

1350 A

THE MORNING EXERCISES

AT

CRIPPLEGATE, ST. GILES IN THE FIELDS,

AND

IN SOUTHWARK :

BEING

DIVERS SERMONS,

PREACHED A. D. MDCLIX—MDCLXXXIX.

BY SEVERAL MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL.

IN OR NEAR LONDON.

FIFTH EDITION.

CAREFULLY COLLATED AND CORRECTED.

WITH NOTES AND TRANSLATIONS,

BY JAMES NICHOLS,

EDITOR OF FULLER'S "CHURCH HISTORY OF BRITAIN," &c.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

CONTAINING THE FIRST VOLUME OF THE EXERCISE AT CRIPPLEGATE,
AND PART OF THE SUPPLEMENT.

LONDON :

PRINTED FOR THOMAS TEGG, 73, CHEAPSIDE.

1844.

THE MORNING EXERCISE

AT CRIPPLEGATE :

OR,

SEVERAL CASES OF CONSCIENCE

PRACTICALLY RESOLVED,

BY SUNDRY MINISTERS,

SEPTEMBER, MDCLXI.

Commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.—2 Corinthians iv. 2.

Unicuique est liber sua conscientia ; et ad hunc librum discutiendum et emendandum omnes alii inventi sunt.—BERNARDUS *De Interiore Domo*, c. xxviii. p. 1072.

“ In his own conscience every man finds a most important book, for the elucidation and amendment of which all other books have been invented.”—EDIT.

Ουδεις γαρ ούτως ουτε μαρτυς εστι φοβερος, ουτε κατηγορος δεινος, ως η συνεσις τ' εγκατοικουσα ταις εκαστων ψυχαις.—POLYBII *Fragmenta*, p. 1029.

“ No witness is so much to be dreaded, and no accuser so terrible, as that wakeful conscience which has its residence in every human spirit.”—EDIT.

TO MY
MOST UNFEIGNEDLY BELOVED PARISHIONERS
OF ST. GILES, CRIPPLEGATE.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

THESE sermons, both preached and printed, are the mere product of love to your souls. I never yet, that I remember, went through the parish without some, though not suitably compassionate, heart-aching yearnings towards my charge, to think (and O that I could think of it according to the worth of souls!) how many thousands here are posting to eternity, that within a few years will be in heaven or hell, and I know not how so much as to ask them whither they are going. While God continues me your watchman, I shall affectionately desire and solicitously endeavour to keep myself "pure from the blood of all men;" (Acts xx. 26;) and that not only for the saving of my own soul, by delivering my message, but that you also may be saved by entertaining it. I am willing, therefore, to commend unto you some *legible* provocations to serious piety; and therefore have procured a contribution of help, that "in the multitude of" spiritual "counsellors" your souls may have "safety." (Prov. xi. 14.) In short, my brethren, give me leave to say, that if I had but the apostle's graces to help me in the *manner*, I can without boasting at present use the *matter* of his spiritually-passionate expressions, that "I greatly long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. And this I pray, that your love" to truth and holiness "may abound yet more and more in" saving "knowledge and in all" sound "judgment; that ye may" practically "approve things that are excellent; and that ye may be sincerely" gracious, and universally "without offence, till the day of Christ;" that you may be "filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." (Phil. i. 8—11.) These, my beloved, are and shall be, through grace, the constant desires and restless endeavours of

Your most affectionate soul-servant,

SAMUEL ANNESLEY.

November 14th, 1661.

THE EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THIS celebrated collection of useful and orthodox theology consists of six volumes of practical as well as doctrinal discourses, preached by some of the most eminent divines of the seventeenth century, and published at irregular intervals between the years 1660 and 1691. Under the title of "MORNING EXERCISES" are comprised,—

1. The four volumes of sermons preached at Cripplegate, and published separately:—The first volume in 1661: its title is, "The Morning Exercise at Cripplegate: or several Cases of Conscience practically resolved by sundry Ministers:"—The second in 1674: it is called "A Supplement to the Morning Exercise at Cripplegate: or several more Cases of Conscience practically resolved," &c.:—The third in 1682, being "A Continuation of Morning-Exercise Questions and Cases of Conscience," &c.:—And, in 1690, "Casuistical Morning Exercises: the fourth volume," &c. To each of the four were prefixed an able preface and introductory sermon by the very learned and amiable SAMUEL ANNESLEY, LL.D.

2. "The Morning Exercise methodized; or certain chief Heads and Points of the Christian Religion opened and improved in divers Sermons," &c. preached at St. Giles in the Fields in 1659, and published in 1660. For this volume, which is itself a brief Body of Divinity, the REV. THOMAS CASE, A.M., wrote a preface, and the first sermon, which is called "the Introduction."

3. "The Morning Exercise against Popery: or the principal Errors of the Church of Rome detected and confuted, in a Morning Lecture preached lately in Southwark," &c.; published in 1675. The editor of this volume was the REV. NATHANAEL VINCENT, A.M.; and by competent judges it has always been deemed a standard book on that great controversy which is recently revived. The first sermon in this valuable course was delivered by the REV. MATTHEW POOLE, A.M., celebrated as the judicious and erudite author of *Synopsis Criticorum*, and of other theological works of great merit.

From the preceding enumeration it will be perceived, that "The Morning Exercise methodized" was the first of the volumes that was published in this series. In DR. CALAMY'S "Account" of the REV. THOMAS CASE, its excellent editor, it is related: "He first set up *the Morning Exercise*; which, to the benefit of multitudes, hath been kept up in this city, from place to place, ever since, except when the rigour of the times prevented." After his decease, DR. SAMUEL ANNESLEY, having long been its "main support, took the care of it upon himself." In the REV. SAMUEL PALMER'S "Nonconformists' Memorial," (vol. i. p. 126,) is given the following more ample history of its rise and success:—

"Its origin, according to Mr. Neal, was this: 'Most of the citizens in London having some relation or friend in the army of the Earl of Essex, so many bills were sent up to the pulpit every Lord's day for their preservation, that the ministers had not time to notice them in prayer, or even to read them. It was therefore agreed to set apart an hour at seven o'clock every morning, half of it to be spent in prayer for the welfare of the public, as well as particular cases, and the other in exhortations to the people. Mr. Case began it in his

church in Milk-street, from whence it was removed to the other distant churches in rotation, a month at each. A number of the most eminent ministers conducted this service, in turn; and it was attended by great crowds of people. After the heat of the war was over, it became what was called a Casuistical Lecture, and continued till the Restoration. The sermons were published in six volumes in quarto.' (NEAL'S *Hist. Purit.* vol. i. p. 797, 4to.) These Lectures treat on a variety of useful subjects, practical as well as doctrinal, in answer to questions proposed, and some of them on cases of conscience; but they are all founded on texts of scripture, in the form of sermons. They are now little known, but are more valuable than is generally supposed. The authors were the most eminent preachers of their day. It is worthy of notice, that in one of the volumes, (which are not numbered, nor uniform,) there is a discourse by Mr. Tillotson, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, who then ranked with the Nonconformists. It is in answer to the question, 'Wherein lies that exact righteousness which is required between man and man?' *Matt.* vii. 12. (See No. X. in the volume of which the Preface is dated November 14th, 1661, 4th edit.) Most of these Lectures are much longer than could have been delivered in half an hour. It appears that they were held every morning for one month only; and from the Preface to the volume dated 1689, the time was afterwards contracted to a fortnight. Most of these were delivered at Cripplegate church, some at St. Giles's, and a volume against Popery in Southwark. Mr. Neal observes, that this Lecture was afterwards revived in a different form, and continued in his day. It was kept up long afterwards, at several places in the summer, a week at each place; but latterly the time was exchanged for the evening."

Two of the volumes here described were published prior to the year 1662; consequently all the authors of the sermons in those volumes were CONFORMISTS up to that time: and though the majority of them afterwards became, for conscience' sake, NON-CONFORMISTS, yet this circumstance, instead of detracting from their moral and intellectual worth, has served, through intervening years, to enhance their character, in public estimation, as divines of great talents, erudition, and piety.

In this new edition of the "MORNING EXERCISES," I found it necessary to obtain a pure text, by a careful collation of the various impressions; between the first and last of which, I found considerable discrepancy. In the first edition of each volume, the typographical execution is generally the least faulty; yet the second and following impressions deserve a preference on another account,—because many of the venerable authors lived long enough to introduce into their discourses important additions, or to impart to their style a few last touches of refinement, or of judicious emendation. The reader will learn the nature of these variations, by consulting pages 243, 434—457, and 668, 685, in this volume.

I have made no alteration in the language of the writers, and have not ventured to amend the structure of their sentences. For a few of these productions, indeed, much indulgence may be claimed from the considerate reader, as they have evidently been printed from rough notes used in the pulpit, without any subsequent attempt at transcription or revision.

My attention has been principally directed to the adoption of a

regular and uniform mode of punctuation; which is the source of much clearness in every species of literary composition, and affords most important aid in comprehending the design of an author.

Wherever I have discovered the relative "which" employed as a personal pronoun, I have usually changed it into "that," "who," or "whom," except in citations from scripture, in which this anomaly has obtained a kind of sacred sanction through long and prescriptive usage. The omission of the relative pronoun after its antecedent was also a common practice in those days, and tended much to obscure the sense of several interesting passages. In this case I have commonly introduced the relative, but always within brackets; [a method] which I have likewise pursued in other instances where the obvious meaning of the clause seemed imperiously to demand the insertion of an explanatory term, but never without [thus] distinctly marking it as my own addition. It is necessary for me further to intimate, that, in a few instances, (though fewer than in any books of that age which have come under my notice,) the verb and its nominative case or cases did not stand in exact agreement with each other: this defect I have always endeavoured to remedy. The casual discordance between the verb and its adjuncts seems to be more frequently traceable to the negligence of the printers, especially in the later editions, than to the carelessness of the writers; whose current language, though extremely varied, (each of them possessing prevailing traits peculiar to himself,) may be pronounced as being, on the whole, very correct and appropriate.

Three or four of these divines appear to have quoted from memory those passages of scripture which they adduce in support of their doctrines. For example: in sermon xv. page 309, this is the manner in which the author has cited Ezek. xxii. 14: "Can thy heart hold, and thine hands be strong, when I shall visit, when I shall deal with you? saith the Lord." But the rendering of the verse by our English translators, is this: "Can thy heart endure, or can thine hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee? I the Lord have spoken it, and will do it." In all cases of this description, (and they have not been numerous,) I have strictly adhered to the phrasology of the authorized version, except when it was obvious that the author had purposely given his own translation of a particular clause or sentence, to amplify its signification, or to render it still more terse and emphatic. In elucidation of this practice, the reader is referred to page 617; where I retain the phrase "*labour after*," which is Dr. Annesley's rendering of *διωκω*, in Philip. iii. 12, though "follow after," is the version of our translators;—and to page 315, where Ezek. xxii. 14 is again cited by the Rev. E. Pledger; but as he evidently intended the citation to be paraphrastic, it is retained, as he wrote it, thus: "Take it in God's own challenge, Ezek. xxii. 14: in verse 13, God complains [that] the sinner had given him a blow; but then, saith God, 'Canst thou indeed make thy part good? Can thy heart hold out? Can thy hands be strong in the day that I shall deal with thee?'"

I subjoin a *List of such words as are slightly changed for others, their immediate cognates in meaning and derivation* :—

Acrew, accrue : *attaque*, attack ; *acomptable*, accountable. *Basilique*, basilic ; *beholding*, beholden ; *base*, bass. *Charet*, chariot ; *course*, coarse ; *concele*, conceal. *Dispoiled*, despoiled ; *discustom*, disaccustom ; *dazels*, dazzles ; *duckoys*, decoys ; *drouth*, drought ; *to dead*, to deaden ; *drace*, drove. *Eccentrica*, eccentric ; *exsultancy*, exultancy. *Failleur*, failure. *Herricane*, hurricane. *Intention*, intension ; (as intensesness or intensity ;) *intayled*, entailed ; *imbarque*, embark ; *inricht*, enriched. *Like*, likely ; *likest*, likeliest ; *lithargy*, lethargy. *Malepart*, malapert ; *metal*, mettle. *Nepe-tides*, neap-tides. *Onslaught*, onslaught. *Postulous*, pustulous ; *Philistims*, Philistines ; *petarhs*, petards ; *phancie*, fancy ; *preheminency*, pre-eminency ; *partaked*, partook ; *phanatic*, fanatic. *Reliques*, relics ; *reflect*, reflex ; *rere-ward*, rearward ; *runnagadoes*, renegadoes. *Secondary*, secondary ; *swinge*, swing ; *schreeking*, shrieking ; *skar*, scar ; *streights*, straits ; *splitted*, split ; *sizes*, assizes ; *suddain*, sudden ; *shipwrackt*, shipwrecked ; *surveighs*, surveys ; *sure*, surely. *Travel*, travail ; *traffiques*, traffics ; *tragæ-comedy*, tragi-comedy ; *temptations*, temptations ; *throws*, throes. *Upholsters*, upholsterers. *Wranckle*, rangle ; *wracks*, racks.

Here also is subjoined a *Collection of the principal words which, for various reasons, I have retained, though they are rarely used by modern writers* :—

Ahibit, acceptance, (acceptance,) appale. *Bemisted*, benevolous, boggle. *Crebrous*, candent, countable, catch, (ketch,) cautious, consequent, (as a noun,) to crack, (to brag,) consultedly, to contrary, (to contradict,) caption, complacential. *Diaper*, (as a verb,) dreggy, discurrency, delices, de-ebriated, difform. *Elenchs*, (sophisms,) entreatment, eftsoons, endamage, extern, emphase. *Flapped*, fastuous, feathery. *Gangrenate*, to greaten. *Incarnative*, to item, inordinacy, incidency, immoderacy, indiligence, inexplleble, intern, ingenerate. *Kindle-coals* (mischief-makers). *Lostness*, lither, love-worthy, loathness. *Moistness*, mighty useful, marvellous circumspect, to mind, (to remind,) mockage, (mockery,) miserablest, mischieving, mediatory, mutuatitious, momentany. *Nescience*. *Oversense*, otherwhere, obumbrate, obligement, otherguess. *Præsentiate*, proclive, parle, propriety, (property, and sometimes proprietorship,) pertinacy, patent, (open,) to patter-over prayers, pot-gun, principled (verbal adjective). *Quietation*. *Respondence*, to rate, (to scold,) reddition, (explanation,) ruffling. *Smatch*, supinity, spiritfull, scape, spritefully, sullages. *Truck*, to temperate, tempestivity, tang. *Universalest*, undoubtful. *Vagous*, velitation, velleity. *Yelk*.

Lest the reader, after inspecting the words in these Lists, should erroneously infer that they afford a fair specimen of the sermons, he ought to be informed that the obsolete spelling occurs only in three or four of them, and that the authors were generally excellent orthoëpists, and masters of a good though diversified style, and a manly elocution.

But the most arduous and toilsome task which I have undertaken, is the translation of numerous biblical, classical, and metaphysical citations from Greek and Latin books, which occur, almost without exception, in every sermon, and often in every page, and which usually afford a most gratifying exhibition of the fine taste and sound judgment of the different authors in this beneficial manner of applying the results of their profound researches and extensive reading. In the first sermon more than seventy passages of this

kind are rendered into popular English, for the benefit of those readers who prefer that some pains should be taken by an editor, rather than by themselves, in ascertaining the titles of the various books, and the meaning of the valuable extracts which, in the form of notes, are adduced from them in support of important propositions. Indeed, the most playful of the classical allusions are more useful than a cursory observer would imagine, evincing, as they do, an extensive and accurate acquaintance with the motives and feelings of our common species in their multiform developements. The versions of other men I have uniformly preferred to my own, whenever I could find them sufficiently simple and expressive; though it will soon be perceived, that my small library is not particularly rich in this interesting department of literature. Beyond the bare duties of an editor and translator I have seldom wandered; and the small number of notes which I have interspersed through the work, relate to critical matters, and not at all to those which are doctrinal. Of this description are the two long notes in pages 33 and 37. In the laborious course of preparing copy, I have been much impeded by the very imperfect mode of citation adopted; some of the sermons specifying neither book, chapter, section, nor edition. Sometimes the very names of the writers are not mentioned; at other times, they are given only in such brief monosyllables as the following: Bress., Cham., Tir., Gib., Brad., Rut., Kon., Brach., Say., Ber.; so that to decipher the men whom these abbreviations (and others still more puzzling) were intended to designate,—to discover the original sources of the recondite passages which were left without description,—and critically to examine them in juxtaposition with others,—were duties the performance of which to my own satisfaction required far more leisure, and the exercise of greater qualifications, than I ever possessed. It is easy to account for the curt mode of reference to which the reverend authors resorted, and even for its occasional omission, when it is recollected that they lived in an age when the Greek and Latin languages were understood by the greater portion of those who were either the regular attendants on their ministry, or who perused their discourses; to them, therefore, the names and productions of all these Classic writers, ancient Fathers, Schoolmen, and Casuists, were familiar; and they consequently needed only this imperfect method of intimation, rather than of formal quotation. Under these circumstances of difficulty in the execution of my purpose, I may, therefore, without the appearance of presumption, be allowed to bespeak the equitable judgment of every real scholar; who, while best qualified to appreciate the care and labour involved in the attempt to render faithfully, into intelligible English, abrupt clauses and insulated sentences, is the only man that can be expected to make adequate allowance for the stray imperfections which his more enlarged course of reading enables him incidentally to detect, but which his candour will not suffer him invidiously to censure.

46, HOXTON-SQUARE,
January 5th, 1814.

JAMES NICHOLS.

CONTENTS.

MORNING EXERCISE AT CRIPPLEGATE.

SERMON I.

BY THE REV. SAMUEL ANNESLEY, LL. D.

HOW MAY WE BE UNIVERSALLY AND EXACTLY CONSCIENTIOUS ?

And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.—Acts xxiv. 16 Page. **1**

II.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM GREENHILL, A.M.

WHAT MUST AND CAN PERSONS DO TOWARDS THEIR OWN CONVERSION ?

Wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.—Ezekiel xviii. 32 **38**

III.

BY THE REV. BENJAMIN NEEDLER, B.C.L.,

AND SOMETIME FELLOW OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD.

HOW MAY BELOVED LUSTS BE DISCOVERED AND MORTIFIED ?

And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee : for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee : for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.—Matthew v. 29, 30 **50**

IV.

BY THE REV. JOHN SHEFFIELD, M.A.

WHAT RELAPSES ARE INCONSISTENT WITH GRACE ?

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance ; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.—Hebrews vi. 4—6 **71**

V.

BY THE REV. JOHN GIBBON, B.D.,

SOMETIME FELLOW OF EMMANUEL COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

HOW MAY WE BE SO SPIRITUAL, AS TO CHECK SIN IN THE FIRST RISINGS OF IT ?

Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.—Galatians v. 16 ... **87**

SERMON VI.

BY THE REV. MATTHEW POOLE, A.M.

HOW MINISTERS OR CHRISTIAN FRIENDS MAY AND OUGHT TO APPLY THEMSELVES TO SICK PERSONS, FOR THEIR GOOD, AND THE DISCHARGE OF THEIR OWN CONSCIENCE.

If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man his uprightness: then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.—Job xxxiii. 23, 24, 111 Page.

VII.

BY THE REV. JOHN KITCHIN, A.M.

HOW MUST WE REPROVE, THAT WE MAY NOT PARTAKE OF OTHER MEN'S SINS? Neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.—1 Timothy v. 22..... 121

VIII.

BY THE REV. SAMUEL LEE, A.M.,

SOMETIME FELLOW OF WADHAM COLLEGE, OXFORD.

WHAT MEANS MAY BE USED TOWARDS THE CONVERSION OF OUR CARNAL RELATIONS?

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.—Romans x. 1..... 142

IX.

BY THE REV. CHRISTOPHER NESSE,

OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERS OF A SOUL'S SINCERE LOVE TO CHRIST? AND HOW MAY THAT LOVE TO HIM BE KINDLED AND INFLAMED?

Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.—Ephesians vi. 24 169

X.

BY THE REV. JOHN TILLOTSON, D.D.

WHEREIN LIES THAT EXACT RIGHTEOUSNESS, WHICH IS REQUIRED BETWEEN MAN AND MAN?

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the Law and the Prophets.—Matthew vii. 12 194

XI.

BY THE REV. THOMAS GOUGE, A.M.,

SOMETIME FELLOW OF KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

AFTER WHAT MANNER MUST WE GIVE ALMS, THAT THEY MAY BE ACCEPTABLE AND PLEASING UNTO GOD?

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to

enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.—1 Timothy vi. 17—19 213

SERMON XII.

BY THE REV. THOMAS DOOLITTLE, A. M.,
OF PEMBROKE HALL, CAMBRIDGE.

IF WE MUST AIM AT ASSURANCE, WHAT SHOULD THEY DO, THAT ARE NOT ABLE
TO DISCERN THEIR OWN SPIRITUAL CONDITION ?

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life.—1 John v. 13 252

XIII.

BY THE REV. ROGER DRAKE, D. D.

WHAT DIFFERENCE IS THERE BETWEEN THE CONFLICT IN NATURAL AND
SPIRITUAL PERSONS ?

But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.—Romans vii. 23 284

XIV.

BY THE REV. THOMAS WHITE, LL. B.

WHAT FAITH IS THAT WHICH EXCEPT WE HAVE IN PRAYER, WE MUST NOT
THINK TO OBTAIN ANY THING OF GOD ?

But let him ask in faith.—James i. 6 292

XV.

BY THE REV. ELIAS PLEDGER, A. M.

OF THE CAUSE OF INWARD TROUBLE; AND HOW A CHRISTIAN SHOULD BEHAVE
HIMSELF WHEN INWARD AND OUTWARD TROUBLES MEET.

And they said one to another, *Yea, but* we are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us. And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required.—Genesis xlii. 21, 22 306

XVI.

BY THE REV. JOSEPH HILL, B. D.,
SOMETIME FELLOW OF MAGDALEN COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

IN WHAT THINGS MUST WE USE MODERATION, AND IN WHAT NOT ?

Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.—Philippians iv. 5 331

SERMON XVII.

BY THE REV. THOMAS MALLERY, D.D.

HOW MAY WE HAVE SUITABLE CONCEPTIONS OF GOD IN DUTY?

	Page.
And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes.—Genesis xviii. 27.....	360

XVIII.

BY THE REV. THOMAS LYE, A.M.

HOW ARE WE TO LIVE BY FAITH ON DIVINE PROVIDENCE?

Trust in him at all times, ye people.—Psalm lxix. 8.....	369
--	-----

XIX.

BY THE REV. THOMAS MANTON, D.D.

HOW MAY WE CURE DISTRACTIONS IN HOLY DUTIES?

Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.—Matthew xv. 7, 8.....	400
--	-----

XX.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM COOPER, A.M.

HOW MUST WE IN ALL THINGS GIVE THANKS?

In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.—1 Thessalonians v. 18.	415
---	-----

XXI.

BY THE REV. MR. SIMMONS.

HOW MAY WE GET RID OF SPIRITUAL SLOTH, AND KNOW WHEN OUR ACTIVITY IN DUTY IS FROM THE SPIRIT OF GOD?

Quicken thou me in thy way.—Psalm cxix. 37.....	434
---	-----

XXII.

BY THE REV. HENRY WILKINSON, SEN., D.D.,

MARGARET PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

WHEREIN ARE WE ENDANGERED BY THINGS LAWFUL?

They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.—Luke xvii. 27—29.	458
--	-----

SERMON XXIII.

BY THE REV. THOMAS WATSON, A.M.,
OF EMMANUEL COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

HOW MUST WE MAKE RELIGION OUR BUSINESS ?

Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business ?—Luke ii. 49. Page. **467**

XXIV.

BY THE REV. HENRY HURST, A.M.,
FELLOW OF MERTON COLLEGE, OXFORD.

WHETHER WELL-COMPOSED RELIGIOUS VOWS DO NOT EXCEEDINGLY PROMOTE
RELIGION.

What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me ? I will pay my
vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people.—Psalm cxvi. 12, 14. **479**

XXV.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM WHITAKER, A.M.,
FELLOW OF EMMANUEL COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

HOW ARE WE COMPLETE IN CHRIST ?

But Christ is all, and in all.—Colossians iii. 11. **500**

XXVI.

BY THE REV. JOHN JACKSON, A.M.,
OF QUEEN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

HOW SHALL THOSE MERCHANTS KEEP UP THE LIFE OF RELIGION, WHO, WHILE
AT HOME, ENJOYED ALL GOSPEL-ORDINANCES, AND, WHEN ABROAD, ARE NOT
ONLY DESTITUTE OF THEM, BUT EXPOSED TO PERSECUTION ?

Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar?—
Psalm cxx. 5. **517**

XXVII.

BY THE REV. ANDREW BROMIALL.

HOW IS HYPOCRISY DISCOVERABLE AND CURABLE ?

First of all, beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.—
Luke xii. 1. **535**

XXVIII.

BY THE REV. DAVID CLARKSON, B.D.,
FELLOW OF CLARE-HALL, CAMBRIDGE.

WHAT MUST CHRISTIANS DO, THAT THE INFLUENCE OF THE ORDINANCES MAY ABIDE
UPON THEM ?

O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in
the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their
heart unto thee.—1 Chronicles xxix. 18. **553**

SUPPLEMENT TO THE MORNING EXERCISE
AT CRIPPLEGATE.

SERMON I.

BY THE REV. SAMUEL ANNESLEY, LL. D.

HOW MAY WE ATTAIN TO LOVE GOD WITH ALL OUR HEARTS, SOULS, AND MINDS ?

Page.

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.—Matthew xxii. 37, 38 572

II.

BY THE REV. JOHN MILWARD, A. M.,

FELLOW OF CORPUS-CHRISTI COLLEGE, OXFORD.

HOW OUGHT WE TO LOVE OUR NEIGHBOURS AS OURSELVES ?

Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.—Matthew xxii. 39 621

III.

BY THE REV. THEOPHILUS GALE, A. M.,

FELLOW OF MAGDALEN COLLEGE, OXFORD.

WHEREIN THE LOVE OF THE WORLD IS INCONSISTENT WITH THE LOVE OF GOD.

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.—1 John ii. 15 642

IV.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM JENKIN, A. M.

NOW IS THE TIME : OR, INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PRESENT IMPROVING THE SEASON
OF GRACE.

We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee : behold, now is the accepted time ; behold, now is the day of salvation.—2 Corinthians vi. 1, 2..... 665

THE MORNING EXERCISE.

SERMON I.

BY THE REV. SAMUEL ANNESLEY, LL.D.

HOW MAY WE BE UNIVERSALLY AND EXACTLY CONSCIENTIOUS?

And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.—Acts xxiv. 16.

THIS sermon is but preliminary to some select cases of conscience: and in this text you have a notable anatomy of conscience; wherein are these six things singularly considerable:—

1. Here is the index to the book of conscience; the eye to the portraiture of a Christian, that, according to your several standings, looks upon *the business, the time, the manner, and the cause* of this account.

(1.) *Ev toutov.* *Herein*—In this, that is, in this business.* As if he had said, “Here I am arraigned as a malefactor, charged with sedition, schism, and heresy: IN THIS my conscience acquits me. *Herein do I exercise,*” &c. Again,

(2.) *Herein*—In or at this time.† As if he had said, “It is but five days ago, since I was flapped‡ in the mouth for this defence; and I see those present, that so rashly and illegally censured me; yet *now*, before more equal judges, I bring the same defence. *Herein I exercise myself,*” &c. Again,

(3.) *Herein*—In this manner.§ As if he had said, “‘My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the straitest sect of our religion I lived.’ (Acts xxvi. 4, 5.) And I am not conscious to myself of any crime in respect of their law, either in my Judaism, or Christianity:” || or thus,

(4.) *Herein*—As if he had said, “‘I have hope towards God, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust;’ and THEREFORE ¶ ‘with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man’s judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self, for I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord;’ (1 Cor. iv. 3, 4;) and therefore, having

* *In hoc.*—VULGATE and ERASMUS.

† *Interea.*—BEZA. *Id est, Ev toutov xronou.*—DE DIEU.

‡ Flapped is a good old English word, and not to be altered into the modern phrase, “slapped in the mouth.”—EDIT.

§ *Sic.*—ÆTHIOPIC. *Id est, Ev toutov*

τροπον.—DE DIEU. || TIRINUS in Acts xxiii. 1.

¶ *Propterea.*—SYRIAC and

ARABIC. *Δια τουτο.*—DE DIEU on verse 16.

an eye to the resurrection and last judgment,* *I exercise myself to have,*" &c.

2. Here is the *act* with the *quality* included; *Ασκω*, "I exercise,"† I am musing, and exercising my mind; I am learning and busying my thoughts. The word also notes industry and endeavour, pains and labour.‡ As if he had said, "This is my meditation, my study, my work and employment, to get, to keep, and use, a conscience void of offence," &c.

3. Consider the *subject* of this exercise: *Αυτος*, "Myself."§ It was himself, not only his hearers. He took on him the care of all the churches; but he would not have it charged upon him, that he kept others' vineyards and neglected his own; (Cant. i. 6;) he would be sure so to exercise himself, that he might not by any means, "when he had preached to others, himself be a castaway." (1 Cor. ix. 27.)

4. Consider the *object* of this exercise: and that is "Conscience." And pray consider the manner of expressing himself: *Συνειδησιον εχειν*. "To have a conscience;" to be owner of a good conscience.|| All men have a conscience, but we may say of most, "Conscience hath them." They have a conscience, as they have a fever, or a disease; conscience is troublesome, and disquiets them; they cannot sin so freely as if they had no inward gripes; and therefore they had rather be rid of their consciences, than be thus troubled with them. But now the apostle—he would have a conscience to commune with, he would do nothing but what he is willing his deputy-judge shall approve of.

5. Consider the *quality* of the subject; *Απροσκοπον*, "void of offence:" that is, without any thing which will not endure the scrutiny of both divine and human judgment.¶ The distribution notes the entireness, exactness, and excellency of his gospel-carriage, in his religion towards God, and in his conversation among men.** He made it his business to live purely before God, and righteously among men.††

6. Consider the *continuance* of this exercise; *Δια παντος*,‡‡ "Always." It is not only by fits and starts, when in some good mood, or under some pangs of conviction; it is not only when arrested by sickness, or affrighted by the apprehension of death; but always, *at all times*.

The words thus opened, the general case that lies upon me to resolve is this:—

CASE.

How may we be universally and exactly conscientious?

Universally, in respect of things; *exactly*, in respect of manner.

To answer this, (so far as I can crowd it into a sermon,) I shall present you with these four things:—I. What conscience is. II. What its objects. III. What its offices. IV. What are the kinds of consciences.

* *Propter hoc, id est, Propter hanc fiduciam*.—GROTIUS. "On account of this trust or confidence."—EDIT. † *Meditor*, and sometimes the same with *μαινεω*.—BUNDEUS.

‡ *Operam do, elaboratè concinno, orno, colo*.—STEPHANI *Lexicon*. § *Ασκειν* *utitur*

Paulus significatione conjugationis Hebrææ Hithpahal.—BEZA. "But, the proper signification of *ασκειν* being retained, (a verb of which Paul makes frequent use in his Epistles,) I prefer to receive it, as we do many other words in these sacred books, in the signification of the Hebrew conjugation Hithpahal."—EDIT. || RUTHERFORD against Liberty of Conscience, p. 1.

¶ VATABLUS *in loc.* †† CALVIN *in loc.*

** 'Η τελεια γαρ αβη απρη.—CHRYSTOSTOM *in loc.* ‡‡ *Id est, Δια παντος χρονου*.—PISCATOR.

Wherein various directions are necessary, for remedies and rules; which, when laid together, will resolve the case.

THE DESCRIPTION.

I. *Conscience is man's judgment of himself,** that is, of his estate and actions,† as they are subjected unto the judgment of God.—I therefore close with this description, to waver the determination of that school-dispute, whether it be an act,‡ or an habit,§ whether of the understanding,|| or will,¶ or both; ** whether it be a distinct faculty,†† or power,‡‡ how far born with us, and how far acquired.§§ I willingly let pass all||| that doth not further the design I drive at, namely, an universal and exact conscientiousness.

For *conscience* the Hebrews ordinarily make use of two words, namely, “heart” and “spirit.” “HEART,” in Prov. iv. 23, $\text{לֵב} \text{ cor tuum}$.

* AMESII'S *De Conscientiâ*, lib. i. c. i. p. 1. † VOETII *Selectæ Disput.* pars iii. p. 827.
 ‡ DURANDUS, lib. ii. dist. 39, p. 441; AQUINAS, *Prim. Quæst.* 79, art. 13, p. 147. § SANDERSONUS *De Obligatione Conscientiæ*, præf. i. sect. xvii. p. 21. || *Plerique referunt ad intellectum.*—BALDUINI *Cas. Conscient.* lib. i. c. iii. p. 5. ¶ *Ibidem.* ** BRESSERUS *De Conscientiâ*, lib. i. c. vi. p. 23. †† MR. BERNARD'S "Treatise of Conscience," p. 4. ‡‡ HUIT upon Conscience, p. 87. §§ SANDERSONUS, *ibid.*, p. 23. ||| *Imprimis observandum est, tantam esse virium mentis (nempe potentiarum, habituum, et actuum) inter se naturæ cognitionem, tamque arctam quoad usum et exercitium conjunctionem sive connexionem, ut non solum vocabulorum appellationes, sed et reales singulorum proprietates et officia, reliquis promiscuè et indiscriminatim attribui solent; idque non in exotericis tantùm poetarum, oratorum, aliorumque humaniorum literaturæ auctorum, (quibus licentius loqui permixtum est,) sed et in dogmaticis philosophorum et scholasticorum scriptis.—Idem, eodem, p. 9. "To remove, therefore, all ambiguity, it is in the first place observable, that there is such an affinity, by nature, of the endowments of the mind, (namely, of *potentias*, habits, and acts,) and so near a conjunction, so close a connexion, according to the use and exercise of them; that not only the appellations of words, but the offices and proprieties of every one of them, are promiscuously and without any distinction attributed to one another; and THAT not only in the rhetorical expressions of the poets and orators, and others the professors of human literature, to whom a liberty was permitted; but even in the dogmatical positions of the philosophers and schoolmen themselves, who were denied that happy elegance."—BISHOP SANDERSON'S translation of his own Latin, 1659. And in the last paragraph of that lecture, *Abolvi tandem, certè obscurius quàm aut voluisssem, aut debuisssem, si res aliter tulisset. Prospectò intricata est et perplexa omnis (quod viri gravissimi jam olim conquesti sunt) de animæ intellectivæ potentii et facultatibus disquisitio, &c. Quæ capere se putant, et quidem suo modo capiunt illiteratissimi quique homunciones; hæc ipsa non capiunt acutissimi philosophi. Quæ in re neque satis admirari Dei Optimi Maximi infinitum sapientiam, retundentis hoc pacto humanam superbiam, et representantis mortalibus, velut in speculo, inanem illam δοκνησοφίαν, quæ sibi videntur aliquid esse, cum nihil sint, miserè decipientes cor suum.—pp. 35, 36. "I have now finished what I conceived necessary to be spoken concerning the nature of conscience: in which I have been longer, (I fear,) but certainly more obscure, than either I would or ought to be, if the subject could otherwise have borne it. But, truly, all disputation concerning the faculties and *potentias* of the intellective soul is intricate and perplexed; as most learned men have already complained of it. Those things which are before our feet and eyes, which of themselves do jump into our thoughts and senses; those things which are not unknown to the cobbler and the weaver; things which the most illiterate men do think they understand, and indeed in some measure do understand them; the same things are not understood by the greatest of the philosophers; and the most refined wits are here at a stand. In which I cannot sufficiently admire the infinite wisdom of the Almighty, by this means beating down all human pride, and presenting to mortals (as in a mirror) that empty δοκνησοφίαν, seeming wisdom, by which they would appear to be something when they are indeed nothing, miserably deceiving their own hearts; (Gal. vi. 3.) that so men might learn *metiri se modulo ac pede suo*, 'to measure themselves by their own last and their own modale,' and not to be wiser than becometh them, but to be wise unto sobriety, (Rom. xii. 3,) acknowledging their own foolishness, that to God alone may be the glory of his wisdom."—*Idem, ibidem.***

"KEEP thy heart" (that is, keep thy conscience) "with all diligence;" and so in the New Testament: "If καρδία, our heart" (that is, if our conscience) "condemn us." (1 John iii. 20.) SPIRIT, in Prov. xviii. 14: πῦρ, "A wounded spirit" (that is, a wounded conscience) "who can bear?" And so in the New Testament: "What man knoweth the things of a man, save πνευμα, the spirit of man," (that is, the conscience of man) "that is in him?" (1 Cor. ii. 11.) But in English (as also in the Greek, συνειδησις, and Latin, conscientia, whence we borrow it) it is called CONSCIENCE, "knowledge with another;" which excellently sets forth the scriptural nature of it: as, "My witness is in heaven;" (Job xvi. 19;) and, "I say the truth, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost." (Rom. ix. 1.) In both places, it is as though he had said, "God witnesseth with my conscience."* Conscience is placed in the middle, under God, and above man.† I will close this with Brochmand's description of conscience, to be "a kind of silent reasoning of the mind, whose definitive sentence is received by some affection of the heart, whereby those things which are judged to be good and right are approved of with delight, but those things which are evil and naught are disapproved with grief and sorrow. God hath placed this in all men, partly to be a judgment and testimony of that integrity to which man was at first created, and of that corruption that followed sin; partly that God may have a tribunal erected in the breasts of men to accuse delinquents, and to excuse those that do what is good and right."‡

II. *The OBJECT of conscience is very various.*—Conscience hath great employment,§ and much business with the whole man, and with all his actions. It is like those living creatures in the Revelation, "all over eyes." It looks to the understanding, whether our wisdom be carnal or gracious; (2 Cor. i. 12;) to the will, whether it go beyond, or fall short, in ability of good performances; (Rom. vii. 18;) to the affections, whether the entertainment or refusal of the gospel be the matter of greatest joy or sorrow. (Rom. ix. 1, 2.) It pries into all our actions both towards God and man. TOWARDS GOD: whether, in general, our estate be good, (Heb. ix. 14;) in special, whether our service be inward and spiritual, (2 Tim. i. 3,) or only outward and formal. (Heb. ix. 9.) More particularly, it surveys all our duties, whether we pray in faith; (Heb. x. 22;) whether we hear with profit; (1 Tim. iii. 9;) whether, through our baptism, we can go unto God as unto an oracle;|| (1 Peter iii. 21;) whether in the Lord's supper we have singular communion with Christ; (1 Cor. x. 15, 16;) in short, whether we do and will stick close to religion; (1 Peter iii. 15, 16;) as

* SANDERSON, *ibidem*, et postea sparsum. et seqq.

† PERKINS, vol. H. lib. I. p. 11.

‡ BROCH-

MANDUS, tom. i. art. 1, c. iii. q. 2, p. 7. § MR. BERNARD of "Conscience," p. 56, et seqq. || *Interpretes LXXII. vocabulo ερωταρειν utuntur, quando in Vetere Testamento Israelite dicuntur interrogare os Domini. Baptismus est ερωτηνια, responsio bonæ conscientie, et etiam interrogatio apud Deum; quia audeat cum fiducia Deum accedere et interrogare; hoc est, cum eo colloqui, eumque rogare pro se et aliis.*—GERHARDI *Loci Communes*, tom. iv. De Sacramento, sec. 88, p. 180. "The Septuagint employs the word ερωταρειν, 'to ask or inquire,' whenever the Israelites are said to ask at the mouth of the Lord. Baptism is ερωτηνια, the answer of a good conscience, and also an inquiring toward God; because this good conscience dares to approach to God with confidence, and to entreat Him; that is, it ventures to speak with him, and to entreat with him in behalf of itself and others."—EDIT.

knowing, that if conscience do not steer right, religion will be shipwrecked. (1 Tim. i. 19.) Thus *duties towards God are the great object of conscience*; but *duties towards man are the secondary*, "and like unto it." TOWARDS MAN, in our whole conversation; (Acts xxiii. 1;) particularly, that we be obedient to rulers; (Rom. xiii. 5;) and that which is, in one place, charged upon us *for conscience' sake*, is in another place commanded *for the Lord's sake*: (1 Peter ii. 13:) in short, that we be just in all our dealings, (Heb. xiii. 18,) avoiding all justly offensive things, (1 Cor. x. 29,) words, (1 Kings ii. 44,) thoughts; (Psalm lxxiii. 15, 16;) that we express singular charity, (1 Tim. i. 5,) especially to souls, (Rom. ix. 1, 2,) and this in prayer, (2 Tim. i. 3, 4,) when we can do nothing else: and conscience doth not only do all this *at present* urging to duty, or shooting or tingling under the commission of sin; but it foresees *things future*, provoking to good, and cautioning against evil; and also looks back upon *things past* with joy or torment; so that it is easier to reckon what is not the object of conscience, than what is. In a word, Every thing of duty and sin is the object of conscience.

III. *The OFFICES of conscience are likewise various.*—In general, the proper office of conscience is, discursively to apply that light which is in the mind unto particular actions or cases. The light which is in the mind is either the light of nature, or the light of Divine revelation. 1. By "the light of nature," I understand those common notions which are written in the hearts of men, which, as a brand plucked out of the common burning, are the relics of the image of God after the fall. Not only scripture but experience evidenceth, that those who are practical atheists, "that say unto God, Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways," (Job xxi. 14, 15,) yet cannot get rid of his deputy, their conscience. They carry a spy, a register, a monitor in their bosom, that doth accuse and trouble them; they cannot sin in quiet.* Those that are without—or reject—the sun-shine of scripture, yet they cannot blow out God's candle of conscience. (Prov. xx. 27.) 2. By "Divine revelation," I mean both the standing rule of scripture, (Isal. viii. 20,) and God's extraordinary discoveries of himself, whether by dreams or visions, or prophecies, or other spiritual communications: (Num. xii. 6—8; Heb. i. 1:) all which, though (if they be from God) they are according to scripture; (1 John iv. 1;) yet the former are afforded upon particular providences; (2 Chron. xx. 14; 1 Kings xiii. 20, 21; Num. xxiv. *per totum*;) and the last are the universal privileges of particular favourites. (2 Cor. xii. 2—4.) But it is the office of conscience to apply all these; and that it doeth, by the discourse of a practical syllogism.† For instance:

"'Whosoever believeth,' (John iii. 36,) that is, accepteth of Christ as Lord and Saviour, (1 Cor. xii. 3,) 'shall be saved.'

* *Quod egi in corpore hoc postmodum importund cogitatione verso in mente: et multoties gravius torqueor in recordatione quam prius captus fueram operis perpetrations.*—BERNARDUS [Clarevallensis] *De interiori Domo, seu De Conscientiâ edificandâ*, c. xxx. p. 1074. "Those things which I have been doing with this my body, afterwards become the subjects of my meditation, on which my mind ponders with deep thoughtfulness; and the mental torture which I endure in my recollections is frequently more intense than the pleasure which I derived from the perpetration."—EDIT. † SAYRUS, *Clav. Reg.* lib. i. c. iii. p. 4.

"But" (may the gracious person say) "I accept of Christ as Lord and Saviour. (John xx. 28.)

"Therefore shall I be saved."

Or thus: "Whosoever is unfeignedly willing to have his actions brought to the scripture touchstone to be tried whether they be right *for the matter*, and to the scripture balance to be weighed whether they are weight *for the manner*, his deeds are wrought in God; that is, he is in a state of grace, he acteth by the gracious assistance of the Spirit of God: (John iii. 20, 21 :)

"But" (may the trembling soul say) "I desire nothing more than to bring myself and all my actions to a scripture trial: (Psalm cxxxix. 23, 24 :)

"Therefore" (he may conclude) "I am in a state of grace, &c. (Psalm xxvi. 1, 2.)"

Once more: "'Whosoever committeth sin,' that is, makes a trade of sin, 'is of the devil,' that is, is the child of the devil: (1 John iii. 8 :)

"But" (may every unregenerate person say, Rom. vi. 20,) "I make a trade of sin; that is, when I am a-sinning I am in my element; I am where I would be; there is no work so pleasing to me:

"Therefore, I am the child of the devil; that is, I am in a state of damnation. (Rom. vi. 16.)"

In the *major*, or first proposition, you have the **DICTATE** of conscience: * in the *minor*, or second proposition, you have the **TESTIMONY** of conscience: † and, in the *conclusion*, you have the **JUDGMENT** of conscience. ‡ 1. In the first the power of conscience is very great, so great that it can do any thing but make evil good; § for it can make an indifferent action good or evil; and it can make a good action evil: || therefore in things necessary it doth so bind, that no human laws can loosen; (Acts iv. 19 :); ¶ and thereupon we are said to be downright debtors, (Rom. i. 14,) engaged servants, (Rom. vi. 16,) spiritually bound, (Acts

* *Habitualis cognitio menti impressa, variè ab authoribus nuncupatur, ut conscientia, conscientie dictamen, lex naturalis, scintilla rationis, συνρησις, &c.*—ESTIUS in *Secundum Librum Sententiarum*, distinct. xxxix. sec. 2, p. 427. "An habitual conception or apprehension which is impressed on the mind receives various appellations from different authors, as *conscience, the dictate of conscience, the law of nature, a spark or slight glimmering of reason, unsullied mental integrity.*"—EDIT. † *Conscientia, respectu propositionis, dicitur lumen et lex; respectu assumptionis et conclusionis, testis; sed, respectu assumptionis, aptissimè vocatur index vel liber; et, respectu conclusionis, maximè propriè jude.*—AMESIUS *De Conscientiâ*, lib. i. c. 1, sec. 9, p. 3. "In reference to the major proposition the conscience is called a *light* and a *law*; with respect to the assumption (or the minor proposition in an enthymeme) and to the conclusion, it is called a *witness*: but with this further distinction, in regard to the assumption or minor it is with much correctness designated as an *index* or a *book*; and in regard to the conclusion or inference it is most appropriately styled a *judge.*"

—EDIT. ‡ *Propositionem dicit συνρησις. Assumptio per appropriationem vocatur συνειδησις. Conclusio est ipsa κρσις. Ibidem*, sec. 10. "Συνρησις, conscious upright-ness, dictates the proposition. The assumption, or minor, is by appropriation denominated *συνειδησις, conscience*. The conclusion is the *real judgment.*" See the note at the close of this Sermon.—EDIT. § *Ibidem, Theses Theol. De Conscientiâ*, sec. 18, p. 44. || See MARTINI *Lexicon Philologicum* under the word *Conscientia*. ¶ *Fix crediderim apud se fuisse Stapletonum cum hæc essetret. Forum conscientie dixit esse longè majorem partem clavium.*—CHAMIERI *Panstratia Catholica*, tom. ii. lib. xi. c. 9, sec. 23, p. 206. "I can scarcely believe Stapleton to have been in possession of his right senses when he gave utterance to this nonsense. He has declared the *forum* of the conscience to be by far the largest part of the *arena* in which the power of the keys may be exercised."—EDIT.

xx. 22,) lovingly constrained, (2 Cor. v. 14,) graciously necessitated; (1 Cor. ix. 16;) yea, in a word, we can do no other (unless we will offer violence to our consciences) than do what God chargeth upon us as duty. (Acts iv. 20.) Thus far the DICTATE of conscience. 2. In the TESTIMONY of conscience, conscience examines, sifts, and tries our actions. This in scripture is called a "returning into a man's own heart," (1 Kings viii. 47,)* a thinking of our ways, (Psalm cxix. 59,) a speaking to our heart, (Hosea vii. 2,) a laying things to heart, (Jer. xii. 11,) † a setting our heart upon a business, (Haggai i. 5,) ‡ an examination and trial of ourselves. (2 Cor. xiii. 5.) § 3. And thence the CONCLUSION is inferred from the premisses, according to our apprehension of the rule and account of our actions. Yet this is worthy of special observation, that though both the premisses be undeniably true, yet there is nothing more ordinary, than for not only wicked but gracious persons (though upon different grounds) to deny the conclusion: (Rom. ii. 18, 21, 22:) and the truth is, without the Spirit's assistance, by way of conviction to the wicked, and relief to the godly, neither of them will prove any better logicians than still to deny the conclusion. Graceless persons—they will not conclude against themselves: for, (1.) They will not weigh the cogency of any scriptural argument. (John iii. 20.) (2.) They have sucked-in other self-flattering conclusions: (Deut. xxix. 19:) and, (3.) They are willing to put a cheat upon themselves: (James i. 22:) || so these will not conclude against themselves. And, on the other hand, gracious persons dare not conclude themselves so happy as the scripture represents them: (1.) Through the prevalency of temptations, Satan frights them from their comforts: (Rev. xii. 10:) ¶ (2.) Through the abounding of grace, (Psalm cxxvi. 1,) they think it is too good to be true; especially considering, (3.) Their sense of unworthiness. (Luke vii. 6, 9.) "What! THEY pass a sentence of absolution upon their souls! of approbation upon their actions! No; they dare not!" Through over-moderesty they will belie the very Spirit of grace. In short, the only remedy I shall commend to both sorts is this; namely, Beg of God to persuade thy heart to close with convincing truth. As if you should say,—

"Lord, thou hast told me in thy word, that if I come unto Christ, I shall in no wise be cast out; (John vi. 37;) and, if I love God, I may thereby be sure that God loves me: (1 John iv. 19:)

"But, Lord, so far as I am able by searching to know my own heart, I desire nothing more than to come to Christ, (Jer. iii. 22,) to receive Christ, (John i. 11,) to be one with Christ, (Gal. ii. 20,) to be conformable to Christ. (Heb. ii. 11.) And, Lord, I dare say, with Peter, 'Thou

* *Et reversi fuerunt ad cor suum.*—*Es Hebraeo.* The Hebrew has, "Bring back to their heart." —EDIT. † פניו לבבכם על-דרכיכם *Ponens super cor.* ‡ There it is, פניו לבבכם על-דרכיכם "Put or apply your heart to your ways." —EDIT. § [In this passage] there is both *εισαφέρει*, (as if he had said, "Make as strict a scrutiny into your own hearts, as the devil will do when he tempts you,") and *δοκιμαζετε*, "Be as loath to be mistaken in your graces, as an usurer in his coin." || Παραλογισθησθαι, *Falsè argumentatione uti, et subdolo supplicatione fallere*; ["to employ false argumentation, and to deceive through a roguish and cunning mode of reckoning;"] as those in Matt. vii. 21—23.—*BROCHMANDUS in loc.* ¶ The devil accuseth them to themselves, as well as unto God, day and night.

that knowest all things knowest that I love thee.' (John xxi. 17.) If prizing thee above all things in the world, if restless longing for further acquaintance and more inward communion, if pantings after the secrets of thy presence, and fear of nothing more than to offend thee, be infallible evidences of sincere love, then I dare appeal unto thee, that I love thee: (Psalm lxxiii. 25; cxix. 20; cvi. 4; xxv. 14; cxix. 120.)

"Therefore, Lord, persuade my soul thankfully to acknowledge, that it is in a safe condition."

On the contrary, thus:—

"Lord, thou hast told me, that if I live after the flesh, I shall die: (Rom. viii. 13:)

"But my heart and life undeniably evidence, that I mind nothing but carnality:

"Therefore, Lord, convince me, that there is but a step, but a breath, between me and everlasting death. (Job xxi. 13; Psalm cxlvi. 4.)"

Thus, Christians, do but suffer and help your conscience to do its office, and "then shall you have rejoicing in yourselves alone, and not in another:" (Gal. vi. 4:) that is, you will find cause of rejoicing in the testimony of your own conscience; and not in others thinking you to be better than you are, nor in your thinking yourselves to be better than others. Thus you have the OFFICES of conscience. I come in the last place to speak of [the kinds of conscience.]

IV. THE KINDS of conscience, I know, are commonly reduced to these four; namely, good and quiet, good and troubled: evil and quiet, evil and troubled.*

But, intending the resolution of the case before me, in speaking to conscience under the several kinds of it, I shall speak to eight kinds of consciences. The TWO FIRST (namely, the *sleepy* and the *seared* conscience) are peculiar to the worst of men. The FOUR NEXT (namely, the *erring*, *doubting*, *scrupulous* and *trembling* consciences) are almost indifferent to good and bad; only the two former have a greater bias to bad; and the two latter have a greater tendency to good. But the TWO LAST kinds (namely, the *good and honest*, and the *good and quiet* consciences) are peculiar to God's choicest favourites. In treating of these, I shall endeavour to acquaint you with *the nature of each*, † *how to cure the evil*, and *how to obtain the good*; and hereby the application will be entwisted with the explication throughout my discourse.

I. THE SLEEPY CONSCIENCE.

I. *The first, and one of the worst kinds of consciences in the world, is the sleepy conscience.*—Such is the conscience of every unconverted

* BERNARDUS *De Conscientiâ edificandâ*, p. 1107. † But here I must say with Augustine: *Non possum ut volo explicare quod sentio: tamen quid moliar dicere, peto ut, non-expectatis verbis meis, sagacissimè si potestis intelligatis. Odi definire; nam facilius est mihi videre in alterius definitione quod non probem, quàm quicquam bene definiendo explicare.*—AUGUSTINUS *De Ordine*, tom. i. lib. ii. cap. 1, 2, p. 671. "In explaining my own sentiments, I find a difficulty in rising to the elevation of my wishes. Yet my request is, that, my expressions being quite unpremeditated, you will expend your utmost sagacity in understanding what I shall endeavour to utter.—I dislike the task of defining; for it is much easier for me to perceive, in the definition of any other person, that of which I cannot approve, than to explain something by a happy definition of my own invention."—EDIT.

person, that is not yet under horror. Their spirit, that is, their conscience, is asleep; (Rom. xi. 8;)* that as bodily sleep bindeth up all the senses and animal spirits, so this spiritual (or rather unspiritual) sleepiness bindeth up the soul from all sense† of the evil of sin, and want of grace; and therefore, in conversion, Christ doth awaken the conscience. (Eph. v. 14.) The disciples of Christ have their spirits waking, when their bodies are slumbering; that is, they have a gracious *habit* of watchfulness, when they are overtaken with some carnal *acts* of sleepiness. (Matt. xxvi. 41.) Christ complains of unkindness, that his *spouse* sleeps in the morning, when he knocks for early entertainment; (Cant. v. 2;) but the unconverted let Christ stand knocking all the day, till supper-time: (Rev. iii. 20;) they will spend their day with their lusts; and if Christ will knock and wait till the day of their life be almost spent, then they will pretend to open. But how long must God call? "How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?" and they will answer: "Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep." (Prov. vi. 9, 10.)‡ The plain truth is, though wicked men cannot quite stifle their consciences,§ yet their consciences do but as it were *talk in their sleep*; and they take no more notice of them than they do of their dreams.

CAUSES.

CAUSES of a sleepy conscience are, beside the sluggishness of our depraved natures,—

1. *A spiritual intoxication*.—All unconverted persons are drunk with the love of sin; and therein behave themselves like Solomon's drunkard, that lies down to sleep in the heart of the sea, or upon the top of a mast, (Prov. xxiii. 34, 35,)|| in the very midst of the greatest soul-danger. He doeth that daily which Jonah did once,—run away from God, and then composeth himself to sleep, when God is pursuing him with judgments; (Jonah i. 5;) and dreams of nothing but impunity and happiness. Love of sin is the devil's opium, whereby he casts the conscience into a dead sleep, that no arm but [that] of Omnipotency can waken it. He meets with something in the world, which he likes better than the holy ways of God; and therefore will not seek God. God's ways are always grievous to him. "He hath said in his heart, I shall not

* Πνευμα κατανοητος. 'Εβραϊζει ἡ φρασις, quasi spiritus catanenuymenon.—CAMERARIUS in loc. "The spirit of slumber—This is a Hebrew form of speech, as if, by an enallage, a benumbed and sleepy spirit."—EDIT. † Privatio omnis sensus et judicii.—ILLYRICUS in predicto loco. "A deprivation of all feeling and judgment."—EDIT. ‡ Concessio ironica, ethopœiam habens pigrorum elegantissimam.—JUN:US in loc. "This is an ironical concession, exhibiting a very elegant ethopœia, or the invention of 'a speech to suit the known habits' of lazy persons."—EDIT. § Videmus conscientiam veluti veterno aut lethargo aliquandis sepultam, &c.—EPISCOPII Institut. Theol. lib. i. cap. 3, p. 11. "We occasionally see a conscience as if it had been a long time buried in a lethargy or deep sleep."—EDIT. || Jacet in coronâ charchesii, id est, galeâ ubi maxima sentitur maris agitatio.—JUN:US in loc. "He lies on the summit of the top-gallant mast; that is, on the very apex, where every agitation of the sea is most severely felt, and the rolling motion is longer vibratory."—EDIT. Or as the Vulgate version, which may serve for a paraphrase, Quasi sopitus gubernator, amisso clavo; id est, usu rationis.—TIRINUS. "Like a pilot who is fast asleep, having lost his rudder, that is, the use of his reason."—EDIT.

be moved. God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see it." He contemns God, and saith in his heart, "Thou wilt not require it." (Psalm x. 4, 5, 11, 13.)* They wink, and then conclude God doth not see them.

2. *Carnal conceits of grace and heaven.*—At the best, human wisdom is their highest guide, their great and supreme oracle. In their mis-shapen apprehensions of their need of mercy, they are willing to be flattered, that it may be had without such severities in religion, † as they are unwilling to undertake. Why should they be wiser than their neighbours? All men are not fools. Men as wise and as learned neither press nor practice such strictness: and do you think they have not a care of their souls? They do not doubt but they shall do as well as the best! Though, poor souls, they know that "wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." (Matt. vii. 13, 14.) Mark that,—“that find it.” He doth not say, ‡ that *enter into it*, but that *find it*. Those that do not walk in the way of holiness, § it is impossible they should ever find it. The gate doth not lead to the way, but the way to the gate. Do not think to get to heaven first, and learn heavenly-mindedness after; yea, heaven must now suffer violence; (Matt. xi. 12;) striving is the condition of entering. (Luke xiii. 24.) || Rouse up, therefore, and shake off your worldly wisdom, ¶ your ignorant self-love, your abuse of mercies, your contempt of God, and your forgetfulness of death and judgment.

“But how shall we do this?”

CURE.

1. The first remedy I shall commend, is *consideration*.—Let the subject of thy consideration be what thou wilt, (only I could wish it may relate to eternity, whither thou art posting,) and I shall not doubt of the success. Let me, for once, insert a relation I heard between the preaching and the transcribing of this sermon:—The father of a prodigal left

* *Justitiam, ut ille apud Platonem Thrasy-machus, appellat γερναίαν εὐθειας, elegantem stultitiam.* They sleep, and then aiunt deum dormire aut oblitum esse eorum qua fiant in terris, &c.—AUGUSTINI STEUCHI EUGUBINI *Enarratio in loc.* “They resemble that Thrasy-machus in Plato, who calls justice only *elegant folly* or *genteel inanity*. They sleep, and then assert that God is asleep, or that he is forgetful of those things which are done in the earth,” &c.—EDIT. † *Quam minutatim et pedetentim declinet a Deo: et ita in profundum descendat, ut super eam urgens puteus os suum, mundi prosperitas alludit et illudit, cum laudatur peccator in desideriis animæ suæ, cum peccantium fuvor, et peccare nolentium pavor, nolens et dolens, arridet ei, &c.*—BERNARDUS, *Liber De Conscientiâ*, p. 1109. “How gradually, as if step by step, does the soul of man decline from God! and he plunges into the abyss before him; so that, like a well brim full, pressing upon his lips and offering its waters for his ready acceptance, the prosperity of this world becomes pleasantly allusory, but deceptive and illusory; while the sinner is flattered when gratifying the desires of his heart, and while he derives as much satisfaction from the applause of his companions in iniquity, as from the dread, mingled with regret, which his conduct produces, and which is reluctantly manifested by those who refuse to transgress.”—EDIT. ‡ *Non dicit, Pauci ingrediuntur, quod difficillimum; sed, Pauci veniunt.*—PAREUS in *loc.* § *Fide Authorem imperfecti operis Homil. xviii. p. 72.* || *Fide STELLAM in loc.* ¶ See ABERNETHY’S “*Physic for the Soul*,” c. vii. p. 92, &c.

it, as his death-bed charge unto his only son, to spend a quarter of an hour every day in retired thinking; but left him at liberty to think of what he would; [he] only engaged him to spend a quarter of an hour in thinking. The son, having this liberty to please himself in the subject, sets himself to the performance of his promise. His thoughts one day recall his past pleasures, another contrive his future delights; but at length his thoughts became inquisitive,—what might be his father's end in proposing this task? He thought his father was a wise and good man; therefore, surely, he intended and hoped that he would some time or other think of religion. When this leavened his thoughts, they multiplied abundantly, neither could he contain them in so short a confinement, but was that night sleepless, and afterwards restless, till he became seriously religious. O that I could persuade you to go and do likewise!

2. *Observe what means thou shunnest as too startling, and make use of them for thy awakening.*—This, with the blessing of God, will savingly awaken thee. O how often hath thy conscience whimpered, and thou hast hushed it to sleep again! What doth thy sleepy conscience most dread? an awakening ministry? So far cross thy conscience as to attend no other. Instead of lullaby notions, improve cutting convictions. (Titus i. 13.)*

II. THE SEARED CONSCIENCE.

II. *The second kind of conscience proposed is the seared conscience.*—Such is theirs who have given up their names to Christ, but lift up their heel against him; of which the apostle speaks: “Having their consciences seared with an hot iron,” (1 Tim. iv. 2,) that is, having a corrupt and putrefied conscience, † that have the devil's brand-mark upon it. ‡ Plainly, a seared conscience is a rotten, § venomous, ulcerate, pestilent, filthy, gangrenate conscience; that doth not perform any of its offices, but is even past feeling; that is (or might have been) in Christ's Hospital, under cure of soul-distempers; but, through indulging of sin, not being able to endure the sharp convictions, bitter reproofs, and close exhorta-

* *Εαυτεσ ανωραυεσ, Redarguito pracise.*—BEZA. *Generalis cujusdam religioni ordinis, qui ut suos hortaretur, ne minus conscientie studerent quàm scientie, dixit majores suos se vitamque suam direxisse* CONSCI-ENTIA: nunc autem abbreviatum videri verbum istud, ac mutilatum primò syllabâ, viz., succedente illi SCI-ENTIA; verendum deinceps ne et hoc verbum mutiletur primò syllabâ, adeoque relinquatur sola ENTIA rationis, circa quæ versatur sæpè speculativa tantum scientia, ac nuda speculationes.—BRESSERUS *De Conscientiâ*, lib. i. cap. 7, sect. 57, p. 28. “Rebuke or convince them with keenness.” “The General of a certain religious Order, with the intent to urge those under his care to devote as much attention in their studies to CONSCIENCE as to SCIENCE, said, ‘Our ancestors directed themselves and their lives by CON-SCIENCE. But, in these our days, that good word seems to have suffered abbreviation, and to be deprived of its first syllable, so that only SCIENCE is its successor. My great fear now is, that hereafter this abbreviated word should also lose its first syllable, and nothing remain of it but ENCE or ENTIA, the entity or existence of reason, upon which much scientific conjecture, and many naked speculations, are often expended.’”—EDIT. † *Corruptam et putrefactam atque putredinem cum fatore semper emittentem.*—ANSELMUS *in loc.* “A conscience corrupted, and putrefied, always emitting, with a fetid stench, its offensive corruption.”—EDIT. ‡ *Cauterio diaboli penetratam esse, ut indebiliter eandem retineant conscientiam, &c.*—CAJETANUS *in loc.* “A conscience characterized with the devil's brand, the mark of which has penetrated so deeply as to enable them indelibly to retain the same conscience.”—EDIT. § ABERNETHY, *ibid.* cap. viii. p. 105.

of the word, he deadens his conscience unto an insensible senselessness. (Jer. xlv. 16, &c.) To this rank of profligate sinners, I refer all those that frequent, as well as those that reject, ordinances; that make a profession, as well as those that hate the profession, of religion; yet have a reserve of sin, which they will not part with. Searing (you know) is of that part which needs cure.

CAUSE.

The CAUSES of a seared conscience are, *conscience-wasting sins on man's part procuring it, and divine withdrawing from the sinner on God's part inflicting it.*—As there are some bodily diseases that follow bodily wickedness,* so this soul-disease is the peculiar punishment of sins against knowledge. Methinks that text is dreadful: “As they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind,” &c. (Rom. i. 28; see also verses 21, 24, 26.) It is observable, the oftener they rebelled against the light, the more severely God punished them, with that (which they counted) impunity,† namely, he gave them up to their swing,‡ 1. Of natural lust, 2. Unnatural, and, 3. Of all unrighteousness. Custom of sinning takes away conscience of sinning.

CURE.

For cure: *Seriously set yourselves against those peculiar ways of sinning which have brought you to this.*—You know them. There is not any one that hath a seared conscience, but he doth (or easily may) know how it came so. Your work (in some respect) is not so large as in [the] case of the sleepy conscience; it is but one or two sorts of sins that are eminently mischievous to your souls in this case. Though a seared conscience is worse than a sleepy conscience, yet as it is more easily discernible, so it is but reasonable you should more speedily and vigorously set upon the cure. Take heed of accounting any sin small,§ lest at last you account not any sin great. I will commend one text to you, and close this particular: “In thy filthiness is lewdness;

* *Morbus venereus.* † *Ecce quotiens vindicat Deus, et ex eadem vindictâ plura et graviora peccata consurgunt.*—BEDA in loc. “Behold how frequently God takes vengeance! and from the very punishment arise sins more in number and yet more grievous.”—EDIT.
‡ *Tradidit Deus, subtractione gratiæ, traditione in potestatem Satanz, eis adonimpor vovv, in mentem reprobam, activè et passivè intelligendo, &c.* And all this to be such a recompense of their error, *ip ebes, quam oportuit, id est, quam ex ordine justitiæ suæ Deus ipsis debeat retribuere.*—PAREUS in loc. “By the withdrawal of grace, and by delivering them unto the power of Satan, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, which is to be understood both actively and passively, &c. And all this to be such a recompense of their error as was fitting and necessary; that is, such as God ought, in the order of his justice, retributively to inflict upon them.”—EDIT.
§ *Cum cæperit quis dicere, Quid est si verbulum hoc unicum locutus fuero? Est hoc, Quid id, quid illud? sensim incipit quis pedetentim in majora et graviora prolabi, et sic deinceps in perfectam insensibilitatem decidit. Curate levia, quoad levia sunt: et virtutes et peccata a parvis incipiunt, &c.*—DOROTHEUS in *Bibliothecâ Patrum*, tom. iv. p. 769. “When a man once begins to inquire, ‘What harm have I done in uttering this single little word?’ he will soon ask, ‘Of what consequence is this thing or the other?’ Every one who acts thus, has gradually and almost imperceptibly commenced a downward course, from what he deemed to be small and trivial matters, towards those which are still greater and more momentous; and thus, at length, he falls into a state of perfect insensibility. Be careful about small things, in reference to their being but small: for both virtues and vices have their different sources in things that are little,” &c.—EDIT.

because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee. I the Lord have spoken it: it shall come to pass, and I will do it; I will not go back, neither will I spare, neither will I repent," &c. (Ezek. xxiv. 13, 14.) Sirs, God hath been your Physician, hath used variety of remedies.* If nothing will prevail, but you will industriously singe your consciences to make them *senseless*, as sure as God is true he will make you *sensible* of your sin by everlasting burnings.†

I forbear enlargement, because in the following Cases about *the mortification of beloved lusts*, about *relapses*, and *how to check the first risings of sin*, you will have suitable directions to make your brawny consciences tender. I proceed therefore to those kinds of consciences none else will ‡ speak to; namely,

III. THE ERRING CONSCIENCE.

III. *An erring conscience is that which judgeth otherwise than the thing is.* §—Conscience is sometimes deceived through ignorance of what is right, || by apprehending a false rule for a true, an error for the will of God: sometimes, through ignorance of the fact, by misapplying a right rule to a wrong action. Conscience, evil informed, takes human traditions and false doctrines, proposed under the show of Divine authority, to be the will of God. A famous instance you have of this in Jeroboam's case: ¶ He fears that if the people should go up to sacrifice at Jerusalem, then he should lose his kingdom; this puts him upon inquiry, whether there should not be a double sanctuary, as well as a double kingdom. Hereupon a council is called; flattering prophets come; they have dreams and visions, worthy of their affections, suitable to their purpose. A decree is made, as if it declared: "It is sufficient that you have *hitherto* gone up to Jerusalem. *Now* behold your gods! These calves are like the cherubims of the sanctuary, which are as ministering spirits before the face of God." (That these calves had the shape of the cherubims, you may gather by comparing of scriptures: that which is called the face of an ox in one place, Ezek. i. 10, is called the face of a cherub in the other, Ezek. x. 14; i. 7.) This seems to the people a satisfying warrant for them readily to follow the king's commandment. (Hosca v. 11.) I might add another instance, of the good old prophet, who was plausibly seduced to his bodily destruction. (1 Kings xiii. 8, 18, 19, 24, 26.) Now it is a great question (among the papists especially) whether and how far an erring conscience binds? One of their most learned casuists that I meet with peremptorily determines, that "the law of an erring conscience is not dispensable by God himself." **

* *Instor medici, qui putridis non parcat carnibus. Non parcat, ut parcat: crudelis est, ut misereatur.*—HIERONYMUS *in loc.* "He resembles a physician, who, in trying to effect a cure, evinces no tenderness toward the putrid flesh: he does not spare it, that he may spare his patient: he is cruel, in order that he may show mercy."—EDIT. † "Till I have caused my fury to rest"—That is, *Non habet quod amplius faciat, &c.*—SANCTIUS *in loc.* "God has nothing more which He can do for him."—EDIT. ‡ In all editions except the first, the pronoun I is improperly inserted here.—EDIT. § ANESIUS *De Conscientiâ*, lib. 1. cap. iv. p. 8. ¶ DICKSON'S *Therapeutica Sacra*, lib. 1. cap. 1. sect. 18, p. 3. ¶ BERGII *Præf. Cath.* dissert. iii. sect. xxvii. p. 244. ** *Ne quidem a Deo, multò minus ab homine.*—BRESSERUS *De Conscientiâ*, lib. v. cap. xxii. sect. ccxii. p. 555.

Others, that "it is good to follow an erring conscience, when it hath the credit of a good conscience, and is agreeable to reason." * Others, that "a right and an erroneous conscience both bind, though in a different respect; †—a right conscience, as it is conformable to the law of God; —an erring conscience, as it is thought to be the law of God; a right conscience binds simply, an erroneous upon a supposition." Some distinguish ignorance into vincibile and invincibile, and say, that "when an erroneous conscience, through invincibile ignorance, judgeth that to be honest which is not so, yet that judgment is the next rule which the will is to follow." ‡ Others distinguish (where all men are not able to discern the difference) between binding and obliging. § But, in short, they generally determine the question in the affirmative; though some grant, that though we must do nothing against a true conscience, yet we must depose an erroneous one, and go contrary to it." || And others, "though we must do nothing against conscience in any case, yet we must not follow conscience in every case." ¶ The plain truth is, error cannot bind us to follow it; ** an erring conscience may so bind, that it may be a sin to go against it; but it can never so bind, as it may be a virtue to follow it. To follow an erring conscience, is for the blind sinner to follow his blind conscience, till both fall into the ditch. †† The violation of conscience is always evil, and the following of an erring conscience is evil; but there is a middle way that is safe and good; namely, the informing of conscience better by God's word, and following of it accordingly.

CAUSES.

The CAUSES of an erring conscience (besides original sin, the effect whereof is blindness in the understanding, and the just judgment of God upon persons for not entertaining, obeying, and loving "the truth as it is in Jesus," besides these, the causes) are reducible to these three heads: ††—

1. *Negligence of learning the will of God, through slothfulness and love of ease, §§ and low esteem of the ways of God.*—I need name but one scripture for both proof and illustration of this particular. "The fool foldeth his hands together, and eateth his own flesh. Better is a handful with quietness, than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit." (Eccles. iv. 5, 6.) As if he said, "He is a fool that puts himself into a posture of idleness, ||| that composeth himself to do nothing, that

* *Ut igitur bonum sit agere secundum conscientiam errantem voluntariè et vitiosè, oportet existimationem conscientie bonam esse, et cum rectè ratione congruentem.*—AZORII *Moral. Instit.* lib. ii. p. 104. † SAYRUS, *Clav. Reg.* lib. i. cap. iv. sec. xiii. p. 8.

‡ *Quando conscientia erronea ex invincibili ignorantia judicat aliquid honestum esse, quod honestum non est, tunc actus voluntatis, qui conformis est tali judicio, bonus et honestus est, etiamsi contingat objectum esse turpe: ita passim theologi; et probatur, quia tunc est conformis suæ regulæ, nam illud judicium est proxima regulæ quam sequi debet voluntas.*—BECANUS, tom. i. *Theol. Schol.* part. ii. tract. i. cap. iv. q. 7, p. 219. § *Neminem obligat, tamen ligat.*—DURANDUS, lib. ii. dist. 39, q. 3, sec. vii. p. 443. || SYLVESTRANUS in *Prim. Lib. Sentent.* p. 239. ¶ *Nihil licet contra conscientiam agere in aliquo casu, nec tamen tenetur quilibet sequi conscientiam suam in quolibet casu.*—GUL. PARIENSIS *De Vitiis et Peccatis*, p. 280.

** HARRIS'S "Works," part iv. p. 28. †† ROBINSON'S "Observations," c. xlvii. p. 246. †† BRESSEBUS, lib. v. cap. xxiii. p. 566, *sparim*. §§ *Discendi negligentia, orta ex pigritia.*—*Ibid.* sect. 317. ||| "English Annotations."

thinks it better to be without good things, than be at some trouble in getting them."*

2. *Pride, whereby a man is ashamed to consult others, and to be taught by them.*†—Those that are sincerely conscientious are not free from a kind of proud modesty, in being shy of making inquiry into practical cases; there is something of pride in their bashfulness to discover their ignorance, in asking of questions for conscience' sake. But those that are ungodly arrogate so much to their own judgment, that (to speak their own boasting) they know as much as any man can teach them. But, as wise as they are, a wiser than they calls them "fools,"‡ (Prov. xxviii. 26,) and their folly misleads them.

3. *Passion, or inordinate affection about that whereof we are ignorant.*§ —This warpeth our consideration; for "he that seeks truth with a bias, will run counter when he comes near it, and [will] not find it, though he come within kenning of it."||

CURE.

You may gather the REMEDIES from the opposites to these three causes of error. 1. Be industriously diligent to know your duty. 2. Be humbly willing to receive instruction. And, 3. Let not your affections outrun your judgment.

But there is one rule I shall commend, which if you will conscientiously improve, you shall never be much hurt by an erring conscience; and I dare appeal to your own consciences that it is your indispensable duty; you *must* use it; and it is so plain and easy, you *may* use it:—

Do what you know, and God will teach you what to do.—Do what you know to be your present duty, and God will acquaint you with your future duty as it comes to be present. Make it your business to avoid known omissions, and God will keep you from feared commissions. This rule is of great moment, and therefore I will charge it upon you by express scripture. "*Shew me thy ways, O Lord;*" that is, those ways wherein I cannot err.¶ "*Teach me thy paths:*" that is, that narrow path which is too commonly unknown,** those commands that are most strict and difficult. "*Lead me in thy truth, and teach me;*" that is, teach me evidently, that I may not be deceived; so teach me, that I may not only know thy will, but do it.†† Here is his prayer. But what grounds hath he to expect audience? "*For thou art the God of my salvation.*" As if he had said, "Thou, Lord, wilt save me, and therefore do not refuse to teach me." "*On thee do I wait all the day;*" (Psalm xxv. 4, 5;) that is, the whole day, and every day.‡‡ Other arguments are couched in the

* PEMBLE *in loc.* † *Pudeat ignorantem alios consulere, et ab eis doceri.*—BRESERUS, *ibid.* ‡ *Qui suo fidit animo stultus est.*—MERCERUS *in loc.* § BRESERUS, *ibid.*, &c. || ARCHBISHOP LAUD, in the "Epistle Dedicatory before the Relation of the Conference." ¶ *Mandata tua ostende, quæ me non permittant errare, &c.*—REMIGIUS *in loc.* ** *Semita dicta quasi semi-via, quia angusto calle dirigitur, nec vulgo nota est, sed occulto itinere ambulatur.*—BRUNO *in loc. in Bibliotheca Patrum, tom. xi. p. 96.* †† It is called *semita*, as if it were *semi-via*, 'only half a road,' because the sole mode of being directed in it is by a little path, not commonly known, and your retired course along it is a kind of concealed journey'—EDIT. ‡‡ REMIGIUS *ubi supra.* §§ ARNOBIUS *in loc.*

following verses, but what answer? In verse 9: "*The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way;*" that is, those that submit their neck to his yoke, those that are not conceited that they can guide themselves better than he can guide them,—he will teach them his ways:* "in necessary, great, and weighty matters they shall not err."† Again: "If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly. He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints. Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path." (Prov. ii. 3—9.) As though he had said, "Be but as diligent to get knowledge as a covetous man is to get money,‡ and God will certainly give you such knowledge of his ways as shall preserve you from error,§ and will teach you how to behave yourselves both towards God and man."|| One scripture more, that, in the evidence of three witnesses, this rule may be established: "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." (John vii. 17.) As if he had said, "Hinder not yourselves from learning truth, through fear of error;¶ for you shall never want the Spirit's guidance, while you practically follow his conduct."**

IV. THE DOUBTING CONSCIENCE.

IV. *A doubting conscience is that which, with much trouble and anxiety, suspends its judgment, not knowing which way to determine.*††—Doubtfulness of conscience is that ambiguity of mind which consists in a standing (or rather in a wavering) balance, neither assenting nor dissent-

* *Non eos qui præcurrere volunt, quasi seipsos melius regere possint, sed eos qui non erigunt cervicem, neque recalcitrant.*—AUGUSTINUS in loc. † *Ejusmodi error nunquam accidit, vel certè non permanet de rebus necessariis, magnis, et gravibus.*—BERGII *Præf. Cathol.* p. 247. ‡ CARTWRIGHT in loc. § *Dominus clypeus erit iis, qui perfectum et omnibus suis numeris constantem contemplationis rationem in hisce reconditis divinisque rebus amplexi sint, quo ab erroribus tuti servantur, &c.*—LEVI BEN GHERSON in loc. "The Lord will be a shield to those who have embraced such an excellent method of contemplation on these recondite and divine subjects, as is perfect and harmonious in all its parts and proportions; and by this shield they shall be preserved in safety from errors."—EDIT. || "English Annotations." ¶ *Quàm perperam et stultè hodie permulti, dum errandi periculum metuunt, hac trepidatione sese impediunt ab omni discendi studio. Si Deo toti in obsequium sinus addicti, spiritum discretionis ab eo nobis datum iri ne dubitemus, qui perperam sit dux ac director, &c.*—CALVINUS in loc. "How preposterously and foolishly do many persons act in these our days, who, while distressing themselves with the fearful peril of wandering into error, by this very trepidation hinder themselves from all desire of learning. If we be devoted in holy obedience to God alone, let us not doubt that he will bestow on us the Spirit of discernment and understanding to be our perpetual Leader and Director."—EDIT. ** GUIL. PARIENSIS: *Qui expressè docet, ubi est invincibilis ignorantia quoad nos, Deus succurret, nisi culpá nostrá ejus opem a nobis avertamus: quæ sententia facit maxime ad providentiam Dei celebrandam.*—DAVENANT. *Determinations*, q. xlv. p. 213. "William of Paris expressly teaches, that 'with respect to ourselves, wherever invincible ignorance exists, there God will come to our succour and relief, unless by our own fault we turn from us his proffered assistance.' This is a sentiment which tends greatly to celebrate and magnify the goodness of God's providence."—EDIT. †† BROCHMANDUS, tom. i. c. iii. q. iii. p. 7.

ing.* To speak strictly, "a doubting conscience is no conscience, but only improperly, as a dead man may be said to be a man." † Conscience is a judgment of something done, or to be done: but now where there is no assent, there is no judgment, but a privation of judgment; and therefore, so far as it may be called a conscience, "it is an evil conscience, at best *troublesomely* evil," ‡ and therefore ought to be deposed. Some term the acting upon a doubting conscience to be "an acting *beside* conscience;" § for they cannot be said to act *according* to conscience, because it is properly none, but equivocally; nor do they act *against* conscience, because conscience permits them to act thus and no otherwise. Those act *with* or *against* conscience, where the judgment of conscience is determined to say, "This is lawful or unlawful;" and he acts *beside* conscience who remains fluctuating and doubting, whether such a thing be lawful or unlawful, and yet doeth or omits it. Now the apostle tells us, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." (Rom. xiv. 23.) By *faith* there, we must understand "that persuasion and security of mind whereby we believe and determine, that such a thing pleaseth or displeaseth God, is lawful or forbidden." It is not spoken of justifying faith, || as if men sinned in eating or not eating, because their sins were or were not pardoned. In short, in all duties that belong to practice, we must be unweariedly diligent to perceive the truth, that doubtfulness may be driven away; for the more certain knowledge we have of those things we do, the more confident we may be in the doing of them, and the more joyful afterwards.

CAUSES.

What therefore is the CAUSE of doubting, that it may be banished ?

The causes of doubting, which I shall speak of briefly, (to say nothing of our ignorance and weakness, ¶) are these two :—

1. *Either want, or equality, of reasons ;** that when we poise and weigh things most impartially, yet we are not able to come to a determination, but the mind is still in suspense.*

2. *Doubts arise from some peculiar reasons.*—General reasons are not sufficient to make a conscientious doubt; there must be intension of mind upon some particular reasons that must be duly weighed, else we may be said to doubt of what we scarce think of. They have not so good as a doubting conscience, (and that is a bad one,) whose doubts lurk in generals; who have only some cloudy notions from without, or foggy mists from within, which they take no due course to clear. Too

* *Conscientia dubia, strictè negativè magisque propriè, nil est aliud quàm ambiguitas, sive suspensio animi constituti in æquilibrio, &c.*—BRESSERUS, lib. iv. c. l. p. 350. † BRESSERUS, *ibid.* sect. v. *Vox DUBIA, conscientiaè addita, sit diminuens seu alienans, haud aliter quàm ens rationis ens dicitur, &c.*—VOETIUS, pars iii. p. 828. ‡ *Si non malitid turpi, saltem tristi.*—VOETIUS, *ibid.* § *Præter conscientiam.*—KONIG *De Conscientiâ, vide pp.* 13, 14.

¶ *Minus ακριβολογοῦσι qui fidem istam explicant de fide justificante et salvificâ, &c.*—KONIG, *ibid.* "Those persons judge with very little accuracy who explain this faith to be justifying and saving faith."—EDIT. ¶ I speak of practical doubts; for of speculative, that proverbial saying of Æneas Silvius is undeniably true, *Cui plura nosse datum est, cum majora sequi dubia.*—PLATINA *De Vitâ Pontif. Pii II.*, p. 308.

"That man who enjoys the privilege of knowing more than others, is liable to entertain greater doubts."—EDIT. ** VOETII *Selecta Disputationes*, pars iii. p. 828.

many deal with their doubts, as cripples with their sores, which might easily be healed, but they make them a *begging* argument. So the formal hypocrites have always their doubts and fears (like the lapwing's cry, far enough from her nest) about things general, or of lesser moment, which they might easily answer, and employ themselves in things more profitable. Shall I tell you how? You cannot expect I should resolve the almost infinite particulars of doubtful cases; * but I will propose two remedies, which, with the blessing of God upon the conscientious improvement, will give you light for smoke, in things both sacred and civil:—

CURE.

1. *About lesser matters, this rule commonly holds good; namely, in things doubtful, take the safest course.*†—In things doubtful, ordinarily one way is clear; take that. For example: I question whether such a recreation be lawful; but I am sure it is not unlawful to let it alone; therefore, to prevent the after-reckonings of conscience, I will not meddle with it. But this rule will not reach all cases:‡ therefore,

2. *Bring the case to a point, wherein the stress of your doubt lies.*—But, (1.) Be sure it be a case of conscience, not of interest or prejudice; but a case of conscience, such as you are unreservedly willing to be resolved in, that you can in prayer (as it were) bring God a blank to write what he pleaseth. And, (2.) Pare off all those whibbling § demurs, and carnal reasonings, which may puzzle, but can never satisfy you. These things premised, (3.) Write down your case as nakedly as you can, with the grounds of your hesitation. In your writing, make two columns; on the one side write those reasons you judge cogent FOR—on the other side the reasons you judge of moment AGAINST—that whereof you doubt. Compare these together, and poise them impartially: you will find that your perplexed thoughts have another aspect when written than when floating, and that your own ink will ordinarily kill this tetter; plainly, yourselves will be able to resolve your own doubts: but if not, this will ripen the boil, where it doth not break and heal it; you will be ready for advice.¶ In your consulting of others, do it with expressions equivalent to those of the Jews to *Jeremy*, but with more sincere affections: “Pray for us unto the Lord thy God: that the Lord thy God may show us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing that we may do. The Lord be a true and faithful witness between us,¶¶ if we

* *Quot modis possit accidere conscientia dubia? Resp. Tot modis posse, quot sunt genera questionum.*—AZORII *Institut. Moral.* lib. ii. c. xviii. p. 135. “QUESTION. In how many ways can a doubtful conscience occur? ANSWER. It is possible in as many modes as there are kinds of questions.”—EDIT. † *In dubio practico eligenda est via tutior ex præcepto scilicet naturali. Est certa et reverè communis.*—BRESSERUS, *ibid.*, lib. iv. c. vi. sect. xlv. p. 371. ‡ “It is generally taken to be safest to take that way, (in things controverted,) wherein differing parties agree; but that it is not always a good rule.” See ARCHBISHOP LAUD’S “Conference,” p. 288, *et seqq.* *In multis particularibus non tenetur homo partem tutiorem sequi.*—SAYRUS, *Clav. Reg.* lib. i. c. xiii. sect. ix. p. 31. “In many particulars, a man is not bound to follow that part which is the safest”—EDIT. § An old English word, in meaning tantamount to *whiffling*, “trifling.”—EDIT. ¶ *Vide SAYRI Clav. Reg. ibidem*, sect. vi. vii.

¶ *Expressius est juramentum quo dicitur, Testis est Deus, quàm quo dicitur, Juro; quia illud explicat rationem juramenti, &c.*—ESTIUS *in loc.* “That form of swearing which says, *God is witness*, is much clearer and more explicit than the one of simple assertion, *I swear*; because the former explains the reason of the oath,” &c.—EDIT.

do not even according to all things, for the which the Lord thy God shall send thee to us. Whether it be good or whether it be evil," (that is, seem it never so disadvantageous or dangerous to us,) "we will obey the voice of the Lord our God; to whom we send thee: that it may be well with us, when we obey the voice of the Lord our God." (Jer. xlii. 2, 3, 5, 6.) But because we have none [who] can give infallible decision, therefore refer your case to those that are likely to give a different resolution; and thereby you will see how much is to be allowed to human passion. Request them to write the grounds of their determination; then compare these together, especially the scriptures and reasons. If you cannot out of these collect a satisfying resolution, yet the case will be brought into a narrower compass; be unwearied therefore to take the same course again; apply yourselves to the same persons, or others. One case thus thoroughly resolved, will be singularly useful for the scattering of all future doubts in all other cases. And though this may prove a business of time, yet suspend your acting till you are satisfied.* Though the duty in question be of greatest moment, yet while you can approve your heart unto God that it is neither love of sin nor ease, it is neither slighting of Christ nor duty, but a restless inquisitiveness to know God's mind in the case, your suspense (at the worst) will be reckoned among your infirmities, and be compassionately overlooked. Can there be any thing of greater moment, than to doubt of Christ's resurrection? Yet while Thomas doubted merely for want of evidence, Christ graciously condescends in a non-such manner to give him satisfaction. (John xx. 25, 27.) To conclude this: "Whereto ye have already attained, walk" by rule exactly; "and if in any thing you be" doubtfully "minded, God shall reveal even this unto you." (Phil. iii. 15, 16.)

V. THE SCRUPULOUS CONSCIENCE.

V. *A scrupulous conscience is that which doth determine a thing to be lawful, yet scarcely to be done, lest it should be unlawful.*—There is some anxiety, reluctancy, and fear in the determination.† A scruple in the mind is as gravel in the shoe,‡—it vexeth the conscience, as that hurts the foot. A scruple is a hovering kind of fearfulness, arising from light arguments that hinder or disturb the soul in performances of duties.§

* *Contra legem charitatis in Deum facit is qui, cum dubium animum habeat, nihilominus operatur. Actus, ad sui bonitatem, rectam cognitionem rei agenda requirit et postulat.*—AZORII *Instit. Moral.* lib. ii. c. xviii. p. 135. "That man acts contrary to the law of charity (or love) toward God, who, while his mind is held in doubt and suspense, ventures nevertheless to enter upon any performance. In order to its purity and goodness, an action requires and demands, from him who does it, a correct knowledge of that which is to be performed."—EDIT.

† *Statuit rem aliquam esse licitam, sed ideò in effectum minus deducendam, quia scrupulus aliquis, qui ansiam reddat conscientiam, ne forsitan res ista sit illicita.*—KONIG *De Conscientiâ*, p. 14. ‡ *Scrupulus, diminutivum a SCRUPUS, lapillus est qui in calceo. Hinc metaphoricè significat similem afflictionem animæ seu conscientie.* (1 Sam. xxv. 31.) *Non eris in scrupulum cordis, &c.*—BRESSERUS *De Conscientiâ*, lib. vi. c. i. p. 562. "The meaning of *scruple*, a diminutive of the Latin *scrupus*, is 'a very small stone,' or piece of gravel, that is in the shoe. Hence its metaphorical use is to signify an affliction of the mind or conscience, having some similarity to the pain endured by a man who walks with gravel between the sole of his sandal and his foot. Thus, in 1 Sam. xxv. 31, 'This shall be no grief to thee, nor offence of heart to my lord,' that is, There shall be no pain arising from an upbraiding conscience," &c.—EDIT. § AMESBUS, *ibidem*, p. 16.

The difference between a doubting conscience and a scrupulous conscience, is this: A doubting conscience assents to neither part of the question; a scrupulous conscience consents, but with some vexation.

CAUSES.

I shall name but two CAUSES, forbearing to mention our ignorance and pride, which have a great influence upon all kinds of error, doubts, and scruples.

1. The first cause of scrupulousness is *natural*;* namely, a cold complexion, which is always timorous. Those that are phlegmatic and melancholy are naturally fearful; and the reason is, that, through the defect of natural heat, the spirits about the heart are as it were congealed, and the heart itself is straitened; whence, by way of sympathy, the imagination hath sad apprehensions of things, and such persons are pusillanimous and fearful.

2. The second and the chief cause is *temptations*.—Satan, if he cannot keep the heart a secure prisoner, he will do his utmost to overwhelm it with fears and jealousies; and he suits his temptations according to our temper.† He doth not tempt the riotous with rewards, nor the glutton to the glory of abstinence. He doth not tempt the coward to strive for victories, nor the passionate to fearfulness. He doth not tempt the melancholy to security, nor the phlegmatic to great achievements. A due consideration therefore of our *natural* temper would mend our spiritual.

CURE.

The first REMEDY I shall commend to you is this, namely: 1. *Be not discouraged with your scruples*.—Pray, keep off from the other extreme, do not indulge them: they naturally tend to much spiritual damage. (1.) They are occasions of sin. (2.) They render the ways of God more strait, horrid, and impossible. (3.) They retard the work of grace. (4.) They hinder cheerfulness in the service of God. (5.) They quench the Spirit. (6.) They unfit us for any duty. These may all serve for arguments to strive against them. But yet, be not discouraged; for God is pleased through overpowering grace to make good use of them: (1.) To further mortification. (2.) To restrain us from worldly vanities. (3.) To abate pride, and promote humility. (4.) To make us more

* *Scrupulus vel melancholiâ vel δυσωνία enatus*.—KONIG *De Conscientiâ*, p. 15. *Item ex aegritudine et infirmitate, ex nonnullis causis quæ cerebrum exsiccant, ut sunt jejunium, vigilia, &c.*—SAYRII *Clav. Reg.* lib. i. c. xiv. p. 42. "A scruple arises either from melancholy or timidity." "It also has its origin in sickness and weakness, from some causes which have a tendency to dry up the brain, such as fasting, watching," &c.—EDIT. † *Singulis hominibus vitiis convenientibus insidiatur; neque enim faciliè captivaret, si aut luxuriosis præmia, aut avaris scorta proponeret; si aut voraces de abstinentiâ gloriâ, aut abstinentes de gulæ imbecillitate pulsaret: ergo in tentationis ardore callidè singulis insidiosos vicinos moribus laqueos abscondit*.—GREGORII *Mor.* lib. xxix. c. xiv. p. 161. b. "Around every man he lays an ambuscade of such vices as are agreeable and convenient to his propensities. For he would have little success, and would take but few captives, if he either proposed rich and munificent rewards to those whose delight is in luxury and riot, or if he hoped to allure the avaricious with the offer of fornication; if he either assailed gluttons with motives founded on the glory of abstinence, or the abstemious with the notorious imbecility which is consequent upon the immoderate indulgence of appetite. In the heat of temptation, therefore, craftily lying in wait for every man, he places along his path such gins and toils for the feet as are nearest and most agreeable to the existing habits and manners of each individual."—EDIT.

watchful. (5.) To make us strive to be more spiritual. (6.) To (little less than) force us to live more upon Christ. But you must take the other rule, if you would have these benefits.

2. *Do what possibly you can to get rid of your scruples : * but if you cannot get rid of them, act against them.*—It is not only lawful but necessary to go against a scrupulous conscience, or you will never have either grace or peace. Should a Christian forbear praying, or receiving the sacrament, every time his scrupulous conscience tells him, he had better wholly omit the duty, than perform it in such a manner; you would soon find, to your sorrow, the mischief of your scruples; but grace will not leave him to his scrupulous humour. Be resolute therefore, and tell the devil, that as you do not perform your duty at his command, so neither will you omit it at his bidding. Do by religious duties, as they that are afraid to go by water, or to go over a narrow bridge,—they cease to fear when they have gone often over: so, by the performance of duties, your scrupulous fears will vanish. Act against your scruples, (1.) Positively; by disputing them down, and opposing their reasons. (2.) Negatively; by slighting of them, and not hearkening to them. In short, in all necessary known duties, always do what you can, when you cannot do what you would.

VI. THE TREMBLING CONSCIENCE.

VI. *The trembling conscience is that which is disquieted † and distressed with the apprehended hazard of the soul's condition, that doth nothing but accuse, and condemn, and affright the soul.*—This, of any, needs least enlargement; for every one that feels it, is rhetorical enough in expressing it.

CAUSE.

There is a twin CAUSE of a trembling conscience; namely, sense of sin, (Psalm li. 3; xl. 12,) and fear of wrath. (Psalm xxxviii. 2—8; lxxxviii. 3, &c.) “Never sin like mine! never heart like mine! never case like mine!” Such are the constant complaints of a troubled spirit. I meddle not now with that horror of conscience that follows profligate wretches; † I shall speak something of it toward the close, nothing now.

CURE.

For CURE, I can give but hints. Never keep the devil's counsel. Break through all carnal reasonings, to acquaint yourselves with some faithful spiritual physician, or experienced Christian, that may show you the methods of divine grace, and what others have successfully done that have been just in your condition. (1 Cor. x. 13.) This premised,—

* *Vide* BRESSERUS, lib. vi. c. ii—v. † Dorotheus compares our consciences to those pits that Abraham digged, and the Philistines stopped them with earth. (Gen. xxvi. 15.) *Ob peccatum ut in aquâ cæcosâ et turbidâ, nemo potest in eâ vultum suum contemplari.*—DOROTHEUS in *Biblioth. Patrum*, tom. iv. p. 769. “As no one can contemplate his own countenance in water which is muddy and turbid, so no one can see himself aright if his conscience be obscured by sin.”—EDIT. † *Nemo a se et extra se curret: nullus sui asylum habet.*—JOHAN. EUSEB. NIEREMBERGIUS *De Arte Vol.* lib. ii. p. 158. “No one runs from himself and beyond himself. No man has a sanctuary in which he may be screened from himself.”—EDIT.

1. *Notwithstanding (yea, in the midst of) your saddest complaints, bless God for an awakened conscience, while there is hope of cure.*—It is a good rule: “Be not too quick in administering comforts;” but we cannot be too quick in provoking to thankfulness. (Read 1 Thess. v. 18, with the verses next before and after.) If you can at present be thankful that you are out of hell, you shall ere long be thankful for assurance of heaven. This rule may seem strange; but, upon experience, its practice will discover its excellency.

2. *Observe, it is God’s usual method to bring the soul, through these perplexities, to the most solid spiritual peace.*—Augustine excellently expresseth his spiritual conflict, how God followed him with severe mercy, till he made him instant for thorough holiness. God kept him trembling, that he might leave dallying in soul-concernments.* Believe it, Christian, God is now storing thee with experiences, which will be a useful treasury throughout thy life. Therefore,

3. *Do but hold on in the vigorous use of all means of grace, (1 Cor. xv. 58,)† and reckon God’s keeping thee from turning thy back upon his ways when thou hast no comfort in them, the secret supports he gives which thou takest no notice of; count these for evidences, that the Spirit is at work in thy heart; and for pledges, that he will perfect his own work.*—For instance: Count thy growing importunity in prayer, or sorrowful complaint for the want of it, a gracious answer of that prayer which thou thinkest is disregarded. Count thy watching for a word to direct and support thee, a notable efficacy of that word which thou countest doeth thee no good. Count thy restless dissatisfaction with every thing on this side God, to be a love-token from God, to assure thee that God will be thy satisfying portion; and, in the interim, ask those well-grown Christians that are now in the spiritually-sensible embraces of

* *Instabas tu in occultis meis, Domine, severè misericordiâ, flagella ingeminans timoris et pudoris, ne rursus cessarem. Dicebam enim apud me intus: Ecce modò fiat! modò fiat! Et cum verbo jam ibam in placitum; jam penè faciebam et non faciebam, &c. Sentiebam me ab iniquitatibus teneri, et jactabam voces miserabiles: Quamdiu, quamdiu cras et cras? quare non modò, quare non hac horâ, finis turpitudinis meæ?—AUGUSTINI Confessiones, lib. viii. c. xi. xii. “Thou, O Lord, didst urgently pursue me, in my hidden parts, with thy severe mercy, brandishing thy whip, and repeating the strokes of both fear and shame, lest I should once more become a loiterer. For I spoke inwardly to myself, thus: ‘Behold, let it [my deliverance] be effected just now! let it be forthwith effected!’ And as soon as I had pronounced the words, I began to yield compliance with the determination; already I almost obtained my wishes, and yet did not actually obtain them,” &c. “I felt that I was fast bound with the fetters of iniquity, and, through misery, I raised to thee this piteous cry: ‘How long, O how long shall it be but to-morrow and to-morrow? Why should there not now, why not in this very hour, be an end of my guilt and turpitude?’”—EDIT. † *Nihil tibi utilius fore scias, quàm ut cum profundâ quadam ac forti resignatione teipsum Deo humiliter resignes in omnibus, quæ tibi evenerint. Sive dulcia ea fuerint, sive amara, sive delectent, sive crucient, ita ut dicere possis: O Deus adorande, etiamsi in hac vitâ istâque pressurâ ad extremum usque judicii diem permanendum mihi foret, te tamen haudquaquam deserere vellem, sed constanter perpetuòque tibi adhærerem, &c.—THAULERUS in Historiâ Vitæ, p. 16. “Know thou, that no course can be more useful for thee than that of humbly resigning thyself to God in all things which may befall thee; doing this with a resignation which may be at once profound and courageous; whether such occurrences be pleasant or disagreeable to thee, whether they afford delight or impart torture: so that, under all these circumstances, thou mayest be able to avow: O adorable Lord God! though I might be doomed to remain in this life, and under the existing pressure of my condition, until the day of judgment, yet would I not on any account desert thee, but I would constantly and perpetually cleave to thee,” &c.—EDIT.**

Divine love, whether they are not glad that God formerly took that course with them, which he now takes with thee, to bring them to these joys. Be encouraged therefore; though thou hast a sorrowful seed-time, thou shalt have a joyful harvest. (Psalm cxxvi. 5, 6.)

Thus having spoken of those kinds of conscience that are either evil or troublesome, and how to cure them; I now come to those desirable kinds of conscience, that, next to Deity and heavenly glory, admit no hyperbole in their commendation; namely, *the good HONEST conscience*, and *the good PEACEABLE conscience*, and how to obtain them.

VII. THE GOOD HONEST CONSCIENCE.

VII. *That conscience is good, in respect of its INTEGRITY, which gives a right judgment of every thing according to the word of God.*—I grant, that the law of nature binds, (Rom. ii. 14,) ecclesiastical laws bind, (Matt. xxiii. 2, 3,) and political laws bind; (Rom. xiii. 5;) but “the word of God is the principal rule,* which precisely binds the conscience in regard of its Author.” “There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy.” (James iv. 12.) “Fear not them which kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Matt. x. 28.)

VIII. THE GOOD QUIET CONSCIENCE.

VIII. *That conscience is a good PEACEABLE conscience that excuseth, absolveth, and comforteth as it ought.* (1 Cor. iv. 4; Heb. x. 2; 2 Cor. i. 12.)—That conscience that is pacified by the blood of Christ, (Heb. ix. 14,) that doth, as Moulin† relates of a dying man, to whom some say the devil appeared, and showed him a parchment, that was very long, wherein was written, on every side, the sins of the poor sick man, which were many in number; and that there were also written the idle words he had spoken, which made up three quarters of the words that he had spoken in his life, and his actions digested according to the commandments: whereupon Satan said, “Seest thou? behold thy virtues! see here what thine examination shall be!” Whereunto the poor sinner answered: “It is true, Satan; but thou hast not set down all; for thou shouldest have added, and set down here below, *The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all our sins*; and this also should not have been forgotten, *That whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life!*” But how shall we get such consciences? Christians, be but persuaded to practise these (or such) directions, and your consciences will certainly be right, and seasonably be comfortable:—

1. *Take heed of every sin,* (2 Cor. viii. 21,) *count no sin small.* (Matt. v. 21, 22, 27, 28.)—Screw up your obedience to every command to the highest. (Matt. xxii. 37, 38.) Ferret out every sin to the most secret corruption. (Rom. vii. 7.) When you have set your watch against the first risings of sin, beware of the borders of sin, shun the very appearance of evil. (1 Thess. v. 22.) Venture not upon occasions or

* *Norma principalissima*, &c.—KONIG, pp. 3, 4.

† MOULIN, “The Comfort of a Communicant,” p. 37.

temptations to sin; (Prov. iv. 15, 27;)* those that dare venture upon occasions, as children upon the ice, (Prov. vii. 8; Num. xxv. 2,) shall find there is always danger, never any good. Morality itself will teach you this lesson,—to keep clear of evil, if ever you would either be good, or enjoy it.† But seeing as, on the one hand, there cannot be truth of grace, and truce with sin; so, on the other hand, while grace is imperfect, sin will have (and makes us feel it hath) a being. “There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not.” (Eccles. vii. 20.) Therefore,

2. *Forthwith set upon the healing duty of repentance; and, upon every slip into sin, renew it, speedily renew it.* ‡—O that I could snatch you out of your state of impenitency, and persuade you to daily actual repentance! To those that are resolved to delay their repentance, I have sometimes given counsel suitable to such resolutions; namely, “The next sickness that seizeth upon you, chide it away, tell your disease you cannot awhile to be sick; say to it as Felix to Paul,|| ‘Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season I will call for thee.’ (Acts xxiv. 25.) If death summon thee, tell it, you will not obey its summons, you have other business to do than to die; you have estates unsettled, and children unprovided for; and you would repent too before you die, but you cannot yet awhile. If this will not serve, but die you must, charge your souls, before they go out of your bodies, not to come near the prison of impenitent persons; charge your friends to lock up your bodies so safe, or bury them so deep, that all the angels in heaven may not be able to drag them to judgment.” But, alas, my brethren! do you not think this wild counsel? and well you may. Yet unless you could do something equivalent to what this counsel amounts to, you are mad to defer your repentance. What! cannot I keep pain from my body, nor the use of reason in my soul, one minute? and shall I continue in my impenitency, that will damn me the very moment of my death? I beseech you, therefore, for your own souls’ sake,—that you may not be guilty of the worst self-murder, that is, soul-murder,—speedily set upon repentance. And those of you that have repented, let your repentance daily supplant sin, by taking it by the heel certainly to lame it, though you cannot take it by the head utterly to kill it. Though we cannot be innocent,¶ let us be penitent,

* *Facile agitur quod libenter auditur.*—BERNARDUS *de Interiore Domo*, p. 1082. “We perform that readily to which we give willing audience.”—EDIT. † Ουτε οικια πολυτελης, ουτε χρυσιου πληθος, ουτε αξιωμα γενους, ουτε μεγαθος αρχης, ου λογον χαρις, ου δεινοτης, ευδιαν παρεχει βιη και γαληνην τωσ αυτην, οσην ψυχη καθαρευουσα πραγματος και βουλευματος ποιηρων, &c.—PLUTARCHUS *Περι Ευθυμιας*, p. 417. “Neither rich furniture and movables, abundance of gold, a descent from an illustrious family, nor greatness of authority, not eloquence and all the charms of forcible speech, can communicate to human life such calmness and serenity as that which arises from a mind free from guilt, and preserved untainted not only from actions, but also from purposes, that are wicked.”—MORGAN’S Translation of Plutarch’s treatise *On Tranquillity of Mind*, altered. ‡ *Peccator omnium notarium cum sim, nec ulli rei nisi penitentiae natus.*—TERTULLIANUS *De Penitentia*, cap. xii. p. 121. “Since I am actually a sinner under the brand of every transgression, I am born solely for the exercise of repentance.”—EDIT. § In the sense of “I am not able for a time to find leisure for being sick.” *Awhile* in this construction admits of a verbal meaning.—EDIT. || In all preceding editions, this clause reads most erroneously, “As Paul to Felix.”—EDIT. ¶ Σοφια πρωτη, βιος επαινετος, και Θεω κεκαθαρμενος, η καθαιρομενος, &c. Μεγα κακιας φαρμακον, φυγη του πταισματος.—GREGORIUS NAZIANZENSIS, tom. i. orat. xv. pp. 225, 236. “The chief part of wisdom is a praiseworthy life, that God has purified, and that remains free from defilement. This is the grand remedy for wickedness, the expeller of error.”—EDIT.

and be very careful never to return to sins repented of.* That you may be serious in both these,

3. *Compose thyself to live as under God's eye, live as in the more than sensible presence of the jealous God.*—Remember, all things are naked and bare before him; you cannot deceive him, for he is Infinite Wisdom; you cannot fly from him, for he is every where; you cannot bribe him, for he is Righteousness itself. Keep, therefore, fresh apprehensions of God in your thoughts; speak, as knowing God hears you; walk, as knowing God is nearer to you than you are to yourselves.† “The Lord is with you, while you are with him:” (2 Chron. xv. 2:) that is, You shall enjoy his favourable presence, while you live in his awful presence. There is one Psalm, which it were well if Christians would do by it, as Pythagoras by his Golden Precepts,—Every morning and evening repeat it.‡ It is David's appeal of a good conscience unto God,§ against the malicious suspicions and calumnies of men, in Psalm cxxxix. (Do you but thus presentiate || God unto yourselves, and God will attest your integrity.) Verse 1. *O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me*—As though he had said, “O Lord, thou art the heart-searching God, who perfectly knows all the thoughts, counsels, studies, endeavours, and actions of all men, and therefore mine.” Verse 2. *Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine up-rising, thou understandest my thought afar off*—As if he had said, “Thou knowest my rest and motion, and my plodding thoughts of both.”¶ Verse 3. *Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways*—As if he had said, “Thou fannest and winnowest me,” that is, “Thou discussest and triest me to the utmost.”** Verse 4. *For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether*—As if he had said, “I cannot speak a word, though never so secret, obacure, or subtle, but thou knowest what, and why, and with what mind it was uttered.”†† Verse 5. *Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me*—As if he had said, “Thou keepest me within the compass of thy knowledge, like a man that will not let his servant go out of his sight. I cannot break away from thee.” Verse 6. *Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it*—As if he had said, “The knowledge of thy great and glorious Majesty and Infiniteness is utterly past all human comprehension.” Verse 7. *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?*—As if he had said, “Whither can I flee from thee, whose

* *Confessio peccati professio est desinendi, &c.*—HILARIUS in Psalm. cxxxvii. p. 595. “The confession of sin is an open profession of its abandonment.”—EDIT. † *Talem te prepara, ut tecum adsit Deus: sit in ore: sit in corde: semper tecum eat: tecum redeat: nec recedat a te: nunquam ille te dimittet, nisi prior illum dimiseris. Ubiunque fueris, nunquam solus esse poteris, si Deus tecum erit.*—BERNARDUS *De interiore Domo*, cap. v. p. 1065, et cap. lxvi. p. 1091. “Let the preparation of thyself be such as will qualify thee for the presence of God. Let God be in thy mouth, let Him be in thy heart. When thou goest forth let Him accompany thee; and let Him not be absent on thy return; and never suffer Him to depart from thee. He will never discard thee, unless thou shalt previously dismiss him from being thy guest. In what place soever thou mayest be, thou never canst be alone, if God be with thee.”—EDIT.

‡ *Refert Galenus recitasse se sub initium et finem cujusque diei.*—ELICHMANNUS, *Epilogus Editoris*, p. 15. “Galen relates that he repeated those Golden Verses at the commencement and at the close of each day.”—EDIT. § MOLLE-

RUS in loc. || An expressive word, fully conveying the meaning of the modern circumlocution, “to realize the presence of God.”—EDIT. ¶ ESTIUS in loc. ** AINSWORTH in loc. †† TIRINUS in loc.

essence, presence, and power, is every where?" Verse 8. *If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there*—As if he had said, "There is no height above thee, there is no depth below thee."* Verse 9. *If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea*—As if he had said, "If I had wings to fly as swift as the morning light, † from the east to the west, that I could in a moment get to the furthest parts of the world." Verse 10. *Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me*—As if he had said, "Thence shall thy hand lead me back, and hold me fast like a fugitive." ‡ Verse 11. *If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me*—As if he had said, "Though darkness hinders man's sight, it doth not thine." In a word, look which way you will, there is no hiding-place from God. "For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings. There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves." (Job xxxiv. 21, 22.) Therefore, Christians, do nothing but what you are willing God should take notice of; and judge in yourselves whether this be not the way to have a good and quiet conscience.

4. *Be serious and frequent in the examination of your heart and life.*—This is so necessary to the getting and keeping of a right and peaceable conscience, that it is impossible to have either without it. There are some duties and graces, like those parts of the body that may supply the defect of other parts; or like some drugs in physic, which when they cannot be had, some of the like nature may serve: but this is like those the defect whereof nothing else can supply. The Heathens have groped out this rule by the glow-worm light of nature. Pythagoras gives it as a precept; § and Seneca backs it by examples of Sextius, ||

* *Nulla altitudo te altior: nullum profundum te profundius*—HIERONYMUS in loc.
 † *Aurora, solis prænuncia, momento totum hemisphærium pervadit.*—MENOCHIUS in loc.
 ‡ *Aurora, the harbinger and herald of the sun, in a moment pervades the entire hemisphere with her light.*—EDIT. † *Deducat; tenebit ut solent teneri fugitivi.*—SAYRUS. § Πη *ὑπερῆν; τὶ δ' ἐρεῖα; τὶ μοὶ θεὸν οὐκ ἐτελεσθή;*—PYTHAGORÆ *Aurea Præcepta*, v. 42, p. 9.

"Each night, ere needful slumber seals thine eyes,

Home to thy soul let these reflections rise:

How has this day my duty seen express'd?

What have I done, omitted, or transgress'd."—FITZGERALD'S Translation.

|| *Somnus quædam tranquillus, altus, ac liber, cum aut laudatus est animus, aut admonitus, et speculator sui censorque secretus cognoscit de moribus suis! Utor hac potestate, et quotidie apud me causam dico. Cum sublatum e conspectu lumen est, et conticuit uxor moris jam mei conscia, totum diem necum scrutor, facta ac dicta mea remitor, nihil mihi ipse abscondo, nihil transeo: quare enim quicquam ex erroribus meis timeam, cum possim dicere: Vide ne istud amplius facias, nunc tibi ignosco, &c.*—SENECA *De Irâ*, lib. iii. c. xxxvi. p. 599. "How tranquil, sound, and uninterrupted is one's sleep, when the heart is either praised or admonished, and when the secret inspector and censor of itself takes proper cognizance of its own morals and habits! This mental process I call into constant exercise, and daily hold a little court within, for the hearing and determining of causes. In the evening as soon as the light has been withdrawn from my view, and my wife, now well-acquainted with my practice, has ceased to converse with me, I enter on an inward scrutiny into the whole of the past day: I recall to mind my words and actions, and ponder upon each of them. I conceal nothing from myself: I do not allow any thing to be slightly passed over. Wherefore, then, should I indulge in fears concerning my errors, when I am enabled thus to interrogate them, and to deliver to my heart a strict charge?—*Beware of this offence, and never again commit it! This time I forgive thee. In that dispute thou didst exhibit symptoms of a pugnacious disposition; never hereafter engage in a contest with men who are ignorant and inexperienced.*"—EDIT.

who every night, before he composed himself to sleep, asked himself: "What evil hast thou this day healed? What vice hast thou resisted? Wherein art thou better?" O how sweet is that sleep which follows such a recognition of himself, who made every night a scrutiny into the words and deeds of the whole day! He would neither pass by, nor hide, any thing from himself. He so ripped up his faults, that he would not pardon them to himself, without a self-charge *not to repeat them!*—Have you gone thus far? Certainly, my brethren, not to out-strip THEM is inexcusable. "It is a shame to see the carelessness of most, that are better acquainted with any thing than themselves. There are many that know the histories of a thousand years past, and yet cannot tell you the particulars of their own lives; men well-acquainted with the mysteries of arts and nature, but utterly ignorant of the secrets of their own souls. How few are there amongst us that can say, with David!—'I have thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.' (Psalm cix. 59.) Nay, we have a thousand matters to think on all the day long, the night too, the week, the year. But who questions with his own heart, 'What am I? What do I? How live I? Is the course I follow good and lawful? Is that which I omit, my duty, or not? Is God my friend? Am I his? What hope have I of heaven? Say, I die to-morrow, to-day, this very hour,—where is my assurance [that] I shall be saved? What apology can I make against the accusations of Satan and my conscience? Will Christ be mine advocate, when I shall stand in judgment? Have I grace, or have I none? Do I grow in grace, or do I decay? Am I better this year than I was the last? What sins have I conquered now, that held me in combat then? What graces have I obtained now, that I had not then?'"* Christians, do you do thus? If you do, that is not enough, unless you do it frequently, daily. Every evening ere you sleep, review your carriage in the day, what you have done, or spoken, or thought, that is but so much as indecent; † whether your hearts have been intent upon religion, and indifferent to the world. Briefly, have special care of two portions of your time, ‡ namely, morning and evening; *the morning*, to fore-think what ought to be done; and *the evening*, to examine whether you have done what you ought.

5. *Be much in prayer, in all manner of prayer, but especially in secret prayer.* (Psalm cix. 4; Eph. vi. 18; Matt. vi. 6.)—Do not nonsuit yourselves by the love of sin, and you shall certainly be heard when you pray for grace. (Heb. iv. 16.) Believe it, Christian, it is not thine inevitable weakness, nor thy sensible dulness, nor thy lamented rovings, nor thy opposed distractions, nor thy mistaken unbelief; (2 Cor. xii. 10; Mark xiv. 38—40; Psalm lxxxvi. 11; Gen. xv. 2, 3; 1 John v. 10;) it is

* PEMBLE, p. 514. † Προ της αναπαυσεως ανακρινεσθαι προσηκει το συνειδος εκαστου υπο της ιδιας καρδιας και ει τι γεγονε παρα το δεον, η ενθυμημα των απηγορευμενων, η λογος εξω του καθηκοντος, η περι την προσευχην βαθυμια, &c.—BASILIUS, tom. ii. p. 514. "Before a man retires to rest, it is requisite for him to institute a searching inquiry into his inward convictions about every thing which he keeps in concealment within his own heart; and if he find that he has either done some improper act, that he has used artful evasions in warding off reproaches, that his conversation has exceeded the bounds of decency, or that he has exhibited a degree of carelessness in his public or private devotions," &c.—EDIT. ‡ CROCII *Syntaxma*, p. 1212, *ex aliis*.

not any nor all these can shut out thy prayers, if thou dost not "regard iniquity in thy heart." (Psalm lvi. 18.) Therefore be encouraged; it is the voice of your Beloved that saith, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing" (*to what you might ask*) "in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." (John xvi. 23, 24.) But this and the two next rules will be spoken to in the following cases; I shall therefore but little more than name them.

6. *Let every action have reference unto your whole life, and not unto a part only.**—Propose some end to yourselves in every thing,† and let all your lesser and subordinate ends be plainly reducible unto the great end of your living. The emphasis of the apostle's exhortation is very great: "Exercise thyself unto godliness." (1 Tim. iv. 7.) As if he had said, Be as diligent in religion as thou wouldest have thy children that go to school to be in learning. Or thus: Let thy whole life be a preparation for heaven, like the wrestlers' or combatants' preparation for victory.‡ Or thus: Strip thyself of all incumbrances, that thou mayest attend unto piety. Pleasures may tickle thee for a while; but they have an heart-aching farewell. Thou mayest call thy riches *goods*; but, within a few days, what *good* will they do thee? Men may flatter thee for thy *greatness*; but with God thy account will be *the greater*. Therefore always mind that which will always be advantage.

7. *Live more upon Christ than upon inherent grace.*—Do not venture upon sin because Christ hath purchased a pardon; that is a most horrible and impious abuse of Christ. For this very reason, there was no sacrifice under the law for any wilful wickedness, lest people might think they knew the price of sin, as those do that truck with popish indulgences and pardons. But, that none may be overwhelmed with the over-sense of their unworthiness, be it known to you, "we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;" (1 John ii. 1;) and our salvation is better, safer, more for God's glory and our comfort, in his hand than in ours.

8. *Be, every way, nothing in your own eyes.*§—It is the humble soul that thrives exceedingly. "And, alas! what have we to be proud of? Look we either at our constitution, or conversation; our conception sin-

* EPISCOPII Institut. Theolog. lib. i. c. i. p. 3. † *Si aliquem exeuntem domo interrogaveris: Quò tu? quid cogitas? respondebit tibi: Non, Mehercule, scio, sed aliquos videbo, aliquid agam. Inconsultus illis vanusque cursus est; qualis formicis per arbusta repentibus; quæ in summum cacumen, deinde in imum inanes aguntur. Deinde domum cum supervacua redeuntes lassitudine, jurant nescisse scipos, quare exierint.*—SENECA *De Tranquillitate Animi*, c. xli. p. 685. "If you ask one of these busy idlers, when he is stepping out of his own house, 'Whither are you running? About what are you thinking?' he will frankly reply: *In truth I know not. But I am resolved to see somebody, and to do something or other.* Their erratic course has no fixed purpose in view, and is, consequently, fruitless. It resembles the pathway along which the loaded ants are creeping through the uneven woodlands: sometimes they reach the tops of the loftiest hillocks, whence, unable to retain either their balance or their burden, they are often precipitated into the lowest depths. When at length these men return home, they suffer from weariness needlessly incurred, and stoutly aver that they have not themselves known why they quitted the threshold in the morning."—EDIT. ‡ *Γυμναζε δε σεαυτον προς ευσεβειαν. Γυμναζειν est proprie exerceri in gymnade.*—GROTIUS *in loc.* "The proper signification of *γυμναζειν* is, to take exercise, as wrestlers do, in the palestra."—EDIT. § *Descendendo colum ascenditur.*—DREXELIUS *de Pradic.* "By self-abasement we climb to heaven."—EDIT.

ful, our birth penal, our life toilsome, and our death we know not what." * But all this is nothing to the state of our soul. A stoic † could give this rule, that "if any one tell you of another's speaking evil of thee, do not excuse thyself, but say, 'He did not know me, or else he would have spoken worse.'" A convert, when he once comes to be sensible of sin, sees more cause to be weary of his life, than proud of his graces. To rise and fall, confess sin and commit it; to see others outrun us, that set out after us; to recover that time for communion with God which we trifle away in unobserved impertinencies;—surely for such persons to be low and vile in their own eyes, deserves not to be called "humility," though the contrary be worse than devilish pride. Be persuaded therefore to believe yourselves of yourselves, in the use of Agur's (some suppose Solomon's) words of himself: "Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man." (Prov. xxx. 2.) As if he had said, "I do not make use of my reason." Verse 3: "I have not the knowledge of the holy." As if he had said, "My knowledge of holy mysteries is very little; in comparison of my ignorance, nothing." Be as willing that others should speak ill of you, as you are to speak ill of yourselves; and be as unwilling that others should commend you, as you are to commend yourselves. ‡

9. *Entertain good thoughts of God, (Psalm lxxiii. 1.) whatever he doeth with you, whatever he requires of you, whatever he lays upon you.* §—We never arrive to any considerable holiness or peace till we lose ourselves in Deity; || till our understandings be filled with admiration; till our wills be, in a sober sense, divine; till our affections be, in a spiritual

* *Unde superbit homo, cujus conceptio culpa, nasei pœna, labor vita, necesse mori, quando, vel quomodo, vel ubi, nescire?*—BERNARDUS *de interiore Dom.* c. 53. *Malem non esse quam talis esse.*—*Ibid.* c. 33. "I should prefer non-existence itself rather than to be only such a creature as this."—EDIT. *Accuso me, non excuso, nec idcirco justus sum; quoniam si alter ita me accusaret, sicut ego meipsum accuso, patienter sustinere non possem.*—*Ibid.* c. 34, &c. p. 1078. "I accuse myself, and offer no excuses: yet I am not on that account righteous; because were another person so to accuse and blame those things which are in me as I am accustomed to blame myself, I should not be able to endure his accusations with patience."—EDIT.

† EPICTETUS, c. 48. SIMPLICIUS *Comment.* p. 276. ‡ *Multos vidisse qui potuerint perferre multa incommoda in corpore et fortunis; qui autem potuerint continere laudes suas neminem.*—LUTHERI *Comment. in Galatas, ex alio,* tom. iv. p. 149. "Of those who could bear innumerable inconveniences in their own bodies and in their worldly circumstances, it has been my lot to see many; but I never yet met with one who was capable of undervaluing or despising the fulsome praise that was lavished on himself."—EDIT. § *Της περι τους Θεους ευσεβειας ιστι οτι το κυριατωτον εκεινο εστιν, ορβας υπολειψεις περι αυτων χειρι, ως ορταν, και διοικουντων τα ολα καλωσ και δικαιοσ και αυτων εις τουτο καταταταχεσται, ψευθεσθαι αυτοισ, και εικειν εν ψασι τοισ γενομενοισ, και ακολουθειν εκοντα, ως υπο της αριστης γνωμησ επιτελουμενοισ. Ουτω γαρ ουτε μεμνησ ποτε τοισ Θεοισ, ουτε εγκυκαλεσεισ ως αμελουμενοισ, &c.*—EPICTETUS, c. 38; SIMPLICIUS, p. 212. "Be assured, that the essential property of piety towards the gods is, to form right opinions concerning them, as existing, and as governing the universe with goodness and justice. And fix yourself in this resolution,—to obey them, and yield to them, and willingly to follow them in all events, as produced by the most perfect understanding. For thus you will never find fault with the gods, nor accuse them as neglecting you."—MRS. CARTER'S Translation.

|| *Hoc est totalem Dei voluntate conformitatem et consonantiam habere; nimirum, nos totos ei offerendo, ut quocumque, quandocumque, quomodocumque ipse voluerit, de nobis faciat ac stultus; idque sine ullâ exceptione et contradictione, et nihil prorsus nobis reservando.*—RODERICIUS, *Eserc. Perfec.* pars i. tr. viii. c. 14, p. 355. "This is to have a complete conformity and harmony with the will of God; namely, By offering our entire selves to Him; so that whatsoever, whensoever, and howsoever God may will concerning us, THAT He may perform and appoint: and all this without any exception or contradiction on our part, and with a total absence of mental reservation."—EDIT.

sense, transported. When we can at once unriddle God's methods of grace, and make good constructions of God's methods of providence, making a spiritual improvement of both, then we are not far from being universally and exactly conscientious.—There is yet one thing wanting; and that is implied in this, but it must be eminently expressed:—

10. *Do all you do out of love to God.*—Spiritual love-sickness is the soul's healthfullest constitution. When love to God is both cause, means, motive, and end of all our activity in the business of religion, then the soul is upon the wing towards its rest. "Then is our love to other things regular, when the alone goodness of God moves us to love them; as the alone respect to health makes me use physic. The means hath no proper goodness distinct from the goodness of the end; those means which were profitable, though they remain unchanged in themselves, yet they become unprofitable by the alone change of the end. For instance: health being recovered, physic is unprofitable, which, while we were infirm, was profitable. So we are not to love any means without relation to the end, because it is contrary to the purity of that love which we owe to God; for we ought so to love God, that with him or under him we love nothing else, but all things only in him, because otherwise we do not love him with our whole heart. For instance: In men's loving their wives, and wives their husbands; in parents' loving their children, and children their parents; it is a rare pitch to love all these in God; that is, to advance our love to God by them, and so far as any of them draw off our love to God, to say to them, as Christ to Peter, 'Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto me.' Love is extended to good: the more good therefore any thing is, the more it is to be beloved."* "But thou, O Lord my God," saith Bradwardine, "art the good of every good; good above all things that are good; a good most infinitely infinite! How much therefore should I rationally love thee, should not my love be proportionably infinite? I would I could so love thee: but how shall I, that am so very little and finite, love thee infinitely? And yet without so loving thee, how will there be kept any due proportion in loving thee, who dost infinitely exceed all other lovely things? I ought to love thee infinitely as to the manner, though I cannot as to the act, of my love: that is, I ought to love thee finally for thyself, or else I may love thee in some sort infinitely as to the act, both intensively and extensively. *In some sort intensively*: that is, more intensely, more firmly, more strongly than any finite good, because I love them but for thee. *In some sort extensively*: by comparing all things, how many or how great soever, with thee, and loving thee before and above all, that I had rather all things in the world, and myself too, to have no being, than once to offend thee. But, Lord, thou lovest thy friends in an unspeakable manner more

* *Ita sola bonitas Dei movet ad amorem charitatis erga proximum, sola ratio sanitatis movet ad utendum potione medicâ. Omnia quæ voluntati obijciuntur sint aut finis aut media; hæc ob solum finem appeti. Media quæ media, dicunt tantum relationem ad finem, non autem fundamentum ipsius; tum quia contraria est puritati amoris, quo Deo inhaerere debemus. Ita enim, ut passim apud solidiores viros spiritualis magistros videre est, amorem debemus Deum, ut cum illo, etiam sub illo, nihil aliud amemus; sed omnia duntaxat in illo: quia aliis non amamus illum ex toto corde, sed aliud quidpiam ab illo occupat cor nostrum.*—GIBIEUF *De Lib. Dei et Creat.* lib. i. c. xi. p. 66.

than they can love thee. O therefore, thou great Lord, thou great Good, that fillest heaven and earth, why dost thou not fill my very little soul? O my soul, that art so little, so miserable, why dost thou not open all thy little doors? why dost thou not extend thy utmost capacity, that thou mayest be wholly possessed, wholly satiated, wholly ravished with the sweetness of so great love? especially seeing thou art so very little; yet nothing less will satisfy thee. O, therefore, my most loving God, I beseech thee, tell me what may most effectually draw out my love to thee, considering what prevention of love, what privative, positive good things I receive from thee, infinite in greatness, infinite in multitude! It is a wonder that any one can think of these things, and not be wholly swallowed up of love, wholly turned into love. But I see, Lord, it is easier to speak these things, and to write them down, than to do them. Thou therefore, most good and most powerful Lord, to whom nothing is difficult, give, I beseech thee, that I may more easily do these things in my heart, than utter them with my mouth! Open, I beseech thee, thy most bountiful hand, and enable me that nothing may be more easy, nothing more sweet, nothing more delightful, than most effectually and most affectionately to fulfil that which I speak about loving of thee. Lord, give me leave a little to presume above my hope, and to plead with thee about thy magnificent goodness. Human friendship will not give the repulse to a poor, wanting, begging friend; O, therefore, most liberal Lord, help me that I may love thee!"* Christians, it is worth while to make it your business to climb up to this love-ecstasy. This you will find to be a *completing rule*, an *effectual means*, and a *singular exercise* of exact and conscientious walking.

I shall briefly name (I intended largely to have pressed) two arguments or motives to persuade the use of these directions:—

1. *You cannot possibly get rid of your conscience: † therefore be persuaded to get a good one.*—There is nothing more common than for

* *Tu autem, Domine Deus meus, es omnis boni bonum, super omnia bona bonus, bonum infinitissimè infinitum. Quomodo tantùm plus amabo te, quàm tu amas me, quantum tu es melior me? Debeo amare te finaliter propter te, et omnia alia propter te. Tu autem non amas me propter me, nec cetera propter me. Debeo etiam amare te infinitè quodammodo intensivè supra quodcumque bonum finitum; tu autem non sic amas me. Debeo quoque amare te infinitè quodammodò extensivè, volendo scilicet potius quodcumque et quancumque bona alia, etiam et meipsum non esse quàm te, vel quàm te semel offendere; tu verò non sic amas me, quia non debeo sic amari, &c.*—BRADWARDINUS *De Causâ Dei*, lib. ii. c. xxxiv. p. 627 et seqq. † *Vix ejus quanta sit, non est obscurum, &c. Nec vi extinguitur nec fraude, adeò altè inhæret animo. Tutissimus licet homo sit, tamen securus non est. Ipsas tenebras nequitia, inò tuta omnia timet: multos fortuna liberat pona, metus neminem.* *Exemplo sunt potentissimi imperatores, et qui arcani licentium nacti, sine arbitrio, sine testibus, &c.*—EPISCOPUS, *Instit. Theol.* lib. i. c. iii. pp. 10, 11. "The vastness of the power possessed by conscience is a fact not veiled in obscurity. Its force is manifest in the effects which it produces: It binds, imposes obligations, acts the part of an accuser, bears witness, absolves or condemns, in such a manner as if it acted within man in the capacity of God's vicegerent. And these effects or goods cannot be shaken off even by those who strive hard to eradicate from their minds every notion concerning God which they have imbibed. Whether with or without their own consent, they are agitated and disturbed with sad cogitations and gnawing remorse, induced either by their absolute denial of God's existence and supremacy, by their daring effrontery against the Deity, or by the heartless worship which they reluctantly pay to the Divine Majesty. Conscience cannot be ejected, either by force or by fraud, so deeply has it seated itself within the human breast! Though the man be quite safe, yet he feels himself to be insecure. Even in solitude he is full of anxiety and perturbation, and his whole frame is seized with trembling. Wickedness is afraid even

wicked men to do what they can to extinguish conscience. They flatter it with carnal reasoning; they bribe it with mock devotions; they wound it with heinous provocations; they sear it with customary wickedness; they trample it under foot by sinning in despite of it; they run away from it, and will not endure to hear it, by diversions: and yet they can sooner turn their souls out of their bodies, than conscience out of their souls; yea, amongst all these indignities, it is as fresh and active, as if it were not thus abused. It doth but watch its opportunity, when it will be heard, when it will make that which was done perhaps forty years ago, as if it had been but yesterday. What ails the great emperors of the world,* "that cause their terror in the land of the living?" What ails them to tremble with inward contrition? Is it a vain fear? Why then do they not shake it off? Is it the fear of men? No: they are above human punishments. Is it the fear of shame? No: the sin perhaps was secret; at least man knows not the inward connotation of their spirits. What is the matter? O! they are haunted by the fury of their own consciences. Would wicked men but blab the gripes they sometimes feel, even then when they out-face a ministerial or friendly reproof, there would need no more to be said to evidence, that a conscience you will have, which will, first or last, do its office.

2. *Your own conscience will be your best friend, or your greatest enemy, (of any creature,) unto eternity.*—There is no greater riches, no greater pleasure, no greater safety, than a good conscience.† Let the pressures of the body, the hurry of the world, the affrightments of Satan, be never so great, they cannot reach the conscience. A good conscience singularly cheers the dying body, joyfully accompanies unto God the departed soul, triumphingly presents both soul and body unto the desired tribunal. There is no more profitable means, nor surer testimony, nor

when concealed in the shade, or covered with darkness; nay, it fears all things that are in perfect safety. Concerning its own security, it betrays many misgivings. A prosperous outward condition delivers many exalted miscreants from merited punishment, but none from inward dread. Of this we have instances in emperors, who have attained to the greatest height of power, and who, finding out the impunity which privacy affords, have committed acts of lewdness in secret, without any check from frowning witnesses, or upbraiding censors," &c.—EDIT. *Ipse conscientia propriis stimulis agitur atque compungitur, et sui ipsa efficitur accusatrix et testis.*—ORIGENES Περὶ Ἀρχῶν, lib. ii. c. xi. p. 707. "Conscience is driven about and goaded by its own stings; and it is constituted the grand accuser, as well as the chief witness against itself."—EDIT.

* *Insigne visum est earum Cæsaris literarum initium; nam his verbis exorsus est:— Quid scribam vobis, P. C., aut quo modo scribam, aut quid omnino non scribam hoc tempore, dii me deaque pejus perdant quam perire quotidianè sentio, si scio. Adeò facinora atque flagitia sua ipsi quoque in supplicium verterant. Tiberium non fortuna, non solitudines protegebant.*—TACITI *Annales*, lib. vi. c. vi. p. 149. "The letter sent by Tiberius on this occasion, is too remarkable to be here omitted. His words were as follows: 'What to write, Conscript Fathers, in what terms to express myself, or what to refrain from writing,—is a matter of such perplexity, that if I know how to decide, may the just gods, and the goddesses of vengeance, doom me to die in pangs worse than those under which I linger every day!' We have here the features of the inward man. His crimes retaliated upon him with the keenest retribution; so true is the saying of the great philosopher, the oracle of ancient wisdom, (Socrates,) that 'if the minds of tyrants were laid open to our view, we should see them gashed and mangled with the whips and stings of horror and remorse.' Of this truth Tiberius is a melancholy instance. Neither the imperial dignity, nor the gloom of solitude, nor the rocks of Capres, could shield him from himself. He lived on the rack of guilt, and his wounded spirit groaned in agony."—MURPHY'S Translation. † *Vide BERNARDUM De inter. Domo, c. xxii. p. 1070.*

eminent conveyer of eternal happiness, than a good conscience. And, on the contrary, there is no greater torment than [that] of an evil conscience : though its gentler checks may be disregarded, its louder clamours will make you tremble. O sirs ! what will you do, when conscience shall upbraid you with your abuse of mercies, incorrigibleness under judgments, contempt of Christ, and hatred of holiness ? You cannot now endure to hear what conscience hath to say : how will you endure it unto eternity ? If one that killed his own father, could not, in some Egyptians' account, be more cruelly punished, than by being compelled to behold the murdered body for three days ;* what a torment will it be, to be forced to behold every sin, with every aggravation, unto eternity ? Here, in bodily sickness, there are some intervals to revive the spirits ; but

* *Parricidium vindicatori Pelusii, pro flagitii dignitate, nullum hactenus tortura ingenium perfectum duserunt ; non culeum, non vivicomburium : scivius quid cogitarunt, pie, scilicet, matris natura ferulam conscientiam : ad summa atrocitatis exemplum docti, novam severitatem didicerunt, parricidam sancientes triduo cogi spectare occisi cadaver, ut sic puniretur enormissimo omnium supplicio, admonitione facinorae.*—JOHANNES EUSEBIUS NIREMBERGIUS *De Arte* Vol. II. p. 159. "When the Pelusians were preparing to punish a parricide by law according to the extreme heinousness of his offence, they began to reflect that no torture commensurate with the enormity of the crime had been previously invented. Neither the *culeus*, nor the burning of the culprit alive, was deemed to be an adequate punishment. They therefore proceeded to consult together concerning some infliction which might operate on the criminal himself as a severe and salutary scourge : and this at length they discovered in CONSCIENCE,—that corrective ferule employed by our pious mother Nature. Having thus been themselves instructed, through an instance of consummate atrocity which had recently been brought under their notice, they taught other nations a new form of cruelty, by passing a decree,—that every parricide should for three days be compelled to live in sight of his murdered parent's body ; that he might be chastised by a method which was of all others the most uncommon, and which inflicted on his ill-suppressed natural feelings the most tremendous punishment, while his example was admonitory to others, warning them against the perpetration of such an act of flagitious wickedness." The remarkable punishment of *culeus*, which the Egyptian senators are here said to have rejected, is believed to have been of eastern origin, before it was employed with some circumstantial modifications by the Romans, and engrafted on their legislation. Mention is made of it by Plautus, Seneca, Cicero, Livy, Juvenal, Valerius Maximus, Apuleius, Plutarch, Orosius, Lactantius, and others. The parricide was sewed up in a large and strong leathern sack, having four living creatures for his companions,—an ass, a viper, a cock, and a dog ; and was then thrown into the sea. According to an old Scholiast, after the sack had been sewed up, the whole of the outside was rendered air- and water-tight by being besmeared over with pitch and bitumen,—a service eagerly performed by the populace, to demonstrate their abhorrence of the detestable offence. In Cicero's Oration for Sextus Roscius of Ameria, who was arraigned at the bar and tried as a parricide, occurs a fine passage on this subject ; which has been the occasion of much perplexity to the critics, but of which the circumstance respecting its bituminous covering affords a most satisfactory explanation. The following eloquent lines form a part of that paragraph :—"O the singular wisdom of our ancestors, in framing and passing a law which decrees, that a parricide should be sewed up alive in a *culeus*, and in that condition be hurled into the flood ! Do not they seem, by this punishment, to have cast him out at once from every part of universal nature ? Have they not thus suddenly debarred from him the free use and enjoyment of *air, light, water, and earth* ? so that the wretch who could kill HIM from whom he had derived his own existence, should be deprived of all those elements out of which, it is affirmed, every thing has been created ! In fine, there is nothing possessed of the least usefulness, or that belongs alike to all men, of which the parricide is allowed to retain the smallest particle. For, what is so common as *breath* to the living, *earth* to the dead, *the sea* to those who are buffeted with its waves, or even *the rocky shore* to those who are shipwrecked ? But the murderer of a parent [in his *culeus*] lives, while he may, in such a condition as leaves him incapable of obtaining a single breath from *the air* of heaven ; his death is such that *the earth* may not even touch his bones ; his conflict with *the waves* is such as prevents him from receiving their ablutions ; and when at length he is dashed on shore a lifeless corpse, on the very *rocks* he cannot find a quiet resting-place."—EDIT.

hereafter there will not be a moment's intermission of unexpressible horror unto eternity. The conscience shall roar under infinite wrath, and the sinner shall be kept from annihilation under it by infinite power.

Thus I have in a weak manner performed my promise in speaking to several kinds of consciences, with remedies and rules which, laid together, will (I think) amount to sufficient instructions, *How we may be universally and exactly conscientious*. Namely, 1. Get your consciences awakened from their natural lethargy. (1 Cor. xv. 34.) 2. Preserve them tender from acquired searedness. (Heb. iii. 13.) 3. Rectify their errors, as you would get cure of blindness. (Eph. iv. 18.) 4. Resolve their doubts, as you would a claim to your lands. (Rom. xiv. 5.) 5. Break from your scruples, as from thieves on the road. (Isai. xxxv. 3, 4.) 6. Lay your head in Christ's bosom, to cure your trembling. (Isai. xl. 11.) And then, 7, 8, For the *integrity* and *quiet* of your consciences, observe the rules proposed, as punctually as you would physicians' bills in a tedious sickness. (1.) Avoid sinning, as you would a train of gunpowder. (Job xviii. 15.)—(2.) Be as quick in your repentance, as in the cure of a pleurisy. (Zeph. ii. 2.)—(3.) Live under the apprehended presence of the jealous God. (Ezek. xi. 5.)—(4.) Examine your hearts, as princes sift out treason. (Lam. iii. 40.)—(5.) Pray for suitable grace, as starving persons cry for food. (Psalm cxliii. 7, 8.)—(6.) Let every action be as an arrow shot at a mark. (1 Cor. x. 31.)—(7.) Think of God as of a wise physician. (Job xl. 2.)—(8.) Be as vile in your own esteem, as you are in the eyes of a captious enemy. (Eph. iii. 8.)—(9.) Live upon Christ, as the child in the womb lives upon the mother. (Gal. ii. 20.)—(10.) Love God (as near as possibly you can) as God loves you. (Psalm xviii. 1, 2.)

But if these rules, though thus contracted, be too many, and too long, to be always remembered, that you may not be overcharged with that which should never be forgotten, I shall commend to you some spiritually-chymical extractions, and (if I might so express it) spirits of directions, that may be to your souls, in your pilgrimage toward heaven, as your ship-provisions in a sea-voyage,—generally sufficient, when others cannot be had. Plainly practise these memorials of direction in all your conscientious walking:—

1. *Consult duty, not events*.—There is nothing in the world for us to do, but to mind our duty. Curious speculations,* that tend not to holiness, may be reckoned among your superfluities: but misgiving predictions of what may or will befall you in the discharge of your duty, may be reckoned among your grosser iniquities: and to venture upon sin to avoid danger, is to sink the ship for fear of pirates, and must be reckoned amongst your greatest follies, your worst of sins. Is not their reason (questionless their conscience is) dangerously distempered, that

* Το ζην ἀρα το εὐταυθ' ἀναγκαιῶν ἡγούμενος εἰς ἐπιστήμης συναυξήσιν, καὶ τὴν περιποίησιν τῆς γνώσεως, οὐ το ζην, ἀλλὰ το εὐζην, περὶ πλείστου ποιήσεται· μήτ' οὐν παῖδας, μήτ' ἀν γάμων, ἢ τοὺς γονεῖς, τῆς πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν ἀγάπης, καὶ τῆς ἐν βίῳ δικαιοσύνης, προτιμῶν.—CLEMENS ALEXANDRINUS, *Stromaton* lib. vi. p. 664. "Not life itself, but a virtuous life, will be in the highest request, by him who believes existence in this condition to be quite essential for the accumulation of useful information, and the acquisition of knowledge; and he will therefore esteem love to God, and righteousness of life, in preference to his natural affection for children, wife, or parents."—EDIT.

practically argue?—"This way of duty may probably procure man's displeasure; and therefore, to prevent that, I will take the course which will certainly procure God's displeasure." Besides, by-ways will not lead you to the place you aim at.* But, on the contrary, keep your consciences from being violated, and you cannot be miserable. O how calm and quiet, as well as holy and heavenly, would our lives be, had we learned but this single lesson,—to be careful for nothing, but to know and do our duty, and to leave all effects, consequents, and events to God! The truth is, it is a daring boldness for silly dust to prescribe to Infinite Wisdom, and to let go our work to meddle with God's. He hath managed the concerns of the world, and of every individual person in it, without giving occasion to any one to complain, for above this five thousand years; and doth He now need your counsel? Therefore let it be your only business to mind duty. "Ay, but how shall I know my duty?" Take a second memorial:—

2. *What advice you would give to another, take yourselves.*†—The worst of men are apt enough to lay such burdens on other men's shoulders, (Matt. xxiii. 4,) which if they would take them upon their own, they would be rare Christians. For instance: The very outcry of those that revile godliness, who deal by the miscarriages of professors, as the Levite by his concubine,—quarter them, and divulge them; even they expect, that those who make a strict profession of religion should be beyond exception blameless; and they, even they, scorn those that make any defection from their professed strictness. And, on the other side, those that are holy,—they expect that even graceless persons should bear reproof, receive instruction, and change the course of their lives. In middle cases, then, between these extremes, what exactness will serious Christians require, where the bias of their own corruptions doth not misguide them? David was twice surprised to pass sentence against himself by remote parables; (2 Sam. xii. 5—7; xiv. 4, 14;) wherein he mistrusted not himself to be concerned. Wherein this rule is too short, add a third:—

3. *Do nothing on which you cannot pray for a blessing.*—Where prayer doth not lead, repentance must follow; and it is a desperate adventure to sin upon hopes of repentance. Every action, and cessation too, of a Christian that is good and not to be refused, "is sanctified by the word and prayer." (1 Tim. iv. 4, 5.) It becomes not a

* Ουδε γαρ ὁ τοξευεν τῷ ἀοτρῷ βουλομενος, καὶ τῷ βοῖ τὸν λαγῶ κυνηγετεν, δυστυχῆς ἐστιν· ἀλλ' ἀβέλτηρια καὶ μοχθήρια τοῖς ἀδυνατοῖς ἐπιχειροῦσιν. Ὅσπερ οὖν τὸ ἄποθνηναι τῷ πρὸς συνδιαστρεφεταί, καὶ οὐ τουναντίον· οὕτω τοὺς βίους αἱ διαθεσεις συνεφομοιοῦσιν αὐταῖς.—PLUTARCHUS Περὶ Εὐθυμίας, pp. 471, 466. "For we do not reckon him unfortunate, who will shoot with a ploughshare, and let slip an ox at a hare; nor is he born under an unlucky influence, who cannot catch a buck with a sling or drag-net; for it was the weakness and perverseness of his mind which inflamed him on to impossible things. As, therefore, the shoe turns about with the foot, and doth not deviate from its motion; so according as the affections of the mind are, they render the life conformable to themselves."—MORGAN'S Translation.

† Τεκνον ἀλλοῦ τεθνήκεν, ἢ γυνῆ; οὐδεὶς ἐστὶν ὃς οὐκ αὖ εἰποι, ὅτι ἀνθρώπων. Ἀλλ' ὅταν τὸ αὐτοῦ τῶς ἀποθάνῃ, εὐθύς, Οἰμοί, τάλαι ἐγώ, βοῶ. Ἐχρῆν δὲ μεμνησθῆναι, τί πάσχομεν, περὶ ἀλλῶν αὐτοῦ ἀκουσάντες.—EPICETUS, *Enchiridion*, c. xxxiii. SIMPLICIUS, p. 168. "Is the child or wife of another dead? there is no one who would not say, 'This is a human accident.' But, if any one's own child happen to die, it is presently, 'Alas! how wretched am I!' But it should be remembered, how we are affected in hearing the same thing concerning others."—MRS. CARTER'S Translation.

Christian to do any thing so trivial, (Eph. v. 1—4,) that he cannot pray over it;* and if he would but bestow a serious ejaculatory prayer upon every occurrent action, he would find that such a prayer would cut off all things sinful, demur all things doubtful, and encourage all things lawful. Therefore, do nothing but what you can preface with prayer. But these rules are all defective; I will therefore close with an example that is infinitely above defects:—

4. *Think, and speak, and do what you are persuaded Christ himself would do in your case, were he upon the earth.*—The Heathen—they proposed unto themselves the best examples they had,† and therefore let us follow the best of ours. (Micah iv. 5.) There are many rare examples in scripture: (Heb. xiii. 7:) but we may say of them, as it is said of most of David's worthies, whose highest commendation was with this diminution:—"They attained not unto the first three." (2 Sam. xxiii. 19, 23.) I propose therefore neither great nor small, but the "King of saints." (Rev. xv. 3.) It becomes a Christian rather to be an example, than to follow one. (1 Peter ii. 12, 15; 1 Thess. i. 7.) But by imitating of Christ, you will come as near as it is possible "to the first three;" for your fellowship shall be "with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ," (1 John i. 3,) "through the Spirit of Holiness," who alone can teach you what it is to abide in Christ, (1 John ii. 27,) who was, and is, and ever will be our absolute copy. (Heb. xiii. 8.) O Christians! how did Christ pray, and redeem time for prayer? (Mark i. 35; vi. 46; Luke vi. 12; John xi. 42.) How did Christ preach, (out of whose mouth proceeded no other but gracious words, Luke iv. 22,) that his enemies could not but admire him? (John vii. 46.) At what rate did Christ value the world, who did and taught to renounce it? (Mark x. 21—27.) What time did Christ spend in impertinent discourse, who made "their hearts burn within them" whom he occasionally fell in company with? (Luke xxiv. 17—32.) How did Christ go up and down doing good to man, (Acts x. 38,) and always those things that were pleasing to God? (John viii. 29.)

Beloved, I commend to you these four memorials, to be as so many scarlet threads,—(Joshua ii. 18, 21,)—upon every finger of the right hand, one; that you may never put forth your hand to action but these memorials may be in your eye: 1. Mind duty. (Acts ix. 6.) 2. What is another's duty in your case, is yours. (Rom. ii. 21.) 3. What you cannot say, "The blessing of the Lord be upon it!" do not meddle with it. (Psalm cxxix. 8.) But, above all, 4. As soon forget your Christian name, (the name of a Christian,) as forget to eye Christ; (Psalm cxliii. 2;) and, whatever entertainment you meet with from the profane world, (John xv. 18, &c.,) remember your Exemplar, and

* Ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἀμαρτανῶν ἀπολλύει τὴν παρῆσιαν ἣν εἶχε, τὸ συνείδος αὐτοῦ, πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν ἐν τῇ εὐχῇ αὐτοῦ.—ATHANASI *Questiones ad Antiochum*, quest. lxxvii. p. 361. "Thus the man who commits sin, destroys that freedom of access to God, and that inward consciousness of Divine favour, which he formerly enjoyed when engaged in prayer to Him."—EDIT.

† Ὅταν τινι μὲλλεις συμβαλεῖν, προβαλε στανφ, τι ἀν ἐποίησεν ἐν τούτῳ Σωκράτης ἢ Ζήνων, καὶ οὐκ ἀπορήσεις τοῦ χρῆσασθαι πρὸς αὐτὸν τῷ ἐμπειροῦτι.—ERICETUS, *Enchiridium*, c. li. SIMPLICIUS, p. 282. "When you are going to confer with any one, and particularly those in a superior station, represent to yourself how Socrates, or Zeno, would behave in such a case; and you will not be at a loss to make a proper use of whatever may occur."—MRS. CARTER'S Translation.

“follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.” (1 Peter ii. 21—23.)

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE.

Synteresis, or *synteresis*, is a word not unknown to our English lexicographers, both ancient and modern, who, almost without exception, have defined it to be “a remorse, prick, or sting of conscience;” and some of them, in marvellous contradiction of themselves, immediately add the word *synteretica*, with this correct meaning: “That part of physic which gives rules for the preservation of health.” Those of them who trace etymologies, uniformly derive the word from *συν*, “with,” and *τηρεω*, “to conserve.” This curious instance of cross-purpose between the derivation and the meaning, is attributable to the mental process of misappropriation,—the very common verb *τερεω*, *τερω*, (*τριβω*), “to pierce, harass, or torment,” being confounded with *τηρεω*, “to preserve;” in brief, the mistake has had its origin in the substitution of (ε) *epsilon* for (η) *eta*.

The only quotation in Johnson’s Dictionary, in support of a remorse of conscience, is one from Dr. Seth Ward, which, on the very face of it, will appear, to the most cursory reader, to be contradictory of that unlucky signification. That passage is here subjoined: “Though the principles of *synteresis*, the seeds of piety and virtue, scattered and disseminated in the soul, to bring forth the fruit of virtue and felicity, may be trampled on and kept under, cropped and snibbed, by the bestial part; yet they will sometimes be starting out, sprouting, and putting forth themselves.” In that age, the principal writers of bishop Ward’s school were warm advocates for baptismal regeneration; and it was not unusual for them to apply *synteresis* to the unobliterated grace of baptism, the influence of which, as explained by them, had not been sinned away by repeated acts of transgression, and the virtue of which still manifested its existence by lively internal struggles in favour of righteous principles and correct conduct.

But all Dialecticians are aware, that the Schoolmen generally describe it to be an original gift of God, a mental light conferred on every man that cometh into the world. Blount, who undoubtedly possessed a large portion of the varied qualifications requisite for a good lexicographer, defines *SYNTERESIS*, in his *Glossographia*, to be “the pure part of conscience; or a natural quality engrafted in the soul, which inwardly informs a man whether he do well or ill.”

The famous Martinus, and our own Holyoke, give us this definition of it: “It may be called *conservation* or *preservation*, from *συντηρεω*, to preserve. Hence that part of the soul which resists sins, which always evinces a desire to preserve itself unspotted from vice, and which continually exclaims against and reprehends the perpetration of criminal acts, is denominated *synteresis*.”

In his celebrated “Cases of Conscience,” bishop Sanderson observes on this subject: “If a man should say, ‘My conscience doth suggest unto me, that this theft is not to be committed;’ or, ‘My conscience crieth out unto me, that it ought not to be committed;’ the knowledge of this conclusion is properly *συνειδησις*, or *conscience*, as it is distinct from *συντηρησις*, or a *guiltless conservation of one’s self*.—The word *synteresis*, which is a *guiltless conservation of one’s self*, is often used for *syneidesis* or *conscience*, but improperly. In practice, *synteresis* is the habit of the first principles about good and evil, from whence conclusions are deduced, out of which proceedeth conscience.”—

“First Lecture,” sec. xii. p. 15. In a subsequent passage, bishop Sanderson translates *synteresis*, “the unstained conservation of the mind.”

The verb *συντηρεω* is also employed in the New Testament, by three of the Evangelists; (Matt. ix. 17; Mark vi. 20; Luke ii. 19;) and in each of the passages our learned translators have given this good word its highest *conservative* character and signification.

As in the note from Ames, in page 6, and in that which precedes it from Estius, I have rendered *synteresis*, through an allowable circumlocution, in the one instance, *unsullied mental integrity*, and in the other, *conscious uprightness*,—both of them opposed to the erroneous meaning contained in our English dictionaries; it became requisite for me to show cause why such a marked discrepancy exists; and this duty, in defence of my translation, I have now briefly performed. I might indeed have made a parade of great names; but every one who is competent to form a judgment on the matter will be content with the name, and the decisive language, of the most accomplished Protestant casuist of the seventeenth century, the amiable and learned bishop Sanderson.—EDIT.

SERMON II.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM GREENHILL, A.M.

WHAT MUST AND CAN PERSONS DO TOWARDS THEIR OWN CONVERSION?

Wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.—Ezek. xviii. 32.

THE words are part of that serious exhortation, begun in verse 30: “Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions:” continued in verse 31: “Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit:” and concluded in this verse: “Wherefore turn yourselves,” &c.

In the former part of the verse, the Lord saith, “I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth.” “I had rather men should come to the knowledge of the truth, and be saved, than die in their sins, and perish through their impenitency. ‘Wherefore,’ or ‘therefore,’ ‘turn yourselves,’” &c.

The exhortation in these words is backed with a reason of great (yea, the greatest) strength, namely, life: “Turn, and live;” that is, Ye shall live comfortably here, and happily for ever hereafter.

There be four propositions deducible from these words:—

1. That man is turned from God.
2. That it is man’s duty to turn unto God again.
3. That the Lord’s willingness that men should rather live than die, should be a strong argument to move them to turn.
4. That those who do turn shall live.

I shall wave all those great truths, and come to that which the words seem to import; namely, *a power in man to turn himself*. It is a good rule which Glassius, in his “Philology,”* gives us: that active verbs are given to those things which do not, properly and by immediate influx, do that which they signify; *sed certâ tantùm ratione concurrunt* [“but

* L b. iii. p. 290.

which, in a certain degree, only concur in their being done"]. God said to Moses, "Lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thy hand over the sea, and divide it." (Exod. xiv. 16.) Moses had not power to divide the sea; but, because there was a certain concurrence of Moses's using the rod according to divine direction, therefore it is attributed unto Moses; whereas it was the work of God alone; for it is said, verse 21, "The Lord caused the sea to go back." So in the work of conversion, because man doeth something about it, therefore he is said to turn himself, although the action be peculiar to the Lord. Ephraim saith, "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned." (Jer. xxxi. 18.)

The query here is, "What CAN or OUGHT persons to do towards their own conversion?"

Something first is to be spoken of man's power, or CAN; and then something of what man OUGHT to do.

I. For the first of these: There is a threefold power considerable,—an active, a passive, and an obediential, power.

1. *An active power*; as in fire there is such a power to warm; in a good tree there is such a power to bring forth good fruit.—This kind of power is denied to be in man: "How can ye, being evil, speak good things?" (Matt. xii. 34.) If they cannot *speak* good things, much less can they *do* good things.

2. *A passive power*; as in wax to receive the impression of the seal; and in wood to receive the engravings of the carver.—This power is not found in man: Paul saith expressly, "The natural man" (or *souly* man) *ου δεχεται*, "receives not the things of the Spirit of God:" and *ου δυναται*, "neither can he." (1 Cor. ii. 14.) A stiff, dead hand receives nothing, neither can it.

3. *An obediential power*; which consists in a capability to receive what form or impression soever the mighty God by his power shall put upon a creature.—Such a power is in a stony heart to become flesh; it is capable to be made fleshy when God puts forth his power. This is the power granted by divines to be in men; and it is a very low power.

The sacred writ is plentiful in setting out the impotency of man. It tells us, that he "is not subject to the law of God, neither can he;" (Rom. viii. 7;) that he "cannot please God;" (Rom. viii. 8;) that he cannot come to Christ; (John vi. 44;) that he can do nothing without Christ; (John xv. 5;) that he cannot believe; (John xii. 39; v. 44;) that he cannot love God; (1 John iv. 20;) that he cannot do good; (Jer. xiii. 23;) [that he cannot] yield good fruit; (Matt. vii. 17;) that he cannot think a good thought. (2 Cor. iii. 5.)

Man's liberty or power is referrible to *natural*, *moral*, or *spiritual* things. To the first, he hath *great* strength: To the second, *some*: To the third, *none*. A man freely doeth natural and moral things; he can live soberly, and chastely, *quoad externos actus*, "as to outward acts;" he may abstain from gross sins, theft, murder, drunkenness, &c.; he may come to the congregations freely, hear the word, and not stop his ears as the deaf adder doth; but as to spiritual acts, *qua tales* ["as such"], he is impotent.

For the better understanding of the query, "What persons *can do* towards their own conversion," I shall lay down several theses or conclusions, which I shall make good by scripture as I proceed.

CONCLUSION I. *All dispositions and inclinations to spiritual good which man had at first in his creation, are lost and ruined by the fall.*—"The carnal mind is enmity against God." (Rom. viii. 7.) It is so far from having inclination to God, or the things of God, that it is not only an *enemy*, but *enmity* against God. And the Lord saith, "I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed; how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?" (Jer. ii. 21.) They had lost their original sap, and were degenerated into a wild vine, and could not bring forth good clusters.

CON. II. *Man being altogether averse from good, the servant of sin and death, sold under sin, Satan's captive, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength and power, to convert or prepare himself thereunto.*—(Rom. iii. 10, 12; viii. 2; vii. 14; 2 Tim. ii. 26; Col. ii. 13; Rom. v. 6.) There must be the Father's giving and drawing, his gift and power, otherwise there is no coming to Christ. (John vi. 44, 45.) Men are without Christ in their natural conditions; (Eph. ii. 12;) they are dead to his life and righteousness.

CON. III. *The Lord calls for human endeavours; and would have men do more than they do.*—To those who had the talents he saith, "Occupy till I come:"* (Luke xix. 13:) Be pragmatical; bestir yourselves, and improve your talents, so that at my return I may find you gainers; and he that hid his talent in a napkin is branded for a "wicked servant," (verse 22,) and for a "wicked and slothful servant." (Matt. xxv. 26.)

CON. IV. *Men may do more than they do.*—"There is none that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee." (Isai. lxiv. 7.) They did not shake off lukewarmness and laziness, and rouse up themselves to take hold of God by faith and prayer. It is the complaint of Christ that he was hungry, and they gave him no meat; thirsty, &c. They might have done those things, and bestowed their estates upon Christ's members, as well as others. It is evident men may do more than they do, for that they do not that in their healths which they do in time of their affliction; then they will "early" seek God. (Hosea v. 15.) Weak ones do more than stronger; many of weak parts act beyond those of larger abilities. Many complain in their sickness, that they have lost time, and not done what they might. Where is the man that dares plead it before the Lord, that he hath done all he could? Because men do not what they might, the Lord may not only deny grace unto them doing something, yea, doing much, but justly condemn them because they did not what was in their power.† It is a common saying among Papists, Jesuits,

* Πραγματευσασθε. This signifies, *Negotiari in aliquâ re ad lucrum.*—BUDÆUS. "Trade in something which may produce profit."—EDIT.

† Nos negamus ullos unquam fuisse bene utentes bono natura propter Deum, itaque nos dubitamus esse aliquod meritum congrui.—CHAMIERI *Panstratia Catholica*, tom. iii. l. 14. c. 4. "We deny that there have ever been any men who employed aright, according to godliness, the good which they had by nature; and we therefore doubt concerning the existence of merit of congruity."—EDIT.

Arminians, and others, *Facienti quod in se est, gratiam non denegat Deus.* ["God denies not grace to him who does that which it is in his power to do."] This is no sound foundation, for it supposeth some men do act to the uttermost of their power. But whoever yet did all that was in his power? Whoever went so far, as that he might not have gone one step farther? Did ever any read, hear, or pray so much, but he might have read, heard, and prayed more? Jehoram might have waited on the Lord longer. (2 Kings vi. 33.)

CON. V. *Human endeavours are not required to co-operate with God's grace, and so make it effectual; but his grace makes their endeavours effectual when he pleaseth.*—Physical means make not God's power effectual; but his power makes them effectual; and so it is in men's endeavours. "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." (Rom. ix. 16.)

CON. VI. *All that men do before conversion is not in vain, fruitless, and to no purpose.*—When Rehoboam and the princes humbled themselves at the preaching of Shemaiah, they were reprieved and delivered from destruction. (2 Chron. xii. 12.) Ahab's humiliation did adjourn the judgment. (1 Kings xxi. 27, 29.) The Ninevites found favour with God upon their fasting and repentance. (Jonah iii. 8—10.)

CON. VII. *All the actings and endeavours of men, whatsoever they be, are not formaliter dispositions and preparations to conversion, so that conversion must necessarily follow upon them; for there is no necessary connexion between the actings of men and divine grace.*—The Lord hath nowhere said, "If you act so far, or be so disposed, qualified, or prepared, I will convert you." If God's grace did depend upon men's actings, then those that are most civil and moral must be taken, and those who are profane and rebellious must be left; but Pharisees were excluded, when publicans and harlots were admitted. Great sinners sometimes are brought in, who did nothing towards their conversion, when those that did much are shut out. Mary Magdalene, a great and infamous sinner, is taken, when the foolish virgins were refused. They were virgins, free from the spots and pollutions of the world; they had lamps, professions; they did much, they went out to meet the Bridegroom, they gat oil into their lamps, they went to the door, and they cried, "Lord, Lord, open to us!" and there was no opening to them. What preparations had Paul to this work of conversion? He was "a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and an injurious person;" these were his dispositions and* preparatory works [which] he had towards his conversion. (1 Tim. i. 13.) †

CON. VIII. *Those that live under the means of grace, the administrations of law and gospel, have some operations and gifts of the Spirit, (which some call "common, preventing, and exciting grace,") whereby they are enabled to do many things towards and in order to conversion.*—The scribe that was teachable, and answered Christ discreetly, was "not far from the kingdom of God." (Mark xii. 32, 34.) He was nearer unto it

* The words, "his dispositions and" are omitted in the fourth edition.—EDIT.

† *Hæc sunt opera preparatoria, quibus se effert Paulus.*—JUNIUS in locum. "These are the preparatory works of which Paul boasteth."—EDIT.

than those [who] had not the means. The preaching of the gospel is to make the converted meet for glory, and the unconverted meet for grace, to prepare and bring them to regeneration. "I have begotten you through" the preaching of "the gospel," saith Paul to the Corinthians. (1 Cor. iv. 15.) The preaching of it wrought much in them, before conversion itself was wrought. Balaam, living under the law, and amongst or nigh the people of God, was much enlightened, and greatly convinced; insomuch that he desired to "die the death of the righteous."

CON. IX. *No actings of men, or qualifications in men, are causes of conversion, do merit it, or make them congruous for it.*—They are not antecedent causes, or so much as *causæ sine quibus non*; ["causes without which a thing cannot be effected;"] but the Lord doth, according to his prerogative, work sometimes where they are not, as, "When thou wast in thy blood, I said unto thee, Live." (Ezek. xvi. 6.) There was no cause, condition, or qualification in them to beget affection, or move the Lord to do aught for them. It was the time of his love, and he said, "Live."

CON. X. *Whatever the endeavours and dispositions of men be, they are only by way of order, before conversion.*—They are only antecedaneous thereunto on man's part, not necessary on God's part, who can, and oft doth, work where there be no such previous acts or dispositions, as in the dry bones in Ezekiel; they had no disposition or power in them to rattle and come together; neither had the dead womb of Sarah any power or virtue in it to conceive.

CON. XI. *Acts of men towards conversion are not to be rested in, as any satisfaction for sin, as making the person acceptable to God, or as inducements of God towards conversion.*—But we must acknowledge ourselves "unprofitable servants," when we have done all that is commanded us. (Luke xvii. 10.)*

CON. XII. *Man's quickening, believing, repenting, or turning, are not acts of man in part, and partly of God; but they are wholly of God and from God.*—"You hath he quickened." (Eph. ii. 1.) They were "dead," and could not quicken themselves; it was he, the Lord. So, "No man can come to me, except the Father draw him." (John vi. 44.) This drawing, or causing the soul to believe in Christ, is wholly the Father's work. And Ephraim saith, "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned." (Jer. xxxi. 18.) He could not turn himself: if the Lord had not done it, it would never have been done. Paul saith, "It is not in him that wills," &c., "but in God," &c. (Rom. ix. 16.) The will and deed are of him, not of man. (Phil. ii. 13.) It is the Lord who is *Causa totius entis* ["the Cause of all being"]. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights." (James i. 17.) It is not a perfect gift if man contribute to it.† The

* *Qui nobis ipsis nihil a Deo meriti sumus, quibus Deus nullam gratiam, nullam mercedem debet; scilicet si jure nobiscum agat juxta conditionem servorum.*—LUCAS BRUGENSIS *in locum.* "We are those who have merited for ourselves nothing from God, and to whom God owes no (*gratiam*) favour, no reward; that is, if of right God act toward us according to the condition of servants."—EDIT.

† *Nisi donum Dei esset ipsa ad Deum nostra conversio, non ei diceretur, Deus virtutum, converte nos.*—AUGUSTINUS *De Gratia et libero Arbitrio.* "Unless our very conversion to God were his gift, we could not address to Him this request: 'Convert us, (or, Turn us again,) O God of hosts.'" Psalm lxxx. 7.—EDIT.

saying of the father is sound: *Velle habemus; sed bene velle, et in parte et in toto, est a gratia.* ["We have the power *simply to will*; but *to will aright*, both in part and in whole, is entirely of grace."]—AUGUSTINE.

CON. XIII. *Man, in the first act of conversion, is merely passive.*—Those who believe are "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God;" (John i. 13;) nothing of man's will comes in. Not *ultimum dictamen intellectus* ["not the last dictate of the understanding"] did set the will on work here, but the Lord "begat them of his own will." (James i. 18.) So that man's will is not *semiviva et semimortua*, but *penitus extincta ad bonum spirituale*, [is not "half-alive and half-dead; but, with regard to all spiritual good, it is completely dead and extinguished,"] and so *ad hoc*, "to this" of conversion, as the vital faculty is gone in a dead man.

CON. XIV. *Man's will, being first converted to God, and by God himself, converts itself also unto God, (acta agit);* ["it acts again what had been already done;"] *as a child's hand in writing being acted by the master's hand, it writes.*—Hence man may be said to turn himself; for, the will being healed and made good, of unwilling willing, it hath an intrinsical principle of willing good, and so dominion over its own acts, whereby it turneth itself to God. Where there is the Father's drawing first, there is presently the soul's coming.

These conclusions being laid down, I shall show you what men can do towards their conversion: but first I must inform you, that conversion may be taken two ways:—

1. Strictly for the infusion of grace into the heart and will of man, whereby he is regenerate, and his will made good. Here man and his will being merely passive, (for in this act *voluntas nec est libera nec voluntaria*) ["the will is neither free nor voluntary,"] he can do nothing towards his own conversion in this sense,

2. It may be taken *pro totâ serie auxiliorum quibus ad eam movemur*; "for all helps and means which further us that way;" and in this sense it is affirmed, that men may do much towards their conversion; they may materially dispose themselves thereunto.

1. *They may do as much as Heathens have done, or would have done had they lived under the same means, and had such motives, as they have.*—The Lord tells Ezekiel, that, if he had sent him to a people "of a strange speech, and of a hard language," (that was, to the Gentiles,) "they would have hearkened unto him;" (Ezek. iii. 6;) they would have received him, and obeyed his doctrine. It is certified from the mouth of Christ, that, "if the mighty works done in Chorazin and Bethsaida had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented;" (Matt. xi. 21;) and that "the men of Nineveh should rise in judgment with the then present generation, and condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas was there." (Matt. xii. 41.) If one sermon of Jonas, who was one of the lesser prophets, prevailed so much with Heathens, why should not many sermons of Christ, who is the chief of all the prophets, prevail as much, if not more, with Christians? *Væ torpori nostro!* ["Alas for our torpor!"] What will

become of us? Rahab showed kindness to the people of God, and that was antecedaneous to her conversion. Herod heard the word gladly; (Mark vi. 20;) and Pharaoh desired the prayers of Moses and Aaron. (Exod. viii. 28.)

2. *They may sit under a powerful ministry, coming with reverence before God, not offering the sacrifice of fools, but [may] hear the truth without being "contentious against it," as they were, Rom. ii. 8.*—They may let the truth have a full stroke at them and their corruptions. They may "receive the love of the truth;" (2 Thess. ii. 10;) and not "hold it in unrighteousness;" (Rom. i. 18;) so that they will not suffer it to have influence into their affections, and to break out into action.

3. *They may hearken to the voice of God's judgments and rods, when they are abroad upon themselves and others.*—No man should despise the chastisement of the Lord; but every one should hear the voice of the rod, and who hath appointed it. The prophet Isaiah tells us, that "the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness, when the judgments of the Lord are in the earth." (Isai. xxvi. 9.) His judgments are the best schoolmasters, and teach many good lessons.* Waldus was taught, by the hand of God upon one of his sociates, to become a new man. When Manasseh was in affliction, "he besought the Lord, and humbled himself greatly." (2 Chron. xxxiii. 12.) *Vexatio dat intellectum*; ["Vexation imparts understanding;"] when the Lord doth box and buffet us with his judgments, our understandings are opened, and fear falls upon us: † and though this fear be *servile* at first, yet it may end in *filial*; the spirit of bondage may become the Spirit of adoption.

4. *They may observe the difference [which] is made in men's lives after conversion, from that which was before.*—Conversion is a strange work, it makes a man another man. ‡ They, in Peter, thought it a strange thing that men left their old courses. (1 Peter iv. 4.) In conversion, wolves are made lambs, and persecutors, preachers. How was it, that when Paul preached, "all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them who called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?" (Acts ix. 21.) True, it was he unconverted [who] did so, not he converted; now he was another, a new man; now he was a Christian, and had other principles and practices than before; there was a great change wrought in him, and so in Mary Magdalene. Observation of such examples has its use and energy: § for examples are strong traces to draw men from wicked practices. "Why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" said Paul to Peter. (Gal. ii. 14.) Peter's example was the compulsion. There is a kind of compulsion in examples, not violent, but alluring and attracting. The example of the

* *Discite justitiam moniti, et non temnere numen.*—VIRGILII Æneis, vi. 620.

† "Be just, ye mortals! by these torments awed,
These dreadful torments, not to scorn a god!"—PITT.

‡ Παθων δε τε νηπιος εγω.—HOMERI Illas, xvii. 32. "To be taught by sufferings only, is the part of fools."—COWPER.

§ *Ego non sum ego.* "I am no longer my former self."—EDIT. § *Præcepta docent et ducunt, exempla trahunt.* "Precepts teach and lead men; examples draw and attract"—EDIT.

believing wife may win the unbelieving husband. (1 Peter iii. 1.) A prudent, gracious wife gains much upon a graceless husband, by her modesty and obedience.

5. *They may see what equity there is, that they should serve the Lord, being his creatures and servants; and not only serve him, but so serve him as they have served their sinful lusts, and something more, seeing they depend on him.*—*Ἀνθρώπινον λέγω*: “I speak after the manner of men,” saith Paul; It is rational, just, and equal, that “as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness, &c., so now yield them servants to righteousness, unto holiness:” (Rom. vi. 19:) it is reason, justice, and equity that you should do so. Should not men take as much pains for heaven, as for hell, for their souls as for their bodies, for the Lord Christ as for creatures? Should they not be as diligent to weaken their lusts as they have been to strengthen them? Should they not be at as much cost to maintain the pure worship of God, as the inventions and traditions of men? It is a complaint of the Lord: “Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not?” (Isai. lv. 2.) They might have spent their money, labour, time, and strength, and as much for true bread which would have fed their souls, as they did for that which was as no bread, but rather husks for swine. (Luke xv. 16.)

6. *They may remove and abate sin in part, which is done by the contrary.*—Knowledge removes ignorance, as light doth darkness; grief abates pleasure, and fear boldness in sinning; patience keeps under passion, and fasting tames unruly lusts. When the strength of a fever is abated by physical means, a man is disposed towards health; and when a man hath gotten moralities, (which he may do,) and by them made an abatement of his sins and lusts, he is *materially* disposed to grace; as the ground when ploughed is for seed, though the seed be not yet sown.

7. *They may do MATERIALLY what converts do.*—There is no act, considered in its mere nature and kind, which a true Christian may perform, but one unconverted may perform also, and may have like dispositions * unto those [which] they have. They may love God: it is clear, they loved God who loved “pleasures more than God.” (2 Tim. iii. 4.) They may have faith: Simon Magus believed. (Acts viii. 13.) They may hate sin in others, if not in themselves: Absalom hated Amnon’s uncleanness. (2 Sam. xiii. 22.) They may delight in God, and in his ways. (Isai. lviii. 2.) They may have a zeal for God, and such a zeal as may prevail more with them than temporal things: the Jews were so zealous of the law, and for the traditions of the elders, that they would have ventured their lives for them: (Rom. x. 2:) so Paul before his conversion, how zealous was he! (Acts xxii. 3, 4; Gal. i. 14.)

To come more particularly and closely to the question: Though conversion be wrought in an instant, yet men have some previous dispositions thereunto, who live under the sound of the gospel; and obtain such knowledge as worketh in them several things, which I shall show unto you from Acts ii. 37, 38: “Now when they heard this, they were

* In the first edition, the clause stands thus: “and have many like dispositions.”—EDIT.

pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you," &c. Many preparative dispositions or qualifications they had unto repentance or conversion, but they had not yet repented; for Peter saith, notwithstanding these, "Repent."

1. *Men may be convinced of sin, as these were.*—They found they had transgressed the law of God, and were guilty before him; for they were pricked in their hearts. Men may have strong convictions of sin, and not [be] converted from sin.

2. *They may mourn for sin, and grieve that they have done such and such things.*—These men had crucified the Lord Christ, put an innocent person to death, saw themselves in an ill condition, and thereupon mourned and grieved sorely, as the word "pricked" intimates: * they had such grief as pained and afflicted their hearts. There is a *how* set upon Ahab's humiliation by the Lord himself: "Seest thou *how* Ahab humbleth himself?" (1 Kings xxi. 29.)

3. *They may be filled with fear, and dread the threatenings and punishments of God due to sin.*—This was the case here: They had provoked the Lord against their souls, felt their consciences condemning of them, apprehended the judgments of God near unto them, and so were possessed with much fear lest the Lord should destroy them; and therefore say, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" We know not whither to go, where to hide ourselves, or what to do, that we may escape the things we have deserved and fear."

4. *They may confess their sin, renounce it, and reform much.*—These auditors of Peter, being pricked in their hearts, said, "What shall we do?" We have sinned, and that greatly; we confess and acknowledge it before God and you; it was a cursed act of ours, and we abhor it; we will never do so hereafter." They were sick of sin, and vomited it up, as they in Peter; (2 Peter ii. 22;) and would change their minds and manners, and walk in any way the apostles should direct them. The merchant "sold all that he had" for the "pearl," before he "bought it." (Matt. xiii. 46.) This *selling all* is made, by some interpreters, to be his restraint from all inward sin, and his conformity to all outward duties. This was much, and yet not more than unconverted persons may attain unto. Herod reformed many things. The foolish virgins went far, as was said before: They were virgins, free from spot and pollution; they had lamps, visible professions; "they went forth to meet the bridegroom;" they had some faith in him, and affection to him, else they would not have gone forth.

5. *They may justify the law and the Lord, should he condemn them, [and] deal severely with them.*—"What shall we do?" say these persons. "We are guilty. We have broken the law, which is holy, righteous, and good; and so is God likewise, who is the author thereof. If therefore we be condemned, and must bear the curse and punishment of the law, we must both justify the Lord and it." Men may accept the punishment of their iniquity, and justify the inflictors thereof. Man hath no

* *Κατενυγησαν* *acutum animi dolorem significat.*—PISCATOR. "It signifies acute sorrow of spirit."—EDIT.

cause to complain of the punishment of his sins. It is brought in by way of oburgation: "Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?" (Lam. iii. 39.) He may complain of his sins, not of his punishment. Many malefactors, after sentence passed on them, do justify both judge and law.

6. *Men may seriously consider the nature of their sin, what circumstances it is clothed with; what aggravations it admits; what crimson and scarlet is in it; what light, love, mercies, means, engagements it is against.*—"What shall we do?" say these troubled souls. "We have sinned against the light of nature, the law of Moses, our own consciences, the love of God and Christ towards sinners, in that we have crucified Christ, 'a man approved of God,' who, we knew, had done many 'miracles and wonders and signs,' (Acts ii. 22,) and deserved not death! O 'what shall we do,' our sins are so dreadful?"

It is in men's power to lay to heart what wrong an infinite, blessed, holy God hath by their sins, what mercies they keep from them, how greatly they defile them, what miseries and mischiefs they bring upon them, what a weight of wrath hangs over their heads for them! They may consider what checks of conscience they have stifled, what motions of the Spirit they have withstood, what precious seasons of grace they have neglected and slighted; what pains they have taken to satisfy a lust, how dear it hath cost them; how careless they have been of their souls, what a separation their sins have made between God and them! They may mind and meditate on it, that man's life is short; ("The pleasures of sin [are] but for a season;") that there is absolute necessity of turning to God; ("Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish;") that turning is acceptable to God, else he would not call for it, nor make such gracious promises to it, as are in holy writ.

7. *They may come to it, to see no help in themselves or in any creature whatsoever.*—"What shall we do?" say these wounded men. "We cannot help ourselves. We have no plasters that will stick, no medicines which will heal. We are wounded in our consciences; and as our hands, so theirs, are too short to help us. It is not in human power to bind up our breaches. 'What shall we do?'" Men may see themselves helpless; that they are without strength, shut up under sin, guilt, and unbelief, children of wrath, and in a lost condition, the law cursing them and sentencing them to suffer.

8. *They may arrive to a resolution of doing or suffering any thing to be saved.*—"What shall we do?" We are resolved, if we may find mercy and live, to do whatever shall be commanded, to suffer whatever shall be imposed." The pride of their spirits is broken, their hearts become teachable and tractable, and their resolutions high for any thing to be done or suffered. So was it with the jailer. (Acts xvi. 30.) When men are in storms at sea, or on their sick beds at home, they resolve, if God will spare them, to do or suffer any thing for God and his ways, and their own salvation.

9. *They may conceive fair hopes of mercy.*—The Lord Christ being held out in the gospel, and freely offered to sinners, this breeds hope in them, a general and preparatory hope. "'What shall we do?'"

You told us that 'God had raised up that Jesus [whom] we crucified, and made him Lord and Christ;' and that 'whosoever should call upon his name should be saved;' therefore we hope there is mercy for us." Thus had they a hope kindled in them; and Peter, in the two next verses, strengthens their hope, saying, "Repent, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you and to your children," &c. (Acts ii. 38, 39.)

10. *They may thirst after, and pray for, the mercy hoped for.*—Such a qualification was in these men. "'What shall we do?' You men of God, we are athirst, and do entreat you to tell us where we may have water to quench our heat, mercy to pardon our sins, balm to cure our wounds." The publican in Luke hath left us his short, pithy, and affectionate prayer to imitate, being in this case and state. "Lord," saith he, "be merciful to me a sinner!" (Luke xviii. 13.) He was sensible of his sin and of his want of righteousness; he had hope of mercy; and thereupon came to the temple to pray, and prayed earnestly for mercy,—and conversion is none of the least mercies of God, or least needful for a sinner.

11. *Men being come thus far, they are to wait upon God for doing the work.*—When the pots were filled with water, the water was not made wine till Christ put forth his mighty power. Neither were the men who lay at the pool of Bethesda cured till the angel came down and stirred the waters. So a man in this case is to wait until the Spirit of the Lord come in, *et omnipotentis suavitate*, ["by his omnipotent sweetness,"] or *victrici delectatione*, ["by his victorious and delightful solace,"] overcome his will, and set it for the Lord and spiritual things. When this is [done], the work is done, and done without violence to the will; for it is an omnipotent presence prevails with the will, and it is immediately made willing in the day of this power.

By these forementioned things men are in a proximity or nextness to conversion, but not converted. It must be an higher power than our own which lifts us up into an higher nature, or state, than we are in at present. Though men may do much upon moral persuasions; yet not so much as to make themselves converts or spiritual, of animal or natural. Previous actions and preparative dispositions may make a man a picture of a convert, not a true or living convert.

II. Having shown what persons CAN and may do towards their conversion, it remains to declare what they OUGHT to do.

The word "must" or "ought," the signification of *dei* in Greek, imports two things:—

1. *Necessity.* "There *must be* heresies." (1 Cor. xi. 19.) It is no man's duty to broach or bring in heresies, but they *must be*; it is necessary for the discovery of men "approved."

2. *Duty.* "God is a Spirit," and *must be worshipped* "in spirit and in truth." (John iv. 24.) It is men's duty so to do. It was the pharisees' and scribes' duty to "pay tithe of mint, anise, and cummin," &c.; therefore saith Christ, "These things ought ye to have done." (Matt. xxiii. 23.)

Now, then, what persons can do they ought to do.

First. *There is a necessity of it.*—We must do what we can, else we are slothful and unfaithful, and our damnation will be just. One thing is necessary; namely, to turn unto God, that our souls may be saved. Here it will hold good, “Turn or burn.” If it be necessary to prevent burning in everlasting flames, it is necessary to turn, and so to do the utmost we can towards the same.

Secondly. *It is our duty.*—“Strive to enter in at the strait gate,” saith Christ. He commands it, and lays this injunction upon all, *Αγωναζεσθε*, “Strain, be in an agony;” as Christ was in the work of man’s redemption, so let men be in the works of their conversion, put forth themselves as they did in the Olympic Games. The wrestlers and runners exerted all their might to obtain; and so must men about the work of their conversion. The Lord, who hath no pleasure in the death of a sinner, saith, “Turn yourselves, and live.” There is life in turning; and what should not men do to preserve or obtain life?

The Lord hath two great ends in saying thus: “Turn yourselves, and live ye,” although he know man is not able to do it:—

1. *That we may see how corrupt and impotent our nature is, and so [that he may] break the strength of human confidence thereby, and bring us to be sensible of, and thoroughly to bewail, our condition.*—It is not so as some think and speak; namely, that “whatever God commands, man hath power to do.”* What man ever kept the law since the fall of Adam? And is not the law given by way of command? If man could keep the law, we might be justified and have life by it. (Rom. viii. 3; Gal. iii. 21.) But the law can neither do the one nor the other; and why? Because man hath not power or strength to keep it.†

2. *To put us upon looking out for help from whence the command cometh.*—Hence is it that what the Lord commandeth us to do in one place, he promiseth to give in another. “Circumcise the foreskin of your heart;” (Deut. x. 16;) and God saith, “The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart.” (Deut. xxx. 6.) In the former verse to the text, they are commanded to make themselves new hearts and new spirits, which they could not do; therefore, in Ezek. xxxvi. 26, the Lord promiseth to “give and put” the same in them. “Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols;” (Ezek. xiv. 6;) and, “I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes.” (Ezek. xxxvi. 27.) The Spirit [which] God would put in should turn them from their idols and own ways, and cause them to walk in his ways. “The Lord doth therefore command such things, that, our desires and endeavours being quickened, he may reach forth help unto us.”‡

Therefore let us apply ourselves to all these means and ways, by which the Lord worketh conversion. Let us make use of all the ways fore-named; and especially hear the word preached, and pray, “Turn us, O Lord, and we shall be turned.” And see to it that we use the means

* *Quicquid nobis præcipitur a Deo, ad illud faciendum sufficientem potentiam habemus.*

† *Dicit Pelagius, quod homo solius liberi arbitrii viribus potest perficere Dei mandatu.*—

BRADWARDINUS *De Causa Dei*, lib. ii. c. 4. “Pelagius declared, that solely by the power of his free-will man is capable of perfectly performing the commands of God.”—EDIT.

‡ *Ideo dat præceptum, ut excitet desiderium et præstet auxilium.*—LEO.

in good earnest. We may do more (as hath been showed) than we do. It is the counsel of him who was wiser than other men, that whatever our "hands do find to do," we should "do it with our might;" (Eccles. ix. 10;) that is, with our whole might. God must have the heart, the whole heart, and the fervency of it. "Be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." (Rom. xii. 11.) Laziness and lukewarmness will not promote the work; fervour and diligence may further it much. See Prov. ii. 3—6; and remember what the Lord Christ hath said, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." (Luke xi. 9.)

SERMON III.

BY THE REV. BENJAMIN NEEDLER, B.C.L.,

AND SOMETIME FELLOW OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD.

HOW MAY BELOVED LUSTS BE DISCOVERED AND MORTIFIED?

And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.—Matt. v. 29, 30.

My text is a part of Christ's Sermon on the Mount. I shall not hold you long in the context or portal, but only pass through unto the words that I have read.

In the verse before, our Saviour tells us, that "whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." This was spoken in opposition to the scribes and pharisees; and may be urged against many carnal protestants, that have but gross conceits concerning the law of God; and in particular, that the outward act of uncleanness only is the breach of the seventh commandment: "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Now, our Saviour corrects this mistake: that "whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart;" not *will do it*, but *he hath done it already*. There is a speedy passage from the eye to the heart: and because the eye and the hand are many times used as principal incitements to this sin, our Saviour gives his disciples and us this serious and holy advice, in the words that I have read: "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee," &c.

The words contain a double exhortation, together with a double reason and enforcement.

1 *A double exhortation*: "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee."

2. *A double reason and enforcement*: "For it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell:" and so again, verse 30.

In the handling of these words, I shall first speak to them by way of **EXPLICATION**, and then by way of **OBSERVATION**.

I. For the **EXPLICATION** of them, I would entreat you to take into your thoughts these particulars:—

1. We must inquire into the meaning of these two expressions, the "right eye," and the "right hand." Most expositors by far carry it, that these words are to be expounded improperly and figuratively: and here I shall not acquaint you, how popish writers abound in their own sense concerning these words. There are sweet truths, that, kindly and freely, without straining, may be deduced from this scripture. Like the bee, I would not tear the flower I light on.

There are two interpretations given of this place that I shall take notice of:—

(1.) There are some, that by "right eye" and "right hand" understand our nearest and dearest comforts which we have in this world, which must be parted with for Christ's sake, yet not absolutely, but upon this consideration, *if they offend*: "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee." Now this is *bona expositio*, "a good exposition," as our divines distinguish; but not *recta expositio*, "a right exposition;" agreeable to the analogy of faith, but not suitable to the scope and design of our Saviour in this place. Therefore,

(2.) There are others, that by "right eye" and "right hand" understand beloved lusts, as hard to be parted with as right hands or right eyes. Our Saviour mentions the right eye and the right hand, because they are most prized, as having more than ordinary of spirits and natural heat, and so more fit for action: I am sure this may be said concerning the right hand.

Indeed, I conceive it a hard matter to prove, that by divine appointment one hand should be more useful than the other: but as God hath given us two eyes, and two ears, so two hands, to use both indifferently, and that, if need required, the one might supply the loss of the other. *If any*, methinks the left hand should be preferred; because it is nearest the heart, the fountain of life and activity. But Christ takes them as he finds them, as he doth in many other cases; and, as we have ordered the matter, the right hand is more active and strong than the other, and so more precious. But, to our purpose:—

Some, I say, by the "right eye," and the "right hand," understand our beloved lusts. It is the usage of the Spirit of God in the scriptures, in a figurative way to express corruption by the parts and members of our bodies. So St. Paul: "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members." (Rom. vii. 23.) And the same apostle: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection," &c. (Col. iii. 5.) As the members of

the natural body need castigation, ("I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection," 1 Cor. ix. 27,) so the members of the sinful body need mortification: and here, in the text, sin is expressed by the right eye and the right hand.

2. *If thy right eye offend thee*—In the Greek it is *σκανδαλίζει σε*, "scandalize thee," hinder thee in a way of duty. For you must note, that obedience and holiness are often in scripture represented unto us by "a way." To give you one place for all: "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord:" (Psalm cxix. 1 :) and men are said to be offended, when something causes them to stumble, or fall in this way. Sin is, as it were, a block or a stone, at which men stumble and fall. "Let him which thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."

3. *Pluck it out, and cast it from thee; cut it off, and cast it from thee*—A metaphor taken from surgeons, whose manner it is, when the whole body is endangered by any part, to cut it off, *ne pars sincera trahatur* ["lest the sound part be drawn after that which is corrupt"]. But before I leave these expressions, take notice of the emphasis that is in them, in these particulars:

(1.) It is not said, "Suffer thy right eye to be plucked out, or thy right hand to be cut off:" but, "Thou thyself pluck it out, and cast it from thee; cut it off, and cast it from thee." To note two things:—

(i.) That we ourselves must engage in the mortifying of our lusts.—Sinners, with their own hands, must pull out their own eyes. It is not enough to cry unto God for help, and, in the mean time, to be careless and idle, as if nothing were to be done on our part. Mortification is a work incumbent upon us, although we are empowered thereunto by the Spirit: "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." (Rom. viii. 13.) We must mortify, although by the Spirit. The duty is ours, though the strength be God's. So here: "If thy right eye offend thee, thou thyself pluck it out, and cast it from thee."

(ii.) That we must be a willing people in this, as in all other duties.—A Christian *dieth to sin, is not put to death*.

(2.) It is not said, "If thine eye offend thee, observe it more than ordinarily, look narrowly to it," but, "pluck it out;" to note, that nothing less is like to do our souls good, than the mortifying, the killing, the cutting off of our corruptions.—Let a man's hand be cut off; it is a dead member immediately. It is not so with plants when they are cut off from their roots; they will grow and sprout again: and so it is with the most inferior sort of sensitive creatures; for instance, cut worms into several pieces, every part will live, and stir; hence the learned call them *insecta*. When the head of a fowl is separated from its body, it will live and flutter for some time. But this cannot be said of the most noble sort of creatures. This is a sure rule in nature: *Unitas et indivisibilitas est comes perfectionis; multitudo et divisibilitas, imperfectionis*: "Union is a sign of perfection, divisibility of imperfection." The more perfect any being is, the more united it is to itself, and the less any part of it can live *nisi in toto*, "but in the whole." So that this phrase is a great elegancy, to note the killing of our beloved lusts: "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee," &c.

(3.) It is not only said, "Pluck it out," but, "Cast it from thee;" to note, that it is not enough for a man to leave his sin for the present, but he must renounce it for ever.—We must not part with sin, as with a friend, with a purpose to see it again, and to have the same familiarity with it as before, or possibly greater. *Amantium iræ amoris redintegratio est*: "The falling-out of lovers is the renewing of love." We must not only shake hands *with it*, but shake our hands *of it*, as Paul did shake the viper off his hand into the fire: "Pluck it out, and cast it from thee."

Thus much for the explication of the words, for I shall have occasion only to deal with the former part of these two verses at this time.

II. I am to give you the OBSERVATIONS. I shall speak but a few words to some of them, that I may reserve myself for that which I mainly intend.

OBSERVATION I. *That the eye and the hand are excellent and useful parts of the body of man.*—You see here our Saviour singles out these, from all other parts, as being very precious: "If thy right eye offend thee," &c. "If thy right hand offend thee," &c.

1. As for the eye, our Saviour tells us, that it is "the light of the body:" "The light of the body is the eye." (Matt. vi. 22.) What is the world without the sun, but a dark, melancholy dungeon? What is "a man without eyes, but monstrous and deformed," *monstrum horrendum, informe, cui lumen ademptum*? The two eyes are two luminaries, that God hath set up in the microcosm, "man's little world." When God would express his tender love unto his people, he calls them, "the apple of his eye." "He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye:" (Zech. ii. 8:) and the like phrase St. Paul makes use of, when he speaks of the love of the Galatians unto himself: "I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your eyes, and have given them to me." (Gal. iv. 15.) I have read of the emperor Adrian, that, with an arrow, by accident, put out one of his servant's eyes. He commands him to be brought to him, and bids him ask what he would, that he might make him amends. The poor man was silent. He pressed him again. He told the emperor, he would ask nothing, but he wished that he had the eye which he had lost; intimating, that an emperor was not able to make satisfaction for the loss of an eye.

O be very watchful over this excellent part! Make a covenant with your eyes. (Job xxxi. 1.) Shut your eyes from seeing evil. (Isai. xxxiii. 15.) Set no wicked thing before your eyes. (Psalm ci. 3.) As the apostle saith in another case, "Doth not even nature teach you?" God hath made a covering for the eye, that opens and shuts with a great deal of easiness, to teach us, that it is expedient sometimes that the eye be closed, and not holden open to every object.

2. As for the hand, it is the prime part for action. Aristotle calls it *organon organon*, "an instrument of instruments." Without this, there could be no cities, no towns, no merchandise, no husbandry, no manufactures. Without this, man would differ but a little from "the beasts that perish;" for, what would his reason stand him in stead, if he had not an hand to improve it? The naturalists observe, that man could

neither do nor say, without this useful and necessary part: for if a man did not eat with his hands, he must, as a brute, feed with his mouth; and by that means the lips would become so thick, that he would not be able to speak with any distinctness; and, indeed, we find by experience, that they that have thick lips have an imperfection in their speech.

O improve this excellent part for God! A good life is expressed in scripture by "a clean hand:" "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded." (James iv. 8.) It is the greatest absurdity imaginable to plead a good heart, as many do, and yet have a foul and wicked hand: this is as if a man should say, "Here is a tree that bears ill fruit, but it hath an excellent root."

OBS. II. *That offences are from ourselves: or the cause of stumbling and falling is from ourselves: some lust or other, some right-eye sin, or some right-hand sin.* "If thy right eye offend thee," &c.—Sin unmortified will very much endanger a man's falling. Truly, if you would not have your right eye, or your right hand, offend you, you must offend them: "Pluck it out, and cast it from thee; cut it off, and cast it from thee." If you would see clearly in God's way, ye must pluck out your right eye; if you would walk evenly in God's path, you must cut off your right foot.

OBS. III. *That sin is, properly and to all intents and purposes, our own.* "If thy right eye offend," &c. "If thy right hand offend," &c.—The apostle, writing to the Colossians, speaks thus: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection," &c. (Col. iii. 5.) These sins were their members. The whole body of sin is ours; and the members of that body are ours. There is a great difference between our *natural* body and our *sinful* body: our natural body is ours *quoad usum*, "with reference to our use;" but it is God's *quoad creationem*, "with reference to its creation." The body of man was originally and fundamentally created. Now there is a twofold creation:—

1. When a being is made of nothing: this is called by the learned, *creatio immediata*, "an immediate creation."

2. When a being is made of something, but that something is *materia inhabilis*, "matter altogether indisposed for the producing of that effect;" and so "is little, if any thing, more than nothing with reference unto that which is made;" *materia est aliquid in se, nihil tamen respectu operis*. Thus when God made the woman of a rib, when Christ turned water into wine, when God made man of the dust of the earth, it was a creation; and this is called by the learned, *creatio mediata*, "a mediate creation:" and our *natural* body still, in a way of generation, is God's creature, but our *sinful* body is our creature. Hence the apostle: "Mortify your members which are on the earth;" and our Saviour in the text: "If thy right eye offend thee," &c. So that sin is, properly and to all intents and purposes, our own.

OBS. IV. *That although all sins are our own, yet there are some sins that in a more especial manner may be called ours; namely, our right-eye sins, and our right-hand sins.* Or, if you will: every man hath his proper, particular iniquity, his beloved sin. "If thy right eye offend thee,

pluck it out, and cast it from thee: if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee."—And the handling of this doctrine will suit the case that is my task this morning; namely, "How may beloved lusts be discovered and mortified?"

In the prosecution of this observation, I shall follow, by God's assistance, this method:—

I. I shall inquire, why sin is expressed sometimes in scripture by the parts and members of our body; as in this place by the "right eye," and the "right hand."

II. I shall show you, that our right-eye sins, and our right-hand sins, our beloved lusts, may in a more special manner be called ours; or, that every man hath his proper, his particular, iniquity.

III. I shall inquire, how this comes to pass, that particular persons have their proper and particular sins.

IV. The use and application.

I. I am to inquire, *why sin in scripture is expressed by the parts and members of our body, and particularly here by the "right eye," and the "right hand."*

1. You must note, that the whole mass of corruption in scripture is called by the name of "the old man," and "the body of sin:" "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed." (Rom. vi. 6.) It is called "the old man." In every young man there is an old man. And it is called "the body of sin." Now, if sin in the lump and bulk be a body, then particular sins may fitly be termed the parts and members of this body.

2. Sin may be thus expressed; because as the natural body makes use of its several parts for the managing and carrying on of those works that are *natural*, so corruption makes use of several lusts for the effecting and promoting of those works that are *sinful*.

3. According to their notion that hold the soul by creation, as I conceive, sin is conveyed into the soul at first by means of the body. Certainly, the soul of man is pure and undefiled as it comes out of the hand of God. I do humbly propose to men of learning, whether that rule, *Corporeum non agit in incorporeum*, or that "a body cannot defile a spirit," is not further to be taken into consideration. We find by experience, that as the soul communicates its affections unto the body, the body hath life, and sense, and motion from the soul, that of itself is a * lifeless lump of clay; so the body again hath a very great influence on the soul, and can and doth communicate its distempers unto it. For instance: Those that have sanguine bodies are inclined to lust; those that are choleric, unto rashness and passion; those that are melancholy, unto suspicion and tenaciousness; those that are phlegmatic, unto dullness and cowardice. So that sin may be in the body *dispositivè*, before it be enlivened by the soul, though not *formaliter*. My meaning is, the body may have a disposition to defile the soul, before it is united unto the soul; and if so, no wonder if sin be expressed by the parts and members of our body.

4. Corruption looks at, and shows itself by, the sinful actions of the

* This line is unaccountably omitted in the fourth edition.—EDIT.

body; and therefore may have its denomination by the parts of it. Hence it is that the apostle, when he had concluded that the Jew and the Gentile were both under sin, to make this manifest he tells the Romans how sin discovered itself in the outward man: "Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues have they used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips," &c. (Rom. iii. 13, &c.) We read in scripture of the sins of the flesh, as well as of the spirit: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit." (2 Cor. vii. 1.) The sins of the spirit, like so many plague-sores, break out into the flesh. Wicked men are all over bespotted and be-leopard'd* with sin: lying is a spot in the tongue, pride is a spot in the eye, wrath a spot on the brow, bribery a spot in the hand, idolatry a spot on the knee: yea, they are called "spots and blemishes;" (2 Peter ii. 13;) not *spotted*, but "spots." Sin itself is a spot, and, like fire, it turns the subject it hath to deal with into its own nature. One part of the body in scripture is called "a world of iniquity:" "The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity." (James iii. 6.) How much iniquity is there in the world, when in this little member there is "a world of iniquity!"

Thus much shall suffice to have been spoken to the first thing propounded, namely, *why sin is expressed sometimes in scripture by the parts and members of our body.*

II. My second work is to show you, that *our right-eye sins, and our right-hand sins, our beloved lusts, may, in a more especial manner, be called ours; or, that every man hath his proper, his particular iniquity.*—"If thy right eye offend thee," &c. "If thy right hand offend thee," &c. Look, as it is with good men, though they have the seeds of every grace in them, yet some one may be said to be theirs in an eminent manner: (Abraham was eminent for obedience; Moses, for meekness; Job, for patience:) thus it is with wicked men; though they have the seed of every sin in them, yet some one may be said to be theirs in an especial manner. Wicked men in scripture are, as it were, marked out for several sins *calculo nigro* ["with a black stone, with an unfavourable suffrage"]:*—Cain, for his murder; Simeon and Levi, for their treachery; Corah and his company, for their conspiracy; Nebuchadnezzar, for his pride; Manasseh, for his cruelty; Balaam, for his covetousness.* Or, look, as it is in the *natural* body; (though every man hath blood, phlegm, choler, melancholy, yet some humour or other is predominant from which a man hath its denomination;) so it is in the *sinful* body, some sinful humour or other hath the predominancy. Most men have some *peccatum in deliciis*, "some sweet morsel" that they roll under their tongue, which they will by no means spit out or part with. It would be no hard matter to show you, that several nations have their proper and peculiar sins,—as the Spaniards theirs, the French theirs, the Dutch theirs. Look into the scripture, and you will find, that the Corinthians had their sin, which is thought to be wantonness and uncleanness; and therefore the apostle, in the epistles that he writes to them, uses so many

* The pious and learned author seems to have intended this word to refer to the spots of the leopard, as though it had been written *be-leoparded*, to distinguish it from a word much older, *belepered*, "spotted like a leprous person."—EDIT.

pressing arguments against this sin. The Cretians are branded for liars ; the Jews, for idolaters. So your towns have their sins ; villages, theirs ; cities, theirs. Possibly, London's sin may be loathing spiritual manna, neglect and contempt of the gospel, a non-improvement of ordinances.

III. I am to inquire how this comes to pass, that *particular persons have their proper and particular sins.*

1. *Men have particular temperaments and constitutions of body, and therefore they have their particular sins suitable to their temperaments and constitutions.*—You heard before, how particular temperaments inclined men several ways. Creatures in the general are naturally delighted with those things which are fitted, suited, and accommodated to the genius and frame of their respective natures : as, in the same plant, the bee feedeth on the flower, the bird on the seed, the sheep on the blade, the swine on the root. The same seeds are not proper for the sand and for the clay. Every thing thrives most where it likes best. So it is in this case : *that sin* is like to thrive most in the soul that we make most of, that we are most delighted in, that suits best our complexions and constitutions. We must be careful here, lest we strain this too far, with some physicians and Epicureans, that hold the soul to be nothing else but the temper of the body. But, questionless, this hath a very great influence on the better part. Hence, some have adjudged it not fit for illegitimate persons to be admitted into ecclesiastical orders : and you know, under the law, by the appointment of God himself, “a bastard was not to enter into the congregation, to the tenth generation.” (Deut. xxiii. 2.)

And I humbly conceive, that a toleration of unclean mixtures is not only against religion, but against principles of polity and government ; the children of filthy persons, for the most part, proving degenerate, ignoble, lascivious, and by that means become the blemishes, the ulcers, the plague-sores of the body politic, kingdom, and state whereunto they do belong.

2. *There are distinct and peculiar periods of times, distinct and peculiar ages, that incline to peculiar sins.*—For instance : childhood inclines to levity and inconstancy ; youth, to wantonness and prodigality ; manhood, to pride and stateliness ; old age, to frowardness. You know, diseases make men fretful : now, *ipsa senectus morbus*, “old age itself is a disease.” If we take not heed, the sinful body will grow strong, when the natural body grows weak. I have heard of a good woman, something inclinable to passion, that used to say, “I must strive against peevishness when I am young, or else what will become of me when I am old?” And so covetousness is a sin that old age is very much addicted to. Windelin, in his “Moral Philosophy,” (cap. 25,) discourses learnedly, *Cur senes sint magis avari quàm juvenes?* [“On the reason why old men are more avaricious than their juniors.”] When God is taking people out of the world, they cling fast about it, and cry, “loath to depart ;” truly, this is no good sign. You know, men that are a sinking, and in a desperate case, lay hold on any thing.

3. *Men have distinct and particular callings, that incline them to particular sins.*—For instance : a soldier's employment puts him upon

rapine and violence. And therefore John the Baptist, when the soldiers demanded of him, "What shall we do?" tells them: "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages." (Luke iii. 14.) A tradesman's employment puts him upon lying, deceiving, over-reaching his brother. Ministers, upon the account of pleasing *the best*, as we many times catachrestically call them, or *the greatest*, of the parish, are tempted to flattery, to please men, to sew pillows under their people's elbows. Magistrates and judges are tempted to bribery and injustice: if great care be not taken, their very calling and office may prove a snare upon that account.

4. *Men have distinct and particular ways of breeding and education, and upon that account have their particular sins.*—The child that hears his father and mother swear, is like to swear too. That child that hath frequently wine and strong drink given to it by the parents when it is young, it is likely, may get a smatch of it, and love to it, and so prove intemperate when it is old. Joseph, by living in the court of Pharaoh, learned to swear the court-oath. Man is ζῶον μιμητικόν, "a creature very much given to imitation." Examples have a very great influence on men, both in reference to virtues and vices, especially to the latter: we catch sickness one of another, but we do not catch health. For instance, the scripture, speaking of the son of Jeroboam, tells us, that "he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, as his fathers had done: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin." (2 Kings xv. 9.) He writ after his father's copy, and therefore the sins of his father in a particular manner are taken notice of by the Spirit of God in that place. So in 2 Sam. vi. 20, you have an account of Michal's jeering of David, because he danced before the ark; and you will find that she is called there, not *the wife of David*, but *the daughter of Saul*: "And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, How glorious was the king of Israel to-day, who uncovered himself to-day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself!" Now, why is she called there *the daughter of Saul*? Because she had learned this wickedness from her father. We have woful experience of this in our days. Formerly people could say: "We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what works thou didst in their days, in the times of old." (Psalm xliv. 1.) Truly, the people of this generation may say: "We heard our fathers swear, and curse, and scoff, and mock at the ways of God." In reason we may expect men's manners to suit their education.

Thus much shall suffice to have been spoken to the third particular propounded to be discussed; that is to say, *how it comes to pass, that particular persons have their proper and particular sins, and thus much also for the doctrinal part.*

IV. The fourth and last thing is the USE and APPLICATION of this to ourselves.

USE I.

[*The first use is*] for lamentation and humiliation in the presence of God this day.—We trouble ourselves about other men's sins, (magis-

trates' sins, ministers' sins,) as the Pharisee: "Lord, I thank thee, I am not as other men are, an extortioner, an adulterer," &c., "or as this publican." And, in the mean time, where is the man that considers his own iniquity, his right-eye sin, or his right-hand sin? There are great outcries amongst us, "What have *others* done?" But who smites upon his thigh, and says, "What have *I* done?" We search every where, save where our Rachel sits upon her idol.

Possibly some poor soul may say, "Did I know this particular sin, this right-eye sin, or this right-hand sin, the Lord knows I would quickly pluck out the one, and cut off the other:" and that brings me to

USE II.

[Which is the use] of examination, how this sin may be discovered.—Now to this purpose, take these marks, or rules:—

1. *It may be known by the loves and tender respects the sinner bears unto this sin.*—Strong love, for the most part, hath but one single object. Affections are like the sun-beams in a burning-glass; the more united they are in one point, the more fervent. A wicked man hath a particular affection for his particular lust. As Abraham cried, "O that Ishmael may live in thy sight!" so a wicked man, "O that this sin may be spared!" This is his Benjamin. The soul is ready to say, "Here is one sin must be plucked out, and here is another sin must be cut off; and must this beloved lust die also? All these things are against me." The sinner seems to repent of sin, and to condemn sin, and himself for sin. But when the time of execution comes, the man is very tender-hearted: here is a reprieve for this sin, and there is a pardon for another sin. O it goes against him to cut the throat of his darling lust! (It is a woful case when a man will undertake to pardon his own sin: this is *crudelitas parcens*, "sparing cruelty!") And if it fall out that his beloved sin die a natural death,—that is, if the adulterer, for instance, cannot actually engage in bodily uncleanness as formerly, upon the account of old age,—he follows it to the grave, as we do our dear friends, and heartily mourns that he and his dear lust must part.

2. *It may be known thus: that sin that distracts us most in holy duties is our beloved sin.*—You may know that cold is natural to the water, and that it likes that quality best; because, let it be made never so hot, it will be still working itself to its own proper temper. Souls possibly may sometimes be warmed at an ordinance; but they quickly cool again, and are still working towards their proper lust, the sin they like best. You may take notice in scripture, that God, to speak after the manner of men, in an especial manner *remembers* the sins of wicked men in the performance of holy duties: "They sacrifice flesh for the sacrifices of mine offerings, and eat it; but the Lord accepteth them not: now will he remember their iniquity, and visit their sins." (Hosea viii. 13.) As if a felon or murderer convict should escape out of prison, and afterwards presume to come into the presence of the judge: this brings his felony or murder into remembrance; and herein their punishment is visible sin. They remember their sins in their duties, and so will God. The people of God themselves are tainted with this. Pride was the disciples' master-

sin; and whilst they were healing diseases, and casting devils out of other men's bodies, the *proud* devil was stirring in their own souls: and our Saviour gives them a rebuke for that: "In this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." (Luke x. 20.)

3. *It may be known by its domination, its commanding power over all other sins.*—Look, as there is a kind of government in hell, (such an one as it is; Beelzebub is called "the prince of devils,") so, in a wicked man's soul, one sin or other is still uppermost, and keeps the throne. All other sins do, as it were, bow the knee to this sin, hold up the train of this sin, are obedient servants to this sin: it says to one, "Go," and it goes; and to another, "Come," and it comes. For instance: if *covetousness* be the beloved sin, lying, and deceiving, and injurious dealing, will serve that. If *ambition*, temporizing and sinful compliance will serve that. If *adultery*, sinful wasting of time and estate and body will serve that. If *vain-glory* be the Pharisees' great sin, "devouring widows' houses, under pretence of long prayers," will serve that. As it is with a man's body when it is hurt or maimed,—all the ill-humours will flow to the part that is ill-affected. Hence it is, when a man is first wounded, he feels but a little pain, because he suffers only upon the single account of the division of the part: but afterwards the pain is increased; for then he suffers doubly,—upon the account of the division of the part, as also by the conflux of ill-humours. When the soul hath received some gash, some hurt more than ordinary by its particular sin, all the sinful humours will make haste to feed that iniquity; so that this is the sin that carries it, and bears the sway in the soul. In a word: the sinner hath the curse of Ham as it were pronounced upon him: "A servant of servants" is he; his other sins are servants to his beloved sin, and he himself is a slave to them all.

4. *That sin that conscience in a particular manner doth chide a man for, that, it is likely, may be his particular sin.*—The Greek word for conscience is *συνείδησις*: it signifies "a joint knowledge," or "knowledge with another." It takes notice of things together with God. Conscience is God's deputy, God's spy, God's intelligencer, (pardon the word,) in our bosoms, an exact notary of whatever we think or do, a co-witness with God, as St. Paul is bold to call it. (Rom. ix. 1.) Now, wouldst thou know thy beloved sin? Harken to the voice of conscience. Doth that condemn thee for pride, for passion, for worldliness, for persecuting the ways of God? O remember, it is God's viceroy: honour it so far as to weigh and consider thoroughly what it saith. It is likely, this may be thy particular sin: that which dishonours God most, if conscience be any thing tender, will trouble thee most. Many a man deals with his conscience as Felix did with Paul,—harken to it awhile, whilst it tells them of their lesser faults, or that they are sinners in the general; but when it rebukes them for their darling lust, though they cannot say, "Go thy way," as Felix to Paul, yet, "Hold thy peace, and when I have a convenient season I will give thee the hearing!"

5. *It may be known by being impatient of reproof.*—Herod hears John Baptist gladly, till he preached against his Herodias. This is a *noli me*

tangere, "touch me not." The plant-animal, or the sensible plant, (so called,) when it is touched, shrinks up and contracts itself; the sinner shrinks when he is touched in the sore place. The eye is a tender part, and apt to be offended if you meddle with it. This is the reason why people are enraged against a powerful, soul-searching, soul-saving ministry. Most men are for mountebanks and quacksalvers, that make use altogether of lenitives, and healing plasters; but as for your faithful surgeons, that, according to art, will probe, and search, and cleanse the wound, they cannot away with them! "I hate him," saith Ahab of Micaiah; "he never prophesies good concerning me, but evil." Only I shall add this, that man, especially that minister, that reproves another for his sins, had need to be blameless as much as may be himself. Thus the apostle intimates: "Thou which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" That man that is a teacher of others should teach himself so much the more. We teach others, when we deliver unto them rules and precepts, unto which they are to conform; we teach ourselves, when we obey those rules. "Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery?" &c. (Rom. ii. 21, 22.) That man that hath a beam in his own eye, is not likely to pull out the mote that is in his brother's.

6. *It may be known by this: it makes a man notoriously partial in his own case.*—David could allow himself another man's wife; and could condemn one to death for, taking away another man's lamb.

7. *It may be known, by the covers, and cloaks, and fair pretences, that the sinner hath for this sin.*—Uncleanness and intemperance are "but tricks of youth, and sowing his wild oats;" luxury is "magnificence;" covetousness is "good husbandry;" pride is "a piece of nobleness, and grandeur of spirit;" yea, (which is more,) it is "humility." You have some that disparage themselves in company, and they call this "humility;" when, in truth, it is the height of their spirits; like the archer, that draws back the arrow, that it may fly so much the higher, and so much the further. It is strange blindness or deceit, or both, to call (not yellow or some middle colour, but) *black*, "white:" yet thus it is with many; they shape their darling lust like those virtues unto which they are extremely contrary. Every wicked man is sin's advocate, and will plead its cause gratis. "O," saith Judas, "to what purpose is this waste? This ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor." (Matt. xxvi. 8, 9.) "This he said," saith another evangelist, "not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein." (John xii. 6.) Beware of speaking any thing towards the justification of yourselves in any way of wickedness. You know, the malefactor is condemned before he is put to death; and so it is in the case of sin: *Cum peccator justificatur, peccatum condemnatur*, "When a sinner is justified, his sin is condemned;" and after condemnation followeth execution. Job vindicates himself in this particular: "If I covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom," &c., then "let thistles grow instead of wheat." (Job xxxi. 33, 40.) As if he had said: "I did not hide mine iniquity as Adam did; I did not cover my transgression; I was

open and ingenuous." The Psalmist saith, "Blessed is the man whose iniquity is forgiven, and whose sin is covered." But then it must be by God's hand, not ours.

8. *If there be any one sin, more than other, that the soul doth readily close with, that is its beloved sin; its right-eye sin, or its right-hand sin.*—Samson, when all the world could not take away his strength, is easily persuaded by Delilah. See how Solomon expresses the harlot's dealing with the young man: "With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him:" (Prov. vii. 21:) the most she could do was to flatter him; and yet, notwithstanding, it is said, she forced him. Sin works altogether by enticement. "Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." (James i. 14.) Yet it is so powerful, that it amounts to a force, as the request of a king amounts unto a command.

9. *That sin which a man wishes were no sin, is like to be his beloved sin.*—The case of the young man in the gospel is considerable to this purpose. Saith our Saviour, "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come follow me. When the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful:" (Matt. xix. 21, 22:) that is, he was very much troubled that there was such a truth as this, that the world, for Christ's sake, was to be parted with. So, Psalm xiv. 1: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." "O," saith the fool, "that there was no God! that there was no heaven! that there was no hell!" Atheism was the beloved sin in that case. First men *wish* there were no Deity; and then they *judge* so, and *say* so. Carnal affections after some time settle in opinion and judgment. It is possible for men, by ways of unrighteousness, by a constant course of cheating and cozening, so far to shut up and imprison their natural light, and so to muffle their reason and understanding, that at length they may cheat and baffle their own souls; and think it a piece of justice and righteousness so to do.

10. *That sin which we think of first in the morning, and last in the evening, is like to be our beloved sin.*—God is the chiefest good, the prime object of our love: and therefore, as he is Alpha and Omega in himself, so he is also unto his people "the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last." They begin the day with him: "When I awake, I am still with thee." (Psalm cxxxix. 18.) They end the day with him: thus the spouse: "By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth." (Canticles iii. 1.) You have mention of both these: "With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early." (Isai. xxvi. 9.) Now this sin that I am treating of (like that *ανομος*, that "lawless person" that we read of, 2 Thess. ii. 8, "that man of sin") "opposeth and exalteth itself in the soul above all that is called God; and sitteth in the seat of God." (Verse 4.) A beloved lust is usually the sinner's *first* and *last*: he gives it entertainment first in the morning, and takes his leave of it last in the evening. Yea, this darling sin must be entertained and made much on in the bed-chamber. The Psalmist, speaking of a wicked man, tells us,

“He deviseth mischief on his bed.” (Psalm xxxvi. 4.) For the most part, that is a very friend that we admit to our bed-sides.

11. *That sin which most infests us and troubles us in our solitudes and retirements, that is our beloved sin.*—My meaning is, when a man is alone, in his closet, or in the fields, and his thoughts run adrift, that sin which of themselves they move towards and close with, that may be his beloved sin; the current of the soul is that way. O Christian! mark the workings of thy heart in private, and thou mayest possibly make some discoveries. When a man retires himself into some solitary place, it is usually absurd to trouble him. It is a friend indeed, that falls in with him, and offers his company in that case. That sin is more than ordinarily beloved by us, that interposes in our privacies.

12. And, lastly, *that sin, that we are willing to endure greatest hardships and sufferings for, that is our beloved sin.*—For instance: suppose covetousness be the darling sin; what base, absurd, unreasonable offices will it put a man upon! how scraping, and niggardly, and dunghill-like will that man live, in his town, or in his parish, and expose himself to scorn and contempt from every one that knows him! Suppose ambition be the beloved sin; how will a man in that case swear, and forswear, and temporize, and, like the boatmen, look one way and row another; almost any thing for preferment! If uncleanness be the man's particular sin, how will he destroy his body, disgrace his name, overthrow his estate, for the gratifying of his lust! I dare aver, that the worst and basest drudgery imaginable, to scour kettles and dishes, to tug at the oar, to dig at the mine, are honourable employments, in comparison of this.

USE III.

[*The third use*] is for exhortation and direction, to press you to the mortification of your beloved sin, and show you how it may be mortified.—Let me take up that scripture again, “Mortify your members which are upon the earth;” (Col. iii. 5;) that is, let every sin be mortified: for, you must know, as death is to the members of the natural body, so is mortification to the members of the sinful body. Now in death the soul is separated not only from one member, (as it is in a paralysis or numb palsy,) but from all, even from the principal parts of the body as well as others. So it is in spiritual death; there is a separation of the soul, not only from this or that sinful member, but from the whole body of sin, from the principal parts and members of this body as well as others. The right eye is dead, the right hand is dead: it must needs be so; the one is “plucked out,” and the other is “cut off.”

A Christian must deal by his darling lust as the Israelites dealt by Adoni-bezek: “they cut off his thumbs and his great toes.” (Judges i. 6.) So must thou deal with this sin; hack it, maim it, that it may not be able to go nor stand, nor act, nor stir, if it were possible. And for that purpose take these directions:—

1. *Labour to have your heart steeled with an holy courage and resolution against this sin.*—It is upon the account of baseness and cowardliness of spirit that people fall by the right hand of their spiritual enemy. Shall I give you some instances for this? Doth the devil tempt

thee to uncleanness? Is that thy right-eye sin, or thy right-hand sin? Take up St. Paul's resolution: "Shall I take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot?" Μη γενοιτο, "God forbid." (1 Cor. vi. 15.) [Take up] Joseph's resolution: "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Gen. xxxix. 9.) Doth the devil tempt thee to blasphemy, or to perjury, or to lying, or to any other sin of that nature? Take up the Psalmist's resolution: "I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked are before me." (Psalm xxxix. 1.) Art thou tempted to idolatry, to deny the truths of Christ, to make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience? Take up the three children's resolution: "Be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." (Dan. iii. 18.) Every man should be a prince over his lusts; and, like Joshua's captains, should put his feet upon the necks of them. Here courage, resolution, severity, is very successful; and, in special, exercise your revenge on your beloved lust. "Fight not against small or great" comparatively, but against this kingly, this master-sin.

2. *Let your repentance be particular for your particular iniquity.*—It is not enough to confess your sins in the lump, in the general; but in prayer you must take particular notice of your right-eye sin, your right-hand sin. Thus David was particular in his repentance: "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight:" (Psalm li. 4:) this evil of murder, and this evil of adultery,—pointing, as it were, with the finger to particular sins. Zaccheus makes a particular confession of that wrong and injustice that he had been guilty of: "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." (Luke xix. 8.) This particle "if" in that place may not be a note of doubting, but supposition.* "If I have taken," that is, *Seeing I have taken* "from men by false accusation!" *Si Deus est animus, "Seeing God is a Spirit."*

3. *Beware of those things that may occasion the commission of this sin.*—For instance: if thou art prone to the sin of lying, "keep a door before thy lips:" if to gluttony and drunkenness: "when thou goest to a feast, put a knife to thy throat." We use to say, proverbially, "Occasion makes a thief." This is true also in other cases: occasion makes a liar: occasion makes a drunkard. It is a sign of a naughty heart to dally with occasions to sin. "Look not thou upon the wine," saith Solomon, "when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright." (Prov. xxiii. 31.) It is not simply unlawful to look upon wine in the glass; but, if this may occasion intemperance, here is a law laid upon our looks. That command which forbids a sin, forbids also those things that have a tendency thereunto, as is observed by learned commentators on the Decalogue. Sometimes this is expressed in scripture: the commandment that forbids adultery, takes-in all causes and occasions thereunto. Thus Solomon, speaking of an harlot: "Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house." (Prov. v. 8.) Harlots, like pestilential diseases, make the

* In every edition except the first, these words are misprinted or *suspicion*.—EDIT.

houses infectious where they are; and therefore "come not nigh the door of her house." "Avoid all appearance of evil." (1 Thess. v. 22.) I know, there are some that dislike the translation of *εἰδος* by "appearance," and rather think it should be expounded "sort or kind." But whether the word be taken in a logical notion in the whole book of God, is very questionable; and therefore why we should depart from the current and stream of expositors, and the sense of our learned translators, I know not. When God would forbid the sin of injustice, selling wares by false weights, mark how it is expressed: "Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small." (Deut. xxv. 13.) It was a sin not only to sell wares by one sort of weights, and take wares in by another; but to "have a great and a small weight in his bag." God would not have us come near the sin of injustice. Hence also is that caution of St. John: "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." (1 John v. 21.) If you would avoid idolatry, beware of idols. He that would not hear the bell, must not meddle with the rope.

4. *Pray unto God, that thou mayest not fall into such a condition as may draw forth that corruption that thou art most prone to.*—This was that which undid Judas: he was naturally inclined to unjust gain, and he had the office of carrying the bag; and thus his lust was drawn forth. When a man is apt to be high-minded, it is a snare to be in a high place. When a man is passionate, it is sad to converse always or mostly with those that are "kindle-coals;" that, by provocations and unworthy carriages, are casting fire-balls into a man's soul; and he, having a gunpowder nature, is in a flame presently. And the nearer the relations in this case the worse. It is sad when my next neighbour's house is on fire; but it is worse when mine own is on fire. It is a promise made to the people of God, that all conditions of life, and all passages of providence, "shall work together for their good;" and, therefore, on the contrary, when our conditions and relations make for the worse, especially with reference unto our souls, it must needs be very sad.

5. *Learn to suspect things that are delightful.*—"The woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes." (Gen. iii. 6.) Carnal pleasures are forbidden fruit. Agrippina poisoned her husband in that meat he loved best. The devil tempts us with dishes sweetly-poisoned. Love and delight *pari passu ambulans*, "walk together, and keep the same pace." Many a man hath been undone by riches, and honours, and worldly comforts, like the bee that is drowned in its own honey. Christians, be careful; every one of us hath Eve's sweet tooth in our heads.

6. *Labour to act that grace in especial manner, which is contrary to thy beloved sin.*—For instance: if passion be thy darling sin, labour to act the grace of meekness; if excess, the grace of temperance; if uncleanness, the grace of chastity. Let me tell you, Where grace is helped by nature, upon the account of a man's temper and constitution, there a little grace will go far. But when grace is to be employed against nature, it had need to be strong and active. Your watermen in some cases take their ease, and their boats will go of themselves; but

when wind and tide are against them, then they must labour at the oar. *Hic labor, hoc opus.* ["Here is need for labour and exertion."]

7. *Keep a watch over thy heart.*—"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." (Prov. iv. 23.) So our Saviour: "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." (Matt. xv. 19.) Godliness is but a fancy till the heart be reformed. We read in the book of Psalms of Israel's turning unto God: "When he slew them, then they sought him: and they returned, and inquired early after God. And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer." (Psalm lxxviii. 34, 35.) But was their conversion right? No: "Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongue." (Verse 36.) And whence was this? "For their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant." (Verse 37.) Therefore, mortify sin in its rise, in its first principle. Lay the axe to the root. There is more sap in the root than in the branches; there is more sin in the heart than in the life. One stroke at the root of the tree conduces more to the deadening of it, than many at the body, or the boughs, or any other part whatsoever.

To quicken your industry in this, know, that the motions of original sin, as they are permanent, so they are exceeding violent and impetuous. I remember the learned Davenant gives this difference between the remission of *actual* and *original* sin: "When *actual* sins are forgiven," saith he, "*penitus tolluntur, quoad maculam et reatum*, 'both as to their *guilt* and *filth*.' But it is not so with *original* sin: the *guilt* is done away, but the *stain* remains. This is a sin that dwells in us, that abides in us and abides by us; we shall not be rid of the body of death, till the death of the body." (*De Justitia habituali et actuali*, cap. v.) Sin is an ill tenant; it will not out till the house fall upon its head. Now, the certainty of the inherence of this sin is an argument of the more efficaciousness of its operation: *Modus operandi sequitur modum essendi.* ["The manner of its working follows the manner of its being."] Unquenchable fire burns more fervently than that which may be extinguished. The reason why the angels at this day do the will of God in a more eminent way than the saints on earth is,—because they have such a principle of holiness as cannot be lost to eternity; whereas the saints on earth have a weaker principle of holiness, which may unhappily be abated, though it be recruited again. The reason why the soul of an healthful person moves and acts with more vivacity, and energy, and power, than the soul of a sick man is,—because in the latter it may be departing, and taking its leave of the body, or at least may be in danger so to do; whereas the former, being a man of an hale and good constitution of body, the soul may act, inform, enliven it many years.

8. *Get a respect to all God's commandments.*—"Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments." (Psalm cxix. 6.) The reason why men indulge any one lust is,—because they pick and cull their duties, and so indeed serve not the will of God, but their own choice. O! how many are there that answer the Lord with half obedience! like the echo, which makes not a perfect response of

the voice, but of some part thereof. Many make such a difference amongst the tables [of the Decalogue], as if only one side or one part were of God's writing. O sirs! this will not do, this will undo. The man that, like Agrippa, doth but *almost* believe, *almost* repent, *almost* conform to the will of God, that man shall be saved proportionably *almost*! One sin unrepented of will cause you to miscarry to all eternity. One crack in a bell may make it unserviceable, untunable; and till it be new-cast, it is good for nothing. One wound may kill your bodies, and so may one sin your souls. O Christians! what had become of you and me, if Jesus Christ had satisfied the justice of God for all but one sin? There is a text in Ezekiel that is usually taken for a place of the greatest mercy in the whole book of God: "When the wicked turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive." (Ezek. xviii. 27.) You have to the same purpose, in verses 21, 22, of the same chapter. But pray mark what follows: "Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed." (Verse 28.) No mercy to be expected from this scripture, unless a man *turn away from all his transgressions*. The vessel of honour is distinguished from the vessel of dishonour, by this character, that it is "sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work." (2 Tim. ii. 21.) And this is the commendation of Zachary and Elizabeth: "They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." (Luke i. 6.) Halting in religion is a troublesome, deformed, dangerous gesture; and there is no cure for this like cutting-off the right foot.

9. *Lay hold on God's strength for the mortifying of thy beloved sin.*—Surely, this is no easy work. See how it is expressed in scripture. Sometimes it is called "the mortification of our members:" is to *mortify* a part of the body an easy work? Sometimes, "the circumcising of the foreskin of our hearts:" (Deut. x. 16:) did the Schemites count *circumcision* an easy work? [It is also expressed] by "crucifying of the affections and lusts:" (Gal. v. 24:) was *crucifixion* an easy death? And here, in the text, it is called "a plucking out the right eye, and cutting off the right hand." The apostle Paul, in the fore-mentioned place, tells the Romans: "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." (Rom. viii. 13.) He who is the Fountain of spiritual life, is also the Principle of this spiritual death. This is a work to be done by us, but *through the Spirit*. Hence in scripture God is said to do this: "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed:" (Deut. xxx. 6:) and the apostle expresses this by "circumcision made without hands;" (Col. ii. 11;) intimating that it is not a work of man's hands, but God's.

QUESTION. If any ask me, "But how shall we lay hold on God's strength?"

REPLY. By faith. Great things are attributed unto this grace, because it lays hold on God, and sets God at work. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (1 John v. 4.) It overcomes not only the honours, and riches, and pleasures of the world,

but the lusts of the world, of which you have mention, 1 John ii. 16. Faith is a self-emptying grace; a poor beggarly hand, rich only in receiving from another; something like David's sling and stone against Goliath-lusts. But, in the name of the Lord of hosts and by his strength, even a babe in Christ, through faith, shall overcome the world. I must tell you, that Hannibal, and Alexander, and all the glorious victors that we read of, were but fresh-water soldiers, in comparison of one that is born of God.

I shall only, to what I have said, add a few MOTIVES, to quicken you to your duty, and so commend all to God's blessing.

MOTIVE I.

Right-eye sins, and right-hand sins are the greatest hinderances of the soul's closing with Christ.—When you flay any creature, the skin comes off with ease, till it comes to the head, and there it sticks; more than ordinary skill is required to get it thence. Now I must tell you, the sin that I am dissuading you against is, not only the eye-sin, and the hand-sin, but the HEAD-sin; and here conversion sticks. The sinner forbears many sins, and performs many duties: but when it comes to this, "O master!" saith flesh-and-blood, "pity thyself, beware what thou doest! What! be thine own executioner? pluck out thy right eye? cut off thy right hand? A man's sin is himself. To deny ungodliness is, to deny thyself. This is a kind of *αυτοχειρία*, 'self-murder.' 'No man ever yet hated his own flesh.' (Eph. v. 29.) Is there no getting to heaven unless a man leave himself behind? This is *durus sermo*, 'an hard saying.'" As Naaman the Syrian: "When my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon: when I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing:" (2 Kings v. 18 :) so the sinner: "The Lord pardon thy servant in this thing!" The young man in the gospel tells Christ that he had kept all the commandments from his youth. But when Christ said to him, "One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up thy cross and follow me:" here he sticks: "He was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions," (Mark x. 20—22,) or his great possessions had him. Alas! this poor young man little thought, that, notwithstanding his forwardness to keep the commandments, he was under the power of worldly lusts. O sirs! there is great strength in a river, when it runs smoothly and without noise.

MOTIVE II.

As these sins are the greatest hinderances of the soul's closing with Christ, so they prove the greatest trouble to the soul afterwards.—Your eye-sin will prove your eye-sore, yea, and your heart-sore. My meaning is, your conscience will suffer most upon the account of this sin all your days. Thus Job: "Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth." (Job xiii. 26.) When a man's conscience is disquieted and tormented for the sins of his youth,

then he may be said to "possess them;" yea, it may occasion not only grief, but guilt. Of all sins this is many times most unmortified, even after mortification. Soldiers that have received wounds and bruises when young, have smarted by them when they have been old. There are many good souls, that after cure have gone to heaven halting on the old maim.

MOTIVE III.

The mortifying of our darling lust, our right-eye sin, and our right-hand sin, is a choice evidence of regeneration.—Truth of grace hath, as much as any way, been declared thus. Paul after conversion becomes a preacher of that name which he before blasphemed. Those of Ephesus that were given to witchcraft and sorcery, after their conversion "brought their books together, and burned them before all men." (Acts xix. 19.) And many other instances of the like nature are urged by divines to this purpose. Cranmer, that had subscribed the popish articles with his right hand, afterwards, as a piece of revenge, put that hand first into the flames. A true convert, of all sins, will be revenged most upon that by which he hath most dishonoured God. His right eye and his right hand shall smart for it; the one must be "plucked out," and the other must be "cut off;" as we say of hunger, "He will kill that which, otherwise, would have killed him." I speak much of mortification and death to you this morning. Christians, be not afraid! To die thus, doth not argue imperfection: there is *corruptio perfecta*, "a corruption that tends to perfection." "I was alive," saith Paul, "without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." (Rom. vii. 9.) This is expiring unto life; just as an embryo expires after it becomes a child.

Here I would add two CAUTIONS under this head:—

1. *The forbearing of any outward act of sin whatsoever is no evidence of mortification or conversion.*—Sin may be restrained when it is not mortified. A chained lion is a lion still. A swine washed is a swine still. In some sense you may be said to be "a new man," and yet you may not be "a new creature." This may come to pass partly from the sense of temporal inconveniences, partly from the clamours of natural conscience, or from fear of wrath. Such principles as these are not strong enough to kill sin, or to heal the soul; but are like those odours which we use to raise men out of a fit of the falling-sickness, but [which] do not at all cure them of the disease.

2. *The mortifying of our darling sin is joined with an universal hatred of all sin.*—A true convert "hates every false way," as the Psalmist phrases it. (Psalm cxix. 104, 128.) Sin is often expressed in scripture by "abomination:" it is so to God; it should be so to man. *Anger* is only with reference to particulars; but *hatred* is *προς τα γενη*, "against the kind." A godly man hates sin *as sin*; and therefore he hates *every sin*. The devil hates goodness *as goodness*, and therefore he hates *all goodness*. *A quatenus ad omne, valet consequentia*. ["The consequence deduced from a part to the whole, is valid."] A man may be *angry* with sin, and not kill sin: but as "he that *hates* his brother is a murderer,"

so he that *hates* sin is a *mortifier*. When the right eye is plucked out, and the right hand is cut off, the whole body of sin hath its death's wound. The man that keeps himself from his iniquity, will keep himself from every iniquity. The heart with one hole reserved for sin, is not sound.

MOTIVE IV.

Mortification is a duty becoming the best of saints whilst they are in this world.—I told you in the beginning of this discourse, that the text was part of Christ's Sermon upon the Mount; and if you consult the first and second verses of this chapter, you shall find that it was preached to Christ's own disciples. *Vir bonus et pius, non est qui carnem non habet, sed qui carnem suam mortificat*: "A good man is not one that hath no flesh, but he that hath crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." (Gal. v. 24.)

It is with our sinful body, as with our natural body: if you cut a wen, or any excrescence of that nature, it will grow again and again; and it will be an hard matter to be rid of it all your days. So though every day we be paring away our lusts, yet they grow again.

To close all: *Go on and persevere in the subduing-and killing of thy beloved lusts.*—Mortification is a work once done, and yet in this life it is always a doing. There are some things that consist of an iteration of multiplied acts. As in wedlock, persons are actually married at once, the husband surrenders himself unto the wife, and the wife surrenders herself unto her husband; and yet if they live together suitably to that near relation, marriage is as it were renewed every day; there is a continual surrender of themselves each to other: so it is here. When the soul is first converted, the beloved sin is mortified; and yet there is a continual mortification of it. This is a duty that consists not in any one act, though never so good, never so vigorous; but it is a continued act of the whole life. It is not killing sin at one blow: the strength of sin decays by degrees; it begins in the weakening of sin, and ends in the destroying of sin. Sin dies a lingering death; therefore let us go on in this great and necessary work. You know, Samson denied, and denied Delilah, for some time; and would not discover where his strength lay. But, not holding out, he lost his strength and his life to boot. Beware of apostasy. Crabs, that go backward, are reckoned amongst unclean creatures. (Lev. xi. 10.) *Factum non dicitur, quod non perseverat*, ["That act of which continuity or perseverance forms no part, is not entitled to the appellation,"] is a maxim. A will not finished, is no will: a deed, unless it be signed, sealed, and delivered, is no deed. The sacrifice that was offered up unto God, was not to want so much as the tail. (Lev. iii. 9.) True Christians hate sin so perfectly, that they cannot be quiet till it be utterly abolished. First, they go to God for justification, *ne damnet* ["that sin may lose its condemning power"]; then, for sanctification, *ne regnet* ["that sin may not reign"]; then, for glorification, *ne sit* ["that sin may no longer exist"]. "Let us be faithful" as to this spiritual "death, that we may receive a crown of life." Amen.

SERMON IV.

BY THE REV. JOHN SHEFFIELD, M.A.

WHAT RELAPSES ARE INCONSISTENT WITH GRACE?

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.—Heb. vi. 4—6.

I COULD say, beloved, of the interpretation and application of this scripture, before I begin to open it, (containing the doom and sad sentence pronounced against apostates and relapsarians,) as once Daniel did to the king, before he opened his mouth to give the sense of his ominous dream: “The dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies.” (Dan. iv. 19.) Yet shall I not wish so much ill to our worst enemies; but the text be to them that hate God; and the interpretation, only to the enemies and despisers, or despisers, of his grace.

It is one of the most startling scriptures in all the Bible; and one of the most terrible flying fiery rolls in all the book of God, utterly consuming the house of the hypocrite-apostate, “with the timber thereof, and the stones thereof,” and dreadfully affrighting his truly-religious neighbour, “who trembleth at God’s word.”

The Novatians, or *Cathari*, abused this place of old, to shut the church-doors and gate of grace upon such as had fallen after their profession of Christianity. And many poor souls and troubled consciences have as often quite perverted or misunderstood it, to the shutting-up the gate of heaven and door of hope against themselves, after their bitterly-bewailed falls or slips: but both unjustly.

But as Joseph’s interpretation once of the same night’s dream, when rightly applied, did rid the butler out of his misapprehended fears, and only left the more-secure baker under that execution which the other apprehended, but himself never dreamed of; (Gen. xl. 5—23;) so neither this nor any other scripture speaks a word of terror to any sin-troubled soul, that trembles at God’s threats. But all the prophets prophesy good with one consent to these; and my word shall be like one of theirs.

It was indeed once a joyful sight which Jacob beheld at Bethel: A ladder whose foot stood “on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven, and angels ascending and descending upon it.” (Gen. xxviii. 12.)

But here we see a ladder whose top spires toward heaven, but the foot resteth in hell, where *seeming* angels of light ascend, or such new strange gods as the witch once saw ascend out of the earth; (1 Sam. xxviii. 13;)

but black apostate angels descend. *Intrat angelus, exit dæmon* ["The angel enters, the devil departs"].

I am to speak of the case of relapses, and my text is the fairest glass [in which] to discover so foul a sight that I know.

Here we have the rise and fall, the first and the last, the better and worse part, of an apostate-hypocrite described.

1. The former,—*his rise, his first and better part*, set out in five particulars: (1.) *Enlightening*. (2.) *Tasting the heavenly gift*, as of some common faith, or repentance, or the like. (3.) *Partaking of the Holy Ghost*, which is not to be understood of the sanctifying graces of the Holy Ghost, but the common, or extraordinary gifts, as of tongues, &c., of the sanctifying Spirit. (4.) *Tasting the good word of God*. (5.) *And the powers of the life to come*. Had they had to these five steps two other more, *sincerity* at the bottom of the ladder, and *perseverance* at the top, they had been safe.

2. The latter,—*his fall, his last and worse part*, is set out in four things.

(1.) *His fall is a break-neck, fatal down-fall*.—"They fall away."* It is not an ordinary slip or stumble, but a down-right; not fair fall, but a foil given them by Satan; such a fall as his own was at first.

(2.) *The irrecoverableness of that fall*.—They are past grace: and grace and mercy have done with them; "they cannot be renewed to repentance." As is said of Esau, "there is no place for their repentance, though he sought for the blessing with tears." (Heb. xii. 17.)

(3.) *The certainty of that irrecoverableness, in that it is said to be IMPOSSIBLE, &c.*—He doth not say, It is hard, or unlikely, or seldom seen; but, "is absolutely impossible," *ἀδύνατον γαρ*, it was never seen, nor ever shall be. IMPOSSIBLE, not so much *ex naturâ rei*, ["from the nature of the thing,"] as some things are utterly impossible which imply a contradiction, as that true should be false; good, evil; light, darkness; these impossible because inconsistent with the nature of the things themselves: but IMPOSSIBLE *ex instituto Dei*, ["from the appointment of God,"] because inconsistent with God's decree and declared will; as impossible as," we say, "an elect or true believer should perish, or an impenitent person be saved;" so we mean *impossible by reason of God's irreversible decree concerning such*.

(4.) *The cause that makes all this dead-sure, and seals the stone of this certainty*.—"Seeing they crucify to themselves afresh the Son of God, and put him to open shame," and make no account of the blood of Christ, and the grace and promise of the gospel, and of the comfort of the Holy Ghost; and are therefore said to sin against the Holy Ghost, because they directly slight, resist, and oppose the gracious office and workings of the Holy Spirit.

But I must stay no longer upon the words, by reason of that brevity expected in this Exercise.

* He saith not, *ἀμαρτανωντας* or *παραβαινοντας*, but *παρακεινοντας*, *ut cum edificium male sartum prorsus corrui*.—PAREUS *in loc.* "He saith not, 'If they shall sin,' or, 'If they shall transgress,' but, *If they shall fall away*; like an edifice which, after having been imperfectly repaired, falls down at once, and is broken into fragments."—EDIT.

DOCTRINE.

Our observation is :—It is the most fearful and dangerous condition in the world, to begin in the Spirit and end in the flesh, to rise and fall in religion, to decay and apostatize from grace ; to have had some work of the Spirit and the word upon their hearts, so as to have light, and love, and taste, and gifts, and favour, and seriousness, and hopes, and fears, and, after all, to cool and give over ! O how desperate is such a case !

To go to hell with so much of heaven, O what a hell is that ! “ For if we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking-for of judgment,” &c. (Heb. x. 26, 27.) “ For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them,” &c. (2 Peter ii. 20—22.)

Such a thing there may be ; *possibly* the text supposeth it, that such may fall, and fall away totally and finally, only [it] pronounceth an impossibility of their rising again.

Some are said “ to fall from grace.” (Gal. v. 4.) The stony and thorny ground did so in a parable. Demas, Judas, Saul, Hymenæus, did so in good earnest. A great apostasy was foretold, in the first days, to let in Antichrist, (2 Thess. ii. 3,) and in the reign of Antichrist more. (1 Tim. iv. 1.) All are warned : “ Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall.” (1 Cor. x. 12.) “ Look diligently lest any man fail of,” or fall from, “ the grace of God.” (Heb. xii. 15.) Some of John’s [the Baptist’s] hearers, after a while, left him. (John v. 35.) Many of our Saviour’s hearers quite left him. (John vi. 66.) Many of Paul’s supposed converts were turned away ; all they of Asia. (2 Tim. i. 15.)

Some have left their love. (Rev. ii. 4.) Some left the faith. (1 Tim. v. 12.) Some have turned after the world ; as Demas. (2 Tim. iv. 10.) “ Some have turned aside after Satan.” (1 Tim. v. 15.) And would to God there were no example to be given in our age and observation ! It is that which the professors of a true religion are more subject to, than those of a false. “ Hath a nation changed their gods, which yet are no gods ? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit.” (Jer. ii. 11.)

Now there are three falls to which men are subject :—

I. Some fall, as wood or cork into the water,—sink at first, but get up again, being helped by the hand of divine grace, as Peter ; (Matt. xiv. 31 ;) or brought off by a miracle of mercy, as Paul and his company, after all hopes of safety were quite taken away. (Acts xxvii. 20—44.)

This the fall of the godly.

II. Some fall, as lead or stone, into the bottom of hell ; as Pharaoh’s host into the bottom of the sea ; (Exod. xv. 4, 5 ;) and never rise again, having neither promise of God, nor seed of God to raise them up again,

but make a final "shipwreck of faith and conscience," and of their souls together. (1 Tim. i. 19.)

This the fall of the wicked.

III. There is a mixed fall common to both, which is like the falling into an epidemical disease; whereof many die, and as many recover: of which in their order.

There are four kinds or degrees of falling, which the people of God are subject to; and four kinds or degrees to which the wicked are subject; and each latter is worse than other in them both.

I. FOUR FALLS OF THE GODLY.

1. The first and lightest fall of the godly, is that in their daily combat between flesh and spirit, set out in Romans vii. at large, and in Galatians v. 17. "We cannot do what we would," but fail or fall short after our best endeavours. Our duties are imperfect, graces defective, our gold and silver drossy, "our wine mixed with water." Sin deceiveth, surpriseth, captivateth,* slayeth, yet reigneth not all this while. "It is not I, but sin that dwells in me. I consent to the law; I delight in the law of God, even in my inner man," &c.

These falls or slips are unavoidable and involuntary. There is no saint but complains of them, no duty but is stained with them. In our clearest sunshine we see a world of such motes, which yet hinder not the light and comfort of our justification, and destroy not sanctification. True grace consists with these; yea, is not separated from the assaults and indwelling of such motions. "Will we, nill we," said Bernard, "We are pestered with swarms of these Egyptian flies, and have these frogs in our inmost chambers." †

We are none of us *supra*-lapsarians in this sense; but *sub*-lapsarians all; yea, and *re*-lapsarians too. "The just falleth seven times a day," by this infirmity, "and riseth up again;" (Prov. xxiv. 16;) and taketh no harm, but is kept humble and depending thereby. Every son and daughter of Abraham is kept bound "under this spirit of infirmity," to their dying day.

This first fall is but like the fall of a mist in a winter morning: the sun gets up, and it is a fair day after.

This is the first fall: the second is worse, which is,

2. An actual and visible stumble as to offence of others, yet occasioned by some surreptitious surprise of temptation, for want of that due consideration which we should always have: this the apostle calls "a man's being overtaken with a fault," who is "to be restored with a spirit of meekness, considering we also may be tempted." (Gal. vi. 1.) Such falls (or slips rather) all or most are subject to. Πολλα γαρ πταισομεν ἅπαντες, "In many things we offend all." (James iii. 2.) We sometimes trip, or slip, or "miss our hold," (so the word signifies,) and so down we come, but not out of choice. Thus did Peter slip or halt, when he did Judaize out of too much compliance with the Jews; whom therefore Paul did rebuke and restore. (Gal. ii. 11, 14.) Thus the dis-

* All editions, previous to the fourth, have *captiveth*.—EDIT. † *Velimus, nolimus, irruunt in nos Egyptianorum muscæ, et obstrepuunt ranae in cubilibus regis*.—BERNARDUS.

ciples slipped, when they, in zeal to Christ, would have fire fetched down from heaven upon those that would not receive them ; whom Christ set right with a spirit of meekness. (Luke ix. 54, 55.)

These slips or falls are like those of him whose foot is wrenched or out of joint ; whence he halts till it be set right. Thus Peter is said to halt ; he did not * *παρῆπιπτεν*, ["fall or tumble,"] only not *ορθοποδεῖν* ["walk uprightly"]. But when Paul had set his wrenched foot, he went upright ever after. Hence that word, *καταρτίζετε*, "restore," is a surgeon's word, "to set him right," as a bone out of joint. (Gal. vi. 1.) He that shall be censorious and severe against these two first kind of falls incident to most, "let him," as Constantine said to Acesius the Novatian bishop, "get himself a ladder, and climb up to heaven by himself : he should have but a few come there else." (SOCRATES, lib. i. c. 7.)

3. The third fall is much worse, "a fall from the third loft," whence, like Eutychus, they are "taken up dead" for the present ; but they come to themselves again. These are falls into grosser and more scandalous sins which do *vastare conscientiam*, "set the stacks or corn-fields of conscience on fire ;" whereas the other two forenamed, especially the former, are such as Tertullian calls *quotidianæ incurisionis* ["of daily incurision"]. These are very dangerous, and befall not all professors : (they had not need !) but, now and then, one falls into some scandalous sin ; but they not usually again into the same sin after sense and repentance of it. Thus fell David and Peter into foul flagitiousness, but not deliberately, nor totally, nor finally, nor reiteratedly. Sin raged indeed, and seemed to reign for the present. Moses's hands grew weak, and the hand of Amalek prevailed for the present. But a "seed of God" was in them, and they "could not sin" unto death ; (1 John iii. 9 ;) but were renewed to repentance, and their sins are blotted out.

This fall is like the fall of the leaf in autumn. Life remains safe ; a spring in due time follows, though many a cold blast first.

4. There is yet one worse fall than the former, incident to a child of God too,—to be of the decaying hand, and to remit and lose his former fervour and liveliness.

And it may be he never comes (as the second temple) up to the former pitch and glory. (Ezra iii. 12.) Thus Solomon's zeal and love were abated in his old age. As his father David's natural heat was in his age, that he needed an Abishag to lie in his bosom ; so was Solomon's spiritual heat cooled by the many Abishags that lay in his bosom : and though he was beloved of his God, his sun set in a cloud, his last was not like his first.† (1 Kings xi. 4, 9, 10.) Thus Samson, after many triumphs over the Philistines, was at length circumvented and betrayed into their hands, who bound him, put out his eyes, made sport with him ; who, though his hair and strength grew again, and he died in the quarrel, and died a victor, yet never did he regain his sight or liberty to

* Not is left out in the other edition, so as to alter the true sense.—EDIT.

† *Incepit melius quàm desinit, ultima primis
Cedunt : dissimilis hic puer, ille senex.*

"Unlike the hopes with which his life began,
YOUTH yielded blossoms, but no fruit the MAN."—EDIT.

his dying day. These kinds of decays are dangerous, and make the people of God go mourning to their dying day; and they are saved as by fire. But [they] are not inconsistent with grace.

This is like the fall of the hair in aged persons. Life yet remains; but strength, native heat, and radical moistness decay, and the hair never grows alike thick again.

These are the fallings of the children of God; and there are four worse than these follow of the unregenerate, and each worse than [the] other.

II. THE FOUR FALLS OF THE UNREGENERATE.

1. The first whereof is a *final* fall, but not a *total* at first, but insensible, by degrees, *sensim sine sensu*, ["gradually and without perceiving it,"] grow worse and worse; as the thorny ground, choked with cares, or drowned with the pleasures of the world. This proves like Eli's fall; they fall backward, break their necks, and die of it; (1 Sam. iv. 18;) and may, with him, be much lamented and pitied; but they are dead and lost.

2. Some fall *totally and finally*, but not premeditatedly and voluntarily at first; but are driven back by *the lion* of persecution and tribulation *in the way*, and they retreat. "These endure for a season," as the stony ground; (Mark iv. 17;) and, leaving God, they are for ever left and forsaken of him. (1 Chron. xxviii. 9.)

This is like the fall of Sisera at the feet of Jael: "At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down: at her feet he bowed, he fell; where he bowed, there he fell and lay down dead." (Judges v. 27.)

3. Some, more fearfully, *totally, finally, voluntarily, deliberately*, but not yet maliciously. Thus Demas is supposed to fall, who, of a forward disciple or teacher, is said to have become after an idol priest at Thessalonica; so Dorotheus reports of him. Thus fell Saul; who having rejected the word of the Lord, the Lord rejected him; and "the Spirit of the Lord departed from him, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him." (1 Sam. xvi. 14.)

Of these three last, I may say as Elisha to Hazael of Benhadad; These may certainly recover: "howbeit," saith he, "the Lord hath showed me that he shall surely die." (2 Kings viii. 10.) These have not yet crucified the Son of God afresh, nor done despite to the Spirit of grace; therefore it is not impossible they should be renewed again to repentance.

These are like Sardis; [they] may "have a name to live, but are dead." (Rev. iii. 1—3.) Their works not perfect before God, ready to die, yet are [they] called once again to repentance, otherwise certain destruction [is] threatened.

But this is like the fall of Haman, whose doom was read by his wife and best friends: "If once thou beginnest to fall, thou shalt not recover, but shalt certainly fall irrecoverably." (Esther vi. 13.)

And these end fearfully, usually, and unpitied spectacles of God's wrath, to astonish and warn others; as Spira once.

4. The fourth and last fall follows, which is like the opening of the fourth seal, and the fourth horse appears; "a pale horse, and he that sat on him is called death, and hell followed with him:" (Rev. vi. 8:)

when men fall *totally, finally, voluntarily, and maliciously*. Thus Simon Magus, Julian the apostate, Hymenæus, and Alexander, whose names are in God's black book. Here the gulf is fixed, and there is a *nulla retrorsum* ["no retracing of the steps"] hence. These are not to be renewed by repentance.

This fall is like that of Jericho's walls: they fell down flat with a curse annexed; (Joshua vi. 26;) or as Babylon's walls, with a vengeance; (Jer. li. 58;) both without hope of repairing: or like the fall of Lucifer the first apostate, without offer, or hope of offer, of grace any more for ever: or like the fall of Judas; who, "falling headlong, burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out." (Acts i. 18.)

III. THE MIXED FALL.

There is also another kind of fall, of a mixed or middle nature: and to which side of the two (*godly or reprobate*) I should cast it, is not so easy to determine. [It is] a reiterated fall into some foul act or course of sin: and herein I must proceed as warily as the priest of old in a doubtful case of leprosy, whether to pronounce *clean* or *unclean*; and by his rule I shall go. He was to shut him up seven days, and look upon him better ere he could give his definitive sentence. (Lev. xiii. 4—59.) If therefore,

1. I see the sore be but skin-deep, (Lev. xiii. 4, 34,) and have not corrupted the blood:

2. If it stand at a stay and spread not further: (Lev. xiii. 5, 6; so also verses 23, 28, 34, 37:)

3. If all become white by repentance and mortification: I shall pronounce him *clean*. It is a scab, it is but a scab, or a scall. (Lev. xiii. 6, 34.) It is no deadly leprosy.

But, on the other side, 1. If it be deeper than the skin, having taken the heart with the love and liking of it: (Lev. xiii. 20, 25, 30:)

2. If it spread further and further, by renewed acts: (verses 8, 27, 36.)

3. If there be proud raw flesh in the rising, (verses 10, 14, 15,) and the man presumptuously live in it, and plead for it: I shall pronounce him *unclean*. "It is an old leprosy." (Verse 11.) It is "not the spot of God's children." (Deut. xxxii. 5.)

Concerning relapses, I shall desire you to take notice of these eight observations:

1. It is very observable, that the Holy Ghost is very sparing in setting down in the scriptures instances in this kind, well foreseeing how apt flesh and blood is to abuse and pervert such examples to their own destruction. Such examples are, as Simeon said of Christ, "set for the fall and rising again of many, and are a sign spoken against." (Luke ii. 34.) How have David's and Peter's falls emboldened many to fall and live in sin! There is *not one* instance in all scripture of any saint that laid violent hands upon himself, lest any should presume to do the like: *but one* example of late repentance accepted, lest many should presume; *yet one*, lest any should despair. Those falls are not set as land-marks to *guide* you, but as sea-marks to *warn* you.

2. It is certain Paul returned not to persecute the church after his conversion, or Manasses to re-erect idolatry, or Matthew to the receipt of custom after he was called thence.

3. Nor did David and Peter fall again into the same foul act of sin, after they had truly repented.

4. They were only wicked ones, as Ahab, Pharaoh, Saul, Jeroboam, who persist and return to sinful courses, from drunkenness to thirst, from thirst to drunkenness. Of Jeroboam it is said, "After this thing"—the prophet's warning, his arm smitten, his prayer thereupon, the recovery upon the prophet's prayer—"did he return again, and made of the lowest of the people priests of his high places," &c. (1 Kings xiii. 33.) Neither warning, nor judgments, nor mercies could work any amendment in him.

5. It is certain that "he who is born of God doth not commit sin," (1 John iii. 9,) so as to make a trade of it, returning to his vomit. But "he that is born of God keepeth himself, and the wicked one toucheth him not." (1 John v. 18.) He hath paid too dear for such a miscarriage. It was not so light a matter to lie under God's wrath, [to] lose his former peace; nor was his comfort so soon restored, and God's favour regained; that he should hazard all anew, and buy repentance at so dear a rate.

6. Very dreadful is that threat of God: "If there be among you man or woman.....or a root that beareth gall and wormwood: and it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart, adding drunkenness to thirst: the Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven. And the Lord shall separate" (and single him out) "unto evil," &c. (Deut. xxix. 18—21.)

7. Relapses into sin are like relapses into a disease after hopes and beginning of recovery. If, by taking cold, or want of heed-taking, or [by] other disorder, the disease return, and the man [be] down again, this is worse than the first ill fit, and [it is] long ere such recover. But if, as soon as he get a little strength, he fall into a new relapse, we reckon his case very doubtful, if not desperate.

8. Yet it is not to be denied but there are some sins of human infirmity which, though repented of, a godly person may be again overtaken with and foiled; yet [will] not his last end [be] worse than his beginning. Thus was Jonah overtaken with his passion a second time; Abraham with his excusatory lie; the disciples, after a former rebuke, a second time contending for superiority. (Matt. xx. 25, [compared] with Luke xxii. 25.)

The first fall in this kind I should liken to a sad and dangerous fall, by which one hath broken a bone in his leg or arm; which, though it put him to much pain, is well set again, and he becomes as strong as before, but more wary while he lives. David speaks of his fall into sin, that it was as "a breaking of his bones." (Psalm li. 8.) But a second fall is

like the breaking of the bone the second time ; which is more hardly set, and puts to more pain, and, it may be, the man feels it at times to his dying day.

But a third, or more frequent, relapse is like the putting of an arm out of joint, again and again ; [which] not being well bound and looked-to in time, becomes habitually loose, and never keeps the place. So it is here : crebrous and frequent acts of sin beget an habit and custom in sin ; and then as soon may "the Ethiopian change his skin, and the leopard his spots," as one "accustomed to do evil," ever learn to do well. (Jer. xiii. 23.)

Bernard describes the steps of sin, how it comes to its height : "First time, it is importable ; next time, heavy, no more importable ; then easy, then light, then sweet, at last necessary ; and what was at first importable to be committed, is now impossible to be omitted."* And St. Austin confirms this by a story of his own mother, who, by sipping of the cup at first when she filled the wine, learnt at last to take almost whole cups.† *Qui modica non spernit paulatim decedit*, is his good note upon it : "He that makes a small matter of small sins, is in the ready way to fall into the greatest." Every new relapse into a former sin is like the adding of a new figure to the first cypher ; which raiseth the sinner's account ten or an hundred times more.‡

Therefore if thou hast been overtaken once, stop and be humbled, and say, "Once I have spoken," or done amiss ; "but I will not answer," to plead for myself. Beware the second time, the second fall, as the second blow makes the fray ; but if a second time, say, "Yea, twice ; but I will proceed no further." (Job xl. 5.) But be sure thou take heed of drawing sin with a threefold cord, or "cart-ropes : " (Isai. v. 18 :) this "threefold cord is not easily broken." (Eccles. iv. 12.) Take heed of a third act ; "fear, and the pit, and the snare are before thee : " O bold and presumptuous sinner ! if thou escape the fear of the *first* act, thou mayest perish in the pit for the second ; but if thou escape the pit, thou wilt be taken in the snare, the third time. (Isai. xxiv. 17, 18.) "Upon the ungodly, God raineth snares ; " (Psalm xi. 6 :) God gives [them] once to a reprobate mind, and they are gone. Think not, after a third or fourth act of presumptuous sin, to go and shake thyself, (by prayer and repentance,) as Samson once, and that thy strength may return to thee to be delivered from these Philistines which lie in wait for thee. He did so, "but wist not," till he found it by woful experience, "that the Lord was departed from him : " (Judges xvi. 20 :) so may it be with thee, therefore be warned.

USE I.

1. This informs us, that possible it is for men (yea, too ordinary) to fall from grace. The text supposeth it ; and in another place the apostle

* *Primo importabile ; processu temporis grave ; paulò post leve ; postea placet et suave est ; ad extremum, quod erat importabile ad faciendum, est impossibile ad continendum.*—BERNARDUS *De Conscientiâ.* † *Ad illud modicum quotidiana modica addendo, in eam consuetudinem lapsa erat, ut prope jam plenos mero caliculos inhianter hauriret.*—AUGUSTINI *Confessiones*, lib. 9. ‡ *Est voluntate perversa facta est consuetudo, et dum consuetudini non resistitur facta est necessitas.*—*Idem, Confessiones*, lib. 8. "A bad habit has its origin in a perverted will ; and while it prevails without resistance, it becomes at length a necessary habit."—EDIT.

items us to "look diligently lest any man fall from the grace of God." (Heb. xii. 15.) The angels did so at first, and Adam soon after; and that which was *morbus angelicus* then is *morbus Anglicus* now.* The Lord may complain of us, as justly as ever he did of Israel: "My people are bent to backsliding from me." (Hosea xi. 7.) And: "Why should ye be smitten any more? ye will revolt more and more." (Isai. i. 5.) And: "Why is this people slidden back by perpetual backslidings? they hold fast deceit, they refuse to return." (Jer. viii. 5.) This is, and of late hath been, the case and epidemical disease of England. It is no new thing to see the sons of fallen man to fall, and fall away. Saul, Joash, Amaziah, Judas, Demas, Alexander, fell away of old. Of all Israel that came out of Egypt with Moses and Aaron, only two, Caleb and Joshua, "followed God fully." (Num. xiv. 24.) Of the four grounds in the parable, only one held out. Many of John Baptist's hearers left him and fell away: (John v. 35:) many of Christ's hearers and disciples: (John vi. 66:) many of Peter's: (2 Peter ii. 20:) many of Paul's: (2 Tim. i. 15; 1 Tim. v. 15:) many of John the Evangelist's hearers: "They went out from us, because they were not of us; for had they been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us." (1 John ii. 19.) But none of these were ever sincere Christians and sound at the heart.

We wonder not to see a house built on the sand to fall, or seed not having root wither, or trees in the parched wilderness decay, (Jer. xvii. 6,) or meteors vanish, or blazing stars fall, or clouds without rain blown about, or wells without springs dried up. So, for hypocrites to prove apostates [is] no strange thing, and utterly to fall away. There are four wills some have observed: (1.) The Divine will never alters or turns. (2.) The angels' will hath turned, never returns. (3.) The will of man fallen [hath] turned, and in conversion returns. (4.) The will of apostates, after that grace received and abused, turns away and never returns, but becomes like [that of] the fallen angels.

2. Even godly and gracious persons are subject to fall, and therefore must not be secure: they must "work out their salvation with fear and trembling." (Phil. ii. 12.) They are bidden to "fear lest they should fall short:" (Heb. iv. 1:) "stand fast:" (1 Cor. xvi. 13:) "take heed lest they fall:" (1 Cor. x. 12:) "look diligently lest any fail of," or "fall from," (so is the other reading,) "the grace of God:" (Heb. xii. 15:) "take the whole armour of God, that they may be able to stand." (Eph. vi. 13.)

Even the very elect have this root of bitterness and seeds of apostasy within them. Even Peter had sunk, if Christ had not put forth his hand to save him from the water; (Matt. xiv. 31;) and had been winnowed as chaff, if Christ had not "prayed for him that his faith should not fail." (Luke xxii. 31, 32.)

Let not him therefore that puts on his harness boast as he that puts it off. (1 Kings xx. 11.)

3. Yet a truly regenerate soul, a plant of God's planting by the water-

* "That which was then the disease of angels, is now the disease of Englishmen."—
EDIT.

side, a plant or graft grafted into Christ, and rooted in Christ, can never fall away totally or finally: Peter could not, when Christ prayed for him: the elect cannot. (Matt. xxiv. 24.) In the general apostasy of the Christian world, and the greatest persecutions under Rome-pagan, and Rome pseudo-Christian, *antichristian* both times, when all the world "wondered after the dragon and the beast;" they who had their "names written in the Lamb's book" held out, and warped not. (Rev. xiii. 8; xvii. 8.) The elect are as Mount Sion that cannot be moved, and are as fixed stars that fall not. The house on the rock stands firm in all weathers; the tree by the water's side; (Jer. xvii. 8;) seed in good ground. (Matt. xiii. 8.) They who have a seed of God in them cannot so sin: (1 John iii. 9:) and "they that are born of God," (1 John v. 18,) they who are in the hand of Christ, "none can pluck them out." (John x. 28.)

Yet as to the fallings of the elect, not presuming to tell you the *minimum* or *summum quod sic*,* we shall make these concessions or observations:—

POSITION 1. We grant that the godly, as well as others, are subject to this *falling-sickness*, having seeds of apostasy in them; and would certainly fall irrecoverably, if left to themselves. "By strength" (his own) "no man shall prevail" or stand. (1 Sam. ii. 9.)†

POSIT. 2. Grace received, truly-sanctifying, is not for its measure so great or for its nature so immutable and invincible, but might be overborne; and would, if not divinely supported and continually supplied; as the widow's oil kept from decay, fed by a spring of auxiliary grace; as "Joseph's bow abode in strength by the arm of God, and his bough green and fruitful, fed by a well of living water:" (Gen. xlix. 22—24:) so that it is not the grace *in us*, but the grace *with us*, 'H χάρις του Θεου ενυ εμοι' ["Yet not I, but the grace of God which was *with me*;"] (1 Cor. xv. 10;) grace supervening and additional,‡ which keeps us from falling. Even the good ground, were it not for the influence of the sun and rain, would prove as the stony and thorny ground.

POSIT. 3. There is no such state of consistency in the effectually called; but there is a daily combat, and oft-times a great inequality in his pulse. Sometimes Amalek, sometimes Israel prevails; and this war lasts not, as that between the house of Saul and David, for certain years; (2 Sam. iii. 1;) but as that "between Rehoboam and Jeroboam, all their days." (1 Kings xiv. 30.)

Paul sometimes, as in the third heaven, cries out: "We are more than conquerors," &c. "Who shall separate us from the love of God?" &c. Sometimes, as under foot, [he] cries out: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?"

POSIT. 4. Even godly persons may fall for once, very foully, as Peter: yea, lie long, as David: (it is hard to say how low they may fall, and how long they may lie:) yet sin not unto death; as the sun

* "What may be the quality of the smallest lapse or of the greatest."—EDIT. † "In te stas et non stas.—AUGUSTINE. "Thou standest in thyself; and yet thou art not stable."—EDIT. ‡ *Gratia gratiam postulat*. "Grace requires more grace."—EDIT.

is for many months absent from some climates, yet returns again : so that they may then say with the church : " Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy : when I fall, I shall arise ; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me." (Micah vii. 8.)

POSIT. 5. There may also possibly be a relapse, or falling anew, into the same act of sin through human infirmity ; as Abraham twice denying his wife, the disciples twice contending for supremacy. And as I will not say how oft thy brother trespassing and repenting is to be forgiven, " not to seven, but to seventy-times seven ;" so I cannot say how oft through infirmity a sinner trespassing, and returning with repentance, may be forgiven,—God's mercies and thoughts being so far above man's.

POSIT. 6. The Christian may, as to his own sense, be reduced to a very sad and low state. (1.) He is poor in spirit, he mourns, he hungers, thirsts, pants, doubts, dislikes all. (2.) He judgeth of himself as (under present prevalency of corruption) " carnal, sold under sin," a forced slave to it. (Rom. vii. 14.) (3.) As if nothing had been done yet, and all was to do, he begs : " O God, create a new heart in me !" (Psalm li. 10.) (4.) He may be apt to conclude against himself, " I never did yet truly believe or repent ; and, which is worse, with Thomas, I never shall believe." (John xx. 25.) (5.) In this case he lies bound, as Peter, and cannot help himself till the angel comes and strikes off the bands, and opens the iron gate. (Acts xii. 6, 7.) (6.) And as to comfort, he may be at an utter loss ; [may] walk in darkness ; (Isai. l. 10 ;) judge himself " cut off ;" (Ezek. xxxvii. 11 ;) his " hope perished ;" (Lam. iii. 18 ;)—God hiding his face ; Satan showing his teeth, casting forth a flood, and shooting in a peal of fiery darts : " Curse God and die ! Thou art mine as sure as death, as sure of damnation as I myself !" Then how doth a poor soul mourn ! " I am forsaken, and quite cast out of sight, I am as a bottle in the smoke of hell, like a broken vessel, or fire-brand reserved for hell !" " As possible for this Venice-glass," said that distressed gentlewoman Mrs. Honeywood, " not to be broken when it falls on the ground, as for me to escape the damnation of hell." " God can do much," saith he ; " but doth he ' show wonders among the dead ?'" (Psalm lxxxviii. 10.) Then pray he would, but cannot ; hope he would, but cannot ; believe he would, but dare not ; fear he would not, but must ; resolve he would to cast himself upon God, but he sees his resolution set another way, and he cannot, he thinks, change it ; therefore doth he not go about it. To God he saith, " I am cast out of thy sight : " (Psalm xxxi. 22 :)—to Satan, *Vicisti, Satana !* [" Satan, thou hast conquered."] " Hast thou found me, O mine enemy ?"—to despair, " I yield, but call not for quarter, nor beg I mercy." To affliction he saith, " I am in the belly of hell, the weeds and chains of hell wrap me about." (Jonah ii. 2, 5.) To ministers and other friends he saith, " Stand away ! go not about to comfort me !" (Isai. xxii. 4.) To promises and experience he saith, in his haste, " All are liars !"

Yet may the tide turn ; and the Sun of Righteousness arise, after a long winter and continual night,—as * in those remote climates who sit in

* To make the sense of this clause complete, the subjoined addition is required : " as the natural sun does upon the people in those remote climates," &c.—EDIT.

the region and shadow of death,—and come “with healing under his wings;” and he may cry out: “Rejoice with me! I have found Him whom my soul loveth!” The lost sheep is found by the Good Shepherd, the lost Saviour is found, (Luke ii. 43—50,) the lost star seen again; (Matt. ii. 10;) and the utterly despairing hopes of salvation are disappointed by a safe though hazardous coming to land. (Acts xxvii. 20—44.)

For God’s election stands firm, and his love is unchangeable, and his gifts [are] without repentance: and the undertaking of Christ is, to keep his to the end, that none shall pluck them out of his hand; and whom he gives himself for, he presents them spotless and blameless before his Father.

Therefore are the godly as firm and safe from utter falling away, as Mount Sion from being removed, or an house on a rock from being subverted.*

USE II. OF TERROR.

Here follows an use of terror, and speaks to four sorts.

1. *This text is thunder and lightning against apostates.*—Awake, you drowsy professors! “There is no sin like apostasy: adulteries, manslaughter, theft, idolatries, &c., nothing to this. No IMPOSSIBLE written over them: they have been renewed to repentance.” (1 Cor. vi. 10, 11.)† Mary Magdalen’s seven unclean spirits, and Manasseh’s ten or more, not so bad as the unclean spirit going out, and a return with an *ogdoas malorum spirituum*, as Irenæus calls it, “with seven other spirits more besides itself.” Thou art in the high-way to perdition, to the sin against the Holy Ghost. Sins and judgments meet together in this sin. The cataracts of upper and nether springs, all “the windows of heaven, and fountains of the great deep,” (as in that great deluge, Gen. vii. 11,) are “broken up” to drown thee in perdition; thy sins making way for more judgments, and this judgment making way for more sins, till, between these two seas, thy soul (as that vessel, Acts xxvii. 41) is eternally shipwrecked.

If thou art not altogether past feeling, crucifying the Son of God afresh, and treading his blood and covenant under foot, I sound this trumpet to warn thee, or to deliver my own soul: “Remember whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works.” (Rev. ii. 5.) “Be watchful, and strengthen what is ready to die.” (Rev. iii. 2.) Haste, “escape for thy life! look not behind thee!” as was said to Lot; (Gen.

* *Gratia nec totaliter intermittitur, nec finaliter amittitur. Actus omittitur, habitus non amittitur; actio pervertitur, fides non subvertitur; concutitur, non excutitur; defuit fructus, latet succus; jus ad regnum amittunt demeritorie, non effective.*—PRIDEAUX. *Effectus justificationis suspenditur, at status justificati non dissolvitur.*—SUFF. BRIT. “Grace is neither totally intermitted, nor finally omitted or lost. The act is omitted, but the habit is not omitted or lost. The action is perverted, but faith is not subverted: it suffers a *concussion*, but not an *excussion*, or an utter casting away. The tree ceases to produce fruit, but the latent sap remains. The right or title to the kingdom is lost through the demerits of the sinner, but not in effect.”—PRIDEAUX. “The effect of justification is suspended, but the state of the justified person is not dissolved.”—“SUFFRAGES OF THE BRITISH DIVINES at the Synod of Dort.”—EDIT.

† *Hic videmus quanta sit apostasie atrocitas: nihil ad eam homicidia, adulteria, furta, &c.*—PAREUS in loc.

xix. 17;) or as Jonathan in another case, Away, "make speed, haste, stay not!" (1 Sam. xx. 38.)

2. *This speaks terror to professors fallen, or lying in scandalous sins.*—You cannot sin at so easy a rate as others. You know your Master's will, and do it not, therefore [ye] "shall be beaten with more stripes." (Luke xii. 47.) You are as a city set on an hill. Your fault cannot be hid, no more than an eclipse of the sun. When the moon or other stars totally eclipse, no notice is taken of them. You make "the enemies of religion to blaspheme," (2 Sam. xii. 14,) or deride godliness. "You make the Lord's people to transgress." (1 Sam. ii. 24.) Your sins are more infectious than others'. Your repentance had need be extraordinary, not only for pardon which you haply may obtain, but for the scandal which others may take, [and] which you cannot possibly prevent.

3. *Terror to such as, after conviction and engagements under affliction and distress, after some prayers, vows, and a begun or resolved reformation, return to former courses.*—As they, after what they promised in their distress, returned when delivered, and started aside like a broken bow. (Jer. xxxiv. 15, 16.) The new broom of affliction swept the house clean for the present; but afterwards the unclean spirit returns, and this washed sow is wallowing in the mire again.

4. *[Terror to] such as lapse and relapse into the same sin again.*—As Pharaoh, Jeroboam, and those antichristian brood which repented not. (Rev. ix. 20, 21.) Notwithstanding all judgments, convictions, confessions, promises, [they] go from evil to worse, from affliction to sin; from sin to duty, and from duty to sin; repent and sin, sin and repent; (Jer. ix. 3;) and from repenting of sin in distress, go to repent of their repentance when delivered. Pharaoh unsaith all he had said, and saith his repentance backward. As the door turneth and returneth on the hinges, is sometimes shut, by and by open again; so these [are] in no constant posture. Their goodness [is] like a "morning dew," a little devotion in a morning; for all companies till night comes, then a little evening dew again. [They are] *amphibia*, that live in both elements. *Modò ecclesias, modò theatra replentes*; "now you see them at a sermon, anon at a play-house;" * as Solomon's harlot, sacrificing in the morning, prostituting herself to all filthiness at night; (Prov. vii. 14, 15;) or as Solomon's drunken beast, that hath had knocks and blows, yet, being besotted with his drink, or company, saith, "They have stricken me, and beaten me, but I felt it not; when I awake I shall seek it again;" (Prov. xxiii. 35;) or as Isaiah's debauched watchmen, who, having drunk sufficiently one day, say they will do as much to-morrow, and more too; and so had their drinking matches and rantings from day to day. (Isai. lvi. 12.)

USE III. [OF DISCRIMINATION.]

The third USE is of discrimination, to discover who is clean and who unclean in respect of falls and relapses; and "to put a difference between the holy and profane," which is the proper work of a faithful prophet. (Ezek. xxii. 26.) To some we are to open the door of hope; to some,

* St. Augustine.

to shut it: Every sin "is not a sin to death;" (1 John v. 17;) every disease not the plague; every ulcer not a leprosy.

1. There are some who have fallen into foul sins; and they think their case desperate, because of the greatness of their sins. But their sin is not the sin against the Holy Ghost, because not committed after light, taste, partaking of the Holy Ghost, &c., but in the days of their ignorance, as Paul once. Some fall foully after conversion, as Peter, but not deliberately, maliciously; and both these may be the spots of children: they see "the plague" in their heart, (1 Kings viii. 38,) feel the smart. These have foul scabs; but they go to Jordan and wash, go to "the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness;" and then, "though their sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though red like crimson, they shall be as white as wool." (Isai. i. 18.)

2. There be some relapses through human infirmity, which are truly bewailed. This is not the sin against the Holy Ghost neither. Come into the camp, I pronounce such clean: for, (1.) There is no raw flesh of pride and presumption in them. (2.) All is turned white, by true repentance: it is a scab, and but a scab. (3.) It is but skin-deep; the heart was not tainted. (4.) It standeth at a stay. (Lev. xiii. 4—6.) These four signs show it to be no plague of leprosy: such are not to be shut up, or put out of the camp. And God, as he pardoneth iniquity, transgression, and sin, so he promiseth "to heal" and pardon "their backslidings." (Hosea xiv. 4; Jer. iii. 22.)

3. But there are others that make a trade of sin, "drink up iniquity like water," that "add drunkenness to thirst," and fall and rise, and rise and fall: they lapse and relapse, and slide away as water. Shall I say such shall have peace? No! What peace to such so long as their sins remain? "The wrath of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and he shall blot out his name from under heaven." (Deut. xxix. 19, 20.)

Call not this a scab; this is the plague of leprosy; this is more than skin-deep; this doth not stand at a stay; here is proud raw flesh; this is an old sore, thou must out of the camp, thou art unclean. (Lev. xiii. 10, 11, 14, 15.) "God will wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of him that goeth on still in his trespasses." (Psalm lxxviii. 21.)

I shall, to conclude, give a few short directions, to prevent falls and relapses, but cannot now enlarge upon them.

1. *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.* (Matt. xxvi. 41.)—This is the old and great receipt, and daily experimented with every ordinary saint; *probatum est.* Watch in prayer, watch after, watch when alone, watch when in company, especially against ill company and all occasions of sin.

2. *Keep conscience tender, and shun the first motions and occasions of sin.*—"If thou find thyself given to appetite, put a knife to thy throat," is the wise man's counsel; if to wine, "look not on the glass;" if to wantonness, "come not near her corner." The consecrated Nazarene must not only forbear the wine, but the grape; and not only the juice, but the husk and kernel of it. (Num. vi. 4.)

3. *Take heed of having slight thoughts of sin.*—As to say, “As long as it is no worse;” “It is the first time;” “It is but now and then, a great chance, when I meet with such company;” and many have such foolish pleas, and so play at the mouth of the cockatrice’s den till they are stung to death.

4. [*Take heed*] *of having light thoughts of God’s mercy.*—“I shall have peace, (Deut. xxix. 19,) I shall have mercy, when I do but ask; *At what time soever*, will save me. We cannot out-sin the mercy of God. When sin abounds, grace superabounds,” &c. The Lord saith, he “will not spare” such, nor be merciful to them.

5. *Take heed of reasoning from God’s temporal forbearance, to eternal forgiveness.*—“Because sentence is not speedily executed against” an evil-doer, his “heart is fully set in him to do evil. But though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged,” &c., “yet it shall not be well with the wicked” at last. (Eccles. viii. 11, 12.)

6. *Take heed of presuming of thy own strength:*—“I can, and I mean to repent; I can when I will, and I will when time serves. I trust I am not so bad, that God hath not given me over. Many have gone further than I: why may I not repent at [my] last hour?”*

7. *Take heed of a mock repentance:*—Saying, “I cry *God-mercy! God forgive me!* I sin daily, and repent daily. When I have sworn or been drunk, I am heartily sorry. Is not this repentance?” I answer, No! Repentance is quite another thing. “The burnt child,” we say, “dreads the fire.” Thou hast smarted for suretiship, and hast repented of it. Thy friend comes again and desires thee to be bound with him once again. Thou repliest: “I have paid dear for suretiship already. I have repented of my folly. I have resolved to come into bonds again no more; no, not for the best friend I have.” Thou art importuned by many arguments, but peremptorily refusest: “Urge me no more, I have vowed and resolved against [it], and have made an oath, I would never be taken in that fault again.” Now I believe thee, that thou hast truly repented of suretiship: why dost thou not *thus* when thou art enticed unto sin again? why dost thou not say?—“I have smarted, confessed, bewailed, been heartily sorry, for my former folly. Now speak no more of it, *I have sworn, and will perform it, to keep God’s commandments.* (Psalm cxix. 106.) Away from me, ye wicked: I must keep the commandments of my God.” (Psalm cxix. 115.) This would be somewhat like true repentance. But take heed of a mock repentance; lest, as true repentance meets with a true pardon, thy mock repentance should be answered with a mock pardon, as Tertullian excellently saith. “There be some that say,” saith he,† “their heart is good: they fear God, grieve for sin, though yet they fall into sin:” they can *salvâ fide et metu peccare, &c., sic et ipsi, salvâ veniâ, in gehennam detrudentur, dum salvo metu peccant:* “They can live in sin, nevertheless,—notwithstanding their faith and repentance; and God can damn them nevertheless,—notwithstanding his mercies, and promises, and pardoning grace.”

* *Qui promittit penitenti veniam, non promittit peccanti penitentiam.* “He who has promised pardon to the penitent, has not promised repentance to the sinner.”—EDIV.
† *De Penitentia.*

True repentance, among other companions, is always attended with these three: "What CAREFULNESS, what INDIGNATION, what FEAR hath it wrought in you?" (2 Cor. vii. 11.)

8. Consider, *sin re-iterated riseth high, adds another figure to increase thy account.*—"Is the sin of Peor too little for you," (old sins in ignorance,) "but that you must this day again turn away anew?" (Joshua xxii. 17, 18.) The Lord keeps an account how often and how often thou hast committed such and such a sin; at length [he] saith, "For three transgressions, and for four, I will not turn away their punishment." (Amos i. ii. *passim*.) When Israel had seen God's works forty years, and tempted him ten times, he swore they should not enter into his rest. (Num. xiv. 22.) In the law, if an ox did gore a man, and the master knew not of it, the ox should die, not the owner. "But if the ox was wont to push with his horn," and the master was told of it, ox and master were both to die. (Exod. xxi. 28, 29.)

Lastly. Though I will not say to thee who art a *frequent* relapsarian, "It is impossible," as to the *malicious* relapser; yet I say, Remember, that every time the bone is broken the more danger; and though thou mayest possibly, after a second breaking, have it well set, yet thou mayest at times, against weather, specially when in years, feel it to thy dying day. Thy sins will lie down with thee in thy grave; and in sickness and trouble thou wilt "possess the sins of thy youth." (Job xiii. 26.)

I conclude all, as St. Jude concludes his Epistle: "Now unto him that is able to keep you from" all "falling" and relapses, "and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy; to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen."

SERMON V.

BY THE REV. JOHN GIBBON, B.D.

SOMETIME FELLOW OF EMMANUEL COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

HOW MAY WE BE SO SPIRITUAL, AS TO CHECK SIN IN THE FIRST
RISINGS OF IT?

Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.—
Gal. v. 16.

THE case of conscience to be discussed this morning, from these words, is, How a Christian may be able to check sin in the first risings of it.

"And without controversy great is *this* mystery of godliness," and, if any other, of inestimable use and moment in the practice of Christianity.

As the title which Solomon inscribes on the frontispiece of that divine poem of his, the Canticles, is, שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים, "the Song of Songs;" and as Aristotle calls the hand, "the instrument of instruments," and the mind, "the form of forms;" so may we with as just a reason style this holy skill of arresting and intercepting sin in its earliest motions and overtures, "the art of arts." Could the chymists ever compass their grand elixir, it were but a poor and cheap trifle in comparison of this grand secret of the school of Christ. So that the case of conscience before us, like Diana of the Ephesians, is great and illustrious amidst its fellows.

My text presents us with it resolved in this excellent rule of sanctification: "Walk in the Spirit," &c.

Wherein we have,

I. The principle and root of sin and evil,—the flesh with its lusts.
 II. The opposite principle and root of life and righteousness,—the Divine Spirit.

III. The terms and bounds of a Christian's conquest, how far he may hope for victory: "Ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh."

IV. The method and way of conquering: "Walk in the Spirit." Of each a word:—

I. *The principle and root of sin and evil, the flesh with its lusts.*—The apostle meaneth (pardon the phrase) a spiritual flesh, not that of the body, but the mind. The immortal souls of men, through their apostasy from God, the blessed Source and Original of all goodness, are become carnal. (Rom. viii. 7.) There is a principle of evil radicated in the very nature, interwoven in the very frame, and births, and constitution of all men; a bias that turns us off in large and wide aberrations from the paths of life and happiness, but with notorious partiality seduceth us into the ways of sin and death. This the Scripture calls "the old man," (Eph. iv. 22,) "the law of sin in our members," and "the body of death," &c. (Rom. vii. 23, 24.)

The wiser Heathen felt, by the very dictate of reason, that human nature was not either as it should be, or as they could have wished it. What meaneth else that ἀπτερια, πτερορρύησις, "that hanging and flagging of the soul's wings," that drooping of her noblest faculties, and that fatal unwilldiness, and untractableness of the will to virtue, which the Platonists so much complain of? * and what meaneth that ἀναγκη πολλὰ τῷ Θεῷ δυσμαχοῦσα καὶ ἀφηνιαζοῦσα, "that reluctancy to the divine life, and that impetuous hurry and propension" wherewith they felt themselves driven headlong towards folly and sensuality?

This "flesh" in man, this corrupt and depraved nature, is perpetually fly-blown with evil lustings. "This body of death," like a rotten carcass, is constantly breeding vermin, as a filthy quagmire, a noisome Mephitic or Camarina, sends out stench and unsavouriness. This region of the lesser world, like Africa in the greater, swarms with monsters. It is "the valley of the shadow of death," "a habitation for dragons, and a court for owls," where dwell "the cormorant and the bittern, the raven, the screech-owl, and the satyr," if I may allude to that of the prophet.

* PLUTARCH in Ψυχολογία.

(Isai. xxxiv. 11—14.) The apostle sets down elegantly the whole pedigree and lineage of evil: "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death." (James i. 15.) Lust is the root of bitterness, fruitful in all the unfruitful works of darkness; and these, like the apples of Sodom and clusters of Gomorrah, if you gather them, crumble into the dust and ashes of death. They are fruits "nigh unto a curse, and whose end is to be burned." (Heb. vi. 8.)

That is the first, the "old Adam," "the flesh with its lusts."

II. *We have here the Second Adam, who is a quickening Spirit.* (1 Cor. xv. 45.)—There is in good and holy souls an immortal seed, a principle of life and righteousness, an antidote to the former poison. "For the law of the Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus hath made us free from the law of sin and death." (Rom. viii. 2.) Philo the Jew, or whoever was the author of that noble tract in the Apocrypha, called the Wisdom of Solomon, styles it, "the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and a pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty." (Wisdom vii. 25, 26.) Every one that is in Christ is "a new creature," (2 Cor. v. 17,) "born again," (John iii. 3—6,) and "made partaker of the divine nature." (2 Peter. i. 4.) For it is the royalty of that King of saints: "Behold I make all things new." (Rev. xxi. 5.) The divine Spirit, that great and heavenly Archeus, is busy in holy souls; that mighty principle of life is counter-working the flesh and its lusts. So that now the warfares of a Christian's "warfare are mighty through God for the pulling down of strong-holds, and the captivating every imagination," yea, "bringing every thought into the obedience of Christ." (2 Cor. x. 4, 5, 17.)

III. *Here are the terms and bounds of the Spirit's conquests in this present life, at which a Christian's hopes and endeavours must take aim:—* Not the extirpating but subduing, not *the not having* but *the not fulfilling*, the lusts of the flesh. The flesh will be lusting, that accursed womb will be conceiving, in the regenerate themselves. But here is the Christian's privilege, that while he walks in the Spirit, those conceptions shall prove abortive.

IV. *The words entirely, and in sum, present us with the method and way of conquering, with the art of circumventing sin in the first avenues and approaches of it.*—"Walk in the Spirit," &c. This is the *εὐ μύρα*, "the [one] great and Achillean stratagem" against the powers of darkness, the true and only course we are to take, if we would strangle the brats of night and hell in their very birth, and crush the cockatrice's egg whilst it is hatching, and before it excludes* the serpent.

DOCTRINE.

So that, in fine, the observation which resulteth, is this:—

The best expedient in the world not to fulfil the lusts of the flesh, is to walk in the Spirit; which what it imports, I come now to show.

1. "Walk in the Spirit:" that is, *in obedience to God's commandments which are the oracles of the Spirit.*—That this is excellently preventive

* An expression, borrowed from the Latin classics, for hatching; in which sense it is employed by many old English authors.—EDIT.

of fulfilling the motions to sin, appeareth [from] Psalm cxix. 1—3: "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies. They also do no iniquity." Again, a little lower: "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word." (Verse 9.) Aristotle, that great dictator in philosophy, despaired of achieving so great an enterprise, as the rendering a young man capable of his *ἠθικὰ ἀκροαμάτων*, "his grave and severe lectures of morality;" for that age is light and foolish, yet headstrong and untractable.* Now, take a young man all in the heat and boiling of his blood, in the highest fermentation of his youthful lusts; and, at all these disadvantages, let him enter that great school of the Holy Spirit,—the Divine scripture, and permit himself to the conduct of those blessed oracles; and he shall effectually be convinced, by his own experience, of the incredible virtue, the vast and mighty power, of God's word, in the success it hath upon him, and in his daily progressions and advances in heavenly wisdom. Let me invite you then this day in the prophet's words: "O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord." (Isai. ii. 5.) And what THAT is, David tells us: "Thy words are a light to my feet, and a lamp to my paths." (Psalm cxix. 105.) And, "His judgments are as a light that goeth forth." (Hosea vi. 5.) Order thy steps by his word, and thou shalt not tread awry. Let the law of thy God be in thine heart; and sin, which is the transgression of the law, shall not come nigh thee. Walk in this broad day-light of the Sun of righteousness shining in the scriptures, and thou shalt have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. This was the practice, and experience too, of the "man after God's own heart:" "I have hid thy word in my heart, that I might not sin against thee." (Psalm cxix. 11.) It is good writing after the copy of so great a Master: "Go thou and do likewise."

2. "Walk in the Spirit;" that is, *as becometh those in whom God's Spirit dwells*.—As if the apostle had said, "The part which ye are now to act, O ye Christian Galatians, it is that of new creatures: see that ye keep the decorum. Demean yourselves like the children of God who are led of the Spirit of God. (Rom. viii. 14.) Be true to your part, fill it up, adorn it; and then, sure enough, ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. For that were to *act the part just contrary to what you sustain*: † as he that is to represent upon the stage some generous and heroic person, cannot do the least base and sordid thing but he breaks his part, and digresseth into the garb and posture of a vile and abject person. Whilst he is true to his part, he cannot possibly do any thing that is absurd and misbeseeing."

Some of the Nethinim stood continually porters at the door of the

* *Cereus in vitium flecti, monitoribus asper, &c.*—HORATII *Ars Poet.* 169.

† The youth, whose will no forward tutor bounds,
Joys in the sunny fields, his horse and hounds;
Yielding like wax, th' impressive folly bears,
Rough to reproof, and slow to future cares;
Profuse and vain, with every passion warm'd,
And swift to leave what late his fancy charm'd."—FRANCIS'S Translation.

† Μεταβαλλειν εις αλλο γενος.

temple, to keep out whatsoever was unclean; and hereunto the apostle palpably alludeth: "Know ye not that ye are the temples of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? Now if any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." (1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.) So then that which the rule amounts to, by this interpretation, is, "Walk in the Spirit;" that is, "Walk as becomes the temples of the Holy Ghost, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh."*

3. "Walk in the Spirit:" that is, *Fulfil the counsels and advices of the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.*—Every renewed soul is the scene and stage, wherein the two mightiest contraries in the world, the Spirit and the flesh, that is, light and darkness, life and death, heaven and hell, good and evil, Michael and his angels, and the dragon with his, are perpetually combating hand to hand. And well it is for a Christian that the Holy Spirit is lusting in him against the flesh. *Αγαθή ὁ εἰς ἡδὲ βροτοῖσι.* ["This is a contest which is beneficial to mortals."] God takes thy part, Christian; the Spirit of the Lord of hosts is with thee, if thou dost not sin and grieve him away. Follow but thy Leader; be prompt and ready to start at the Divine signal; when the Holy Ghost displays his ensigns, then *μετ' ἰχθυα βαῖνε Θεοῖο*, † march presently forth under those mighty and victorious banners, and thou shalt become invincible. When a Christian goeth out thus to warfare, following the Almighty conduct of his God, he must needs proceed conquering, and to conquer. † "My soul followeth hard after thee," saith David: "thy right hand upholds me." (Psalm lxxiii. 8.) The original is, *רבקה נפשי אחריך* "My soul cleaves after thee." As if he had said, "Go, lead on, my God! Behold, I follow as near, as close, as I can; *e vestigio*; 'I would not leave any distance, but pursue thy footsteps, step by step,' leaning upon thine everlasting arms, that are underneath me, and following thy manuduction." Lot had almost

* That a good man's soul is a temple which God inhabits, the philosophers acknowledge; and that the honour and worship rendered to him in a pure and holy mind, is incomparably more worthy and acceptable, than all the costliest sacrifices and offerings in temples made with hands, how magnificent soever. *Μονος γὰρ οἶδε τιμᾶν ὃ τὴν ἀξίαν μὴ συγχέων τῶν τιμωμένων, καὶ ὃ προηγουμένως ἱερίων ἑαυτὸν προσάγων, καὶ ἀγάλμα θεῖον τεκταῶν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ψυχὴν, καὶ ναὸν εἰς ὑποδοχὴν τοῦ θεοῦ φάτος τὸν ἑαυτοῦ παρὰσκευάζων νοῦν. Ψυχῆς καθαρᾶς τοποῦ οικειωτέρον ἐπὶ γῆς θεὸς οὐκ ἐχει ὅς καὶ ὁ Πυθίος συμφερεται, λέγων Ἐυσεβείου δε βροτοῖς γανύμαι τὸσον ὅσον Ὀλύμπῳ*—*HIEROCLEUS Comment. in aurea Pythagoreorum Carmina*, p. 18. "For he alone knows how to render due honour, who does not confound the relative worthiness of those that ought to be honoured; who, in preference to all other acts, offers up himself as a sacrifice, fashions and moulds his own soul into the Divine image, and prepares and furnishes his mind as a temple for the reception of Divine light. The Deity possesses no spot on earth which is more the object of his choice for a residence, than a pure human spirit. In accordance with these sentiments, the Pythian oracle declares:—

"As much as in Olympus bright,
With holy men is my delight."—*EDIT.*

† "The footsteps of the Deity he treads."—*POPE'S Translation of the Odyssey*, ii. 453.

‡ *Ἄπλως μὴδεν ἄλλο θελεῖ ἢ ἃ ὁ θεὸς θελεῖ: καὶ τις σε κωλύσει, τις ἀναγκάσει, οὐ μᾶλλον ἢ τὸν Δία, ὅταν τοιοῦτον ἐχρῆς ἡγεμόνα, καὶ τοιοῦτῶ συνέλθῃς καὶ συνῆγγῆς, &c.*—*ARRIAN in Epictetum*, lib. ii. cap. 17. "Simply wish and will for nothing but for that which God wills; and any one shall as soon hinder or compel God himself as thee, when thou hast such a mighty Leader, in concert with whom thou both wiltest and doest," &c.—*EDIT.*

perished in Sodom, for lingering when his God hastened him away. (Gen. xix. 16.) But Samson (till then invincible) awoke too late from the bosom of his Delilah, when the Philistines had shaved his seven locks. And he thought to go out and shake off their cords wherewith they bound him, "as at other times:" but "the Lord was departed from him:" and they took him and put out both his eyes. (Judges xvi. 20, 21.) A Christian is more than a man when he acts in concurrence with his God. "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalm xvii. 1.) But if he resists the Holy Ghost, he doth not only grieve Him, but will (if he go on resisting) quench Him; and then he is all alone, and becomes heir to the curse of Reuben: he who was, a while since, "the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power," is now weak "as water, and cannot excel." (Gen. xlix. 3, 4.)

The proverb tells us, Πολλος εν καιρω χρονος, "There is a great deal of time in a little opportunity." It is good striking while the iron is hot, and launching-out while wind and tide serve. Open all thy sails to every breath and gale of God's good Spirit. Welcome every suggestion, reverence every dictate, cherish every illapse of this blessed Monitor. Let every inspiration find thee as the seal doth the wax, or the spark the tinder; and then, as the spouse tells her beloved, "or ever thou art aware, thy soul" will make thee "as the chariot of Ammi-nadib."* Step into the pool when the Angel stirs the water. (John v. 4.) Keep touch with the motions of the Spirit, and all is well.

But if these three rules are too general and remote, I shall now lay down some more particular and exact directions for checking the beginnings of sin: and these are of two sorts; (as physicians have their prophylactics, and their therapeutics;) some *for the prevention* of the fit and paroxysm; others *for the cure, and removal*, when the symptoms of it are upon thee.

RULE I.

Before the paroxysm cometh, prepare and antidote thy soul against these lusts of the flesh, by observing these advices:—

The first is that notable counsel of Eliphaz to Job: "Acquaint now thyself with God, and be at peace." (Job xxii. 21.) Get thy heart fixed where thy treasure is. Have thy "conversation in heaven," and thy "fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." Flee to thy God to hide thee. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler." (Psalm xci. 1, 3, 4.) Arise with thine arisen Lord, and "seek the things that are above." Set thine affections there, "where Christ sits at the right hand of God." If the soul is not where it animates, but where it loves, awaken thine, and kindle it into holy passionate ecstasies of love, that

* בְּיָדָאֵי אֱמִינָדָב, that is, "a free and willing people."

thou mayest live in heaven all day long, and (which is the privilege of "the upright") "dwell in the presence of that God" whom thy soul delighteth in. (Psalm cxl. 13.) The tempter cannot reach thee there.

Be much in converse with God, and the devil will have little converse with thee; or if he have, it will be to little purpose. How was the majesty of king Ahasuerus incensed at that affront of Haman, when he threw himself upon queen Esther's bed! "What! will he force the queen in our presence?" (Esther vii. 8.) Keep but in the presence of thy Lord, thy King, thy Husband; and the ravisher will not offer to force thee there; or, if he do, it will be but in vain. How secure is that soul that lives under the deep, and warm, and constant sense of God's being its "all in all!" What a munition of rocks is this against all assaults and incursions of the tempter! They are our tame and common poultry whose wings sweep the ground as they fly, and raise a dust: but the generous eagle soon mounts above this smoky lower region of the air, till she makes the clouds a pillow for her head. Put on, Christian, thy eagles' wings, (which are the same with those doves' wings which David prays for,) "and flee away, that thou mayest be at rest." (Psalm lv. 6.) "They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength, they shalt mount up with wings as eagles," &c. (Isai. xl. 31.) When the soul is once but upon the wing heaven-ward, O how easily then doth it soar away above this region of smoke and dust, above this atmosphere of carnality and fleshly lustings, into the pure and free ethereal air, the blessed serenity and rest of God's life and kingdom, "which is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost!" (Rom. xiv. 17.) It is cold iron that shows its rusty scales; they disappear when it is red hot. Get but thine heart on fire heaven-ward, be but ascending thither Elijah-like in a flaming chariot of holy longings and pantings after God; and the lustings of the flesh shall no more appear to deform thy beauty, than the rust of iron appears, when the metal is candent, that is, all over of a light and glowing ardour. The rule then is, Be sick of love to thy dear Master and Lord; and thou shalt not be sick of sin. Stir up spiritual and holy lustings in thy soul after the love and favour, the grace and image, of thy God; and thou shalt not fulfil the lustings of the flesh.

RULE II.

Study thoroughly the unchangeable natures, the eternal laws and differences, of moral good and evil.—To open this: There are some things of a middle and indifferent nature, neither good nor evil in themselves. But if God commands or forbids any of these, they are then good or evil indeed; but only because or whilst He doth so. The ceremonial law of the Old Testament stood in these things, and is now abolished by the same Divine authority which enacted it. And it is now the glory of Christian religion, that (excepting the two sacraments, and a very few other positive institutions for great and weighty causes reserved) the evangelical law of the New Testament consists of such precepts as carry their own credential letters, and are built upon moral grounds of everlasting equity and righteousness. Wherefore the Romanists deserve

very ill of Christian religion ; nor are the Lutheran churches to be excused, who, of their own heads, impose so many indifferent things now in the service of God under the gospel, and that for no other reason, but because they will ; consequently rendering that yoke a *hard* one which Christ left *easy*, and that burden a *heavy* one, which he would have *light*.

But, now, moral good and evil are not only such because God commands the one, and forbids the other, but because the things themselves are so, essentially and unalterably. As mathematical truths and proportions are not such only *because God would have them so*, but *because the nature of the things cannot be otherwise* ; almighty power itself (reverently be it spoken !) cannot make two parallel lines or surfaces meet, though extended infinitely ; or the three angles of any straight-lined triangle amount to any less or more than two right angles, in geometry ; or, in arithmetic, alter the proportions between two and four, to any other than that of double and half, or between three and nine than that of a root and square ; or (to name no more) is it possible that a seventh in music should ever become a concord, or a unison (fifth or eighth) a discord : for these things are in their very nature fixed, and unchangeable ; they must be what they are, or not be at all. Thus there is an eternal reason why that which is good should be so, and commanded ; and why that which is evil should be so, and forbidden, which depends not so much on God's *will*, as on his *nature*. For if God could will that good should be evil and evil good, he could deny himself, and change his own unchangeable Divinity ; which is impossible : and therefore I look upon that opinion of a modern Dutch author* (though I would be so charitable as to believe he knew not, and therefore meant not, what he said) as overthrowing all religion : the thing is this,—That God may, if he please, out of the vast sovereignty of his will, command all that wickedness which he hath forbidden, and make it our duty ; also forbid all that holiness which he hath commanded, and make it become sin to us.

For my part, I would choose rather to be an atheist, than to believe there is such a God as this in the world. But, I am sure, “the Holy One of Israel” cannot do so, not through any *defect*, but through infinite *plenitude and redundance*, of all perfection. For instance : There is an eternal fitness and comeliness that a reasonable creature should love, and honour, and obey its Creator ; and, contrarily, an eternal horridness and indecency, that an immortal soul should forget, contemn, and affront the Father of spirits. Now to affirm that God can dispense with the former, nay, [that He can] make our fear of him, or delight in him, to be a sin, and punish it with everlasting torments ; and to affirm, that God can wink at or allow the latter, much less command atheism, blasphemy, pride, unthankfulness, &c., or make hypocrisy, covetousness, revenge, sensuality, to become duties and graces, and reward them with everlasting happiness ;—this were to utter the most hellish blasphemy, and the most impossible contradictions in the world. The heathen Plato, in those divine discourses of his (his Eutyphro and Theætetus) and other-

* Ziglovius.

where, may well rebuke the madness of such Christians as this bold and vain speculator. The sum of this rule then is : Deeply possess and dye thy soul all over with the representation of that everlasting beauty and amiableness that are in holiness, and of that horror, and ugliness, and deformity that eternally dwell on the forehead of all iniquity. Be under the awe and majesty of such clear convictions all day long, and "thou shalt not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." For the mind of man is wont to conceive before its own apprehensions and ideas of good and evil, as Jacob's sheep did before the rods in the gutter. If thy notions of good and evil be right and clear, thy lustings and desires will be from evil towards good, all the conceptions of thy soul and their births will be fair and unspotted. But if thy apprehensions be speckled, confused, and ring-straked, (like his rods,) the conceptions of thy mind, thy lustings, will be so too ; so great a truth is that, Πας μοχθηρος αγνοει, that dark ignorance and folly lie at the bottom, as the root and foundation of all wickedness ; "every immoral man is a fool ;"—even when he commits a known sin,* yet then he may be said not to know what he doeth. (Luke xiii. 34.) All the reason in the world takes the part of holiness ; and sin hath not one jot of true reason to plead, or allege in its own behalf.

RULE III.

Understand thyself ; be no stranger to thy own breast ; know the frame, and temper, and constitution of thy mind.—"The wise man's eyes are in his head ; but the fool walketh in darkness." (Eccles. ii. 14.) It is a true and sober maxim of the Platonist, Εφ' ὃσον σαυτον αγνοεις, νομιζει μαινεσθαι, "As far as a man is ignorant of himself, so far forth he is to reckon himself guilty of madness and distraction."† The satirist complains of this :—

Ut nemo in sese tentat descendere, nemo. †

Dare to unlock thy bosom, to ransack every corner of thy heart ; let thy spirit accomplish a diligent search. Feel the pulse of thy soul ; visit it

* Παραδειγματων εν τη ορτι εστωτων, του μεν δειου ευδαιμονεστατου, του δε αθεου αβλιωτατου ουχ' ὀρωντες οτι ουτως εχει, ὑπο ηλιθιοτητος τε και της εσχατης ανοιας λαθραουσι τη μεν ὁμοιουμενοι δια τας αδικους πραξεις, τη δε ανομοιουμενοι οὐδη τυρουσι δικην ζωντες τον εικοτα βιον ὡ ὁμοιουνται. Εαν δ' εικωμεν ὅτι, αν μη απαλλαγωσι της δεινοτητος, και τελευτησαντας αυτους εκεινος μεν δ των κακων καθαρος ποπος ου δεζεται, &c.—PLATO in *Theateto*. "In the present life two classes of examples present themselves to our view ; the one being of a truly Divine and most felicitous character, the other without any reference to God, and consequently most wretched and miserable. Those who compose the latter, not observing the existence of this broad difference, are imperceptibly assimilating themselves, by their wicked conduct and extreme folly, to their own unhappy class ; pursuing an opposite course to the virtuous and happy. The wicked indeed suffer the penalty of their unrighteousness while they lead a life which is in conformity with that to which they are assimilated. If, however, we remark, that unless they desist from the practice of their wickedness, that place which is unsullied, and perfectly free from the society of the wicked, will not be their receptacle when they depart out of this life ; but then their state of existence will for ever be in accordance with themselves, wicked men constantly herding with their flagitious companions ;—if we talk in this style to these desperate and artful men, our words will insure from them only that degree of attention which they usually give to the ravings of idiots."—EDIT. † DEMOPHILUS in *Γνωμαις*.

‡ PERSIUS, sat. iv. 23. "Into themselves how few, alas ! descend,
And act, at home, the free, impartial friend !"

BREWSTER'S Translation, altered.

often; ask it how it doth. Survey thyself, and blush to leave any *terra incognita*, any "region of thy mind undiscovered." God hath charged and intrusted every man with his own soul: and what folly is it *αλλοτριπισκοπειν*, "to be busy in what doth not concern thee," and neglect what chiefly doth so,—the affairs of thy own mind! Is any thing nearer thee, or of such consequence to thee, as thyself? O let thy charity then begin at home! Thou owest this duty to thyself,—to take an exact account daily of the posture and order of thy inward man. With how great confusion doth the spouse acknowledge this neglect!—"They made me keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept." (Canticles i. 6.) If ever thou wouldest be dexterous in suppressing the first risings of sin, inquire what advantages the tempter hath against thee; where that *nescio quid tenerum et molle** lieth in thy soul, as Cicero calls it, against which temptation plants its chiefest battery and artillery; what "thine own iniquity" is, (Psalm xviii. 23,) which is that *επιπεριστατον αμαρτιαν*, "the sin that doth so easily beset thee." (Heb. xii. 1.) See what grace is principally wanting in thee, which is weakest, in what instances thy greatest failure betrays itself, in which of thy passions and affections thou art most peccable, and what lustings of the flesh they are which give thee the frequentest alarms, and threaten the greatest dangers. Be making these researches and explorations daily; compare thy heart with the law of the eternal God, and with the dictates and maxims of thine own conscience. See where thy greatest discrepancy and non-conformity to these from time to time ariseth; and this, like pathology, or understanding the disease and the constitution of the patient, will hugely minister and conduce to the exact method of physic, either for prevention or for cure.

RULE IV.

Get and keep a tender conscience. Be sensible of the least sin.—As the apple of the eye (the fittest emblem, in the world, of a tender conscience) is not only offended with a blow or wound, but if so much as a little dust or smoke get in, it weeps them out. Some men's consciences are like the stomach of the ostrich that digesteth iron: they can swallow and concoct the most notorious sins, (swearing, drunkenness, &c.,) without regret. "Their consciences are seared as with a hot iron," as the apostle phraseth it. (1 Tim. iv. 2.) They have so inured their souls to the grossest wickedness, (as the *Psylli*, a people of Africa, whom Plutarch mentions, had [inured] their bodies to the eating poison,) that it becomes as it were natural. But a good conscience hath a delicate sense; it is the most tender thing in the whole world; it feels the least touch of known sin, and grieves at the grieving of God's good Spirit, not only for quenching, or resisting, or rebelling against the Holy Ghost, but even for "grieving the Holy Spirit of promise, whereby it is sealed to the day of redemption." (Eph. iv. 30.) The most tender-hearted Christian,—he is the stoutest and most valiant Christian. "Happy is the man that feareth always: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief."

* "That undefinable softness and tenderness."—EDIT.

(Prov. xxviii. 14.) It is the truest magnanimity and heroic courage in our spiritual warfare, to tremble at the least iniquity. A Christian is never fitter to "endure hardness as a faithful soldier of Jesus Christ," (2 Tim. ii. 3,) than when his conscience is most tender. To be such a coward as not to dare to break any one of God's commandments, is to be the valiantest person in the world; for such an one will choose the greatest evil of suffering, before the least of sinning; and, however the jeering Ishmaels of the world [may] be ready to reproach and laugh one to scorn, for "this niceness and precise scrupulosity," as they term it; yet the choice, if God be but wiser than vain man, is a very wise one.

RULE V.

Keep an exact guard upon thy heart. (Prov. iv. 23.)—Let the eyes of thy soul be open and awake, upon all the stirrings of thy thoughts and affections. Bid them stand at their first appearance. As soon as ever thou descriest any of them in motion, summon them before thy soul's tribunal: let them not pass till thou knowest perfectly whence they come, whither they go. Ask their errand:—

State, viri! quæ causa viæ? quive estis in armis?—VIRGILII Æneis, ix. 376.*

Is it grief, or is it joy, or hope, or fear, or love, &c., that is now upon the march? Demand the word of it; ask whether it hath a pass from God and conscience; catechise it, examine it, search it; speak to it in the sentinel's and watchman's phrase, *Δειξον τα συνθηματα*, "Show me your ticket." "Tell me, my desire, my love, my fear, my anger, by whose authority art thou now up, and in motion?" If they are able to produce a good warrant from God's commandments, or from the dictate of reason and conscience, let them go on in God's name; they are about their business. But if they cannot, arrest them as idle vagrants, nay, as enemies to thy soul's peace, and charge them, upon their allegiance to their superiors, that they stir no further.

RULE VI.

Be daily training and exercising all thy graces.—Have them always in battle-array. Be in a military posture, both defensive and offensive. Stand constantly to thine arms; for thou hast to do with two enemies that will never give thee any truce or respite, the *דע יצר* and the *מלאך המות*, as the Jews call them, the flesh within thee, (Jer. xvii. 9,) and the tempter, that destroying angel of the bottomless pit, without thee. (1 Peter v. 8.) The Christian warfare is *πολεμος ασπονδος*, "a war never to be altered;" it admits of no peace, no cessation. The soldier of Christ must never lay down his arms, but expect to be upon continual duty and travel, till the great Lord of hosts, under whose banner he now fighteth, is pleased to remove his quarters from that army militant here on earth, to that blessed and triumphant [one] in the heavens.

* "Declare, young men, both whence and what you are, And whither bound? and wherefore arm'd for war?"—PITT'S Translation, altered.

RULE VII.

Be well-skilled in the elenchs of temptation.—I mean, in unmasking the sophistry and mystery of iniquity, in defeating the wiles and stratagems of the tempter, and in detecting and frustrating the cheats and finesses of the flesh with its deceitful lusts. (Eph. iv. 22 ; 2 Cor. ii. 11.) No small part of spiritual wisdom lies in the blessed art of discovering and refuting sin's fallacies and impostures. If ever thou wouldest prove famous and victorious, and worthy [of] honour and reverence in thy spiritual warfare, be well-seen in the skill of fencing, know all thy wards for every attack. Provide thyself with answers and retorts beforehand, against the subtle insinuations and delusions of thine enemy. For example: If Satan tells thee, as he often will, that the sin is pleasant,* ask whether the gripings of conscience be so too, whether it be such a pleasant thing to be in hell, to be under the wrath of an Almighty Judge! If he tells thee, "Nobody sees; thou mayest commit it safely;" ask whether he can put out God's all-seeing eye, whether he can find a place empty of the Divine Presence for thee to sin in, or whether he can blot out the *items* out of the book of God's remembrance. If he tells thee, "It is a little one;" ask whether the majesty of the great Jehovah be a little one, whether there be a little hell or no. If he talks of profits and earthly advantages that will accrue, ask what account it will turn to at the last day, and what profit there is if one should gain the whole world and lose his own soul, or what one should give in exchange for his soul! (Matt. xvi. 26.) When sin, like Jael, invites thee into her tent, with the lure and decoy of a lordly treatment, think of the nail and hammer which fastened Sisera dead to the ground. (Judges iv. 18, 21 ; v. 25, 26.) Be not caught with chaff; lay by thee such memoirs, such answers and repartees, as these, wherewith thou mayest reply upon the tempter: That the God of truth hath other manner of pleasures, profits, honours, to court thy love and reward thy service with, than the father of lies; namely, true and real, solid and eternal ones. What are "the pleasures that are in sin for a season," to be compared with "the rivers of God's pleasure, that are for evermore at his right hand?" And what is a little wealth, "that thieves can steal," a despicable heap of riches, (which, like a flock of birds alighting a little while in thy yard, will "take wing presently and fly away,") to be named with "the unsearchable riches of Christ," or that "inheritance of the saints in light?" Or what is the painted bubble, the fading though beauteous rainbow, of earthly honour and grandeur, to "a weight of glory," to an "incorruptible crown of righteousness that fadeth not away," to "a kingdom which it is the Father's good pleasure to reserve" in the highest heavens for every sheep and every lamb of his "little flock?" And (to name these considerations by cluster) remember, that the greatest wisdom is to do (not what in some poor few regards is, but) what is absolutely lovely and desirable; that what is best of all is best for thee to love, and

* Τις σε πολυπλανων επων ειδαζε κελευθους;—MUS.ΚΙ *Hero.* 175.

"Who first essay'd thy youthful mind to teach
These wily arts of smooth deceptive speech?"—ERDIT.

mind, and prosecute;* that a good conscience is a continual feast; that God alone is enough, and *without him* nothing [is enough] for thy happiness; that thy soul is worthier thy care than thy carcass, and the life to come than this; that eternity is more valuable than time; that not the opinions of men lulled asleep in voluptuousness and sensuality, but God's estimate, but the sentiments of the holiest, best, and wisest men,—or, if you needs will, of the worst and vilest, when conscience is awakened, when they come to lie a-dying, and when they shall stand before God at the last day,—are to be preferred as the wisest; that everlasting happiness cannot be bought too dear, but repentance and shame may easily; that the hardest doings or sufferings for Christ are infinitely easier than everlasting misery; that heaven and glory will more than recompense all thy self-denials and mortifications, all thy watchings, fastings, &c.; and, in the mean time, the very hope of it, beside “the peace of God which passeth all understanding,” and his love and grace, and the comforts of his Spirit, will certainly sweeten all the tediousness of thy way to heaven, with inexpressible redundance of satisfaction, yea, sometimes with joy unutterable and full of glory: in sum, that God is a good master, and his service perfect freedom; for beside the glorious recompence to come, thy work, Christian, is even now its own reward. If thou believest strongly such aphorisms as these,—and he is madder than any in Bedlam that doth not believe them,—it will be no hard matter, by God's blessing and assistance, in their strength to “put to flight the armies of the aliens,” at least to shield thyself against the volleys of fiery darts, which at any time the tempter shall pour upon thee.

RULE VIII.

Withdraw thyself, if possible, from the occasions of sin.—It is good standing out of harm's way: do not gaze upon temptations, but pray, with David, “Lord, turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity.” (Psalm cix. 37.) If thou perceivest “thy feet are almost gone, thy steps had well-nigh slipped,” (Psalm lxxiii. 2,) it is surely high time for thee, if thou canst, to run away; nor will it be reckoned thy cowardice, but thy valour, in the day of thine account, thus to retreat from the enemy. It is a very wise man's counsel, concerning the haunts and converses of the profane: “Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men; avoid it, pass not by it; turn from it, and pass away.” (Prov. iv. 14, 15.) Again, concerning the strange woman: “Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house.” (Prov. v. 8.) And again, concerning occasions of intemperance: “Be not among wine-bibbers, among riotous eaters of flesh. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright;” (Prov. xxiii. 20, 31;) that is, when it sparkles and vapours in the glass. When it laughs in thy face, and invites thy lip, then shut thy eyes, lest sin steal in upon thee. Do not imitate the silly lark, which,

* Μηδεις μητε λογω σε παρεικη, μητε τι εργω,
Πρηξαι μηδ' ειπω ο τι μη βελτερον εστι.—PYTHAGORÆ ANTIQ. CARM. 25, 26.

“To words or actions stain'd with horrid vice,
Disgraceful to thyself, let none entice.”—EDIT.

by the pleasing contemplation of the little piece of glass, that glitters in the sun, while the fowler twirls it about, is enticed nearer and nearer, forgetting or overseeing the net, which ere long overwhelms it. Vouchsafe not to admit the tempter to a parle: the poets fable Ulysses to have stopped his ears at the enchanting voices of the Syrens. Be thou as the deaf adder to that great charmer: the best entertainment thou canst give him, is, "Get thee behind me, Satan!"

RULE IX.

Bind thyself beforehand, with the severest of thy resolutions, not to trust thy own judgment, when the temptation begins to get within thee.— "A man in passion is not himself." *Periit judicium cum res transit in affectus.* One distempered with the *morbus arcuatus*, "the jaundice," black or yellow, is apt to impute the colour his eye is vitiated with to every object. Who would trust such a judge of colours? or the palate of one in a fever, to distinguish of tastes? It is a good rule, under the disorder of temptation, *Μεμνησο ακιστειν** "Never credit thy own apprehensions" at such a time. If thou takest thyself yielding in the least, start back with abhorrence, and chide thy rashness, appealing from thy present distracted, to thy ancient and wiser, self; from thyself asleep and disordered, to thyself awake and sober at other times. Jonah's judgment was weak and childish, though a prophet, when he was under that temptation of impatient anger: "I do well to be angry;" (Jonah iv. 9;) a saucy and bold answer to his God! He should not have trusted his present sentiments; for he was not himself. As one that bespeaks an awakening, will, over-night, desire his friend not to give ear to him: "Though," saith he, "I plead earnestly to sleep a little longer, yet do not regard that; for I tell you of it before on purpose; and I shall thank you, when once I am up, for not letting me have my will." Thus tell thyself aforehand, that though, under a drowsiness and slumber of spirit, thou art ready to plead for the flesh, and to feel some inclinations to fulfil its lusts, and art very loath to let them go unsatisfied; yet, if thou art but resolute not to comply with thy own foolish and unreasonable desires, thou wilt heartily thank thyself; I mean, [thou wilt] be entirely glad, when thy eyes are open, that thou hast overcome thyself, and that wisdom and reason and conscience have got the day. Resolve to remember this, when temptation comes the next time to assault thee, and play the man.

Having laid down these directions, by way of prevention against the time of conflict, to prepare the soul aforehand, that in the assault it may not be vanquished, I come now to the Christian's behaviour in the fit and paroxysm itself, when the lusts of the flesh are stirring. And the great rule to be observed here, is this:—

As soon as ever thou perceivest thine affections and lusts begin to grow inordinate, and thy inferior appetites to rebel, take thyself to task forthwith, and resist them with all thy might.— Do not stay a moment; delay is unutterably dangerous. Who but a madman, that sees the stable or barn hard by his dwelling-house just beginning to catch fire, would stand

* "Recollect to be mistrustful of thyself."—EDIT.

still, and say, "Let it alone a little, I would see what will come of it?"—Two or three minutes' indulgence to the flame will embolden it, without expecting his leave or permission any longer, to devour, and rage, and consume, and carry all before it, in despite of his *mightiest* resistances; when a *little* at first might have saved that vast damage which his folly and loitering have occasioned. How contemptible were those fires at first, that in few hours have triumphed over stately palaces, and turned sometimes vast cities into heaps of dust and ashes! How small an infirmity and distemper, neglected, hath ushered in the most fatal sickness! And how often hath a trifling bruise or strain been preface to a gangrene; and the prick of a pin or thorn, not looked after time enough, enforced the cutting off a leg or arm, nay, [hath] proved mortal and incurable! Advantages to good, like *arithmetical* progressions, rise slowly, in fair and even intervals; but advantages to ill, like *geometrical*, grow up presently from little to vast excesses:—

————— *Facilis descensus Averno:*
Sed revocare gradum, superasque evadere ad auras,
*Hic labor, &c.—VIRGILII Æneis, vi. 126, 8, 9.**

Motion to ill is downwards, and, like the descent of heavy bodies, collects a new impetus, and moveth every step with a swiftness perpetually increasing,† and, if not stopped early, soon irresistible. Mischief springs apace; grows tall, and large, and adult suddenly, as Jonah's gourd did in a night. Our passage in sin is with wind and tide increasing; but in holiness, with both against us. To seek the things above is a supernatural motion, and therefore difficult; but the contrary is natural, and therefore easy: 'Ἦδὺ μὲν τὸ κατὰ φύσιν, τὸ δὲ βίαιον λυπηρὸν,‡ as the philosopher well determines. Evil is now akin to us since our degeneracy, and hath vast advantages on its side, if once it gets an allowed harbour and entertainment in our breast.

The inquiry then before us is, by what methods a Christian ought to address himself to battle in this spiritual warfare; how he may so bid defiance to his enemies, as to daunt and vanquish them. Let these RULES therefore be observed for resisting and quelling thy lusts and inordinate affections in their first sallies, and in the commencement of the insurrection.

RULE I.

Ave them with the authority of thy reason and understanding.—It is infinitely unbecoming a man, that his lower appetites should grow mutinous and untractable, that τὸ ἀλογὸν τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ θηριώδες,

- * "Smooth lies the road to Pluto's gloomy shade;
 And hell's black gates for ever stand display'd.
 But 't is a long unconquerable pain,
 To climb to these ethereal realms again."—PITT'S Translation.

† Galileo, and, after him, Gassendus, and others, have demonstrated, that heavy bodies, in their descent, do in equal times transmit unequal spaces, continually increasing according to the progression of odd numbers. For instance: If in one pulse a bullet fall perpendicularly one inch; in the next it will three inches; in the third, five; in the fourth, seven, &c., till the swiftness grow immense and unutterable. † "We feel pleasure in that which is agreeable to nature; but the exertion of force against her is harassing and painful."—EMT.

“the inferior and brutish faculties of our souls,” should rebel against the *το ἡγεμονικόν*, “that sovereign faculty of reason.” The Scythians are reported, when their slaves took arms, to have dashed the sneaking rebels presently out of countenance by showing their whips, that well-known weapon. How soon doth the presence of a grave magistrate allay a popular tumult, if he comes in soon enough, in the beginning of the riot!

Ille regū dictis animos, et pectora mulcet.—VIRGILII *Æneis*, i. 157.*

God hath made reason the magistrate of the little world; he hath given it a commission to keep the peace in our souls. And so far as our minds are illustrated and governed by right reason, so far do they partake of the image of God; of whose glorious mind one of the best and clearest conceptions we can have is, that *it is infinite and eternal reason*. Do thy passions begin to rise in arms? Do they grow disordered and unruly? Let thy reason come out to them, and ask whether they know their master; and let thy soul blush, with infinite scorn, that ever these base slaves should usurp the throne of their rightful lord, and unman thee, by deposing reason, which is all thou hast to show that thou art not a beast! What an extreme silly thing is a man in passion! Nothing can be more ridiculous and contemptible. Out of love and pity to thyself, O man, do not affront and disgrace thine immortal soul any more, by suffering any malapert and saucy passion to outrage and assassinate thy reason. That was a generous rule of Pythagoras: Παντων δε μαλιστα' αισχυνεο σαυτον † “Let a man use great reverence and manners to himself.” Be ashamed, friend, to do any vile or dishonest action before thyself. Though nobody be conscious, yet thy soul is; and thou canst not run away from that. What good will it do thee to contradict the dictates of thine own mind? Is it possible for thee to be at peace, when thou fallest out with thyself? Thou justifiest all the injuries in the world that others do thee; for thou doest thyself daily injuries ten millions of times greater than the greatest others can do thee. Whoever thou art that despisest thy own reason, and permittest every silly lust to abuse thee, by scorning *that* thou art a false traitor to thy own soul. There are but a very few men that are in their wits. The far greatest part of mankind, in the greatest matters, in the highest concerns of a man, are beside themselves: for a man's own self must be a reasonable creature; and therefore, not to govern one's own mind and affections by reason, is to be mad and distracted. If he that looks not to his family is worse than an infidel, what then is he that looks not to his mind? What “confused chaos” are most men's minds! *Rudis indigestaque moles?* ‡ A man makes a fool of himself as oft as he prefers his passion before his reason. The philosopher gives us the sum of this rule excellently: Μηδ' αλογιστως σαυτον εχειν περι μηδεν εθιζε. § “Accustom thyself to act every where like a reasonable creature.”

* “All stand attentive, while the sage controls

Their wrath, and calms the tumult of their souls.”—PITT'S Translation.

† PYTHAGORAS, in *Carminibus*, 12.

‡ OVIDII *Metam.* i. 7.

§ PYTHAGORÆ

Carmina, 14.

RULE II.

If thy distempered affections and lusts slight the authority of thy reason, as thou art a man ; bid thy conscience do its office, as thou art a Christian.—Try to awe them with God's written word : thus our Saviour thrice repulsed the tempter, by producing scripture to confront him : " It is written," &c. (Matt. iv. 4, 7, 10.) Ask thy heart if it knows that hand ; whether it dares rebel against the express commands, statutes, and ordinances of the living God. Bring out of the register of conscience the laws of Him that made thee ; oppose some clear text of holy writ, that comes into thy mind, against that very lust that is now rising. For instance : If it be carnal fear, Isai. li. 12 ; if love of the world, 1 John ii. 15 ; if revenge, Rom. xii. 19 ; if impatience under affliction, James i. 12 ; if diffidence in God's promises, Num. xxiii. 19 ; if immoderate anger, Eph. iv. 26 ; if pride and arrogance, and self-assuming, Matt. v. 3 ; xi. 29, &c. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of such artillery, whose conscience is rich in these memoirs ! Store thy mind with this sacred treasure, that, as a " scribe instructed for the kingdom of heaven," thou mayest upon all occasions " bring forth out of thy treasure things new and old." (Matt. xiii. 52.) Hold such scriptures as are point-blank contrary to the temptation, before thy conscience ; if it would turn away, compel it to look upon them ; and think, " I am God's creature, I must obey him." Did ever any rebel against him and prosper ? *Eine ego ut adverser ?* * " Is it wisely done of me to resist my Maker ?" to try which is strongest, a poor worm, or the Almighty God ? And if the love of God's commands will not constrain thee, let the terrors, the thunders and lightnings of his threats persuade thee ; which are all levelled against wilful sinners. And it is not safe standing, surely, in the very cannon's mouth. Peruse those two scriptures, and tremble to venture on any known breach of the law of thy God, Deuteronomy xxviii. 58, and Isaiah xlv. 9.

RULE III.

If all this effect nothing, then draw the curtain, take off the veil from before thy heart, and let it behold the God that searcheth it. (Jer. xvii. 10 ; Heb. iv. 13.)—Show it the majesty of the Lord ; see how that is described, Isai. vi. 1—3. Ask thy soul whether it sees the living God, that seeth it ; whether it is aware whose eye looks on ; (Gen. xvi. 13, 14 ;) whether it hath no respect for God himself, who stands by, and whose pure and glorious eyes pierce through and through thee ! (Hab. i. 13.) Tell thy heart again and again, that God will not be mocked ; that he is " a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed ;" (1 Sam. ii. 3 ;) that he is " a jealous God" too, " and will by no means clear the guilty." (Exod. xxxiv. 7.) Bid it consider well and look to itself ; for God will bring to light every hidden thing of dishonesty ; he that now sees, will judge it. Speak to thy unruly lusts as the town-clerk of Ephesus wisely did to the mutinous citizens : " Sirs, we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this tumult." (Acts xix. 40.)

• TERENCE.

RULE IV.

If these great real arguments be slighted, try whether an argument ad hominem, drawn from sense, will prevail.—Awe thy lusts then with the bitterness of thine own experience. Consider how often thou hast rued their disorders; what dismal consequences have followed upon their transports, and how dearly thou hast paid heretofore for thy connivance at them. Bethink thyself on such a fashion as this: “The other day I was angry, and behaved myself uncomely, put the whole company or family out of order, disoblighd such a dear and faithful friend, by my rashness and folly, in uttering hasty words before I weighed them. O how did I repent me afterwards! How ashamed, and abashed, and confounded was I, when I came to myself! So at another time thus and thus I miscarried myself; and these are the fruits and cursed effects of my yielding to the beginnings of sin: and shall I go now and repeat my madness? Had I not smart enough for my folly before, but must I needs play the fool and the beast again?” Ask thyself what thou ailest, to forget all the sighs and groans and bitter tears that thy lust hath already cost thee; and yet would the impudent sin be committed once more? *Πα τας φρενας εκπεποτασαι*;* “Where are thy wits, man,” if thou goest about it? *Sic notus Ulysses*? † Was it so sweet a thing to lie under the horror and agony of a wounded conscience, and under God’s rebukes in secret the last time, that thou must needs venture again? Why wilt thou hurt thy soul, and become a devil to thyself? Why wilt thou needs break thy peace, by consenting to sin; and not only so, but torment thyself, and kindle a hell in thine own bosom; and all this in despite of all thy warnings? *Ictus piscator sapit*. ‡ “The burnt child dreads the fire.” But it seems thou art in love with misery, and weary of thy joy and comfort. Thou hast a mind to be cursed; wretchedness, and woe, and death are, it seemeth, grown so amiable in thine eyes, as to become thy deliberate choice. Thus upbraid thyself; and do it so long and loud till thou fetchest thy soul again to itself, out of that swoon and lethargy which besotteth it. Give not over chiding and reproaching thyself, till thou makest thy heart sensible and considerate.

RULE V.

Labour to cure thy lustings and affections in the first beginning of their disorders, by revulsion, by drawing the stream and tide another way.—As physicians stop an hemorrhage, or bleeding at the nose, by breathing the *basilic* vein in the arm, or opening the *saphæna* in the foot; so may we check our carnal affections, by turning them into spiritual ones; and those either,

1. *Of the same nature.*—For example: catch thy worldly sorrow at the rise, and turn thy mourning into godly sorrow. If thou must needs

* THEOCRITUS, in *Idyl*. xi. 72. (Cyclops.) † “Is not Ulysses notorious for the highest exercise of human prudence?”—EDIT. ‡ “When a fisherman has received one smart stroke, he afterwards becomes wiser and more cautious.” In Pliny’s “*Natural History*,” (lib. xxxii.) *scorpiusæ et draco pisces* are described as the only species of fish which strike the fishermen when taking them out of the nets. May not this proverb, which Erasmus traces up to Sophocles, have had its origin in the shock of an electrical eel?—EDIT.

weep, weep for somewhat that deserves it. Be the occasion of thy grief what it will,—loss of estate, relations, &c.,—I am sure thy sins are a juster occasion; for they brought that occasion of mourning upon thee, be it what it will, that thou art now in tears for. Art thou troubled at any danger, full of fears, heart-aching, and confusion? O forget not the mother-evil, sin; let that have but its due share, and there will not be much left to spare of these affections for other things.

Is thy desire, thy love, thy joy, too busy about some earthly trifle, some temporal good thing? Pray them to look up a little, and behold thy God, who is altogether lovely, “in whose presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore;” (Psalm xvi. 11;) and let everlasting shame stop thy mouth, if thou darest affirm any thing in this wretched world worthy to be named once with the living God, for rivalry and competition in thy heart: * sure I am he is the fountain and measure of all goodness. Let but the first and sovereign good have its due of thy love and desire, thy delight and joy, and the remainder will be little enough for thy creature-comforts. (Jer. ii. 12, 13.) O, how great a folly is it to doat on husks, and overlook the bread in thy Father’s house!

2. *Turn thy carnal affections into spiritual ones of a contrary nature.*

—For example: allay thy worldly sorrow by spiritual joy. Try whether there be not enough in *all-sufficiency* itself to compensate the loss of any outward enjoyment; whether there will be any great miss or want of a broken cistern, when thou art at the fountain-head of living waters; whether the light of the sun cannot make amends for the expiring of a candle. Chastise thy carnal fears by hope in God. Set on work the grace contrary to the lust that is stirring: if it be pride and vain-glory in the applause of men, think how ridiculous it were for a criminal to please himself in the esteem and honour his fellow-prisoners render him, forgetting how guilty he is before his judge. If thou beginnest to be poured loosely out, and as it were dissolved in frolic mirth and joviality, correct that vainness and gaiety of spirit by the grave and sober thoughts of death, and judgment, and eternity.

RULE VI.

If this avail not, fall instantly to prayer.—And, indeed, all along the whole encounter with thy lusts, pray continually; lift up thy heart to God with sighs and groans unutterable: “O that thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down!” Tell him, thy lusts are his enemies, as well as thine; tell him they are too strong for thee; beg of him that he would interpose, and make bare his arm, and get himself a glorious name. “Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon?” (Isai. li. 9.) Entreat him, of all love, to pity thee, even by his very bowels, and not to let the enemy

* Καλον μεν γαρ ειναι τον Θεον, και των καλων το φανωτατον. Καθσον αυτου μετεσχεν εκαστα, καλα, και εδραια, και σωζομενα: και καθσον αυτου απολειπεται, αισχηρα και διαλυομενα, και φθειρομενα.—MAXIMUS TYRICKS, Dissert. 1. “For the Divinity is indeed beautiful, and the most splendid of all beautiful things. So far as every thing participates of this, it is beautiful, stable, and safe; and, so far as it falls off from this, it is base, dissipated, and corrupted.”—TAYLOR’S Translation.

triumph over thee. Tell him thou knowest not what to do; but thy eyes are toward him. Bemoan thyself before him, and plead his glory with him, and his truth and faithfulness. Spread his own gracious promises in his eyes: Psalm xxvii. 14; Isaiah xl. 28—31; Psalm lv. 22; 1 Peter v. 7.

Such ejaculations or meditations as these are mighty useful; God's children find them so in the very paroxysm and assault. But if the temptation continue, get into thy closet, and humble thyself greatly before thy God: throw thyself at his feet; tell him, thou wilt not rise till he hath given thee a token for good: no, thou art resolved there to lie hanging on him, and not to let him go until he bless thee. O how welcome is every honest heart to the Father of spirits, when it comes on such an errand, and in such a manner, to the throne of grace! God cannot choose but melt in pity and tenderness over his poor desolate ones, when he sees the anguish of their souls. "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? My bowels are troubled for thee, they will not give me leave to forget thee. Is Ephraim my dear son? I do earnestly remember him: I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord." (Isai. xlix. 15; Jer. xxxi. 20; Hosea xi. 8.) Give not over wrestling, like Jacob, till thou risest ISRAEL, "one who hast power with God and prevailest:" (Gen. xxxii. 26—28.) And it is worth observing, that the Lord takes pleasure to be called "the mighty God of Jacob," and "the Lord God of Israel:" as if he reckoned it an honour, that once the worm Jacob wrestled with his omnipotence, and overcame him, he seems to glory in his being conquered, and chooseth that for his name, and for his memorial throughout generations; which is an everlasting monument, that a poor frail man got the day of him. So much doth the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous prevail.

Perhaps sometimes it may be requisite to join secret fasting with thy prayer. It may be, the devil that tempts thee is of that "kind that will not go out but by prayer and fasting." (Matt. xvii. 21.) Thus Daniel lay prostrate at God's feet, "till a hand touched him, and set him upon his knees, and the voice said to him, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved," &c. (Dan. x. 2, 3, compared with verses 10, 11, 18, 19.)

RULE VII.

When thou hast done this, rise up, and buckle on "the shield of faith, wherewith thou shalt be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." (Eph. vi. 16.)—Clothe thy soul with a heroic confidence in the power and faithfulness of thy God, and in the name and majesty of the Lord of hosts; bid battle to thy lusts, and to all the powers of darkness. Take heed of going out in thy own single strength; for lust "hath cast down many strong men wounded." (Prov. vii. 26.) While thou art keeping thine own heart with all diligence, forget not by faith to bring the great Keeper of Israel in. If any other man could have kept his own heart, sure the man after God's own heart could have done it.

*Si Pergama dextrâ
Defendi possent, etiam hac defensa fuissent.**—(VIRGILII ÆNEIS, ii. 291.)

* "Could any mortal hand prevent our fate,

This hand, and this alone, had saved the state."—PITT'S Translation.

But the matter of Uriah and Bathsheba stands on record to all posterity to the contrary: for "except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." (Psalm cxxvii. 1.) Do not venture to grapple with the roaring lion, but in the strength of the Lion of the tribe of Judah, who is also the Lamb of God, and the great Shepherd of Israel, "that carries his lambs in his bosom;" (Isai. xl. 11;) and whither should the pursued lamb betake itself, but into that Shepherd's arms? "In the time of trouble," spiritual as well as other, "he will hide thee in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide thee, and set thee upon a rock." (Psalm xxvii. 5.) He never fails the eyes of them that look up to him, nor makes his people ashamed of their hope. "What time thou art afraid trust in him." His name is a strong tower. Cast thy care upon him; and expect the same pity from thy God, which the men of Jabesh-Gilead found from Saul when Nahash the barbarous Ammonite would have put out their right eyes: "To-morrow, ere the sun be hot, ye shall have help." (1 Sam. xi. 9.) If the king of Israel's bowels yearned over those poor men, shall not the bowels of the God of Israel over those that fear him? Yes, upon his honour, truth, and faithfulness, he will not suffer that cruel *Nahash*, (to allude to the signification of the word,) that "old serpent,"* to have his will upon them: if he doth not come to-day, he "will to-morrow, ere the sun be hot." "Lift up your heads," therefore, "O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle." (Psalm xxiv. 7, 8.) Thus was Joseph rescued from the "archers that shot at him, and sorely grieved him. His bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the arms of the mighty God of Jacob." (Gen. xlix. 23, 24.)

I come at length to the USE.

USE I.—INFORMATION.

We are to learn hence, *that our souls are not as they came out of the Father of spirits' hands.*—They appear as it were wrong risen in the world, and begin to tread awry the very first steps they measure on the stage of earth. All the symptoms of degeneracy are upon them. The best of men that ever yet blessed the earth with their residence upon it,—except that Son of man who was only so by the mother's side, being by the Father's the only-begotten Son of the eternal God,—had flesh lusting in them unto sin: which is as convincing an argument, that human nature is blemished and infected, that it hath received a *μιασμα*, "a stain and venom," as the *εξανθηματα* ["pustules or eruptions"] are of a pestilential disease, whose breakings-out display the contagion within. If the *carbuncle* and the *tokens* proclaim the plague, or the spots discover a pestilential fever, or the *variola*, those pustulous efflorescences which we commonly name "the small-pox," argue the precipitation of the blood, by some latent malignity; certainly the lustings of the flesh in all men demonstrate, that the very nature of man on earth is now blasted and corrupted.

* *נחש* *serpens*, Hebrew.

Methinks the Divine Perfection, and our own imperfection, are the two greatest sensibles in the world, both of them equally, that is, immensely, clear and discernible. For the former is no less illustriously undeniable, than is the being, light, and beauty of the sun in the firmament at noon-day; and the latter is no less evident and conspicuous than the obscurity and horror of midnight darkness. Not to see the one is to be *αθεος*, "without God in the world;" and not to feel the other, (for it is like the Egyptian darkness, Exod. x. 21, that may be felt by all that are not past feeling,) is to be without (or beside) one's self.

Now, since all the reason in the world consents to the truth of that aphorism of the philosopher, Παντ' ὑπ' ἀριστου νοι γινεται,* that "the Best and Most Excellent Mind is the Parent of the universe," and an almighty, ever-living goodness is the source and root of all things; since heaven and earth say, "Amen," and again, "Amen, hallelujah!" to that oracle of the Psalmist, "The work of God is honourable and glorious;" (Psalm cxi. 3;) "and all that God made was very good;" (Gen. i. 31;) no wonder if it puzzled all philosophy, Ποθεν το κακον; "whence human nature came to be thus vitiated and debauched." What are the fountains of this great deep of sin within us, which, "like the troubled sea," is perpetually thus "casting out mire and dirt?" (Isai. lvii. 20.) Sure enough, so universal an effect as this calamity of mankind must have a cause as universal.

The Socinians here, and others, will have us believe that we all are born as innocent as Adam in Paradise; that is, say they, in an *equilibrium* and perfect indifferency to good and evil; assigning no other cause of the general corruption of men's lives and manners, but the infection of example, and evil custom: which is, methinks, as wise a guess as to affirm the wolf and vulture to be bred and hatched with as sweet and harmless a nature as the innocent lamb or loving turtle, but only the naughty behaviour and ill example of their ancestors and companions have debauched them into ravenousness and ill manners.

The Manichees, as St. Austin tells us, (who was himself for several years before his conversion of that heresy,) thought that all the evil in the world sprang from an almighty and an eternal principle of evil, counter-working and over-bearing God, whom they held the opposite eternal principle of goodness. But since the very formal notion of God involveth infinite perfection, and that of sin mere imperfection, it is a perfect contradiction that evil should be infinite, if good be so; it were to make imperfection perfect, and mere impotency omnipotent. Therefore, there can be but one God, who is Almighty Goodness; and as possible it is that the sun should darken the world by shining, as Almighty Goodness should do any hurt in the world, or make any evil.

* Hierocles most divinely concludes: Αιτια γαρ της των παντων ποιησεως ουδεμα αλλη προσεστιν ευλογος, πλην της κατ' ουσιαν αγαθοτητος. Αγαθος γαρ ην φυσει αγαθω δε ουδεις περι ουδενος ουδεποτε εγγινεται φθονος.—HIEROCLES in *Carm. Pythagor.* p. 21. "The dictate of sound reason can assign no other cause for the creation of all things, than that of essential goodness. For, according to his own nature, God is infinitely good; and in that Being who is essentially good, no malignant passion against any one can possibly exist."—EDIT.

God is the Author of all the good in the world; but sin and misery are of our making. (Hosea xiii. 9.)

Much wiser than either of the two former was the conjecture of the Pythagoreans and Platonists, though Heathens; who, having nothing else to consult (as wanting the divine revelation of holy scripture) but their own faculties, embraced the conceit, that all human souls were created in the beginning upright, and placed by God in happier mansions, in purer and higher regions of the universe, until at length they did *αποβησκειν την θειαν ευζωϊαν, τη απο Θεου φυγη*,* as Hierocles phraseth it; that is, till they fell from the divine life, and became inhabitants of earthly tabernacles, bringing their fallen and degenerate natures along with them. This opinion had of old the general consent of the Jews, as appeareth, John ix. 2; and yet hath, as Men. Ben Israel, in his book *De Resurrectione Mortuorum*, witnesseth. Among the Christians, Origen is in the number of its sectaries, (in his books *Περι Αρχων*.) and some few of the ancients.

But as much as is necessary for us to know about this great inquiry, God hath (blessed be his goodness!) sufficiently revealed in Genesis i.—iii., compared with Psalm li. 5; Eccles. vii. 29; Rom. i. 24, 25, &c. And he is as wise as he need be in so great a point, that knows how to understand these scriptures according to the analogy of faith, and consistently with the divine perfections; and that so believeth them, as to put that and no other sense and interpretation upon them which is worthy of the glorious attributes and excellent majesty of the living God; although some difficulties will remain perhaps insuperable to us, in this our present estate on earth.

USE II.—EXHORTATION.

I have already in some measure discovered the mysteries and secrets of this blessed art of checking sin in the beginnings of it. *Let me now persuade the practice of these holy rules. Let us resolve, in the strength of Christ, to resist these lustings of the flesh.* Take the exhortation of the apostle: “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.” (1 Cor. xvi. 13.)†

Let me press this with a few considerations.

1. *The more thou yieldest, the more thou mayest.*—Sin is insatiable: it will never say, “It is enough.” Give it an inch, it will take an ell. See the sad example of Peter denying his Lord. (Matt. xxvi.) (1.) He was only timorous; he follows afar off. (Verse 58.) (2.) At the next step he denies his Lord openly before them all. (Verse 70.) (3.) He adds an oath to it. (Verse 72.) And, lastly, he falls a cursing and swearing, as if he meant to out-sin the vilest there. (Verse 74.) It is no wisdom to try conclusions between fire and gunpowder in the heap. Who but a fool would unlock the door of his house, when it is beset

* “By their departure from God, they destroyed that happy and divine life which they had previously enjoyed.”—EDIT.

† *Ανερες εστε, φιλοι, μησασθε δε θουριδος αληης.*—HOMERI *Ilias*, vi. 112.

“Be mindful of the strength your fathers bore;

Be still yourselves, and Hector asks no more.”—POPE’S Translation.

with thieves, and excuse it?—"he did but turn the key, that was all!" Why, he need do no more to undo himself; they will easily do all the rest.

2. *It is the quarrel of the Lord of hosts in which thou fightest.*—Let thy courage rise in proportion to the goodness of thy cause, and the honour of that great Prince and Captain under whose banner thou servest.* Upon thy good behaviour and address in arms depends much of the renown and honour of Christianity. A cowardly soldier is the reproach of his commanders. Thou hast a noble General, O Christian, that hath done and finished perfectly whatever concerns thy redemption from the powers of darkness. "To him that overcometh will he give to sit on his throne, even as he overcame, and is set down on his Father's throne." (Rev. iii. 21.) Do valiantly and worthily. Follow thy victorious Leader; let all that know thee see that religion is no mean and feeble thing; that the school of Christ breeds the excellent of the earth; that the divine life is the most powerful principle in the world; that the Spirit of God in thee, and his grace, are stronger than all thy lusts and corruptions. Not he that talks most, or professeth most, but he that acts and lives most, as a Christian, shall be the "man whom the King delights to honour."

3. *The lusts of the flesh are thy greatest enemies, as well as God's.*—"They war against thy soul." (1 Peter ii. 11.) To resist them feebly, is to do not only the work of the Lord, but of thy soul, negligently.

4. *It is easy vanquishing at first in comparison.*—A fire newly-kindled is soon quenched, and a young thorn or bramble easily pulled up. The fierce lion may be tamed, when a whelp; but if thou stay a little, there will be no dealing with a lust any more than with a savage beast of prey. Grace will lose, and corruption get, strength continually by delaying.

5. *If thou resistest, the victory is thine.* (James iv. 7.)—And in my text, "Walk," &c., "and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." Thou canst never be conquered, if thou wilt not yield. Stand but to it, and thou art invincible; while thou art unwilling, all the devils in hell cannot force thee to sin. Temptation puts on its strength, as the will is. Cease but to love the sin, and the temptation is answered. Indeed, if thou chooseth to be a slave, thou shalt be one. Nothing but thy own choice can undo thee.

6. *Consider what thou doest.*—If thou fulfillest the lusts of the flesh, thou provokest thy heavenly Father, rebellest against him, (and "rebellion is as witchcraft, and stubbornness as idolatry," †) thou "crucifiest Jesus Christ afresh, and putteth him to an open shame." ‡ Is this thy love and thanks to thy Lord, to whom thou art so infinitely beholden? Canst thou find in thy heart to put thy spear again in his side? Hath he not suffered yet enough? Is his bloody passion nothing? Must he bleed again? Ah monster of ingratitude! Ah perfidious traitor as thou art, thus to requite thy Master! Again: thou grievest thy Comforter; and is that wisely done? Who shall comfort

* *Cæsarem vehis et fortunam Cæsaris.* "Thou conveyest Cæsar, and the destinies of Cæsar."—EDIT. † 1 Sam. xv. 23. ‡ Heb. vi. 6.

thee, if He depart from thee grieved? Or is it ingenuous, thus unworthily to treat that noble guest, to affront God's sacred Spirit to his very face; and, in despite and mockery of him, to side with his enemy, the flesh? Is this thy kindness to thy best Friend, thy faithful Counsellor, thy infallible Guide, thy Minister and Oracle, thy sweet and only Comforter? What need I add, that thou breakest thy peace, woundest thy conscience, forfeitest the loss of God's countenance, and makest a gap in the divine protection for all evil to rush in at?

7. And lastly, *Consider the invaluable benefit of resisting, of not fulfilling the lusts of the flesh*, in two great instances:—

(1.) *Unutterable joy and pleasure will be shed abroad in thy soul, as often as thou gettest the day.*—I know no greater triumph than that of a Christian, when he is “more than conqueror through Christ that loves him.” O the peace, the joy, and holy glorying in the Lord, and in the power of his might, that a good man is even ravished and caught up into the third heavens with, when the Lord covers his head in the day of battle, and lifts it up above his spiritual enemies! To vanquish one's self, is a nobler exploit than to subdue a city; (Prov. xvi. 32;) nay, a vaster conquest than if one could, with that great Macedonian captain, achieve the empty title of “the vanquisher of the world.”

(2.) *Every conquest will increase thy strength and dexterity against the next assault.*—So that when the vanquished lust recruits its forces thou wilt be able to outvie thyself, and become more dexterous every time.

Nay, the mortifying of one earthly member, like the cutting-off a limb from the natural body, will make the whole body of sin tremble, all the rest of thy lusts will fare the worse, and by consent languish: so that every victory over any one corruption weakens that and all the rest, and breaks the way for future conquests.

SERMON VI.

BY THE REV. MATTHEW POOLE, A.M.

HOW MINISTERS OR CHRISTIAN FRIENDS MAY AND OUGHT TO APPLY THEMSELVES TO SICK PERSONS, FOR THEIR GOOD, AND THE DISCHARGE OF THEIR OWN CONSCIENCE.

If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man his uprightness: then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.
—Job xxxiii. 23, 24.

THESE words are part of Elihu's discourse uttered by way of reprobation and conviction to Job, and by way of vindication and apology for God in his dealings with men; and although he premiseth this, that

God "giveth no account of his matters," (verse 13,) yet he doth, *ex abundanti*, give an account for God, and makes a defence, or gives a *rationale* of God's proceedings with men, &c.; where he shows that it is not man's torment or ruin that God desires, but his reformation and amendment. And that it may appear how sincerely and fervently he desires it, he shows that there are several ways and means which God useth, which are most powerful and likely to produce it.

1. He speaks to men in dreams. (Verse 15, &c.)

2. When that will not do, by afflictions. (Verse 19, &c.)

3. To make those afflictions more intelligible and more effectual, he sends "a messenger," &c. This is the business of the text: "If there be with him," &c.: wherein you may observe two parts:—

1. A supposition: "If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter," &c. (Verse 23.) 2. A position: "Then he is gracious to him," &c. (Verse 24.)

The words may be called "the sick man's cordial, or his restorative:" wherein you may observe: 1. The patient, expressed in the word "him." 2. The disease, his danger, and misery: "He is going down to the pit." 3. The Physician, who is described, (1.) *Ab officio*, "by his office," "a messenger." (2.) *Ab opere*, "by his work," "an interpreter." (3.) *A præstantid*, ["from his excellent qualities,"] a rare man, "one of a thousand," *multis e millibus unus*. 4. The physic: "To show unto a man his uprightness." 5. The cure: "Then he is gracious," &c. Where are considerable:—

(1.) The quality of it, the kind of the cure: "Deliver him from going down to the pit;" that is, from mortal sickness.

(2.) The spring of it, God's grace: "He is gracious."

(3.) The meritorious cause of it: "I have found a ransom."

(4.) The declaration of it: "He saith," &c.

The difficulties are neither many nor great; yet some things there are which need explication.

If a messenger—An angel; that is, by office, not by nature; for so the word is oft used in scripture, both in the Old Testament, "Behold, I will send my messenger," Hebrew מַלְאָךְ, "my angel," (Mal. iii. 1,) which the infallible Interpreter, the Lord Jesus, tells us was meant of John the Baptist: "This is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send a messenger," &c. (Matt. xi. 10.)—and in the New Testament, (Rev. ii. 3,) where the pastors of the several churches are called "angels:" and so it is most fitly understood here, both because God did then and still doth most generally use the ministry of men rather than angels in counselling and comforting afflicted men; and because he is called "one of a thousand," a phrase which implies, as his excellency and fitness for that work, so the insufficiency of most of the same kind for it; which must not be charged upon the meanest of God's elect angels.

An interpreter—Namely, of the mind and will of God: Christ is the great Interpreter; (John i. 18;) but he, when he ascended on high, gave forth this gift, and left us interpreters in his stead. (Eph. iv. 11, &c.)

To show unto a man his righteousness—That is, man's own righteousness, to say nothing of the other senses [of the words]; for it is the sin

and unrighteousness of a man which causeth his disease, and the sense of that sin which makes his disease bitter and formidable: sin is the sting of every affliction. Now then *omnis curatio fit per contraria*, "all cures are wrought by contraries:" when therefore a faithful messenger or minister of Christ having* made the sick man sensible of his sin, and afterwards of the pardon of it, and when he comes to discover to him his righteousness, uprightness, holiness, "then God is gracious," &c.; although it is not at all impossible that here may be a reference to Christ's righteousness; for Job is no stranger to that; and the word "ransom" carries an evident relation thither: so that both may be conjoined.

Then he (that is, God) *is gracious*—God is always gracious in himself, in his own nature; but he is gracious to none, but in his own way, and upon his own terms. God is not gracious to unrighteous and unholy persons; but when men return from their sins, &c., "God is gracious, and saith;" that is, God saith, "Deliver him." He saith so to his minister, he gives him commission to deliver him; that is, to declare him to be delivered. God delivers men *authoritative et realiter*, ministers only *ministerialiter et declarative*: it is an usual phrase; ministers are said to do that which they declare God will do: "I have set thee over nations and kingdoms," saith God to Jeremiah, "to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy;" that is, "to declare that I will do it." (Jer. i. 10.)

I have found a ransom—I have received satisfaction, that is, in the death of my Son; which was a ransom satisfactory for the sins of his people. And, farther, it is by virtue of this ransom that God's people are delivered, not only from hell, but from any other miseries. Indeed, as divines distinguish of the resurrection of the godly and the wicked, so the temporal deliverances which wicked men receive,—they are the effects of common providence; but those which Christ's members receive, they have as the fruits of Christ's purchase. And well saith God, "I have found a ransom:" for it is beyond the wit of men or angels to find out such an admirable way for man's salvation. Thus you have had the coherence, division, and sense of the words.

There are several doctrines which these words would afford; but I shall forbear the very mention of them, and only speak of this one, which falls to my share.

DOCTRINE.—*That the seasonable instruction of sick and languishing persons is a work, as of great advantage, so of great skill and difficulty.*

I need not spend much time in the proof, yet something must be said of it: there are two branches.

I. It is of great advantage.

II. It is of great difficulty.

I. *That it is a work of great advantage.*—It is convenient to say something of this, because I take it to be a common mistake of many persons: they are apt to think, that sick-bed applications are in a manner useless and ineffectual. It may be a discouragement which the devil proposeth to ministers or others to make them neglect this work, or be formal in it, especially when the persons are ignorant or profane: the devil may suggest the invalidity of a sick-bed repentance, the customari-

* The construction of the sentence requires this word to be "haa."—EDIT.

ness and hypocrisy of sick-bed desires, &c. Now, to obviate such suggestions, consider these things:—

1. *That the instruction of sick persons is God's institution.*—So you see in the text: “A messenger;” that is, one sent of God to this purpose. Now God's institutions are not in vain: every institution of God carries a promise in its bowels to him that doth not *ponere obicem*, [“place any hinderance in its way,”] that doth rightly use it. Ministers or Christian friends may go about it with much comfort; for it is God's work; as he said, “Have not I commanded you?” &c. It is one of those ways, as you see in the chapter, which God ordained to reclaim sinners; and when you attempt it, you may expect God's concurrence; you may pray in faith for God's assistance in his ordinance.

2. *God's mercy is proposed by himself, and may be offered by ministers, even to languishing persons.*—It is true, it must be done cautiously, as you shall hear; but it may be done. God doth indefinitely tender his mercy to all; and we must not limit where God limits not: ministers may safely follow God's example. And whereas it may be thought that such men only come to God, as driven by necessity; you must know that God is so gracious, that he receives even such whom mere necessity drives to him; and, indeed, all true converts are first persuaded to come to God by the sense of their own necessities, though afterwards they are elevated to a more noble disposition. God never rejected any upon this ground. How many came to Christ merely in sense of their bodily maladies, and were sent away with spiritual cure! Christ received her that came not to him till she had in vain tried all other physicians. So in that parable of the prodigal, wherein God is pleased to represent the methods of his grace in the conversion and salvation of sinners, you shall find that God doth not reject that poor prodigal, because he was forced home by that *durum telum, necessitas*, [“hard dart, necessity,”] by insuperable straits and difficulties.

3. *Sick-bed repentance is not wholly impossible, though it be hard.*—Sickness is one means that God useth to work repentance. God can work repentance even upon a sick bed; and it is God that must do it even in health; and, to speak truly and strictly, although the means of repentance be more probable, and the truth of repentance more discernible, in health than in sickness; yet the practice of repentance is as hard a work in health as in sickness, seeing in both cases it is the great work of the omnipotent God, who hath ever challenged it as his royal prerogative to give repentance, whatever those *hostes gratie Christi*, [“enemies to the grace of Christ,”] as Austin calls them, say to the contrary; so that, in short, with men, repentance is always impossible: “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil:” (Jer. xiii. 23:) but with God it is always possible. And yet, to prevent the abuse of this, by a presumptuous putting-off repentance to the time of sickness and death upon this pretence, I must add, that such as put off repentance on such a pretext, do seldom meet with it. God doth seldom give repentance to such persons; and it is a general observation of all serious divines, that late repentance is seldom true, though true repentance is never late; it being the just

judgment of God, that they that intend to mock God by putting off repentance, should deceive themselves, and die without repentance.

II. *That it is a work of great difficulty, might easily be demonstrated.*—But that will appear in the further prosecution of it all along: only there are two arguments which the text suggests:

1. *That it is a work which God hath put into the hands of his chief officers, his ministers, who ought to be the most accomplished persons of all others, &c.*—This is one of those works for which God hath vouchsafed such singular gifts unto his messengers.

2. *That it is not every minister, neither, who is fit for this work.*—And therefore here it is required, that he be “one of a thousand.”

But this I shall pass over, and come to that which is allotted to me,—the resolution of this great and important case of conscience: *How ministers or Christian friends may and ought to apply themselves to sick persons for their good, and the discharge of their own consciences.*

I take it to be one of the hardest parts of the ministerial work, to make seasonable applications to such persons. I shall therefore endeavour to answer it, though not so fully as the point deserves, yet so far as the brevity of this exercise will permit, in these eight propositions or directions:—

1. *Endeavour must be used to understand the state of the sick person.*—As physicians do by sick persons: they inquire into the manner of their life, diet, &c. It is a great step to the cure to know the patient's temper; because, as bodily, so spiritual, physic must be suited to the temper, and disposition, and condition of the patient. And as physicians take pains in this, by conference with friends, and by examining the patient; so should ministers, by discourse with religious acquaintance, and by searching conference with the sick persons, endeavour to find out the truth. For why should not men be as accurate in healing men's souls as their bodies? since the very Heathen could say, That all our care should be translated from the things of the body, to the soul. So Epictetus, in his sixty-third chapter: Αφύιας σημειον, το ενδιτριβειν τοις ωρει το σωμα,* &c. And as for the body, men prize those physicians most that best know their temper, &c.; so should sick persons prefer, *ceteris paribus*, [“things in other respects being similar,”] that faithful minister that hath most knowledge of them, &c.

2. *The great business is to bring the sick man to a true sight of his state and condition.*—Indeed this is a happy thing, whatever his condition be. If his condition be sound and good, then it is a happiness to know it, that he may have the comfort of it; if it be bad, yet it is a happiness to know it, that a man may be capable of counsel, and put into the way to amend it. It is true, evil men, like persons much in debt, care not to look into their books, and understand their debts; but they must be brought to it. And the worse thy condition is, the more art thou con-

* “There is no surer sign of stupidity and want of sense, than to trifle away a great deal of time in things relating to the body; as, to be long at exercise, or at meals, or in drinking, or in the other functions of nature. For we ought to look upon all that is done to the body as things by the bye; and upon the improvement of the soul as that which challenges our time, and is the true and main end and business of our lives.”—DEAN STANHOPE'S Translation.

cerned to discover it ; for, to be ignorant of thy condition, if it be good, only hinders thee from comfort ; but if it be bad, it hinders thee from salvation. You and they must both consider, that as the heart is always deceitful, so then especially for three reasons amongst others : (1.) Then men are impotent, and unable to examine themselves ; their natural parts are weakened, the eyes of their mind clouded ; their mind is diverted by bodily pains, that it cannot attend, and so may sooner be cheated. (2.) Then men are slothful and listless as to all spiritual exercises. If even good men are slothful in their most healthful times, how much more evil men in times of sickness ! The listlessness of the body generally makes an answerable impression upon the faculties of the soul ; that being a received truth amongst physicians and philosophers, and ratified by daily experience, that *mores animi sequuntur temperamentum corporis*. [“The moral habits of the soul follow in the train of the body’s temperament.”] (3.) In times of sickness, men are greedy of comfort, and so will catch even at a shadow, &c. Upon all these grounds there needs the more caution, to set before his eyes the folly and misery of self-deceit, especially in everlasting matters.

3. *Ministers and others must take great heed, lest, while they avoid one extreme, they run upon another ; which is a common error in practice.*—Some, for the prevention of despair, have made such unseasonable applications of comfort as have begotten presumptuous hopes. Others, again, to prevent presumption, have so indiscreetly aggravated things, as to render them hopeless, and so careless, &c. There must therefore be a prudent contemperation of things together : as the wise physician mixeth several ingredients ; he puts-in, indeed, things of a sharp and corroding nature, which may eat out or remove the noxious humours, but addeth to them things of a more gentle temperature, which by their lenity may correct the acrimony of the former. God himself sets us a copy by the mouth of Samuel : “Ye have done all this wickedness.” There are the corrosions ; he faithfully discovers that, and doth not daub with them. Yet, lest the disease should rather be exasperated than removed, he adds this healing counsel : “Yet turn not aside from following the Lord ;” and this cordial : “The Lord will not forsake his people.” (1 Sam. xii. 20, 22.) And Ezra follows it : “We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives : yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. Now therefore let us make a covenant with God.” (Ezra x. 2, 3.)

4. *The same methods are not to be used to all sick persons.*—You might as well give the same pill to all diseased persons ; whereas that which would cure one will kill another : you may as well make one suit for all bodies. Discreet physicians diversify their applications, according to the difference of the patient’s disposition and condition : so here. And there are many differences to be eyed here :—

(1.) *Difference of tempers, whether tender, or rough and stubborn.*—As you read, it is the husbandman’s “discretion” that “the fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument, neither is the cart-wheel turned about upon the cummin ; but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod ;” (Isai. xxviii. 27 ;) so it must be the discretion of a minister, to have respect to the different tempers of men, in his

applications to them. It is said of Christ, he taught the disciples as they were able to bear.

(2.) *Difference of education and conversation.*—Some have been nuzzled [nursed] in ignorance, others brought up in the knowledge of the truth; [the] not considering of this occasions much mischief. Discourse to an ignorant person of the necessity of faith and repentance, you lose your labour oft-times; he conceits he hath believed and repented; for he takes *faith* to be a believing (though without any grounds) that God hath pardoned him, and *repentance*, a crying “God mercy!” &c. One must consider where foundations must be laid, and where we need only raise superstructions. Some have had a loose and profane education, others civil and religious: the former require more terror, the latter more caution, lest they deceive themselves.

(3.) *Difference of guilt.*—Great difference is to be made in the handling of sinners of a smaller size, and inveterate sinners: as God expects, so ministers must endeavour, that sorrow may bear some proportion with the sin. Peter, having sinned grievously, wept bitterly. (Matt. xxvi. 75.)

5. *It is a very bad guide to follow the counsels or desires of sick persons, or their carnal friends.*—It fares with faithful ministers as with honest and able physicians, that are many times ill thought of by the sick man and foolish friends. When they put* him to pain or trouble, they charge him with cruelty, and delighting to torment the poor man unnecessarily; and, it may be, think of discharging him, and getting a physician, that will deal more gently with him: whereas, indeed, he is the sick man's best friend; and many times should he not pain him, he would kill him. So is it here: come to a sick man, he cries: “Comfort, for God's sake.” So say his friends; and they think all is done, if they can get comfort! Why, you shall have it, but in due time; you shall have ease, health, &c.; but you must be contented to wait for it, and expect it in due order. First, you must be sick: oft-times that physick is the best which makes you sickest. You shall be healed; but, if you would proceed regularly, and work a true cure, you must first have your wound searched, and then healed, else you have only a palliative cure, and the wound will fester inwardly: and it is an horrible mistake of sick persons,—they think comfort is all they are to look after. I tell you, it is not present comfort, but everlasting happiness, you must make [it] your business to get: it is not the *ευθανασία* † of Augustus, “to die quietly, like a lamb,” as the vulgar phrase it; but a scripture *ευθανασία*, to “die the death of the righteous.” It is not so much a calm, and sweet, and easy passage, (the fishes have that, when they swim down the sweet stream of Jordan, into the Dead Sea, where they perish,) but a safe harbour. One may go to heaven in a storm, and to hell in a calm; and which is better, judge you. Those wretches in Psalm lxxiii. “have no bands in their death;” and yet death hath dominion over them. Comfort is not the great business you need.

6. *The same course, for substance, is to be taken for the conversion of sick and healthful persons, &c.*—There is but one way to heaven for all

* The rest of the sentence requires the commencement to be, *When he puts*, &c.—EDIT.
 † Vide Suetonium De XII. *Cæsariis*, lib. ii. 90.—EDIT.

persons ; and therefore consider with yourselves what you would do, if they were in health, and what were necessary then ; why, that same course you must take now ; and if it be more troublesome to sick persons, they may thank themselves for it, who neglected the time of their health, &c. Indeed, sick men are apt to favour themselves, and to think God will accept of less from them than [from] others ; whereas, if possible, they have need to do more than others, and to make the more haste, having the less time for their work.

7. *The greatest care must be, to keep sick persons from those errors whereby such persons commonly miscarry.*—Such as these :—

(1.) *Insensibleness of their danger.*—Whereas the first step to a cure, is to know one's malady. It is a dreadful thing to see poor ignorant and unconverted sinners, at the very brink of the pit, ready to drop into hell, and not at all affected with it, &c. If ever you mean to do them any good, you must awaken them out of that mortal sleep or lethargy, lighten their eyes with a conviction of their danger, lest they sleep the sleep of death.

(2.) *Willingness to be deluded.*—You may know it thus : if a daubing minister or friend offers comfort, how greedily they catch it ! They will receive comfort upon any grounds, nay, upon no grounds, but upon the bare words, it may be, of a time-serving and man-pleasing minister. But let a serious and faithful minister come to them, and show them their sad, and sinful, and hazardous condition, and demonstrate it by irrefragable arguments, they will not yield to it. But, as St. Peter speaks, *Λαθῶσαι γὰρ αὐτοὺς τοῦτο θελοντάς* : “This they willingly are ignorant of.” (2 Peter iii. 5.) You must possess them with the folly of such a temper, the unavoidable misery of self-deluding persons, &c., and the dread of disappointment when too late.

(3.) *Carelessness and listlessness.*—This is the temper of many ; knowing the difficulty of believing, repenting, &c., and remembering their own guilt, they cast off the care of that which they think will be to no purpose, &c. You must therefore possess them with the necessity of Christian carefulness ; what madness it is to be careless now, which is the only season of caring to any purpose, &c. ; what folly it is to free themselves from the care of a few days, to ascertain * to themselves everlasting care and torment, &c. Also you must possess them with the benefit of this care, and laying it to heart, &c.,—that it is God's course, in opening the heart, to stir up this care.

(4.) *Resting in generals.*—*Dolosus versatur in generalibus.* [“An artful and treacherous man deals in generalities.”] This deceives many in hell : you may discourse excellently against sin in the general, and raise in them some passion against it, yet not profit them at all, &c. For, true repentance takes notice of particular sins, &c. ; and as generals have no existence, but in the particulars, according to principles of philosophy ; so it is sin in particular which doth primarily affect the heart of a true penitent.

(5.) *The concealment of some hidden way of wickedness,* I believe, hath sent many to hell : they would never make their disease known,

* In the old English signification of *assure*.—EDIT.

through fear of shame, &c. ; as some persons have died of those diseases which they have smothered. It is true, a man is not bound to make confession of all his sins to a minister, as we rightly assert against papists ; but yet all divines grant, that in many cases it is both expedient and necessary to acknowledge thy wickedness to men ; and, to say nothing of those cases wherein it is sometimes necessary, nor of many reasons which make it frequently expedient, I shall only instance in one, which is sufficient of itself many times,—that the physician, knowing more exactly thy malady, may more effectually proportion his remedy. Possess them with this in such cases,—How infinitely better it is to have some shame before a friend, who will cover your shame, and hate to reproach you with it, than before all the world ! Convince them what folly it is to be unfaithful to themselves, &c.

8. *Take heed of healing the souls of sick persons slightly.*—This we are very apt to, (1.) From the sick man's greedy desire of comfort ; (2.) From the expectation and desire of carnal friends ; (3.) From our own careless hearts, that love not to put ourselves to any trouble or reproach, which we shall meet with, if we be faithful in this case. However, take heed of it : “They have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace.” (Jer. viii. 11.) This is the case : a soul, whether in sickness or in health, must first be wounded, then healed. There must be sorrow and travail, ere the man-child be brought forth. There must be true repentance, and godly sorrow, deep sorrow : (they daub that tell you otherwise, and make God a liar :) great heaviness of heart, &c. Repentance is neither a short nor a superficial work. Persuade them to wait God's leisure, and in God's way, for the cure ; not to precipitate your work. Persuade them not to be afraid of sorrows, troubles, &c., but rather to fear the want of it. For here is a common and a fatal mistake : most men are afraid of sorrow, and labour to drive away sorrow ; whereas, indeed, sorrow is the midwife of all true joy. Tears of penitential sorrow are the streams that lead us to “the rivers of pleasure, which are at God's right hand ;” it is none other than the gate of heaven, the fountain of comfort : and, on the contrary, to be a stranger to godly sorrow, is one of the dread-fullest signs of a lost soul. The laughter of such a person is a *risus Sardonicus*,* a deadly joy. Labour more to work a solid than a sudden cure.

There are other directions I thought to have given ; but these may suffice ; and I will conclude all with two or three USES, first to ministers, then to people.

USE I.

I. *To ministers.*—Hence we may learn the great difficulty of the ministerial work : we see one reason why Paul said, “Who is sufficient for these things ?” O what a sin and shame it is to see what persons venture upon this work ! that such undertake to be shepherds of Christ's flock, that are hardly fit to be set with the dogs of the flock ! “Father, forgive them ! they know not what they do.” Many act as if they thought this were all the work of a minister,—to make a few sermons,

* A *Sardonic smile* signifies a kind of “convulsive laughter,” or “forced grin.”—EDIT.

read some prayers, &c. No, no; a minister must be "thoroughly furnished to every good work." He must be apt and able for every work; this, among others. O what angelical abilities doth it require! Acuteness, to discern the sick man's temper; knowledge, to understand the nature of all spiritual diseases, the symptoms, the prognostics, as also the antidotes and remedies; wisdom, to make suitable, speedy applications. O how hard a case is it! Many sick men can neither endure *morbum*, nor *remedium*, neither the "disease" of their souls, nor their "remedy," &c. A minister had need know all things, understand all persons, discern the subtilties of men's hearts, and not be ignorant of the wiles of the devil.

How many knots must he be able speedily to untie! How many cases must he be able to give speedy resolution to! And he must be supposed to have laid up with great industry, because he must "bring forth out of his treasure things both new and old." O the difficulty! It is a sad thing to consider, that many souls do perish, not only *vi morbi*, "by the force of their disease," but also *errore medici*, "by the error of their physician," by the mistakes of their ministers: and, as Galen speaks of physic for the body, it is also true of the physic of the soul: *In medicina nihil exiguum*: "In physic nothing is little." A small error there, may occasion fearful mischiefs; so a small mistake in souls' concernments may occasion a soul's everlasting ruin.

USE II.

II. *To people*.—Is it of such difficulty? O labour you to do your work in health, while time and strength last, before the evil days come, &c. It is a serious admonition of Gregory, in his book *De Curâ Pastoralî: Salus corporis, quando ad bene operandum accepta despicitur, quanti sit muneris amissa sentitur*: "He that neglects the time of health for the doing of his great work,—he shall feel the worth of it by the want of it." I beseech you, let me reason with you: "Why will you run a hazard, when you may go a safe way? Consider what woful straits you will bring yourselves to. If you do not ponder your ways, and fix your thoughts, and afflict your hearts, you kill your souls; if you do, perhaps your bodies, &c. What a dreadful dilemma is this! &c. The physician chargeth you not to trouble yourselves with sad thoughts, lest you overthrow your bodies; and the minister, if he will be faithful, must charge you to trouble yourselves, lest you lose your souls. O consider now; *now* you may consider, you have the use of reason; *then* reason may be lost, &c. *Now* God will accept of you; *then*, it may be, he will reject you. (Prov. i. 20—32.) *Now* you are at leisure to consider; *then*, "sufficient unto the day will be the evil thereof." And therefore be persuaded to improve the time of health. It is the general custom of sick persons to send for ministers to prepare them for the future life, when they despair of the enjoyment of this present life. A learned man wittily observed, that, as they say, *Ubi desinit philosophus, insipit medicus* :* so it may be said, *Ubi desinit*

* "At the point where the *Philosopher* ends, there the *Physician* exhibits his folly;" conveying an intimation, that, whenever a *Physician* deserts the enlightening guidance of a

*medicus, incipit theologus,** "Where the physician ends, the divine begins." Thus they begin to live at the end of their life: but you, if you be wise, take this counsel, and (O that my words might prevail with you!) desire to speak with able and godly ministers in the time of your health: that, that is the acceptable time; then may they give counsel freely, and you may follow their counsel thoroughly. That was the course of those converts, Acts ii. 37—47. They did not tarry till their souls were ready to breathe out themselves into eternity; but, in the time of their health applied themselves to Peter, &c.: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

Make such applications to your friends in health, as you must do in sickness, if you mean to discharge your duty to God, or friendship to them: you will give them, and yourselves too, great ease and advantage by it, &c. Remember, what obligeth you to do it in sickness, obligeth you also in health; you are your brother's keepers; you have all *curam animarum*, "cure of souls." And as ministers are bound to this work *virtute officii*, "by virtue of their office;" so you are bound to it, *ex lege charitatis*: ["by the law of charity:"] and, surely, if every one of you are bound to deliver your neighbours' ox or ass, when you see it falling into a pit; much more are you obliged to have compassion upon their souls, when they are going down to the pit from which there is no redemption.

SERMON VII.

BY THE REV. JOHN KITCHIN, A.M.

HOW MUST WE REPROVE, THAT WE MAY NOT PARTAKE OF OTHER MEN'S SINS?

Neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.—
1 Timothy v. 22.

THIS Epistle is a scripture-directory for church-government. In this chapter there are certain general rules, or canons apostolical, which St. Paul enjoins Timothy to observe:—

1. About *church-widows*, how they must be qualified. (Verses 3—16.)
2. About *church-elders*, how they must be ordered. (Verses 17—25.)
 - (1.) About their maintenance and encouragement. (Verses 17, 18.)
 - (2.) About their credit and reputation. (Verse 19.)
 - (3.) About their reproof and correction. (Verse 20.)

true Philosophy, that moment he becomes foolish. The fourth edition is the only one in which this sentence is correctly printed, and in which the latent wit is preserved. The witty author couched his pleasantry in the word *insipit*, which, when thus written with *s*, in barbarous Latin signifies, "becomes foolish," or "exhibits his folly;" but when written with *c*, means simply, "he begins," or, "he commences."—EDIT.

* "When the Physician ceases to prescribe for his patient, then the Divine commences his visits."—EDIT.

(4.) About their admission and ordination : “ Lay hands suddenly on no man.” (Verse 22.) Some understand this of the hands of absolution ; * others, of the hands of benediction ; † others, of the hands of confirmation ; ‡ but most and best, of the hands of ordination ; § that is, “ Ordain no man, admit no man into this sacred and weighty office and function of the ministry, suddenly.” *Suddenly*, that is, not before natural capacity, not without competent ability, not unless qualified with piety, industry, gravity. ||

The danger follows : “ Neither be partaker of other men’s sins.”

1. Not of their sins *who would importune thee to ordain unworthy persons, consentiendo*, “ by consenting.”

2. Not of their sins *who do ordain unworthy persons, imitando*, “ by imitating.” ¶

3. Not of their sins *who are ordained*, being unworthy persons ; ** and that,

1. Not of their sins BEFORE ORDINATION, *approbando*, “ by approving of them.” ††

2. Not of their sins AFTER ORDINATION, *confermando*, “ by confirming them in them.” For, says the apostle, in the next verse but one, “ Some men’s sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment ;” (that is, the crisis, or test, or censure, or judgment of the church ;) “ and some follow after.” This is the grammatical sense and logical analysis of the words.

But, beloved, I must take leave to handle the words in a greater latitude and extent. For certainly this caution is not intended to ministers only, neither is it to be confined to the case of ordination ; but, as Christ said upon another occasion, “ What I say unto you, I say unto all ;” (Mark xiii. 37 ;) so here, what St. Paul writes to Timothy, he speaks to all. A private Christian as well as a minister, a church-member as well as a church-elder, must be sure to take heed, that he “ be not partaker of other men’s sins.” The case of conscience to be discussed this morning is this :—

CASE.

How must we reprove, and not partake of other men’s sins ?

And, indeed, this case is complex and double : it bears twins. (Canticles iv. 2.)

I. About PARTICIPATION of other men’s sins.

II. About REPROVING of other men’s sins. ††

I must beg leave to project and manage my discourse sermon-wise, and so commend to your Christian meditation this truth and doctrine. In the explication whereof, I shall handle the former case, and in the application, the latter.

DOCTRINE.

It ought to be every man’s care, not to PARTAKE of any man’s sin : “ Neither be partaker.”

* SALMERON. † GUIL. † CHRYSTOSTOM, THEOPHYLACT. § THEODORET,
CALVIN. || PAREUS, ESTIUS. ¶ ESTIUS. ** ŒCUMENIUS. †† ESTIUS *in loc.*
†† In the fourth edition this line is omitted.—EDIT.

In the handling of which I shall endeavour to show you,

I. How a man may be guilty of other men's sins, or how many ways a man may be said to partake of other men's sins.

II. Why a Christian must be careful not to partake of other men's sins.

III. To apply it.

I. *How a man may be said to partake of other men's sins.*—To this I answer, There are many ways whereby we contract the guilt of others' sins. "Lord," says David, "who knows how oft he offends?" I will name some of them.

There are eight ways especially noted in scripture, by all which a man is made *partaker*, and becomes *guilty*, of the sins of others.

1. *By contrivance.*—By plotting and contriving of sin, by provoking and soliciting others to sin; and this is in an high degree to be guilty of other men's sins. Thus Jonadab was guilty of Amnon's incest, by his subtle contriving of that wickedness, by being a pander to that villainy. (2 Sam. xiii. 5.)

When a man shall wittingly and willingly spread a snare in his brother's way, and either drive him in by provocation, or decoy him in by allurements, he makes himself a partaker of his sin. For example: to provoke a man to passion, to tempt a person to drunkenness and uncleanness, to put a man upon murder and bloodshed, to draw souls into error, heresy, blasphemy, &c.,—this is to espouse and adopt the sin, and to make it a man's own.

You know the story there, 2 Sam. xi.: Uriah was slain with the edge of the sword; David was many miles off when Uriah was slain; he died in the battle; Joab put him in the front, and the Ammonites slew him; but now, because David plotted and contrived all this, the scripture tells us that David was the murderer: "Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon." (2 Sam. xii. 9.) Though the blade was the Ammonites', and the hilt might be said to be Joab's; yet the hand was David's, and the deed was David's. The Ammonites *slew* him; but David *murdered* him. St. Paul tells us, he was a "blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious." (1 Tim. i. 13.) Why, beloved, we do not read of any blasphemy that St. Paul uttered in all the Bible. "O, but," says he, "I compelled the saints to blaspheme." (Acts xxvi. 11.) *There was his blasphemy, in compelling others to blaspheme.*

Beloved, to incite and provoke any to sinful practices, to seduce and solicit any to loose doctrines and erroneous opinions, it is to be doubly guilty of those sins,—once by infection, and again by instigation.

Hence is that frequent expression among the Fathers, concerning Arius the heretic: that, look how many souls he had seduced to his heresy and blasphemy, so many several additions of torments he had in hell, as guilty of all their sins. O man! whoever thou art that makest thy neighbour drunk, by putting the bottle to his mouth; (Habak. ii. 15;) that callest to thy brother, saying, "Cast in thy lot amongst us, and let us have one purse;" that enticest the soul of the simple with a "Come, let us take our fill of loves, and solace ourselves until the morning;" I tell thee,

Thou art guilty of all their sins, and mayest justly be punished with all their plagues : for this, Christians, is a most devilish practice,—to tempt and provoke others to wickedness. All sins, indeed, are devilish sins, *per modum servitutis* ; but some sins are devilish sins, *per modum imaginis*. In all sins, “men bear the devil’s yoke ;” (1 John iii. 8 ;) but in some sins, “men bear the devil’s image.”

Five sins especially the scripture brands as devilish sins ; and this is the chief : (1.) *False accusation* : “Men shall be false accusers,” *devils*, says the Greek. (2 Tim. iii. 2, 3.) (2.) *Lying* : “Ye are of your father the devil : for he is a liar and the father of it.” (John viii. 44.) (3.) *Pride* : “Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil.” (1 Tim. iii. 6.) (4.) *Persecution* : “The devil shall cast some of you into prison ;” (Rev. ii. 10 ;) that is, devilish men-persecutors. (5.) *Temptation*, as this is : “Get thee behind me, Satan,” says Christ to Peter, when he tempted him. (Matt. xvi. 23.) He that shall either hinder another of doing that good which is commanded, or shall further another to the doing of that evil which is prohibited, is justly chargeable with both their sins.

2. *By compliance*.—By consenting and complying with sin and sinners : so a man makes himself partaker. Though he has no hand in it, yet, if he has a heart in it ; though he does not act it, yet if he likes it, and loves it, and approves it ; though he does not persecute God’s saints and ministers, yet, if he saith, “Aha, aha ! so would we have it ;” it is enough to make him guilty before God.

Saul,—he had no hand in St. Stephen’s death, he did not cast one stone at him ; but because he looked on with approbation, and stood by with consent,—“Saul was consenting unto his death,” (Acts viii. 1,)—therefore was he esteemed guilty of his blood and murder ; and so himself confesses, when God had awakened him, and humbled him to repentance : “When the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I was consenting unto his death ;” (Acts xxii. 20 ;) and so charges himself as guilty of it.

God looks not upon *the outward man* so much as upon *the heart* ; according to the frame and inclination of the heart, according as the pulse of the heart beats, so is every man in the account and esteem of God. If sin has once stormed the *fort-royal* of the heart, though it never appears in the *out-works*, the garrison is lost. That which is upon the stage of the heart after consent, is as truly acted in the sight of God as that which appears in the outward man by commission. “Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.” (Matt. xv. 19.) Why, beloved, from the hand proceed “murders and thefts ;” (Eph. iv. 28 ;) from the eye proceed “adulteries and fornications ;” (2 Peter ii. 14 ;) and from the tongue proceed “false witnesses and blasphemies.” (Psalm cx. 3.) O, but the heart is the forge of all.

You may murder a man with a thought, as they say the basiliak will with a look,—such a poisonous thing a wicked heart is : and let me tell you, it is the heart-murder, and the heart-adultery, and the heart-blasphemy, and the heart-iniquity, that God especially judges ; according to

that famous place: "I the Lord search the heart, to give every man according to his ways;" (Jer. xvii. 10;) that is, "according to what I see acted and done upon the stage of the heart," says God; he does not only judge *the actions*, but he judges *the very intentions*.

3. *By connivance*.—By a sinful dissembling, flattering, and winking at others in their wickedness and sins, so men become guilty of others' sins: "The leaders of this people cause them to err:" (Isai. ix. 16:) it is in the Hebrew, "*The blessers of this people cause them to err.*"* Beloved, the blessers of men in wickedness are the leaders of men in wickedness. He that shall wink at and flatter men in sins, when he knows in his conscience that they do wickedly,—he makes himself captain and *master of misrule* among them. And thus we are too prone to be partakers of magistrates' sins, and governors' sins, and great men's sins, patrons' sins, and landlords' sins. If the grantees of the world profane the sabbath, dishonour God, rant and swear, and scoff at religion; out of a base, cowardly spirit, or out of a carnal, covetous heart, we flatter them and let them alone, it may be, applaud them; as he said, *Tu fac hunc dominum, te facit ille Deum*; "Do but make him a lord, and he straightway makes thee a God!" as if we were not to distinguish between *the persons* of men and *the vices* of men; or as if so be we more feared a mortal man, whose breath is in his nostrils, than we do the immortal God, who can frown us into hell in a moment. O, this is to be deeply guilty of other men's sins! See how sharply God by his prophet taxes and reproves this daubing in those wicked upholsterers, that "sew pillows to every elbow," Ezek. xiii. 17, and so forward. Read it at leisure.

I fear this has been the sin of former times and governments: God grant it may not be the sin of present and future ages,—for men to connive at any that promote their own interests!

Alas, my brethren! methinks the interest of piety, and the interest of conscience, and the interest of the eternal God, Judge of quick and dead, should swallow up all the interests of the world. If Nebuchadnezzar himself should set up a golden image, and would have it worshipped, I tell you it is not treason for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego to say, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter." (Dan. iii. 16.) Besides, let not men deceive themselves; for such persons as can so easily betray the interests of God, will never be afraid, if opportunity serve, to oppose the sovereignty of man, whose authority he bears; and are not indeed Hushais, but Zibas; not David's *friends*, but David's *flatterers*.

4. *By sufferance*.—By permitting the sins of others, so we become guilty, by suffering others to sin, whom we are bound in duty, and may be able by authority, to hinder. And thus, as in the former particular we are guilty of magistrates' sins, in this particular magistrates oft-times become guilty of our sins. Kings, and rulers, and subordinate magistrates become oft-times deeply guilty of their people's sins; namely, by

* מאשרי העם *Beatificantes populum.*

sufferance, by tolerating errors, and heresies, and blasphemies, on the one hand, or by suffering wickedness and profaneness, on the other.

That ruler or magistrate that shall suffer either loose opinions or principles that are contrary to sound doctrine to be broached, or loose ways and customs that are contrary to the power of godliness to be observed, and shall not use his authority to prevent and suppress them, —he contracts to himself the guilt, and draws upon himself the mischief, of all those sins and enormities. Just as he that licenses a book to the press, if there be any faults of ignorance, or error, or poisonous opinions, they may be justly charged upon him and laid at his door; though he is not the author, yet because he is the licenser; though he is not the parent, yet because he is the midwife. So if there be any heresy and blasphemy tolerated in a place, if there be any profaneness and ungodliness suffered among a people, because it has the magistrates' *imprimatur*, and he suffers it to pass the country without whipping, therefore he is highly guilty.

Sabbath-breaking abounds: "Let it pass," says the mayor of a town. Drunkenness abounds: "Let it alone," says the justice of peace. Profaneness abounds: "Let it go," says the minister. Sirs, if it should be thus, this were to bear the sins of a whole parish, and a whole county, and a whole nation, upon a man's back at once. See that [in] Revelation ii. to this purpose; where you find the sins of the people charged upon the governors, for their permission and toleration, both sins of doctrine and practice. OF DOCTRINE: "To the angel of the church in Pergamos, write; I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate." (Rev. ii. 12, 14, 15.) This is charged upon the *angel*, "the overseer and governor," of the church. He should have hindered it, and he did tolerate and permit it; and it was his sin. And so OF PRACTICE; "Unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce," &c. (Rev. ii. 18, 20.) To suffer Jezebel to teach in a nation, is to suffer painting, and wantonness, and uncleanness: these were the sins of Jezebel; and to permit them, is to partake of them.

OBJECTION. But some may object, and say, "Why does God then permit sin to be in the world? He might hinder it, and he might prevent it, if he would. There could be no wickedness acted under the sun, but by God's permission. The devil could not tempt Job, and Satan could not sift Peter, without leave and commission from God; neither could any wicked man act his villany, and spit out his venom, without God's sufferance. If permission of sin be a partaking of sin, how shall we vindicate God from the imputation of unrighteousness?"

ANSWER. (1.) This was Marcion's wicked and malicious cavil at God's providence about the first transgression. "Why would not God, who foresaw the issue, hinder Eve and the devil from conference and communion together, that so sin might have been prevented, and the world been everlastingly happy? unless," saith he, "God was either envious and

would not, or weak and could not, hinder it!" To which Tertullian replies: "Because God was arbitrary and free in his gifts." Austin answers: "Because it was his will." Prosper and Hilary reply: "The cause may be unknown: it cannot be unjust." All which is enough *obturare*, "to muzzle" that heaven-daring "mouth" of blasphemy. But afterward Austin answers, that "though sin be the worst thing in the world, yet the existence of sin is not ill;" as poison would do no hurt, if men would not meddle with it. But that satisfies not our case. Therefore,

(2.) *Though God hath authority, and is of ability, to prevent and hinder the commission of sin, yet he is not bound in duty so to do.*—"God is under no tie and obligation," but his own purpose and pleasure: *Deus non tenetur legibus*, "God is a law to himself." Herein lies the guilt and evil of man's permitting of sin:—he is bound in duty, as well as furnished with ability and authority, to prevent it; and therefore his permitting of sin is a partaking of sin: "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live:" (Exod. xxii. 18:) man is bound to hinder profaneness and wickedness, if he can; but so is not God. Though he is of infinite power and ability to restrain it, or to remove it, yet he is not bound in duty; and so it is no unrighteousness in God to suffer sin. "Sin is the transgression of the law; but where there is no law, there is no transgression."

(3.) It is no unrighteousness in God to suffer sin, when he may hinder it, *because he can by his infinite wisdom order it to his own glory.*—He suffered Pharaoh to harden his heart, that he might be glorified on Pharaoh. (Rom. ix. 17.) Pharaoh's sin turned to God's glory. As he makes all *penal* evils work together for our good; so he makes all *sinful* evils concur to his own glory.

(4.) It is no unrighteousness in God to suffer sin, *because he can turn every man's sin to a greater benefit and advantage.*—"Ye thought evil against me," saith Joseph to his brethren; "but God meant it unto good." (Gen. 1. 20.) He can bring good out of evil, and light out of darkness. God suffers toads and serpents to live, because they are useful; they suck the noxious and hurtful gusts from herbs and flowers, and so make them wholesome for man's use. So God permits sin in the world, because he knows how to make it useful: he can make an antidote of the viper's flesh. He did, by an excellent and rare chymistry, extract the greatest mercy from the greatest mischief, the greatest good from the greatest evil:—the salvation of mankind from the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

5. *By influence of bad example.*—By setting loose and bad examples for others to imitate. So men are guilty of others' sins; as, namely, when children sin by the examples of their parents, those very parents are guilty of their children's sin. So we have some families that inherit the lusts, as well as the lands, of their ancestors; parents swear and curse, and so do children; parents are drunkards, and so are children; parents are unclean, and so are children; as they make them rich by their *livings*, so they make them wretched and debauched by their *lives*: this is to make themselves partakers of all their sins. So when people sin by the

looseness and licentiousness of their minister, that minister is guilty of those very sins that the people so commit ; which made Austin, though a very holy man, so exceeding jealous of himself in this case, that that was his constant prayer, *Libera me, Domine, a peccatis meis alienis.* "Lord," saith he, "deliver me from mine other men's sins!" those sins that others have committed through my carelessness and incogitancy.

And indeed examples are more cogent and influential a great deal than precepts. The adulteries of Jupiter and other pagan gods did mightily draw the people to imitate their wantonness ; and Augustine gives the reason : *Magis intuebantur quid fecerat Jupiter, quàm quid docuit Plato* : "They more minded what Jupiter did, than what Plato taught."

Jeroboam the son of Nebat is said to make Israel to sin : that is his brand. How did he make Israel to sin ? Why, by his law he commanded them to sin ; but by his practice and example he made them to sin. He set up calves in Dan and Bethel, and whole herds of people ran a lowing after them. So it is said of St. Peter, that he compelled the Gentiles to Judaize : "Why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" (Gal. ii. 14.) How did St. Peter compel the Gentiles to Judaize ? "Not by any thing he preached to them," saith Jerome, "but by his example :"
*Non docentis imperio, sed conversantis exemplo.** A stone, you know, thrown into the water, makes itself but one circle ; ay, but that one perhaps begets a score, or a hundred. So it is here : he that sets an evil example sins not alone ; he draws hundreds, it may be, into sin after him. He is like a man that sets his own house on fire ; it burns many of his neighbours', and he is to be answerable for all the ruins.

6. *By inference from a bad example, or by imitation.*—So a man is guilty of another man's sin, not only by *pattern*, in setting bad examples, but also by *practice*, in following bad examples ; and thus that man that will be drunk because another was drunk, or that breaks the sabbath because others do the like,—he is not only guilty of his own particular sin, but he is guilty also of their sins whom he imitates and follows ; and the reason is, because bad examples are not *land-marks* for us to go by, but they are *sea-marks* for us to avoid. Hence you shall find in scripture mention made of children by imitation as well as by nature, and people by imitation as well as by nation, and kings by imitation as well as by succession. I will give you an instance of all these. Look into that, Judges xviii. 30 : "The children of Dan set up the graven image : and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan." Here Jonathan, an idol-priest, is called the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh ; that is, the grandchild of Manasseh. Now it is clear in scripture, that Gershom was the son of Moses, and not of Manasseh. (Exod. ii. 22 ; xviii. 3 ; 1 Chron. xxiii. 15.) And so Jonathan must be the grandchild of Moses, and not of Manasseh. But the Jews and learned critics tell us, that he is called the grandchild of Manasseh for a double reason : (1.) Because the scripture, consulting the honour of Moses, did conceal his pedigree as to Moses ; for it had

* *Epistola Hieronymi intra opera Augustini, Epist. 11.* "The eleventh epistle of St. Jerome, inserted in the Works of St. Augustine."—EDIT.

been a disgrace to Moses to have had upon record an idol-priest in his lineage; and, (2.) Which is to my purpose, he is called the grandchild of Manasseh, and that by *προληψις* and "anticipation," because he followed him in his idolatry: he was no whit like Moses, but rather imitated Manasseh, and so he is called his grandchild.

For the other instance, see Isaiah i. 10: "Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah." Why, beloved, these that the prophet speaks to,—they were the people of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Why does the prophet call them the people of Gomorrah? Even for this reason,—they did imitate those filthy Sodomites and Gomorrhites in wickedness, and wantonness, and looseness, and so became guilty of their sins, and worthy of their names.

The last instance you have in 2 Chronicles xxviii. 19: "The Lord brought Judah low, because of Ahaz king of Israel." Ahaz, all know, was king of Judah, and not king of Israel; but he is called king of Israel, because he imitated the wicked and idolatrous kings of Israel: he was not so by succession, but he was so by imitation.

Hence it is that God is said to "visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children," because they make themselves guilty by imitation: and this may be a key to unlock that place of the apostle: "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived:" (2 Tim. iii. 13.) Deceivers are *worse*, but the deceived are *worse and worse*: if they see a bad example, and will not avoid it, but copy it, they are worse than worse. The deceiver is guilty of the deceived's sin by instigation, and the deceived is guilty of the deceiver's sin by imitation.

And this is the woful, intricate, perplexed labyrinth into which sin doth precipitate careless and ungodly sinners. If thou committest that sin which none before committed but thee, thou art guilty of all the sins of future generations by thy example,—as Adam was in the world, and Jeroboam in Israel. And if thou committest any sin because others have committed it before thee, thou art guilty of all the sins of former generations by thy imitation: and so sin never goes alone; a single sin is as great a solecism in divinity as a single *thank* is in grammar and morality. And that you may know, Christians, I do not speak without book in so saying, witness that dreadful place: "Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city:" Mark! "That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew," though slain in Jehoash's reign, almost nine hundred years before, yet ye slew, "between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation." (Matt. xxiii. 34—36.) And why? Because they sinned "after the similitude of their fathers' transgression." O what matter of humiliation is this to every soul that continues in any known sin!

7. *By countenance.*—By delightful society and company with wicked men to countenance them, so we become partakers of their sins: "But

now I have written unto you, not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner ; with such an one no not to eat. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." (1 Cor. v. 11, 13.) As you would avoid the sin, avoid the sinner. *Eating* does denote intimate fellowship and familiarity ; and we cannot be intimate with such without contracting their guilt to our own souls. It is true, indeed, all commerce with such is not forbidden ; for then, as the apostle says, " we must needs go out of the world ;" (verse 10 ;) but intimate society is, upon this account. And therefore the apostle, or at least the translator, does here seem critically to distinguish between " *companying*," and *keeping company* : " I wrote to you in an epistle, not to company with fornicators. But now I have written unto you not to keep company." (Verses 9, 11.) Company we may—(yea, we cannot avoid it,) but *keep company* we must not—with wicked men. As elsewhere the Holy Ghost distinguishes between " *sinning*" and *committing sin* : " He that is born of God doth not commit sin," saith St. John. The holiest man on this side heaven cannot but *sin*, saith the same apostle ; ay, but " he that is born of God does not commit sin ;" *sin* he does, but *commit sin* he doth not ; that is, he doth not delight in it, he doth not use it, he doth not make it his practice : so here.

We read in scripture where wicked men have often fared better for the godly ; as Laban for Jacob, and Potiphar for Joseph, and Ahab for Jehoshaphat, &c. ; but we never read that godly men fared better for the company of the wicked, but rather worse : " Depart from me, ye evil doers : for I will keep the commandments of my God." (Psalm cxix. 115.) It is a very hard matter to *keep wicked company*, and to *keep the the commandments of God* together.

The Lacedæmonians would never suffer a stranger to be with them above three days, for fear of infection and corruption with their evil manners. And verily those that are strangers to God and godliness should be as little as may be our companions.

8. *By maintenance*.—By upholding and encouraging men in their sins, though thou never committest them thyself, yet thou art guilty. " He that biddeth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deeds." (2 John 11.) Though thou dost not commit it, yet if thou dost applaud it, and rejoice in it, and say, " It is well done," thou art a partner. If thou art not *the mother* of it, yet thou art *the nurse* of it ; if thou art not *the father* of it, yet thou art *the guardian* of it ; and God will lay the brat at thy door, as sure as if thou hadst begot it.

Thus I have done with the first thing, *How we become guilty, or how many ways partakers, of other men's sins*. There are many more might be named, as *by hindering good, by excusing evil, by administering occasion, by not reproving, not mourning, not reclaiming, &c.* But these and many more that practical authors handle,—they are but underling-sprigs from the great branches that I have opened.

II. *Why a Christian must be careful to avoid, and not to partake of, other men's sins : The reasons of the doctrine ?*

ANSWER. Out of a three-fold principle :

1. Out of a principle of *charity to our brethren.*
2. Out of a principle of *pity to ourselves.*
3. Out of a principle of *piety to God.*

1. *Out of charity to our brethren.*—That we be not means and instruments to promote their ruin and destruction: for, to partake of other men's sins, though it does more burden us, yet it does never a whit ease them, but does rather harden them, and confirm them in their practices; for company in sin makes men act it with the greater confidence. Now, this is to do the devil's part in the habit of a friend. Sirs, we must be charitable; charity is the golden rule; charity is the bond of perfection. Now, if it be a piece of charity to help up our brother's ox or ass, when he is fallen into a ditch; (Exod. xxiii. 4;) sure it is more charity to do as much for his soul: "Others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire." (Jude 23.) Sin is the deep ditch of the soul, and sin is the hell-fire of the soul, as it were: here should be lifting and plucking indeed.

The neglect of this duty of keeping one another from sin, the scripture calls an "hating of our brother." "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt not suffer sin upon him." (Lev. xix. 17.) I observe, in company, that if many persons sit together by a fire, and a spark fly upon any one of them, every one is ready to shake it off and beat it off; and why should not we be as friendly and charitable to men's souls, when sin, which is as hell-flakes, lies smothering in their consciences, or burning upon their souls?

2. *Out of pity to ourselves.*—That we may keep ourselves from the blood of other men's souls, and secure ourselves from the judgments of other men's sins. For the former, says St. Paul: "I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." (Acts xx. 26, 27.) Had the apostle connived at, or consented to, their sins, God would have made inquisition for the blood of their souls at his hands. For the latter, says Jacob: "Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations: O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united." Why? O, "I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel." (Gen. xlix. 5—7.) He would not have a hand in their sinful union, because he would not have a share in their dreadful division: they were united in sin, and they must be divided in punishment.

3. *Out of piety towards God.*—God forbids it: "Be not ye partakers with them;" (Eph. v. 7;) and God forbid that we should do it! Nay, God abhors it and condemns it: "When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers," &c. "These things hath thou done: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes." (Psalm l. 18, 21.) This sin is a breach of all the law at once, being against the rule of charity. He that hath his own sins alone, doth only *commit* them; but he that takes other men's sins, doth highly *approve* them; and this greatly dishonours God. It is worse partaking of sin, than committing of sin. "They do not only do the same," saith the apostle, "but have pleasure in them that do them:" (Rom. i. 32:) that is worse. Wherefore Zelophehad's daughters pleaded

in mitigation of their father's offence, that "he died in his own sin;" (Num. xxvii. 3;) he was not partner with Korah, but died in his own sin. It is worse to be a partner, than to be an actor.

III. Application.

1. *Information.*—Is there such a thing as "partaking of other men's sins" after this manner?

(1.) Hence you may be informed of the equity and justice of God's proceeding in punishment.—You oft-times see God punishing one man's sin upon another, or at least hear of it; and you think it strange. Why, this (Edipus will read you the riddle; this clue will conduct you through the labyrinth:—They have been, some way or other, partakers of those sins, either by contrivance, or by compliance, or by connivance, &c., one way or other, else God would never punish them: if they have not been actors, they have been abettors. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" God punishes children for the sins of their parents; (Exod. xxxiv. 7;) ay, but those children have been *κοινωνοι*, "partakers," certainly by approbation, it may be by imitation. God punishes servants for the sins of their masters; (Gen. xii. 17;) but, sure, the servants were *κοινωνοι*, "partakers" by consenting,* it may be by executing. God punishes wives for the sins of their husbands; (Gen. xx. 18;) but those wives were *κοινωνοι*, "partakers" still by admitting, by enduring. God punishes ministers for the sins of the people; (Ezek. xxxiii. 8;) but then those ministers are *κοινωνοι*, "partakers," sure enough, by not instructing, by not reprovng: still the justice of God is vindicated.

(2.) Hence be informed *what piety, and strictness, and watchfulness are more especially required of those that have the care of others.*—For example: kings, and parents, and masters, and magistrates, and ministers,—they should be exemplary in godliness. They have *curam animarum*, and therefore they should have *curam animæ*; they have "care of other men's souls," and therefore they should look well to "their own." The want of this was her crime and complaint: "They made me keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept." (Canticles i. 6.) O, those that are keepers of vineyards had need to have special care of their own vineyard!

(3.) Hence take an account *why the wicked of the world do so hate the godly, and reproach and revile them.*—It is this: They will not be partakers of their sins; they will not commit them, neither will they connive at them; and this is the reason why the world hates them. Ahab hates Micaiah; and himself gives the reason,—because he reprovved him: "I hate him," he "doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil." (1 Kings xxii. 8.) He never speaks well of me. Herod hates John Baptist because he reprovves him. No wonder that ministers, of all kind of men in the world, are most hated. The case is plain: because they are reprovvers. Godly ministers are wicked men's reprovvers, and wicked men are godly ministers' reproachers: "They think it strange ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you." (1 Peter iv. 4.)

(4.) Here is *matter of reproof and humiliation this day for our want*

* In the first edition, this word is *consulting*.—EDIT.

of watchfulness in this kind.—O which of us can say, that we are free from the guilt of other men's sins? Every man may cast this *bur* of reproof and lamentation at his own conscience, and there let it stick. Parents, every one: "Ah my children's sins!" Masters: "Ah my servants' sins!" Ministers: "Ah my people's sins!" Rulers: "Ah my subjects' sins!" O let us deeply mourn for want of relative holiness, and more frequently and fervently pray that prayer: "Lord, forgive me my other men's sins!"

2. The SECOND USE is *of exhortation and caution together.*—Is it so, that it ought to be every man's care not to partake of any man's sin?

O Christians! let me entreat you, then, to be very mindful of this duty: be persuaded, beloved, and the Lord persuade you, to be tenderly careful and watchful, that "you do not partake of other men's sins." These are infectious times and places that we live in; and multitudes there are that catch diseases and distempers from others. But let me tell you, Christians, that bodily diseases are not half so catching as sin is. Sin is an infectious, contagious, pestilential plague, that spreads mightily in the world. O take heed, take heed, that the guilt of other men's sins do not one day lie upon your conscience, and be put upon your account!

Let me enforce this counsel in the words of our apostle here; and they are very weighty and emphatical:—

"I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another;" and amongst the rest this is one: "That thou be not partaker of other men's sins." (1 Tim. v. 21, 22.) Give me leave to prosecute this in these three particulars:—

1. By laying down some arguments to press this caution and exhortation.

2. By pointing at what sins especially you must not partake of.

3. By showing you how you may so manage the business, and order the matter, as not to be partakers of other men's sins; what are the antidotes against this infection.

1. *To lay down the arguments.*

(1.) Consider: *You have sins enough of your own, you have no reason to partake of other men's.*—It is cruel to "add affliction to your bonds." Jesus Christ had no sins of his own, and therefore he could and did bear ours; he did *take* all men's sins, though he did not *partake* of any man's sins: all were his by imputation: "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all;" (Isai. liii. 6;) but none were his by perpetration and participation. It is not so with us. Alas! we have sins enough of our own. Man, woman, thine own pride will damn thee, if thou dost not repent; and thine own hypocrisy, and formality, and worldliness, and hardness of heart. Thou hast no need to take the sins of others. Said the daughter of Zelophehad, "Our father died in his own sin;" (Num. xxvii. 3;) ay, that is enough to kill a man, and damn a man,—*"his own sin."*

(2.) Consider: *It is a most monstrous sin, it is a most dreadful sin, to partake of other men's sins.*—The apostle speaks of committing iniquity "with greediness." (Eph. iv. 19.) Sirs, there is no such greedy sinning

as this,—for a man to lick up, and swallow down, and devour, other men's sins. Naturalists tell us, that *serpens serpentem devorans fit draco*, "If a serpent swallow down another serpent, it becomes a dragon." O Christians! this sin of devouring other men's sins is a dragon-sin, a monstrous sin, a dreadful sin, a devilish sin; and therefore take heed of it!

(3.) Consider: *If you partake of other men's sins, you shall certainly partake of other men's plagues.*—"Come out of her, my people," says God, namely, from Babylon, "that you be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." (Rev. xviii. 4.) See Prov. xiii. 20: "A companion of fools shall be destroyed;" not only "*fools shall be destroyed,*" but "*a companion of fools shall be destroyed.*" If you sin with them, you shall suffer with them, and you shall suffer more because of them. Read that: And the rich man said, "I pray thee, father Abraham, that thou wouldest send Lazarus to my father's house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment." (Luke xvi. 27, 28.) Why would not he have his brethren to come to hell to him? Divines determine, [that it was] not out of any love to their souls; there is not that charity to be supposed in hell. O, but [it was] because the sight of them, and company of them, would increase his torment. This will be the shrieking and howling in hell among damned souls one to another: "O woe-worth the day that ever I saw *thy face!*" "O that ever I saw *thy face!*" "Thou hast brought *me* hither!" "And thou hast brought *me* hither!" and so they will torment one another to all eternity!

2. *What sins we must especially take heed of partaking of.*

ANSWER. *Of all sin whatsoever:* "Abstain from all appearance of evil;" * (1 Thess. v. 22;) but especially of three sorts of sins, which may be called epidemical plagues. (1.) Church-sins, (2.) National sins, (3.) Family-sins. But I shall speak nothing of the first, but little of the second, and most to the third.

(1.) Among *national sins*, especially take heed of profaneness. This is obvious; this is an universal, spreading plague, that is like to infect the whole kingdom, if God does not in mercy prevent it. There is a deluge of profaneness breaking in on every side; swearing, drinking, whoring, sabbath-breaking, scoffing, and mocking at religion: all the countries ring again. Men are now grown bold, and audacious, and incorrigible in their wickedness; that, like a Titan-brood, they even threaten heaven itself with an over-daring impudence, as if they would storm the palace of Jehovah, and pluck him out of his throne. O take heed of partaking here!

(2.) *Family-sins.*—We must have a care of partaking here, and so much the more watchful must we be, in that family-sins, of all sins, are most catching and infectious. As it is with bodily diseases, if one be sick in a house, they of the blood, and kin, and family, are likeliest to catch the distemper, because of their frequent and intimate converse

* *Loquitur apostolus de peccatis gravioribus usque maxime quæ publicum offendiculum pariunt.*—ESTIUS *in loc.* "The apostle here speaks of the more grievous sins; and, chiefly, those which produce the greatest public scandal and offence."—EDIT.

especially: so it is here; if there be any predominant lust lurking in a family, all are apt to be infected with it, if they are not marvellous circumspect and watchful.

And therefore parents, and masters, and governors of families had need to be reformers, both of themselves and all under their charge; for, beside that this is the most compendious and safest way to state-reformation and church-reformation,—every family being a kind of a little kingdom of itself, and a little church of itself, wherein the master is both king, priest, and prophet;—beside this, there is the sound of this argument and reason to alarm them, namely, as they desire to have their souls and consciences free from the guilt of other men's sins.

Plato, seeing a child do mischief in the streets, went forthwith and corrected his father for it. That father that does not correct his child when he does amiss, is justly corrected for his faults; and it is the pattern of God's judicial proceedings. As he visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children who *imitate* them; so he visits the iniquities of the children upon the fathers, who *countenance and indulge* them. As Jacob was countable to Laban for the whole flock; not a sheep or a lamb lost or torn, but it was required at his hands; (Gen. xxxi. 39;) thus must family governors be accountable to God for every lamb in the fold, for every child in the family, for every servant in the house. Says God to him, "Give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward." (Luke xvi. 2.) So will God one day cry aloud in thine ears: *Quintili Vare, redde legiones!** "Husband, father, master, wife, give an account of thy husbandship, and give an account of thy fathership, give an account of thy mastership, give an account of thy wifeship," &c. This made Joshua undertake for his house, as well as for himself. (Joshua xxiv. 15.) And this made David careful of his house, as well as his heart: "I will walk within my house with a perfect heart;" (Psalm ci. 2;) not only *with a perfect heart*, but *in his house with a perfect heart*, so as to reform his family, that that may be the church of God; (Col. iv. 15; Philemon 2;) as well as to reform himself, that he may be the "temple of God." (1 Cor. iii. 17; vi. 19.)

Ah! how many families are there whose houses are not the "church of God," but the "synagogue of Satan" rather! "God is not in all their thoughts;" God is not in all their mouths, except it be in swearing, and cursing, and blaspheming. Their "bellies are their god," and their lusts are their lord. It is said of Noah's ark, that it "was pitched within and without." (Gen. vi. 14.) "Such," says one, "is the condition of many a man's house: it is a Noah's ark; it is pitched within and without; nothing but the pollutions and defilements of sin in every room, and passage, and corner. *Idleness* stands at the door; *unconscionableness* walks in the shop; *covetousness* lurks in the counting-house; *luxury* sits at the table; *pride* looks out at the window; *wantonness* lodges in the bed;—all pitched and filthy both within and without."

* Suetonii *Vite*, lib. ii. 23.—"It is related, that Augustus was in such a state of consternation," (at the loss of the three legions in Germany, under the command of Quintilius Varus,) "that, having allowed his beard and his hair to grow for several months, he sometimes, through agony, struck his head against the doors, and cried out,—*O Quintilius Varus! restore me the legions which you lost!*"—EDIT.

And therefore, Christians, for the Lord's sake, out with all this rubbish, if it should be found in your families. How do you in London here delight to have your houses clean; and hereupon sweep them, and wash them, and rub them! O that you would be as careful to cleanse your families from sin, as you are to cleanse your houses from dirt! How soon would this great city become "a habitation of righteousness," and "a mountain of holiness!" How would this family-reformation prevent the guilt of family-sins, and keep out family-distractions, and secure from family-desolation! Therefore, sirs, set up family-watchfulness, and family-correction. Let every house be an house of correction of itself; and set about family-reading, and family-conference, and family-repetition, and especially family-prayer; that all your houses may be like God's house: you know his is called an "house of prayer:" "Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people." (Isai. lvi. 7.) So should yours; they should be houses of prayer, all of them: if they be not, let me tell you, they are no better than dens of thieves. Saith Christ, "My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves." (Matt. xxi. 13.) There is no medium betwixt these two; if your houses be not "houses of prayer, they are certainly "dens of thieves;" if you do not pray to God for your mercies before you receive them, and praise God for your mercies when you enjoy them, you do but rob God of his mercies; they are not given but thrown, and snatched indeed rather than received.

3. Now, and in the last place, we come to the ANTIDOTES: *How we must so carry it, and order the business, as not to partake of other men's sins.*

ANTIDOTE I. *Exercise an holy jealousy over others,* ("I am jealous over you," saith St. Paul,) especially thy relations; and this is the way to deliver thy soul from their sins. Job, sacrificing for his children, said, "It may be that my sons have sinned." (Job i. 5.)

ANT. II. *Watch against the sins of others.*—Have your eyes about you: take heed of contriving, complying, winking at them. If it be in your power, take heed of suffering them. See David's paroxysm of zeal in this case, Psalm ci. 2, &c.

This is the direction in the text, which must not be omitted: "Keep thyself pure;" take heed of infectious places, and infectious practices, and infectious company.

ANT. III. *Pray against them.*—Pray against profaneness, pray Augustine's prayer, "Lord, deliver me from other men's sins!"

ANT. IV. *Mourn for them.*—Mourn for the sins of the nation, and mourn for the sins of thy relations; for the sins of thy brethren in their obstinacy, that they will not be reformed. Christ came to sinful Jerusalem with weeping eyes, and with a mourning heart: "O Jerusalem!" David mourned for the wickedness of the times that he saw. (Psalm cxix. 136.) "Many walk," says Paul, "of whom I tell you weeping." Thus did God's people of old free themselves from national sins, and particular men's sins. When they could not be reformers, they turned mourners. (Jer. xiii. 17.) And see how prevalent this is with God! These mourners are the only people to deliver a nation, or at least

to deliver themselves from the sins and plagues of a nation, when God makes an overflowing scourge to pass through. (Ezek. ix. 4.) On the other side, not mourning for the sins of others makes us adopt and espouse the sins of others. (Dan. v. 22.)

ANT. v. *Reprove them.* (Ezek. iii. 17—19.)—If we would not partake of the sins of others, we must reprove the sins of others. (Lev. xix.; Ezek. xxxiii. 7—9.) So the apostle saith expressly; (Eph. v. 11;) intimating that you do certainly approve them, if you do not reprove them. Reprove heresy, blasphemy, drunkenness, oaths, sabbath-breaking, uncleanness, and every sin you hear or see committed. The ravished virgin under the law was to cry out; (Deut. xxii. 25—27;) in this case God takes silence for consent. As there is a holy silence to God's correction; (Aaron held his peace;) so there is a sinful silence under man's corruption; (Eli held his peace also;) Aaron's silence was a good silence; but Eli's silence was a naughty silence. We must be silent under God's correction; but we must not be silent under man's corruption. (Lev. v. 1.) Therefore, saith St. Paul, "Reprove them:" the best way to avoid "fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness," and to free a man's soul from the guilt of other men's sins, is to reprove them: that is the antidote against this infection. Thus the Ephesians practised as St. Paul preached. St. Paul does not more advise them to this duty, than St. John does commend them for this duty. Says the Holy Ghost there, in Rev. ii. 1—3, compared together: "Thou hast borne, and yet hast not borne," God's correction, man's corruption: "I know thy patience, and how thou canst not bear," &c.: it is no breach of patience to be impatient against sin and sinners. But now, beloved, because this sword of reproof is a very dangerous weapon, if it be not rightly handled, an edge-tool that we must be marvellously chary how we meddle with; there is required therefore a great deal of skill, and prudence, and wisdom, and watchfulness, to a right and successful managing of this duty. He that would fasten this nail of reproof in the conscience of his offending brother, had need be a very wise man. (Eccles. xii. 11.) Yea, as I remember Isidorus Pelusiota [says,] Το μὲν ἐπιτιμᾶν ῥαδίον. ["It is indeed an easy matter to bestow rebukes."] Every one can find fault and reprove another for the same; but to do it discreetly and seasonably and successfully, requires a great deal of wisdom; and to this end I shall give you these rules. Reproof is double: 1. *Ministerial*, and by way of authority; and, 2. *Fraternal*, by way of charity.

II. And here we come to the second case; namely, REPROOF.

1. *He that reproves another must be very careful that himself be faultless and blameless, as much as may be.*—Otherwise he is not acting his charity, but bewraying his hypocrisy. "Thou therefore which teachest another," &c. (Rom. ii. 21, 22.) This is hypocrisy, saith Christ. (Matt. vii. 3—5.) And here there are two things couched in this:—

(1.) *A man must be faultless in reference to sin in general, as much as may be, that will reprove another.*—The snuffers of the sanctuary under the law were of pure gold; and it behoves that man that will be a snuffer in God's house,—to correct others, to amend others, and reprove others,—

to be very upright and circumspect in all things, and then he may admonish with the greater advantage, authority, efficacy. "Let the righteous smite me," &c., saith David. (Psalm cxli. 5.) A man of a strict and severe life, and religious and righteous conversation, carries a kind of a majesty and authority along with him, at which the guilty consciences of guilty sinners cannot but recoil; as Herod did to John Baptist, though John had reprovèd him, and touchèd him to the quick. (Mark vi. 18, 20.) And then,

(2.) *A man must be blameless in reference to that sin [which] he reproveth especially.*—Else, in healing his brother, he doth but stab himself. If thou reprovest pride in others, and art proud thyself; covetousness, and art covetous thyself; drunkenness, and art a drunkard thyself; thou dost but, like David in Nathan's parable, pronounce the sentence of thine own condemnation. (Rom. ii. 1.) But here I must enter one caution: none is exempted from this duty for unfitness: no; "This ought ye to have done, and not to have left the other undone."

2. *As he must take heed that himself be faultless, so he must be sure that his brother be faulty.*—For, otherwise, it is not to reprove him, but to reproach him; and so, instead of doing a Christian duty, a man commits a devilish sin; he becomes an "accuser of the brethren," instead of a reprovèr of the brethren. (Gal. ii. 11.) And here are likewise two things considerable:—

(1.) It must be a *truth* that thou reprovest him for.

(2.) It must be a *sin* that thou reprovest him for.

(1.) It must not be a conjecture, or imagination, or jealousy, or rumour, or hearsay, that is ground sufficient for reproof: for all these may be false; and the rule of charity is, *Quisque præsumitur esse bonus nisi constat de malo.** But, verily, the guise of the world is far otherwise. We deal with our brethren as the persecuting Pagans did with the primitive Christians; put them into lions'-skins, and into bears'-skins, and then bait them, and tear them to pieces. Alas! the poor Christians were harmless, meek lambs; but they disguisèd them, and so abusèd them. Thus it is now; Christians are apt and ready to put their poor brethren into I know not what kind of monstrous ugly shapes, of their own imagining and devising, or else of other men's traducing and reporting; and, without more ado, they fall foul upon them: this is not to imitate our Saviour. (Isai. xi. 2—4.) Not from rumours, but with "righteousness and equity." As God said in destroying of Sodom, so should we say in reprovèing our brethren: "I will go down now, and see." (Gen. xviii. 21.)

(2.) It must be a breach of some command, affirmative or negative, directly or reductively; either the omission of that which is good, or the commission of that which is evil. We must be Catos, not Momuses. As the Pharisees to Christ, (Matt. xix. 3.) so here, "Is it lawful to reprove a man for every cause?" No; the disciples were quite out in reprovèing the children for coming to Christ in this chapter, when it was not their sin, but their duty. (Verses 13, 14.) Quakers make a stir about

* "Every man is presumed to be good, unless his wickedness be manifest."—EDIT.

cuffs, and bands, and ribbons, and laces, and such like minute trifles of pharisaical humility: if they can prove these [to be] sins, let them reprove them in God's name; but if they are indifferent things, it is censoriousness, uncharitableness, and pragmatism to rail at them; and not Christian reproof.

3. *He must manage his reproof to sincere ends; must take heed that his aims and intentions be upright and honest in reproof.*—Take heed of mingling any wild-fire of pride, and vainglory, and ambitious humour of contradicting and controlling others, with thy zeal of reproof. This heat must be holy heat, a fire of the sanctuary, as free from the smoke of by-ends and self-interest as may be, purely for God's glory, and out of hatred unto sin, and out of love to the salvation of thy brother's soul. Diogenes, it is storied, reprov'd Plato's pride, by trampling upon his velvet chair and cushion; but, says the author, *Majori fastu superbum Platonem Diogenes superbior.**

4. *He must manage his reproof in fit season.*—There is a time to speak, and a time to be silent. Reproof is a duty grounded upon an affirmative precept. Now, it is well observed by divines, that affirmative precepts bind *semper*, but not *ad semper*; we must always reprove, but we must not reprove always; it is a *constant* duty, but it must be done in a *seasonable opportunity*. There are certain *mollia fandi tempora*,† “words upon the wheels,” as Solomon calls them, “that are like apples of gold;” (Prov. xxv. 11;) and let me tell you, Christians, one word spoken in season is worth a thousand other words. Now, it is impossible to define and determine all the nicks of time wherein a man should strike in with a reproof; for this must be left to the wisdom and experience of every Christian, that makes it his business to be his brother's keeper; and let him assure himself, he must expect to lose many an admonition, shoot many an arrow of reproof, as Jonathan did his, under and over, on this side and the other side, before he hit the mark.

RULES.

1. *He must take a season wherein the offender is capable of reproof.*—If a man be drunk, we must stay till he be sober; as Abigail. (1 Sam. xv. 36, 37.) So, if a man be all in a heat of passion, we must stay, and come to him, as God did to Adam, in the cool of the day, when the fit was over.

2. *We must take a season wherein we have occasion to commend a man for his virtues, and then rub him up for his faults.*—“Sir, you are thus and thus; O but if you would but mend this and that, how excellent it would be!” So St. Paul, 1 Cor. xi. 2, 17.

3. *We must do it as soon as ever we can.*—And the sooner the better: a green wound is easier healed than an old sore. (Lev. xix. 17.)

4. *If we have long waited for fit seasons, and yet cannot find them, you had better make a breach upon one's prudence than one's conscience.*—

* “When Diogenes trampled on what he deemed to be the pride of Plato, he exhibited a specimen of his own greater pride and consummate arrogance.”—EDIT. † “Suitable times for speaking to a man, when he is inclined to be specially bland and courteous.”—EDIT.

Discretion then must give place to necessity : out with it, and leave the success to God.

5. *He must manage his reproof with due conditions and qualifications.*—And, beloved, there are seven properties of that reproof that will, in all likelihood, both benefit and better our brother, and also secure ourselves from participation of his sins.

(1.) *We must reprove seriously and in good earnest, so as to knock the nail up to the head in the conscience of the sinner.* (Psalm l. 21.)—So should we, in our reproofs of our brother, charge him home : “These things hast thou done ; there is no denying.” “Thou art the man,” says Nathan to David. Before he was in his parable ; but now he speaks plain English, as we say. “This Jesus whom ye have crucified,” says Peter to the Jews ; and thus we should set things in order before him. “Sir, is not this and that highly to dishonour God, and to crack your credit, and to shame your profession, and to impair your body, and to waste your estate, and to wound your conscience, and to damn your precious and immortal soul ? And therefore, for the Lord’s sake, think on it, and amend it.” A loose and squibbing kind of reproof is like an *ignis lambens*, [“a lambent flash,”] as soon off as on, and does the man more hurt than good ; as Eli’s careless and loose reproving of his lewd sons did rather harden them in their villany, than any way reform them. As it is with weak physic administered to a sick man ; if * it doth only stir the humours, but not purge them away, it leaves the body in a greater and worse distemper than it was before : so it is here. Therefore, says the apostle, [“Reprove”] *αποτομως*, “cuttingly.” (Titus i. 13.) A finger that is but just pricked, and no more,—it is apt to rankle and fester, and be worse ; but let it bleed, and there is no danger ; it will then soon be healed.

(2.) *We must reprove impartially, and without respect of persons.*—Good men, if they miscarry, must be reproved as well as bad men. If Peter temporize, Paul will not spare him ; nor Barnabas neither ; they shall hear of it. (Gal. ii.) Again : great men, be they never so great,—they should be admonished as well as others, so long as they are under the great God, and subject to great failings and miscarriages ; kings, and nobles, and magistrates, as well as meaner and inferior persons. Nathan reproved David, though a king ; and so did Elijah, Ahab ; and Nehemiah reproved the nobles and rulers for usury and sabbath-profanation. Certainly, if any be fit to teach great men, they are as fit to reprove them ; for both must go together. (2 Tim. iv. 2.) That is but a drone-like preaching that hath lost the sting of reproving. It is the great unhappiness of princes and nobles, that they have so many flatterers about them, and so few reprovers. Carneades, in Plutarch, was wont to say, that “great men’s sons learned nothing well, but to ride horses ; for men would be sure to flatter them. If they run, they would lag behind, that they might outrun them ; if they wrestled, they would fall on purpose, that they might seem to cast them, &c. But a horse, not knowing a prince from a peasant, would down with him if he could not rule him.” Just so it is now : let great men do what they will, both against scripture, and reason, and law, and conscience, they will not

* *If* is omitted in all editions except the first.—EDIT.

want their parasites, both to encourage them and applaud them. If there be not a law for Cambyses to marry his sister,—tush! what of that?—there is a law for Cambyses to do what he pleases; and thus men, out of cowardice, and fear of frowns and wrath, dare not reprove guilty greatness. O, but if a man be a faithful monitor, he must be impartial in his reproofs. Agag must be reproved, as well as the poorest Amalekite; and the mountains must be touched, let them smoke and fume never so furiously, to allude to that place, Psalm cxliv. 5. This made that excellent emperor Theodosius so much esteem Ambrose; namely, that he durst and would, out of the sense of his duty, reprove even the highest and proudest. *Ambrosium ob hoc dignum episcopi nomine solum novi.** But here humility must be used.

(3.) *We must reprove discreetly, making a difference between man and man.*—For though it is true, that all are to be reproved that are offenders, especially within the pale of the church; (1 Cor. v. 12;)—except they be scorers, whom Christ calls “dogs” and “swine,” (Matt. vii. 6,) and obstinate “heretics;” (Titus iii. 10;)—yet all must not be handled in the same manner. Some will do more with a rod than others will do with a scorpion. A glass is not to be handled so roughly as a brassen vessel. This rule St. Jude gives, verses 22, 23. Some must be dealt withal with lenitives, others with corrosives; some gently reproved, others sharply rebuked; according to the tenderness or stubbornness of their disposition, or according to the nature and quality of their offences. And here abundance of rules might be laid down about public, private, great, small, seldom, or frequent, offences. In one word, “a reprovor must be like the thresher, that the prophet describes,” as one says. (Isai. xxviii. 27, 28.)

(4.) *We must reprove compassionately, with the deepest sense of our own failings and miscarriages, and so with the greater pity to their infirmities.* (Gal. vi. 1.)—Bernard said of himself, that he never saw another man sin, but he was distrustful and jealous of his own heart: *Ille heri, et tu hodie, et ego cras;*† and this would file off a great deal of that rigour and roughness that renders a reproof so displeasing, and so unprofitable; for, verily, Christian tenderness and compassion in the reprovor is the best way to work sense and passion in the sinner:

*Si vis me flere, dolendum est
Primum ipsi tibi.*—HORAT. *De Arte Poet.* 103, 104.

This is the way to mollify men's hearts; whereas, by a lordly, domineering, austere, rigid reproof, instead of rendering thy brother God's friend, thou dost but render thyself his enemy. (James i. 20.)

(5.) *We must reprove charitably, with the greatest love to men's persons.*—Even then, when we show the greatest zeal against their sins; for it is one thing to be angry with the sins, and another with his person; therefore, we should consult our brother's credit, and esteem,

* “On this account Ambrose is the only man whom I have known to be worthy of the title of bishop.”—EDIT. † “He committed sin yesterday, and you may commit it to-day, and I to-morrow.”—EDIT.

† “If you would have me weep, begin the strain;
Then I shall feel your sorrows, feel your pain.”—FRANCIS'S Translation.

and honour, and person, while we stab his sin; and not, as one said well, "in healing a wound in his conscience and conversation, to leave a scar of reproach upon his person, and a brand of shame and ignominy upon his name:" that were to do the work of an enemy under the vizard of a friend. And thus I remember the Jews generally interpret that law, Lev. xix. 17; that is, say the Talmudists and Gemarists, "Thou shalt rebuke thy brother, *so as to reform him*; but thou shalt not rebuke thy brother, *so as to shame him*; thou shalt rebuke him in love and lenity: he that shames his brother by rebuking him, bears his sin; nay," say they, "he that shames his brother shall never enter into the kingdom of heaven:" their meaning is, unless the fault be notorious, and public, and scandalous; for then they may shame him: "I speak this to your shame," saith Paul.

(6.) *We must reprove meekly, not in rage, and passion, and bitterness, but in meekness, and sweetness of spirit.*—This rule the apostle gives. (2 Tim. ii. 25.) Though there may be some warmth in a reproof, so as to fetch off the hair; yet it must not be scalding hot, so as to fetch off the skin. Elisha * did that with a kiss which his man could not do with a staff: beloved, when a kiss will do better, O take heed of carrying your teeth in your tongues. Take soft words and hard arguments to convince gainsayers; and so gentle reproofs, and solid reasons, to reduce offenders.

(7.) *We must reprove scripturally.*—My meaning is, as near as we can, to reprove our brethren in scripture-text, and scripture-language, that so it may not seem to be we that speak, so much as the Spirit of our Father that speaks in us; and this is to reprove with authority. (Titus ii. 15.) What greater authority and majesty wherewith to awaken the conscience of a sinner than the word of God, by which he should be ruled, and by which he must certainly be judged?

Know, reader, that God took the author to glory, before he could finish this sermon for the press.

SERMON VIII.

BY THE REV. SAMUEL LEE, A.M.

SOMETIME FELLOW OF WADHAM COLLEGE, OXFORD.

WHAT MEANS MAY BE USED TOWARDS THE CONVERSION OF OUR
CARNAL RELATIONS?

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.—Romans x. 1.

THIS noble argumentative Epistle of the apostle Paul to the Romans, was written and dated at Corinth, when he was now even ready to set

* In all the editions, this is misprinted *Elijah*.—EDIT.

sail for Jerusalem, as the messenger of the churches, to convey thither the collections of Macedonia, and other places in Greece, made for the poor saints of Judea; as appears by chap. xv. of this Epistle: "But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem;" (Rom. xv. 25, 26;) it being supposed to be the same journey which is mentioned in Acts xx. 3; xxi. 3, &c.

The time of the penning this Epistle, some place in the fourteenth year* of Claudius the emperor; some in the second, some in the sixth, some in the eighth, of Nero.† It is at present impertinent to decide that chronological controversy.

It consists principally of two parts; the first doctrinal, the second hortatory.

The doctrinal part spends its strength upon the great point of justification by faith, and its glorious effects. Unto which our apostle doth annex a notable discourse of the abstruse mystery of predestination, from the beginning of chap. ix., to the end of chap. xi.; and therein takes occasion to speak of that doleful bill of divorce which God had given to the Jewish nation. He treats likewise of the calling and fulness of the Gentiles, and the restoration of Israel in the latter days.

In each of these three chapters he sadly bewails the deplorable state of his own kindred; and, by all the evincing arguments possible, labours for their conversion to the faith.

To cut off any further prologue: in the beginning of this tenth chapter, he pours out his longings after their salvation.

In the first verse whereof, be pleased to observe these four parts:—

1. *Paul's holy groans and prayers*: "My heart's desire and prayer to God," *Ευδοκία της ημης καρδιας*. "The good-will, the hearty wishes, desires, and pantings of my soul."—He lays open the greatest earnestness of his spirit. *Ευδοκίαν—Την σφοδραν επιθυμιαν, φησιν, πολλην την σπουδην ποιειται, &c.†* "By this his *desire* we are to understand a marvellous strong intention of spirit, and an earnest study and endeavour about accomplishment." Hesychius expounds the term by *βουλεσθαι, θελειν, αγαπαν*, "to will, desire, wish, love, and delight in the work." He wills it, not only as a possible achievement, but as amiable; he endeavours to compass it by all good means, because he proposes so desirable an end. The sincerity of our desires in obtaining of possible designs is manifested by our diligent endeavours in the use of proper ways to effect them. *Ουδεις των αδυνατων εργα, ουδ' επιθυμει, ως επι πολυ.*‡ "For the most part," says the philosopher, "no man delights in, or hankers after, impossibilities." No rational man, certainly. And therefore we are to conceive, that our apostle doth here, under his importunate desires, couch and imply all holy means to accomplish his end. Upon which account he presently subjoins *δησιν προς τον Θεον*, "his prayer to God" for that purpose: of which afterwards. Only at present observe, from the connexion of his prayers to his hearty desires,

* CAPELLUS in *Historia Apostol.* p. 76.

† CALVISIUS, USSERIUS, PAREUS.

‡ CHRYSOSTOM in *loc.*

§ ARISTOTELIS *Rhetor.* lib. ii. cap. 19.

that lively are those prayers which flow from the heart: most harmonious in the ears of God are those groans that mount up to heaven upon the wings of ardent emanations, out of the depth of our hearts; *suspiria e sulco pectoris ducta*;* when the words of our petitions ascend warm and reeking out of our bowels, when every expression is dipped in our heart-blood.

2. *The persons that were the subject of his prayers and desires: "For Israel."*—And here it is considerable in what relation Israel stood to the blessed apostle. They were his "brethren," his "kinsmen according to the flesh." (Rom. ix. 3.) "For I also," saith Paul, "am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin." (Rom. xi. 1.) In another place he acquaints us, that he was "circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews," that is, both by father and mother; "as touching the law, a Pharisee." (Phil. iii. 5; Acts xxiii. 6; 2 Cor. xi. 22.) It appears thence, that the Israelites were his kindred, his own dear and near relations, remaining for the most part in a state of ignorance as to the Messiah, and of alienation and estrangement from the covenant of grace, and the mystery of the promise through faith in the blood of a Mediator. For these it is that our apostle groans; for these he is so ardent in prayer; for these he pours out such earnest petitions to the Father.

3. *The great scope and design of the apostle for his kindred and relations according to the flesh, in all his desires, endeavours, and prayers, was, εἰς σωτηρίαν, "that they might be saved."*—The earnest solicitude of his spirit, the fervent petitions poured out into the Divine Bosom, did all combine in this,—that his *natural* might become *spiritual* relations; that his kindred of the tribe of Benjamin might, through union to Christ, be allied to him in the tribe of Judah. What is natural to animals and plants, το εφιεσθαι, οἷον αὐτο, τοιοῦτον καταλιπεῖν ἕτερον,† "to thirst after an impression of their own likeness upon another," is much more longed for by the saints, that others might be holy and happy, as well as themselves; but especially such as are nearest to them by the bonds of nature. Holy Paul doth not press after outward enjoyments; as health, strength, riches, power, or dominion in the world; that Israel might have prosperity and plenty in their streets and palaces, or that the kingdom should be restored to them from the Romans; not the great things of the earth, but the greater of heaven. This his soul travails with,—that Christ might be formed in them, and dwell in their hearts by faith, that so Israel "might be saved."

4. *In these words we may observe, likewise, the kind compellation, wherewith our apostle doth salute the saints at Rome, to whom he wrote this Epistle,—by the name of "brethren."*—Now, though he wrote to the Gentiles, yet he lets them know, that his bowels did yearn over his poor kindred, "that they" also "might be saved." The reason why in this letter to the Romans he doth so pathetically mention these his desires, with such strong and vehement asseverations, is, because there

* "Sighs drawn forth out of the deep furrows of the breast."—EDIT. † ARISTOTELIS Polit. lib. i. cap. 1.

were great numbers of the Jews at Rome, and principally of the two tribes that returned out of the Babylonian captivity; who, after the wars of Pompey, and other Roman generals and captains in Judea, were very many of them transplanted into Italy; which is not only attested by civil and ecclesiastical historians, but also by scripture itself, declaring that there was a solemn convocation of the Jews assembled by Paul at his arrival: (Acts xxviii. 17, &c. :) to whom the apostle did first preach the gospel, and related the story of his coming to that imperial city, by reason of his appeal to Cæsar.

From all these parts laid down together, there results this doctrinal conclusion:—

OBSERVATION.

That to endeavour the conversion and salvation of our near relations is a most important duty.

The precedent and example of our holy apostle, compared with and confirmed by other scriptures, will notably evince the truth of this assertion. "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." (1 Cor. xii. 7.) One great end why God bestows the graces of his Spirit upon us, is, that we should spend the savour thereof upon others. Our discourse must be seasoned with the salt of grace, that it may minister edification to others. (Col. iv. 6; Eph. iv. 29.) Our speech should never overflow in abundance, but, like the waters of Nilus, to render the neighbouring plantations fruitful. Grace is sometimes compared to light, by reason of its diffusive nature; that our shining conversations might illustrate others in the paths of truth and holiness. Sometimes grace is likened to spikenard; (Canticles i. 12;) to perfumed ointment, (Prov. xxvii. 9,) which must not be shut up in a box, though of purest alabaster, but opened, that the whole house may be filled with the fragrant odour thereof; (John xii. 3;) to oil, to the costly sacred oil that ran down not only upon the beard of Aaron, but to the skirts of his garments; (Psalm cxxxiii. 2;) to talents, which must be industriously traded with, and not laid up in napkins; to dews, showers, waters, because of their fructifying virtue; to a generative principle, because of its begetting power and influence. We are therefore commanded, exhorted, directed to "edify one another," (1 Thess. 5, 11; Rom. xiv. 19,) to "exhort one another," (Heb. iii. 13,) to "admonish" one another, (Col. iii. 16,) to "turn" one another, as that phrase in Ezekiel seems to import, *וְהוֹשִׁיבֵהוּ, et converti facite*, "and make others to be converted" as well as ourselves; (Ezek. xviii. 30;) "to provoke one another unto love and to good works." (Heb. x. 24.) "When converted," we are enjoined to "strengthen our brethren," that we may "save their souls from death, and hide a multitude of sins." (James v. 20.)

Now, the principal objects of this excellent duty are such with whom we converse; such to whom we are obliged and connected by the bonds and links of nature, office, or vicinity of habitation.

Hence was it that our blessed Lord, while he walked in the valley of his incarnation, exercised his ministry [for the] most part among his

kindred, relations, and neighbours ; at Nazareth, Capernaum, Bethsaida, near the Sea of Tiberias, at Cana, and other regions of Galilee, in which parts he had received his education. Andrew, when he understood the call of Christ, the great Saviour of the world,—he presently seeks out his brother Simon, to bring him to the Messiah. (John i. 41.) Philip, after the like manifestation, looks out for Nathanael, and in a great ecstasy of spirit, cries out, *Εύρηκα, εύρηκα*, “ We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write.” (John i. 45.) There are many instances of this nature both in the Old and New Testament. Abraham and Joshua were famous in their generations for this work ; they counted it their principal business, they made it their great care, to instruct their families in the fear and service of the great God. David also engages to “ walk within his house with a perfect heart,” that by his exemplary pattern he might gain over his family to the Lord. (Psalm ci. 2.) Matthew the publican, we read, did invite all the tribute-gatherers, that were of his own fraternity and profession, to a great feast, that they might sit down with Christ, and feed upon his heavenly doctrine. (Luke v. 29.) The great man in the city of Capernaum brings in his whole family to the belief of the truth. (John iv. 53.) Cornelius, the Roman centurion, who was quartered at Cæsarea, calls his relations together, to hear the doctrine of faith and repentance. (Acts x. 24.) The woman in the gospel, having found the lost groat, after great pains and diligence, calls in her friends and neighbours to rejoice with her. (Luke xv. 9.) Crispus, and the jailor, and Lydia, and Stephanas, are eminent examples of this duty ; by whose conscientious care and procurement it may be supposed, that their whole households came under the roof of Christ ; because, presently after that we have heard of their own personal baptism, we find their families also washed in that sacred laver.

I shall not insist upon arguments, to prove the incumbent necessity of this duty, or motives to allure you to the practice of it. I might deduce it as an inference consequent from the law of nature, to use our greatest endeavours that our relations might obtain an union to the best and highest good. I might draw it from the divine injunction. (Psalm lxxviii. 5.) I might excite your diligence, from the consideration of the dreadful danger following its neglect ; from the comfort that will flow into thy bosom upon the exercise of it, since it is a notable evidence of the sincerity of grace in thine own heart. None but such as have seen and tasted, can cry out to others, with an holy affectionate vehemency, “ O come taste and see that the Lord is good !” (Psalm xxxiv. 8.) The wine of the kingdom, having once warmed the hearts of saints, sends up vivacious spirits, and fills their mouths with a holy loquacity. I might further provoke thee to this excellent work, by the rich benefit in gaining such to love thee, whose affections will exceed all natural love whatever ; and by the great reward that shall ensue in the life to come. For “ they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.” (Dan. xii. 3.)

O brethren, if families were holy, then cities, then nations, would quickly prove mountains of holiness, and seats for the throne of God.

We are apt to cry out of bad times: Alas! those unclean nests of ungodly families have been the causes of all the wickedness in all ages and generations to this day. Therefore, whoever thou art on whom the grace of God hath shined, study that holy art of divine reflection, and repercussion of that light on others' hearts: which brings me to an useful and practical question.

QUESTION. You will say: "What course shall we take, what means shall we use, what method will you prescribe, that we may be able to manage this important and weighty duty; that we may be helpful towards the conversion and salvation of our near relations that are in the state of nature?"

I confess this question is of grand importance, and, being properly solved, may prove of great influence in all places where we are cast by Divine Providence. There is scarce a family, scarce a person living, who may not be comprehended within the verge and limits of this discourse.

ANSWER. In answer, therefore, to it, I shall spend the principal part of my time; and that I may handle it the more distinctly, I shall rank such as may desire satisfaction and direction in this weighty and excellent case under three forms or orders: such as are either superiors, equals, or inferiors. But before I enter into the main body of the answer, I shall crave leave to premise three things:—

1. *That this question is not to be understood of persons in public capacity and concernment, as magistrates or ministers; but of family-relations, kindred cohabitants, neighbours, friends, and acquaintances.*—Of such as have frequent converse together in civil societies, and often commerce in dealings; but principally of economical relatives, or such as are nigh to each other by blood or affinity.

2. *That saving conversion is in the power of God alone to effect, as being the primary and principal efficient cause of all those gracious works that accompany salvation.*—There is none able to kindle grace in the heart, but He who hath his fire in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem. Yet, notwithstanding, all of us, in our several stations, as subordinate instruments, may and must use all wholesome means that are of divine appointment, conducing to such a blessed end.

3. *That there are different states, conditions, capacities, and qualifications among such relations, whose conversion we should endeavour.*—Some being perhaps enormously and outrageously wicked; others morally civil; and yet further, others possibly may be conformable to the institutions of the external worship of God. Of these I may speak, *sparsim opere intertexto*,* as the particulars will bear, together with such other appendent cases that may hold some consanguinity with the general question.

To begin then with the first branch:—

QUESTION I. *What means superiors, principally in family relations, should use to draw on their inferiors to relish and savour the things of God?*—True it is what Jerome says, *Fiunt, non nascuntur, Christiani*,† "No man is born a Christian," but an heir of wrath and divine justice. For

* "Occasionally interweaving them in the texture of the discourse."—EDIT.
 † HIERONYMUS *ad Lectam*, tom. i. p. 55, editio Lugd. 1530.

the obtaining of the new birth, then, in such as are committed to our charge, I shall draw up directions under twelve heads. Some whereof, though usual and obvious, in such as treat upon economical duties, yet, being further improved, may by no means be here passed by in silence, since they are exceeding useful, and no less practical than others. Most men under the gospel perish for want of practising known duties; wherefore let me beg of thee, O Christian, that every prescription may be duly weighed, and conscientiously improved; so shalt thou not doubt of admirable success, through Divine assistance.

1. In the first place, *Preserve and uphold the honour and pre-eminence of that station wherein God hath set you, by all prudent means.*—The prophet bewails those times wherein “the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable.” (Isai. iii. 5.) Distance of years calls for distance of deportment. A father may challenge honour and reverence; a master, his due fear and subjection from his servant. What is duty in the inferior to yield, is prudence in the superior to maintain. It is therefore wisely advised by the philosopher, that no persons should marry over-early: *Διαν παρεγγυς ειναι πολλην εχει δυσχερειαν ητε γαρ αιδως ηττον υπαρχει τοις τοιουτοις ωσπερ ηλικιωταις και περι την οικονομιαν εγκληματικον τι παρεγγυς.** “For if parents and children prove too near in age, there may follow great inconveniences; in that too much propinquity of years diminisheth reverence in children, and oftentimes produces contentions in the management of family affairs.” Let such a distance be preserved, as may obtain the effectual issue of that counsel which Jerome gives to Gaudentius about the education of Pacatula: *Matris nutum pro verbis ac monitis et pro imperio habeat. Amet ut Parentem, subjiciatur ut Dominā, timeat ut Magistram.* † “Let the child esteem the nod of her mother in lieu of words, admonitions, and commands. Let the mother be loved as a parent, subjected to as a lady, feared as a mistress.” Condescension to mean, sordid, and contemptible actions draws scorn and disdain upon superiors. As reverence and obedience are enjoined to inferiors; so rulers should manage and order their actions with such gravity and sobriety before them, as may gain some awe and respect from their hearts. No wonder, if that ruler be contemned and slighted who disgraceth himself. Some are apt to count it a piece of gracious humility and lowliness of spirit; but they are greatly mistaken. It argues rather a base, low, degenerate temper. Be as humble before God, as reverential to rulers, as affable to equals, as thou canst; but ever remember to maintain the eminency of thy place above inferiors. It is not heavenly (no, nor moral) wisdom to entertain discourse of trivial and frivolous matters, with those that are under your inspection and government. Let converse with inferiors be spent, not upon superfluous, but necessary subjects. It is a good precept of the Stoic, to abstain from moving of laughter by jests among familiars; for it will have that influence, *την αιδω την προς σε ανιεναι* ‡ “to lessen their reverence towards thee.” There is a great deal of reverence to be manifested by superiors

* ARISTOTELIS *Politic.* lib. vii. c. 16.

† HIERONYMUS *ad Gaudentium*, tom. i. p. 101.

‡ EPICETUS, c. 54.

towards youth; if they would cherish and preserve *that* due reverence which ought to be in the hearts of young ones towards themselves.* And yet, notwithstanding, you must not carry yourselves with any proud, supercilious, or fastuous deportment; your countenance, though grave, yet must not be stern. As you need not indent your cheeks with continual smiles, so neither to plough your foreheads with rough and sour wrinkles. A sober affability, an unaffected and amiable gravity, will sufficiently chastise contempt, and nourish a reverent love. Rigid austerity in words and actions will produce a slavish, dispirited temper in children and servants; that when they come to years, they prove either more difficult to please than their fathers before them, or else so pusillanimous that they are rendered unfit to manage the work of their generation among whom they converse. It is a maxim of Plato: Σφοδρα και αγρια δουλωσις, ταπεινους, και ανελευθερους, και μισανθρωπους, &c., επιτελει,† that “over-much rustic slavery renders them dejected, illiberal, and haters of mankind.” Carry yourselves, therefore, in that manner, that they may neither fear nor hate your morosity, nor grow wanton upon the commonness and supinity of your carriage. If inferiors repute their rulers not wise enough to govern them, all their instructions will fall to the ground. *Regimen esse non potest, nisi fuerit jugiter in rectore judicium.*‡ “Judgment and prudence in a ruler is the foundation of the consistency of government.”

2. *Be frequent, and pithy, and clear in family-instruction.*—“Nature without moral discipline is blind,” could a Heathen say.§ Without heavenly instruction, it is sealed up to eternal darkness. We are all like barren heaths and stony deserts by nature: instruction is the culture and improvement of the soul. It is observed by naturalists, that bees βραχειαν λιθον εν τοις ποσι κομιζειν, “do carry small gravel in their feet,” to poise their little bodies through the stormy winds.|| Such are instructions to the floating and wavering minds of youth. The keel of their weak judgments would soon overset without the ballast of discipline; their conversations would soon prove unfruitful, or overspread with the rampant briars of vice and sin, unless well manured and laboured upon, and moistened with the sweet showers of parental teachings. (Deut. xxxii. 2.) Wherefore all inferiors are by God referred to their rulers, that they may drink-in the soul-refreshing dews of prudent precepts. Even women are commanded to “learn in silence with all subjection.” (1 Tim. ii. 11.) Γυναικι κοσμον η σιγη φερει.¶ “Silence

* *Maxima debetur puero reverentia. Si quid Turpe paras, nec tu pueri contempseris annos.*—JUVENAL, sat. xiv. 47.

† “Reverence to children, as to heaven, is due: When you would, then, some darling sin pursue, Think that your infant off-spring eyes the deed; And let the thought abate the guilty speed.”—GIFFORD'S Translation.

‡ Παντων δε μαλιστα αισχυνοο σαυτον.—PYTHAGOR. *Aurea Carmina*, 12.

§ “Above all witnesses thy conscience fear; And, more than all mankind, thyself revere.”—FITZGERALD'S Translation.

† PLATO *De Legibus*, lib. vii. tom. ii. p. 791. *Editio* Hen. Stephani. † SALVIAN *De Gubern. Dei*, lib. i. p. 20. *Editio* Oxon. § PLUTARCHUS *Περι Παιδων Αγωγης. Editio* Hen. Stephani, p. 2. || ÆLIANUS *De Animalibus*, l. i. c. 11. ¶ ARISTOTELIS *Pol.* lib. i. c. 8, p. 86.

is a woman's ornament," as a great master of wisdom hath observed. Their ears should be more exercised than their tongues. "If they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home," (1 Cor. xiv. 35,) who are commanded to "dwell with them according to knowledge." (1 Peter iii. 7.) As for servants and children, the case is more evident and clear. (Isai. xxxviii. 19.) But in all your instructions, have a care of tedious prolixity; make up the shortness of your discourse by frequency. Thou art enjoined to talk of God's precepts, "when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up;" (Deut. vi. 7; xi. 19;) a little now, and a little then. "When thou wouldest accustom a child to any useful quality, begin betimes:" it is the counsel even of a Heathen; "but yet" *εκ προσωραγωγης δ' επιζειν*,* "inure him by degrees." As the precepts and axioms by which a wise man should guide his life, according to the royal moralist, should be *βραχέα και στοιχειωδη*,† "brief and compendious," so much more for youth. Long orations burden their small memories too much, and through such imprudence may occasion the loathing of spiritual manna, considering their being yet in the state of nature. As physicians, in their dietetical precepts, prescribe to children little and often; so must we deal with beginners in the things of God. A young plant may quickly be over-glutted with manure, and rotted with too much watering. Weak eyes, newly opened from sleep, cannot bear the glaring windows; scarce a candle at the first: "Line upon line, and precept upon precept, here a little and there a little." (Isai. xxviii. 10.) You must drive the little ones, as Jacob did, very gently towards Canaan. (Gen. xxxiii. 13.)

Entertain their tender attentions with discourses of God's infinite greatness, and amiable goodness, of the glories of heaven, of the torments of hell. Things that affect the senses must be spiritualized to them; catch their affections by a holy craft. Deal as much in similitudes as thou canst. If you be together in a garden, draw some sweet and heavenly discourse out of the beautiful flowers; if by a river-side, treat of the water of life, and the rivers of pleasure that are at God's right hand; if in a field of corn, speak of the nourishing quality of the bread of life; if you see birds flying in the air, or hear them singing in the woods, teach them the all-wise providence of God, that gives them their meat in due season; if thou lookest up to the sun, moon, and stars, tell them they are but the shining spangles of the out-houses of heaven: O then what glory is there within! If thou seest a rainbow to diaper some waterish cloud, talk of the covenant of God. These and many more may be like so many golden links, drawing divine things into their memories. "I have spoken by the prophets, and used similitudes," saith God. (Hosea xii. 10.) Moreover, let young ones read and learn by heart some portions of the historical books of holy Scripture. But, above all, the best way of instruction, especially as to the younger sort, may be performed by catechisms, platforms of sound words, (2 Tim. i. 13,) by question and answer in a short, compendious method; whose terms, being

* ARISTOTELIS *Pol. lib. vii. c. 17.*

† ANTONINUS *De Seipso*, lib. iv. p. 69. *Editio Lond.* 1643.

clear and distinct, might be phrased out of holy scripture, and fitted to their capacities by a plain, though solid, style, and to their memories by brief expressions.

OBJECTION. But some may object, *that children not well understanding what they repeat, do but profane the name of God.*

ANSWER. To this I answer, *that our reasonings ought not to countermand or contradict divine injunctions.* We are commanded by God in the book of Deuteronomy, to whet the law upon our children. (Deut. vi. 7.) "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." (Prov. xxii. 6.) By the bending of young trees, and putting young fruit into glasses, you may form them into what shape you please. The apostle commends the precedent of Timothy to the whole Christian world, that *απο βρεφους*, "from a little sucking child," as the word imports, he had known the holy scriptures. (2 Tim. iii. 15.) Some children have been sanctified from the birth, as is evident in [the case of] Jeremy and John Baptist. (Jer. i. 5; Luke i. 41, 44.) Now we, being ignorant who are under the election of God, must use the means to all, especially such as are under the federal stipulation between God and us; such as are the children of believing parents. They are commanded "to remember their Creator in the days of their youth:" (Eccles. xii. 1.) And who should make such impressions of God upon their hearts, but those that are over them by divine appointment, who ought to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?" (Eph. vi. 4.) As seals are to be imprinted upon the wax, while it is tender; *οὕτως αἱ μαθησεις ταις των επι παιδιων ψυχαις εναποτυπονται** "so teaching and instruction will best fix upon their minds while yet they are children." So soon as ever reason begins to sprout forth, yea, as soon as they are "drawn from the breasts," (Isai. xxviii. 9,) begin to season younglings with the sense of God's majesty and mercy. Gardeners begin to graft so soon as ever the sap begins to arise in the spring, and the bud of the stock to swell and enlarge. Colts must be backed before their mettle grows too high; and heifers must be used to the yoke before they attain to their full strength, or else they will prove unserviceable. God commanded, in the old law, more lambs, kids, and bullocks, young turtles, and pigeons, to be offered upon his altar, than those of elder growth: first-fruits and green-corn must be presented to the Lord: (Lev. ii. 14:) to intimate the dedication of our children (those reasonable sacrifices, Rom. xii. 1) unto the temple and service of God, while they are young and tender. The sooner you sow, the sooner you may reap. "In the morning sow thy seed," says Solomon. (Eccles. xi. 6.) The benefit of timely instruction is scarce imaginable. But I come to the third.

3. *Add to thine instructions preceptive injunctions.*—Lay it as a charge upon their souls, in the name of God, that they hearken to and obey thine institutions. "Every house is under a kind of kingly government," *Πασα οικια βασιλευται*, &c., *θεμιστευει δ' εικαστος παιδων η δ' αλοχων*,† "and a ruler gives laws to wife and children." An instance we have in the case of Solomon, who acquaints us that he was "his

* PLUTARCHUS *Περὶ Παιδ.* p. 5.

† ARIST. *Ρολ.* lib. i. c. 1.

father's son, tender and only beloved in the sight of his mother. He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live." (Prov. iv. 3, 4.) When David was ready to die, Solomon, the text says, was "yet young and tender;" (1 Chron. xxii. 5; xxix. 1;) and, notwithstanding that, his father instructs him in many grave and excellent lessons; (1 Chron. xxviii. 9, &c.) and in the book of Kings it is remarkable, that when David's decease drew nigh, "he charged Solomon his son, saying," &c. (1 Kings ii. 1.) Now when Solomon came to the crown, he was but eighteen years old, or nineteen at the most, as the learned seem to evince from several passages of David's reign.* How young, then, was he when his father David, and his mother Bathsheba, began to instruct him, and lay their preceptive charge upon him! This charging of obedience upon young ones is like the tying and claying-on of the graft upon the stock. *Non multis opus, est sed efficacibus.*† "Efficacious words rather than many are to be sought, studied, and used."

Nay, women have both precedent and precept also for this work; as who do more frequently converse with their children in their tender age? We have an excellent example in Bathsheba teaching her son, and pressing divine precepts upon his heart; she gave also a portion of instruction, as well as of food, to her servants and maidens. (Prov. i. 8; vi. 20; xxxi. 1, 15, 26.) Ancient matrons are commanded also by the apostle to teach younger women the works of sobriety and obedience. (Titus ii. 3, 4.) For this matter Abraham was commended by God himself, as a pattern to all posterity. "I know him," says God, "that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment," &c.: (Gen. xviii. 19;) and therefore God was pleased to reveal secrets to him. To conclude: It is good to edge your precepts and instructions with some notable remembrances of the great day, as that holy and learned Mr. Bolton did to his children upon his death-bed; for, speaking of the instructions that he had given them in the time of his sickness and before, he said, he hoped they would remember it, and verily believed "that none of them durst think to meet him at that great tribunal in an unregenerate state."‡

4. *Set a narrow guard upon the first sproutings of sin in their conversations.*—Crush vipers in the egg. Exercise your hazel-rods upon the serpents' heads, when they first creep out of their holes, being chill and feeble in the beginning of the spring. "I will early destroy all the wicked of the land," says David. (Psalm ci. 8.) You must set about this work betimes, check every evil and unsavoury word at the first hearing; watch the beginnings, the first bubblings of corruption in them. A man may pull off a tender bud with ease; but if he let it grow to a branch, it will cost him some pains. It is observed by experienced naturalists, that a common bringing forth nothing but fern may be made very good ground; if when the weed comes up tender and green, it be often cut down, you will in three or four times discourage the root, and

* USSERII *Annales*, pars ii. p. 56. SIR WALTER RALEIGH'S "History of the World," part i. book ii. c. 18. sect 4. † SENECAE *Epist.* 38. ‡ Mr. Bolton's *Life*, p. 33. Printed with his Works, 4to. Anno 1639.

make it die away. It may prove so, through Divine blessing, as to the shootings-up of original corruption, if thou be diligent and constant at first. "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines;" (Canticles ii. 15;) this is the way to destroy their race, as well as to preserve your tender grapes. David smote Goliath in the forehead; he smites the devil and sin in the forehead, *qui initio tentationis vincit*,* "that falls upon and overcomes temptation at first." It is a saying of Salvian: *Cum primum homo peccare incipit, æternum sibi accendit ignem*: † "When one first begins to sin, then he kindles the eternal fire." O that you would then begin to cast water upon the first kindlings of sin in your little ones! Cut off the occasions of sin by prudent interposition. It is strange to see what excuses and palliations for sin, what collusions in speech, little children will use! Before thou canst teach them to speak plain English, the devil and a corrupt heart will teach them to speak plain lies. While their tongues do yet falter much in pronunciation, they will falter more in double-speaking. What great need is there, then, to put a curb and bridle upon thy child's tongue as well as thine own! (Psalm xxxix. 1.) Undermine their fallacies by discreet examinations and sagacious questions. If this work be not set-to betimes, possibly in process of years they may prove too cunning to be caught, unless thou season them quickly with the awe of God's judgments, and the danger of sin. Teach their conscience to blush, as well as their cheeks, that they may, from an in-wrought principle, eschew the evil and do the good. Else they may too soon prove like the hares in Ælian, that by leaping this way and that way, when they come nigh their muse, *ταραξας τα ιχθυη*, ‡ "do confound their footsteps to prevent discovery." If thou suffer a child, or a young servant, to go on in sin unregarded, untaught, unchid, and think it is too little to mind at first; that sinful folly will be thy scourge in the end. God many times whips an aged parent by that child which was unwhipped at first. Adonijah had well-nigh broken the design of David about Solomon's being set in the throne; whom his father had never displeased by saying, "Why hast thou done so?" that is, never checked him for his faults. (1 Kings i. 6.) The means to take away the root and foundation of evil customs and habits, is to fall a-weeding in the spring of thy child's life: *Ægrè reprehendas quod sinis consuescere*. § Reproofs will go down untowardly, when children come once to their teens, when their years come up to double numbers.

5. *Preserve them from evil society.*—David not only hated sin in general, but especially he detested to have it become an inmate in his house. "He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight;" (Psalm ci. 7, 8;) that so the evil example and pitch-like society of wicked persons might not cleave to and corrupt his near relations. Children are like the polypus in Ælian, that turns into colour of that rock or weed in the sea that lies nearest. || Imitation is natural to children: associates and companions

* STELLA *in loc.*
 † SALVIANUS *De Gubern. Dei*, lib. iv. p. 116.

‡ ÆLIANUS
De An. mal. lib. vi. c. 47.

§ HIERONYMUS *ad Gaud.* p. 101.

"With an ill grace can you blame that which you have yourself allowed to become a fixed habit."—EDIT.

|| ÆLIANI *Variæ Historia.*

are the patterns of their imitation. Wherefore Plutarch, in his tract about the education of children, advising some Grecian "boys to be brought up with them," gives this precept, that these *συντροφα παιδια* should be *σπουδαια τους τροπους*,* "of virtuous manners and behaviours," lest children should contract some vice from ill society. For, according to the proverb, "He that lives with a lame man, will learn to limp." Nay, one greater than Plutarch tells us, that "with a furious man we should not go, lest we learn his ways." (Prov. xxii. 24, 25.) Children especially may be dangerously infected by lewd and corrupt company. Many children of godly parents have had their manners fouled and vitiated extremely by frequent and familiar converse with the naughty children of wicked neighbours.

6. In the next place, *let seasonable and prudent rebukes be administered, according to the nature and quality of their offences.*—Begin gently; use all persuasive motives to draw and allure them, if possible, to the ways of God. Tell them of the rewards of glory, of the sweet society in heaven; endeavour to satisfy their hearts, that God is able to fill their souls with such joys as are not to be found in the creatures. "Of some have compassion, making a difference." (Jude 22.) But if this will not do, then begin to mix some more severe expressions of thy holy anger against sin. As there is a concatenation in virtues, so in passions. Love and anger are not altogether *αυσυστατα*, "incompatible affections." Nay, love may be the principle and foundation of that anger, which shoots its rebuking arrows against the butt of sin. It is well observed by the philosopher: *Γιγνεται τα εγκληματα και αι μεμψεις εν τη κατα το χρησιμον φιλια*.† "There may be accusations and reprehensions connected with that love, which designs the profit and benefit of the persons beloved;" and that *ευλογως*, as he says, "according to the rule even of right reason." Thou mayest tell thy child, and that with some grains of vehemency, that if he continue in sinful courses, God will be angry, and thou wilt be angry; and then let him know what a "fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God." (Heb. x. 31.) This is the way to "be angry, and not to sin," as the apostle commands. (Eph. iv. 26.) Let not your passions, like unruly torrents, overflow the banks that are limited by scripture and reason. There is a grave and sober anger, that will procure reverence, and advance reformation. That which is mixed with horrid noise and clamours, floweth from the breasts of fools. In vain shalt thou attempt to reclaim others, who art so exorbitant thyself. He that lets loose the reins upon the necks of the unruly horses of his passions, will endanger the tumbling his reason out of the chariot. How shall that person in his rebukes speak reason to another, that hath lost his own? He that is a slave to his irascible appetite, can never manage ingenuous reproofs. A child can never persuade himself that such anger proceedeth from love, when he is made the sink to receive the daily discharges of a choleric stomach; when the unhappy necessity of his relation ties him to be always in the way where an angry disposition must vent and empty itself. If thou that rulest be thus unruly, how canst thou expect thy inferiors to be regular, when thy

* PLUTARCHUS Περὶ Παίδ. p. 6.

† ARISTOTELIS Ἠθικ. lib. x. c. 13.

uncomely demeanour does almost convince them, that love can hardly be the genuine root of thine anger, but that they are made the sad objects of thy native temper, or that thy reprehension is spiced with hatred? Observe, therefore, a prudent administration of thy rebukes. Gild those bitter pills with the hopes of recovering thy favour upon amendment; mix these unpleasant potions *τοις γλυκεσι χυμοις*,* “with some sweet emollient juices,” that such interwoven lenity may procure access for your admonitions, and effect your desired issue. The quality of the offence, and the various aggravations of it, must state† the quantity, measure, and duration of thine anger. Great faults, if repeated, deserve a greater ardency of spirit. Consider, likewise, the station and place of thy several relations. A wife ought not to be rebuked before children and servants, lest her subordinate authority be diminished. Contempt cast upon the wife will reflect upon the husband at last. Yea, for smaller offences in children and servants, if they be not committed openly, rebuke them apart, and in private. But, above all, take heed thou be not found more severe in reproving faults against thyself, than sins against the great God. “Them that honour me,” saith God to Eli, in the case of his sons, “I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.” (1 Sam. ii. 30.) It is a point of excellent wisdom to manage thy family aright in these cases. A pilot may show as much skill and dexterity in [the] steering of a little catch [ketch] or pinnacle of pleasure, as of the vast galleons of Spain. If thou hast cause to be angry, yet let not thy storms run all upon the rocks, but endeavour *ταχως αποφλεγμηναι* μαλλον οξυθυμον ειναι δει τον πατερα η βαρυθυμον,‡ “speedily to cool the inflammation, to abate the fever, and slake the fire of anger. It is better for a father to be often and nimble, than to be heavy and durable, in his wrath.” Wink at infirmities; if not such as are immediately sinful, chide them with frowns, and not with bitter assaults; reserve thy public and sharp reprehensions for open and scandalous offences, for reiterated and repeated transgressions which bear a show of great neglect, if not of some contempt and disdain.

7. *Keep up a constant and vigorous practice of holy duties in thy family.*—“As for me and my house,” says Joshua, “we will serve the Lord.” (Joshua xxiv. 15.) Moses commanded the Israelites to go over the laws and precepts which he had given them from God, in their own families in private among their children. (Deut. vi. 7.) The instructions and exhortations of God’s ministers in public should be repeated at home, and whetted to and again upon the little ones. Samuel had a feast upon the sacrifice in his own house. (1 Sam. ix. 12, 22.) Job and others had sacrifices in their own families. The passover-lamb was to be eaten in every particular house. (Exod. xii. 3, 4.) God says, he will “pour out his fury upon the families that call not upon his name.” There are times that every family must be apart, as well as every wife and person apart. (Zech. xii. 12, 13.) All the males of Abraham’s family were appointed to pass under the ordinance of circumcision. The keeping-up of family-duties makes every little house become a sanctuary,

* PLUTARCHUS, *ibid.* p. 22. GASSEND. in *Epicur.* tom. iii. p. 1611.

† In the old meaning of *regulate*.—EDIT.

‡ In the old

a Beth-el, a house of God. And here I would advise, that Christians be not over-tedious in their duties of private worship. I have heard from a near relation of that holy man, Mr. Dod, that he gave this counsel, that the constant family-prayers should not ordinarily exceed above a quarter of an hour, if so much. The morning and evening sacrifices at the temple, and the passover-offerings, which were for every family, consisted but of one lamb. Take heed of making the ways of God irksome and unpleasant. If God draw forth thy heart sometimes, do not reject and repress Divine breathings; but usually labour for succinctness and brevity, such as may stand with holy reverence to God, so as not to huddle over excellent and weighty duties; and yet such as may render religious worship desirable in the eyes of those whom thou wouldest have to look towards Canaan. The spirit is willing many times, when the flesh is weak; and a person may better for a little time keep his thoughts from wandering and discomposure, whenas the large expense of expressions gives occasion for too much diversion. "God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few." (Eccles. v. 2.) When our Lord gave his disciples a form of prayer, which was for quotidian and daily use, as appears by that petition, "Give us *this day* our daily bread;" you know how short and compendious it is. The spirits are like strings of harps and bows, which, if never remitted and slackened, will crack, and make those instruments unserviceable.* It is of good use, likewise, to vary the duties of religion; sometimes sing and sometimes read, sometimes repeat, sometimes catechise, sometimes exhort. *Orationi lectio, lectioni succedat oratio; breve videbitur tempus, quod tantis operum varietatibus occupatur.*† It was the direction of that holy hermit of Bethlehem: "Let reading succeed prayer, and prayer reading: that time will seem short which is exercised with such variety of works." Aristotle observes out of a poet, *Μεταβολή παντων γλυκυτατον, δια πονηριαν,*‡ that "change is a most sweet thing, by reason of our pravity." Indeed, says the philosopher, unto simple natures the same action is most pleasant; and therefore God delights in one and the same simple pleasure. However, let us use the best art we can to draw on our own hearts, as well as [those] of inferiors, to delight more constantly in holy duties. But in two things be principally frequent: the offering up the sacrifice of prayers, and the keeping of children to read daily some portion of holy scriptures; as Jerome counselled *Læta: Reddat tibi pensum quotidie de scripturarum floribus carptum*: § "Let thy child give thee a daily account of some choice flowers cropped out of the Bible."

8. *Endeavour by all good means to draw them to public ordinances.*—For there God is in a more special manner present. "There the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." (Psalm cxxxiii. 3.) There he "walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks." (Rev. ii. 1.) "While the king sitteth at the table, the spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof." (Canticles i. 12.) — He makes the place of his feet to be glorious. Though it were God's appointment that the males only should

* PLUTARCHUS *Περί Παιδων Αγωγης.*

† ARISTOTELIS *Ethic.* lib. vii. c. 14.

† HIERONYMUS, tom. i. p. 57.

§ HIERONYMUS, p. 57.

at the solemn feasts repair to Shiloh, yet Elkanah carries up "all his house" to the yearly sacrifice. (1 Sam. i. 21.) He would have his wife, and children, and servants, "to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple:" and you know what a great blessing succeeded upon Hannah. Cornelius also, when Peter came to preach at Cæsarea upon God's immediate command,—he calls together all his kindred and acquaintants* to hear the sermon. (Acts x. 24.) Jesse and his sons came together to the sacrifice which Samuel offered to the Lord at Bethlehem. (1 Sam. xvi. 5.) It is an ungodly, wicked custom to leave many children and servants at home needlessly upon the Lord's day. Indeed, in great and numerous families, where there are many small children that might disturb the congregation, and where much provision is necessary for such as attend upon God in the duties of worship, there the case is somewhat altered; for such works of mercy are dispensed with by God himself. But labour to contract the number of absents to the smallest quantity possible; and let servants take their turns, that none may be always at home: leave none behind thee without necessary and urgent cause. As for such as can be present at ordinances, remember to examine them of what they heard; as our blessed Lord, the grand pattern of our imitation, dealt by his beloved disciples, when he had preached that famous sermon by the sea-side: Jesus asks them, "Have ye understood all those things?" (Matt. xiii. 51.) And when they were alone, and apart from the multitude, then he expounded and explained all things that he taught more fully to them. (Mark iv. 34; ix.)

9. In the next place, *if all these things fore-mentioned will not prevail, but inferiors will still run on in a course of sin, then oughtest thou to repair to paternal correction.*—Now, chastisements must be suited to their age, the temperament of their natures and several dispositions, the various qualities and kinds of their offences. Indulge a pardon sooner to lesser faults upon repentance and sorrow. You must consider, whether their faults proceed from imprudence and weakness, upon what ground and occasion, upon what provocation or seduction. Call to mind their former lives, whether they have fallen seldom and rarely, or often and frequently, into the same sin. Observe whether they appear to be deeply sorrowful, and truly humbled, and readily beg forgiveness of God and you, *cum animo non revertendi*, "with a promise of a new life." In these and the like cases, you must adhibit great diligence and prudence. Due punishment is a part of economical justice; and there must be care had, lest by frequent impunity they and their fellows be hardened in the ways of sin, and grow contumacious against the commandments of God. "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell." (Prov. xiii. 24; xxiii. 14.) This is an ordinance and appointment of God. "Our fathers corrected us, and we gave them reverence." (Heb. xii. 9.) But let superiors remember, that they must not do this without good and without great cause, and when all other means will not prevail. If it be possible to rule without the rod, it is

* This word has at length become ACQUAINTANCE, on account of euphony.—EDIT.

best. Happy are those parents to whom God hath given such towardly children, that a nod, that a frown, that a wink, will reform them. Certainly the wisdom of parents might do much this way at first. If their children be of any tolerable frames, that the holding-up of a finger may excuse the holding-up the rod, it preserves and endears the affections of children exceedingly. That of the tragedian is a good maxim in economics: *Qui vult regnare diu, languidè regnet manu*: "Durable power is fixed upon gentle management." Take heed of exasperating, and "provoking your children to wrath," (Eph. vi. 4,) by rigid and severe courses, where less may effect your purpose, and that more kindly. There be some cruel parents and masters, that carry themselves more like raging brutes than men, that take pleasure in tyrannical corrections. They can let their children swear, and lie, and filch, and commit any other sin, and yet correct them not. But if they do not what they would have them, then they fall upon them, and tear them like wild beasts. Know, that God will require such vile acts at your hands in the great day. O rather let them see that thou art angry for God's sake, and not for thine own! There must be a great deal of gracious pity to their souls, and holy love, mixed with thine anger against sin. O how few be there that beg in secret, that God would soften the hearts of their relations by their due and moderate castigations! O pray that God would lay his holy hand upon their hearts, when thou layest thy rod upon their backs! After they have paid their debt to justice, look more serenely upon them, and thereby encourage them to amendment. "Morosity and acerbity," *στρυφνοτης*,* if continuing still, will check their hopes of ever returning to thy grace and favour. Let ancient rulers have a care of too much sourness of carriage; for, many times, through the common incidents of age, the philosopher hath observed that they are too proclive to jealousies, suspicions, *επι το χειρον υπολαμβανειν παντα*,† "to interpret all things in the worst sense," and so, possibly, to be too quick and ready, upon easy suggestions, to think of and deal hardly with their inferiors. Be careful to use both your ears, and hearken to both parties in matters of complaint. But if, upon deliberate and mature conviction, nothing less will prevail, follow God's command herein, and "thy son shall give rest unto thy soul." (Prov. xxix. 17.) In all these cases there lies a great point of prudence, to let them know, that thou hast yet greater corrections for them, if they mend not; that the fear and terror of what thou hast yet reserved may work them to a compliance. They that show the utmost of their rigour and power in such acts at once, despoil themselves of that authority and awe which otherwise they might ingenerate in their hearts; but take heed of all violent and passionate corrections. A Heathen could say to his servant: *Cæderem te nisi irascerer*: ‡ "I would beat thee, were I not angry." He that smites when his passion boils, is too, too subject to transcend the limits of moderation; vehement anger makes the hands to tremble, [so] that such are not able to strike aright. Take heed lest thou make thy child or thy servant to become vile in thine own eyes by too many stripes. (Deut.

* ARISTOTELIS *Ethic.* lib. viii. c. 6.
De Irâ, lib. 1, c. 15.

† *Idem in Rhetoric.* lib. ii. c. 12.

‡ SENECA

xv. 3.) Such persons plant quicksets in the hearts of their children, that may grow up too fast to prick their own hands (yea, their hearts) another day.

10. *If the fore-mentioned means, through Divine blessing, prove effectual, then praise and encourage them, when they come on, though yet but a little.*—Ingenuous, yea, rugged tempers are sometimes wrought upon by moderate and prudent euges. It is spoken of God himself, that “he will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever.” (Psalm ciii. 9.) As magistrates, so parents, must be sometimes praisers of them that do well. (Rom. xiii. 3.) Our Lord comes in sometimes with, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” (Matt. xxv. 21.) So must you, when they are towardly and dutiful, *ανακαλῆσαι τοις πνευμασι*, “call up their spirits by commendation.” *Laudibus excitandum est ingenium*:* “There is a notable virtue in praise, especially as to generous spirits, to excite” and prick them forward to duty; and that principally when divers together, according as deserts vary, are unequally praised: it stirs up a virtuous emulation. Only take heed of exceeding too much; for little vessels can bear no great sails. Pride and arrogancy are, many times, nursed up by too exuberant and lavish expressions, and sometimes an unmannerly familiarity appears.

11. *Do they flourish and thrive in duty and obedience, and begin to take in precepts freely and kindly? then win them on further by rewards, according to their several capacities, and the quality of thine own estate.*—God is pleased most graciously to draw and allure us on in the ways of holiness, by the proposal of reward: “He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” (Heb. xi. 6.) I remember that Jerome, as to the green years of Pacatula, wishes her father to use these means: *Propinantur ei crustula, mulsæ præmia, et quicquid gustu suave est; quod vernat in floribus, quod rutilat in gemmis, quod blanditur in pupis, acceptura festinet, &c.; psalmos mercede decantet.*† “Give her sweetmeats, flowers, jewels, babies, to entice her to learn the psalms.” As to years of further growth, such rewards as become them may be more proper. In some cases, these have proved great spurs and incitations, at least to the outward work of religion in younger ones. Hannah, that good woman, brought up a little coat every year to her son Samuel, when he was in the service of the Lord at the tabernacle in Shiloh, under Eli. (1 Sam. ii. 19.) And you know the father of the prodigal in the parable, when his son returned home to lead a new life,—he killed a fatted calf for him, put the best robe upon his back, a ring upon his hand, and shoes upon his feet. (Luke xv. 22.)

12. In the last place, *be exceeding conscientious and cautelous in disposing them abroad, when either their education or profession requires it.*—As to the schools, when young and tender, choose out such guides and masters as may edify them, and imprint something more of God upon their hearts. It is a great fault in many that take up any neighbour-school where there are profane and wicked children, such as have learnt of their parents to swear, and take God’s name in vain. Many times little youths gather a great deal of filth, and soil, and pollution in

* HIERONYMUS *ad Letam*, p. 55. † *Idem*, p. 100.

such places, that sticks by them many years after. It is a good work, *απελαυνειν απο των ακουσματων και των δραματων ανελευθεριας*,* “to prohibit and keep them off from all illiberal and sordid speeches and spectacles.” There was, it seems, a great crew of naughty children at Bethel, in the days of Elijah, that mocked the prophet,—a place that was a seminary and nursery for young ones in knowledge. (2 Kings ii. 3, 23.) O how sad is it for children that have been diligently taught at home in the fear of God, to unlearn all in wicked schools! Have a great eye to this, and especially if they be such as are designed for academical learning, that they be placed under godly tutors at the university; or if for trades, or other mechanical mysteries, that you choose out the blessed shadow of a godly master and mistress, that may rivet and clench the nail that thou hast knocked in. Great will be thy comfort in this, if thou soughtest more a pious family than a great and rich trade; a family wherein ships go to heaven, and a trade is driven to Canaan: but especially in the grand concernment of marriage, that they match into a godly family, in whose veins the blood of the covenant doth run. An heiress of the Divine promises is a greater match than an empress, of the whole world. He that hath but one foot of land in Mount Zion is richer than he that holds a sceptre over the round globe.

I come now to the second branch of this question, and that is,—

QUESTION II. *By what means may we attain our desires in reference to a good work in the hearts of those that are our equals, whether of consanguinity, affinity, or neighbourhood?*

ANSWER. As to this, I shall only propose two particular rules, which I cannot now handle largely:—

1. *Be diligent in private conference and admonition, as the providence of God shall administer seasonable occasions.*—“Give attendance to exhortation.” (1 Tim. iv. 13.) “Exhorting one another.” (Heb. x. 25.) Lay before them the weighty and momentous matters of eternity and another world. Such things will make deep wounds, to be cured in time by the hand of Heaven. Be short and nervous; and lead them off from carnal discourse, by some sweet and heavenly diversions.

2. *Manage your reproofs with great prudence and discretion.*—“Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.” (Lev. xix. 17.) I might here divert into a case almost co-incident; and that is,

QUESTION. *When is it our duty to reprove such as we see and hear committing of sin as we pass by in the streets?*

ANSWER. This being the business of another subject, I shall only say thus much,—that, if thou perceivest them (by their haughty and scornful carriage) to be such as will kick at rebuke, thou hast a rule from Solomon: “Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee.” (Prov. ix. 8.) When, by the wisest conjecture that thou canst make, he is like to show the properties of a brutish, swinish nature, “Cast not your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.” (Matt. vii. 6.) But if he be a person likely to receive impressions, and particularly if it be a trespass against thyself, go and tell him his

* ARISTOTELIS *Polit.* lib. vii. c. 17.

fault between thee and him alone : if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother." (Matt. xviii. 15.) "Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself." (Prov. xxv. 9.) I have known admirable success in this case. But in all such cases observe these three directions :—

1. *Time your reproofs seasonably.*—"Words spoken in season are like apples of gold in pictures of silver." (Prov. xxv. 11.) *Αυτο τουτο μαλιστα φιλοσοφιας ιδιον, το καιρον εκαστων εκιστασθαι** "This very point," says an ancient, "is proper to a philosopher, to understand the season of all things." I may say, it is much more the excellency of a Christian to feel the pulse of the soul, and hit the disease in the very joint ; as it is reported of Galen, that when Antoninus laboured under a distemper, others not being able to declare where it lay, this physician, by his expertness in the evidence of symptoms, pronounced that his stomach was vexed with crudities and indigestion. The emperor cried out three times : *Αυτο εστιν, αυτο τουτο, ο ειπες εστιν.*† "That is it ! that very thing is it, which thou hast spoken." As to our purposes, it is advisable, sometimes, not presently and immediately to fall bluntly upon the work, lest thou thyself shouldst be in a passion ; yet stay not too long, lest thy holy zeal be cooled, and both thou and he forget or dissemble the circumstances whereby reproof might be the better fixed. A seasonable time to intermeddle in these cases may be when a friend is under the holy hand of God in any affliction, particularly in a sick-bed. That time which is fit for bodily- may be much more fit for soul-physic ; when thoughts of mortality, and the leaving of all outward enjoyments, do prepare and meliorate the way for spiritual impressions.

2. *Mix thy reproofs with meek and gentle expressions.*—Every reproof should be like the *syrupus acetosus* of physicians, "the syrup of vinegar," that carries with it a grateful sharpness. Take heed thou go not to this work vested in thine own anger ; for though there may be in thee some holy zeal, yet take heed of mingling too much of kitchen-fire. Meek reproofs are like tents dipped in the Balm of Gilead, that both search and cure the wound together. "Let the righteous smite me," says David ; "it shall be a kindness : and let him reprove me ; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head." (Psalm cxli. 5.) Such are the disciples of the Good Samaritan, who poured-in wine as an abster-sive, and oil as a suppling incarnative, into the wound. (Luke x. 34.) Such are the children of that prudent matron, who "opened her mouth in wisdom, and in whose tongue was the law of kindness." (Prov. xxxi. 26.) And yet, friends, if we be over-gentle, the core of the wound will remain. The surgeon who hath taught his fingers too much tenderness, and not willing to put his patient to pain, may, through cruel kindness, occasion distorted limbs and lameness all a man's life. Corrosives are as necessary as glutinous plasters, to eat down the proud flesh of our sinful sores. Eli's sinful mildness procured the sharp sword of the Philistines to cut off his sons ; and occasioned such dismal events, that broke his own heart, and his neck too. In many chemical operations, salt is a most necessary ingredient, and causes things to ferment : without the salt of reproof, in its due proportion, bare words of advice will

* *DIODEGENES LAERTIUS in Arcesilao.*

† *CASTELLANUS De Vit. Medic. p. 117.*

seldom work. The temper of the person must be wisely considered. In some, too mild expressions lull them asleep in sin. "No great matter," may they think, "which extorts but such gentle reflections." In others, that are quick and apprehensive, soft words do pacify wrath. (Prov. xv. 1.) Such as are of choleric tempers, whose gall doth much overflow their intestines, physicians are more careful of their *χολαγωγα*, of "such ingredients in their purges that may exonerate, and not augment, their choler." In all thy spiritual physic, labour to clear it up, that thou givest no potion but what may tend to the health of his soul.

3. *Be sure thou be unblamable as to that which thou reprovest in another.*—If thou doest the same things for which thou rebukest thy brother, "thou art inexcusable: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself." (Rom. ii. 1.) He may well retort the proverb upon thee, "Physician, heal thyself." "Cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye." (Luke vi. 42.) This is the first and principal work, *σαυτον πεισαι, και ουτω πεπεικας, ειτα μοι νυν επιχειρεις πειθειν τους αλλους*;* "to persuade thyself. Dost thou attempt to persuade others to that whereunto thou art not arrived thyself?" O vain man! who will believe that thou art in good earnest, that thou dost indeed "abhor idols," whenas thou "committest sacrilege?" (Rom. ii. 22.)

OBJECTION. But some may object: "Shall we never reprove others in any case, till we are clear ourselves? Then who can perform this duty?"

ANSWER. I answer: As to scandalous sins, and such as grossly foul the conversation; a man through grace may "keep himself unspotted from the world." (James i. 27.) But in matters of infirmity, who can say that his heart or his life is free and clean? In the former, when thou hast washed thy hands in innocency, then mayest thou deal with thy brother. In the latter, since "in many things we offend all," (James iii. 2,) involve thyself in the same reproof, and it may be digested the more kindly.

I come now to the third and last branch of the question; and that is,

QUESTION III. *How shall we deal with superiors, in case such are in the state of nature? By what means may we most effectually promote their conversion?*

1. Here I might enlarge, by way of preface, to show that it is lawful in some cases for inferiors to deal with superiors, though it be the most difficult task.

2. *That it is not only lawful, but sometimes necessary.*—For it may so fall out, that in a whole family there may be but one child, or one servant, that truly fears God; as it was with Joseph in the house of Potiphar. What shall he do, that would fain win a father, a master, or any other superior, unto God? As to this, I shall give-in but two directions at present.

ANSWER 1. *Exhibit thy counsel, advice, or reproof, under the veils of similitudes, examples, or histories.*—Diogenes Laertius, in the Life of Zeno, acquaints us: *Ειδη τινα επικοπτοι, περισταλμενως και ουκ αδην, αλλα*

* ARRIANUS in *Epictet.* lib. iv. c. 6.

προβρῶθεν * that "if he did reprehend any, he did it succinctly, not profusely, but at some distance." It is a good rule as to superiors. It is an elegant and a profitable way for managing this necessary duty, though usually ineffectual and unsuccessful, for want of vigilant circumspection and prudence. If thy father be ungodly and unholy, recite some history out of the Bible, or out of church-writers, that may have a sweet reflection upon thy father's way. Sometimes parables and proverbial speeches that are modest and sober, may hit the joint. He may vouchsafe to behold his face in this glass, who would storm at direct reproof. Parents many times, when they are hit thus meekly and modestly, if they be wise, will seem to take no notice, but may ponder upon it a great while after; as our Lord when he told his parents that he was about his Father's business, the text says that Mary "kept all those sayings in her heart." (Luke ii. 51.) This is drawing the bow, as it may seem to the superior many times, at an adventure; yet may thine arrow hap to pierce even within the joints of the harness. Parables are feigned examples, and are ὁμοια επαγωγῆ, "near akin to inductions:" such was the great wisdom of Æsop and Stesichorus in their days, as the philosopher notes.† Such was the parable of Jotham to the men of Shechem. (Judges ix. 7, &c.) Thus Nathan dealt with David; (2 Sam. xii. 1, &c.) and our blessed Lord himself after this manner many times handled the high priests and rulers of the people; he reproveth them sometimes in dark sentences, and chosen parables. But if superiors be over-morose, and exceeding sagacious, and highly magisterial, then a disapproving silence, a disrelishing look," as speedy a departure out of their presence as may stand with the necessary detentions of thy duty: (2 Thess. iii. 14:) ἀποσιωπησαι, και ερυθριασαι, και σκυθρωπησαι, δηλος γινου δυσχεραινειν τῷ λογῶ.‡ a holy blush for them that are shameless in sin, may do greater things than thou art aware of.

2. *Manage all your discourses with reverent expressions and compellations.*—If it be a great part of common humanity, προσαγορευειν και χαριεντιζειν,§ "to salute courteously those that we meet;" what dexterous affability, and most sweet lowly demeanour, should we exert and put forth to those above us! Paul, in his conference with Porcius Festus, salutes him with great respect: "Most noble Festus, I speak forth the words of truth and soberness." (Acts xvi. 25.) Grace expels not the due distance of nature. "Rebuke not an elder," says the apostle, "but intreat him as a father," (1 Tim. v. 1,) that he may see thou desirest, and longest, that he may be begotten to God. Mark how Naaman's servants treated their master; with what submissive reverence did they bespeak him in that matter of his washing in Jordan: "My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it?" &c. (2 Kings v. 13.) Abraham hearkened, you know, to the voice of his wife, at the command of God, in the case of

* DIOGENES LAERTIUS in *Zenone*, p. 445. Editio Genev. † ARISTOTELIS *Rhetoric*. lib. ii. c. 20. ‡ EPICTETUS, cap. lv. "Approaches to indecent discourse are likewise dangerous. Whenever, therefore, any thing of this sort happens, if there be a proper opportunity, rebuke him who makes advances that way: or, at least, by silence, and blushing, and a forbidding look, show yourself to be displeas'd with such talk."—MAS. CARTER'S Translation. § DIOGENES LAERTIUS in *Platone*, p. 245.

Hagar ; and the Spirit of God takes notice of the temper of Sarah, and commends her for it, that she called her husband "lord." (Gen. xxi. 12 ; 1 Peter iii. 6.) And, that I may give an instance in all three relations, if we consult the circumstances of the text, we shall find it probable, that Terah the father hearkened to Abraham his son, as to his departure out of an idolatrous country. For the voice of God came to Abraham alone, bidding him to go out of Ur of the Chaldees, to a land that he would show him. (Gen. xi. 31 ; xii. 1 ; Joshua xxiv. 2.) Nebuchadnezzar, that great and mighty monarch, did not reject that pious and savoury counsel which was given him by Daniel, his captive-servant within his palace. (Dan. iv. 27.) Job, likewise, a man of great possessions in the east, did not "despise the cause of his man-servant or of his maid-servant, when they contended with him." (Job xxxi. 13.) Humble, modest, and reverent behaviour may have notable influence into superiors. It is controverted by Seneca, whether or no a child may not heap greater benefits upon a father than he had received from him.* It may be clearly stated in the affirmative, if he should be a means of turning him unto God. The father begets his son to a miserable and mortal life : the son begets his father to that life which is glorious and eternal.

There remain yet four general directions respecting all relations.

1. *Insinuate thyself into their affections.*—Let them know that thou hast no design upon them but to make them happy. Endeavour to persuade them that thou hast no private end, only their everlasting good. Wind into their hearts, screw thyself into their affections, and thou hast done half thy work. 'Ο δ' ερωσ ουδενι ουτως πολεμει ως αναγκη και δεσι† "Nothing [is] so inimical to love as fear and necessity." When all jealousies of any sinister ends are blown away, then exhortations and counsels go down comfortably. When persons are convinced and satisfied, that in all our applications we study their benefit and profit, this opens an effectual door to all the means that we shall use. Thus the apostle accosts the Romans : "I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift." (Rom. i. 11.) Thus he facilitates his way to the Philippians : "God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ." (Phil. i. 8.) Τους το δοκουν συμφερον ποριζοντας εκεινους και τιμαν, και σεβειν, πεφυκαμεν ‡ "We do even naturally respect and reverence such as bring that which appears profitable to us ;" especially when superiors carry themselves with courteousness and kindness. For most men delight to be honoured and esteemed by them that are above them, δια την ελπιδα,§ "for the hope that they conceive of some special profit to be received from them." The case varies not in spiritual matters. Labour, then, to gain their love, their good esteem, and the work will thrive beyond expectation.

2. *Study to convince them by rational arguments.*—Ηπειθα συζυγια ερωτος και λογου : || "Persuasion is the daughter of love and reason." Our affections, indeed, most times are first wrought upon, we are so sensual by nature. When thou art once gotten into their hearts, then

* SENECA *De Benefic.* lib. iii. c. 35. † MAXIMUS TYRIUS, *Dissert.* 10. Editio Heinsii, 1607. ‡ SIMPLICIUS in *Epictetum*, c. xxxviii. p. 217. Edit. Salm. § ARISTOTELIS *Ethic.* lib. viii. c. 8. || MAXIMUS TYRIUS, *Diss.* x.

press them with weighty arguments drawn out of scripture; argue with them about the folly of sin. See how Job handles the matter with his wife about murmuring and impatience against God: "What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" (Job ii. 10.) Let them know that all the ways of God are pleasant ways, and all his paths are peace; (Prov. iii. 17;) that the path to heaven is a most sweet path to walk in. Show them the beauty of Christ, the glory of Christ. Draw aside the curtain, and unveil the mysteries of free grace before their eyes. Let them behold the image of that blessed Saviour portrayed in scripture. As the spouse did to the daughters of Jerusalem, run over all the excellencies of Christ; and then conclude, "He is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem." (Canticles v. 16.) Tell them what experience you had of the blindness, nakedness, miserableness, of your own condition formerly, when you were as they are now; that you then thought of religion as they do,—that it was but a pceevish, foolish, unnecessary strictness. Tell them how the case is mended with you; how admirably, through mercy, it is altered.

3. *Let your conversation be very exemplary; so that what you persuade may be strongly confirmed by your own example.*—Both vice and virtue are learned by precedents. Alexander, in his manners and gait, did imitate his master Leonides, as long as he lived. *Nihil in te et in patre suo videat quod si fecerit peccet:** "Let thy child behold nothing in thy walking which, if followed, may prove sinful." Be an example to others of holiness, that they may not offend by the authority of thy name.† Though thy precepts be short and concise, let thine actions, exemplifying those precepts, be constant and perpetual.‡ Deny yourselves sometimes in the enjoyment of lawful things, which may not be expedient before carnal relations, when you are upon this work. Let wives, says the apostle Peter, win their husbands by their holy conversation. (1 Peter iii. 1, 2.) Walk so meekly, so obediently, so winningly by an amiable deportment, that a wicked, drunken husband may see the picture of grace in the life of a wife, and may be forced to confess, that grace of a truth dwelleth in her. Many times the unbelieving husband may be saved, even in this sense, by the believing wife, *et vice versa*. (1 Cor. vii. 16.) David professed that he would "walk within his house with a perfect heart." (Psalm ci. 2.) As the water follows the finger in the clay; so may thy example lead them on to the things of God. There is a secret reverence and awe upon the hearts of others, when any in the family do walk worthy of the gospel unto all well-pleasing.

4. And lastly: after thou hast used all these fore-mentioned directions,—which lie couched in the bowels of these words in the text: "My heart's desire is, that Israel may be saved:" for if he did heartily desire their good, as he professed, then he would use all good means proper and proportionable to that end. But then he adds his "prayer to God" for the same purpose: and so must thou,—*follow the example of our holy apostle*. Alas! all thy instructions without prayer will do no good. Go

* HIERONYMUS *ad Latam*, pp. 56, 57.
Diss. xv.

† *Idem*, p. 101.

‡ MAXIMUS TYRIUS;

to God to sanctify all, and to persuade their souls that you have a most single and sincere aim at their everlasting salvation. Pray apart for them; and, if the condition of thy relations will admit, pray with them; and therein couch * some sweet reflections upon their souls. Elijah, when he was in prayer with company, cries out, "O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God." (1 Kings xviii. 37.) Our blessed Lord also, in that heavenly prayer to the Father, makes most sweet and ardent mention of his disciples who were present with him. (John xvii. 20; xviii. 1.) Job,—he sacrificed for his children, he sent for them, and sanctified them, and "offered burnt-offerings according to the number of them all;" (Job i. 5;) to teach us to pray for children distinctly one by one. Abraham,—he begs of God, "O that Ishmael might live before thee!" (Gen. xvii. 18;) and Bathsheba,—she calls Solomon "the son of her vows." (Prov. xxxi. 2.) Austin was the child of Monica's prayers and tears. Ask counsel of God, as Manoah did, that he would be pleased to teach you what you must do with your children. (Judges xiii. 8.) Beg of God wisdom and direction, that he would order providential seasons for their good. Let that be your great request in secret: "O that such a child, such a servant, might be pulled as a firebrand out of the fire, (Jude 23,) and brought home to God." Should you have the wisdom of angels, if God do not come in to your help, all your labour will be in vain. Cry out with the poor man in the gospel, "Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatic, and sore vexed: for oft-times he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water;" (Matt. xvii. 15;) sometimes into one sin, sometimes into another, whereby his soul incurs fearful and terrible dangers. Commend thy child to God, whom thou hast begotten to death and damnation, unless wonderful mercy interpose itself. Sprinkle him with the holy water of melting tears, beg of God that he may be delivered from the wrath to come by his almighty arm. Petition earnestly for the pardon of those sins, for the rooting-out [of] that spiritual wickedness, which thou hast been the means to propagate. Pray it out, fast it out, weep it out before God. Such devils go not out without fasting and prayer.

Now I shall make some brief application of the whole, and so conclude.

USES.

1. In the first place, *hence we learn the diffusive nature of holiness.*—It is like the widow's oil, that filled all the vessels of her neighbours. (2 Kings iv. 3.) He that is holy, is *θεοειδης*, "like unto God himself" for communicativeness, as well as for purity, in his small degree and measure. The language of a saint is, "O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us come before his presence with thanksgiving." (Psalm xciv. 1, 2.) "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways," &c. (Isai. ii. 3.)

2. [*We learn*] *to reprove such as do not perform their utmost, that do not improve their skill and endeavour to the height, in this excellent work.*

* The third and fourth editions have *touch* in this place.—EDIT.

—Every child is born an heir of hell; and wilt thou use no means to deliver his soul from death, and to pull him out of the jaws of the devil? O thou ungodly father, that, like Gallio, takest no care in this matter! God will require the blood of thy child, and the blood of thy servant, at thy hands one day. Dost thou love thy child? A Heathen will teach thee thy duty: “To love,” saith he, “is βουλεσθαι αγαθα και το κατα δυναμιν πρακτικον ειναι,* “to desire good things for such, and, according to the utmost ability, to endeavour to accomplish them.” There is but one good thing that is absolutely necessary for thy child; and that is, a happy union to God. What hast thou yet done to the effecting of that? Many are eagerly bent upon those designs,—how their children, like Caligula in the historian, may tumble in a room full of gold;† but take little pains for “the gold of Ophir,” and that wisdom which is “far above rubies.” (Prov. iii. 14, 15.) Know, that all the sins of relations under your charge that are not reprov'd and corrected for, will become yours. Every drunken fit of thy servant will be counted thine to answer for. Every turn of pleasure that thy children and servants take in the fields upon God's holy day, with thy approving connivance, will turn to thy account at the great tribunal. (Isai. lviii. 13; 2 John 11.) If thou wouldest find favour with God, labour to divert them from the ways that lead to the chambers of death. He that neglects his duty herein, does what in him lies to damn his child and himself too. As if he were in league with death, in covenant with Satan, and with hell were at an agreement; (Isai. xxviii. 15;) as if it were a laughing matter, for himself and all his relations to fall into the bottomless pit of fire and brimstone! O how many families are the filthy cages of unclean birds, like so many hog-sties and sinks of all manner of abominations! We can scarce walk the streets, but we shall hear swearing, and cursing, and polluting God's holy name, and many obscene and filthy speeches, and see great wickedness committed, even by young striplings: and this is because they are not instructed and taught the fear of the Lord at home by their parents and rulers. There be many ruffling gallants in our times, that look upon holiness as a crime, and count it their bravery to go towards hell with open mouth, with a full swinge, that swim down the rivers of riot and luxury into the Dead Sea; (2 Peter ii. 3, 13;) that are so far from reprov'ing others for sin, that they commend and encourage them rather; that have much ado to bear with servants that perform excellent service, if they will not drink healths, and be debauched as well as themselves, more like Nero ‡ than Christians. (1 Peter iv. 4.) If their children serve Satan never so much, they matter it not; so they do not ruin their patrimony. No wonder that their children be profligate and vile, that have such sad examples. The Spirit of God takes notice, that Ahaziah was a wicked man, and gives this for the reason: “His mother was his counsellor to do wickedly.” (2 Chron. xxii. 3.) Such as will be angry rather, if their relations do not walk in the ways of sin, [are] like the wasps, in the naturalist, § that dip their stings in the poison of vipers. Their angry tongues are tintured

* ARISTOTELIS *Ethic.* lib. ii. cap. 4.

† SUTONIUS in *Caligula*, cap. 42.

‡ SUTONIUS in *Nerone*, cap. 5.

§ ÆLIANUS *De Animal.* lib. v. cap. 16.

in the venom of sin. (Rom. iii. 13.) O how much good might a Theophilus do! When greatness and holiness run in a blood, how would the generations to come rise up and bless them! how much honour might they bring to God! how would religion flourish! how would our fields bring forth peace, and our streets run down with rivers of righteousness!

3. Hence we learn the horrible sin of such that cause others to do wickedly.—That egg on others to the commission of sin, that encourage children to profane the sabbath, to lie, and swear, and seem to approve of, delight, and rejoice in it: “Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.” (Rom. i. 32.)

4. Hence we may infer, what great wisdom is requisite in managing those means that are proper and useful in order to the salvation of our relations.—“What integrity of heart, what sincerity, what holy contempt of the scorns of this wicked world!” “Dost thou take upon thee the study of wisdom?” says the Stoic, “prepare thyself speedily,” *ὦς καταγελασθησομενος*,* “to be laughed to scorn, and expect that many should mock at thee.” How much greater is the depravation of men’s hearts since the fall, in opposition to true holiness! Many a bitter taunt and scoff must thou go under; but in wisdom pass it by, regard it not: you work for souls. One soul begotten to God is better than the gaining of whole kingdoms and empires.

5. To such as live under holy rulers and governors of families, that you would highly esteem them for their labour of love.—That you would count it a singular mercy that God hath given any of you a holy father, or a holy mother, such as have spent many an hour in secret for thy good, that have sought it earnestly at the throne of grace, that thy life might be hid with God in Christ. Look upon their instructions as so many pearls, their reproofs as so many rubies, to wear about thy neck. (Prov. i. 9.) Not to be reprov’d in the way of sin, is a great judgment. To have these thorns and briers cast in the way to our sinful lovers, is a great mercy. (Hosca ii. 6.) O how many blessings do children enjoy by means of praying parents! Count it a great and an admirable favour from God.

6. To such as are employed and exercised in this excellent duty and study, to perform it conscientiously.—Who seriously endeavour, that their yoke-fellows may be the spouses of Christ, their posterity the children of our heavenly Father, their servants the freemen of Christ, their kindred of the blood-royal of heaven. Let me say, as our blessed Lord to Zaccheus, “This day is salvation come to this house.” This day hast thou fellowship with the Father and with the Son. The God of heaven goes along with thee. Though thou dost not see the desired fruit of thy labour at present, do not despond, the work is God’s. It is like to some of those seeds, which, sown in the earth, will not come up till the second spring. “The husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.” (James v. 7.) It is often seen that there is a mighty

* EPICTETUS, cap. 29.

power of God going along with such constant endeavours; at length the diligent hand may make thee rich. The grace that dwelt in the grandmother Lois, in the mother Eunice, dwelt afterward in their little son Timothy. (2 Tim. i. 5.) Though God is not tied by any bond of nature, yet fervent prayer is of a high esteem in the sight of God. The use of means directed by God, is a hopeful sign of mercy intended: where God chooseth to the end, he ordains to the means. He hath chosen us to be holy, that we might be glorious. (Eph. i. 4, 11.) However God deal with you in that particular request, yet be sure your care and pains will not lose a signal reward. Your prayers shall return into your own bosom; and, I tell thee, God watcheth over such a family in a way of mercy and peace. His eye of grace is toward thee; his holy hand will uphold thee; his heart will bless thee. Unto his good pleasure commit thyself, and wait the success; go on and prosper, thou blessed of the Lord.

SERMON IX.

BY THE REV. CHRISTOPHER NESSE,*

OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERS OF A SOUL'S SINCERE LOVE TO CHRIST? AND HOW MAY THAT LOVE TO HIM BE KINDLED AND INFLAMED?

Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.—
Ephesians vi. 24.

THESE words may well be treated on without much preface, there being nothing in them which speaks any dependence upon or connexion with any thing that went before. Some form of benediction we find used by this great apostle, at the conclusion of every epistle; (Rom. xvi. 24; 1 Cor. xvi. 23, 24; 2 Cor. xiii. 14; Gal. vi. 18;) and accordingly, having driven his excellent design, in this to the church of Ephesus, to a full period or issue, he first makes an affectionate address to God, and to the Mediator, in their behalf: "Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ;"

* The name of the author of each sermon in this volume was not given till the publication of the fourth edition in 1677, some years prior to the death of the learned editor, Dr. Samuel Annesley. In that edition the author of the ninth sermon is printed MR. NEST. But in that age, amazing variations were discernible in writing the names of individuals; a defect for which Dr. Edmund Calamy endeavoured to find a remedy in reference to the Nonconformists in 1727, by the publication of his celebrated "Continuation of the Account of silenced Ministers," &c. As, however, neither he, nor any other Dissenting historian, has, in the enumeration of Christopher Nesse's works, mentioned this sermon as a part of them, I should have felt some hesitation in ascribing its authorship to him, had not the peculiarities of NESSE'S style been impressed on the whole discourse, in characters too palpable to be mistaken.—EDIT.

(verse 23;) and then leaves his apostolical benediction upon them: "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity:" (verse 24:) or, "The blessing of the eternal God be upon all the sincere-hearted Christians among you;" for so I look upon the latter words of the verse as a periphrasis of all real Christians; love to Christ being as essential to the Christian, as the rational soul is to the man. The only difficulty in the words, that will require our stay, is to inquire what is meant by *εν αφθαρσια*, "in sincerity;" some refer it to the *χαρις*, "grace," mentioned at the beginning of the verse; as if it had been read, *εις αφθαρσιαν*, "unto incorruption," or "to bring them to eternal life," or "until they come to a state of immortality:" so, many the ancients, and of the modern interpreters, Beza, Tremellius, and of others.

Others read it in conjunction with the "love of the Lord Jesus Christ;" making it a qualification or a discriminating note of that love, which is *sound, real, and sincere*, from that which is but *pretended, counterfeit, and easy to be corrupted* by every difficulty and temptation. And, accordingly, they translate, some in *incorruptione*; others, *absque*; a third sort, *amore non vitiato nec culpato*: all to the same sense with our English translation, "in sincerity."

There are others who consider this phrase apart by itself; some explaining it by purity of heart and conversation, others as denoting thereby the "duration of love," *tam prosperis quam adversis*, or "both in good and bad times." Piscator makes it a distinct branch of the apostle's prayer; as if he had said, "Grace be with all them," &c., "and life eternal;" taking no notice of the preposition that is added, and varies the construction. It is the conjecture of a learned divine, that the apostle, in adding this clause, hath some reflection on the Gnostics, who had mingled themselves with the Christians of Ephesus, and were, whatever they pretended, neither pure in their love to Christ, having mixed his doctrine with abominable corruptions, nor yet sincere and lasting therein, being ready, upon every blast of persecution that did arise, to deny him, and apostatize from him. I shall for the present, with Musculus, leave the matter indifferent, not only which of the two first, but of all the other fore-mentioned, opinions is fixed upon, finding no cause, so far as concerns my present purpose, to be peremptory in either; the apostle doubtless meaning none else by "lovers of Christ," but such whose hearts were sincerely and entirely affected to him, whether he intended to characterize them any further by *εν αφθαρσια*, or no, which, I presume, might easily be manifested from other parallel places, where this grace is mentioned and understood properly, having no additional qualification made thereto; (1 Cor. xvi. 22; John xiv. 15, 23; xxi. 15—17; 1 Peter i. 8;) and from the design of the words themselves; for certainly he would not so solemnly have entitled the rotten-hearted hypocrites, that did only pretend love to Christ, unto the benediction of the great and blessed God. And if that stand good, we have enough for our purpose; and more need not be contended for.

Let this suffice, then, for their meaning. The subject-matter of them, whether you look to the first clause or the last, is very noble, and might

well deserve a large consideration ; but I am confined to this single use of them, which is, to make them the foundation of these two cases of conscience :—

What are the genuine characters of a soul's sincere love to Christ ? And how may that love to him be kindled and inflamed ?

And there are but two or three things that I desire to suggest, and then we shall immediately begin to treat upon them in their order.

1. Let it be considered, that there is a vast difference between these cases, and such others as do refer only to lower duties. When we inquire after the sincerity of our love to Christ, it is all one as if we were upon the search whether we are Christians, yea or not ; and whether, consequently, our portion doth lie in the divine promises or threatenings ; and what is our immediate duty, that, all other set aside, we must attend unto. And, again, when we seek for directions to help us unto the love of Christ, our inquiry is not, how we may order this or that inferior action, but how we may attain to saving religion and Christianity ; how we may escape the great damning sin of the world, and entitle ourselves to the love of God and Christ, and to all the rare privileges which belong to the communion of saints ; in a word, to the grace of God here, and to eternal life hereafter. (See 1 Cor. ii. 9 ; James i. 12 ; ii. 5 ; John xiv. 21, 23.)

2. Let it be considered, that it is not the distinct resolution of these cases that will be of final advantage to any person, unless there be added to the former an impartial soul-searching examination of themselves ; and to the latter, as the case shall require, a conscientious practice ; the resolutions given to cases of conscience about the right performance of duties being nothing else but the bare providing the food or physic ; and again the discoveries of men's states thereby, being but the presenting looking-glasses to them ; neither of which are effectual, or do any good but to such as faithfully use them.

3. Let me humbly mind you, that the more uncertainty you are at, touching your estates, when you have examined them by the CHARACTERS, the more diligence you are concerned to use in the practice of the DIRECTIONS. And let me add this, that where you cannot undeniably and demonstratively conclude the sincerity of your love, which I think few in comparison on this side of heaven can, there you must never lay by the advice about the last case ; no, not although your probabilities should be great : it being at the worst but an easy and sweet trouble to be still doing this great work over again, whereas it is irrecoverably dangerous and desperate, upon presumption that we have done it already, to leave it wholly neglected : and I beseech you, remember this useful rule,—that in all trials, which Christians make about grace, it is safer to want credulity than to be over-hasty therein.

The cases are two, and very fit to follow each other in the order that is given to them. I begin with the first.

CASE I.

What are the genuine characters of a soul's sincere love to Christ ?
And in order to the resolution thereof, I must premise these several

PROPOSITIONS.

PROP. I. *That there is a great deal of difference between love, as it is seated in the will or rational appetite, and the same act or principle of love as seated in the sensitive.**—In the former, it is a settled, rational, uniform, and deliberate motion, co-incident with the very natural act of the will itself; to love, as the great schoolman notes, being nothing else but *intensivè velle*, “to will intensely,” either person or thing. The motion of the will towards the object, as good and desirable, and the earnest embracing thereof,—this is rational love. And according to the various aspect which it hath thereto, either as present or absent, perfect or imperfect, it is called love of desire, or fruition, dependence, or complacency: and if the object be such as can or doth reciprocate affection, then it is friendship, or *amor amicitiae* [“the love inherent in friendship.”] But now take love, as it is an affection properly so called, and seated in the lower faculties of the soul; and so there is a great variety and inequality in its motions, much easier to be felt than expressed. Sometimes the soul is in a kind of ecstasy, rapt above itself; and then by and by it is flat and dull again. I note this first, for this reason,—that you may understand what kind of love it is that our inquiry doth proceed upon, namely, rational love; it being, as a judicious divine hath often observed, “not so safe for Christians to try their states by the passionate motions of grace in the lower parts of the soul, or the affections, as by the more equal and uniform actings thereof in the will itself,”† the *το ἡγεμονικόν*, “commandress” of the soul.

PROP. II. *The acts of the will, in specie morali, derive their goodness or viciousness partly from the nature of the object upon which they are fixed.*—I do not assert this to be the only ground, whence they are concluded good or evil; for the principle, and the end, and sometimes the degree, of the act are all necessary thereto; but only that this is *one thing* necessary. Thus the willing of God, or any of those things which are in a direct order to his glory, is that [which] we call “the grace of love;” as, on the other side, when the will moveth towards any thing which standeth in opposition thereto,—this is that [which] we call “sinful concupiscence.”

PROP. III. *It is not barely the object, in itself considered, but as clothed with its proper excellences that agree to it and all its necessary relations, which the will in its motions must have respect unto, before any of those motions can truly be said to be gracious.*—For the nature of grace lies not in the act or motion of the will, simply and nakedly considered, but as it is suited and proportioned to the excellences of the object, and those relations which do inseparably belong thereto. For instance: *to delight in God*; it is not every act of delight which the soul may have upon the apprehension of him, such as a bare philosophical conception of God may sometimes raise the heart unto: but when

* *Voluntas nihil aliud est, quam intellectus extensus ad habendum et faciendum id quod cognoscit.*—SCALIGERI *Exercit.* “The will is nothing more than the understanding extended to have and to do that of which it takes cognizance.”—EDIT. † BAXTER'S “Directions for Peace and Comfort,” Direct. 21.

the believing soul, having taken a view of the excellences of God, and its own sweet relation to him as a gracious Father, is carried forth in a holy rapture and exultancy of spirit. This is the *grace of delight*.

PROP. IV. *Though the love of God, and the love of Christ, are never found one without the other, yet is there a distinction necessary to be put between them; and that even as great, in proportion, as is between God and the Mediator, or between the last end and the principal means conducing thereto.*—The love of the soul to God is *amor finis ultimi*, ["the love of the ultimate end,"] or of such a being as it will be an eternal happiness to be united unto. The love of the soul to Christ as Mediator, is *amor medii principalis*, ["the love of the principal means,"] or of one by whom we may have access to God, and find our happiness in him. The formal reason of the former is the divine all-sufficiency and blessedness; but [that] of the latter, the personal excellences that are in Christ, together with his ability and willingness to free us from our undoing straits and exigencies, as we are in a state of apostasy and elongation from God. And, if I mistake not, the not observing this necessary distinction between the acts of the soul, as respecting God, and the same acts, *in specie*, or "in kind," as respecting the Mediator, hath occasioned much confusion in those answers which are given to this, and many such like inquiries; such arguments as are only proper to the one, being made use of to discover the sincerity of our hearts in the other.

PROP. V. *Love, as it is an act or habit of the will, and hath Christ for its object, is not properly the evangelical grace of love to Christ, unless it have respect to him, according to the various excellences of his person, and the several distinct relations which are by God invested in him.* Or thus: *The Gospel grace of love is not the intensive willing a naked Christ, but Christ as represented with his peculiar personal excellences, and with his various offices and relations unto us in the Gospel.*—This proposition undeniably follows from the third before laid down. But yet, because it gives some special light to help us to discover the true nature of this grace, and is intended as the foundation of some of those characters that will afterwards come to be insisted on, I must crave your patience, while I offer something farther for the confirmation thereof. That certainly is no true moral act which is not suited to the nature of the object: thus, for a man to love his friend no otherwise than he loves his beast, would not be a true moral act of love. And again: as plain a truth it is, that where the act of love doth not bear some gradual proportion to the various excellences of the object that it is conversant about, neither can that act have any moral truth or goodness in it. For instance: to love God or Christ with no higher love than we love inferior persons, whether friends, relations, or superiors in the world,—this were not sincerely to love either of them. (See 1 John ii. 15; Matt. x. 37; Luke xiv. 26.) I add, in the last place, (which is no less evident than either of the former,) that where there are relations or offices necessarily invested in and inseparable from the person beloved, then, if our love doth not respect the object as under those relations and offices, it will be far from being love in sincerity. Some instances

will clear this also beyond contradiction : Suppose a woman that hath a husband, and she loves him no otherwise than one friend loves another ; and the case is the same between a scholar and his master, a servant and his lord, a subject and his prince ; if the affections be without reverence, obedience, and loyalty, will either of these be reputed true love ? Why, no more are such to be accounted the sincere lovers of Christ who do not bear an affection to him, in all his offices and relations. And this I take to be so demonstrative a truth, and of such necessary consideration in our present inquiry, that nothing could be spoken in judgment thereto, until we had first made our way unto it, and laid it down : I am sure it will be found fundamental to the right understanding the nature of sincere love to Christ, and the greatest part of the characters which are laid down in the scripture of this grace. It might now be here expected, and it is almost necessary, to give some account of Christ's personal excellences, and also of his offices, what they were ; and briefly to intimate what new qualifications each of them would put upon a Christian's intensive willing of Christ, which is but the *substratum* or matter of this grace. But I am not now to discourse the nature of this grace at large ; and so much thereof as is necessary will come in, when we lay down some of the characters of it : and I have but two things more, and then we come to them.

PROP. VI. *The love of the soul to Christ in sincerity is not any one indivisible act or habit, but a holy frame of spirit, made up of many gracious inclinations, carrying the whole soul along with it unto Christ, for union and communion with him.*—I told you in the beginning, that it is used here by the apostle as the periphrasis of a Christian, a brother, a real saint ; and therefore it is not a sudden and transient flash of the soul, or any one act, but comprehensive of much of that wherein the nature of Christianity doth essentially lie. This follows necessarily from the last proposition : and, indeed, to make faith or love to Christ such single physical acts as many do, as it renders the doctrine of Christianity perplexed, so doth it exceedingly tend to the amusing of the consciences of weak Christians, and, I am afraid, engender also to licentiousness ; it being too usual with such persons, who presumptuously conceive themselves to be Christians, because they discern, as they think, those supposed particular acts, to take up with them, and to grow remiss and careless in other duties, as essential to Christianity and necessary to salvation as those graces themselves. To conclude this proposition : you may note, that as love to God is the soul of natural piety, and is incorporated into every branch of it, so is love to Christ the very spirit that diffuseth itself through and animates all those duties which are required by the new covenant, and respect Jesus Christ as Mediator.

PROP. VII. *When we inquire after this love, by its genuine characters, you are not to understand thereby only such special properties as argue the essence of this grace a posteriori ; but you are to know that we understand it in such a latitude, as leaving room for all those arguments by which the conscience of a Christian may be resolved, whether this grace was ever truly wrought in his soul or not.*

And, these things premised, the characters which evidently discover whether we love Christ in sincerity are these that follow.

CHARACTERS.

CHAR. I. *We may know it by our former convictions.*—And the rule is this: Where love to Christ is sincere, there hath been a conviction of the soul's undone condition without him, and of the sufficiency and willingness of Christ to recover the soul out of that condition. (Isai. lv. 1; lxi. 1—3; Matt. xi. 28.) And wherever this conviction hath been fully wrought, and the wound made thereby regularly healed, there dwells sincere love to him. I put this first, as containing the original birth of evangelical love. I dare affirm, "No conviction, no love; no contrition of heart for sin, no affection in the soul for Christ." "Every degree of true spiritual love," saith a divine, that had well studied this point, "proceeds from a proportionable act of saving faith." (1 Peter i. 8.) And to the same purpose, saith Dr. Preston,—and he presseth it earnestly,—two things must concur to beget love. 1. The sight of Christ's willingness and readiness to relieve. 2. His ability and sufficiency to help. These two, *willingness* and *ability*, are the crown upon the head of Christ, when undone souls do first take delight in him; they are the sweet ointments of our Lord which, by their savour, do attract virgin souls to betroth themselves unto him. (Canticles iii. 11; i. 3.) Whatever men may vainly talk, it is brokenness of heart, and a sense of approaching ruin, that gives the soul the first occasion of acquainting itself in good earnest with Christ; (Acts ii. 36, 37; ix. 5, 6; Matt. ix. 12;) and when faith hath thereupon found the suitableness of Christ to itself, in its present state of misery, then the fire of love begins to burn. So that it is not a blind, casual passion, but a matter of right reason, mature judgment, and choice. It is not a frame of spirit that persons were delivered into they know not how; but such, whereof they that have it can give undeniable reasons; so that, if the question were put to any love-sick soul, as to the spouse in the Canticles, "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" she could give an account, if not so glossy and rhetorical, yet as logical and rational as that which is there given. (Canticles v. 9, 10; i. 3, 12; ii. 3.) She hath seen that in Christ,—so much excellency in his person, and so much readiness and sufficiency, as resulting from his several offices,—which hath even ravished her, and made "him comely to her for delights," yea, "the very chiefest of ten thousands:" (Canticles v. 10;) and therefore she both can and doth clasp fast about him, and takes him for her Physician, Husband, King, Priest, and Prophet. "Since he is willing and fit to be my Saviour, O," saith the soul, "I will be his disciple, servant, subject, or any thing." Thus she can hold no longer, but falls down-right sick of love. (Canticles ii. 5; v. 4.)

And this is the first character. Take it now, and ask thy soul, "Didst thou ever yet find thyself lost and undone? not able to bear up against the terrors of an accusing and condemning conscience; even dying away for fear lest God should spend all his arrows upon thee, and leave thee a horror to thyself, and an amazement to all about thee? (Deut. xxxii. 23; Job vi. 4; Psalm xxxviii. 2.) And was it in this dark

valley that thou camest first seriously acquainted with Christ? and didst thou see his bowels yearning to thee, (Jer. xxxi. 20,) and that he was fully able to set thee in the light of the countenance of that God whose terror was upon thee? (Acts ix. 5.) And under this conviction was it that thou didst first close with him? Why, this is love, not in pretence and compliment, but in sincerity: whæ'as, on the other side, if thy pretended affection wants this foundation; if it hath been always alike, neither more nor less; if that senseless conceit runs through thy soul, that thou hast loved Christ ever since thou wast born, and never didst feel the least stirrings of enmity against him; if education, custom, outward communion,* be all that thou hast to say to prove thy love; in faithfulness to thy soul, I warn thee to take heed of self-deceit, for surely "the root of the matter is not in thee;" (Job xix. 28;) and if thou wilt still presume, notwithstanding this confident denial, I have but one word more, and that is, to commend to thy serious perusal that judicious tract of Mr. Pinke,† on this very case and text; where these counterfeit grounds of love are fully convicted of insufficiency, and therefore I would not do it here again.

CHAR. II. *Where love to Christ dwells in sincerity, there hath been some sensible impression, taste, and feeling of the Father's love to the soul in him.*—I do not mean, the Father's love, as it lies in the womb of election, (Rom. viii. 30; ix. 13,) but as it hath broken forth in a powerful, actual vocation. The pedigree of a Christian's love to his Saviour is to be fetched from the Father's love to souls in Christ. (John xiv. 6.) "We love him, because he first loved us." (1 John iv. 19.) Christ himself, as Mediator, is but a means whereby souls may come to God, their final end and blessedness; (John xiv. 9; xv. 23;) and therefore, as the soul that loves him loves the blessed God much more, so, before we can fix upon him with full satisfaction, some beams thereof must light upon us; it being too great a difficulty for the soul to prevail with itself to trust all its concernments in the hands of a crucified Christ, and to be fond † of him, until it hath gained some sweet assurance of the Father's love to itself in him. And hence it is that our Saviour tells us: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." (John vi. 44.) By "coming to Christ," I take it for granted, may be understood either faith or love; and these cannot be without the Father's drawing. What is that? Morally, it lies in the clear discoveries of his willingness to be reconciled to us in Christ; when, in conformity to his being "in Christ, reconciling the world to himself," (2 Cor. v. 19,) he is pleased to vouchsafe us his own beseechings of us to be reconciled, then he draws us. The promise, therefore, of reconciliation must first be made known; and by the sweet influence thereof the soul is allured with cheerfulness to throw itself into the arms of its Saviour: and this is love.

Try by this also: "Didst thou ever find those cords of a man, those bonds of divine and ravishing love, thrown upon thee? Didst thou ever see God to be thy happiness, and offering himself to thee as such, and so

* See Reynolds on Psalm cx. pp. 59, 60, &c. † "Trial of a Christian's Sincere Love to Christ." ‡ *Found* is the incorrect reading of the third and fourth editions.—
EDIT.

alluring thee? Then thou art married to Christ; for this speaks thee united to God in love; and the end must include the means, and the greater the lesser.

CHAR. III. *We then love Christ in sincerity, when that affection in us is qualified according to the various excellences that belong to the person of our Lord.*—When it respects him according to the manifestation made of him in the gospel; namely, not simply as a person, who is historically made known to us by such a name; but according to the true character of him, as God and man in one person, Θεανθρωπος; as one filled with the Spirit of God, above measure, (John iii. 34,) by an ineffable unction; as one admirably condescending, and laying aside his Divine splendour and majesty, that he might appear “in the form of a servant, and be obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,” for the salvation of sinners; (Phil. ii. 6—8;) and, lastly, as one raised from the dead by God, (Acts v. 30,) made able, and declaring his high satisfaction in the access of sinners unto God by him: and so there are these four graces, which are always attendant upon and are, as it were, incorporated into the nature of this evangelical affection:—

1. *Humble and reverent admiration.*—It is an admiring love. Objects that are incomparably excellent do always first affect with admiration; and though that affection dissolve into love, yet doth it not usually wholly cease, especially if the object be not thoroughly comprehended. It is thus with thy soul, Christian, that art a sincere lover of thy Redeemer, and hast not set up some image of an ordinary person, in the place of him: thou admirest him, whom thou lovest, as never being able to comprehend his glory: (Canticles v. 16; Eph. iii. 17:) the Lord whom thou lovest being God as well as man, and man as well as God, and all this in one person: (John i. 1, 14; 1 Tim. iii. 16:) an object in whom heaven and earth are so admirably blended together, that the acutest reason loseth itself, and stands amazed at the union: whence we find one of the ancients thus speaking of it: “I know that the Word was made flesh; but how or in what manner this was done, I know not. Dost thou wonder that I profess my ignorance? Why, the whole creation is ignorant of it as well as I.”* And another of them gives this advice: “If reason go about to cavil, *προφερε (τοιμην λυσιν) την πιστιν*, do not dispute, but apply thyself to the common refuge against cavils in matters of faith, even faith itself: God hath said it, and therefore I must and will believe it.”† These things considered, I dare boldly tell thee, that thou canst not love in sincerity, but together therewith thou wilt be under a holy rapture of admiration; and, together with thy love, thy admiration will be always increasing.

2. *Sweet and refreshing delight.*—It is a delighting, rejoicing love. (Canticles ii. 3.) “Love,” saith Aquinas, *est complacentia amantis in amato*, “is the rest and satisfaction of the soul in the object loved.” The nature of love lies much in delight. Thou canst not, Christian, love thy Lord, but thou wilt find thy heart even ravished with delight in him; as being one in whom “the fulness of the Godhead dwells,” *σωματικως*, or “personally,” (Col. ii. 9,) *non per efficaciam solum aut*

* CHRYSOSTOM.

† JUSTIN MARTYR.

assistentiam, sed per unionem hypostaticam ;* or not virtually, or only in a way of external help and assistance ; and being also one that had such an unction of the Spirit upon him, that hath fully fitted him for the delight of thy soul. (Canticles iv. 15.) And hence it is, that we find the spouse in the book of Canticles so often letting forth her heart in holy delight to her Beloved, as is manifested by her many loving compellations, and several other expressions, ("He shall lie all night betwixt my breasts," Canticles i. 13.) too large and many to be mentioned here ; and therefore I refer you to the book itself.

3. *Ingenuous gratitude and thankfulness.*—It is a grateful and thankful love, as that which is begotten in the soul by the sense of Christ's unspeakable goodness and condescension, and which is also ever after fed and maintained thereby. Now the condescension of Christ lies in three things : (1.) In his voluntary undertaking the work of reconciliation and mediation with God for persons so unworthy. (Rom. v. 8.) "He took not on him the nature of angels ; but he took on him the seed of Abraham." (Heb. ii. 16.) It was the cause of sinners which this great Lord undertook to plead. (2.) In his unwearied diligence, and invincible patience, in fulfilling the severe law of redemption, which he had submitted to. Though the injury that was done him by man was so great and manifest, and the terror of the Lord against him also so severe and unspeakable, "yet he opened not his mouth : he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." (Isai. liii. 7.) (3.) In being willing to communicate the benefits purchased thereby to sinful and rebellious men, upon such easy terms ; bidding us do nothing else but turn to God by repentance and self-denial, and believe in himself ; and then, whatever our sins had been, all the advantages merited by his death should be made over to us. (Matt. xi. 30 ; Rom. x. 8—10 ; Isai. i. 16—18.) Now, when all these are considered, (as by every soul that sincerely loves him more or less they are,) do they not sweetly affect with thankfulness, as well as love ? Christian, canst thou look upon such a Redeemer without some sense of an obligation laid upon thy soul thereby ? Wilt thou think one single and separate affection enough for him ? Or rather, will not thy heart empty itself into the bosom of the Lord, with love and thankfulness both at once, and each of them contending which shall outdo the other ?

4. *Supporting hope and confidence.*—It is a hoping and confiding love ; it is not a languishing affection, but that which brings life into the soul from the fulness of that Christ it feeds upon. "Perfect love," saith the apostle, "casteth out fear." (1 John iv. 18.) There will not be so much as the shadow of fear upon the soul, when this affection is ripened into perfect fruition. And, in the mean time, as the degrees of it do increase, so is the soul heightened in its hopes, and tramples upon its former jealousies, fears, and discouragements. And to this sense some interpret those words : "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ?" &c. : (Rom. viii. 35—39 :) as if they were the exultation of faith upon the view

* DAVENANT *in loc.* "Not through efficacy and assistance only, but by a personal union."—EDIT.

of love's conquest, and victorious triumph over all its enemies. Love gives confidence of access to Christ, and unto God by him; and this confidence lies in the soul, as a cordial against all its faintings and despondencies: not that there may not be a sinking of spirits, and a swooning away for a time; but love will restore the soul again, and knowing Christ to be good, as well as all-sufficient for its condition, it will recover life and spirits again, and not suffer it utterly to faint under its own sad apprehensions. (Canticles vi. 12, 13.)

And this is the third character. Take now all these four qualifications of sincere love, and try yourselves by them.

CHAR. IV. *If our love be sincere, it is an affection which respecteth not a naked Christ, but Christ as Mediator; or, it is a hearty desire of, and complacency in, Christ, in all his offices, as King, and Priest, and Prophet.*—And of such moment is the right knowledge of this character, that, Christian, I must desire thee principally to study it, and pass a judgment upon thyself thereby. For, whatever fondness and sudden flashings of love thou mayest find within thee, they will not so clearly tell thee what thou art, as the knowledge of thyself by this mark. Take it for a clear truth, that if thou lovest not Christ as thy Sovereign Lord; if thy heart be not knit to him as thy High Priest with God; if thou hast not affectionately entertained him as thy Master and Teacher; in a word, if thou art not consecrated unto God by Christ, if thou art not a loyal subject, and a willing disciple; love in sincerity doth not dwell in thee; thou art still an enemy, and wilt so be judged. It is not fondness of expression, nor any outward compliment that men put upon Christ, which reacheth the New-Testament notion of love to Christ; but when as loyal subjects and willing disciples we are always doing the things that are grateful, and are obedient to him: this is love. And hence it is, that in so many places our Lord puts us upon trying our love by our obedience, by keeping his words and commandments; and speaks of libertines, infidels, the carnally-wise, rebels, and apostates, as enemies and haters of him, whatever their pretences are to the contrary. (John xiv. 15, 21; xv. 8, 10, 21, 23, 24; 1 John v. 3; Luke xix. 27; Heb. x. 28; John xiv. 23, 24.) And, verily, so essential is this to sincere love, that, unless you understand it, you will be able to give but a lame account of most of the scripture-characters thereof, (as, if I had time, I could easily demonstrate,) because they do all pre-suppose it. If thou wouldest know, therefore, whether this grace be in thee in truth, take thy heart, Christian, to Christ in every office, and try it, by such interrogatories as may result from the consideration of them; and this will tell thee thy case distinctly.

Begin first with Christ as High Priest; for this did lay the foundation of the other two offices; and if thou hast any love to Christ in sincerity, it was the sight of him in this that first kindled it. And thus bespeak thyself: "Didst thou ever, O my soul, seriously consider what Christ hath undertaken in thy behalf with the jealous God, whose face thou couldst not see, and live? Wast thou ever convinced, that all thy prayers, duties, outward privileges, and devotions were little worth, and could not have aught availed thee, unless by his own blood he had first entered within the vail, and made atonement for thee; (Heb. x. 10, 12;

1 Cor. ii. 2;) and then with the same blood went afterwards to the right hand of God, and put him in mind of his covenant, to procure actual grace, and peace, and adoption for thee? And is it a pleasure to thee, as well as thy admiration, to be always musing and searching what such an abyss of grace and goodness should mean? And in the midst of thy musings was it that thy affections first took this holy fire, and were even surprised into love? Is it by his mediation that thou findest thy expectations from God, and thy delight in him, supported? (Rom. viii. 34; Phil. iii. 7, 8.) And dost thou rejoice in him, as one whose goodness thou adorest, and whose favour with God, purchased by his own merit, thou admirest; and therefore art most willing to trust all thy concerns in his hands; and in all thy addresses to God comest leaning upon the arms of him, as thy beloved Mediator and Intercessor?" (Canticles viii. 5.) Why, thus to renounce our own righteousness, and to feel our hearts warmed into a further estimation of his; to attribute all our acceptance with God to him; briefly, to be intensively willing of Christ, and to look upon him with full satisfaction of spirit in all his priestly administrations;—this is sincerely to love Christ as our High Priest. And, on the contrary, to undervalue his blood either as needless *by presumption*, or as worthless *by desperation*; to be ascribing to ourselves, when we receive any kindness or favour from God; to doat upon our own worth and righteousness, as that which is sufficient without either Christ's righteousness, satisfaction, or intercession;—this is interpretatively to reject him from being our High Priest, and to hate the person of our Lord. (Heb. x. 28.)

Thus try yourselves, whether ye love Christ in his priestly office; and when you have done with that, take thy soul to his prophetic office; and make a further trial, by bespeaking thyself after the same manner. Thus: "Didst thou ever, O my soul, seriously consider that thou wast made for an eternal life, and that none could ever chalk thee out the way thereto, it being only to be learned in the school of this great Prophet? And thereupon hast thou wholly ceased from listening unto any other? and, as a loving disciple, hast thou found pleasure in seeking the law, even the word of thy salvation, at his mouth? Doth thy heart thoroughly savour his doctrine? And dost thou like the discipline of his school? Dost thou make it thy study to know, and lay it as a charge upon thyself to keep, the words of this great Master and Prophet? (John xiv. 23, 24.) And even now, that he is gone to heaven, and hath left his word in the scripture behind him, and hath sent his Spirit, and set up under-officers in his school, and precious ordinances for thy guidance and direction; dost thou value the scriptures above all other writings in the world, and witness thy esteem of them by thy daily perusal and study of them? Dost thou bear a reverence in thy breast to all Christ's offices and institutions? Dost thou account the mouth of Christ most sweet, and even delight to hear his voice in the scripture, and in every ordinance? And when thou hast heard, dost thou lay up what thou hast been taught as the faithful counsel of thy dearest Teacher, and rejoice therein? (Canticles v. 16; Psalm i. 2; Heb. ii. 1.) More particularly, what is thy carriage towards his Spirit? Dost

thou hear when he calls? And art thou tractable to all his motions? Dost thou grieve him, or art thou willing to be instructed and guided by him?" Why, thus to cease from leaning to our own understandings; to give up ourselves to Christ, and his Spirit in the scriptures, and in all the ordinances of the gospel; to be the serious and willing disciples of Christ;—this is to love Christ as our Prophet in sincerity. That is the second office.

Once more, to make the trial by this mark complete: and that will respect his kingly office: and this is as easy as either of the former; for, our loyalty and voluntary subjection to Christ as commanding and governing,—this is love; and the heart's rebellion against Christ, rejecting his dominion, murmuring against his laws, finding fault with his administrations, disturbing his subjects, and disquieting the peace of his kingdom, envying him the multitude of his subjects, and yielding no obedience to his commands;—all these are several branches of enmity against Christ as King and Sovereign. Put the case, therefore, home to thy own soul, if thou wouldst not be mistaken, and say: "Doth Christ rule within thee, O my soul, or doth self and Satan? Art thou glad with his sovereignty, or is it the yoke thou canst not bear? Do the laws of his kingdom bear sway within thee, or is it the law of thy members and carnal self? (Rom. vi.) When both come in competition, whose command dost thou in the course of thy life most commonly fulfil? Whose kingdom art thou most delighted in the advancement of? Is it a pleasure to thee, that thy Lord doth reign, and that his throne is more universally exalted? Or else, doth thy heart rise against the advancement of Christ's kingdom? In whom dost thou find thy greatest delight? Is it rather in the company of rebels, that would pull the crown from the head of Christ, than in the humble and obedient subjects of thy Lord? Dost thou take Christ to be thy Prince and Sovereign? And dost thou love the peace and glory of his kingdom, as becomes an obedient subject of so great a Lord?" Why, this is intensively to will *Christum Regem*, or to love him as King. And this is the third office, and the fourth character. If you would make sure work, this is a rule which will not deceive you.

CHAR. V. *If we have a fellowship with Christ in his honours and dishonours, or in his joys and sorrows, then is our love not feigned unto Christ, but in sincerity.*—True love, if I may be allowed so to speak, mixeth concerns: my meaning is, that it makes another's joys and sorrows to be mine, as well as his: they may write "hatred" upon themselves, who are regardless whether it go well or ill with Christ's interests in the world. No communion with Christ, no love. Even the personal reproaches and abuses which Christ endured here below, though so many hundred years since, do yet affect them; and they that love him have a sympathy with him in them. Neither is it his joy alone that he was personally advanced by being raised again from the dead, and taken up to glory, to sit therein at the right hand of God, but theirs also. (Luke xxiv. 52; Acts ii. 26.) Tell a loyal wife, that her husband is honoured, and her heart will leap at the tidings that are brought to her. It is good news to love-sick souls to hear that Christ is now in

glory; they savour the advancements of their Lord, according to those words of Christ himself to his apostles: "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I." (John xiv. 28.) They are glad by faith to see the Sun of Righteousness after a dark and cloudy morning in his meridian altitude. (John xx. 20.) They die, and are crucified with Christ in his death; (Rom. vi. 3; Gal. ii. 19;) and they feel a reviving of themselves in the resurrection of their Lord; and hence it is said of them, that they are "quicken together with him," and that they "sit together in heavenly places with him." (Eph. ii. 5; i. 20.) We read of Mary, that she went weeping to the grave of her Lord; but hearing that he was arisen, she came away rejoicing: (John xx. 11; Matt. xxviii. 8;) and no otherwise was it with his disciples. Christ doth not triumph alone in his ascension; but all such as love him share therein together with him. And as they share with Christ in his personal joys and troubles; so do they no less when any of his concernments in the world do either prosper, or else are trampled upon and clouded. It is as the arrows of death to see either his laws, ordinances, officers, or subjects trampled upon. The reproaches of the rebellious world reproaching their Lord fall upon them, and are as so many darts struck into their own souls. (Psalm xlii. 10; lxi. 9.) This is that which successively feeds their joys and sorrows, that it goes well with the militant church here below, or that a cloud of displeasure and persecution is spread over it.

CHAR. VI. *Where love to Christ is sincere, there Christ is accounted by the soul to be its treasure; and there is a longing desire in every such soul of the nearest communion with him.*—I put both these together, though there be a very clear distinction between them, for brevity. It is a truly conjugal love, which can neither bear with distance, nor brook any rival. And this is the meaning of the spouse in that double expression, calling him "the chiefest among ten thousand," and professing him to be "altogether lovely." (Canticles v. 10, 16.) The soul that loves Christ may love other things, and esteem them lovely; but she will say of none, that they are "altogether lovely," but only of her Lord. When one asked Alexander to show him his treasure, the report is, that he pointed to his friend Hephæstion: the treasure of a soul that sincerely loves Christ, is Christ himself: *Deus meus est omnia*, or "My God is my all," saith the soul that loves God as his ultimate end. Hence is that of David: "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." (Psalm lxxiii. 25.) *Christus meus est omnia*, or, "My Christ is my all," saith the soul that is upon inquiry how to find acceptance with God. Whence is that of Paul: "Doubtless I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." (Phil. iii. 8.) It is the proper motto of a love-sick soul, "None but Christ:" the sincerity of a Christian's love lies in giving a pre-eminence to the Redeemer, whom it loves above every thing else. The soul that loves Christ, values nothing in comparison of him, no, not his own benefits. *Meretricius amor est, plus annulum quam sponsum amare*, or, "It is a note of a harlot, to prefer the portion before the person." And that is a no less true than noble speech of the devout A Kempis: *Nobilis*

amator non quiescit in dono, sed in Christo super omne donum, or "The worthy and noble lover values not Christ so much by what he brings, as by what he is himself." The soul that loves Christ, loves ordinances, because they are the "banqueting-house" of her Lord, wherein she is often refreshed by him; (Canticles ii. 4;) she loves the privileges of the gospel, because they are the purchase of her Lord's blood. (Canticles iv. 1, &c.) She loves her own graces, because they are the rare ornaments which Christ hath put upon her, to render her beautiful, and fit her for his own embraces; and yet, after all, her language to Christ is, "Not thine, but thee:" she will not so value them, as to forget Him that gives them; Christ is her centre, and therefore she rests not, but will lay by, and *through* all to come to him; she can scarce forbear a fit of impatience sometimes to think of that distance that is still between them. "Make haste, my beloved," saith the spouse to Christ, "and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices." (Canticles viii. 14.) And such another ejaculation is that, where the whole church is brought-in crying to Christ: "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." (Rev. xxii. 17, 20.) While our hearts dwell below upon the thick clay, and have no daily desires to send forth, as doves from the ark, for communion with Christ, there is little sign of sincere love to him.

CHAR. VII. *We may know our sincerity in love, by the value we put upon ourselves, as well as upon Christ.*—If our interest in Christ be the rule by which we value ourselves, that will argue true love: when this makes it day in our souls, that Christ smiles upon us; and, on the other side, when this spreads the darkness of the night over us, that he hides his face from us; then we love him. David loved God heartily; and, therefore, when God smiled, he rejoiced; and when God hid his face, he was as much troubled then as before delighted. (Psalm iv. 6; xxx. 7.) It is thus in every relation, where there is sincerity of affection as the bond thereof, and a dependence between them of the one upon the other. It is thus between a prince and a loyal favourite; between a husband and a loving wife. It is thus between the love-sick soul and Christ; when she enjoys him, then none so lightsome in countenance as she. According to the nature of love, her affections are hardly concealed; they are even too big for her heart to cover, and therefore she can scarce withhold herself from a holy exultation before every one that meets her. Whereas, on the other side, if Christ but withdraws; if she calls, and he gives no answer; if he seems to avoid her company, and to despise her familiarity; what then? O then her joy is turned into gall, and her pleasantness into wormwood; then her countenance grows dark and sable, and her thoughts within her are full of horror, dejection, and confusion; she goes up and down like a person almost distracted, and every place is made to echo to her griefs and mournings; she goes from ordinance to ordinance, and from one watchman to another, and proclaims to them all the sickness of her soul, if peradventure she may recover again the sight of her Beloved. All this and much more with incomparable elegance you may read described in the Song of Solomon. Thus, as the marigold opens to the sun in the firmament, so doth the heart of a sincere Christian to the Sun of Righteousness, Christ in glory.

CHAR. VIII. *Where love is sincere, the soul will be often on the wing of meditation, and busied in the contemplation of Christ.*—It is an old rule and a true one, *Anima est ubi amat, non ubi animat*, or, “The soul dwells as much where it hath fixed its love, nay, more there, than where it hath its most natural operation.” Christ, and the believer that loves him, live as if they had but one soul betwixt them. It is not the distance between earth and heaven that can separate them; true love will find out Christ wherever he is; when he was upon the earth, they that loved him kept his company; and now that he is gone to heaven, and out of sight, those that love him are frequently sending up their hearts unto him. And, indeed, they never think themselves intelligent in any thing that is worth the knowing, until they have made their souls much acquainted and familiar with their crucified Saviour. (1 Cor. ii. 2.)

CHAR. IX. *There will be a willingness to part with all for him.*—How many goodly things do persons of all sorts contemn for some one thing which they love! Amnon, Ahab, and Haman, are three great examples of this. (2 Sam. xiii. 2; 1 Kings xxi. 4; Esther v. 13.) Take but one instance, and it shall be of a covetous man: why, he disregards all the learned accomplishments in the world for a little gain; he thinks himself better, when he hath got that which comes out of the bowels of the earth he treads on, than that which comes from the mansion-house of God, in the heaven above him; and, therefore, how familiarly and easily will he part with the one to choose the other! No bonds of nature or religion are enough to restrain him. (Acts xx. 24.) It is the resolution of a soul that loves Christ, that nothing shall part them. They are habitually martyrs already; and if he put them to it, it is not life itself that they will account too precious to lay down for the sake of him. (Matt. x. 37; Rev. xii. 11.) All the waters and floods of persecution, temptation, and affliction shall not quench their flames of love. (Canticles viii. 7.) Witness those words of Ignatius: *Πυρ και σταυρος*, &c.; or, “Let fire, cross,” &c., “and all the torments, which by men or beasts can be inflicted on my body, yea, and add to them what all the devils in hell can do upon it, if it were by solemn sentence of excommunication delivered to them; yet would I go through them all, to come to the bosom of my Lord.”

CHAR. X. *There will be a willingness to stoop to the meanest offices, for the service of Christ.*—“Love,” we use to say, “stands not with majesty;” it did not do so in the person of our Saviour, when he washed and wiped his disciples’ feet; (John xiii. 5, 6, 14;) and those that love him will not think it much to conform to his example; they will not think they can ever stoop too low for the sake of him. (John xxi. 15.)

CHAR. XI. *If it sticks not barely in the person of Christ, but reacheth to all that have an union with him.*—If it be to Christ mystical as well as personal; if you love their persons, their graces, their fellowship, &c. “Tell me,” saith the spouse, “where thou makest thy flocks to rest at noon.” (Canticles i. 7.) She delights to be led forth with them into the green pastures of his ordinances, and to feed together with them. If she hath any thing, it is all theirs, who have an equal interest in Christ with herself. (Acts ii. 44, 45.) She will make use of her graces,

substance, and all, that fellow-members may be refreshed. It makes them of catholic spirits. The apostle is peremptory, and brandeth them all as liars that pretend to the one of these without the other. See 1 John iv. 19, 20; v. 1; John xiii. 34, 35.

CHAR. XII. *We may know it by its concomitants.*—Sincere love goes not but in the company of every other grace: it either presupposeth, or strongly implieth and inferreth, the whole duty of a Christian. *Diligere Christum*, saith Aquinas, *est Christo in omnibus se subicere, et regulam præceptorum ejus in omnibus sequi*; or, “To love Christ, is to fulfil the whole law of Christ.” (John xiv. 15.) It is a most comprehensive grace; it is the abstract of the new creature, the whole image of God. In one word: it is the substance of the divine workmanship upon the soul. They are but ciphers, and signify nothing in Christianity, who are without it. Briefly: to love Christ, it is in some measure to partake of every grace, and to be a Christian altogether.

These are the characters: some I have omitted, and in others I have been brief, because I would reserve a little room for the second case. Give me leave but briefly to suggest a few things for satisfaction of one doubt, and I shall presently come to that. Will some say, “If this be love in sincerity, who then loves him aright?” It is no less dangerous to draw out the description of a grace so as none can find it, than to leave it so as none may suspect the want or absence thereof in themselves; and upon that rock, they will tell me, I have split in the decision of this case, there being hardly any one that can go from *character* to *character*, and say, after a thorough search, “Now I know that I am a lover of Christ in sincerity:” for answer to which scruple, I shall barely suggest a few considerations.

1. *It is most certain and notorious, that there is much counterfeit love abroad.*—And it was not the least part of my design to unmask it. Characters serve as well to convince the presumptuous, as to establish the sincere and upright. There is much in the world that looks like love, that is not: such are those vagous affections that are to a *Christ in general*, and not to Him as King, Priest, and Prophet: and those counterfeit affections, which are to Christ upon the sole arguments of education, custom, which are as truly in a Turk to his Mahomet, and serve as well to justify the Jew in his blasphemy against Christ, as the Christian in his pretended love of him: (for love to Christ, say divines, is not so much to be measured by the degree and fervour, as by the grounds and motives:) and also that barren love which works up the soul to no measure of obedience unto him; and, lastly, that which allows Christ but the world’s leavings in our hearts, every thing being constantly preferred before him: and what a vast number of persons go no further than these!

2. *Many persons are truly gracious, who yet know not whether they have any grace or not.*—It requires more skill to search out the nature of a grace, and to find it in ourselves, than barely to exercise it; the former are works of much judgment, and require a deep acquaintance with our own hearts; whereas to the latter, it is enough if a person be but of an ordinary understanding, and an honest heart. Besides, graces have their degrees, like the waters of the sanctuary; (Ezek. xlvii. 3—5;) and

where grace is very shallow and little, it is exceeding difficult to know that there is any at all ; and such persons should do well, who are so weak, rather to spend time in the exercise of grace, than in trying whether they have grace or no ; for commonly it is but labour in vain.

3. *There are no souls in whom this grace is really planted, but they have all these characters drawn upon their hearts to know it by, more or less.*—I do not say, they can find them in themselves, and know they have them ; but only, that they have them. And of this I need give no further evidence than what you will easily find yourselves, if you will but study the nature of love to Christ, by the rule of it laid down in the fifth *proposition* premised, and by the third and fourth *characters* ; for I am well assured that Christ cannot be loved as therein described, unless all these particulars mentioned be either antecedent thereto, or connexed with it.

CASE II.

And so I come to the second case ; namely, *How we may get our love to him kindled and inflamed.*

And I shall proceed in the resolution of this, by these four steps.

I. I will discover the danger of being without this grace.

II. I will add some moving considerations to provoke all that love their souls, to look after it.

III. I will give directions to them that have it not, how to get it.

IV. I will add a few more directions for them that have it, how it may be increased and inflamed.

I. I begin with the first, which I will dispatch by these two steps :
1. By discovering the heinousness of sin. 2. The terror of the punishment due thereto.

1. Now, that you may understand the first, besides what hath been said in the fore-mentioned tract, proving it to be a sin against the Father's love and wisdom, the whole work of the Son, and the special economy of the Holy Ghost ; I add,

(1.) *It is a sin utterly subverting the whole design of the Gospel* :—Casting a scorn upon the grace of all the three Persons, and not so much as acknowledging what was done by them as worthy the least acceptance, it writes “vanity” upon all the promises, and is a frustration to the design of Christ in that noble dispensation ; there being nothing that he did more aim at than to testify his own and his Father's love to us, and to recover from us our love to them again. (John iii. 17 ; 1 John i. 3.)

(2.) *It is interpretatively a confederacy with Satan against God and Christ.* (Matt. vi. 24 ; Acts xiii. 10.)—The proper and grand wickedness of the devil being his opposition to the design of God in glorifying himself by the salvation of mankind through Christ, which yet, so far as we are haters of Christ, we are in our measure guilty of, as well as he. (Heb. x. 28.)

(3.) *It is a complicated sin ; many sins in one.*—Such as are foul ingratitude, rebellion ; it being the casting off the sovereignty of a rightful Lord ; cruelty to Christ, and, as it were, a kicking him upon the bowels, a *Christicidium* ; and to ourselves, (Prov. viii. 36,) the tearing

out our own bowels with our own hands, spiritual uncleanness and adultery; (James iv. 4;) it being a treacherous revolting from Christ, after profession of marriage to him.

(4.) *It is a sin which opens the door to all wickedness.*—Resistance of the Spirit, contempt of the gospel and them that bring it, slighting of ordinances, treason against Christ as King, and implacable bitterness and enmity against his subjects and children. (John xv. 18, 19.)

(5.) *It is an irrational sin.*—Or such for which there cannot be the least apology; because Christ was lovely in himself; (Canticles i. 13, 14; v. 9, 16;) did much to engage our hearts to him; earnestly entreated us to place our affections upon him; sending his messengers to woo us; bestowing gifts upon us, like a king, to oblige us; (1 Peter i. 4;) and making almost incredible offers of much more that he would do for us; yea, finally, threatening us even with *Anathema Maranatha*, (1 Cor. xvi. 22,) if we withhold our hearts from him. And can such a sin after all this be extenuated?

(6.) *It is a sin brought forth and nursed by the foulest abominations.*—Such as spiritual darkness, and ignorance; (1 Cor. ii. 8;) notorious infidelity, as to the doctrine of the gospel; (John v. 43, 44, 47;) horrible pride, self-righteousness, idolatrous and carnal self-love.

(7.) *It is a sin against all our covenants and engagements.*—Especially our baptismal bond, wherein we did solemnly promise Christ our hearts, and that in opposition to all others; (2 Cor. xi. 2;) the bond of Christian ingenuity, self-love, and proper interest, profession, and relation, as we bear his name in the world.

(8.) And, lastly, *It is a sin utterly inconsistent with the presence of any one grace in the soul.*—It being impossible that any thing should prosper, where this weed hath once settled and rooted itself. You may as well expect to find branches without a root, as the graces of the Spirit without love. Thus very briefly you have an account of the danger of being without love to Christ, from the nature of the sin.

2. I argue it from *the terror of the punishment.*—And certainly the just God hath proportioned the evil of this, to the quality of that. Study well these few places of scripture: John iii. 19; Matt. xxi. 41; Heb. ii. 3; x. 28, 29; xii. 25; Rev. ii. iii. throughout. O the terrors of the Lord, that will one day be heaped upon the haters of his Son! (See Rev. vi. 16.) But we need not look any further for this matter, than into the awakened conscience of a rebel against Christ in a fit of desperation: what scorpion-lashes doth such a man's conscience give him! O the heat of this burning caldron! With what rage and fury doth it break forth on every side, until the soul is even become a hell to itself! "And wouldest thou not love Christ," will enraged conscience then say, "so lovely in himself, and so full of love to thee? Couldst thou see him sighing, bleeding, sweating, dying for thy sake, and yet not love him? Couldst thou spurn at such bowels, and contemn such prodigious mercy? and that when this love would have opened to thee the door of glory! how great, how infinite, glory! and when the rejecting of it would infallibly plunge thy soul into misery; how dreadful, how intolerable! Was ever madness like thine, O my soul?" will

conscience say. "Certainly hell is too easy a punishment for such a serpent, such an incarnate devil as thou art. Well may God rejoice to be avenged on such a wretch as thee, and make thee to drink up the very dregs of his indignation; while others that 'dwell in God' shall 'dwell in love,' O how will God be nothing else but fury, and wrath, and vengeance to thee! Thou shalt one day (and that day such as never shall have an end!) hear Justice call upon Omnipotency still to add more flame to thy torment!" Thus conscience will look backward and forward, and even wreak itself, with the most dismal flaming language that it can find out, upon the haters of Christ. And is not that a dreadful sin, which shall thus set a man against himself, and put a sword into the hand of cruel conscience to cleave the soul in pieces? And is not that a dreadful punishment, when a man shall become his own accuser, judge, and executioner? when conscience shall burn so hot within a man, that he shall be a terror to himself, and an eternal amazement? And yet, alas! what is all this to the immediate impressions of the wrath of God upon the soul? when He that hath said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay," (Rom. xii. 19,) shall grasp the soul in his dreadful hand: which might be farther improved, and be demonstrated to be incomparably the sorest part of the punishment.

II. But I come to the second particular, which was, to lay down some moving considerations to provoke such as love themselves to love Christ; and, besides the particulars last mentioned,

1. Consider *who it is that I plead for this day*.—Sirs, I do not call you to doat upon thick clay, filth, and vanity. I do not plead to gain your hearts to one that is not worthy, or hath not deserved that you should place your affections upon him: if you can make either of these manifest, hate him and spare not. But I plead for one who is, (1.) Glorious and excellent: if you doubt it, read his character, Canticles v. 9. What sayest thou now? Is he not altogether lovely? Is there any blemish to be found in him? And if thou mistrustest the judgment of the church, sure thou canst not doubt of God's. Hear his sentence: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased." (Matt. iii. 17.) He knew of whom he spake, for he was his Son; and he doth not say, he was pleased with him only, but *well-pleased*, that is, delighted, and satisfied. (See Prov. viii. 30.) And was he worthy of God's love; and dost thou doubt whether he have deserved thine? (2.) Consider, he is one that died for thee; first, to purchase thy love; and since is gone to heaven, where yet he doth not cease to call upon thee, and invite thee to bestow thy heart upon him. Were he excellent, but proud, it would be little to thy advantage; but he stoops, and woos, and entreats thee. It is a day of the gladness of his heart when he prevails but with one soul to close with him: and all the rage of his persecutors did not grieve him more, than you will, if you stand it out against him. (Isai. lv. 1; Luke xv. 20; Acts ix. 4; John v. 21, 26.) (3.) Consider, he is one that hath the power of thy life and death in his own hands; and this is one part of his covenant, upon which thy life or death depends; as offered in the promise, so he waits; but as love is the condition of it, so if thou hearkenest not, thou lovest thy

share therein; and what thou choosest, be it life or death, thou shalt certainly have.

2. Consider, *what it is I plead for*.—Why, all that I ask is love; and will you deny Christ that? I call thee to think well of Christ, to desire him, to take complacency in him, to breathe after union and eternal communion with him; and which of these dost thou think too much for such an object? Or where canst thou place them more fitly than upon him? What is he worthy of, if not of this? Did ever death content itself with such a recompence? Was ever any debt easier paid, any service so easily performed, as this,—only to love? Hath God made Christ a King, Priest, and Prophet? and is that all which thou must do, to partake of his love in him, to love him in those relations? and wilt thou stick at this? Hast thou any other way to the bosom of God but by him? and yet, rather than thou wilt come thither by love, wilt thou damn thy soul by hating Christ? Is not the enjoyment of God worth the labour of love? (1 Thess. i. 3.) Shall all go, rather than be saved by love to thy Redeemer?

3. Consider, *what he will do for thee, if thou art a sincere lover of him*.—He comes not to court thee, and flatter thee to thy loss; but his reward is great, and he brings it with him. (Rev. xxii. 12.) Give me leave to tell thee some particulars thereof. (1.) If thou wilt love him, he will betroth thee to himself in dearest love; (Hosea ii. 19, 20;) he will be thy bridegroom, and thou shalt be his bride; (Eph. v. 32;) it is not all thy filthy garments, rags, or poverty, that shall hinder; (Zech. iii. 4;) but he will be to thee the covering of thine eyes; (Gen. xx. 16;) and a gladness of heart shalt thou be unto him; (Zeph. iii. 17;) thou shalt be the joy of Christ himself; (Rev. xxi. 9;) for “as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.” (Isai. lxii. 5.) (2.) He will dwell with thee: (John xiv. 23, 24;) husband and wife dwell together, and so do the betrothed soul and Christ: “I in them, and they in me,” saith Christ. (John xvii. 23.) Now this is a privilege which carries many in the womb of it; such as are these: (i.) Intimacy and daily familiarity; Christ and Christians take their meals together; (Rev. iii. 20;) there is no communion so near, as that which is between them: (Eph. v. 23;) “One spirit.” (1 Cor. vi. 17.) (ii.) Maintenance and provision. “He is worse than an infidel, that provides not for his own house.” (1 Tim. v. 8.) All that live under the same roof with Christ have their daily bread provided for them at his charges; and he hath said, that he will never leave them. (Heb. xiii. 5.) (iii.) Protection. Every man’s house is his castle; they are under safe covert that dwell with Christ. (iv.) Counsel, guidance, and direction: this great husband dwells with all his family according to knowledge; (1 Peter iii. 7;) for he teacheth them all his secrets, and shows them his covenant. (Psalm xxv. 14.) (3.) He will interest thee in all his own riches, purchases, possessions, and dignities; together with his person, he offers heaven and earth for a dowry. All things are his by purchase, and thou shalt be a co-partner or co-heir with him, when thou art espoused to him. (Rom. viii. 17; 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.) (4.) He will manifest the highest indulgence and tenderness towards thee. (Isai. liv. 7, 8.) Not all thy cross

walkings (if through temptations it shall so fall out) shall put him upon any more than a momentary departure from thee ; for he hath resolved that his faithfulness towards thee shall never fail ; (Psalm lxxxix. 33 ;) and therefore when thou seemest almost lost, and ready to despond, he will return to thee again ; and the more time he hath lost by absence, the more full will his heart be of ravishing love and affections to thee. (Canticles vi. 3.)

(5.) He will turn all to thy good : neither thy sins, though many and great, nor thy miseries, though overwhelming and discouraging, no, nor, lastly, shall death itself be ever able to make a divorce between thee and him ; but serve as a passage to thee, when thy work is done, into the bride-chamber of thy Lord. (Rom. viii. 28, 38 ; Phil. i. 21.) And now tell me, hast not thou reason to love him ?

4. Consider but thy case, while this virgin affection to thy Saviour is wanting.

(1.) *Thou multipliest thy whoredoms and thy abominations continually.*—For what are thy intensive willings of other things, but so many acts of spiritual adultery, and base prostitutions of thy soul to thy dishonour and disadvantage, while other things usurp the room of Christ ?

(2.) *Thou art a treacherous hypocrite and deceiver.*—Forasmuch as thou pretendest to the eye of the world to be Christ's, and yet art nothing less than his.

(3.) *You lay a bar in against yourselves, and the acceptance of all your duties.*—When “faith works by love,” (Gal. v. 6,) then is obedience illustrious, and meet for a gracious acceptance. That obedience which owes no part of itself to love, is worth little, and brings-in no more than it is worth.

(4.) *You make bonds for yourselves in death, and lay up terrible reproaches in your consciences against the day of judgment.* (Job xxvii. 6.)

(5.) *You make your damnation necessary :* there being no congruity to any of the divine attributes, much less to the offices of Christ, that that man should ever be saved, who never had any sincere affection to him.

These are some of the considerations, which may be of use to them that have no spark of love yet kindled in their hearts. There are a few of the other kind, which may provoke to get this love inflamed where it is : such are these :—

1. Consider, *the love of Christ to thee was a growing, increasing love.*—I do not mean in respect of the habit, but in the outward demonstration thereof. The nearer he was to his death, the more exuberant in love ; and when he rose again, his heart did overflow with tender indulgence ; as appears by the meltings of his bowels towards Mary and over Peter ; and much more may we believe him now to be full of them, now that he is at the right hand of God.

2. *There is more loveliness in Christ, than ever thou canst find out or fathom.*—When we have let out our affections to the utmost, there will still be more than we can find affection for ; our love to eternity will have something of admiration mixed with it.

3. *It is all you can return to him.*—It is all he looks for at our hands. That which lies in love, and which flows from it, is the whole that is required to complete Christianity.

4. *The more you love him, the more lovely you are unto him.*—Then hath Christ the highest complacency in us, when our hearts are under the greatest raptures of love to him.

5. *It is the honour of a man to love Christ superlatively.*—It is the sweetest part of our lives, and that which Christ values us more by than by any thing else : it is heaven on earth.*

6. *According to the measure of your love, so will all the rest of your services and graces be.*—That is, either more or less, better or worse. Love is like the master-wheel in an engine, making the whole soul to move faster or slower.

These are the considerations of the last kind. Will some say?—"O, but what shall we do to get this blessed affection into our souls?" which was the third thing proposed : and in order thereto, I offer these

DIRECTIONS.

DIRECTION I. *Be well acquainted with the nature of this great duty.*—The great mistake of the world lies in this,—that is thought to be love, which is not ; and thence men and women grow bold and confident, and value themselves more than they ought. I have given in my best assistance, so far as the nature of the first case would permit, to prevent mistakes in this matter, before ; and therefore I will not do it over again. Only remember, if you would not miscarry, that it is not a naked Christ, but a Christ advanced by incomparable personal excellences, and clothed with his offices of King, and Priest, and Prophet, that is THE CHRIST to be loved ; and you cannot well miscarry. This is that damning mistake of the world ; they love Christ, but not as dignified by God with any of his offices.

DIREC. II. *Be much in the study of yourselves.*—What you were originally, and what you are since become through your own miscarriage, wilfulness, and folly. Take your souls to the glass of the law, and go from one precept to another ; and when you have done there, go to the gospel : and be sure you do not deal slightly, but understand thoroughly how much you have offended. And when you have well studied the number and quality of your sins, then consider the justice and holiness of the eternal God, which you shall understand by the same law and gospel, where they speak the Divine terror against offending sinners ; but more especially shall ye know it by going to the cross of Christ, and wisely and seriously considering the horror of that punishment which Christ there endured ; for we never know as we ought the evil of sin, and our misery thereby, until we know what he endured to make an expiation for it. Do this, and do it faithfully. They that never knew themselves,—they are most certainly without love to Christ : and it is enough to prove it ; because, unless this foundation be first laid, they can see no sufficient reason for it.

DIREC. III. *Get a true conviction concerning thy own ultimate end and happiness.*—Where it lies, namely, not in the objects of sense, (Matt.

* *Beatus est, qui intelligit quid sit amare Jesum, et contemnere seipsum propter Jesum.*—A KEMPIS *De Imitatione Christi*, lib. ii. c. 7. "Blessed is that man who understands what it is to love Jesus, and for the sake of Jesus to despise himself."—EDIT.

xvi. 26,) but in the beatifical vision of God. Possess thy soul, by scripture-light, of the grand importance of securing thy interest therein : while you think your happiness lies any where else than in God, it will be irrational to love Christ, because his purpose and design is to take our hearts from the pursuit of all but God. And until you know God to be your happiness, you will never understand the *best* reasons (that I may not say, *the only*) that you have to love him. That man loves Christ best that most fully knows God to be his eternal Rest and Blessedness, and loves him as such.

DIREC. IV. *Get a gospel knowledge of Christ.*—Both what he was originally, and what he hath stooped and humbled himself to be for thy sake ; why he came into the world, how he lived and died, and what was the covenant between the Father and him ; how he is exalted and honoured by God, and what great things are promised both by Father and Son to all that in Christ sincerely draw nigh to God. O the sweet gales of affection which, by spiritual meditation upon Christ, will begin to blow within us ! We cannot muse upon Christ's dying, and rising again, and inviting us to love him, but the fire will burn : a considering faith in Christ will naturally bud and blossom into love.

DIREC. V. *Believe the reality of his love to thee.*—I mean, that he did all that ever he did for thee out of a hearty and real affection to thee ; and that he still desires to have the match made up betwixt thy soul and himself. This fond prejudice, whereby souls put discouragements upon themselves, is that which spoils many a match. Do not weaken thy soul by making difficulties where there are none. If thou hearest Christ inviting, stir up thyself, O thou convinced soul, as if thou heardest him even calling to thee by name. Believe it, that Christ is never better pleased than when he is loved ; and that he came no less to procure thy love than to testify his own. The way to love Christ in good earnest is to believe that he is so in his offers of grace to us.

DIREC. VI. *Understand the world thoroughly, and be jealous of thy own heart therein.*—Remember that of the apostle, who knew what it was to love Christ, as well as any man ever did : “ If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” (1 John ii. 15.) We may well enough add, “ Nor the love of the Son.” We may offer to our Lord *cor fractum*, or “ a broken heart ;” but we must not presume to desire him to accept our *cor divisum*, or “ divided heart.” Remember that Christ and the world are two, contrary each to other ; and the single stream of love cannot run two contrary ways at once. If our hearts be not crucified to the world, the love of Christ will never live within us.

DIREC. VII. *Be much in attendance on those means or ordinances, wherein Christ is evidently set forth, and by his Spirit wooing souls to love him.*—If faith comes by hearing, so no less certainly doth love. Christ most commonly honours his own ordinances and officers, in making up the match between himself and souls ; so he did Paul. (2 Cor. xi. 2.)

DIREC. VIII. *Go to God and Christ for love.*—When you have gotten your hearts well warmed with the use of all the fore-mentioned means, then go to God and Christ, and turn thy meditations into petitions.

Plead hard and heartily all those moving *considerations* which were set down to usher-in these directions. God delights to honour prayer in this great work of his, in drawing souls to Christ. "No prayer, no faith:" and it is as true, "No prayer, no love, no marriage to Christ."

I have done with the *directions* of the first kind; and have therein almost prevented myself from going any further; it being a rule in the spiritual, as well as the natural, growth, that we are nourished by the very same that gave us our first beings. If we know by what means we came by our love at first, and have but appetites whetted-on to a further growth, we need little more. And therefore having first persuaded you carefully to continue to practise-over the fore-mentioned directions, I only add:—

DIRECTIONS.

DIREC. I. *Consider much your own experiences, and the great advantages you have made by this grace.*—I need not tell what they are, because ye know them well enough already; and the sense of past advantage will best quicken to future diligence; which is the second direction.

DIREC. II. *Be constant in the exercise of that love ye have.*—The best way to strengthen any habit, is to be often repeating its acts. We cannot do any thing better to increase love, than to be often acting love.

DIREC. III. *Get faith more rooted.*—And that will make your love to be more inflamed. If you would have fruitful branches, you must keep the root of the tree fat; and if you would have any grace to thrive, you must be sure to strengthen faith.

DIREC. IV. *Take heed you be not willingly guilty of any known wickedness against Christ.*—For this will cause Christ to withdraw; it will occasion in thy heart a jealousy, and that will be an abatement of thy love. Be conscientiously diligent in all known duties.

DIREC. V. *Get thy heart daily more thoroughly crucified to the world, and better acquainted with heaven and the love of God.*—The more you love God, the more you will and must love Christ.

DIREC. VI. *Be much in the communion of saints.*—And then, especially when together with them, thou mayest look on, and admire the love of thy crucified Saviour in the Lord's supper. They that are most where Christ is to be enjoyed, love him best.

And these are briefly the heads of DIRECTIONS in answer to each of these inquiries: they might have been more largely insisted on and pressed; but this defect must be supplied by yourselves.

Remember, again,—and with that I will conclude,—that it is not the knowledge of these directions that will advantage you, but the serious and diligent practice of them. And so "grace be with all them that," in the diligent use of these means, get and inflame their "love to the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

SERMON X.

BY THE REV. JOHN TILLOTSON, D.D.*

WHEREIN LIES THAT EXACT RIGHTEOUSNESS, WHICH IS REQUIRED
BETWEEN MAN AND MAN ?

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the Law and the Prophets.—Matthew vii. 12.

THESE words being brought in by way of inference from something said before, we must look back a little, to find out the relation of them to the former verses. At the seventh verse Christ commands to ask of God those things which we want; to encourage us to ask, he promises we shall receive; to induce us to believe this promise, he puts a temporal case: Our earthly fathers, who are evil, give us good things when we ask them; how much more easily may we believe this of a good God, of Infinite Goodness! Now, as we desire God should give us those things we ask, so we should do to others; and not only so, but universally in all other things, what we would that men should do to us, that we should do to others. *That men should do unto you*—Though the persons be expressed, yet we may take it impersonally, by an usual Hebraism; as if it had been said, “Whatever you would should be done unto you,” leaving the person to be supplied in the largest sense: thus, Whatever you would should be done unto you by God or men: *This is the Law and the Prophets*—That is, this is the sum of the Old Testament, so far as concerns our duty to our neighbour.

The observation which ariseth from the words is this:—

The great rule of equity in all our dealings with men is this,—to do as we would be done unto.

This rule hath been otherwise expressed, but not more emphatically in any other form of words than this here in the text. “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” (Matt. xxii. 39.) This requires that we should bear *the same affection* to our neighbour which we would have him bear to us; but the rule in the text expressly requires that we should do *the same offices* to others, which we would have them do to us. Severus the emperor, as the historian † tells us, did learn this rule of Christians, and did much reverence Christ and Christianity for it; but he expressed it negatively: *Quod tibi non vis, alteri ne feceris.* ‡ Now this forbids us to do injuries to others, but doth not so expressly command us to do kindnesses and courtesies.

In speaking to this rule, I shall give you,

I. The EXPLICATION of it.

* Dr. Tillotson afterwards became archbishop of Canterbury.—EDIT. † LAMPRIDIUS.
‡ “What thou wouldst not wish to be done to thyself, that do not thou to another.”—EDIT.

II. The GROUNDS of it.

III. The INSTANCES wherein we ought principally to practise it.

I. For EXPLICATION.—The meaning of it is this: Put thyself into the case and circumstances of every man with whom thou hast to do; that is, suppose thou wert he and as he is, and he were thyself and as thou art: that, then, which thou wouldest desire he should do to thee, that do thou to him; and that which thou wouldest be unwilling he should do to thee, do not thou do to him. Now, this is an *exact* rule; for we are very curious in determining our own privileges, and what duty others owe to us. Just so much as we take to ourselves, we must allow to others; what we expect from others when we are in such circumstances, we must do the same to them in the like. And this is a *plain and easy* rule. Many men cannot tell what is law or justice or right in such a case; many cannot deduce the laws of nature one from another; but there is no man but can tell what it is that he would have another man do to him. Every man can take his own actions, and put them into the other scale, and suppose, “If this that I do now to another were to be done to me, should I like it, should I be pleased, and contented with it?” And thus, by changing the scales, his own self-love, and self-interest, and other passions, will add nothing to the weight; for that self-interest which makes a man covetous, and inclines him to wrong another man for his own advantage, makes him likewise, when the scales are changed, unwilling that another man should wrong him. That self-conceit which makes a man proud, and apt to scorn and despise others, makes him unwilling that another should contemn him.

I question not but, by this time, you understand the meaning of the rule; but we are not yet past all difficulties about it. Three things are to be done, before this rule will be of use to us:—

1. We must make it appear that it is *reasonable*.
2. Make it *certain*; for till it be certain it cannot be a rule.
3. Make it *practicable*.

1. We must make it appear to be *reasonable*.—The difficulty about the reasonableness of it is this: according to this rule, I shall be obliged to do that many times which is sinful, and to omit that which is a necessary duty. I will give two or three instances. Saul would have had his armour-bearer to have killed him: might he therefore have killed his armour-bearer, if he had been willing, and had desired it? I may not be an instrument or furtherer of another man’s sin, though I were so wicked as to desire that another would be so to me. If I were a child, I would not have my father correct me; or a malefactor, I would not have the magistrate cut me off: must there therefore be no correction or punishment? Now, because of these and the like instances which may be given, the rule is necessarily to be understood of things that may be done, or omitted, that is, which are not unlawful or unreasonable. Saul might not kill his armour-bearer; I may not further another man’s sin, in the cases propounded; because these things may not be done; they are morally impossible, that is, unlawful. A parent or magistrate may not wholly omit correction or punishment,

because such omission would tend to the ruin of good manners and of human society.

2. We must make the rule *certain*.—The difficulty about the certainty of it is this: everlasting disputes will arise about what is lawful and reasonable, and unlawful and unreasonable. Now, we must reduce it to a certainty thus: Whatever I would that another should do to me, that I should do to him, unless the thing be plainly and evidently unlawful or unreasonable: and this cuts off all disputes; for though there may be perpetual disputes about what is lawful and reasonable, or the contrary, yet there can be no dispute about the unlawfulness and unreasonableness of those things which are plainly and evidently so; for that which is plain and evident is out of all dispute. To confirm this, let us consider another text, Phil. iv. 8; where the apostle exhorts Christians to follow whatever things are true, and honest, and just, and pure; and, as a discovery of what things are such, he adds, “Whatever things are lovely, of good report, and praiseworthy;” that is, whatever things are amiable, well spoken of, and praised by wise and good men; (who are the only competent judges of these things;) if they be not plainly contrary to truth, or honesty, or justice, or purity,—follow these things; and if this be not the meaning, those words, “lovely, of good report, praiseworthy,” are superfluous, and do not at all direct our conversation, which certainly the apostle intended to do by them.

3. We must make it *practicable*.—There are two things which make the practice of it difficult. (1.) A seeming *contradiction* in the rule. (2.) *Partiality* in judging of the circumstances of other men’s conditions and our own.

(1.) A seeming *contradiction* in the rule.—Which you will see in these instances: if I desire a thing, I would not have another stand in competition with me for it; if another desire a thing, I would not have him think much that I stand in competition with him. If I be indebted to another, I would not have him arrest me; if another be indebted to me, I would not have him think much that I arrest him. When we sell, we care not how dear; when we buy, we care not how cheap. Now, if this were a real contradiction in the rule, it were impossible it should be put in practice; but it is only a contradiction in our wills, which must thus be reconciled to the rule:—

(i.) We must consider which of these wills is most reasonable, and the greater reason and equity must carry it; and that which is plainly unreasonable, in comparison of the other, is not to be regarded. If we consider the two first instances, this is most reasonable, that where men have an equal right, they should be allowed an equal liberty to use that right. Another man hath as much right to stand in competition with me for any thing, as I to stand in competition with him; and to arrest me in case of debt, as I to arrest him; and it is plainly unreasonable that I should use this right, and another be debarred from it.

(ii.) If both these contradictory wills be plainly unreasonable, as in the third instance of buying and selling, they must be accommodated by finding out such a medium as is equally and mutually good for all buyers and sellers; that is, such a proportion of gain may be taken, and must

be allowed to be taken, as will be equally and mutually good for all buyers and sellers.

(2.) Another difficulty in the practice of this rule ariseth from men's *partiality* in judging of the circumstances of other men's conditions and their own.—We are apt to lessen the circumstances of another man's condition, and to overvalue our own; another man's concerns seem less to us than they are, and our own greater than they are. Now, this difficulty will most eminently appear in cases of passion, and interest, and those subordinate relations which are at the greatest distance. Another man provokes me; I revenge myself on him: one asks me, "Would you be contented to be thus dealt withal?" I am ready to answer, "Yea, if I should so provoke another:" I aggravate the fault of his provocation, and lessen that of my own revenge: here is passion. I desire a courtesy of a man which he cannot conveniently do for me: he denies me: I think much at him, because I judge the courtesy less, and his obligation to do it greater, than indeed it is: here is interest. I think, "If I were a father, I should not carry myself so severely towards my children. If I were a master, I should give more liberty to servants, and use them with a greater familiarity. If I were a minister, I should not gall the consciences of people by so free and open a reproof of sin. If I were a magistrate, I should make other laws, or punish some crimes more or less severely." Now, if men frequently thus misjudge, how shall this rule be put in practice?

To remove these difficulties as much as may be, and to make the practice of this rule more easy, observe these rules:—

(i.) *Labour to understand truly every man's condition, so far as you have opportunity.*—This is easily said; but how shall we come to do it? Thus, when you are in any condition, observe diligently the motions of your own mind, and how your affections then work, and what apprehensions you then have of things, and what it is that in such a condition you desire and expect from others; and labour to remember this when you are out of that condition, and to retain the sense which you then had of things.

(ii.) In cases wherein you are unexperienced, and which you cannot reasonably be presumed to understand, partly because of your distance from that condition, partly because of the opposition of your own interest, and partly because of the mists and clouds of your own passion; *trust the concurrent experience of others that are in that condition*: and think that you ought not to do that to another which the generality of mankind count grievous; and that fit to be done, which the most and wisest in such a condition and relation do usually expect. If men, when they are under, and lie at the mercy of others, generally desire that clemency and moderation should be used towards them; how just soever thou mayest think thy severity is, and that thou wouldest be contented that another should deal so with thee, yet do, not trust thy present apprehensions of things, but believe that thou wilt have the same sense of things, when they lie heavy upon thee, with the rest of mankind, and [that] when thou art in their circumstances, thou wilt desire quarter as they do. In like manner, that respect and obedience which parents, and

masters, and magistrates, do generally expect, even the best and wisest of them, that do thou pay to them; and though it may have some appearance of rigour and injustice, yet believe that when thou comest to be in the same relation, thou wilt expect the same things as they do; and that thou dost now judge otherwise, proceeds from thy inexperience, and distance from that condition, or from passion and opposition of interest.

(iii.) Conclude, *that in cases betwixt superiors and inferiors, the partiality is usually on the inferiors' side.*—And it is reasonable thus to conclude, both because inferiors have seldom had experience of the other condition, as superiors usually have had; (a child hath not been a parent, or a servant ordinarily a master, or a subject a magistrate; but all parents have been children, and most masters have been servants, and many magistrates subjects; and so they have had experience of both conditions;) and likewise because inferiors cannot so well see the condition and circumstances of those that are above them, as those that are above can of those that are below them; they have the advantage of ground, and better opportunities of knowledge.

(iv.) *In judging of your present condition and circumstances, always abate something for the presence of them, and for self-love, and self-interest, and other passions.*—He that doth not consider how apt every man is unequally to favour himself, doth not know the littleness and narrowness of human nature. We are near to ourselves, and our own interest is near to us; and we see it in its full proportions, and with all possible advantages: other men and their interests are at a distance from us, and seem less to us than they are. Now, we must make abatements for this, according to that experience which we have had of our own mistakes; which, if we will observe, as we pass from one condition into another, we may easily be convinced how great many times they are.

II. For the GROUNDS of this.—The equity of this rule stands upon these foundations:—

1. *All men are equal in many things, and those the greatest things.*—Now, I should deal equally with him whom I acknowledge to be mine equal. “Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us?” (Mal. ii. 10.) Are we not all made of the same materials? Is it not “appointed unto men once to die,” and after death to stand before the impartial judgment of God? (Heb. ix. 27.) We have all the same notions of right and wrong; we are all obnoxious to one another, and may be all beneficial one to another; we all love ourselves, and study the advancement of our interest and happiness. Thus far [we are] equal.

2. *In most of those things wherein we are unequal, the inequality is not considerable, so as to be a ground of any unequal dealing with one another.*—As to strength of body, whatever the difference be, the inequality is not considerable; because as to the greatest effects of strength there is an equality. “Every man that will venture his own life, may take away another man’s,”* either by open force or by surprise. As to abilities of mind, which we usually call parts, there is originally a great equality,

* *Dominus est alterius vita quicumque contemnit suam.*

especially if that received opinion be true, that souls are equal; and, as the French philosopher Des Cartes hath ingeniously observed, there is this notable sign of the equality of men's understandings: *Nulla res, saith he, æquabilis inter homines distributa est quàm bona mens, &c.* "Nothing is more equally divided among men than a good understanding. Men will acknowledge others to be richer and stronger than themselves; few will acknowledge others to be wiser, or to have better parts, than themselves. Every man thinks himself to have so good a proportion of parts and wisdom, that even those who are most covetous, and have the most insatiable desires as to other things, and whom nature could never satisfy in any thing else, yet would not desire to have more wit than they have, or exchange their parts with any man." * Now, there is no better sign of an equal distribution of things than that every man is contented with his share. † Now, because all men generally think thus, it is to be presumed that all are not deceived, but that there is some real equality, which is the ground of this conceit. A difference, indeed, must be granted, but which ariseth usually from one of these two causes,—either an unequal exercise of our parts, or an unequal temper of body. Now, those who are so happy as to exercise their understandings more than others, are very often rather conceited that they are wiser than others, than really so; "for the greatest clerks are not always the wisest men." Those who are unhappy in the temper of their bodies, are thereby inclined, how weak soever they be, to conceit themselves as wise as others. So that whatever real inequality there be, conceit levels all again. So that whether men be really wise, or only think themselves so, it makes no difference as to men's dealing with one another; for they that think themselves equal will not deal but upon equal terms. So that Aristotle's pretty notion, that "wise men are born to govern, and fools to obey," ‡ signifies very little in this case; for there are but few such fools in the world, but would govern if they can. So that by virtue of wisdom or parts, no man can challenge a privilege or prerogative to himself above others, which another will not pretend to as well as he.

3. *In all those things wherein men are unequal, the inequality is not fixed and constant, but mutable and by turns.*—All things that belong to us are either the endowments of the mind, the accidents of the body, or the circumstances of our outward estate. Now, those that are most unequal in any of these, may be equal; for the inequality may turn, and be as much on the other side. A disease may ruin the most happy and excellent memory, and make a man forget his own name. A little knock on any side of the head may level the highest understanding with the meanest. Beauty, health, and strength may be blasted by a disease, or a thousand other accidents. Riches, and honour, and reputation are the most slippery and brittle things that belong to us; and when these are gone, friends will fall off, like leaves in autumn. Now, why should I despise another man, when I may be as silly as he? or bear down another by my strength, when I may be as weak as he? or insult over another's

* *Dissertat. de Methodo.* † *Qui velit ingenio cedere rarus erit.* "It very rarely happens, that any man owns himself to possess less genius than another."—EDIT. ‡ *Poëtic. c. 3.*

poor and low condition, when a day may level me with his meanness, and raise him to be as great and rich as I am?

4. Another ground is *the mutual and universal equity and advantage of this rule*.—Upon those terms I and all men shall be equally dealt with: it will be well with me, and well with all men. The observation of this rule would secure peace to the world; and if it were generally practised, those few that should offend against it would be looked upon as the pests and troublers of human society. As by the violation of this rule every man becomes a wolf and beast of prey to another, so, by the mutual observation of it, every man would be a God to another; men would be full of mutual goodness, and pity, and compassion; they would be mutual benefactors one to another. All men would be as happy as it is possible for them to be in this world; and no man could be miserable, if it were in the power of his neighbour to help him.

5. The last ground I shall mention is *the absurdity and inconvenience of the contrary*.—And this is the most proper way of proving this; for, as Aristotle tells us, “First principles which are evident by their own light, cannot be proved by way of demonstration, but of conviction.” As thus: contradictions cannot be true at once. This cannot be demonstrated *a priori*, because there is nothing true before it to prove it by; therefore whoever shall deny it, must be convinced of the truth of it by showing the absurdities of the contrary. In like manner, this being one of the first principles of human society,—that we should use no more liberty towards other men, than we would allow them to use towards us, the best way to convince any man of the reasonableness and equity of it will be to show him the inconveniences of the contrary. Wherever this principle is violated, men will think themselves injured; where men are injured, they will be apt to vindicate themselves. Hence come contention and wars, which loose the bands of human society. Or, if a man can pardon an injury, that hath received one; yet he that hath done it cannot believe so, but he will fear revenge; and fear of being oppressed makes a man seek to anticipate and prevent another: so that every injury endangers the peace and security of mankind, and lays the foundation of perpetual mischief; for by the same reason that I injure any man, I am obliged to ruin him.

He that breaks this rule, doth what he can to break human society; that is, to spoil himself of all common protection, and to leave himself to stand upon his guard against all the world: in which state no man can hope to continue that is not wiser and stronger than all the world. Aristotle tells us, “He that desires to be alone, must either be a God or a wild beast;” * that is, he must either be self-sufficient, and stand in need of nothing; or else be wild and savage, and delight in cruelty and mischief.

III. The INSTANCES wherein we ought chiefly to practise this rule, are these:—

1. *In matters of civil respect and conversation*.—I must treat every man with that fair respect which I would have another to show to me. We must accommodate ourselves to men’s particular tempers; and not be froward or intractable, or tenacious of our own humour, especially when

* Η ἄνηριον ἢ Θεος.—ARISTOTELIS *Polit.* c. ii.

it lies in another man's way. But we must be apt to recede and give way, that there may be room for other men's tempers and humours, as well as ours: our humour must not take up all the world. Those who want this complaisance are, in society, as one ingeniously compares them, like irregular stones in a building, which are full of roughness and corners: they take up more room than they fill: till they be polished and made even, others cannot lie near them. So men of sharp and perverse humours are unsociable, till the ruggedness and asperities of their nature be taken off. We must not carry ourselves insolently, or superciliously, or contemptuously towards others. We must not be contumelious; nor by deed or word, countenance or gesture, declare hatred or contempt of others. We must not upbraid one another with any imperfection, or weakness, or deformity. We must not peremptorily contradict others. We must not use to talk things displeasing to others, wherein their credit, or relations, or especially their religion, is concerned. Josephus saith, this was one of Moses's laws (it was a good one, whose-ever it was): *Ὅτις ἀλλὰι πολλοῖς νομιζοῦσι θεοὺς, μηδεὶς βλασφημεῖτω** "Let no man blaspheme that which other nations count a God," or make their religion. Not but that every man may confute a false religion, and endeavour by all fair ways to convince a Jew, or Turk, or Heathen; but we may not reproach another man's religion, or provoke any man in ordinary conversation, by unseasonable and uncivil reflections upon it; for we are with meekness to convince gainsayers, to reprove men for their sins, but not to upbraid them with them. We must give no offence to the Jew or to the Gentile, remembering always that the wrath of man doth not work the righteousness of God; and that Michael the archangel, when he contended with the devil, did not bring a railing accusation against him; he did not revile him, no, not in the heat of dispute. And there is great reason why we should thus carry ourselves towards others, because we ourselves would not be contemned or despised; we would not have any man jeer us, or insult over us, or upbraid us, or peevishly contradict us, or affront us by speaking unhandsomely of us, or of our relations, or of our religion. Now, if we would have others to consider us, we must not neglect them; if we would be taken notice of for somebody, we must not overlook others with contempt. Every thing thinks itself considerable, and there is nothing comes sooner to us, or continues longer with us, than a sense of our own worth; and we judge ill of human nature, if we think another man is not as impatient of rude and uncivil usage as we are. Nothing would be despised, a worm would not be trod upon. Nay, men do usually overvalue themselves, and are apt to think that they are owners of that singular worth which may command respect from all men, and that every one that passeth by ought to fall down and do obeisance to them. They have Joseph's dream waking, they think "all men's sheaves bow to their sheaves;" they think every man takes notice of them, and observes their carriage and actions, when probably not one of a thousand ever took them into consideration, or asked who they were. Now, we must consider, that it is a hundred to one but there is a little of this vanity in us also, and that we do usually

* *Antiquit. Judaic. lib. 4.*

look for more respect than is due; therefore it will not be amiss, in our respects towards others, *largiri aliquid*, "to give men something above [that which] we think they deserve;" and the rather because civil respect is cheap, and costs us nothing; and we expect from others full as much as comes to our share: for it is a mistake to think, that we do but righteously esteem ourselves, and that we have no more than a just value of our own worth.

2. *In matters of kindness and courtesies.*—We must be useful to one another. I would have no man churlish to me, but ready to gratify me, and do me a kindness. Do I think much to be denied a reasonable favour, and doth not another so too? We would have all men love us, that is, bear such an affection to us, that when it falls in their way, they should be ready to do us a courtesy. We would not have courtesies done in a discourteous manner, extorted by importunity, or upbraided to us afterwards. Let us likewise dispense favours with a liberal hand and a cheerful countenance, that men may see that they come from a kind heart, and a real good-will.

3. *In matters of charity and compassion.*—If any man be in misery, pity him, and help him [according] to your power. If any be in necessity and want, contribute to his relief, without too scrupulous inquiries about him; for we would be thus dealt with ourselves; we would not have others to harden their hearts, or shut up their bowels of compassion against us. Is any man cast down? Do not insult over him, and trample upon him; do not look upon him with scorn, and rejoice over him in the day of distress. *Res est sacra miser*: "Persons in misery are sacred, and not to be violated." When you see any man in calamity, think ye hear him say to you, with Job: "I also could speak as ye do: if your soul were in my soul's stead, I could heap up words against you, and shake mine head at you. But I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the moving of my lips should assuage your grief." (Job xvi. 4, 5.)

4. *In matters of forbearance and forgiveness.*—We stand in need of forbearance and pardon from others, from God and men. We should be loath God should take advantage against us upon every provocation, and let fly at us with a thunderbolt every time we offend him. We would not have men storm and fall into passion with us upon every slight occasion: I would have great allowances given to me; I would have my ignorance, and inadvertency, and mistakes, and present temper, and all occasions and provocations, and every thing considered; and, when I have done amiss, upon acknowledgment of my fault, I would be forgiven and received to favour. Now, if we would be thus dealt with, we must bear with others: the best men need some grains of allowance: *Nullum unquam ingenium placuit sine venia*: "No man was ever so perfect, so accomplished, so unexceptionable, but there was something or other in his carriage that needed pardon." Every man hath a particular humour; we must give some allowance for that. Every man is subject to mistake: we must allow for that too; and if a man have committed a fault, we must accept of an ingenuous acknowledgment, and be ready to grant him peace. There is a shame and disdain in human nature of too vile a sub-

mission ; therefore we must not bring a man too low when we have him at advantage.

5. *In matter of report and representation of other men, and their actions.*—We must not take up a rash prejudice, or entertain a sinister apprehension of any, upon slight grounds. Do not represent any man, his words or actions, at a disadvantage. Make the best of every thing. A man's good name is like a looking-glass ; nothing is sooner cracked, and every breath can sully it. Handle every man's reputation with the same tenderness thou wouldest have every man use towards thine. Do not slander or defame any man, or rejoice to hear other men's miscarriages ripped open. Do not account it an entertainment to censure and backbite all the world.

6. *In matters of trust and fidelity.*—Where I place a confidence and repose a trust, I would not be deceived : I must not deceive another, nor let any man fall that leans upon me. If a man trust me with the management of his business, or lodge a secret with me, or put his life into my power, or commit the care of his estate or children to me after his death, these are all ingenuous trusts, and must be discharged with the same faithfulness we expect from others.

7. *In matter of duty and obelience.*—We must give that honour to our parents which we would expect from our children ; and pay that reverence to masters which we would exact from our servants. We must rise up before the gray head, and give respect to old age ; for, let not us think but that the change of relation and of age will have the same effect upon us which it hath upon the rest of the world. It is a folly to talk, that when we are old we shall be pleased with the insolencies of youth ; when we are masters, we shall not be at all offended with the contemptuous carriage of our servants ; that it will not touch our hearts to have our children undutiful and void of respect, to see the fruit of our body unnatural and unkind to us.

8. *In matters of freedom and liberty, which are not determined by any natural or positive law.*—We must permit as much to others as we assume to ourselves ; and this is a sign of an equal and temperate person, and one that justly values his own understanding and power. But there is nothing wherein men usually deal more unequally with one another, than in indifferent opinions and practices of religion. I account that an *indifferent opinion* which good men differ about ; not that such an opinion is indifferent as to truth or error, but as to salvation or damnation it is not of necessary belief. By an *indifferent practice in religion*, I mean, that which is in its own nature neither a duty nor a sin to do or omit. Where I am left free, I would not have any man to rob me of my liberty, or intrench upon my freedom ; and, because he is satisfied such a thing is lawful and fit to be done, expect I should do it who think it otherwise ; or, because he is confident such an opinion is true, be angry with me because I cannot believe as fast as he. Now, if another do ill in doing thus to me, I cannot do well in doing so to another. And do not say that thou art sure thou art in the right, and he that differs from thee in the wrong ; and therefore thou mayest impose upon him, though he may not upon thee. Hath not every man this

confidence of his own opinion and practice? and usually the weakest cause bears up with the greatest confidence. Now, if thou wouldest not have another, that is confident he is in the right, to impose upon thee, do not thou impose upon another, for all thy confidence. We should rather be modest, and say every one to ourselves: "How came I to be so much wiser than other men? Which way came the Spirit of the Lord, from so many wise and pious men, to speak unto me? Is it a peculiar privilege granted to me, that I cannot be mistaken? or are not *they* most of all mistaken *who* think they cannot mistake? If, then, I be but like other men, why should I take so much upon me, as if my understanding were to be a rule, and my apprehensions a standard to the whole world? as if, when another man differs from me, I did not differ as much from him. Why may not another man understand the thing better than I do? or what crime is it if he understand it not so well? Were all men's understandings cast in the same mould? Is it presumption for any man to know more than I do, or a sin to know less?" Job doth well reprove this self-conceit. His friends would needs bear him down, and were very angry with him, that he was not of their mind, and would not acknowledge all to be true of himself which they said against him: he takes them up sharply: "No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you. But I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you: yea, who knoweth not such things as these?" (Job xii. 2, 3.) Let not any man think that he hath engrossed all the knowledge of the world to himself, but others know the same things which he doth, and many things better than he.

9. *In matters of commerce, and contracts which arise from thence.*—Now, a contract is a mutual transferring of right. When I buy any thing of another, he makes-over the right of such a commodity to me for so much money, or other valuable thing, the right whereof I make over to him. Now, in this kind of intercourse, we are to be governed by this great rule: *In making of contracts*, we must *agere bonâ fide*, "deal honestly and truly;" *in performing of contracts*, we must give *liberare fidem*, "satisfy the engagement we have made;" for thus we ourselves would be dealt withal.

Now, if any shall desire to be more particularly satisfied, what that exact righteousness is which, in matter of contracts, ought to be observed betwixt man and man, I must confess this is a difficult question, and to be handled very modestly by such as acknowledge themselves unacquainted with the affairs of the world, and the necessities of things, and the particular and hidden reasons of some kind of dealings. For he that is ignorant of these may easily give rules, which will not comply with the affairs of the world: he may complain of that which cannot be otherwise, and blame some kind of dealings which are justifiable, from particular reasons, not obvious to any man who is unseen in the way of trade. Besides, there are many cases fall under this question which are very nice, but of great consequence; and the greater caution and tenderness ought to be used in the resolution of them, because they are matters of constant practice, and the greatest part of mankind are concerned in them. Now, it is a dangerous thing to mistake in those things in which

many persons are interested, especially if they be things of such a vast difference as good and evil, right and wrong, are. For if that be determined to be lawful which is unlawful, men are led into *sin*; if that be determined to be unlawful which is lawful, men are led into *a snare*. For if this determination be to the prejudice of men in their callings, it is an hundred to one but common example and private interest will make many continue in that practice, and then the mischief is this:—Though men do that which is lawful and right, yet they are staggered by the authority and confidence of him who hath determined it unlawful; and so have some reluctance in their consciences in the doing of it; and this by accident becomes a great sin to them: and when upon a sick-bed, or any other occasion, they come to be touched with the sense of sin, this will be matter of greater horror and affrightment to them than a real sin which they committed ignorantly, and were afterwards convinced of. Upon all these considerations, I ought to proceed with great wariness in the answering of this question: therefore I shall content myself with speaking those things which are clear and evident, though they be but general, rather than venture out of my depth by descending into particulars, and such things as are out of my notice.

I shall therefore,

1. Lay down the general rule;
2. Some propositions which may tend to the explication of it;
3. Some special rules for the directing of our commerce and intercourse.

1. The general rule is this: *That which it is not unreasonable for me to desire to gain by another when I am to sell, that I should allow another to gain by me when I am to buy; and that which it is not unreasonable another should gain by me when I am to buy, that, and no more, I may gain by another when I am to sell.*

2. The propositions which I shall lay down for the further explication of this rule, are these:—

(1.) *In buying and selling, such a proportion of gain may be taken, and ought to be allowed, as is mutually and universally best.*—And this every man is presumed to desire, because this will be certainly good for every one; whereas, if it be not universally good, it may be bad for any one; if it be not mutually so, it will be bad for me by turns.

(2.) *That proportion of gain which allows a reasonable compensation for our time, and pains, and hazard, is universally and mutually best.*—If the compensation be unreasonably great, it will be bad for the buyer; if unreasonably little, it will be bad for the seller; if equal and reasonable, it will be good for all.

(3.) *That proportion of gain which, in common intercourse and use of bargaining among those who understand what they buy and sell, is generally allowed, ought to be esteemed a reasonable compensation.*—This is evident, because the common reason of mankind doth best determine what is reasonable. Therefore, those who speak of *commutative justice*, and place it in “the equality of things contracted for,” need explaining; for value is not a thing absolute and certain, but relative and mutable.

Now, to fix the value of things as much as may be, this rule is commonly given: *Tanti unumquodque valet, quanti vendi potest*; "Every thing is worth so much as it may be sold for;" which must not be understood too particularly, as if the present and particular appetite of the contractor were to be the rule; for every thing is not worth so much as any body will give for it, but so much as in common intercourse among knowing persons it will give. For this I take for a truth,—that, in the ordinary plenty of commodities, there is an ordinary and usual price of them known to the understanding persons of every profession: if I be out in this, the matter of gain will be more uncertain than I thought on.

(4.) *A reasonable compensation doth not consist in an indivisible point, but hath a certain latitude, which, likewise, is to be determined by the common intercourse and practice of mankind.*—Suppose ten in the hundred be the usual gain made of such a commodity, eleven the highest, nine the lowest; the latitude is betwixt nine and eleven.

(5.) *Every man engaged in a way of commerce is presumed to understand, unless the contrary be evident.*—So that, keeping within the latitude of a lawful gain, I may use my skill against another man in driving a bargain. But if his want of skill be evident, that is, sufficiently known to me, I must use him as I would do a child, or other unskilful person, that is, fairly.

(6.) *Where the price of things alters, as it often doth almost in all things, no other rule can be given but the common and market-price.*—There are some things which are fixedly certain, as coin: there I have no latitude at all; I may not put off a piece of money for more than its value, though a person out of ignorance would take it for more. There are some commodities which, in ordinary plenty, being of an ordinary goodness, have an usual price: here I have but little latitude, namely, that of the market. In the rising and falling of commodities, I have a greater latitude; but usually in these cases the market sets some kind of price: unless I be the sole master of a commodity; and here the latitude is the greatest, and my own reason and moderation must limit me. And if any ask why I make the market the rule, seeing this seems to be as if I should say, "Let every man get as much as he can, for so men in the market do;" I answer, The market is usually more reasonable than the particular appetites of men; and though every man be apt to get as much as he can, yet men generally have an appetite to sell, as well as to sell dear, and that checks this; and men are brought to moderation, because they are unwilling to lose custom; so that he that governs himself by the market prices, not catching at particular advantages, seems to me to follow the safest rule.

(7.) *There are some things allowed in common intercourse which are so rigorous, that they are hardly just, which are rather tolerable than commendable.*—I will give one instance instead of many: A man hath a small piece of ground lying within another man's estate. He is willing to sell, but requires, possibly, forty or sixty years' purchase, or more, according to the particular appetite of the purchaser. This seems not to

be so agreeable to this great rule of equity. I deny not* but some advantage may be made in this case, and I will not set any peremptory limits. I shall only say this in general, We should set a moderate value upon another man's appetite and convenience.

(8.) *It is to be feared, that something very like unrighteousness is woven into the mystery of most trades; and, like Phidias's image in Minerva's shield, cannot be defaced without the ruin of it.*—I think this is not a groundless jealousy; but the confession and complaint of the most knowing and understanding persons in human affairs. I shall instance only in the slightness of work, the imbasing of commodities, and setting them off by indirect advantages. I can only bewail this; for, unless the world could generally be convinced of this, it is not like to be amended. Perfection is not to be looked for in this imperfect state: we must be content if things are passable.

(9.) *Nevertheless, we ought to aspire after as great a degree of righteousness and equity as the condition of human affairs will admit.*—We should bend all our endeavours to the bettering of the world; and not only avoid all unrighteousness, but draw back, as much as in us lies, from the indirect practices of the world, and from all appearance of unrighteousness.

3. The more particular rules are these:—

(1.) *Impose upon no man's ignorance or unskilfulness.*—Thou mayest set a just value upon thine own commodity, but not a price upon another man's head. I mean, thou mayest not rate a man's want of understanding, or set a tax upon his ignorance: therefore, take no advantage of children, or any other incompetent persons; and do not only use them with justice, but with ingenuity, as those that repose a trust in you, and cast themselves upon your equity. And here are some questions to be resolved.

QUESTION I. "If a man be otherwise skilful in his calling, may not I take advantage of his ignorance of a particular circumstance wherein the contract is concerned?"

ANSWER. I will tell you how Tully resolves this in a particular case: "A man," saith he, "brings a ship of corn from Alexandria to Rhodes, in a time of great famine: he may have what price he will: he knows of a great many more ships that will be there next day: may he conceal this from the Rhodians?" He determines peremptorily, he may not.† If we will be worse than Heathens—I say no more.

QUESTION II. "But may we not take advantage of the ignorance of the seller, though not of the buyer? The difference is, he that offers to sell any thing at such a price is willing so to part with it: now there is no wrong done to him that is willing."

I answer: A man is so far willing, as he is knowing. Aristotle tells us, that "ignorance is a sort of unwillingness." If a man, out of forgetfulness, or want of consideration or sufficient understanding of his own calling, mistake himself, I may not make a prize of this man's weakness;

* The third edition has, instead of this commencement, *I do not see*; and the fourth has, *I doubt not*; but the reading of the first edition, as it stands in the text, is the correct one.

† *De Officiis*, lib. iii.

for he is only willing to sell it so upon supposition he remembers right, and understands himself aright; but, the thing being really worth more, he is absolutely unwilling, and I am injurious to him in taking advantage.

QUESTION III. "May I not sell secret faults and vices in a commodity?"

ANSWER. If the faults be such as men take for granted do often happen, and, notwithstanding them, they do not account any man to have deceived them, then they are faults pardoned by common consent. But if they be such as I am grieved at, and think myself not fairly dealt withal when they happen; then some think it is enough to allow for them in the price; but I think Tully hath determined it better: *Ne quid omnino quod venditor novit emptor ignoret*; * "That the buyer should not be left ignorant of any thing that the seller knows." And this seems reasonable; for I know not but another man may value those faults higher than I do: however, it is not so fair for me to make another man's bargain.

(2.) *Impose upon no man's necessity.*—If a man must needs buy now, or of thee, because none else is near, make no advantage of this.

(3.) *When God's providence hath put into thy hands some great opportunity and advantage, (as by the intervention of some unexpected law, by a sudden war or peace betwixt nations, or by some other casualty,) do not stretch it to the utmost.*—*Fortunam reverenter habe*, "Use this providential advantage modestly;" considering that He whose blessing gave thee this opportunity can blast thee a thousand ways.

(4.) *Use plainness in all your dealings.*—This the Roman laws called *bonâ fide agere*. Do not disparage another man's commodity, or raise your own beside truth: this is sinful. Do not insinuate a commendation or disparagement indirectly, thereby to lead a man into an error, that you may draw on a bargain the more easily. Do not, as your phrase is, ask or bid much out of the way; for if this be not simply unlawful, yet it doth not become an honest man. We commend the Quakers, because they are *at a word* in all their dealings. We would be loath not to be counted as good Christians as they are; let us, then, do as good things as they do, especially when we account those things praiseworthy; and I am sure this is no ways contrary to justice, and honesty, and truth. I know nothing that gives so real a reputation to that sect as this practice; and would it not adorn those who account themselves the more sober Christians? If we praise this in others, let us practise it in ourselves. We are apt to value ourselves much by our orthodox *judgments*; but let us take heed that sectaries do not confute us by their orthodox *lives*. For the sake of religion, next to your consciences, in all your dealings, tender your reputation; for, *quod conscientia est apud Deum, id fama est apud homines*: "that which conscience is in reference to God, that our reputation is in respect of men."

(5.) *In matters of vanity and fancy, and things which have no certain estimation, use moderation.*—And so much the rather, because in these thou art left to be thy own judge.

(6.) *Do not go to the utmost of things lawful.*—He that will always

* *De Officiis*, lib. iii.

walk upon the brink, is in great danger of falling down. He that will do the utmost of what he may, will some time or other be tempted to what he should not. For it is a short and easy passage from the utmost limits of lawful, to what is evil and unlawful; therefore, in that latitude which you have of gain, use favour toward the poor and necessitous, ingenuity toward the ignorant and unskilful, moderation toward all men.

(7.) *Where you have any doubt about the equity of your * dealings, choose you the safest part, and that which will certainly bring you peace.*—For not only a good conscience, but a quiet conscience, is to be valued above gain. Therefore, in matters of duty, do the most; in matters of privilege, and divisions of right, and proportions of gain, where there is any doubt, choose the least; for this is always safe.

Thus I have laid down the *rule* and explained it, and have given as particular directions as I could safely adventure to do: I must now leave it to every man to apply it more particularly to himself, and to deal faithfully with his own conscience in the use of it. Circumstances which vary cases are infinite; therefore, when all is done, much must be left to the equity and chancery of our own breasts. I have not told you how much in the pound you may gain, and no more; nor can I. A man may make a greater gain at one time than another, of the same thing; he may take those advantages which the change of things, and the providence of God, give him, using them moderately: a man may take more of some persons than of others: provided a man use all men righteously, he may use some favourably. But I have on purpose forbore to descend to too many particularities, among other reasons, for the sake of Sir Thomas More's observation concerning the casuists of his time, who, he saith, by their too particular resolutions of cases, did not teach men *non peccare*, "not to sin," but did show them *quàm propè ad peccatum liceat accedere sine peccato*, "how near men might come to sin, and yet not sin."

The USES I shall make of all this are these two:—

USE I.

Let us not revenge ourselves.—The rule is not, "We should do to others as they do to us;" but, "*as we would have them to do to us:*" as if it were on purpose to prevent revenge. St. Luke forbids revenge from this rule: "For if ye love them which love you," &c. (Luke vi. 31, 32.) "But love ye your enemies." Revenge is the greatest offence against this rule; for he that revengeth an injury hath received one; he that hath received one knows best what that is which he would not have another to do to him; the nature of evil and injury is better known to the patient than to the agent; men know better what they suffer than what they do. He that is injured feels it, and knows how grievous it is; and will he do that to another?

USE II.

Let me press this rule upon you. Live by it; in all your carriage and dealings with men, let it be present to you. Ask yourselves upon every occasion, "Would I that another should deal thus with me, and

* In the fourth edition the word *your* is omitted.—EDIT.

carry himself thus towards me?" But I shall press this chiefly, *as to justice and righteousness in our commerce*. It is said that Severus the emperor caused this rule to be written upon his palace, and in all public places :* let it be written upon our houses, and shops, and exchanges. This exhortation is not altogether improper for this auditory. You that frequent these exercises seem to have a good sense of that part of religion which is contained in the *first* table : do not, by your violations of the *second*, mar your obedience to the *first*. Do not prove yourselves hypocrites in the *first* table, by being wicked in the *second*. Give not the world just cause to say, that you are ungodly, because they find you to be unrighteous ; but manifest your love to God, whom you have not seen, by your love to your brother, whom you have seen ; and if any man wrong his brother, he cannot love him. Do not reject or despise this exhortation, under the contemptuous name of "morality." Our Saviour tells us, this is a chief part of that which hath ever been accounted religion in the world : "It is the Law and the Prophets ;" and he, by enjoining it, hath adopted it into Christianity, and made it Gospel. We should have an especial love to this precept, not only as it is the dictate of nature, and the law of Moses ; not only as it is a Jewish and Gentile principle, but as it is of the "household of faith." When the young man told Christ, that he had kept the commandments from his youth, it is said, "Jesus loved him." (Mark x. 20, 21.) Wherever we have learned to despise morality, Jesus loved it. When I read the Heathen writers, especially Tully and Seneca, and take notice what precepts of morality and laws of kindness are every where in their writings, I am ready to fall in love with them. How should it make our blood to rise in many of our faces who are Christians, to hear with what strictness Tully determines cases of conscience, and how generously he speaks of equity and justice towards all men! *Societatis arctissimum vinculum est, magis arbitrari esse contra naturam, hominem homini detrudere sui commodi causâ, quàm omnia incommoda subire.*† "This is the strongest bond of society, to account it to be more against nature, for any man to wrong another for his own advantage, than to undergo the greatest inconveniences." And again: *Non enim mihi est vita mea utilior, quàm animi talis affectus, neminem ut violem commodi mei gratid.* "Nor is my life more dear and profitable to me, than such a temper and disposition of mind as that I would not wrong any man for my own advantage." Again: *Tollendum est in rebus contrahendis omne mendacium.* "No kind of lying must be used in bargaining." And to mention no more: *Nec ut emat melius, nec ut vendat, quicquam simulabit, aut dissimulabit vir bonus.* "A good man will not counterfeit or conceal any thing, that he may buy the cheaper, or sell the dearer." And yet, further to check our proneness to despise moral righteousness, I cannot but mention an excellent passage to this purpose, which I have met with in a learned man of our own nation: "Two things," saith he, "make up a Christian,—a true faith, and an honest conversation ; and though the former usually gives us the title, the latter is the surer ; for true profession without an honest conversation, not only saves not, but

* LAMPRIIDIUS.

† *De Officiis*, lib. iii.

increaseth our weight of punishment; but a good life without true profession, though it brings us not to heaven, yet it lessens the measure of our judgment; so that a moral man, so called, is a Christian by the surer side." And afterwards: "I confess," saith he, "I have not yet made that proficiency in the schools of our age, as that I could see why the *second* table, and the acts of it, are not as properly the parts of religion and Christian, as the acts and observation of the *first*. If I mistake, then it is St. James that hath abused me; for he, describing religion by its proper acts, tells us, that 'pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world;' so that that thing which, in an especial refined dialect of the new Christian language, signifies nothing but morality and civility, that in the language of the Holy Ghost imports true religion. When the scribe told Christ, that 'to love God with all the heart,' &c., 'and our neighbour as ourselves, was more than whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices,' it is said, 'When Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.' (Mark xii. 33, 34.)* They that would have a religion without moral righteousness talk indiscreetly, and are farther from the kingdom of God than a mere moral man. If we neglect this part of religion, we disparage the gospel, and abuse our profession; we are but pretenders to Christianity. Plutarch speaks somewhere to this purpose: "he had rather posterity should say, 'There was never such a man as Plutarch,' than that 'he was a vicious, or cruel, or unjust man.'"

I had rather a man should not call himself a Christian, that he should renounce this title, than that, by his life and actions, he should represent Christians to the world as oppressors, as unjust and treacherous dealers. If men will only use religion for to cover their unrighteousness, I had rather they would put off their cloaks, and be knaves *in querpo*, that every body may know them, than that they should go, like highwaymen, in vizards and disguises, only that they may rob honest men the more securely.

And to move you to the practice of this rule, I shall only offer to you one consideration, but which hath so much weight in it, that it may be instead of many: *As you deal with others, so ye shall be dealt with.* "With what measure you mete to others, it shall be measured to you," is a proverbial speech often used by our Saviour; and which, one time or other, you will find to be very significant. God doth many times, by his providence, order things so, that in this life men's unrighteousness returns upon their own heads, and their violent dealing upon their own pates. There is a Divine Nemesis, which brings our iniquities upon ourselves. No man hath any vice or humour alone, but it may be matched in the world, either in its own kind or in another. If a man be cruel and insolent, "A Bajazet shall meet with a Tamerlane;" if a man delight to jeer and abuse others, "No man hath so good a wit, but another hath as good a memory:" he will remember it to revenge it. He that makes a trade of deceiving and cozening others,—he doth but

* MR. HALES.

teach others to cozen him ; and there are but few masters in any kind but are outdone by some of their scholars. But, however we may escape the hands of men, how shall we escape our own consciences, either trouble of conscience in this life, or the worm of conscience in the next ? How shall we escape the hands of the living God ? How shall we escape the damnation of hell ? “ Let no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter : because that the Lord is the avenger of all such.” (1 Thess. iv. 6.) He will take their cause into his own hands, and render to us according to our fraudulent and cruel dealing with others. “ So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you,” &c. (Matt. xviii. 35.) What our Saviour saith, that “ there is no man that denies himself in houses or lands, &c., for Christ’s sake and the gospel’s, but shall receive in this life a hundred-fold, and in the world to come everlasting life,” (Matt. xix. 29,) is true also here. There is no man that is injurious to his brother in houses, or lands, or good name, or any other thing, but shall probably receive in this world an hundred-fold ; however, without repentance, in the world to come, everlasting misery. In the next world men will find, that they have but impoverished themselves by their ill-gotten wealth, and heaped up for themselves treasures of wrath. Read those words and tremble at them : “ Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you,” &c. (James v. 1—5.)

Let us, then, be persuaded—as we love God whom we have not seen ; as we love the gospel which we read and hear every day, and would preserve the reputation of it ; as we would better the world and the condition of mankind ; as we love ourselves and our own peace and happiness—to deal justly and equally with all men. Till we come to live by this rule of equity, we can never hope to see the world a quiet habitation. But if this were practised among us, then “ glory would dwell in our land ; mercy and truth would meet together ; righteousness and peace would kiss each other ; truth would spring out of the earth ; and righteousness would look down from heaven ; yea, the Lord would give that which is good ; and our land would yield her increase ; righteousness would go before him, and set us in the way of his steps.” (Psalm lxxxv. 9—13.)

SERMON XI.

BY THE REV. THOMAS GOUGE, A.M.

SOMETIME FELLOW OF KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

AFTER WHAT MANNER MUST WE GIVE ALMS, THAT THEY MAY BE
ACCEPTABLE AND PLEASING UNTO GOD?

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.—1 Timothy vi. 17—19.

THE sum of these words is, a direction for rich men how to make the best use of their riches. The ground or occasion of this direction is, to meet with an objection, which might be made against the discommodities and dangers of riches, noted before in verses 9, 10: "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." From hence some might infer, as the disciples did from the inseparable and inviolable bond of marriage, noted by our Saviour: "If," say they, "the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry." (Matt xix. 10.) So might some say, "If they that will be rich fall into temptation, and a snare," &c., "then it is not good to be rich;" yea, such as are rich may say, "Let us give away, or cast away all that we have, rather than retain such vipers as riches seem to be."

To prevent such inconsequent inferences, the apostle giveth this direction, whereby he showeth that riches may be well used, and, being well used, be a means of helping on our eternal salvation. Learn hence not to condemn things good in themselves, because of the abuse of them. The Lord, in regard of the ordinary abuse of riches, styleth them "mammon of unrighteousness;" (Luke xvi. 9;) and yet adviseth not thereupon to cast them away, but to "make to ourselves friends thereof:" that is, so to use them as the good works done by them may, as friends before the Judge, give evidence of the truth of our faith and love, and show that we are of the sheep of Christ, for whom eternal life is purchased.

Having thus showed the occasion and dependence of these words upon the former, come we now to the logical resolution of them; where we may observe two parts:—

1. A *prohibition*.
2. An *injunction*.

A prohibition of hurtful vices. 'An injunction of needful virtues.

The vices are two:—(1.) *High-mindedness*. (2.) *Vain-confidence*. “Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches.”

The virtues are likewise two:—(1.) *Confidence or faith in God*: “But trust in God,” which is urged by an argument taken from God’s bounty, in these words, “Who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.” (2.) *Charity towards men*, expressed in several phrases; namely, “by doing good,” and by being “rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;” which duties are enforced by an argument taken from the benefit of performing them, which is, in brief, assurance of eternal life, implied in these words: “Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.”

I shall briefly speak something to the several branches of the text, as they lie in order, and then come to the question or case of conscience given unto me to handle.

Charge them that are rich in this world—The expression of our apostle is here observable, in that he saith not, *Λεγε*, “Speak to them,” not, *Αγγελλε*, “Declare to them,” but, *Παραγγελλε*, “Charge, command them.” Well did the apostle know how forward, on the one side, rich men are to be high-minded, and to trust in their riches; and, on the other side, how backward they are to trust in God, and to show charity to the poor; and thereupon saw it requisite that a minister should take courage to himself, and not think it enough closely to intimate to rich men what vices they are addicted to, or what virtues they are bound unto; but, remembering the place wherein they stand, which is God’s, in the name of his most excellent Majesty, to require, charge, and command them to forbear the one, and endeavour after the other.

In the next place follow the parties to whom this charge is to be given, namely, to *the rich in this world*: “Charge them,” saith the apostle, “that are rich in this world,” that is, in this present world; noting our riches to be only for this world. For true is that proverb of the wise man, “Riches are not for ever;” (Prov. xxvii. 24;) they cannot be carried out of this world. “As naked we came into this world, so naked shall we go out of it.” (Job i. 21.) And therefore it must needs be a point of great wisdom, by that which is but for this present world, to store up a sure foundation for the time to come.

In the next place follow the vices here forbidden: the first is *high-mindedness*; whereunto rich men are very prone, in that their wealth is as wind; and though wind be but a vapour, yet it puffeth up exceedingly; as we see in a bladder blown up with wind. In like manner, riches, though they be but *mere vanity*, as the wise man expresseth it, (Eccles. i. 2,) yet are they apt to puff up men extremely, even to think of themselves above what is meet. Whereas, if rich men would but well weigh, that they came from, and must return to, the same mould that others do; “for dust they are, and to dust they must return;” (Gen. iii. 19;) yea, if they would consider, that they came from the same cursed stock that others do, and are by nature no better than the meanest; especially if they would consider, that outward riches cannot add the least dram of

real worth to the owners of them; but though they may be more honourable parts or members in the civil body of the state, yet in the mystical body of Christ they may be less honourable than the poor;—I say, if rich men did but seriously consider these things, they would not be so high-minded as they are.

The other vice here forbidden unto rich men, is, *vain-confidence*, or trusting in their riches; and this is very fitly joined to the former; for where our pride is, there will be our confidence. That rich men are apt to put too much trust and confidence in their riches, doth appear by the titles which they commonly give unto them, calling them “their goods,” as if they were the only good things; and “their substance,” as if all things else were shadows; and by the increase of them they say they are “made for ever,” and by the loss of them they say they are “utterly undone.” What do these expressions imply, but a trust and confidence in their riches? Whereupon saith the wise man, “The rich man’s wealth is his strong city, and as an high wall in his own conceit.” (Prov. xviii. 11.) It makes him think himself so safe and secure, that, like the judge mentioned by our Saviour, “he feareth not God, nor regardeth man.” (Luke xviii. 2.)

In the next place follow the virtues enjoined.

The first is *confidence*, or faith in God; which is directly opposed to trust in riches, so as rich men may have wherein to trust, though they trust not in riches. God is the God of the rich, as well as of the poor; and the one as well as the other are to put their whole trust in him.

And if we consider the property here given to God, namely, *living*, (“But trust in the LIVING GOD,”) we shall see good reason to trust in God rather than in riches. For our wealth may vanish away; but He ever liveth. Our wealth may prove our bane; but He is both the Giver and Preserver of life. Our trusting in God is here pressed by an argument taken from God’s bounty to us in these words: “Who giveth us richly all things to enjoy:” so that the Lord is not only a *living* but also a *giving* God, of whose gift you have not only your life, but also your riches; yea, all that you have is the gift of God, who giveth you not only all needful things, but also richly, and, as St. James saith, “liberally.” (James i. 5.) For God in his gifts showeth himself to be a God, and that two ways: 1. In the freeness, 2. In the greatness, of them. He “loadeth us with benefits,” saith the Psalmist. (Psalm lxxviii. 19.) This rich bounty of God is a further motive to draw you to trust in him.

Yea, the apostle addeth, that the Lord “giveth us all things richly to enjoy;” that is, not only for the present to spend, as being absolutely necessary; but also to lay up and reserve, so as it is not unlawful to lay up for after-times. The apostle presseth it on parents as a bounden duty, “to lay up for their children.” (2 Cor. xii. 14.)

Only let this lawful liberty be limited with these and such-like bounds:—

1. That we lay up nothing but what is justly gotten. To lay up riches of unrighteousness, is to kindle a fire that may destroy both our temporal and our spiritual estate.

2. That we be not so covetous of hoarding up, as to deny ourselves

what is needful for our use and comfort, or to deny the poor what is needful and necessary for them ; but that we willingly give out, as what is meet for ourselves, so what is necessary to the poor.

3. That, in our treasuring up, we aim not merely, wholly, and only at ourselves, but withal have an eye as to the charge which in particular God hath committed to us, so also to the church, commonwealth, and poor for the time to come.

4. That we exceed not measure in our treasure, no, though we aim at the fore-mentioned good ends.

So much for the clearing the first duty the apostle would have pressed upon rich men especially, which is to "trust in God."

The second is *charity towards men*, expressed in several phrases ; as, first, by "doing good : " "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they do good." So that true charity consisteth not only in compassionate affections, and kind speeches, but in good deeds, as *αγαθοεργειν*, the word in the original, implieth.

You rich men ought "to be rich in good works," as the apostle addeth. For God expecteth fruit answerable to the seed which he soweth. He giveth you plenty of seed ; therefore you must be plentiful in this kind of fruit.

The next branches,—“Ready to distribute, willing to communicate,”—set forth the manner of our charity ; the former implying a *wise distribution of our alms* ; for “to distribute” is not hand-over-head, without consideration, to give, but according to the need of them to whom we give : the latter implying a *willingness therein*. As *by distributing*, good is done to others ; so *by willingness* therein, much comfort is brought unto our own souls, and grace to the work ; and God doth best accept such, for “he loveth a cheerful,” willing, “giver.” (2 Cor. ix. 7.)

In the next place follow the reasons, to enforce the fore-named duties, taken from the benefit of performing them ; which is, in brief, *assurance of eternal life*, implied in these words : “Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.” The apostle here, for their better encouragement to lay out a portion of their estate on good works, telleth them that they are so far from losing what they so lay out, as in truth “they lay up thereby in store for themselves.”

Yea, they lay up “a good foundation ; ” that is, such a treasure as is like a foundation in the ground, that cannot be shaken nor overthrown. This treasure the apostle thus expresseth, in opposition to the fore-mentioned uncertainty of riches : so, as by a cheerful distribution of this world’s wealth, they do indeed but exchange uncertainties for certainties, and so no fear of losing by such bargains. Yea, they thereby obtain “eternal life.”

QUESTION. “Are then good works the cause of eternal life ? ”

ANSWER. Surely, no ; only they are the means and way of attaining thereto ; and in this sense is this phrase here used : “That they may lay hold on eternal life.”

Having thus showed you the *occasion* of the words, the *logical resolution* of them, their *sense and meaning*, I should now, according to my

accustomed method, come to such points of doctrine which the words do naturally afford unto us. But I must wave them, and fall upon that question or case of conscience which was given me to handle; namely,

QUESTION. *How, or after what manner, must we give alms, that they may be acceptable and pleasing unto God?*

In the resolving whereof, I shall endeavour to answer most of the cases of conscience about alms-giving.

ANSWER 1. It must be *with justice*, giving only of our own, whereunto we have a just right and title.—So much our Saviour implieth in that precept of his, where he saith, “Give alms of such things as you have;” (Luke xi. 41;) whereby is not meant, such things as a man hath by him, (for one may have another man’s things by him,) but such things as are his own, whereunto he hath a just title and undoubted right, whereof he is the lawful proprietor, hath the power of disposing those things; and those only he may lawfully and justly give away.

This caveat is very necessary for many reasons.

1. *Because otherwise we shall sever mercy from justice, which should always go hand in hand.*—God hath put them together, (Prov. xxi. 21; Dan. iv. 27,) and we must not put them asunder. Indeed, they are two links of one and the same chain, of which other virtues and graces are also other links. So many virtues, so many links. Now, if one link of a chain fall off, the whole chain is broken, and down falls that which is drawn or held up by it: so we that are held up out of the pit of destruction by the chains of graces, are in danger to fall into it, if one grace be violated, and severed from the rest.

2. *By giving that which is not our own, the excellency and glory of charity is lost.*—Of such charity it may be said, *Ichabod*; (1 Sam. iv. 21;) “Where is the glory?” The glory of charity consists in this,—that we are willing to part with our own, and therein to damnify ourselves, for the relief and succour of others.

3. *By giving that which is not our own, we do wrong, and thereby make ourselves liable to restitution.*—So as charity in such a case is a plain injury. It is a case wherein recompence of revenge may more be feared than recompence of reward expected.

QUESTION. “Who may be said to give that which is not their own?”

ANSWER 1. *They who filch, steal, or rob for this very end.*—As parents for children, or children for parents, or one friend for another. It is a sin for one to steal to satisfy his own hunger; (Prov. vi. 31;) much more is it sin to steal for another. Certainly it is a great wickedness to do injustice, that we may do acts of charity.

2. *Such as having raised up an estate, or got something by indirect and unjust means, as by lying, swearing, false weights, deceitful measures, and the like, think to make up all by giving part to the poor.*—For, as the Civilians say well: “The good use doth not justify the unjust getting of their goods.”* And can any imagine that God will be pleased with those men’s charity who give relief out of that which they have wrongfully gotten? Restitution should rather be made to such as have been wronged. And if neither the parties wronged, nor their heirs, can be

* *Bonus usus non justificat injustè quæsitâ.*

found, then what hath been wrongfully got ought to be given to the poor, as their heirs. An example whereof we have in *Zaccheus*, who, having wronged many by oppression, after his conversion offereth four-fold restitution unto all whom he had wronged; and because many could not be found, to whom he should make it, he offereth to bestow half of his goods to the relief of the poor. (Luke xix. 8.)

3. *Such as being under authority, and having no propriety* in the things which they give, do, notwithstanding, give directly against, or simply without, the consent of those who have the true propriety, do not give of their own.*—Servants, children, and others. Indeed, servants and children may lawfully give out of that which is their own; but not out of that which is their masters' or parents', without their allowance.

4. *Such as being joined in partnership with another, and give alms out of the common stock without the consent of their partners, do not give that which is their own.*

5. *Such as are in extreme debt, and owe more than they are worth.*—We showed, that mercy and justice must go together; yea, justice must go before mercy, and be satisfied before mercy be showed. They who owe more than they are worth have nothing at all to give for alms; such join arrogancy to injustice, to make show of a great estate, and yet have none.

I shall close this with a word of advice to such as have a merciful and charitable disposition, above their outward condition and ability: that they use the best diligence they can, by all lawful and warrantable means, to get something to bestow upon charitable uses. Let poor labouring men take so much the more pains, that they may have somewhat to give; let servants spare out of their wages; let such as have no propriety in any thing, but are wholly maintained by them under whom they live, (as children, apprentices, and others,) do what they can to obtain something of their parents, or other governors, even for this very end, that they may have something to give. Let such as are in debt first pay their debts, and then give alms. Let such as have any way defrauded others first make restitution, and then relieve them that are in need. (Eph. iv. 28.) Finally, let such as live at the extent of their estate, and much more, such as live beyond their means, well weigh wherein they may cut off some of their expenses to bestow on the poor.

ANSWER II. Alms-giving must be *with freedom and cheerfulness*, and not grudgingly.—The phrase of "giving alms," frequently mentioned in scripture, implieth as much; for, to give, is freely to bestow. In the law this propriety of giving is plainly expressed, and by the contrary thus explained: "Thou shalt surely (freely) give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him." (Deut. xv. 10.) It is also implied under this phrase: "Thou shalt open thine hand wide." (Verse 11.) Alms must not be wrested and wrung out of a man's hand; but he must of himself "open his hand;" that is, freely give. The word "wide" addeth emphasis. And in the gospel we find it commanded by the apostle: "Every man according as he purposeth in his

* This good old word occurs frequently in this sermon, and, as the reader will perceive, uniformly has the meaning of our modern words, *property*, or *proprietorship*.—EDIT.

heart, so let him give ; not grudgingly, or of necessity : for God loveth a cheerful giver." (2 Cor. ix. 7.)

Many motives may be produced to induce us hereunto : as,

1. *The pattern of God our heavenly Father, and of his Son Jesus Christ, our Redeemer.*—All the good that the Father doeth, he doeth most freely : "Who hath first given unto him ?" The word which is used to set out that which God giveth, signifieth "a free gift ;" * (Rom. v. 15, 16 ;) and he is said to "love us freely," (Hosea xiv. 4,) to "justify us freely," (Rom. iii. 24,) and "freely to give us all things." (Rom. viii. 32.)

This reason of God's love,—“The Lord set his love upon you, because he loved you,” (Deut. vii. 7, 8,) doth clearly demonstrate the freeness of it.

The good also which the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Saviour, doeth for us, he doeth most freely upon his own love, without any desert of ours : in this respect it is said that he hath "loved us, and hath given himself for us." (Eph. v. 2, 25.) The conjunction of these two, "love," and "giving," plainly prove the freeness of the gift. But, further, he expressly saith, concerning the freeness of his gift : "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." (Rev. xxi. 6 ; xxii. 17.)

2. A second motive may be taken *from the nature of charity, which, unless it be free, is not true and sound.*—Thus much the apostle implieth under this phrase : "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." (1 Cor. xiii. 3.) By "charity" he meaneth a free giving of that which is given, merely out of love and pity to him unto whom he giveth.

3. *Free giving makes that which is given to man acceptable to God.*—“For God loveth a cheerful giver.” (2 Cor. ix. 7.) Yea, God hath more respect to this manner of giving, than to the greatness of the gift. “For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.” (2 Cor. viii. 12.)

4. *A free manner of giving makes the gift the more acceptable to him that is made partaker thereof.*—As the gift supplieth his want, so the manner of giving reviveth his spirit. The apostle rejoiceth in the Lord greatly upon that care which the Philippians showed to him in his necessity. (Phil. iv. 10.)

5. *A free and cheerful giving much redoundeth to the glory of God, in that others are stirred up to praise God for such gifts.*—David praised God's glorious name, when he saw his people offer willingly unto the Lord. (1 Chron. xxix. 13, 14.) And this in respect the apostle saith of such benevolence, that it is "abundant by many thanksgivings unto God." (2 Cor. ix. 2, 12.)

ANSWER III. *With simplicity and sincerity.*—According to that of the apostle : "He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity ;" (Rom. xii. 8 ;) that is, with an honest, plain, and sincere heart, not aiming

* To χάρισμα. *Id quod gratificando aliquis donat.* "That which any one freely bestows on another for the purpose of gratifying him."—EDIT.

therein at his own praise or applause, but at the glory of God, doing it in obedience to his command. This simplicity in giving, our Saviour hinteth unto us, where he saith: "When thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth;" (Matt. vi. 3;) that is, let not the nearest that may be unto thee know what thou givest. The right hand is that hand wherewith we ordinarily give, yet the left hand is often assistant to it. Now, though there should be any so near unto thee, as to be helpful and assistant, or at hand, yet let them not know it; make known thy charity to none.

QUESTION. "May we not give alms if others be by?"

ANSWER. Yea, if need so require; as at public collections, or when in public we see one stand in need. But we may not do it with a mind to have it known; our mind must be free from all such conceit; and we must so do it, as if we were alone. "That alms is not unacceptable which is given and seen of men, but that which is given to be seen of men."* So that the scope of our Saviour in the fore-mentioned place is, to take us off from all vain-glory in giving of our alms, that as much as in us lieth we should endeavour to hide and conceal our good works from the eye of the world.

ANSWER IV. Our alms must be given *with a compassionate heart, with bowels of affection*.—The Greek word for "alms" is derived from a word that signifies "mercy;"† which intimateth the disposition of the giver, how he should be a merciful man, whose bowels are moved at the misery of another, and thereupon contributes to his need with bowels of compassion.

In giving, we must not only open our hands, but our hearts also, in pity and compassion; we must "draw out our own souls," as the prophet speaketh, as well as our purses, "to the hungry and afflicted," (Isai. lviii. 10,) which is implied under several expressions of charity, used in scripture by the Holy Ghost; as, "He that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he." (Prov. xiv. 21.) And again: "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord." (Prov. xix. 17.) And saith the apostle St. Paul: "Put on, as the elect of God, bowels of mercies." (Col. iii. 12.) And saith the beloved disciple St. John: "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (1 John iii. 17.) It is not sufficient to have an open, liberal hand, unless we have also an open and compassionate heart; for if the sacrifice of our alms-deeds be not mingled with the oil and incense of mercy and compassion, it will not be acceptable unto God, who will have mercy as well as sacrifice. In contributing, therefore, to the relief of the poor, let our inward affection go along with our outward action.‡

As helps hereunto,

1. *Be well informed in the benefit that compassion bringeth*.—And that not only to thy distressed brother, who is succoured, but also to thyself,

* *Non est ingrata elemosyna quæ fit et videtur, sed quæ fit ut videatur.* † Ελεημοσύνη ἀβ ελεος, misericordia.

‡ *Benevolentia ex benevolentia manare debet. Affectus tuus nomen imponit operi tuo.*—AMBROSIUS *De Officiis*, 30. "Beneficence ought to flow from benevolence. The work in which thou art engaged receives its name and impress from the feeling by which thou art actuated."—EDIT.

to whom in this case a promise of mercy is made: "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy;" (Matt. v. 7;) mercy from other men, and mercy from God himself.

2. *Well weigh the common condition of all.*—How "all things come alike to all," as the wise man speaketh; (Eccles. ix. 2;) so as thou also art subject to the same distress whereunto others are brought; and therefore, as Aquinas saith, "we should have compassion on other men's misery, for the possibility of suffering the like:"* which argument the apostle useth to the Hebrews; saying: "Remember them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body;" (Heb. xiii. 3;) that is, say some, "as being members of the same body;" but rather, as Beza and others interpret the place, "as being yourselves in the body of flesh and frailty, subject to the like miseries."† For so long as we dwell here in these houses of clay, and carry about us this earthly tabernacle, we are all subject to the like changes and chances; which made old learned Theodoret reach his helping-hand to those outcast Africans: "For when I saw," quoth he, "their pitiful estate, I began to lay to heart the doubtful turnings and inversions of human things, and to fear lest I myself might fall into the like evils."‡

ANSWER V. Our alms must be given *seasonably*.—For, as the wise man speaketh, "To every thing there is a season, and every thing is beautiful only in its time and season;" (Eccles. iii. 1, 11;) and therefore it will be our wisdom so to observe the needs and necessities of other men, that we do not let slip any season or opportunity of doing good. According to the exhortation of the apostle, "As we have opportunity, let us do good." (Gal. vi. 10.) The word in the original, *καιρον*, translated "opportunity," properly signifies a "seasonable time."

QUESTION. "Which are the most seasonable times of doing works of mercy?"

ANSWER. 1. *When accidentally thou meetest with any fit objects of mercy.*—Thou must not then pass them by, with the priest and Levite; but, with the good Samaritan, presently pour the oil and wine of thy charity into the wounds of thy brother, forthwith contributing somewhat to his relief. (Luke x. 30—34.) For, misery being the proper object of mercy, thou shouldest then extend thy mercy unto such as are in want and misery.

2. *When God by his providence hath any way blessed and increased thy stock and store:*—By prospering thy adventure at sea, or thy trading at home, or by some great legacy bequeathed thee by some of thy friends,—that is a seasonable time for thee to give out freely and liberally to the relief of the poor, in testimony of thy thankfulness unto God for his bounty towards thee. I know, it is usual with most men, upon the increase of their stock and store, to "sacrifice to their own nets," to ascribe their wealth to their own wit and policy, and to say in their hearts, their "power and the might of their hand hath gotten them this wealth." But mark what Moses saith in the next verse:

* *Propter possibilitatem similia patiendi.*—THOMAS AQUINAS, *Sum. Theol.* pars ii. quæst. iii. art. 2. † *Ut qui sitis et ipsi iisdem calamitatibus obnoxii.*—BEZA in loc. ‡ THEODORETUS, Ep. 29.

“Thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth.” (Deut. viii. 17, 18.) Seeing, therefore, what thou hast, thou hast received from God, whatsoever the means and instruments were of conveying it unto thee, is it not most just and equal, that in way of thankfulness thou shouldst set apart some portion thereof for the poor and needy?

3. *The Lord's day is another seasonable time of doing works of mercy.*—According to the apostle's rule and direction: “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him.” (1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2.) Where by “the first day of the week” is meant *the Lord's day*, on which the apostle enjoineeth the Corinthians to “lay up something in store;” implying thereby, that *that* is a very fit season, not only to do such works of mercy which are then offered unto us, but also to prepare for other times.

4. *Days of thanksgiving for some eminent mercy are another seasonable time of doing works of mercy.*—The remembering of the poor at such times is expressly commanded in scripture: “Thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow.” (Deut. xvi. 14.) Here “the stranger, the fatherless, the widow,” are commanded to rejoice on their days of feasting, which presupposeth the rich men's sending portions of their good cheer unto them; which was the practice of the people of God, as appeareth by that command of Nehemiah to the Jews on a day of thanksgiving: “Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared.” (Neh. viii. 10.) And their day of thanksgiving [on account of their deliverance] from Haman's conspiracy is called “a day of feasting and joy, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor.” (Esther ix. 22.) And what more seasonable time can there be for showing mercy to the poor, than when we are blessing God for his manifold mercies vouchsafed unto us?

5. *Days of fasting and prayer are another seasonable time of doing works of mercy.*—For how can we expect that God should show mercy unto us, in removing those judgments which we feel, or in preventing those which we fear, if we will not show mercy to our poor brethren, who stand in need of our relief? In the day of our fasting, therefore, let us at least give away to the poor so much as we save by our fast. For as St. Austin, in one of his sermons, saith: “Then are our fasts acceptable to God, if they who fast out of necessity, because they want meat, be relieved by us.”* Let this, therefore, be always observed by us, that the poor have the gain of our fasting, and not our own purses.

ANSWER VI. Our alms must be given *readily and speedily*, without any needless delay.—According to the counsel of the wise man: “Withhold not good from them to whom it is due;” that is, withhold not any act of charity from those who stand in need of thy help. “Say not

* *Tum grata sunt Deo nostra jejunia, si illi qui necessitate jejulant reficiantur a nobis.*
—AUGUSTINI Sermones De Temporalibus, 64.

unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to-morrow I will give thee, when thou hast it by thee." (Prov. iii. 27, 28.) "He that so delayeth his helping hand, is next door to him that denieth."* "And, therefore, as any occasion offers itself unto us, let us speedily embrace the same, as knowing that a speedy giver is a double benefactor; and the swifter that a benefit cometh, the sweeter it tasteth. And contrariwise a benefit loseth its grace that sticketh to his fingers who is about to bestow it."† What, then, shall we think of *their* charity who put off all to their death-beds, never giving any thing considerable to the poor till they can keep it no longer? These, though by *their last Will and Testament* they give somewhat to the poor, yet questionless it is *against their wills*: for could they have kept it longer, they would not have parted with it.

I shall desire such seriously to consider these six things:—

1. *That if all rich men should do thus, the poor would soon be starved for want of bread.*

2. *That this practice of theirs is against the express command of God, who requireth us to do good, and to communicate out of our store, while we have time and opportunity.* (Gal. vi. 10; Matt. v. 16.)

3. *That they have no assurance of the continuance of their wealth.*—For as the wise man speaketh, "Riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven;" (Prov. xxiii. 5;) they have eagles' wings to fly from us.‡ And how many are there who have outlived a fair estate! If God in his displeasure blasts a man's substance, it vanisheth away in a moment.

4. *Though their riches should continue with them, even to their deaths; yet they have no assurance that God will give them grace to be liberal at their deaths, who had never the goodness to be charitable in their life-time.*

5. *That they have no assurance that God will accept of their death-bed charity.*—What St. Austin speaketh of death-bed *repentance*, that "it is seldom true and hearty," the same may I say of death-bed *charity*,—It is seldom true and hearty, but for the most part rotten and hypocritical, proceeding from ill grounds, as vain-glory, conceit of merit, and the like.

6. *That they have no assurance of the true performance of their will, that the poor shall be the better for what is thereby given them.*—For how many executors have proved most unfaithful to their trusts, whereby many charitable gifts have been clean perverted! And if friends be so unfaithful to us in our life-time, how can we but question their fidelity after our deaths? O, therefore, that all, whom the Lord hath blessed with an estate, would in their life-time become their own administrators; making, as one saith, "their own hands their executors, and their own eyes their overseers!" For, questionless, that charity which is exercised in a man's life-time is the best, and most acceptable unto God.

ANSWER VII. Our alms must be *bountiful and liberal*, giving out

* *Qui sic moratur, neganti proximus est.*—SENECA *De Beneficiis*, lib. ii. cap. 5.

† *Beneficia non sunt procrastinanda, sed tempestive danda, ut magis prodesse possint. Bis dat, qui cito dat. Ingratum est beneficium quod diu inter manus dantis hasit.*—SENECA *De Beneficiis*. ‡ *Alas aquilinas.*

proportionably to what the Lord hath given unto us.—This is implied in that command of God to his people : “Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in the land ;” (Deut. xv. 11 ;) that is, thou shalt give unto him bountifully and liberally. And our apostle here in the text would have rich men charged “to be rich in good works, even as God hath given them all things richly to enjoy ;” (1 Tim. vi. 17, 18 ;) “for unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.” (Luke xii. 48.) And therefore the same apostle adviseth the Corinthians to give “as God had prospered them :” (1 Cor. xvi. 2 :) to whom God hath given little of this world’s goods, of them he requireth but little ; but to whom he hath given much, of them he requireth much. Rich men, therefore, must not only give a portion of their wealth to the relief of others, but also in some fit proportion to their estate.

QUESTION. If any shall ask, “What is that portion or proportion of estate which rich men ought to set apart for charitable uses ?”

ANSWER. It is a hard matter to determine the quantity and proportion of men’s charity, the scripture being silent herein, leaving this to the discretion and ingenuity of the prudent Christian. As the apostle speaketh, “every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give,” &c. (2 Cor. ix. 7.) A certain quantity is not set him : that is left to the free purpose of his own heart.

But yet, though the scripture giveth us no direct *precept* in this particular, it holdeth forth many *precedents* for our imitation : as that of Jacob, who, in testimony of his thankfulness unto God for what he should bestow upon him, vowed the tenth part thereof unto God for pious and charitable uses : “And Jacob vowed a vow unto God, saying, Of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.” (Gen. xxviii. 20—22.) Of Cornelius it is recorded, that he “gave much alms.” (Acts x. 2.) And the Macedonians are highly commended for their great bounty and large contributions. (2 Cor. viii. 3.) These examples are left upon record for our imitation. For, as the apostle speaketh, “whatsoever things were written afore-time were written for our learning, and for our admonition.” (Rom. xv. 4 ; 1 Cor. x. 11.) So that though the *quantity* of our alms, how much we should give, is not expressly set down ; yet this we find both commanded and commended, by precepts and precedents, in the scripture, that we give *liberally* and *bountifully* in some fit proportion to our estates ; that if we be rich in this world’s goods, we should then be rich in good works ; “sowing liberally, that so we may reap liberally.” (2 Cor. ix. 6.)

Now, that our alms may be liberal, it must be fitted to two things ; namely :—

1. *The necessity of the receiver.*
 2. *The ability of the giver.*
1. *That in giving we should have respect to the need and necessity of our brother.*—The law is clear which saith, “If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren, thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth.” (Deut. xv. 7, 8.)

2. *That we should likewise have respect to our own ability.*—The apostle St. Peter is as clear, where he saith, “If any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth;” (1 Peter iv. 11;) that is, let every one give with respect to his own estate and ability. Notwithstanding, in cases of urgent necessity and great extremity, we are to strain ourselves even above our ability.

Here it may not be impertinent to answer another question: (for I resolve to contrive all I have to deliver upon this subject into this plain and easy method :) and that is this:—

QUESTION. “How many ways may rich men exercise their charity?”

ANSWER. 1. *By laying out a portion of their estate in such a way as directly tends to the worship of God, the advancement of religion, the salvation of men’s souls.*—Which I may not unfitly term, “a spiritual charity.”

And this may also be done several ways. As,

(1.) *By contributing towards the planting and propagating the gospel where it hath not been.*—A work set on foot by divers in New-England, but chiefly carried on by the charity of well-disposed people here in Old-England.

(2.) *By setting up and maintaining of lectures.*—The preaching of the word being the ordinary means appointed by God for the bringing of sinners to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, “whom to know is life eternal.” (Rom. i. 16.)

(3.) *By adding to the maintenance of such settled preachers whose pains are great, and means small,* through the covetousness of impropiators, who engross to themselves what doth more properly belong to the minister.

(4.) *By maintaining of poor scholars at the university, in reference to the work of the ministry.*—That so there may be a continual supply of learned, godly, and orthodox ministers, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

(5.) *By bestowing of Bibles on poor children.*—Whereby, through the care of their parents, they may be acquainted with the knowledge of “the holy scriptures, which are able to make them wise unto salvation.” (2 Tim. iii. 15.) Memorable is the famous gift of Sir John Fenner, who by his last will gave six pounds *per annum* to several out-parishes in London, for the buying of Bibles, to be distributed among poor children. From my own experience I can say, that this gift hath occasioned many poor people to teach their children to read, that so they might be capable of those Bibles, which are to be given only to such as can in some measure read.

(6.) *By erecting of country-schools, and endowing them with some competent maintenance, for teaching of poor men’s children, who have not wherewithal to pay for their schooling.*—Which will be a special means not only to further their civil, but likewise their spiritual, education; for thereby they will be made more capable of divine instruction. Experience teacheth us how ineffectual the most powerful ministry is upon an ignorant and unlearned congregation. Questionless, therefore, the erecting of country-schools is a work of charity, more noble in itself, more

226 SERMON XI. AFTER WHAT MANNER MUST WE GIVE ALMS, acceptable unto God, and more beneficial to the kingdom, than the building of alms-houses, which are too often filled with swarms of idle drones.* But though this spiritual charity is unquestionless the more excellent, as tending to a more excellent object, namely, the souls of our neighbours, yet the bodies of our neighbours must be cared for as well as their souls: our charity, therefore, must also extend to them, and in this kind it may be practised and expressed.

2. *By a free and liberal giving to the relief of those who are in want.*—Of which I have already largely spoken.

3. *By a ready lending to such as, being in a calling, want stock, or other means to help themselves in their trades.*—This duty of lending we find expressly commanded both in the law and in the gospel. IN THE LAW; as in the place before quoted: "Thou shalt open thine hand wide to thy poor brother, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth," &c. (Deut. xv. 7, 8.) IN THE GOSPEL; "Lend," saith our Saviour, "hoping for nothing again;" (Luke vi. 35.) that is, lend not only to such from whom you may hope, by reason of their ability, to receive your own again; but also to such as by reason of their poverty may perhaps never be able to repay you. The Psalmist maketh this a note of a righteous and a good man, that "he is ever merciful and lendeth;" (Psalm xxxvii. 26;) that he "sheweth favour, and lendeth;" (Psalm cxii. 5;) where we see it is set down as the property of such a man, that he is ready to lend to the poor, to such as stand in need of his help; and that freely, without hope of gain.

This duty belongeth especially to rich men, because the occasions of him that would borrow usually require more than meaner persons can well spare: they can better give a penny than lend a pound; though in many cases the lending our brother a considerable sum together would be more beneficial to him than it may be to give him half as much. There is therefore a noble and very generous act of charity to be exercised this way; and it is peculiar to rich men, who have it by them wherewithal to do it.

4. Rich men may and ought to express their charity, *by forgiving a debt, in case the borrower be not able to repay it.*

There be many who, by the help of that which is lent them, God blessing their pains in the employments thereof, are able to repay what is lent. If there were not hope thereof, men would rather give than lend to such.

But there are others who, notwithstanding their care and pains in their calling, thrive not; or, by some accident, suffer such loss and damage, as they are not able to repay what they have borrowed. In such cases creditors are bound to forgive, at least to forbear, their debtors. This is the intendment of that charge, "Lend, hoping for nothing again." (Luke vi. 35.) To take this phrase simply, is to alter the nature of lending, and to turn it into giving. Herein lieth the difference betwixt *lending*, and *giving*: *lending* is on condition to have again that which is lent, or

* *Docere simpliciter est melius quam pascere.*—AQUINAS, *Summ. Secunda Pars*, art. ii. "The mere act of communicating instruction to children's minds is better than that of feeding their bodies."—EDIT.

at least the worth of it some other way; *giving* is free, without any such condition. That advice of Christ, to "lend, hoping for nothing again," hath respect to the mind of the lender, that he should not have his mind wholly and only upon the repaying of what he lendeth, but on the need of his brother. He is not simply to lend, because he is persuaded he shall lose nothing, but have his own again; he is to lend, because he doeth therein great kindness to his brother, who stands in much need thereof.

The Greek word properly signifieth "to despair;"* and so it may here be taken: as if he had said, "When your brother hath need to borrow, lend, though his case be such that you even despair of receiving it again, though you run some hazard of losing the principal."

If, therefore, it so fall out that the debtor be not able to repay what he borrowed, forgive it him. He lends, "hoping for nothing again," who is willing to forgive, in case the necessity of the borrower require it. This was it which Nehemiah enjoined the rich Jews. (Neh. v. 11.) Excellently doth our Lord press this duty in the parable of the two creditors; where we have a commendable pattern of a certain king, that in such a case forgave a great debt; and of the sore revenge he executed on one of his servants, because he did not in like manner forgive his fellow-servant. (Matt. xviii. 23—35.)

In the Old Testament it is commended to us under the phrase of "restoring the pledge." (Ezek. xviii. 7; xxxiii. 15.) A pledge was a pawn left by a debtor with his creditor, for assurance to repay the debt. (Gen. xxxviii. 17, 18.) Restoring the pledge when the debt was not paid, was an evidence of remitting the debt.

5. *By hospitality*, which consisteth not so much in a loving entertainment of kindred, friends, and neighbours, as of strangers; as the word in the Greek importeth.†

This is that hospitality which is both commanded and commended to us in the holy scripture.

It is commanded in those known precepts of the apostle St. Paul: "Be given to hospitality;" (Rom. xii. 13;) and, "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers." (Heb. xiii. 2.) Which is as much as to say, "Forget not hospitality, which is an entertaining of strangers." And the apostle St. Peter commands the faithful to whom he writes, to "use hospitality without grudging," or repining. (1 Peter iv. 9.)

It is commended to us in the practice of God's people: as of Abraham; of whom it is recorded, that he sat at his tent-door, looking and waiting, as it were, for strangers to entertain them; and so soon as he saw three men, whom he took for such, he ran to invite them: (Gen. xviii. 1—3:) and of Lot, that as he sat in the gate of Sodom, he saw two whom he

* *Απελπίζοντες*—*Ελπίζω*, sperare; *απελπίζω*, desperare. † *Φιλοξενία*, compounded of *φιλεω* et *ξενους*. *Hospitalitas est species liberalitatis quæ peregrinos, et hospites, ac præsertim propter verâ doctrinæ professionem exsultantes, verâ benevolentia, et aliquibus officiis hospitalitatis prosequimur.*—URSINI *Catechismus*, quest. iii. "Hospitality is one kind of liberality; namely, liberality and bountifulness toward travellers and strangers, especially toward those that are exiles for the profession of the gospel, entertaining them with all duties of hospitality and Christian charity."—PARRY'S Translation, 1645. *Φιλοξενία* ἐστὶ *φιλοτεχνία* περὶ *χρησῶν* ξένων.—CLEMENS ALEXANDRINUS. "Hospitality is a loving art, skillfully exercised in behalf of strangers."—EDIT.

conceived to be strangers ; them he exceedingly pressed to turn into his house, where he made them a feast : (Gen. xix. 3 :) and of the Shunammite woman and her husband, who showed themselves hospitable to the prophet Elisha, “ as oft as he passed by ” their house. (2 Kings iv. 8.) We have Job’s testimony of himself : “ The stranger,” said he, “ did not lodge in the street ; but I opened my doors to the traveller : ” (Job xxxi. 32 :) which words set out Job’s great hospitality, who kept open house for all passengers. In those days there was no common inn for the entertainment of strangers ; and therefore they must have lain out of doors, if some good men had not entertained them.

Having such and so many precedents of hospitality, let us strive to follow them, labouring to write after their copy ; knowing assuredly that our labour of love and cost therein shall not be in vain. For I may truly say, it is a fruitful and gainful course of liberality ; never did any lose by it. Some hereby have entertained angels, as the apostle speaketh : “ Be not forgetful to entertain strangers : for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” (Heb. xiii. 2.) In setting down this recompence, the apostle hath an especial respect unto two instances ; one of Abraham, and the other of Lot. (Gen. xviii. 2 ; xix. 1.)

Angels came to both these, in the appearance of men, whom they knew not ; which showeth God’s high account of this duty, in that once and again he sent angels, to such as were ready to entertain strangers.

Yea, we may entertain Christ himself ; and, indeed, in every entertainment of a poor godly stranger, Christ himself is entertained. And therefore, in the great day of judgment, we read that Christ puts-in this good work by name : “ I was a stranger, and ye took me in ; ” (Matt. xxv. 35 ;) Jesus Christ is a stranger in his members.

In sacred scriptures we find several others rewarded for their hospitality : as, Rebekah, for her courtesy to Abraham’s servant, a mere stranger to her, was rewarded with precious gifts and a good husband. (Gen. xxiv. 22, 67.)—The Shunammite’s hospitality to the prophet was recompensed with giving her a son, and restoring him to life. (2 Kings iv.)—The widow of Zarephath’s hospitality to the prophet Elijah, in receiving him into her house in a great famine, was rewarded with preserving and increasing her meal and oil ; for it is expressly said, that her “ barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail,” until the Lord sent plenty of food. (1 Kings xvii. 16.)—Gaius’s hospitality towards St. Paul, in receiving him into his house, was recompensed with an honourable testimony, which both St. Paul and St. John gave of him. (Rom. xvi. 23 ; 3 John 5, 6.)

OBJECTION. Some may object and say, “ Instead of a godly man, I may haply entertain some dissembling hypocrite, and so lose both my gift and reward.”

ANSWER. 1. Our charity ought to hope the best of every one, of whom we have no evident proof or presumption to the contrary. (1 Cor. xiii. 7.)

2. If we receive a distressed minister in the name of a minister of Christ, or a private distressed Christian in the name of a righteous man, supposing him to belong to Christ ; let him be what he will, we shall

neither lose gift nor reward: Christ hath undertaken the payment thereof.

6. Rich men may and ought in some cases to express their charity, even by *selling what they have, for the relief of others*: according to that of our Saviour, "Sell that ye have, and give alms." (Luke xii. 33.)

QUESTION. "In what cases must rich men sell their estates, or any part of them, for the relief of others?"

ANSWER. 1. When they are extraordinarily called thereunto: as he that asked Christ what he should do to inherit eternal life: Christ said unto him, "Sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor." (Mark x. 17, 21.) That which the apostles did in leaving their callings to follow Christ, was equivalent to selling their possessions. (Matt. xix. 27.)

2. When they have defrauded and oppressed others, and are rebuked for that sin, or otherwise brought to repentance for the same, they ought to testify the truth of their repentance by a full restitution, though it be by parting with their possessions. Thus did the Jews, after their captivity, restore to their poor brethren, whom they had oppressed with usury, their lands and their houses, &c. (Neh. v. 11, 12.) The instance of Zaccheus tendeth also to this purpose, who promised to give the half of his goods to the poor. (Luke xix. 8.)

3. When there are such a multitude of indigent persons in the church, as the superfluity of such as are rich is not sufficient to relieve them. In this case, Christians in the primitive church that "were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." (Acts iv. 34, 35.)

These particular cases, being all of them somewhat extraordinary, do not patronize the Platonical and Familistical conceit of community of goods. Which fond mistake of theirs, these arguments, amongst others, may sufficiently confute, and evince propriety in land and possessions to be lawful now in the times of the gospel.

1. In those very times wherein Christians, for use, had all things common, St. Peter expressly saith to Ananias, concerning the lands which he sold, "Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?" (Acts v. 4.) Hereby it is manifest, that men then had a propriety in goods and lands.

2. The duties prescribed to rich men in the words of my text, "to do good, to be ready to distribute, and willing to communicate," prove as much.

3. The many admonitions to pay debts, to give tribute, and perform other like duties of justice, do imply a propriety of goods.

4. Exhortations also to lend, and to sell, prove as much. (Luke vi. 35; xi. 41.) For men may not lend nor sell that wherein they have not a propriety.

5. Inhibitions against stealing, and against all kind of injustice, presuppose a propriety. (Eph. iv. 28; 1 Thess. iv. 6.)

Thus have I done with the *seventh* property, requisite to the right manner of giving alms, which is bounty and liberality: whereon I have somewhat the longer insisted, because it is the principal thing intended

in my text,—That “they which are rich in this world’s goods, be rich in good works.” I shall add but one more.

ANSWER VIII. Our alms must be given *prudently, with discretion*, according to every one’s need. It is said of the merciful man, “A good man showeth favour, and lendeth : he will guide his affairs with discretion.” (Psalm cxii. 5.) And truly there is a great deal of discretion to be used, in the ordering of our charity ; by putting a difference between poor and poor ; for, as one saith, “Unadvised giving is the worst kind of losing.”*

Prudence in almsgiving is commended to us by our Saviour, in this word, *distribute* : *Διὰδος πτωχοῖς*, “Distribute unto the poor.” (Luke xviii. 22.) For “to distribute,” is with discretion to give to sundry persons several portions, according to their need. When mention is made of a prudent, discreet relieving [of] the poor, it is thus expressed : “Distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.” (Acts iv. 35.)

For the better performing this due discretion in our charity, let these rules following be observed :—

1. *They are before others to be relieved, over whom we have an especial charge.*—As they who are of our household, of our own house and family, as wife, children, and servants. For, as the apostle speaketh, “If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.” (1 Tim. v. 8.)

2. *In our charity we ought to have a special respect unto our poor kindred.*—For of those is the fore-mentioned place (1 Tim. v. 8) to be understood ; where the word in the Greek, *των οικειων*, translated “house,” is rendered *kindred* in the margin of your Bibles. For the scope of the apostle is to free the church from unnecessary charges, and to that end doth impose the care of providing for poor kindred upon such of their relations as were able. (1 Tim. v. 16.)

3. *They are to be relieved who are of the congregation or parish whereof we are members.*—Especially they who dwell near unto us, in regard that we may best know their wants. (Deut. xv. 7, 8.)

4. *They whom we have just cause to believe that they are of the household of faith.* (Gal. vi. 10.)—For we may judge them to be true in their words ; and believe that their wants are such as they declare them to be. Now, amongst the godly, such are especially to be relieved, and to be preferred in our charity, who are imprisoned, or otherwise suffer, for Christ and the gospel’s sake. For Christ in a special manner is relieved in the persons of such as himself will acknowledge at the day of judgment, when he will pronounce that blessed sentence of absolution to such merciful men : “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world : for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat : I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink : I was a stranger, and ye took me in ; naked, and ye clothed me : I was in prison, and ye came unto me,” &c. (Matt. xxv. 34—36.)

5. *They whom we discern to stand in need of present succour.*—Though they be mere strangers, whom we never saw or knew before.

* *Turpissimum genus perdendi est inconsulta donatio.*

Hereof we have a worthy pattern set before us in the good Samaritan. (Luke x. 33, &c.)

6. *They who are in prison, or sick, or any other ways restrained from making their wants known unto others.* (Matt. xxv. 36.)

7. *They of whose piety, poverty, and necessity, credible testimony is brought unto us, though we see them not ourselves.*—Thus many of the Christian Gentiles sent relief to the churches at Jerusalem upon the apostle's making known their wants. (Rom. xv. 25, 26 ; Acts xxiv. 17.)

In these and other like cases we ought to extend our charity, according to the necessity of those whom we relieve, and our own ability ; and not think it enough to give a few scraps of bread and meat, or some halfpennies or pence, to common beggars at our doors, or in the streets. This kind of alms savoureth more of vain outward ostentation, than of true inward compassion ; and it more beseems proud Pharisees, than humble Christians. A charitable Christian ordinarily giveth more to one whose distressed case he knows, or is credibly made known unto him, than these Pharisees do to many beggars at many times.

QUESTION. But you will say, "Do ye, then, utterly condemn all giving to common beggars, as unlawful?"

ANSWER. For answer to this question, we must distinguish of common beggars. Some are strong and lusty, able to work ; and yet are so lazy, that they will not work, but would live by the sweat of other men's brows. Others, again, are weak and impotent, unable to work through age, sickness, lameness, blindness, or the like.

These latter are fit objects of charity, and therefore ought to be relieved. But the former sort of beggars (namely, the strong and lusty, who are able to work, but will not through laziness) are no fit objects of charity, and therefore it is no work of charity to relieve such ; for,

1. *Their trade of life is no warrantable calling.*—It is a *disorderly walking*, which is expressly taxed by the apostle ; for, saith he, "When we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all." (2 Thess. iii. 10, 11.) It cannot be said of those, "As the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk : " or, "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called." (1 Cor. vii. 17, 20.) God hath called none to such a trade.

2. *They are as drones in a hive of bees.*—They live of the labours of others, but bring in nothing to the stock, as all the other bees do. They are as barren trees, which receive sap from the earth, but yield no fruit ; "unprofitable burdens of the earth,"* whose sad doom ye may read, Luke xiii. 7.

3. *Many of them are of no particular church, nor of any civil society ; but out of all government in church and state.*—In this and the former respect they may justly be styled "children of Belial," without yoke. (Deut. xiii. 13.)

4. *They withhold, and in a manner rob the state wherein they dwell of their labour and pains.*—The state or kingdom is as a body ; all that dwell therein are as so many members. Now, nature teacheth every

* *Telluris inutile pondus.*

member to do somewhat for the benefit of the whole. These, doing nothing thereto, sin against the light of nature.

5. *They who are truly poor shall by this means be neglected and scanted*: whilst these lazy drones devour that which of right belongeth unto them.

6. *They are a great scandal and shame to the government of the nation wherein they are.*—For their course of life implieth that no good provision is made for the poor; nor order taken to set such as are able to work, and to relieve such as are impotent. Now, it is a great sin to be a shame to one's own country.

7. *Their kind of life is sensual and brutish.*—For as brutes they spend all their days in seeking food for their bodies.

From hence it followeth that they who relieve such make themselves accessory to the fore-mentioned sins.*

There are some allegations made for relieving such; but they are undue allegations, and may easily be answered. The chiefest of them is this:—

1. Christ commandeth to “give to every man that asketh of thee.” (Luke vi. 30.)

ANSWER. To this I answer, that the precept is to be taken in reference to a false position of the Pharisees; which was this,—that their countrymen and friends only were their neighbours, whom by the law they were bound to love. That this was their opinion, is evident by this their gloss on the law: “Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy;” (Matt. v. 43;) and by the parable which Christ produceth to demonstrate to the lawyer *who was his neighbour*. (Luke x. 29, &c.) In opposition to that false doctrine, Christ commands to “give,” not to friends only, but “to every man.” So as the scope of that precept is, to take away respect of persons in alms-giving; that we should not restrain this duty of charity to countrymen, kindred, and friends; but extend it also to strangers, enemies, and to every one, that, being in need, craves it of us.

2. A second allegation is, “that many beggars may perish, if they be not relieved.”

ANSWER. In case of necessity they may and must be relieved, either at doors, in streets, or other like places, where their necessity is manifested. “Necessity,” as we speak, “hath no law.” It dispenses with ordinary rules. Instance that which Christ produced concerning David: “He entered into the house of God, and did eat the shew-bread, which was not lawful.” (Matt. xii. 4.)

I have done with the question allotted to me. Give me leave to add a few words, for the more profitable pressing this most necessary, but much-neglected, duty of charity. I shall dispatch my intendment herein,

* *Qui largiuntur indignis ea quæ dignis conferri debebant, tria committunt absurda: 1. Nam et ipsi jacturam faciunt. 2. Et in bonos contumeliosi sunt. 3. Et malos roborant materiâ vitiorum suppeditâ.* “Three great absurdities are committed by those who bestow on the undeserving what ought to have been conferred only on the worthy: 1. They suffer the loss of their own property. 2. They both injure and reproach good people. 3. And they strengthen bad men, by supplying materials for pampering their vices.”—EDIT.

I. By showing you by what MEANS you may obtain this grace.

II. Giving you some MOTIVES to quicken you up to a conscionable performance of the works of it.

I. The MEANS are these :—

1. *Meditation.* Seriously meditate,

(1.) Of the *necessity* of it ; which ariseth from the Lord's express charge and command, unto which we are bound to yield obedience. It is often commanded, both in the Old and New Testament. That I may not be tedious, I shall give you but two or three proofs : Deut. xv. 11 ; a place I often mentioned for the excellency and exceeding pertinency of it to this purpose. Saith the Lord to his people there : "The poor shall never cease out of the land : therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy in thy land ;" that is, thou shalt give unto him freely and bountifully. And saith our Saviour in the New Testament : "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away." (Matt. v. 42.) And saith the apostle : "To do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased ;" (Heb. xiii. 16 ;) in which words he presseth the duty with a forcible motive ; for who would not do that which is well-pleasing unto God, who is bountiful in rewarding the least good we do upon his command ?

This duty of alms-giving being so expressly commanded in scripture, it is not in our power to omit or neglect the same ; neither can any creature give us a dispensation against the Creator's command. A prophet sty leth omission of that which God enjoineth to be done, yea, though that omission were but in part, and that upon a fair pretence, "rebellion, which is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness, which is as iniquity and idolatry." (1 Sam. xv. 23.) Against him who failed in performing the charge enjoined him, though he were a king, this doom is denounced : "Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king." (Verse 26.) In like manner may God reject such as neglect this duty of charity, when he calls them to it, from being kings, and reigning in heaven. We have a manifest instance thereof, Matt. xxv. 41—43.

Now, the giving of alms being a duty so expressly commanded in the holy scriptures, it cannot therefore be accounted a matter merely arbitrary, left to a man's own will, to give or not to give. But it is a bounden duty, which they that in any competent measure can do, must not omit : which consideration cannot but be a strong incitation unto us to make conscience of this duty of alms-giving, as occasion is offered, and not to overslip opportunities that by the Divine Providence are offered unto us. Should we neglect that which our Lord hath expressly commanded ? that whereunto, by virtue of that command, we are bound ? that whereof we are to give an account ? Let us, upon the Lord's commands, do what in this kind we can ; and when we have done what we can, say, "We are unprofitable servants : we have done that which was our duty to do." (Luke xvii. 10.)

(2.) Of the *equity* of this duty of alms-giving. It is a most equal thing, that he who hath wherewithal should give to him that hath not.

The equity ariseth both from the Divine Providence, and also from the instability of man's state and condition.

(i.) God for this end gives more to some than to others, that they who have more abundance should give, out of their abundance, to them who are in want. This was typically signified by the gathering of manna; [of] which, though it were rained down from heaven, yet the Lord would not allow that they who had gathered much, even more than was needful for themselves and their household, should hoard up their superfluity, but enjoined them to communicate of their abundance to such as had not enough. The which the apostle applieth to the giving of alms, out of our abundance, to those who want; which he styleth "equality." (2 Cor. viii. 14.)

(ii.) Man's state is so variable, as he who now hath may quickly want, and in want desire to be succoured by such as have. It is thereupon most equal, that they who would be succoured in their need should be willing to succour the need of others. This equity doth Christ himself press: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them;" and as a ground to enforce this the further, he addeth: "For this is the Law and the Prophets:" (Matt. vii. 12:) hereby implying, that this doctrine is contained in the Law and the Prophets. But that is not all: these words, "This is the Law and the Prophets," intend that the sum of the Law and the Prophets consisteth therein; and the main scope of them tendeth thereunto; namely, so far as they contain the duties of man to man. So evident is the equity hereof, even by the light of nature, as the very Heathen, who wanted the light of God's word, discerned it. Well, therefore, might the apostle enforce this duty of charity upon this ground: thus, "Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them;" (Heb. xiii. 3;) that is, "Be helpful to others which cannot help themselves, as you would have others afford succour unto you, if you were succourless."

(3.) *Meditate of the manifold singular benefits which do follow and accompany a conscionable performance of this duty.*—For thereby we discharge our duty to God, who requireth it at our hands; and, as a consequent thereof, we shall glorify God; for it tends much to his praise and glory when, in such works as himself hath commanded, his children testify their obedience and thankfulness: and therefore saith our Saviour, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." (John xv. 8.)

And by our charity, as we shall grace and adorn our holy profession, so we shall stop the mouths of wicked men from speaking any evil of us or of our profession; for how are men apt to speak of us, and of our profession, according to the fruits we bring forth, and the good works which we do!

And as we shall thereby comfort and make glad the hearts of the poor and distressed, so we shall refresh our own souls, in that our works of charity will evidence our fruits to be sound and saving, lively and effectual; for as Rachel said to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die;" [Gen. xxx. 1;] in like manner saith faith to the soul of a Christian, "'Give me children,' let me bring forth good works, 'else I die,' and have no life in me;" according to that of the apostle James, "Faith

without works is dead :” (James ii. 26 :) it is not a living but a dead faith, that manifests not its life by working.

2. As meditation, so *prayer*, is a special means on our part to be performed for attaining unto this grace of charity. I say, earnest and fervent prayer unto God for the same ; for as he is the Fountain and Author of every good gift, so he hath sanctified prayer, as the means of obtaining every good gift from him.

Be earnest, therefore, with God in prayer, that he would be pleased to give thee as a compassionate heart towards the needs and necessities of the poor members of Jesus Christ ; so an open hand, that thou mayest freely and liberally contribute unto them, according to their necessity, and thy ability. Beg of God that, as he hath blessed thee with some competent estate, so he would add this mercy,—to give thee an heart to give out proportionably to what he hath given thee ; and that in testimony of thy love and thankfulness unto him. But, alas ! how few are there who in their prayers unto God are mindful of this grace of charity ! How few are there who ever begged of God that he would be pleased to implant this noble grace of charity in their hearts ! If, upon examination, thou findest thyself to have been faulty therein, go, take up a new resolution to be earnest with God in prayer for this grace especially, and never to give over till thou find it in some measure wrought in thy soul, till thou find thyself, upon all good occasions, “ready to distribute, and willing to communicate,” to the needs and necessities of thy poor brethren.

3. *Diligence in our callings* is another means on our part to be performed, for the practising of charity. He that would be charitable to the poor in their needs and necessities, must be diligent and industrious in his calling, so that he may have wherewithal to express his charity : for men’s diligence in their callings is usually crowned with a blessing ; according to that of the wise man : “The hand of the diligent maketh rich.” And again : “The soul of the diligent shall be made fat ;” (Prov. x. 4 ; xiii. 4 ;) that is, shall be enriched with outward blessings : and the Greeks say that “plentifulness follows painfulness ;” and that “all things are made servants to care and industry.”* And therefore the apostle Paul prescribeth diligence and industry in a lawful calling as a means of charity : “Let him that stole steal no more : but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.” (Eph. iv. 28.) This is one end we should propound to ourselves, in the works of our callings ; namely, that, through God’s blessing on our pains and endeavours, we may have not only sufficient for our own livelihood, and of them that belong unto us, but also somewhat for the relief of others. Solomon, describing the virtuous woman, saith, in the first place, that “she seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands ;” and then, “that she stretcheth out her hand to the poor ; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.” (Prov. xxxi. 13, 20.)

4. *Be careful to prevent all superfluities in your expenses.*—As dili-

* Πονη φλουτος οκηδει της επιμελειας δουλα παντα γινεται.—STOBÆUS. “Riches are always found in company with labour ; and every thing becomes subservient to attentive carefulness.”—EDIT.

gence in your callings, so frugality in your spending, is a special means for the practice of charity. "Frugality," says Justin, "is the mother of virtue."* I am sure it is the foundation and supporter of charity: for, let a man's estate be never so great, yet, if there be not frugality used in the management thereof, there will be but little found for works of charity. And, on the other side, though a man's estate be but mean and low in the world; yet, if there be frugality used in the management of it, there will be ever somewhat for charitable uses. As, therefore, thou desirest to be charitable, be careful to prevent all unnecessary expenses; I mean, let not thy apparel be too costly; for how can it be expected that they should be charitable, ready to distribute to the necessities of others, who lay out the greatest part of their estates upon their backs? Neither let thy feasting be too frequent, nor too chargeable; which is noted for one of the sins of the old world, who "were given to eating," as the word in the original, *τρῶγοντες*, properly signifieth. (Matt. xxiv. 38.) Neither let thy recreations be too expensive, in playing more for money than for refreshment. O that such of you who spend so much time and money on your recreations (as if God had sent you into the world, and given you the good things of the world, for no other end than to follow your pleasures) would consider what a fearful reckoning you are to make at the day of judgment, not only of your precious time lavishly mis-spent, but also of your estate wickedly lost or wasted; when in thy account there shall be found so much wasted in gaming and pleasures, and so little given to the poor!

5. *Set apart something out of thine incomes and receipts, as a sacred stock, for charitable uses.*—For, (1.) Hereby thou wilt be fitted and prepared with matter for such uses, having always somewhat by thee to give upon any good occasion. (2.) By this means thou wilt more readily and willingly, more freely and liberally, contribute to the needs and necessities of others, having a stock by thee for that very end and purpose. All men naturally are hard-hearted, and close-handed; † and thereupon are very hardly persuaded to part with any thing considerable for charitable uses. But this consecrating beforehand a part of thine estate for the use of the poor, will cause thy charity to flow out more freely and bountifully.

Now a sacred stock for the poor may be raised two ways:—

(1.) *By setting apart something every Lord's day, out of thy comings-in the week before, according as God hath prospered thee.*—Which practice we find prescribed unto us by the direction of the Holy Ghost, and warranted unto us by apostolical authority: for, saith the apostle Paul to the Corinthians, "Now, concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week," which is the Lord's day, "let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him;" (1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2;)

* *Genetrix virtutum frugalitas.*—JUSTINUS, lib. xx. cap. 4. † *Ad opes honoresque expectandos, ad cumulandas divitias, furiosa est nostra libido, infinita cupiditas.*—CALVINI *Institutiones*, lib. 31. "Most outrageous is our natural desire, and infinite our cupidity, for the acquisition of property, influence, and honour, and for the accumulation of riches."—**EDIT.**

that is, according to the ability wherewith God hath blessed him, let him set apart something for the relief of the poor, especially the poor saints.

This rule I would commend to such who live upon their daily labour. But for those merchants, citizens, and tradesmen, who sell much of their wares upon trust, and know not certainly at the week's end what they have gained, I would advise such, when they have cast up their accounts at the year's end, to set apart something of their comings-in that year, according as God hath prospered them, for charitable uses; as they expect God's blessing upon their trading the year following.*

(2.) *By consecrating unto God a certain portion of thy yearly incomes and revenues for charitable uses.*—What this portion should be, I dare not determine, the scriptures being silent therein; only in the general we are commanded to give out proportionably to what God hath given unto us, that they who are rich in this world's goods be rich in good works. But this I can say, that the most that I have heard or read of, who have taken this course to consecrate unto God a certain portion of their estate to charitable uses, have followed the example of Jacob, in giving a tenth part unto God. (Gen. xxviii. 22.) And as God did exceedingly bless Jacob after his vow, so likewise hath he blessed divers others after their vow unto God.

An eminent divine of this city, † now with God, in his funeral sermon at the burial of a merchant, speaking of his charity, saith, that at his first effectual call, among other things he then resolved upon, this was one, to set apart every year a tenth of his gain for the relief of the poor; and that God from that time forward abundantly advanced his estate. ‡ And, withal, he adds a passage very remarkable, and therefore I shall give it you in his own words: "True it is that for some space of time, some three or four years after that his resolution of setting a tenth apart for such purposes, he thrived not, he found no increase, nor came forward in the world, as formerly he had done; yet was he not thereby discouraged; nor did he forbear to be bountiful, as opportunity was offered, and the necessity of poor people required it. But he gave still with cheerfulness and comfort, out of love to God; conceiving that God, in wisdom and goodness, prospered him not, *thereby to try his sincerity to Him, and his charity to others*; yea, and that he himself might thereby have experience of his love unto God, his faith, patience, and constancy." But then he adds: "From that time forward, God abundantly advanced his estate; so that he found experimentally all those gracious promises of God true, of his blessing of him that 'disperseth and dispenseth to the poor,' (Psalm cxii. 9,) and of the repayment of that with interest that is so lent to the Lord. (Prov. xix. 17.)"

Another eminent divine, § in his funeral sermon at the burial of the Lord Harrington, speaking of his charity, declared, that in his life-time he gave the tenth part of his yearly revenue to the poor.

And from mine own experience I can tell you of one yet living, who,

* This paragraph was added by the author after the publication of the first edition.—
 EDIT. † Mr. Thomas Gataker, in his funeral sermon at the burial of Mr. John Parker, merchant and citizen of London. ‡ The remainder of this paragraph is to be found only in the first edition.—EDIT. § Mr. Stock.

finding little coming-in by his trade, resolved upon two things : (i.) To be more careful in sanctifying the Lord's day. (ii.) To set apart the tenth of his increase for charitable uses. Whereupon he gained so much in a few years, that he gave over his calling, and ever since liveth upon his rents.

Many like instances I could give you of some that are dead, and others yet living, who have devoted, some a tenth, and others a fifth, part of their whole estate to pious and charitable uses. *Which I do not propound as a general rule to all good Christians ; for, some there are who have no more than is necessary for the comfortable support of themselves and families, from whom less is required for the relief of others. But I question whether such whom the Lord hath blessed with a plentiful estate, so that their necessary expenses are, or might be, far less than their incomes, can be accounted "rich in good works," unless they give at least a tenth part of their whole yearly income to charitable uses. I say of their "whole yearly income," without first deducting any part thereof for diet, clothes, or other necessary expenses ; for the tenth of the remainder will be a very inconsiderable proportion for a rich man to devote to charity, and far short of that which the scripture seems to call for. It is recorded of the Jews, that very many amongst the richer sort, who are devout in their religion, do usually give away a tenth part of their estate to charitable uses. And is it not very unbecoming Christians who are rich in this world's goods to fall short of the Jews herein ?

II. Having thus done with the MEANS on our part to be performed for attaining unto this grace of charity, come we now to the MOTIVES, to quicken us up to a conscionable performance of the works of it. I shall touch only upon these four :—

1. The *excellency* of the duty.
2. The *piety* which it containeth in it.
3. The *profit* which ariseth from it.
4. The *damage* which follows upon the neglect thereof.

1. The first motive or inducement to charity may be taken from *the excellency thereof*.—I suppose that all will grant that the greatest excellency that a creature can attain unto, is to be like his Creator. That excellency wherein man was at first created, is thus set out : "God created man in his own image ;" that is, "in his own likeness." (Gen. i. 26, 27.) And that excellency wherewith we shall be glorified in heaven is set out by our likeness to Christ ; for it is said, our bodies shall then "be fashioned like unto his glorious body," (Phil. iii. 21,) yea, in the whole man : "when he shall appear, we shall be like him." (1 John iii. 2.)

Now, while we live on earth, there is nothing wherein we can show ourselves more like unto God than in showing mercy, and in succouring such as stand in need. When God sets himself to proclaim his name, he most insisteth upon his mercifulness and goodness. (Exod. xxxiv. 6.) Christ himself doth press this motive to enforce this duty ; thus : "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful." (Luke vi. 36.)

* The remaining sentences in this paragraph do not occur in the first edition.—EDIT.

The excellency of charity doth herein further appear, that Christ hath set the poor in his own room; insomuch as they who relieve the poor do therein relieve Christ himself. So much doth Christ acknowledge, where he saith to such as succoured the poor, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (Matt. xxv. 40.) Is it not an excellent thing to relieve Christ? They, then, that relieve the poor do an excellent work. As it is a great aggravation of persecuting the true professors of the faith, because therein they persecute Christ himself, (as is implied under this divine voice that affrighted Saul, while he was breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Acts ix. 4,) so it is a great commendation of true charity, that Christ himself is relieved thereby.

2. Another motive is the *piety, which in and by performing this duty of alms-giving is manifested*.—Piety, I say, to God: for "pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction." (James i. 27.) Here he puts two particulars, for all kinds of charity; and by this phrase, "pure religion before God is this," he intends four things:—

- (1.) That it is but a mere show of religion that is without charity.
- (2.) That true religion will make men charitable.
- (3.) That charity will prove men to be truly religious.

(4.) That works of charity are as acceptable to God as duties of religion. For God accounts charity "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing unto him." (Phil. iv. 18.) The poor and needy are to God as the altars of burnt-offerings and incense were under the law. Those things which were laid on them, and offered up, were given to the Lord, and as a gift accepted by him. Even so are alms given to the poor; the poor are the altar, alms the sacrifice. Now, who would not dispose of that which he hath, as God may account it given to him, and answerably accept it? On this very ground doth the apostle incite the Hebrews to this duty, in this manner: "To do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." (Heb. xiii. 16.) Thus we see how works of charity are not only useful and profitable to man, but also acceptable and well-pleasing to God; which consideration addeth much life to the duty here pressed.

3. A third motive is, *the manifold profit wherewith it is rewarded*.—Profit and advantage is the motive which, for the most part, spurs men on to labour and take pains; to rise early, and sit up late; to venture goods, life, and all they have. Witness the pains, travels, and watchings, and adventures of labourers, workmen, tradesmen, farmers, merchants, mariners, &c. :* yet that profit which they aim at is but earthly and temporary, and their hope of attaining it uncertain. Surely, works of charity give an assured hope of a far greater and better profit than earth can afford.

* *Omnes expetimus utilitatem, ad eamque rapimur, nec facere aliter ullo modo possumus.*
—CICERO *De Officiis*, lib. iii. "All of us are engaged in the search of that which we consider to be useful; and in the pursuit of it we are impelled forward, and incapable of acting in any other manner than as we really do."—EDIT.

In general it is promised, that if we cast our bread upon the waters, we shall find it after many days; [Eccles. xi. 1.] that is, if we give alms to the poor, where all we do may seem to be cast away, as if it were thrown into the sea; yet, in due time, will it return to us with advantage.* And lest any should be discouraged from doing works of charity, our Saviour assureth us, that "whosoever shall give a cup of cold water only," (which is one of the least acts of charity we can perform,) "shall in no wise lose his reward." (Matt. x. 42.)

If, *in special*, it be demanded, What profit is there of charity? I answer, as the apostle did of circumcision, "Much every way." (Rom. iii. 2.) Yea, I may say of charity, as the apostle doth of piety: it "is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." (1 Tim. iv. 8.)

In this life is promised,

(1.) *Sufficiency*: "He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack;" (Prov. xxviii. 27;) that is, he shall be secured from want and penury. God will not suffer him to be brought to penury, who hath been charitable to the poor.

(2.) Not only sufficiency, but likewise *abundance*: for, saith the wise man, "Honour the Lord with thy substance," by giving freely and cheerfully to charitable and pious uses: "so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine;" (Prov. iii. 9, 10;) which is an hyperbolical expression, implying plenty and abundance.

(3.) *Good success in what he enterpriseth*.—According to that of Moses, "Thou shalt surely give him, because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto." (Deut. xv. 10.)

(4.) *Deliverance out of trouble*: for, saith the Psalmist, "Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble." (Psalm xli. 1.)

(5.) *Protection against enemies*: as it followeth in the next verse: "Thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies." (Verse 2.)

(6.) *Succour in sickness*; as the prophet goes on: "The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing;" (verse 3;) that is, the Lord will comfort and support him in his sickness, and at length restore his strength again. "Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness;" that is, thou wilt give him ease and rest, as they do to sick men that make their beds.

(7.) To pass by other particulars, *blessedness*, which compriseth under it all manner of commodities, is promised to the charitable person. (Prov. xxii. 9.) And in Psalm xli. 2, it is said, "He shall be blessed upon the earth;" yea, and "at the resurrection of the just." (Luke xiv. 14.)

(8.) *This promise is extended to his posterity*; for "his seed shall be blessed." (Psalm xxxvii. 26.)

* *Fecundus est ager pauperum; cito reddit donantibus fructum.*—AUGUSTINUS, *Sermo De Divite*. "The field of the poor is a fertile soil: its returns of fruit, to those who are benefactors to it, are abundant."—EDIT.

These and other like promises of temporal, spiritual, and eternal blessings, being made by the Lord God of truth, may with much confidence be rested upon: for God's words are deeds; his promises, performances.

In the life to come, merciful men shall "inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world." (Matt. xxv. 34.)

There are, among others, two metaphors often used by the Holy Ghost, in setting out alms-giving, which do much amplify the commodity thence arising: one is taken from *lending*; the other from *sowing*.

(1.) Alms-giving is set forth in scripture by *lending*; yea, to such a lending whereby we have not only the principal restored, but with great increase. And whereas such as put forth their money unto men can expect but six in the hundred; if we, in obedience to the command of God, shall freely part with our money to the use of the poor, for their relief, we shall receive an hundred for six, yea, an hundred for one, and eternal life to boot. (Mark x. 30.) And we need not to doubt of the payment; for though the poor be never so unable, yet we have an all-sufficient Surety, even God himself, who hath undertaken to pay whatsoever is thus put forth; according to that of the wise man: "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again." (Prov. xix. 17.) Where you have God's counterbond to save you harmless, in which he both acknowledgeth the debt, and promiseth payment. And what better security can any man desire than a bond under God's own hand? The consideration whereof should, methinks, make us willing to embrace any opportunity of putting out our money to this great advantage.

(2.) As for the other metaphor of *sowing*, it is in scripture applied to alms-giving, under this phrase, "He hath dispersed." (Psalm cxii. 9.) As the husbandman disperseth his seed which he soweth in the earth, so doth the almsgiver his alms; therefore this is added by way of exposition: "He hath given to the poor." The apostle also applieth unto alms-giving this proverbial speech: "He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." (2 Cor. ix. 6.) Now, what is it that ordinarily bringeth forth a greater increase than sowing seed in fertile ground? It is said of Isaac, that he "sowed in the land, and received in the same year an hundredfold." (Gen. xxvi. 12.) And Christ saith, that "good ground" beareth fruit, some "an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold." (Matt. xiii. 8.) Now, alms-giving is one of those things that shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

If, therefore, profit and advantage may be a motive to stir us up unto any thing, surely it should be a motive to incite us unto liberality in alms-giving, to be bountiful in contributing to the relief of the poor.

For it is a most certain truth, that "giving to the poor is the surest and safest way of getting." For though husbandmen may sometimes lose the benefit of their seed sown, through mildews, or unseasonable weather; and such as put their money to use may come short of their principal; yet he who with an honest and sincere heart giveth to the poor, shall in no wise lose his reward. For, as the wise man speaketh,

“there is that scattereth, and yet increaseth;” (Prov. xi. 24;) intimating unto us, that this scattering is the best way of increasing. And, indeed, so it is; for hath not our Saviour promised, that if we “give, it shall be given unto us; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together?” (Luke vi. 38.) Here God gives us, as it were, a bill of his hand, and enters into bond, and becomes surety with the poor, that what we give shall be repaid with advantage. This is a paradox to worldly men, *that giving should be the surest and safest way of getting and increasing*; yet nothing [is] more clearly laid down in the scripture, and found to be true by the experience of God’s people.

4. The fourth motive and inducement is *the damage which may ensue upon the neglect of almsgiving*.—Though it argue a kind of servile disposition to be moved with fear of loss or pain,* to a duty; yet of that disposition are many; and in that respect this may be added as an inducement to the duty.

The damage that may arise upon the neglect of charity, when it ought to be showed, is, in the kind thereof, as large as the fore-mentioned benefits of performing the duty, in the kind of it. For, neglect of the duty doth not only cause a forfeiture of all the fore-mentioned benefits arising from the performance thereof, but also pulleth upon the neglecter’s head many evils. Where the wise man saith, “The merciful man doeth good to his own soul,” he addeth, “But he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh.” (Prov. xi. 17.) Soul and flesh are the two essential parts of a man; both the one and the other are synecdochically put for the whole man; even for the person. By a “cruel” man is meant an unmerciful or hard-hearted man; for he is opposed to a merciful man. The meaning, then, of this proverb is this: “As a merciful man doeth good, not only to his poor brother, to whom he showeth mercy, but also to himself; so a hard-hearted man doth not only grieve his distressed neighbour in affording him no succour, but also brings much damage to himself.” For he “that withholdeth more than is meet, cometh to poverty.” (Verse 24.) “Withholding” is there opposed to “scattering,” which word hath reference to casting or sowing seed on the earth, to bring forth a crop; and thereby is meant alms-giving. On the contrary, “withholding more than is meet,” implies a denial of alms, when there is just cause to give. Justice and equity require this duty, as we have before showed; so as that phrase doth much aggravate this kind of unmercifulness; and, as a just punishment thereof, that which covetous men, by refusing to give, seek to prevent, shall fall upon them, even poverty.

And if in any distress they shall be forced to seek help of others, even they shall be neglected as they neglected others. The wise man testifieth as much in these words: “Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.” (Prov. xxi. 13.) Not only other men, but also God himself, will refuse to hear his cry. Dives, who refused to relieve Lazarus, could not obtain any to afford him a drop of water to cool his tongue, when he was tormented in

* All the editions, except the first, have misprinted this word *gain*, to the manifest injury of the author’s argument, as is apparent through the whole of the fourth motive.—EDIT.

hell-flames. (Luke xvi. 24.) It is expressly said, that "he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy." (James ii. 13.) For God deals with men according to their dealing with others. (Matt. xviii. 33.)

Finally : As blessings are promised to merciful men, so *curses are denounced against unmerciful men.* (Prov. xxviii. 27.) As under "blessings" all manner of good things are comprised, so under "curses" all manner of evils. Unmerciful men shall have the curses of men, and "people shall curse them." (Prov. xi. 26.) And at the great day of judgment, they shall be pronounced *curse*d by the Great Judge. For "then shall he say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, YE CURSED, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels : for I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat : I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink," &c. (Matt. xxv. 41, &c.)*

Having thus done with the MOTIVES, I shall close this discourse with answering some OBJECTIONS, which keep back many from a conscionable discharge of this duty.

OBJECTIONS.

OBJECTION 1. Some object their great charge, having a wife and many children to provide for ; and are ready to say with the apostle, that "parents ought to lay up for their children." (2 Cor. xii. 14.) And, "If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." (1 Tim. v. 8.) How, then, can we be liberal to the poor?

ANSWER. 1. I deny not but parents ought to provide for their children, so far as they may with a good conscience. But know, that the same apostle who commands you to *lay up* for your children doth likewise command you to *lay out* a considerable part of your estate for the succour and relief of others : as Gal. vi. 10 : "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." And, Heb. xiii. 16 : "But to do good and to communicate forget not : for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." If, therefore, you would approve yourselves sincere Christians, you must bear an equal and impartial respect to all and every the commands of the Lord, making conscience of one duty as well as of another.

2. The greater thy love, the stronger thine affections are to thy children, the more liberal and bountiful shouldst thou be to the poor saints and servants of Jesus Christ, that thereby thou mayest entail God's blessing upon the persons and estate of thy children. I am sure thou wilt grant that, without God's blessing, all [that] thou shalt bequeath unto thy children will little avail them ; and what better course canst thou take to procure God's blessing upon that part of thy estate which thou shalt leave them, than freely to communicate some part thereof to pious and charitable uses ? For, as the Psalmist expresseth it, "the seed of the merciful

* In the first edition the conclusion of the sermon was at the end of this paragraph. But, in the subsequent impressions, the benevolent author, who was favoured by Heaven both with *the ability and the heart* to practise his own precepts, enlarged it with nine additional pages of most important matter, which the reader will peruse greatly to his own pleasure and profit.—EDIT.

244 SERMON XI. AFTER WHAT MANNER MUST WE GIVE ALMS, shall be blessed." (Psalm xxxvii. 26.) Whereby is implied, that thy mercy and liberality to the poor will entail God's blessing upon thy children.

Very solicitous many are to entail their lands and houses on their posterity, that they may continue in the same family; but I know no surer way than in their life-time to communicate a considerable part of their estate to the poor: and thus, "by taking somewhat from your children's portion for the relief of the poor, you may exceedingly advance their estate."* Hath God blessed thee with children: in Christian discretion, then, thou shouldst be charitable, that thereby thou mayest procure God's blessing, both on thyself and posterity; for thy sparing and withholding from the poor, to make thy children rich, may prove the subversion and ruin of thine house and children.

3. Though thou oughtest to lay up some competent portions for thy children, yet ought not that to be a pretence against laying out a portion of thine estate here on the poor. For know, that the poor have a right unto part of thine estate, as well as thy children, though not unto so great a part. In which respect the Spirit of God calleth that part of the rich man's stock which he can well spare, the poor man's "due," unto whom of right it doth belong; for, saith he, "Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it." (Prov. iii. 27.) Whereupon said an ancient father, "It is the bread of the hungry which moulders in thy cupboard; it is the garment of the naked which hangs useless in thy chamber; it is the gold of the poor which lieth rusting in thy chest."† So that thy relieving the poor is not only an act of mercy, left to thy choice to do or not to do, but also of justice, to the performance whereof thou standest bound. And, therefore, what St. Paul saith of himself concerning the preaching of the gospel, "Necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" (1 Cor. ix. 16;) the like should all rich men especially say of themselves: "Necessity is laid upon us to give out a part of our estate for the relief of the poor saints and servants of Jesus Christ; and woe be unto us, if we do it not!"

4. It is a great mistake in parents, that, because it is their duty to make some provision for their children, therefore they are bound to lay up all that possibly they can scrape together for their use, without giving any considerable part towards the relief of the poor; for thereby they manifestly declare, that they prefer their children's temporal good before their own spiritual and eternal good, and hazard the salvation of their own souls for the advancement of their children's estate. O how little comfort will it be to you in hell-torments, to think that you have lost heavenly joys, for the gaining of some earthly enjoyments for your children! If, therefore, you have little or no charity for others, yet have some for your own souls, by a liberal contribution to the poor saints and servants of Jesus Christ, and that according to your own ability and their necessity.

OBJEC. II. Some object their poor and mean estate, pretending they

* *Forsitan heredi præstabis quicquid misericordiæ causâ de ejus portione detraxeris.*— AUGUSTINUS *De Tempore*, sermo 76. † *Est panis famelici quem tu tences, nudi unica quam tu in conclavi conservas, &c.*— BASIL.

have not wherewithal to supply the wants, and relieve the necessities, of others.

ANSWER. 1. Though thou pleadest poverty, to excuse thy not giving towards the supply of the needy and necessitous, yet it is to be feared, that thy plea is not real, but feigned, a mere pretence; because thou canst find money enough to buy rich and costly apparel for thyself, wife, and children; money enough to pamper thy belly, and to feast thy rich neighbours, friends, and acquaintance; money enough for the gratifying thy sinful lusts and pleasures; when thou canst find little or nothing for the clothing the naked backs of the poor members of Jesus Christ, nothing for the filling of their empty bellies, nothing for their comfort and support. O how sad will thy reckoning be at the great day of judgment, when thou shalt hear: "So much spent in clothes, so much in costly diet, so much in satisfying thy carnal lusts and pleasures, and so little in relieving the poor saints and servants of Jesus Christ!"

2. Though thy plea be real, that thou art in truth in a low and mean estate, yet oughtest thou to give something when thou meetest with those who are poorer than thyself, especially if they be in great necessity. The apostle exhorteth poor men, even such as work for their living, so to labour that they may have not only to maintain themselves and family, but also to relieve the necessities of others: "Let him labour," saith the apostle, "working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." (Eph. iv. 28.) The deep poverty of the Macedonians, we read, kept them not from contributing to the poor saints at Jerusalem, who were poorer than themselves. (2 Cor. viii. 2, 3.)

Who could plead greater poverty than the poor widow in the gospel, who having but two mites, cast them both into the treasury? of whom our Saviour giveth this testimony, that she cast more into the treasury than the rich; "for all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living." (Mark xii. 43, 44.) A halfpenny or farthing of that little which a poor man giveth, is more, in Christ's reckoning, than a whole mass of money out of a rich man's treasure. Say not, therefore, "I am poor, and have but little;" thinking thereby to excuse thy not giving; for thou canst not be poorer than that poor widow: but of a little give a little, and it will be accepted; "for if there be a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." (2 Cor. viii. 12.) God looketh not so much to the greatness of the gift, as to the quantity of the store out of which it is given, and the largeness of the affections wherewith it is given.

OBJEC. III. Some are ready to object and say they live in dangerous times, and know not what troubles may befall them; and therefore it will be wisdom to keep what they have.

ANSWER. The more dangerous the times are, the more reason thou hast to give out of thy store towards the relief of others; for,

1. Thou knowest not how long thou mayest enjoy thy life or estate: "Whatsoever," therefore, "thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might;" (Eccles. ix. 10;) that is, whatsoever ability or opportunity thou hast of doing good, do it, as with all diligence, so speedily. And,

saith the wise man, "Give a portion to seven, and also to eight;" as if he had said, "Let thy liberality be large and bountiful, not limiting it to few, but distributing it to many." Mark his reason in the next words: "For thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth;" (Eccles. xi. 2;) that is, what troublesome times may be. I have read of an husbandman, who, hearing of the approach of an army, and fearing thereby the loss of all his corn, caused as much as possibly he could to be carried into the city, and committed the custody thereof to a friend of his. In like manner let the apprehensions of dangerous times prevail with thee, to deliver some considerable part of thy estate unto the poor members of Christ, whereby it will be best preserved from loss and spoils.

2. Thy liberality to the poor will be a notable means to free thine heart from those anxious and distrustful fears of evil times which do usually possess the hearts of unmerciful men; as the Psalmist seemeth to imply: "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord." The reason whereof he rendereth: "He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor;" (Psalm cxii. 7, 9;) therefore "he shall not be afraid of evil tidings." And, indeed, such have least ground of fear; for, (1.) God hath promised to deliver such from the evil to come: as, "Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble." (Psalm xli. 1.) (2.) God hath promised, that, though they should fall into troublesome times, yet they shall find abundance of sweet peace and comfort in their own souls; for, saith the Lord, "If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul;" (that is, if thou shalt afford unto him that which may supply his necessity, and satisfy his hunger;) "then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon-day." (Isai. lviii. 10.) Where "light" signifieth peace and comfort, as "darkness" signifieth affliction. So that the prophet's meaning is, that merciful men shall have peace and comfort in the most troublesome and uncomfortable times; which, if it were seriously considered, would be a great encouragement to us to abound in works of mercy.

OBJEC. IV. Some object and say, "If I be so full in giving, I may want myself before I die."

ANSWER. 1. Doth the husbandman forbear to sow his seed for fear of want? Nay, rather doth he not with a plentiful hand sow his seed, that he may prevent want? being confident that by sowing his seed, he shall in due time reap it again with such increase, that thereby he shall be enabled to sustain himself and family. So that this objection is a groundless fear, arising from a distrustful heart, contrary to that of the wise man: "He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack;" (Prov. xxviii. 27;) namely, any thing which God seeth to be good and needful for him. Nay, by not giving, thou art likeliest to come to want; for, saith the Spirit of God, "There is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty." (Prov. xi. 24.) So that keeping back and hoarding up is the readiest way to want and penury; whereas, giving to the poor, according to that God hath given unto us, is the best means to prevent penury.

2. Thou needest not fear want by giving; for thereby thou wilt both secure thy stock, and increase thy store.

(1.) What thou givest to the poor, with an honest and sincere heart, will secure the rest of thy estate. For, as in a state politic, the leiger-ambassadors that are sent abroad to lie in foreign kingdoms,* secure our peaceable state at home ; in like manner, that which thou dispersest and sendest abroad to the poor doth secure the rest at home. "So that in truth our earthly goods are lost by keeping, and kept by giving away." †

(2.) That which thou givest away to the poor will increase thy store. For, "Give," saith our Saviour, "and it shall be given unto you ; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over. (Luke vi. 38.) By which variety of expressions our Saviour declareth, that charitable men shall not only receive back again from God what they give to the poor, but abundantly more ; which the wise man implieth, where he saith : "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth ;" (Prov. xi. 24 ;) intimating that the more we scatter the seeds of our beneficence, the greater our increase will be. And, as it followeth in the next verse, "The liberal soul shall be made fat ;" (that is, he that is bountiful towards others shall be enriched himself ;) "and he that watereth" (namely, others with his store) "shall be watered also himself ;" that is, shall be abundantly watered with the blessing of God, that he may have wherewith to do more good. Whereupon saith the apostle Paul, "He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly ; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully : " (2 Cor. ix. 6 :) thereby hinting unto us the great gain and increase that we shall receive by a free and liberal contribution to the poor saints and servants of Jesus Christ ; which Job acknowledged, when he said, "The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me ;" (Job xxix. 13 ;) that is, I had their prayers, and the Lord blessed me extraordinarily for relieving them.

Some question there is about the lawfulness of putting out money to use. But this is out of question, that to put out a considerable part of thine estate to charitable uses, is, as a lawful, so the most gainful, usury in the world ; ‡ for thereby thou shalt receive, instead of six in the hundred, an hundred for six. If, therefore, thou wilt be wisely covetous, fall upon the practice of this Christian usury ; knowing that the more thou shalt adventure therein, the greater will be thy gain, and the more bountifully thou shalt receive.

OBJEC. v. Some object, that what they give unto the poor is utterly lost.

ANSWER. 1. This is directly contrary to what the Spirit of God saith : "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord ; and that which he hath given will he pay him again." (Prov. xix. 17.) If that

* The ingenious writer of this sermon had in his mind's eye the subjoined "pleasant definition of an ambassador," given by Sir Henry Wotton, while at Venice: *Legatus est vir bonus peregrè missus ad mentiendum reipublicæ causâ.* Walton, his biographer, adds : "Which Sir Henry Wotton would have been content should have been thus Englished: *An ambassador is an honest man, sent to lie abroad for the good of his country.*"—EDIT.
 † *Terrena seroando amittimus, largiendo servamus.*—ISIODORUS. ‡ *Eleemosyna non est divitiarum dispendium, sed discedendi potius compendium, quæstusque omnium uberri-mus.* "Almsgiving is not a wasteful expending of wealth ; on the contrary, it is a compendious mode of acquiring riches, and, beyond all other methods of employing capital, yields the most profitable returns."—EDIT.

which thou givest to the poor be repaid thee again, how can it be said to be lost? Indeed, the poor, unto whom thou givest, are unable to repay thee; yet, having such an all-sufficient Surety as God himself, who hath undertaken the repayment, thou needest not doubt thereof.

2. It is a great mistake in men, to think that what they give away to charitable uses is utterly lost: for, in truth, a covetous, scraping, and sordid hoarding-up [of] our wealth, is the only way of losing it. But, as I have formerly showed, a cheerful distributing [of] part thereof to the poor is the surest way of securing our stock, and increasing our store. I never yet met with the man who could say, that he was a loser in his estate by what he gave away to charitable uses. And this I can affirm, that very many have, and are still ready to acknowledge, that as the widow's oil increased by pouring out, so that their store hath multiplied and increased by giving away to good uses.

3. What thou givest to the poor is not lost, but sent to heaven before thee. It is reported of Cyrus, that he should say, that "by doing good he hoarded up riches for himself." But sure I am, that by communicating part of thy goods to the poor saints and servants of God, thou layest up treasure for thyself in heaven. (Matt. vi. 20.)

This is the very argument wherewith the apostle, in the words of the text, enforceth this duty of liberality to the poor; for, saith he, "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate:" mark his reason in the next words: "laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come;" where the apostle intimateth, that, by laying out on the poor, we do in truth lay up in store for ourselves. Look, therefore, how much thou layest out here on good uses: by a bill of exchange, as it were, thou shalt receive as much, yea, much more, in the kingdom of heaven: to which agreeth that of St. Austin: "Whatsoever we give to the poor, we send before us; and we shall find that in heaven which we give here on earth."*

I have met with a notable story to this purpose, which I shall the rather relate, because I have known some so affected upon the hearing thereof, as that they have taken up present resolutions to communicate more liberally to the necessities of the poor than ever they did in their lives before. The story is this:—

"Synesius, a good bishop of Cyrene, laboured much and a long time with one Evagrius, a heathen philosopher, to convert him to the Christian faith; but all in vain; the philosopher still objecting that the Christian religion taught many strange and improbable things; among others, that 'he that hath pity on the poor, lendeth to the Lord;' and 'he that giveth to the poor and needy, shall have treasure in heaven, and shall receive an hundred-fold from Christ, together with eternal life:' 'things,' said he, 'to be derided rather than believed.' The good bishop, notwithstanding, ceased not to travel with him, assuring him, by many arguments, that these things were true; and at last prevailed, so that the philosopher and all his children were baptized. A while after, he cometh to Synesius, and bringeth with him three hundred pounds of

* *Quod pauperi damus ante nos pramittimus, &c.*—AUGUSTINUS.

gold for the poor, bids him take it, but would have a bill under his hand, that Christ should repay it him in another world. Synesius took the money for the poor, and gave him such a bill under his hand as he desired. Afterwards, the philosopher, being near his death, commanded his sons, that when they buried him, they should put Synesius's bill into his hand in the grave; which they did. The third day after he was buried, the philosopher seemed to appear to Synesius in the night, and said to him, 'Come to my sepulchre where I lie, and take thy bill; for I have received the debt, and am satisfied; which for thy assurance, I have subscribed it with mine own hand.' The bishop, not well knowing the meaning hereof, sent to his sons, who told him all; whereupon, taking them and the chief men of the city with him, he went to the grave, and found the paper in the hand of the corpse thus subscribed: *Ego, Evagrius, philosophus, tibi sanctissimo domino Synesio episcopo, salutem: Accepi debitum in his literis manu tua conscriptum, satisfactumque mihi est; et nullum contra te habeo jus propter aurum quod dedi tibi, et per te Christo Deo et Salvatore nostro;* that is, 'I, Evagrius the philosopher, to the most holy sir, bishop Synesius, greeting: I have received the debt which in this paper is written with thy hand, and I am satisfied, and I have no action against thee, for the gold which I gave thee, and by thee to Christ, our God and Saviour.'

This story, I say, I was willing to relate at large, not only because it passeth in antiquity for a great, though strange, truth, but also because, as I said, I have known it reported to some, with such good effect and success, as I hope and heartily wish it may have upon thy spirit.

4. Thy works of charity to the poor saints and servants of Jesus Christ, will hereafter be rewarded with everlasting glory and happiness in heaven. So much our Saviour expresseth, by declaring, that the kingdom of heaven was, from the foundation of the world, prepared for the merciful, who had showed themselves bountiful to the poor members of Jesus Christ, by clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, &c. (Matt. xxv. 34, 35.) And, saith our Saviour: "He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward." (Matt. x. 41.) As by receiving a righteous man, "in the name of a righteous man," is to show kindness to him for his righteousness' sake; so by "receiving a prophet in the name of a prophet," is not only receiving of his message and ministry, but also a receiving of his person, by showing kindness unto him, either in entertaining of him, or contributing to his needs and necessities, and that as he is a minister of the gospel. And by the "prophet's and righteous man's reward," which such shall receive as relieve them, is meant that surpassing and excellent weight of glory in heaven, which cannot be expressed by the tongue of men or angels. Not that their works of charity do merit that glorious reward, but in regard of the promise of God made to all those who in faith apply themselves to the practice of good works.

OBJEC. VI. "Many there are who make a great profession of religion, but manifest little power thereof in their lives; being as backward to any good work, and as barren therein as any whosoever."

ANSWER. I must confess there is more truth in this objection than in any I have yet met withal. For I cannot but acknowledge, there are too many whose leaves of profession are very broad, but their fruits of charity and liberality are very small; who are a shame to religion, a reproach to Christianity, and a scandal to profession.

But this may be taken for an answer: That whereas many who make a profession of religion are barren in good works, questionless they are no sincere Christians, no true converts, but mere outside professors. For most certain it is, that "the elect of God put on bowels of mercies," as the apostle Paul speaketh. (Col. iii. 12.) Therefore, whosoever he be that, having this world's good, doth make a profession of religion, and yet shutteth up his bowels of compassion from his poor brother, and will not communicate towards his necessities, let his profession be never so specious and glorious in the eyes of men, yet certainly he is but a rotten professor and dissembling hypocrite in the sight of God; for, saith the apostle St. James: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction:" (James i. 27 :) implying that works of charity are clear evidences of the truth of our religion, and of the sincerity of our profession. If you look into the scripture, you shall scarce read of a man truly godly, but he was charitable; nay, according to his eminence in godliness, he was eminent in works of charity. To instance in some few:—

Abraham, the father of the faithful, as he was eminent in godliness, so was he eminent in hospitality, which is one of the noblest works of charity. For we read how Abraham stood at his tent-door, and no sooner saw strangers passing by, but called them in, and gave them entertainment. (Gen. xviii. 1, 2.)

As there was none like Job, in his days, for piety and godliness, of whom God himself giveth this testimony, that "there was none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feared God, and eschewed evil;" (Job i. 8;) so neither was there any like Job for liberality. Note what he saith of himself: "The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me;" that is, I had many good prayers, and well-wishes from them, whom I had relieved in their low and perishing condition; "and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy;" that is, "By my bounty and liberality to her in her necessity, I gave her great cause of hearty joy." (Job xxix. 13.) And afterwards Job declareth how he had not, according to the manner of covetous and churlish persons, eaten his meat alone, without giving part thereof to the hungry orphans. Neither had he seen any perish for want of clothing. (Job xxxi. 17, 19.) Under which expressions is implied, his readiness to feed the hungry, and clothe the naked, with other like acts of charity.

It is recorded, to the perpetual praise and commendation of good Obadiah, that, in the time of famine and persecution, he not only hid the prophets of God by fifty in a cave, from the cruelty of Jezebel, but that also, in that extreme dearth, [he] there sustained them with food, and supplied their necessities. (1 Kings xviii. 4.)

We read of Cornelius, who, as he was a godly and devout man, so he was very charitable; for the Spirit of God giveth this testimony of him,

that he was "a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the poor;" he was not only charitable, but did abound in works of charity, giving much alms to the poor. (Acts x. 2.)

We likewise read of Gaius, who is recorded to be a godly, wealthy citizen of Corinth, that he did usually in his house entertain, not only the apostle Paul, but also all Christians resorting to that city. (Rom. xvi. 23.)

The apostle Paul, who was an holy, zealous Christian, was likewise charitable; for in his Epistle to Timothy, reckoning up some of his graces, as his faith, patience, long-suffering, &c., he mentions charity. (2 Tim. iii. 10.)

Yea, we read of Zaccheus, that though, before his conversion, he was a most covetous extortioner; yet, after his conversion, he gave the half of his goods to the poor; for, said he, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor." (Luke xix. 8.)

But the most remarkable is the charity of the primitive Christians, who, being converted by the ministry of the apostles, and having embraced the Christian faith, it is said, that "as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." (Acts iv. 34, 35.)

Thus you see it hath ever been the property of a sincere Christian and true believer to be charitable. And certainly, whosoever, by a true and lively faith, are ingrafted into Jesus Christ, cannot but be fruitful branches, bringing forth the fruits of mercy and compassion, of charity and liberality, towards their poor brethren.

I shall conclude, therefore, with a passage of a reverend divine, now with God: *—

"If the world hath locked up thine heart, and congealed the bowels of thy compassion towards the poor; let the blaze of thine outward profession shine never so fair; manage the heartless representation of external holiness never so demurely; keep the times and tasks of daily duties with never so great austerity; nay, though thou be able to amaze weaker Christians with some affected strains and artificial fervency in prayer; for all this, if the holy heat of brotherly love doth not warm thine heart, and upon occasion work affectionately and effectually; I dare say, thou art rotten at the heart-root; there is no true love of God in thee, no grace, no hope of salvation.

"Let that terrible and flaming place against all covetous Pharisees, 'Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?' (1 John iii. 17;)—let it, I say, dissolve thy frozen-heartedness this way, and enlarge the bowels of pity towards thy poor brethren of Christ Jesus; or else never look hereafter to look him in the face with comfort, or to find mercy at that day."

* MR. ROBERT BOLTON; in his "Directions for a comfortable Walking with God," p. 262.

SERMON XII.

BY THE REV. THOMAS DOOLITTLE, A.M.

OF PEMBROKE HALL, CAMBRIDGE.

IF WE MUST AIM AT ASSURANCE, WHAT SHOULD THEY DO, THAT ARE NOT ABLE TO DISCERN THEIR OWN SPIRITUAL CONDITION ?

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God ; that ye may know that ye have eternal life.—1 John v. 13.

THE greatness of the mercy in having of the scripture, is manifested by the great advantages that the elect of God receive thereby ; namely, that they might be brought to close with Christ by faith unfeigned, and be partakers of eternal life through him ; (John xx. 31 ;) that bad men might be made good, and that good men might be made sure of an eternal blessed state in the life to come, whereby the Lord hath abundantly provided both for our happiness and our comfort : For OUR HAPPINESS, that we may have eternal life. For OUR COMFORT, that we may know we have eternal life. (1 John i. 4 ; Rom. xv. 4.) I cannot stay to view the context : I need not stay to explain the text. The case of conscience to be treated of from this scripture is this :—

Since men may know that they have eternal life, what must they do that cannot discern their spiritual condition ?

Here are two things to be performed :—

First. That we may know in this life, that we shall *certainly* be partakers of eternal glory in the life to come. For if assurance be not possible, I can neither blame you for wanting it, nor stir you up to labour after it.

Secondly. Lay down some rules for the getting of it, and directions, if by these rules we cannot for the present obtain it.

For the stating of the first part of the question, concerning the possibility of getting this certain knowledge of our future happiness, I shall lay before you these six positions :—

POSITIONS.

POSITION I. *An unregenerate person, while such, can have no assurance or certain knowledge of the eternal salvation of his immortal soul.* (John iii. 36 ; 1 John v. 10, 12.) Because, as such, he hath no actual interest in the promises of salvation, being without the conditions of faith and repentance, to which the promises are made, being a child of wrath, (Eph. ii. 3,) a slave to his lusts, (Titus iii. 3,) a captive to the devil, (2 Tim. ii. 26,) a rejecter of the Son of God. (John v. 40, 43 ; Mark xii. 10.) This man hath plague-sores, tokens of eternal death. I cannot say thou shalt be infallibly damned, because thou mayest repent and believe ; (2 Tim. ii. 25 ;) and thou canst not say thou shalt be

saved, because thou hast not yet repented for thy sin, nor believed on the Son of God. A wicked man is not *subjectum capax*, "a subject capable" of this assurance: "In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." (Eph. i. 13.) It is not the hard stone, but the soft wax, that receiveth the impression of the seal. If he hope for salvation while he liveth, and dieth in a natural condition, he shall lose his hope and soul together; (Job xi. 20; viii. 13, 14; xviii. 14;) this presumption will prove self-delusion, and end in desperation. He is worse than a Pharisee, (Luke xviii. 11,) whether he be a private person or a preacher, that liveth in gross sins, hating the power of godliness, and discouraging holiness, that yet blesseth God for election, justification, sanctification, and assured hope of glory.

POSIT. II. *That many of God's dear children for a long time might remain very doubtful as to their present and eternal condition, and know not what to conclude, whether they shall be damned, or whether they shall be saved.* (Psalm lxxvii. 1—10; lxxxviii. 4, 15, 16; Isai. i. 10.)

—There are believers of several growths in the church of God: fathers, young men, children, and babes: (1 John ii. 13, 14; 1 Peter ii. 2:) and as in most families there are more babes and children than grown men, so in the church of God there are more weak, doubting Christians than strong ones, grown up to a full assurance. A babe may be born, and yet not know it; so a man may be born again, and not be sure of it. Sometimes they think they have grounds of hope, that they shall be saved; sometimes they think they have grounds of fears, that they shall be condemned: not knowing which might be most weighty, like a pair of balances, they are in equal poise: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark." (Zech. xiv. 6.) It is spoken primarily of God's providential dispensations towards his church in gospel times: for a while she should live *in crepusculo*, "in twilight;" in a mixed condition of light and darkness, comfort and affliction; like a man in a misty morning, that neither walketh in the dark, nor yet hath the light clear to see far before him; like Paul and the mariners, that saw neither sun nor stars for many days; (Acts xxvii. 20;) so might it be with a particular person, in reference to his spiritual condition.

By this you see,

First. We make a difference betwixt saving faith, as such, and a full persuasion of the heart.

Secondly. That some of those that shall be certainly saved might not be certain that they shall be saved; for the promise is made to the grace of faith, and not to the evidence of it; to faith as true, and not as strong: they may be sure of heaven, and yet in their own sense not assured of heaven. As an infant may be born to a great estate, and have a certain title to it; but yet he might not know it, or make it out to himself or others. So that the question is not *de certitudine objecti*, "of the certainty of salvation," but *de certitudine subjecti*, "of the apprehension, sense, and knowledge of the believing person," concerning his salvation.

POSIT. III. *That a believer may not only in the general gather from*

the word of God, from the death of Christ, from the glorious preparation God hath made, that many shall be infallibly brought to glory, but also that he in particular shall be one of them. (Matt. viii. 11; xxv. 34; xi. 28; 1 Peter i. 4, 5.)—This must have its proof after: I therefore now pass on.

POSIT. IV. *That we are not to expect any voice from heaven, or God's sending of an angel, or extraordinary revelation, to make us to know that we do believe, or shall be saved; but to make use of those helps and means appointed by God, common to all believers, but yet sufficient for the obtaining of this particular assurance.*—This I put in, because the Papists grant it may be got by extraordinary revelation, but not else; as it is their wicked practice to keep the people most ignorant of those things of which they should have most knowledge, that, following them with an implicit faith and blind obedience, [they] might not scruple at their human traditions, and unwarrantable and many ridiculous innovations,* that have crept in amongst them, so they keep them most doubtful, where they should be most sure; and so the Council of Trent: † “If any man say that he knoweth he shall certainly persevere, or infallibly be assured of his election, except he have this by special revelation, let him be anathema.” A wicked council that anathematizeth a man for asserting that may be obtained which God commandeth him to get: “Make your calling and election sure.” (2 Peter i. 10.)

POSIT. V. *That such as have been filled with divine joy, through well-grounded apprehensions of their present grace and future glory, might lose that assurance, and that joy.* (Psalm xxx. 7; Canticles v. 6.)—And this may be, 1. From God acting, (1.) As a Sovereign Lord. (Job ix. 17.) (2.) As a wise God, putting a more eminent difference betwixt earth and heaven. (Psalm xiii. 1; 1 Cor. xiii. 12.) Or, 2. From the buffetings of Satan. Or, 3. From themselves, (1.) For the trial and exercise of some of their graces. (Job i. 1; xiii. 24; Isai. viii. 17.) Or, (2.) For correcting them for sin. (Isai. lix. 2.) As, (i.) For their backwardness to duty. (Canticles v. 2, 3, 6.) (ii.) Slothfulness in duty. (iii.) Frequent strong actings of pride in and after duty. (iv.) Letting down their spiritual watch; and so, (v.) Falling into some notorious transgression. (2 Sam. xi. 4; xiii. 15; Psalm li. 8, 12.) Or, (vi.) For not setting a due esteem upon the comforts of the Spirit. (Job xv. 11.) Or, (vii.) Insulting too much over weak believers; not exercising tender compassion to dejected, drooping Christians. (viii.) For their too much earthly-mindedness. (ix.) Not rising presently by repentance; (Isai. lvii. 17;) for these reasons and the like, their sun might be eclipsed, a winter of sorrows might follow their summer joys. They may lose their evidence, but not their adherence; and though there shall not be any interci-

* BELLARMINUS *De Baptismo*, tom. iii. lib. i. cap. 25—27, mentioneth twenty-two ceremonies about baptism, exorcism, salt, spittle, cross, unction, wax-taper lighted, in token that the baptized person is translated from the power of darkness unto light, &c. † *Si quis dixerit, hominem renatum et justificatum teneri ex fide ad credendum se certo esse, ex numero predestinatorum, anathema sit.*—*Concil. Trident. sess. vi. can. 15.* And again: *Si quis dixerit, magnum illud usque in finem perseverantiae donum se certo habiturum absoluta et infallibili certitudine, nisi hoc ex speciali revelatione didicerit, anathema sit.*—*Concil. Trident. sess. v. can. 16.*

sion of justification, yet there might be afterwards a non-apprehension of it.

POSIT. VI. *That in divers men, there are diverse degrees of this assurance, and in the same man different degrees at divers times; but in no man, at any time, in this life, perfection of degrees.*—For our understanding is imperfect, both as to the faculty and its acts. And though the mind is curing, yet it will not be perfectly cured in this life, from that darkness that befell it by man's apostasy from God. For we have but an imperfect knowledge of faith and love; and while we have but an imperfect knowledge of the premisses, we cannot give a perfect assent to the conclusion. And no man hath such perfection of degrees of the assurance of his salvation, *in an ordinary way*, as that one degree more cannot be added to the former; neither is there any repugnancy in asserting an infallible assurance, and denying a perfect assurance; for I infallibly know that there is a God, and that this God is good and just; and yet I have not a perfect knowledge of a Deity, or of his goodness and justice; for in this life we know but in part. (1 Cor. xiii. 11, 12.)

A THREEFOLD CERTAINTY.

There are three ways that we come to a certainty:—

1. *There is a certainty that comes by sense.*—Which cannot err about its proper object, when there is a due distance, a fit disposition of the organ, and the medium rightly disposed. Thus Thomas was certain of Christ's resurrection from the dead: "The other disciples said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God." (John xx. 25, 27, 28.) Though the other disciples told him they had seen the Lord, yet he would not take it for a certainty from their report, except he had a certainty from his own sense. But the Papists do not only deny us a certainty of faith, but also a certainty of sense; for though in the sacrament we see it is real bread, and taste it to be real bread, and feel and handle it as real bread; yet, contrary to our sense, [they] would have us believe and say it is transubstantiated.

2. *There is a certainty of science*, or knowledge arising from first principles, received by all, that are proved by their own light, that cannot be demonstrated *a priori*, because there is nothing true before them; as, a man cannot show you the sun but by its own light: so, I certainly know, that both parts of a contradiction cannot be true; so, I certainly know, that the whole is greater than any particular part.

3. *There is a certainty of authority*, or testimony: if the testimony be human, it begets but a moral persuasion; for no human testimony is of necessary verity, because truth is not necessarily, but contingently and mutably, in the man that gives this testimony; and the testimony hath not its cogency or validity from itself, but from the qualifications of the

person that bears the testimony: whence there is a gradual certainty in human testimonies; only God is so necessarily true, that it should imply a contradiction that he should be God, and yet lie: God "cannot lie." (Titus i. 2.) So that a divine testimony begets a certainty of divine faith; for what God saith, I undoubtedly know to be true, because truth is essential to him; (Deut. xxxii. 4; xxxiv. 4; Heb. vi. 18;) for if truth be necessary to the testator, the truth of the testimony must necessarily be true; (John xvii. 17;) so I know that the impenitent, unbelieving person that dieth without grace, and an interest in Christ, shall certainly be damned, (Mark xvi. 16; Rom. ii. 4, 5; Heb. xii. 14,) because God hath said it, as if I saw him in his misery; and I know that the penitent, believing, self-denying, and sin-mortifying Christian shall be saved, (Matt. v. 8; Rom. viii. 13; Acts x. 43,) because God hath said it, as certainly as if I saw him actually possessed of it already.

When faith hath this divine testimony to lean upon, it ariseth in some by degrees to a full assurance. There are especially four words in the scripture, that set forth faith in its different degrees.

1. As it is said to be *ὑπόστασις*, the *substance, subsistence, existence of things*: (Heb. xi. 1:) looking upon things future, as certain as if they were present. Among the Hebrews there is usual a mutation of tenses, turning the future into the preter tense. Faith is the believer's *Pathach*, making things to come as certain to him as if he did already enjoy them; * and putteth a date upon the joys of the life to come, before he is possessed of them. Noah's faith assured him of the flood, as certainly as if it had then been when it was first foretold. (Heb. xi. 7.) 2. It is a *demonstration* of things not seen; faith seeth things that cannot be seen. That way of argumentation whereby error is confuted, by Aristotle is called *ελεγχος*,† the word here used; but here, for a *certain conviction* arising from divine authority, showing us such things which sense cannot perceive and reason cannot comprehend. When faith thus represents these glorious things to come thus unto the believing soul, then, 3. There is *πειθοιησις*, a *good persuasion of the heart*, or a holy confidence; and from this persuasion there ariseth *παρρησια*, "an humble boldness," or liberty, and freedom of speech to God in prayer, which *de jure* all believers have. These words you have together, in Eph. iii. 12: "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him." 4. And from these resulteth that desirable *ωληροφορια*, a *full assurance* of a future enjoyment of those things that faith presents unto us, and we are persuaded of our title to, and with liberty, freedom, and enlargedness of soul have prayed unto God for. So the question is not concerning all men, but believers; and not whether all believers have it, but may have it; not by revelation, but by

* In lingua sacra *Vau* cum *Pathach* sequente *Dagesh* futurum in *preteritum* convertit, nam *presens proprium* Hebraei nullum habent. "In the holy language, the letter *Vau*, with the point *Pathach* following *Dagesh*, changes the future into the preterite or past; for the Hebrews have no proper present tense."—EDIT. † *Ελεγχος* *εστι* *συλλογισμος* *της* *απιφασεως*.—ARISTOTELES *De Reprehensione*, lib. i. cap. 8. And so used by the apostle, 2 Tim. iii. 16. The scripture is profitable *προς* *ελεγχον*, to convince the enemies of the truth: it signifieth "conviction," plain and evident. (John viii. 9; xvi. 8.)

ordinary means; not whether they always keep it; nor about perfect but certain infallible assurance in these words: thus,

THE QUESTION STATED.

A believer may, without extraordinary revelation, certainly know and be infallibly assured of eternal life.

I. ARGUMENT FROM SPECIAL GRACE.

And this will be made evident by the proof of these two propositions:—

1. *That a believer, without extraordinary revelation, might certainly know that he hath justifying faith, and unfeigned love to Christ, and that he is upright and sincere with God.*

2. *That there is an infallible connexion between these special graces and future glory.*

That a man may certainly know his sincerity, faith, and love, is evidenced by these particulars:—

FIRST PROPOSITION, WHICH SHOWETH THAT A MAN MIGHT KNOW HE HATH SAVING GRACE.

1. *God hath laid down in his word certain infallible γνωρισματα, "characters, signs, discoveries," of sincerity, justifying faith, and unfeigned love to God.*—Beside other topical heads, we may know it from the effects which it doth always produce; that where I see such an effect of faith, I know there is faith:* and Papists must make us cast away all logic, if we shall not have this granted. I see the broad clear light shining in mine eyes; therefore I know the sun is risen; and when we see any sign that is concomitant or consequent, inseparable and proper to the thing of which it is a sign, we know that that thing is. A man that is sick and weak, yet feels his heart to leap and pant; he knows he is a living man. A man that discourseth, and rationally inferreth one thing from another, knoweth that he hath a reasonable soul, and that he is a man. There are as certain characters, in the word of God, of sincerity, faith, and love, as there are plain injunctions that we should be sincere, believe, and love. Would God command a man to "examine himself whether he be in the faith," if there were not rules suitable and sufficient to direct us to know the nature of faith, and wherein it doth consist?

2. *God hath given to a man a power to understand, consider, deliberate, and reflect upon himself, and judge of himself and of his ways.*—Herein a man is above a brute:† a beast likes his pasture, but cannot know his propriety. Certainly, a man that is not a stranger to himself,

* *Posito effectu in esse, effectus ponitur causa.* "The effect being granted as actually existing, the cause of that effect is likewise granted."—EDIT. † *Ψυχη φωι λαμπεται, φ την αληθειαν ορα την παντων και την εν αυτη.*—MARC. ANTONINI *Meditationes*, lib. xi. sec. 12. Edit. Cant. "When the superficies of the soul is thus even, the light plays better upon her: she reflects a light which discovers the truth in other objects, and that within herself."—JER. COLLIER'S and GRAVES'S Translations. *Τα ιδια της λογικης ψυχης εαυτην ορα, εαυτην διαβροι, εαυτην οποιαν αν βουληται ποιει.*—*Idem*, *ibid.* sec. 1. "The privileges of the rational soul are these: it contemplates itself; it regulates itself; and renders itself such as it wishes to be."—GRAVES'S Translation.

but a diligent observer of the actings of his soul, might know what they are, yea, and discern the moral modifications of those acts. For conscience is privy to the principle and spring of all our actings, to the manner and the end. If I love a man, by reflecting upon myself I know I love him; and shall this noble power of the soul be only useless in the greatest concernments of my soul? Can I know what I approve, esteem most, and delight in most, and breathe, and pant after most in other things, and not in this? It is true, conscience is naturally blind in spiritual things; but yet, directed by the word, and enlightened by the Spirit, [it] might pass a judgment upon a man. For as the moon borroweth light from the sun, and so communicateth light unto the world, which else it could not do; so conscience, receiving light from the word and Spirit, discovereth what else it could not do. So it is called the "candle of the Lord:" "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly:" (Prov. xx. 27 :) not only taking notice of the outward acts in the life, but the inward motions of the heart; not only of some, but it hath a power to take cognizance of them all. Conscience is like the urine which discovereth whether a person be sound in health, or shows what his distemper is. By the echo caused by the reflection of the sound, a man heareth his word after he hath spoken it; so by the reflecting power of conscience a man views his actions after they are done, and hears his words after they be spoken. A man sees his spots or beauty in the glass, by the reflection of the species,* that do represent them to his view. As Joseph's brethren's consciences told them that they were true men, and not spies; (Gen. xli. 31;) so conscience may truly tell a man, that he is sincere, and not an hypocrite. Thus conscience is said to be a witness: "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost;" (Rom. ix. 1;) to accuse and to excuse. (Rom. ii. 15.) So it is a judge, condemning or acquitting, according as a man's state is found to be. So much Heathens have spoken of conscience.†

Unfeigned willingness to part with and mortify every sin, a sure sign of saving grace.

Now, that the scripture containeth characters of sincerity, and that a man comparing himself by those characters might certainly know that he is sincere, will be evidenced by these scriptures: "Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then" (mark, "then") "shall I be upright." (Psalm xix. 13.) When there is no one known sin but a man is really willing should be mortified and parted with, his most beloved sin that is nearest to him, which, by way of propriety, he may call his own, in an especial manner, which is the last sin a man parteth with; and if there be any sin which a man is unwilling to part with, and will keep a man off from Christ, it is his

* In the old signification of *image, likeness, outward appearance, or show*.—EDIT.

† Το συνείδος αυτο εστι δικαστης ο δικαιος, αμα και οικειοτατος.—HIEROCLIS *Comment. in Pythagor. Carmina*. "Conscience itself is of all judges the most equitable and unbiassed; and, besides, it is one that we always have most intimately near us, and that need not be sought for at a distance."—EDIT.

bosom sin, his darling ; and the truth is, that if any man keep [and] love any one sin, which he will not let go to close fully with Christ, let his profession be never so great, he is an hypocrite. Some men part with Christ for one lust, for one sin. "When Jesus heard these things," how far he had gone, how much he had done, "he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing." (Luke xviii. 22.) Love to his riches, and prizing them more than Christ, was his ruin ; one stab at the heart with a pen-knife will as certainly kill a man as a thousand wounds with a sword ; one disease that is mortal will as certainly bring a man to his grave as twenty ; and one leak in a ship will sink it, as well as more. Herod did many things ; but yet he would not let go his Herodias. (Mark vi. 17—20.) It is a sure rule, that which a man loves most, he will endeavour to keep longest : "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life." A man prizeth his right hand much, but his head more ; and therefore, to save his head, he will hold up his hand, and venture the loss of the one, to save the other. There may be many sins [which] a man might love, but one especially ; and he may be willing the other should be pared off to preserve that ; but when he is willing to leave all, to indulge himself in none, no, not his darling sin, it is a sign of sincerity. Consult these scriptures : Psalm xvii. 1, 3, 4 ; cxix. 1—3, 6 ; Job i. 8 ; ii. 3 ; xxxi. throughout.

A man may know whether he be thus willing to part with sin.

Now, a man may, by diligent inquiry, find out his beloved sin, and he may know, and his conscience may bear him witness, of his willingness to part with this, to have it subdued, and that by the grace of God he doth keep himself from it, that it bears not rule nor dominion in his soul : "I was also upright before him." (Psalm xviii. 23.) How doth David manifest this ? By the observation of his heart and ways in this particular ; for it followeth : "And I kept myself from mine iniquity." There is as much power of God required, and strength of grace, to make a man part with his beloved sin as all the rest. Thus Hezekiah knew his sincerity. He had the testimony of his conscience, and was sure of it ; else how could he have made his appeal to God ?—"Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight." (Isai. xxxviii. 3.)

True faith might be discovered in us.

Likewise, that a man might certainly know he hath justifying faith, is proved from 2 Cor. xiii. 5 : "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith ; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates ?" Doth God so strictly charge us to know that which cannot be known ? That that faith here spoken of, that we must inquire after, is a justifying faith, appears from the text.

1. By this Christ dwelleth in us, and so not by any other faith.

2. Because without this faith we are *αδοκιμοι*, "reprobates," not as opposed to the elect, but denoting persons unsound and hypocritical.

It is also not a conjecture, but a certain knowledge, that we are pressed to obtain, by the word that the Holy Ghost useth, *πειραζετε*, "search, make trial," as God tried Abraham, (Gen. xxii. 1,) that his love to God, and fear of God, appeared. *δοκιμαζετε*, "prove" as the goldsmith doth his metals, in the fire, or by the touchstone; because he bids us prove it not so much by argument, as experience; for so the word is used, Luke xiv. 19. He went *δοκιμασαι* "to prove" his oxen: and forasmuch as we must prove ourselves to be in Christ, we must not leave it uncertain; for what is uncertain after trial, is not proved.

A note of true faith.

Besides, that we do believe, we might know by the judgment's valuing, the will's choosing, and the affection's loving Christ above all. "Unto you that believe he is precious;" (1 Peter ii. 7;) Christ is an honour to the believer, and Christ is most prized and valued by the believer: * and cannot a man know what he prizeth most? what he valueth and esteemeth most? what his understanding doth dictate to him to be chosen above all? and whether his will doth choose according to the dictates of the understanding? and the affections, love, and desire are upon the wing to enjoy what the will doth make choice of? and grief filleth the heart when he cannot obtain it? Could not Ahab know that he prized Naboth's vineyard, when he grieved because he could not get it? and all that he had was lessened by the want of what he prized so much? So doth the soul cry out, "Riches are nothing without Christ;" and honour and friends cannot remove the grief of his heart, till Christ comes into his heart, and manifests himself there. Cannot he know it by his care to get, by his fear to lose, by his determining what to do in case he must lose, that which he prizeth most, or all other things besides? He will part with all, though very desirable, as a mariner will cast away his richest goods in a tempest, to save his life: † which think you doth he prize most? A woman, if her house be on fire, suffers all her pewter to be consumed in the flames, so that she may but save her child: is it not apparent which she valueth most? All shall go, that thou mayest keep Christ, if thou prize him most. This is known by the delight of the heart in the enjoyment of that which a man valueth most in the want of other things. Thou canst delight in Christ, in poverty, affliction, in the midst of troubles in the world.

So, likewise, for love: is it not possible for a man to know that he loveth Christ above all? How else could Peter, when asked three times by Christ whether he loved him, answer three times, that he did love him, and did appeal to Christ, that knew his heart, that he spake truly, because he knew he loved him sincerely; and this is observable that this was after Peter's fall, by which he had learned to have a holy jealousy over his own heart; and Christ doth not intimate any deceitfulness in his heart in this, as he did before when he said twice that he would not deny him. (Matt. xxvi. 33, 35.)

* *Τμη* for *επιτιμος*.—PISCATOR in loc. † As Aristippus cast his gold into the sea, saying, *Satius est, ut hæc per Aristippum, quam propter hæc percat Aristippus*, "It is better these things perish by Aristippus, than Aristippus by these things."

Signs of true love to God.

By the effects of love, we may certainly know that we love him.

1. *By thy unfeigned desires to be like unto him.*—We love to imitate those whom we dearly love. Love produceth assimilation: if he be holy, so wouldst thou be; if he hate sin, so dost thou.

2. *By thy hearty desire to be united to him, to have him with thee.**—His presence thou dost desire, his absence thou canst not bear without mourning and complaints, and wishing, “O that I could see him! O that I could meet with him!” And therefore thou goest from duty to duty, from ordinance to ordinance, from thy prayers in thy closet to the congregation, if thou mightest find him there; from the word to the sacrament, if thou mightest find him there: if he come unto thee, thou rejoicest; if he withdraw himself, thy soul is troubled.

3. *By thy great care to please him, fear to offend him, and resigning thyself to him.†*—When it grieveth thy heart to grieve thy Lord, and it breaks thy heart when thou breakest his commands: “If ye love me, keep my commandments. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.” (John xiv. 15, 21.) “And hereby we do know that we know” (including this affection of love unto) “him. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby we know that we are in him.” (1 John ii. 3—5.) “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous,” (1 John v. 3,) because of the love we have to him that doth command.

4. *By the love that we bear unto his image, in whomsoever we do see it, and love them that are like to Christ so much, that we could deny ourselves of honours and profits, were it necessary, and God should call us to it, to do them good.‡* As we love Christ above all, so we love his likeness in others, and the believer for Christ's sake above outward things, that if he be in necessity, we do not only wish him well, but part with something; and if God and the law of nature did not require us to lay it out first for necessary provision for our families, could part with all to help them in their great necessity. (Acts iv. 32, 34, 35, 37; 1 John iii. 16, 17.) Now, this sincere love to the people of God is an evidence of the goodness of our spiritual condition: “We know that we are passed from death unto life.” How? not by extraordinary revelation, but by this rational argumentation: “Because we love the brethren;” (1 John iii. 14;) and, verses 18, 19: “My little children let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

* *Nihil magis gregale quam amor; omnium rerum patientissimus, nisi solitudinis, societate gaudet et extorquet consortem.*—JOHAN. EUST. NIEREMBERGIUS, *De Arte Vol.*, p. 333. “Nothing is more social and gregarious in its nature than love. Possessing the most extraordinary powers of enduring all things except solitude and absence, it delights in the society of the object beloved, and claims for itself a companion with whom it may associate.”—EDIT. † *Se a se auferet amans, et amato tradit.* “He that loves, withdraws himself from himself, and delivers himself up to the object beloved.”—EDIT. ‡ *Amor echo.* The soul that loves God, doth echo to God's commands: “When thou saidest—my heart said,” &c. (Psalm xxvii. 8.)

And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him."

The Papist cavils, the drooping Christian doubts.

But here the Papist doth not only cavil, but the drooping, distressed Christian also questioneth all this, because of the deceitfulness of the heart. "Alas! the scripture tells us, that 'the heart' of man 'is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?' (Jer. xvii. 9 :) and if the heart of man cannot be known, how can we say we believe or love God?" For this, consider these four things:—

1. Another man cannot know it; I cannot certainly and infallibly know whether another man be sincere, or what his heart is; for it is the prerogative and excellency of God to be καρδιογνωστης, "one that knows the hearts of all men." (Acts i. 24.)

2. A wicked man's heart is so wicked, and there is such a depth of wickedness in his heart, that he cannot come to the bottom of it.

3. If a man cannot know all the secret turnings and windings of his heart, yet he may know the general scope and frame of his heart.

4. If he could not do this of himself, yet, assisted by the Spirit of God, which all believers have received, he might know the frame, bent, scope, inclination, of his own heart.

Thus far the first proposition, that a man may know that he hath sincere faith in Christ, and love to God. Now we proceed to the second.

SECOND PROPOSITION, WHICH SHOWS THE CONNEXION BETWEEN
GRACE AND GLORY.

[The] second proposition is this: *That there is an infallible connexion between justifying faith, unfeigned love, and eternal glory.*

The apostle tells us of some things that may be called εχομενα σωτηριας, "things that accompany salvation," (Heb. vi. 9,) having or containing salvation, that are so contiguous to salvation that the one toucheth the other. This must be proved; for, else, though I know I do believe and love God sincerely to-day, I can have no infallible assurance of salvation, because this may be lost before to-morrow, or before I die. Now this I shall endeavour to prove by these three following particulars:—

1. *From the verity of God's promises.*

1. *The undoubted verity of God's promises proveth an inseparable connexion between sincere grace and eternal glory.*—Faith is the eye of the soul, and with it, through a promise, as through a perspective glass, can the soul have a view of heaven and glory. What greater certainty or security can a man have, than the infallible promise of that God who is Truth itself? who will not deny his word; but the same love and free grace that moved him to infuse grace into thy heart, and to make the promise, will move him also to give the thing promised: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.) "He that believeth hath everlasting life." (John v. 24.) He hath it in the

promise, he hath it in the first-fruits. "But ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit." (Rom. viii. 23.) The Jews, by offering their first-fruits, did testify their thankfulness to God for what they had received, and hopes of the full crop in due time. He "hath everlasting life;" then it must not end. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark xvi. 16.) As certainly as the unbeliever shall be cast into utter darkness, so certainly shall the believer be partaker of the glorious inheritance of the saints in light. The promise is as true as the threatening. There, (Acts xvi. 30, 31,) you see a poor convinced, wounded sinner, under the load of guilt, that had a sight of his lost, undone, deplorable condition, coming to the apostles, and speaking after this manner: "Ye men of God, ye servants of the Lord, if there be any way for me, who have been so great a sinner, that have done enough, ten thousand times over, to damn my own soul; if there be any certain way to avoid damnation, I beseech you tell me; if there be any means by which I might certainly be saved, as you pity my sinful soul, my bleeding heart, my wounded conscience, tell me what it is, declare it to me!" What is the apostle's answer? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." The apostle speaks not doubtingly, "*Perhaps* thou shalt be saved, perhaps thou mayest be damned." "If thou get faith *it may be* thou mayest get to heaven," Alas! what relief, peace, satisfaction would this have been to his wounded conscience? But they speak peremptorily: "Believe, and thou *shalt* be saved." So that prove thou that thou hast faith, and these scriptures prove thou shalt have salvation.

The connexion, therefore, will not be questioned: "If I believe, I shall be saved." This God hath promised. But shall not a believer lose his faith in Christ, and lose his love to God? for the Remonstrants grant that a believer *qua talis*, "as a believer," cannot fall away, nor come short of glory; but *qui talis est*, "he that is a believer" may fall away totally and finally, and so cannot have assurance of salvation, because he hath no assurance that he shall persevere in his believing and state of grace. To this I oppose these places of scripture: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless"—(therefore preserved from apostasy, which is exceedingly blameworthy) till when?—"unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Is this a prayer, and not a promise? Yea, it is a prayer indited by the Spirit of God, and hath a promise following it, if you will read on: "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." (1 Thess. v. 23, 24.) Here the apostle, that had the Spirit, prayeth for perseverance; and the apostle, that had the Spirit, promiseth perseverance. Certainty, then, of perseverance doth not make men careless in the use of means, nor prayers needless; by praying, a man obtains the thing promised; and the certainty that he hath by the promise of obtaining, puts life into his prayers: "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it," *επιτελεσει*, "will finish it, will perfect it," "until the day of Jesus Christ." (Phil. i. 6.) *Φρουρουμενους*, "kept," garrisoned,* "by

* *Φρουρησθαι* denoteth more safety than *φυλαττεσθαι*.

the power of God through faith unto salvation." (1 Peter i. 5; John x. 28—30.) "But will with the temptation make a way to escape." (1 Cor. x. 13.) Therefore they shall persevere; for to enable the believer to persevere in all temptations, is to make a way to escape the destruction and hurt the temptation tendeth to. God doth promise this absolutely: "And they shall be my people, and I will be their God: and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." (Jer. xxxii. 38, 40.) They shall not forsake God, because God will not leave them. "And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." (Ezek. xxxvi. 27.) As absolute as was the covenant with Noah, that he would not drown the world. Besides, as God doth make conditional promises of pardon and salvation to those that believe and repent, so he doth promise to give the condition. (Isai. liv. 9, 10.) And herein is one special difference betwixt the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace; for God promised happiness to man under the covenant of works, if he persevered in yielding perfect obedience, but did not promise to keep him from departing from him. (Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27.) So that a conditional promise is sufficient security, where the condition is certain, and doth not infer the uncertainty of the promise, but where the condition is doubtful. These places also prove the constancy of grace, that it shall not be lost. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin;" doth not make a trade of sin, cannot sin so as by sin totally and finally to fall; "for his seed remaineth in him."* (1 John iii. 9.) While the Papists and Arminians have endeavoured to bite asunder the golden chain, whereby grace and glory are linked together, this place of scripture hath broken their teeth. Bellarmine acknowledgeth that this is the hardest place of scripture for him to answer, in all the book of God.† In John iv. 14, it is set forth by "a well of water springing up into everlasting life." A believer is "born of incorruptible seed." (1 Peter i. 23.) An hypocrite, like a stake, hath no root, and therefore may be plucked up; but a real believer hath grace rooted in him, and therefore, like a tree rooted in the earth, stands fast.

If it be objected, "No man can certainly be assured of salvation, because God hath no where made a particular promise to any person by name; and nothing is to be believed with a divine faith but what is expressly contained in the word of God. He hath not said, 'Thou, Cornelius, shalt be saved:—'"

To this is answered, that all particulars are contained under the universals. If all men be rational creatures, and Cornelius be a man, we must conclude that Cornelius is a rational creature. How will they prove that there is an infallible certainty, that every particular person shall come to judgment? For God hath not said, "And thou, Cornelius, shalt come to judgment." In the commands that are given to all men,

* *Ἀμαρτιῶν ποτεῖν differt ab ἀμαρτανεῖν simpliciter accepto.* "To commit sin differs from sinning in its simple acceptation."—EDIT.
 † BELLARMINUS *De Justificat.* tom. iv. lib. iii. c. 15.

that they shall not commit adultery; how will they prove that this reaches every particular man? for where hath God said, "Thou, Cornelius, shalt not commit adultery?" Thus this is proved from the infallibility of God's promises.

2. From the prevalency of Christ's prayers.

2. *The prevalency of Christ's intercession for those that do believe and love God, doth demonstrate the inseparable connexion between grace and glory.*—For we know, that what Christ prayed for shall be granted. "And I know that thou hearest me always." (John xi. 42.) Arminius layeth it down as "a certain truth, that Christ's prayers are never rejected." * Now Christ's prayers for believers are not conditional: "Father, if their faith fail not, let them be saved;" but Christ prayeth, that their faith might not fail, and that they may be saved. Christ's intercession doth not exclude the conditions of faith and perseverance, but is, that we may believe, persevere, and so infallibly be saved. "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." (Luke xxii. 32.) And Arminians grant this prayer of Christ to be absolute, praying not for Peter's salvation if he should persevere, but praying that he may persevere. Neither is this prayer peculiar for Peter, excluding the rest; for though he mentioneth Peter, yet he speaketh to all, and of them all: "Simon, Σίμων, Satan ἐξήγησάτο ὑμᾶς, hath desired you, that he may sift you as wheat;" and when he should be recovered from his fall, he should strengthen his brethren: whereby it is manifest, that Christ had respect unto the perseverance of the rest, as well as to Peter's. And the like intercession Christ makes for all that should believe, as appeareth from John xvii.; which was not a prayer only suitable to the condition, and cases, and exigencies of the apostles at that time, but a pattern of his interceding now in heaven. So much Arminius grants.† "I pray that thou wouldest keep them from the evil;" (John xvii. 15;) therefore from apostasy, the greatest evil. Not that they should be free from persecution, but from being overcome by persecution, that it may not separate them from him: ἀπο τοῦ πονηροῦ the article shows "the evil" to be specially sin and Satan. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." (Verse 20.) And he prayeth for their glorification: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am;" (Christ then, as to his divine nature, was in heaven, a proof that he was God;) "that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me." (Verse 24.)

* *Certò certius concludere nobis licet, Christi preces nunquam rejectum iri.*—ARMINII *Oratio De Sacerdotio Christi*, p. 17. † *Continet illud caput 17 Joh. perpetuum canonem precum et intercessionis, quas Christus Patri offert in cælis: quanquam enim Christus adhuc in terrâ existens illam precationem recitaverit, tamen ad statum illius sublimem in cælis pertinet propriè; et describi voluit, ut perpetuò nobis esset in terris solatio.*—ARMINII *Oratio De Sacerdotio Christi*, p. 17. "The seventeenth chapter of St. John's Gospel contains the perpetual rule, the exact canon, of the prayers and intercessions which Christ offers in heaven to his Father. For although that prayer was recited by Christ, while he remained upon earth, yet it properly belongs to his sublime state of exaltation in heaven: and it was his will, that it should be written and described in his word, that we who are on earth may derive from it continual consolation."—EDIT.

3. *From the inability of all things to separate betwixt Christ and a believer.*

3. *The inability of all things that may set themselves to make a breach and separation between God and the gracious soul, doth demonstrate an inseparable connexion between grace and glory.*—Famous is that place to this purpose, in Rom. viii. 35, 37—39; where the question is propounded by the apostle, whether any thing shall separate betwixt God and his people, and hinder their salvation. And the apostle saith, “No:” where observe these particulars:—

First. The interrogation: “Who shall separate?” that is, none shall. For thus an interrogation is a strong negation.* (Matt. xxiii. 33; Heb. ii. 3.)

Secondly. Here is a particular application of this to individual persons; not only believers, or elect in general. “Who shall separate us?”

Thirdly. A particular enumeration of those evils that might threaten this separation: “tribulation, persecution,” &c. And whereas some assert their own wills may be the cause of their apostasy, and that not mentioned in the text; “It is not said, their own wills shall not separate them;” I answer, It is included, when it is said, “no other creature,” except they will exempt men’s will from the creation.

Fourthly. His glorying and triumphing over all these, *ὑπερνικώμεν*, “more than conquerors;” “over-overcome.”

Fifthly. In whose strength it is that we are enabled to keep our steadfastness, that maketh it the more certain: in the strength of Christ, and not our own.

Sixthly. His confidence, (and he had the Spirit of God,) *πεπισμαι*, “I am persuaded;” though sometimes it signifies no more than a moral persuasion or probable conjecture, yet it doth not exclude a certainty of knowledge. “I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself;” (Rom. xiv. 14;) that is, *I certainly know*: it must therefore be judged by the circumstances of the text.

Seventhly. It is not said only, they “shall not separate,” but that they “cannot separate us from the love of God.” Whether “love” be taken actively or passively, for the love wherewith we love God, or the love wherewith we are beloved by God, is not now material: it is true of both. The sum of this might be gathered up in this syllogism:—Those that may certainly know that they do sincerely believe and love God, may certainly know that they shall be saved: But a real believer may certainly know that he doth sincerely believe and love God: Therefore, he may certainly know that he shall be saved.

Thus far of the first argument from our graces, and the infallible connexion between them and glory. Because I may be judged to be too long in this, I will be shorter in the rest, that I may come to the second part of the question.

* *Interrogatio negantis.*

II. ARGUMENT FROM THE INHABITATION OF THE SPIRIT.

II. *A believer may know that he shall be saved, because he may know he hath the Spirit of God dwelling in him.*—The indwelling of the Spirit is proper and peculiar to believers; for the world cannot receive him. (John xiv. 17.) That they have the Spirit,—they may know by the special effects which he produceth in that heart where he dwells, by his convincing, humbling, sanctifying work; (1 Cor. vi. 11;) by enabling them to make progress in their sanctification; (2 Cor. iii. 18;) by his special assistance vouchsafed to them in holy prayer, with sighs and groans which cannot be uttered; (Rom. viii. 26, 27;) by enabling them to mortify their sins more and more. (Rom. viii. 13.)

Now, by all these effects, the indwelling of the Spirit of God in the heart of a believer being manifested, it doth assure him of three things:—

First. By the inhabitation of the Spirit, he may know his eternal election. “Because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit.” (2 Thess. ii. 13.)

Secondly. By this we may be sure of our adoption. “And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” (Gal. iv. 6.)

Thirdly. By the Spirit dwelling in us, we may be sure of eternal salvation: “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.” (Eph. i. 13, 14.) In which text there are two words that are to be considered: *Εσφραγισθητε Ἀρράδων*. The Spirit is a seal: it is an earnest. 1. A seal among men is, (1.) For secrecy. (2.) For distinction. (3.) For authority. (4.) For certainty. A writing sealed is authentic, and for insuring. 2. It is “an earnest;” so also called, 2 Cor. i. 22; a metaphor taken from buyers and sellers. An earnest among men is part of payment; and though it be but small, yet it is sufficient to secure you of that which is of very great value.* Though there be no commutative justice betwixt God and the creature, yet here it hath its weight. There is this difference betwixt an earnest and a pawn: a pawn might be fetched from his hands to whom it was committed to keep; but an earnest binds a man to stand to his agreement, or at least he must lose his “earnest.” But God will give the whole inheritance, and will not lose his “earnest.”

For our greater comfort, we may take notice of these particulars in this text, and 2 Cor. i. 21, 22, compared together: 1. The person sealing: “The Father.” 2. In whom: “In Christ.” 3. With what seal: “The Spirit of promise:” where are all the Persons in the Trinity making us sure of our inheritance. 4. When: “After ye believed.” 5. The end, *subordinate*, the certainty of our salvation, a seal, “an

* *Ἀρράδων peculiariter dicitur pars aliqua persoluta pretii in venditione intervenientis, ut fides fiat reliquæ persolvendæ summæ.*—BEZA. “The word EARNEST is peculiarly applied to that part of the price of any thing which, in the course of bargaining, is agreed to be deposited, as a security that the rest of the sum will be paid at the stipulated time.”—EDIT.

268 SERMON XII. WHAT SHALL THEY DO THAT ARE NOT ABLE earnest :” *ultimate*, “the praise of his glory.” 6. How long this seal and earnest shall thus assure us? And that is, till we have the complete possession of what it is “an earnest.”

III. ARGUMENT FROM INSTANCES, AB ESSE AD POSSE VALET CONSEQUENTIA.*

III. *Many have without extraordinary revelation obtained a certain knowledge, that they should be saved. Therefore it is possible : that which hath been done is not impossible.*—“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith : henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day : and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.” (2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.) This certainty the apostle gathers from his sincerity and constancy in his obedience and faith, and declareth the same certainty that all those have, that know “they love his appearing :” “Knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.” (Heb. x. 34.) *Par parium est ratio, et par affirmatio.*†

IV. ARGUMENT, NEMO TENETUR AD IMPOSSIBILE.‡

IV. *God commands us to make our calling and election sure ; therefore it is possible.*—God’s commands are not evidences of our ability, but yet are of the possibility of the duty that he commands. They do not tell us what we by our own strength can do ; but yet they declare what by our diligence and God’s assistance may be done. (2 Peter i. 10.) And if we can make our election sure, (not in itself, for so it is, 2 Tim. ii. 19, but to ourselves,) we may be sure of salvation. “Whom he did predestinate, them he also called : and whom he called, them he also justified : and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” (Rom. viii. 30.)

V. ARGUMENT.

V. *The Papists grant a certainty of hope, therefore we may have a certainty of faith.*—For by faith we must first apprehend the object, before we can hope for it ; § and according to the measure, degrees, and strength of our faith, is our hope. He that hath but a weak faith cannot have a strong hope. If Abraham had staggered in his faith, he had not been steadfast in his hope. “Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope.” (Rom. xv. 13.) So much for the possibility of this assurance.

SECOND PART OF THE CASE.

Now I come to the second part of the question, *to speak to those that know not that they have eternal life, and discern not their spiritual condition.* And those may be of two sorts :—

* “In reasoning from *that which actually is*, to *that which is possible*, the consequence is valid.”—EDIT. † “The same reason exists for things in similar circumstances, and the same affirmation may be made concerning each of them.”—EDIT.

‡ “No man is bound to that which is impossible.”—EDIT. § Πληροφορία της ελπίδος, [“the full assurance of hope,”] in Heb. vi. 11, supposeth πληροφοριαν της πιστεως, [“the full assurance of faith,”] in Heb. x. 22.

I. *Some that, for want of diligence in the use of means, are uncertain what their condition is.*

II. *Such as have made inquiry, and long earnestly to be resolved in this great question, whether they be converted, changed, and shall be saved, or no, and yet cannot find it out.*

I. I would speak a few things to the first of these, because the greatest part know not their condition through their own carelessness and negligence; that, through the slothfulness of their own hearts, or the difficulty of the work, or multiplicity of worldly care and business, are yet in the dark, that examine their shop-book oftener and more diligently than they do the book of their own hearts; that make oftener inquiry whether they grow rich, than whether they wax good. If I may judge of other men's hearts by mine own in this point, and not be thought to have too hard and uncharitable thoughts of them, I would conclude we are all guilty of negligence in this case, and therefore walk in the dark, and remain in uncertainties about the salvation of our immortal souls; which should be the first thing we should make sure of, because it is of the greatest and everlasting concernment. Ah Christian! chide thy own slothful, lazy, negligent heart; shame thyself out of this carelessness. What! canst thou eat, and drink, and sleep, and trade as quietly as if thou wert past all danger? And yet thou dost not know whether thou shalt be damned or saved! Awake, O my soul! Rouse up thyself, and look after thine eternal state. It is no matter whether thou art rich or poor, honourable or contemptible; the great question, that with the greatest seriousness is to be resolved, is, whether thou hast grace or no, whether Christ be thine or no. Certainly careless persons should be stirred up to look after their eternal state; and those that are diligent need some considerations to make them more diligent; and therefore the apostle Peter writeth to those that had obtained like precious faith with himself, calling upon them, urging and exhorting them, to make their calling and election sure. (2 Peter i. 10.) For this end let me propound these following questions to thee that art negligent in this great concernment, and, as thou readest, give thyself a sober, serious answer.

EIGHT QUESTIONS PROPOUNDED TO SLOTHFUL CHRISTIANS.

1. *Is it nothing to thee, to live in the daily neglect of a commanded duty?*—Is it not the injunction of thy Lord, whose servant thou dost profess thyself to be, that thou shouldest give all diligence in this matter, and wilt thou not give any at all, or not at all proportionable to the weightiness of thy concernment herein? Might not this raise doubts and jealousies in thy soul, that thy condition is not good, because thou art not diligent to know and to prove it to be good? especially when thou dost consider that thy Lord commands thy diligence herein. Mightest not thou question the sincerity of thy obedience to any of God's commands, for want of the universality of it, extending itself to all God's commands? Tell me, Christian, why hath God given us this charge? Read 2 Peter i. 10: "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure." Is it not the same God that commands thee to pray, that commands thee to make sure of

heaven? Didst thou never read these words? or hast thou read them, and thrown them by, and thought, "This counsel is not fit to be followed, nor this command to be obeyed?" What canst thou say for thy neglect? Look a little into the text, what is it that you are commanded to make sure of? house or land? If it had been so, it is like thou wouldest have obeyed; but it is something better, infinitely better,—whether thou art effectually called, and eternally elected; and is this to be done slothfully, carelessly? or doth not God require thy diligence, (*Σπουδασατε*,) thy utmost diligence; nay, all thy diligence; nay, thy speedy diligence, without delay; thy painful diligence, without indulging thyself in thy sloth; thy continual diligence, without weariness, or till thou hadst got a certainty of thy state? And shouldst thou not do this, rather than any temporal concernment? Shouldst not thou make sure of grace, rather than of riches; of heaven, rather than the earth; of an interest in God, rather than of earthly possessions?

2. *Is it not a shame that wicked men should daily use more care to make sure of fading vanities, than thou dost to make sure of better and more lasting riches?**—What! is not the soul better than the body? Or are things temporal better worth than things eternal? How do they cark and care! "What must we eat, and what must we drink; and how shall we be sure of something to keep us when we are old?" Dost thou do thus for thy soul?—"How shall I get my sins pardoned, my nature sanctified, and my soul saved? How shall I be sure of an eternal, heavenly house above, when this mouldering cottage of my body is tumbled down?" Doth it not shame thee to see the diligence of worldly men, that if they buy house or land they look narrowly to the writing, and ask advice and counsel, whether the title will be good, that they may be sure, and not defrauded? The old usurer will not let forth his moneys, but he will have good, sufficient security both for principal and interest, because he saith, and knows, it is good to be sure. Nay, yet farther, doth it not shame thee that many men should take more pains for hell than thou dost for heaven, and to be sure of damnation than thou dost to be certain of thy salvation? How do they daily drudge in the ways of wickedness, committing sin with greediness, with both hands, heartily, with their whole soul, as though they should not come to hell sure enough, or soon enough! while thou art dull, flat, listless in thy duties to God, and not praying heartily as for thy soul! Do not wicked men take more pains in breaking the sabbath, than thou dost in keeping of it? And do not they scorn duties, more than thou dost prize and practise them? But, further:

3. *Dost thou not too much forget thine own mortality?*—Dost thou indeed consider that thou art hasting into an eternal state, and must, within these few years, months, yea, weeks, enter into an unchangeable condition? Dost thou indeed believe heaven or hell is before thee? that eternal death, or eternal life, is at the end of this fading, short, momentary life? Or dost thou judge it to be indifferent whether be the place of thy everlasting abode? What is the matter? Good Lord! what sloth, stupidity, negligence, hath possessed our hearts! Surely, if thou didst

* *Operosè nihil agunt.* "They are officiously busy in doing just nothing at all."—EDIT.

believe that thou mightest be in thy grave to-morrow, wouldest thou not make sure of heaven to-day? If the lease of thy house be almost expired, and the landlord hath given thee warning to provide thee another habitation, (for he will not suffer thee to renew it any more,) dost thou not presently inquire of thy friends and of thy neighbours?—"Sirs, can you tell me where I may have a convenient dwelling? I have but a little time in the house where I am, and I have had warning to go out by such a day." Art thou not careful to have a house ready to go to upon the very same day thou leavest the former? Alas! man, dost thou not know the lease of thy life is almost out? Nay, dost thou not know that thou art only a tenant-at-will, and God may turn thee out at an hour's, at a moment's, warning? And yet dost thou not make sure of "an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens?" Hath not God given thee warning? Did thy head never ache? Was thy heart never sick? Surely, if thou didst not forget thy own mortality, thou wouldest be more careful, painful, diligent in thy business. I see frequently men upon their sick-beds, when they think they must die, begin to inquire after heaven, and how they may know their sins are pardoned, and whether their souls shall be saved; because the apprehension of the nearness of the grave doth rouse them; and, for all [that] thou knowest, thou, though now in health, mayest be as soon in thy grave, as he that lieth sick. God can stop thy breath when he pleaseth. Art thou mortal? Look, then, after thy soul.

4. *Is not this too great a slighting of the comforts of the Spirit of God? of Christ and happiness?*—Is there not so much excellency in all these, and sweetness in discerning thy propriety to* them, as to provoke thee to diligence in making sure of them?

5. *Dost not thou know that others have looked long after it, and dost thou think thou shalt come so easily to it?*—Others have prayed much, and searched themselves often, and yet have not been able to satisfy all their own doubts, whether they have gone farther than ever any hypocrite went: and dost thou think it will be so easily discerned whether thy heart be sincere with God? Many find it a hard thing to distinguish betwixt the highest degrees of common grace in hypocrites, and the lowest degrees of saving grace in a true believer.

6. *Dost thou think that conscience will never be awakened to disquiet thee, when thou canst not satisfy it about thy salvation?*—Will it always be in this spiritual slumber? Dost thou think that sickness will never come, and that death will never come, and that trouble will never seize upon thee? when thy conscience shall be so alarmed that thou wouldest give all thou art worth to know what shall become of thy soul? O then for an infallible evidence of God's love! O then that thou mightest know whether God will pardon thy sin, and save thy soul! O dreadful case, when thou comest to die, and conscience shall accuse thee for thy sloth, when thou feelest thy spirit begin to fail, and apprehendest thyself near the grave, and conscience rageth and is not at peace, because thou dost not know whether thou shalt go to heaven or hell! It is dreadful, doleful, sad, to hear these complaints from a dying man: "O, woe is

* The fourth edition has *in*.—EDIT.

me, that I must take my farewell of all my friends, and death is impatient of delay, and yet I cannot say my sins are pardoned! O woe is me! though I lie a-dying, I cannot say my sins are pardoned! Within a little while, my body must be carried from my bed to my grave; but, O, it breaks my heart that I cannot tell whether my soul, my precious and yet too-much neglected soul, shall be carried to heaven by holy angels, or dragged down to hell by cursed devils! O that God would grant me a month or two, a little longer, that I may work out my salvation!" But thy conscience shall tell thee, thou hadst time, but thou didst mis-spent it; thou hadst it, but thou didst not improve it in getting this grand question resolved, *whether thou hadst made thy peace with God*. Consider now how dreadful it will be, when conscience is awakened, and thou in this case unresolved!

7. *If thou be a true Christian, yet herein dost thou not act too much like the careless, ungodly world?*—They take no care to make sure of heaven; and wilt thou justify their practice, and harden them in it? There are some carnal ones in the family; a carnal husband, or a carnal wife, or ungodly children, or graceless servants, that mind not God, nor care for their souls, that look not after heaven: and wilt thou be guilty of encouraging them in their carelessness, and hardening them in their forgetfulness of God, by thine own remissness? But if thou wast serious in the use of means, pressing, following hard after God, thy strictness might shame them out of their wickedness, and might reflect upon themselves: "If such a one that lives so circumspectly, and taketh so much pains in duties, and yet doubteth, and fears, and would fain be resolved, what a careless wretch am I, never to regard my own soul!" They are ignorant of God and his excellency, of Christ and his beauty, of grace and its necessity; and therefore desire them not, nor care to make sure of them. But God hath opened thine eyes, to see all these. Stir up thyself, then, to get a certainty of thine interest in them.

8. *Art thou not too much guilty of hypocrisy, when thou goest to the table of the Lord, and yet dost not give diligence to make thy calling and election sure, nor to have the certain knowledge of the pardon of thy sin, and of thy peace with God?*—Is not the Lord's supper an ordinance for the helping the right receivers to assurance of the pardon of their sin, in the blood of Christ? Is it not for that end a seal of the covenant of grace? If thou sayest thou usest it for this end, why then dost thou look after it no more when thou returnest from that ordinance?

Having premised these things to awaken you, and rouse you out of your sloth, supposing that now you are resolved to take any course that can be prescribed from the word of God; that thou art one who weepst, mournest, complainest, because thou dost not discern thy spiritual condition; I shall lay down my advice to thee in these following Directions:—

DIRECTIONS TO GET ASSURANCE.

DIRECTION I. *Get some characteristic, distinguishing signs of true saving grace, by thy serious searching [of] the word of God.*—God hath told thee in his word who shall be damned, and who shall be saved;

though not by name, yet by the qualifications by which they are described. In the Bible, there are the statute-laws of heaven, and the standing rule by which you must be tried, [by which] thou must stand or fall, be eternally blessed or everlastingly miserable, as thy condition is consonant to or various from the infallible characters of saving grace contained in the scripture. Thou that hast deserved eternal death, mightest know before the day of the general assize whether thou shalt be acquitted or condemned.

But if thou know not how to gather these thyself, go to some godly, faithful minister, and desire him to give thee some characters of a sincere Christian from the word of God, wherein hypocrisy and sincerity are differenced; and be sure the signs thou triest thyself by be not short of saving grace, or that will not hold trial, or bear thee out at the day of judgment. I cannot here insert any, partly because I have not room to crowd them in, partly because by what I have already laid down under that head, *that a man might know that he is sincere, believeth and loveth God*, something to this purpose might be picked up.

DIR. II. When thou hast thus furnished thyself, thy next work must be to *set thy conscience on work, and reflect upon thy own heart, and upon the motions of thy will, and compare thyself with the word of God.*—The former sent you to study the book of God's word; this calleth upon you to study the book of your own hearts. The other is a direct act of the understanding; this is a reflex act to make a judgment of thy state, whether there be a transcript of those things in thine own heart; for every believer hath the gospel-laws written upon the table of his soul by the Spirit of God. Assurance cannot be had ordinarily, without the examination of our own hearts; for assurance is the certain knowledge of the conclusion drawn from the premisses, one out of the scripture, the other by the reflex act of the understanding or conscience; thus: "He that believeth and is justified shall be saved;" that is the word of God: then, by the search of his own heart, he must be able to say, "But I believe, and am justified;" and from these two doth result this assurance that he may conclude: "Therefore I shall be saved." The woman that had lost a piece of silver did light a candle, and swept her house, and thereby found what she had lost. (Luke xv. 8.) Conscience is this candle, the scripture is the fire at which it must be lighted, and self-examination is the broom whereby the heart is swept; and so the state of the soul, which before was not discerned, comes to be discovered.

But here take heed thy heart be not rash in affirming or denying. Suspend the determination till thou hast made a narrow, strict inquiry into thy soul. As thou lovest thy soul do not *presume*, as thou valuest thy comfort do not *deny*, *any work of the Spirit of God* upon thy heart; but with thankfulness acknowledge any thing that thou canst discern to be a fruit of the Spirit. Search thoroughly, and judge impartially. Say, therefore, to thy soul, to make thyself more serious in this weighty work, "Thou art now, O my soul, in the presence of the great heart-searching God, that knoweth certainly what thy state and condition is; what thy will, heart, and affections are.* Thou must, O my soul, shortly stand at

* *Deus est oculus infinitus.* "God is an infinite eye."—EDIT.

the bar of God, as now thou standest at the bar of conscience, and must be searched, judged by the Lord, and have the sentence of life or death, of absolution or condemnation, according as thy state shall be found to be. Consider, O my soul, thou art now about the greatest concernment in the world. Many have been mistaken; many are now tormented in hell, that once thought their condition was good. It is not therefore for thee to flatter thyself; and it is easy to be mistaken; and if thou shouldest be mistaken, it is as much as thy *soul* is worth: if thy condition be bad, and thou conclude it to be good, thou wilt but go more merrily to hell. It is as much as thy *comfort* is worth: if thy condition be good, and thou conclude it to be bad, thou wilt go more sadly to heaven, and wilt be unthankful to thy God, and keep the glory from him, and the comfort from thyself. Thou art indicted, O my soul, arraigned, and found guilty, that thou hast sinned against the Lord. The question is, whether thou hast repented, and art pardoned? I charge thee, therefore, O my soul, that thou speak truly, and answer right 'to these demands."

Art thou so far convinced of sin, of the vileness of its own nature, the evil in it, the evil after it, that thou art weary of it, thou groanest under it, thou loapest it, and art unfeignedly willing to be broken from every sin without any reserve? and what thou canst not estimate, that thou wilt bewail? Art thou so far convinced of thine own insufficiency to help thyself, that all thy tears cannot wash thee, and make thee clean, all thy duties cannot save thee? that though thou darest neglect them *as means*, yet thou darest not rely upon them *as a saviour*? so that thou seest the necessity of a Christ, the sufficiency of Christ? the sufficiency and willingness of Christ, offering himself unto thee in the gospel, calling to thee, crying after thee, saying, "Ah, thou poor, miserable, forlorn sinner! thou hast undone thyself: wilt thou now be cured? Thou hast wounded thyself: wilt thou let me apply a plaster of my blood, my healing, pacifying blood, to thy bleeding soul, to thy distressed, disquieted conscience? All that I expect from thee is, to take me for thy Lord and Husband, to rule, govern, sanctify, and save thee. Thou hast withstood thine own mercy; I have often asked thee, and thou hast often denied me; but yet if now thou wilt receive me, behold, I bring pardon along with me, and peace along with me, and eternal life, and every good thing along with me; yet mercy is not gone, it is not yet denied to thee." When thou mayest gather such things from the word of Christ, put the question to thyself, "What sayest thou, O my soul? Thou hearest the gracious words of the Lord Jesus: he commands thee to come, he inviteth thee to come, he promiseth thee acceptance if thou come. Art thou willing, or art thou not? Wilt thou persevere in thy former denial, and be damned; or wilt thou yield, and be saved? Wilt thou consent to take him for thy husband, and subscribe unto his terms? Doth thy judgment value him above all, and thy will choose him above all, and thy affections go out after him above all things in the world? as a woman doth in all those three respects, when she taketh a man to be her husband?"

Art thou so far convinced of the excellency of the everlasting glory of the saints, and the perfection of that happiness that is above, as it is a

state of *perfect holiness*, as well as a state of *real happiness*, that thou art willing to part with any thing that might hinder thee from obtaining of it, and do any duty prescribed by God, though displeasing to thy flesh, and use them as means for the attaining of so excellent an end? Wouldest thou have him, whatever it cost thee? Canst thou not be without him, whatever thou be without? Then pass sentence for thyself, concluding thy condition to be happy.

This is the nearest way to find out thy condition; not stand wrangling with thyself for thy former neglects any further than for thy humiliation; and do not so much inquire what thou hast not formerly done, as what now thou art really willing to do.

Besides this solemn, set examination, thou shalt find it very profitable to get and keep a sight of thy spiritual condition, to call thyself to an account every night before thou sleep, where thou hast been that day, what thou hast done, what company thou hast been in, what sin thou hast committed, what duty thou hast omitted; and mourn if thou hast fallen, and return thy hearty thanks to God if thou hast walked carefully and circumspectly that day. This counsel a noble Heathen did give, to call ourselves to an account before we sleep.*

DIREC. III. That thy assurance may be yet more complete and full, and thy comfort arising from the same more enlarged, *fall down at the throne of grace, and beg earnestly and pray importunately for the witness of the Spirit of God.*—For as it is the Spirit that worketh grace in us, so it is the Spirit that must discover the truth of that grace to us: “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.” (1 Cor. ii. 12.) “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” (Rom. viii. 16.) But beware thou take not satanical delusions for the Spirit’s persuasion, or the conceit of thy own brain for the witness of the Spirit. The Spirit never witnesseth any thing to any man contrary to what is revealed in the word; for he is a Spirit of truth, and never speaks contradictions; therefore, if any man thinketh that he hath the witness of the Spirit, testifying that he is a child of God, and yet is not holy, humble, penitent, he is deceived. But if thou hast the graces of the Spirit, and the Spirit witnesseth so much unto thy conscience, and with thy conscience; 1. It inflameth thy heart with love to God and Christ; 2. It raiseth more hatred in thee to thy sin; 3. Thou findest a mighty strength and power in it, engaging thy soul to walk humbly, holly with thy God; 4. A wonderful cogency in it to be zealous for God in suffering any thing for his sake, and doing and obeying any thing that he enjoins. Thou hast encouragement to ask this of God, because it is according to his will. (John xiv. 13, 14, 21.) “Lord, is it not according to thy will that I should be careful of my immortal soul, and make sure its eternal happiness and salvation? It is thy command I should do so; that I should examine myself whether I be in the faith, and whether Christ be formed in my heart. Lord, I

* Πη παρεθην; τι δ' ερεξα; τι μοι θεου ουκ ετελεσθη; For a translation of this part of the “Golden Verses” of Pythagoras, see p. 26.—EDIT.

have examined, but yet I cannot clearly see it. I see there are some grounds to hope it; but yet I cannot confidently assert it. O thou blessed Spirit of God, clear up mine understanding, and stir up and excite my graces, that I may feel the actings of them in my soul, and so better discern them. Though this be arbitrary, and not necessary, yet do to me as thou didst unto thy servant David; when he prayed that thou wouldest lift up upon him the light of thy countenance, thou puttest gladness into his heart." (Psalm iv. 6, 7.)

DIREC. IV. *Press after the highest degrees of grace, and be much in the exercise thereof, if thou wouldest clearly discern thy spiritual condition.*—The weakness of thy grace makes thee doubt of the truth of grace. The Christian must be like the crocodile, that grows as long as it lives, and ceaseth to be when it ceaseth to grow.* The body of a man is continually growing, till he come to his perfect age, and then ceaseth to grow; for then, though he may wax fat and broader, yet he riseth not higher, and his bones have no increase: so when we come to our full stature in Christ, to our perfect age in glory, we shall grow no more, because then we shall be perfect; but in our minority we must be always growing; and a growing person is easily discerned to be a living person. A dwarf cannot see so far as a taller man, nor be seen so far: so a little grace cannot be so easily perceived amongst a crowd of sins and corruption.

When grace at first is like Elijah's cloud, little like a man's hand, it was hardly discerned; but when it did increase, and the heavens were black with clouds, every eye could then perceive them. (1 Kings xviii. 43, 44.) Assurance is usually vouchsafed to Christians of the largest size. Men put not up a great mast or sail in a little boat, but in a larger vessel, that is able to bear it.

So also, by the strong actings and exercise of grace it is discerned. A man in his sleep, when he acts not reason, cannot judge himself to be a man. A man in a swoon, when he cannot be perceived to breathe, standers-by know not whether he be dead or alive, nor he himself.† Moral habits are acquired and strengthened by frequently-repeated acts, and more easily discerned. The fire lying raked under the ashes, is not so easily found, as when it, being blown up, breaketh forth into a flame. He that hath strong love to God will sooner feel it; and the more frequent it moveth, and is upon the wing after God, the sooner shalt thou know that thou lovest him. "The being of a thing is proved by its operation." *Operari supponit esse.*

DIREC. V. *Be well acquainted and informed in the nature of the covenant of grace, and the conditions thereof.*—Whatsoever are thy doubts, there is something in the covenant of grace that would be ground of satisfaction to thee: is it thine own unworthiness? Here rich and free grace is laid open. Is it thy long delay of coming unto God, that now thou thinkest it is too late? The gospel will tell thee, that Christ will not cast thee off, if now thou come unto him. Is it thy ragged, torn, imperfect obedience? The covenant of grace accepts of sincerity,

* As some affirm.

† *Animi quies, motus virtutis est*; "The moving activity of virtue, is the settled rest of the mind."

though there be many infirmities; the intention of the heart for the work of the hand; the purpose for the performance, where the sincere soul cannot do so much as he doth really desire to do.

DIREC. VI. *Prize the society of the people of God that are acquainted with the workings of God's Spirit upon their hearts.*—Be much in communion with the saints. When they have been unfolding their doubts, they have been in some good measure resolved; this hath quickened their hearts when they have been dull, and blown up the sparks of love in their souls to God, that they have felt their hearts to burn within them with love towards God. (Luke xxiv. 32; Psalm lvi. 16; Mal. iii. 16.)

DIREC. VII. *Keep a record of all the experiences thou hast had of God's goodness to thee; and what thou hast formerly found, make it a means for the supporting of thy soul for the present and the future.* (Psalm lxxvii. 10, 11.)—Such a time thou canst remember thou wast upon thy knees, bemoaning thyself, loathing thyself, full of sorrow and complaints, and God took thee up in the arms of his love, and spake, like a friend, words of peace and comfort to thy soul, and bid thee be of good cheer, he was reconciled to thy soul. He filled thee full of sorrow, and afterward filled thee full of joy. He cast thee down, and raised thee up. He broke thy heart, and bound it up. He came to thee, as to Mary, expostulating with thee: "Sinner, why weepest thou? What aileth thee?" Thou weepest for thy Saviour, and he was by thee, and showed himself unto thee.

So much for the means to obtain this certain knowledge of eternal life.

II. But if by the use of these and the like directions, the soul cannot get this assurance; and though he search, and pray, and grieve, because he hath not the light of God's countenance shining upon him, followeth the means, and longs to know his estate, and all things he enjoyeth are lessened in his esteem, because he cannot see his interest in Christ, whom he doth most esteem: to thee I will give these directions.

COUNSEL TO THOSE THAT, BY THESE DIRECTIONS, CANNOT YET OBTAIN THIS ASSURANCE.

1. *Though thou canst not say thy condition is good, yet do not say that thy condition is bad.*—Though thou canst not affirm thou hast the faith of evidence, yet do not peremptorily say, thou hast not the faith of adherence. Though thou hast not the witness of the Spirit for thee, yet do not bear false witness against thyself. Canst not thou say thou art sure of heaven? yet do not say there is no hope of heaven. Though thou canst not own heaven as thine, do not disown it; if thou canst not prove it, do not disclaim it. It is strange, yet ordinary, to see many doubting Christians dispute against themselves, and reason against their own comfort. Tell them of their longing after Christ, their weeping and mourning for him, they doubt it is not in truth: if you say to them, "If you do not truly love him, then let him alone, and follow no more after him: why do you grieve for him, because you cannot find him, if you do not truly love him?" they will reply, "Conscience will

put a man on to do something, when yet it may not be done out of love to God." If you ask, "Can you take up with any thing short of Christ?" though indeed they cannot, yet they will reply, "The heart is deceitful," and they know not what they should do. Frame not arguments *against thyself*, when thou canst not frame them *for thyself*: live by faith, when thou canst not live by sense and comfort.

Take heed here of judging thy condition to be bad, by trying thyself by rules not so suitable to find out the being and truth of grace, as the growth and increase of grace. And here,

(1.) *Say not, thou hast no grace, because thou hast not so much as thou seest others to have.*—To take notice of the eminent degrees of grace in others, to provoke ourselves to labour after the same proportion, is good; but to argue for a nullity of grace, because thou hast not such a quantity of grace as thou discernest in others, is not rational. Is there no water in the brook, because there is not so much as in the river? Is there not light in a candle, because there is not so much as in the sun? Wilt thou say thou art a beggar, because thou art not so rich as thy neighbours, that have a full estate? Or, that thou knowest nothing, because thou knowest not so much as the greatest scholar? Observe Peter in this case: he did not say,—when Christ asked him, "Lovest thou me more than these?"—"I love thee more than John or any of thy disciples love thee;" but, "I love thee." (John xxi. 17.) Thou must love Christ more than thou lovest any thing in the world besides, or else thou dost not sincerely love him; but thou must not conclude that, except thou lovest him as much or more than others love him, thou hast no love at all unto him. Yet this is ordinary: "I never was humbled so much as others have been; I cannot mourn as others do." Inquire now after the truth, rather than after the degrees; and know thy humiliation is true, First, when thou art broken for and from thy sin: so much bitterness upon the breast, as weaneth the child from it, is sufficient: Secondly, that makes thee see a necessity of Christ, and willing to close sincerely with him.

(2.) *Say not, thou hast no grace, because thou hast not grace proportionable to thy desires*; but rather hope thou hast it, because thou hast such enlarged desires after it. Is not he a froward, unthankful child, that saith his father hath given him nothing, because not so much as he desireth?

(3.) *Say not, thou hast no grace, because thou seest corruption in thee more than before.*—They were in thy heart before, though thou didst not discern them. The house is full of filth; but while the shuts are up, it is not perceived; but take them down, and you see it plainly, not because there is more filth, but because there is more light.

(4.) *Not because of the indisposedness of thy heart to, and dulness of thy affections sometimes in the time of, holy duties.*

2. *When thou canst not get assurance, make as much improvement of the grounds upon which thou mayest build hopes of salvation.* (Psalm xxxiii. 18; cxlvii. 11.)—The probable grounds [which] thou hast, thou wouldest not part with for all the world. If thy heart is not full of joy through the sense of God's love, yet thine eyes are full of tears, and thy

soul of sorrow, through the sense of thy sin. Wouldest thou change thy condition with any hypocrite whatsoever, with the richest man that hath no grace? I would not have thee rest satisfied with a probability, but yet bless God for a probability, of salvation. Is it nothing, that one that hath deserved hell most certainly, should have a probability that he should escape it? Would not this be a little ease to the torments of the damned, if they had but a strong probability that they may be saved? But "no hope makes it heavy." When thou art sick, thou inquirest of the physician: "Sir, what do you think of me? Shall I live or shall I die?" If he reply, "It is not certain; but there are good hopes, it is probable you will live, and do well;" this is some support unto thee in thy sickness.

3. *Discourse with such Christians whom thou darest not judge to be ungodly, and yet findest them to be in the same condition with thyself, having the same doubts, the same fears, complaining of the same sin; and do not pass a worse judgment upon thyself than thou darest upon them.*—This is a very useful way either to convince or support,—to consider our case in a third person. Thus Nathan convinced David. (2 Sam. xii. 1—14.) So the prophet convinced Ahab. (1 Kings xx. 35—43.) A man condemning another in the same case, becomes αυτοκατακριτος, "self-condemned." So a man approving of another in the same state and condition, clothed with the same circumstances, as himself, is to approve of himself. Thou hearest another say, he knows not what to think of his present and eternal state; but yet thou seest, and he tells thee, he dares not willingly sin; the desire of his soul is to walk holily and humbly with his God; he dares not neglect a commanded duty: thou darest not say, "This man hath no grace." It being as well with thee [as with him], say not worse of thyself.

4. *Forsake not duty, because thou wantest comfort.*—Thou hadst better want joy than neglect duty; for duty is more necessary than comfort, and in order to it; therefore [it] must be minded more. To seek comfort, may be in love to thyself; but to be constant in duty in the want of comfort, argues conscientious obedience to the commands of thy God. Though thou art not taken up into the arms of Christ, yet lie at his feet; though he doth not take thee into his bosom, yet throng among the crowd to touch the hem of his garment. He might deny thee comfort, and yet own thee for his child; but thou canst not deny him duty, and yet own him for thy God. If he do not tell thee thou art his son, yet do not thou say, thou wilt not be his servant. (Luke xv. 19.) I beseech thee, say not, "I will hear no more, I will pray no more: ordinances are in vain, and all endeavours will be in vain." Casting off hope clips the wings of serious, constant endeavours. Limit not God to thy time. Joseph did not presently discover himself unto his brethren, but carried himself as a stranger to them. Joseph knew that they were his brethren, but they knew not that they were related to him; but they often coming to him, and making known their perplexed condition in the grief and trouble of their souls, with sad complaints and moans, he could no longer refrain; his heart was full, his bowels did yearn, and the fire of love did so flame forth, that made his tears presently boil over.

"I am Joseph your brother: I will show you kindness; be not troubled." (Gen. xlv. 1, &c.) While thou followest God with thy complaints, and pressest hard after Christ, he will at length show and make known himself unto thee. "O thou weeping sinner, I am Jesus thy Brother, I am thy Redeemer, I will be thy Saviour: though thou hast dealt unkindly with me, yet I will receive thee with the sweet embraces of my everlasting love." Read Psalm lxxxv. 8; Hosea vi. 1—3; Isai. liv. 7, 8.

5. *Always be more observant of the purpose and disposition of thy heart, the inclination of thy will, the general scope of thy life, than the passionate sense of joy and comfort.*—There is but little constancy in these joys: like the tide, they ebb and flow; like a land-flood, [they] might overflow for a while, but a little after be dried up. Joys are the sweet-meats of the soul, but are not for its constant fare and diet; for a spiritual banquet, not for a standing-dish. Thus it was with David. And the experience of Christians proves it.

6. *When thou canst not experience the sweetness of the promise, yet then firmly believe the verity of the promise.*—The truth of the promise doth not depend upon our sense and feeling of it, especially when we would. There might be *evidentia credibilitatis*, when there is not *evidentia rei*, "sufficient reason to believe, because it is a promise made by God, when thou dost not as yet see the performance of it." Though thou hast not tasted honey, yet thou wilt believe it to be sweet, if told by one that hath eaten thereof.

7. *Carry thyself really towards thy sin, as thou dost conceive, through mistake, God doth towards thee.*—Thou sayest, God doth not love thee; be sure thou dost not love thy sin. Thou sayest, he hath cast thee off; be sure thou cast off thy sin. Smile as little upon thy sin as, in thy greatest darkness of discomfort, thou sayest God doth upon thee. Lighten the ship by casting thy sins overboard, and thou shalt come safe to shore. This eclipse may be by the interposition of some sin betwixt thee and the light of God's countenance.

8. *Diligently observe what grace is of the greatest growth in thy soul, and make the best improvement of that for thy support.*—The body natural doth grow in all the parts of it, but not equally as to all dimensions. The finger grows not to the magnitude of the wrist or arm. In mixed bodies, there are all the elements, but one is predominant. Amongst the many branches of a tree, one might out-top all the rest. In a ring of bells, all sound; but the great bell is heard above them all. In the new creature there are all graces radically and seminally; but yet one might be more eminent than the rest. In some, faith; (Matt. xv. 28;) in some, love to God; (Luke vii. 44, 47;) in some, sorrow for sin; (2 Cor. ii. 7; 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12;) as every sin is radically in every wicked man, yet some sin is grown to a greater height, and, like Saul, is taller than the rest; in one, covetousness; in another, passion; in another, pride.

Moral virtues are connexed *communi vinculo*, "with a common bond," yet they may be in several degrees: some have them *in gradu continentiae*, ["in the degree of continence,"] that, though the disorders and pertur-

bations of the soul are very urgent and pressing, yet a man is able to resist and to suppress them; some, *in gradu temperantiæ*, ["in the degree of temperance,"] when the passions are more sedate and calm; some, *in gradu heroico*, ["in the heroic degree,"] when they are subdued and restrained, that they are subject to the government and rule of right reason, the guide and leader of the soul. Now, that grace that is most eminent is easily discerned. Make use of that.

9. *Blar not thine eyes, by always poring upon thy sin and wants, that are the reason of thy doubts and fears; but study also the righteousness and fulness of Christ, for the support of hope and confidence.*—Know, that if thou hadst never so little sin, (Gal. iii. 10,) yet thou hast need of a Saviour; and if thou hast never so much, he is willing and sufficient; (Isai. i. 18;) if thou hadst never so much sorrow and inherent grace, thou must be justified by the merits of Christ alone; (Job ix. 21; 1 Cor. iv. 4; Phil. iii. 8, 9;) and if thou hast but so much as is true and sincere, thou art justified, and shalt be saved. (Matt. xii. 20.) Set thy faith on work, therefore, to lay hold upon Christ, and faith will suck strength from Christ, as the child doth cleave to the mother by the navel, and receive nourishment from her. A twig that is shaken by every wind, yet tied to the body of a tree,—it standeth fast. Eye thy sin to cast thee down, and Christ's righteousness to raise thee up.

10. *Be more in practice than in disputes; and wherein thou wouldst inform thy judgment, proceed in a right method.*—Many weak Christians cannot see the complexions of their faces, because they are always looking into troubled waters, searching into needless disputes and questions. Notional knowledge in the scripture will never cure thy distemper; no more than [the] bare reading of Galen, or the works of some physician, will recover a man from a fit of sickness.

And where thou wouldst be informed, proceed in a right method. Question not thy election first, but thy true conversion. "God hath reprobated me: all will be in vain." But thou must prove thy election by thy conversion, as the cause is discovered by the effect. "We must begin in this where God doth end, and end where God doth begin." As on a ladder, he that is above, if he would come down to you, must first use the top rounds; but if you would go up to him, you must first use the bottom rounds, and ascend step by step. Election is the uppermost round, sanctification is at the bottom; and by our sanctification we must climb up to see our names written in the book of life. In building, men proceed *methodo syntheticâ*; * in pulling down, *methodo analyticâ*. † If you would take a watch to pieces, you must begin where the watchmaker made an end. The carpenter, when he builds, first lays the foundation, and finishes the roof last: when he pulls down, he takes off the roof, and so to the foundation. God did first choose, and then convert us; but we first know our conversion, and thereby our election.

* "By the synthetical method," that is, from the foundation of first principles up to the conclusion; or that which, beginning with the parts, leads onward to a knowledge of the whole. —EDIT. † "By the analytical method" of separating a matter into constituent parts, or resolving it into its first principles. —EDIT.

MOTIVES TO GET ASSURANCE.

In the close, take these MOTIVES drawn from the utility of this assurance, to quicken thee further to labour after it. This assurance will be,
1. Comfortable to thyself. 2. Profitable to others.

1. *It will fill thee with comfort.* (1.) *Under all God's providences.*
(2.) *Under all God's ordinances.*

(1.) *That is a desirable frame of spirit, that doth fit us to carry ourselves, under the various dispensations of Divine Providence wherewith the people of God are exercised, as most becomes the gospel of Christ, and the profession we make.*—Assurance helps us in this; for,

(i.) *Assurance sweetens every mercy.*—It is the sugar in our wine. He knows every mercy is given in mercy, and not in wrath. He knows it is not his portion: he hath much here; but he is sure he shall have more hereafter. But the want of this embitters all outward enjoyments to the doubting Christian; who saith, “What are the riches of the world to me, when I doubt whether the graces of the Spirit are infused into me? What is gold without God's love? And what is plenty without hope of heaven?”

(ii.) *Assurance will lighten every burden.*—With this he can bear the burden of adversity, as Samson did the gates of Gaza upon his back, (Judges xvi. 3,) without sinking under it.

First. *The assured believer knows he is rich in the midst of poverty.* (Col. ii. 2.)—“Though I cannot say, ‘Riches are mine;’ yet I can say, ‘Christ is mine;’ and that is more. Though I cannot say, ‘Silver and gold are mine;’ yet I can say, ‘Grace and glory are mine;’ and that is better.” This believer can look up towards heaven, and say, “Yonder is the place, the palace, the kingdom I have a title to; above yonder heavens must I for ever dwell; above yonder sun is a mansion for me. O, I long to be there, where I know I shall for ever be! My heart is filled with joy while I think on it. O, what joy shall enter into me, when I shall enter into that joyful, blessed place! Though now I walk in rags, I shall shortly be clothed with white and glorious robes. Now a cottage is my house, but a stately building is prepared for me.” (2 Cor. v. 1; John xiv. 2, 3.)

Secondly. *The assured believer rejoiceth in the sharpest sufferings for the gospel's sake.* (Heb. x. 34; Acts v. 40, 41; xvi. 23—25. Compare Gal. ii. 20, with Acts xx. 23, 24; xxi. 13.)—He can despise and scorn all the scorings, threatenings, and reproaches of the ungodly world; for though he seeth he is hated by men, yet he knoweth he is beloved by God.

(iii.) *Assurance is the best cordial in time of sickness, and a sovereign remedy against the fears of death.*—But it is sad to be a doubting Christian, when thou art a dying Christian.

(2.) *The assured believer may with comfort approach to God in all his ordinances.*—(i.) He can go to the throne of grace with humble boldness, crying, “Abba, Father.” (ii.) When he reads or hears the word of God, every part is welcome to his soul. When the promises are opened, he can say, “These belong to me.” When threatenings are denounced, he can rejoice, because he is delivered from the misery

threatened. When commands are urged, by assurance they are much facilitated: "This is my Father's command, I will do it; my Father's will, I will obey it." (iii.) He can approach with joy to the Lord's supper, and sit there with great delight. He sees the wounds, the sufferings, the sorrows, of Christ; and saith, "All this was for me."

2. *This assurance will make thee profitable unto others.* (1.) To the wicked; (2.) To the godly.

(1.) *To the wicked.*—(i.) *By this the wicked shall be convinced that religion is a reality*, that ordinances are not empty things; when they must acknowledge: "Surely these men meet with something from God in duty, which we are strangers to, that maketh them thus cheerful in all conditions."

(ii.) *By this they shall be convinced that that is false [which] they have conceived of seriousness in religion*; that if they close with Christ, they shall never have a delightful, pleasant life more. Drooping, disconsolate, mourning Christians strengthen this error in wicked men too much.

(2.) *It will make thee profitable to the godly.*—(i.) To the weak. (ii.) To the strong.

(i.) *Thou wilt be profitable to the weak*, by communicating thy experiences to them for their comfort and support. (2 Cor. i. 4.)

(ii.) *Thou shalt be profitable to the strong*, that have the same assurance with thyself. When two such meet together, O how sweet is their discourse of the joys of heaven, and of the comforts of the Spirit, and the delights of the life of a Christian!

These advantages, amongst many others that I might have named, hath the believer that is assured of his spiritual-safe condition, that a believer that yet knoweth it not doth not so fully enjoy. I shall conclude all with that exhortation of the apostle: "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Peter i. 10, 11.)

SERMON XIII.

BY THE REV. ROGER DRAKE, D.D.

WHAT DIFFERENCE IS THERE BETWEEN THE CONFLICT IN NATURAL AND SPIRITUAL PERSONS?

But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.—Romans vii. 23.

THE apostle, having showed in the former chapter, that justified persons are not under the law, prosecutes and amplifies that choice privilege in this seventh chapter, which hath four parts.

PARTS OF THE CHAPTER.

1. *An allegory*, which shows there is no matching with Christ, till we be divorced from the law. (Verses 1—6.) Moses may be a good friend; but to fallen man he is ever an ill husband, “a bloody husband,” as he was to Zipporah. (Exod. iv. 25.)

2. *A complaint*, partly of the law, as an occasion of sin’s malignity, (verses 8—10,) and partly of his own estate: (1.) Before conversion, as either secure, or desperate. (Verses 9—11.) (2.) After conversion, as troublesome and vexatious. (Verses 14—24.)

3. *An apology*. (1.) For the law, as spiritual, holy, just, and good. (Verses 12, 14, 16.) (2.) For himself, as under a force, &c. (Verses 15, 17, 20, 22, 25.) The best gospel-apology against sin is, under Christ, a *fore* or *after* descent.* *This*, grace will allow for a good clearing of ourselves. (2 Cor. vii. 11.)

4. *A gratulation*. (Verse 25.) No man, especially no godly man, can, under the gospel, want matter of thanks, be his condition never so sad; since the former is not altogether hopeless, and the latter hath at present a part and interest in Christ.

COHERENCE.—My text falls under the second head. The apostle’s condition was bad before conversion, sad after conversion, truly militant, and no release from this warfare. (Eccles. viii. 8.) Christ endured the contradiction of sinners; (Heb. xii. 3;) Christians, the contradiction

* Such is the correct reading of the first edition, which, by gradual corruption, at length became, in the fourth edition, “*fore* or *after* dissent.” Our old lexicographers describe *descent*, now generally written *descent*, as “a term in Common Law, being an order or means whereby lands or tenements are derived to any man: thus, *to make one’s descent from his ancestors*, is to show how and by what means the land in question came to him from his ancestors; and this descent is either lineal or collateral.” In this view, the words, “a *fore* or *after* descent,” contain an allusion to “the first” and “the second Adam;” under the latter of whom a title to the “inheritance that is undefiled” is claimed collaterally by all believers, as “children of the promise,” in right of their elder Brother, who is himself “not ashamed to call them brethren.”—EDIT.

both of sin and sinners, and that continually. May they not well complain, as [in] Psalm cxx. 5—7, and Gen. xxv. 22?

DIVISION OF THE TEXT.—In the words, note,

I. *An act of observation.*—Godly men are great observers, especially of themselves: “I know;” (verse 18;) “I find;” (verse 21;) and in the text, “I see.”

II. *The matter observed:* a combat or conflict.—In which, note,

1. The *combatants or champions*,—the law of the mind, and the law of the members. The form of a being, naturalists call “a law,” (*Bacon de Formâ Calidi, Aphor. 7.*) because forms, like laws, and laws, like forms, do ordinate and constitute natural and politic bodies in their being, distinctions, and operations. Vatablus calls it, *aliam vim*, [“another force or power,”] laws, as forms, being principles of action. Grotius distinguisheth of a fourfold law: (1.) *Lex Dei*, [“the law of God,”] recorded in scripture. (2.) *Lex mentis*, [“the law of the mind,”] the judgment between things honest and dishonest. (3.) *Lex membrorum*, [“the law of the members,”] “the carnal or sensual appetite.” *Lex peccati*, [“the law of sin,”] “the custom of sinning.” To complete which heads, we must, with the leave of the learned author, add two other distinctions; namely, (1.) The law of original sin propagated by generation, which is strengthened by custom in evil, and, together with our sensual appetite depraved, makes up the law of sin. (2.) The law of sanctifying grace infused in regeneration, which completes the law of the mind.

2. The *equality of this fight* in a reciprocal opposition; sin indwelling fighting against grace indwelling and *contra Arabes castrametantem*,* there being a pitched battle between grace and corruption; in which some graces and corruptions bear the office of commanders, others, of common soldiers: this is noted in the preposition *avti*. (Compare Heb. xii. 4.)

3. The *disparity of the fight*, managed by way of “rebellion” on the part of sin, by way of loyalty and authority on the part of grace; whence Beza and Piscator render it *rebellantem*.

4. The *dubiousness of the fight*, both parties often fighting, as it were, *æquo Marte*, [“with equal prowess and success,”] sometimes one, sometimes the other, seeming to get the better, as in the battle between Israel and Amalek. (Exod. xvii. 11.)

5. The *sad event too often on the better side which is led captive.*—In which term yet there is a mixture of comfort; sin, when in triumph, acting as a tyrant, not as a lawful sovereign. The law of the mind may be overborne by, but never indents with, the law of the members; as a person enslaved by force, but not by contract; or as school-boys, in a mis-rule, may shut their master for a while out of doors, but at last he gets in, and they pay dearly for that affront. Withal, note in the text a mixture of civil and military terms to illustrate the spiritual conflict; there being a law-suit, as well as a pitched battle, between grace and corruption.

THE SCOPE OF THE TEXT.—The text is limited, by the apostle, to the

* “Pitching his tents against the Arabs.”—EDIT.

regenerate ; yet may in a good and true sense be extended to the unregenerate also, in whom there is "a law of the mind ;" namely, the law of reason, though not of regeneration. Yea, Porphyrius (*Περὶ Ἀποχής*, lib. i.) uses the apostle's phrase, calling it *τον νομον του νοου*. Taking, therefore, the law of the mind, and the law of the members, in a large sense, may not every one take up this complaint of the apostle ? Thence note,

THE DOCTRINE.

In every man, especially in the regenerate, there is a conflict between the law of the mind and the law of the members.

THE *ὅτι*, "that it is so," appears by a threefold evidence :—

1. *By the testimony of nature speaking in [the] Heathen.*—Thus Medea :—

Video meliora, proboque :

*Deteriora sequor.**—OVIDII *Metamor.* lib. vii. 20.

So Simplicius *ad Epictetum* : *Ἀλογος ορέξις τον λογον κινησασα, (τουτ' εστιν ημας τους κατ' αυτον ουσιαμενους,)*† *και αιχμαλωτον λαβουσα.* "The irrational appetite displaces reason, &c. ; and leads it captive."

2. *By testimony of scripture ;* and that, (1.) As to the godly : "The flesh lusteth against the spirit," &c. (Gal. v. 17.) (2.) As to the unregenerate : instance in Herod, who was troubled by this conflict between lust and conscience ; (Mark vi. 26 ;) yea, in the very Heathen, who, by not hearkening to conscience opposing sin in them, felt conscience accusing them for sin. (Rom. ii. 14, 15.)

3. *By every man's experience.*—Who finds not every day within himself a contest of contrary motions and inclinations ? Are we not all in this point Rebekahs, big, though not with twins, yet with an Esau and a Jacob, two contrary nations struggling each with other ? (Gen. xxv. 22, 23.) O that we had all her wisdom and success !

THE *διοτι*, "why it is so," will appear in the explication and resolution of the special case of conscience assigned ; which therefore here I pass.

PREMISALS.—Before I propound the case, let me premise some particulars preparatory, as a key of explication.

1. *As the great, so the little, world (man) is made up of contraries :—*The outward man of contrary elements, humours, health, and sickness ; the inward man, of contrary principles, reason and passion, grace and corruption, conscience and sense.

2. *Man is both an actor in, and a theatre of, the greatest action and noblest conflict in the world,* though usually invisible, and therefore not so much observed. He that conquers himself, is a nobler hero than Alexander, who conquered a great part of the world. (Prov. xvi. 32.)

3. *In the state of innocency there was no conflict : in the state of glory*

* "Affection *this*, discretion *that* persuades.

I see the better, I approve it too :

The worse I follow."—SANDYS'S Translation.

† "That is, ourselves, whose very essence consists in this."—DEAN STANHOPE'S Translation.

there will be no conflict, there being no corruption to combat with grace.—In a state of minority, as in infants and fools, there is no conflict till reason begin to dawn, and with it conscience to actuate common principles against the motions of innate corruption. In a state of corruption there is no spiritual conflict, because there is no renewing grace to combat with corruption, that strong man that keeps all in peace till a stronger than he comes. (Luke xi. 21, 22.)

4. *The natural conflict is in every godly man, the spiritual conflict is in no wicked or natural man.*—This I note to allay the fears of drooping saints, who, finding a conflict between conscience and corruption, conclude they are in a state of nature, and search not for the conflict between grace and corruption. This is as if a man should conclude he is a beast, because he hath sense like a beast; not considering that he hath reason superadded, which a beast is not capable of.

5. *There is a vast difference between the natural and the spiritual conflict.*—This will appear in the resolution of the case.

6. *The mistake about these two conflicts.*—(1.) [It] undoes natural men, who, feeling a combat in themselves, fondly apprehend it to be the fight between the flesh and the spirit, and thereupon rest secure in a natural estate. (2.) It troubles regenerate persons, and that in reference both to duty and comfort; making them drive heavily, because they doubt whether they be Israelites or Egyptians.

7. *As the great wisdom of God lies in governing the great world made up of contraries, so the great wisdom of a godly man lies in governing the little world made up of like contraries.*

8. *This government lies principally in discerning these conflicting contraries, and improving their contrariety for the advantage of the outward and inward man.*—He is the wisest physician who can govern the body made up of contraries; and he is the wisest Christian who can rule his soul in the midst of contraries. In this government Christ is principal; (Psalm cx. 2;) a saint instrumental. (Hosca xi. 12.)

9. *This singular wisdom is attainable in the use of ordinary means, and that by the meanest who have grace to follow Christ's conduct:* yet not by the power of free-will or human industry, but by the bounty of free and special grace. (2 Tim. iii. 15; James i. 5; Rom. ix. 16.)

10. *It cannot be expected that any unregenerate person should understand to purpose the difference between these two conflicts; because he hath no experience of this double state, and double principle.*—No wonder, then, if such say of me, as the Jews did of the prophet, "Doth he not speak parables?" (Ezek. xx. 49.) However, for the sake of the unregenerate, (to convince them,) and for the sake of the regenerate, (to comfort them,) I shall endeavour, ploughing with Christ's heifer, to find out this great riddle. And so I come to the case, and a case of the highest concernment.

QUESTION. *Wherein doth the natural and spiritual conflict differ? or, what difference is there between the conflict in the natural and spiritual man?*

ANSWER. They differ principally in seven particulars; and,

1. *In the ground or cause of the fight; which, in the unregenerate, is,*

(1.) *Natural principles*, or the relics of God's image in the understanding. The notion of a Deity, and of loving my neighbour as myself, &c., are principles [which] cannot be razed out of any man's heart, be he never so professed an atheist; nor can these principles lie always idle, but will more or less be in action against corrupt inclinations.

(2.) *Acquired principles*, from common illumination, moral and religious education and custom. This light discovers more of sin's obliquity and danger, thereby laying on a stronger bridle of restraint, through fear, shame, &c., and adding spurs to the exercise of many parts of piety.

(3.) *The natural temper of the body*, which indisposes to some special sins, as well as to some special graces. As all souls, so original corruption in them, may be equal, yet not act equally, because of the indisposedness of bodily organs. Thus some naturally are more chaste, sober, and meek than others; and hence their temper advances the combat against the lusts that oppose the fore-mentioned virtues.

(4.) *The contrariety of one lust to another*.—Grace is uniform, and each virtue linked together in a perfect subordination; but sin is divided, and opposite to itself as well as to grace. Thus ambition says, "Spend;" covetousness says, "Spare;" revenge incites to murder; self-love restrains, for fear of an halter. Here, now, is a combat, but only between flesh and flesh, between flesh more refined, and flesh more corrupted. The best of these may be called "a counter motion," as in dust and clouds agitated by contrary winds; but not properly "a conflict or fight;" because they proceed not from a true vital principle, there being in a natural man no principle of spiritual life.

On the other hand, in the regenerate, the combat ariseth from the antipathy of two contrary natures perfectly hating each other. (Gal. v. 17.) Of all affections, as one notes well, love and hatred are first, and most uncompoundable. A godly man hates sin as God hates it, not so much for its danger as for its loathsomeness; as some creatures hate filth, so that they will rather die than defile themselves. One wolf may snarl at another; but the quarrel is not laid in their natures as it is in the wolf and lamb, which therefore cannot be reconciled. God in Paradise first sounded the trumpet to this alarm,* proclaiming an eternal war between this seed of the woman, and of the serpent. (Gen. iii. 15.) As in persons, so much more in principles, there is a mutual abomination. (Compare Psalm cxxxix. 22; Prov. xxix. 27; Psalm xcvi. 10; cxix. 128; Rom. viii. 7.) Enemies may, but enmity can never, be reconciled.

2. *They differ in the object or matter of conflict*; which, in a natural man, is, (1.) Grosser evils that startle the conscience; (2.) Infamous evils that are attended with worldly fear or shame; or, (3.) Some particular evils that cross temper, education, or custom, &c.

But in spiritual persons, the matter of conflict is, (1.) Little sins, as well as great. (2.) Secret sins, as well as open. (3.) The first risings, as well as the gross acts. (4.) Sins which promise worldly safety, credit, profit, contentment, as well as those sins that threaten the contrary. (5.) In a word, all moral evil; hatred and antipathy being of the whole kind; (Psalm cxix. 128;) especially of those evils which most endanger

* Concerning this word, see the note in page 290.—EDIT.

the new man ; (Psalm xviii. 23 ;) and such as are beloved sins ; (Matt. xviii. 8, 9.)

3. *They differ in the subject of the conflict.*—In natural men, the fight is in several faculties ; reason fighting against sense and passion, or the dictate of conscience against the corrupt inclination of the will ; whence the fight is more at a distance by missile arms and velitation. But in the regenerate man, the fight is more close in the same faculty ; the wisdom of flesh and spirit counteracting, in the same understanding, the lustings of the flesh and spirit in the same will : whence the fight is, as it were, *inter triarios*, [“between veterans of approved courage,”] grace and corruption immediately ; which at first, haply, was managed by the *hastati* and *scutati*, [“the spear-men and targetiers,”] reason and interest. The former is like the fight of the soldiers of fortune, more lazy, and by way of siege ; the latter more keen and vigorous, by way of assault and onslaught,* like that of Scanderbeg, who fought with his enemies breast to breast in a box or grate.

4. *They differ in the instruments or weapons wherewith they combat.*—The natural man’s weapons are, like himself, carnal ; to wit, natural or moral reason, worldly fears or hopes, and sometimes spiritual fears or hopes, but carnalized ; namely, slavish fear, and mercenary hopes. But the regenerate man’s weapons are spiritual ; (2 Cor. x. 4 ;) to wit, gracious interest, and all the spiritual armour, especially the shield of faith, and the sword of the Spirit. (Eph. vi. 11—18.)

5. *They differ in the manner of the fight.*—The natural man’s combat is more mercenary ; admits of more parleys, cessations, correspondencies ; as Saul’s fight with Amalek. (1 Sam. xv. 9.) But the spiritual man, as such, fights it out to the last, and will give no quarter. The former is like the strife between wind and tide, which often come about, and are both of one side ; the latter is like the dam and the tide, that strive till one be borne down ; or like stream and tide meeting and conflicting till one hath overborne the other.

6. *They differ in the extent of the conflict, in relation to its subject and duration.*—(1.) The *extent of the subject* is double : (i.) As to the faculties ; (ii.) As to the acts. (i.) As to the faculties: the seat of war in the regenerate is every faculty, flesh and spirit being ever mixed ; as light and darkness in every point of air in the twilight. (1 Thess. v. 23.) Grace and corruption leaven the whole man ; so that, in the regenerate, there is at the same time both a civil and a foreign war ; *that* in the same faculty, *this* in one faculty against another. Contrariwise, in the unregenerate, there is usually nothing but a foreign war between several faculties, there being nothing of spiritual good in their wills and affections, to set the same faculty against itself.

(ii.) It extends also to every act of piety and charity, especially if more spiritual ; (Rom. vii. 21 ;) for which the natural man hath no conflict, but against them ; unless it be to stop the mouth of conscience enlightened, &c. Nor, indeed, doth he know experimentally what spiritual acts of piety are. But the regenerate find it by constant experience ; faith and unbelief,

* In the early editions this word is printed *onslait* ; but in the fourth it is improperly changed into *onset*.—EDIT.

humility and pride, ever opposing and counter-working each other : whence he is forced to cut his way through his enemies, and to dispute it step by step. Others may *seek*, but he *strives*, (Luke xiii. 24,) and takes the kingdom of heaven by a holy violence, (Matt. xi. 12,) in spite of spiritual enemies that waylay him within and without.

(2.) As to the *extent of duration* of the war, which, being in the regenerate irreconcilable, must needs be interminable ; like the war between the Romans and Carthaginians that was entailed to posterity ; or as fire and water will fight for ever, if together for ever. In the natural man, contrariwise, the quarrel is soon taken up ; as between the Romans and other nations ; there being not that antipathy between reason and corruption, as there is between grace and corruption.

7. *They differ in the concomitants and consequents of the fight.*—
And,

(1.) The fight in natural men may stand with the constant practice of, and living in, sin, against the light of conscience. Godly men sin more with knowledge, but wicked men more against knowledge. “He that is born of God doth not commit sin,” that is, make a trade of living and lying in known sin. (1 John iii. 9.)

(2.) The fight in the unregenerate hinders not the perfection and consummation of sin in the antecedent deliberation and purpose, in the present delight and complacency, and the following pertinacy and impenitency. Instance in Saul, Herod, Judas, and others. But the Spirit, by its conflict, breaks the power of sin in all these in the regenerate, that they can neither do good as they would, nor sin as they otherwise would. (Gal. v. 17.)

(3.) The fight in natural men seeks only the repression, not the suppression, of sin ; to lop the superfluous branches, not stub up the root ; to charm the serpent, not to break its head. But the spiritual fight seeks the full mortification and abolition of sin, (Rom. vi. 6,) (hatred seeks the destruction of its enemy, 1 Sam. xxiv. 19 ; 1 John iii. 15,) and the complete perfection of grace, though not attainable in this life. (Phil. iii. 10—14.) This for the first branch of wisdom, which teaches to discern between the natural and the spiritual conflict.

APPLICATION.

The second branch of heavenly wisdom lies in improving these spiritual contrarieties, by siding with the spirit against the flesh.

This is done,

1. *By watching all the forces, designs, and motions of the enemy.*—We have in us legions of these devils, the meanest of them too strong and too subtle for us ; (Heb. iii. 13 ;) true Gibeonites, that can easily cheat us with their mouldy bread and clouted garments ; sons of Anak, all of one confederacy, and sworn enemies of our salvation. Had we not need have our eyes in our heads, and set watchfulness upon the forlorn hope ? (1 Cor. xvi. 13.)

2. *By making head early against the enemy.*—*Principiis obsta, &c.* “Nip sin in the bud,” crush this cockatrice in the shell, strangle this hellish brat in the birth ; take heed of the first appearances of evil, take its first

alarms;* slight not the smallest sin or occasion of sinning. How much mischief is done by a little wound, a little thief, a small spark! (James iii. v; 2 Sam. xi. 2.)

3. *Oppose especially thy master-lust.*—Fight, in comparison, neither against small nor great, but against the king of these hellish regiments. (1 Kings xxii. 31.) Be sure to pull out that right eye. This is the skirt Satan lays hold of, in wrestling with thee, to thy hazard and his no small advantage; the Goliath and Holofernes, who being once slain, the Philistines and Assyrians will soon be routed. Throw the head of this Sheba over the wall, and the enemy will retreat shamefully.

4. *Never enter the field without thy second.*—Fight under the shield, as well as under the banner, of thy general. In other fights the general flies to the battle upon the wings of his army; but here the army flies upon the wings of their general. This is done by faith and prayer. Thus David conquered Goliath, (1 Sam. xvii. 45.) and the Philistines. (2 Sam. v. 19, 23.) Fight always upon thy knees. Let Moses be praying while Joshua is fighting. (Exod. xvii. 11.) May not Christ take it ill, if thou carry thyself as if thou meanest to steal a victory before he know of it?

5. *Put on, keep on, stand in, and exercise, thy spiritual arms.* (Eph. vi. 10—18.)—That only is armour of proof: never any girds it on but may boast before the victory. (Allude to 1 Kings xx. 11.) Never any fought prosperously without it: it is our metal as well as our weapon. Neither earth nor hell can stand against this artillery of heaven. Let not Satan find thee disarmed, lest he leave thee despoiled. There is no fighting with carnal weapons against a spiritual enemy. You may as well beat the devil with a sword or spear, as conquer sin by the power of free-will, or with moral and worldly arguments. They are but paper-bullets and paper-walls; the scorn, not the terror, of hell, though useful in some cases. Remember, withal, there are no arms for thy back-parts.

6. *With some lusts fight like the Parthians, flying.* (1 Cor. vi. 18; 2 Tim. ii. 22.)—This is but an honourable retreat, and warlike stratagem. (Joshua viii. 15; Judges xx. 32.) Youthful lusts are like the basilisk, or like a burning-glass in the sun, that may not be looked on. (2 Sam. xi. 2.) With other lusts fight like the Romans, charging home.

7. *Entertain no parley with thy enemy.*—This cost all mankind dear at first. (Gen. iii. 1—4.) It is disloyal, looks like a confederacy, and is very dangerous. Come not into Jael's tent; sleep not in Delilah's lap; talk not with Joab, lest he smite thee under the fifth rib. Sin and Satan are too cunning sophisters for us to dispute withal. He in a manner gives up his cause that will plead it with the devil. The best answer to Satan's suit is, a round and churlish denial. (Zech. iii. 2; Matt. iv. 10; Jude 9.) Parleying is a kind of faint denial, and draws on this impudent suitor.

8. *Take advantage by every thing that befalls thee in this spiritual*

* In the first edition this word is printed "*all-arms*," according to its primitive signification of *conclamatio ad arma*, in French, *crier à l'armes*. Old Kersey's definition is very appropriate: "A signal given by loud cries, or the sound of warlike instruments, to cause people to take arms upon the sudden arrival of the enemy. It is figuratively taken for all manner of sudden fear, fright, or trouble."—EDIT.

warfare.—Eye thy reserves. The captain of thy salvation is both thy vanguard and thy rear-ward, and will be thy reward. Thou gainest thy husband, as David did his wife, by conquering these Philistines: and, while thou art fighting for him, he is weaving thy crown. (2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.) Eye thy fellow-soldiers, those worthies of the heavenly David, that are both militant and triumphant. (Heb. xii. 1.) Example is very forcible. Yea, take advantage by thy very foils, to be more humble, charitable, dependent, watchful, and courageous. Let not the enemy gain the field, after conquest, by a back-blow of pride. This Antiochus gains often more by flattery than by force. (Dan. xi. 21, 22.) It is honourable for Christ to say, “Well done,” &c., but dangerous for Satan to say, “Well done!” and safe for thee to say, “Poorly done,” when thou hast done thy best. Despise thyself when others admire thee; and be assured, that self-admiration is the most dangerous devil in the world. Especially improve advantages prudently: when thou hast thy enemy on the hip, yea, on the ground, fall with all thy weight upon him, give him no quarter, lest thou meet with the doom of Ahab, (1 Kings xx. 42,) and of the Israelites. (Num. xxxiii. 55, 56.) Here, as one notes well, learn wisdom of the serpent’s brood, who never thought they had Christ sure enough, though they had him in the grave. (Matt. xxvii. 64.) Remember: it is thy highest wisdom, first to discern, next to improve, the spiritual contrarieties that act in thy own bosom. He is the wisest man that knows himself, and he the strongest man that conquers himself. This alone is the true Israelite, who, by conquering himself, doth in a pious sense overcome both heaven, earth, and hell. (Gen. xxxii. 28.)

SERMON XIV.

BY THE REV. THOMAS WHITE, LL.B.

WHAT FAITH IS THAT WHICH EXCEPT WE HAVE IN PRAYER, WE MUST NOT THINK TO OBTAIN ANY THING OF GOD?

But let him ask in faith.—James i. 6.

FOR the connexion of these words with the former, since they will not give much light to the question I am to handle, and the time will hardly permit things more necessary to be spoken, I shall wholly wave or very briefly speak to.

The subject I am to speak to, is to show what is meant here by asking “in faith,” or what faith that is which whoso hath not, must not, or hath no reason to, expect to receive any thing from God. God may bestow his mercies where and on whom he pleaseth; but he is no way engaged by promise to bestow any mercy on such an one that asketh not in faith. It is not said, that such an one should not expect any great matters from God, but not any thing at all; the least mercy is greater than he hath any reason to think he shall receive; not only he shall not

receive wisdom, spoken of in verse 5, but not any thing. Wisdom he may get as Ahithophel did, and many other things, without praying in faith, or praying at all; but for Divine wisdom, or for any blessing from God, he may think what he will, but if the apostle may be thought worthy to advise him, he would not have him think to receive any thing, except he ask, and ask in faith. Therefore it much concerns us to know what is meant by *asking in faith*, since the want of it makes our prayers of none effect: if we pray without it, we may pray; but you cannot justly expect any return of your prayers, except it be as of an arrow shot up to heaven, upon your own head to your wounding. Of this question I shall speak very plainly, as the Lord shall enable me in the evidence and demonstration of the Spirit, comparing spiritual things with spiritual things.

I. Some may make it to imply more to ask *in faith* than to ask *with faith*, or that it is more to be *in faith*, than for *faith* to be *in us*. *To be in love* is more than *to love*; and when it is said, that the apostle was *in the Spirit*, (Rev. i. 10,) it shows that not only he *had* the Spirit, and was *filled* with it, but there were great overflowings, and a superabundance of the Spirit. This the apostle seems to call "the prayer of faith;" (James v. 15;) as if their faith rather prayed than they: as St. Paul speaks: "Not I, but the grace of God which was with me;" (1 Cor. xv. 10;) when faith rather may be said to act *us* than we to act *faith*.

But I suppose those high degrees of faith cannot be meant here, because it is said that they who have not this faith must not think to receive any thing, not the least: if so, then the highest degrees of faith should be required for the obtaining the lowest degrees of mercy. But scripture-promises are made to the truth, and not to the degrees, of grace: to faith that is but as a grain of mustard-seed, to remove mountains; and to love that is but a spark, to be victorious. (Matt. xii. 20.)

(I.) But I shall rather endeavour to show you how faith is taken here, than how it is taken in other places; therefore,

To "*ask in faith*," may be here spoken *in reference to the person that prays*; namely, he that prays must be in the faith, a faithful or righteous person. The scripture is full to this purpose; as: "If I regard iniquity in mine heart," though my tongue do not plead for it, nay, though it speaks against it, though I refrain from it in my life; (for we may love the sin we commit not;) and if I do so regard it in mine heart, God will not hear my prayers: if I give it so much as a good look, (for so the Hebrew, "if I see iniquity in my heart,") if I take pleasure in sin, for David calls it "painful iniquity," for so in the Hebrew. (Psalm lxxvi. 18.) No saint can live without committing sin; but all saints live without regarding it in their hearts. So also, "The prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (James v. 16.) How **MUCH** is not set down, because it cannot be set down how much it avails; as much as they please; they may have what they will. But, for a wicked man, though his prayers were effectual, they avail not much, since their desires are for temporals. The other places are full to this point, namely, that the prayers of none but righteous persons are accepted with God; as John ix. 31; James i. 15; Prov. xxviii. 9; I John iii. 15.

OBJECTION I. To this may be objected, that "many unregenerate and profligate wretches have obtained [some things] by prayer; as scoffing Ishmael; (Gen. xxi. 17;) nay, Ahab, a man that 'sold himself to work wickedness,' prevailed with God, for an adjournment of the judgment denounced."

I answer: 1. This was done by way of common providence, or God's prerogative, not by way of promise; so that they could not reasonably expect that their prayer should be heard.

2. God did this to honour the ordinance of prayer. As when our children come and tell us of some poor body: though we may not think it fit to relieve him in respect of his wants, yet we give him, for fear we should hinder our children from acts of charity; for they, not knowing our reasons of denying him relief, will expound it to be our neglect of the poor. So, many times, God may give to bad men, lest good men should be discouraged from prayer.

3. God gives to wicked men when they pray, oft-times for the strengthening of his people's faith: for they may be sure, if God hears the croakings of ravens, he will hear the mournings of doves.

OBJEC. II. You may farther say, "Are wicked men bound to pray, since their prayers are an abomination, and they cannot ask in faith?"

I answer: 1. Inability to pay a debt doth not acquit one from it, nor cancel the obligation. If one blows out the candle, one cannot excuse one's self for not working, by saying that they could not work in the dark; nor can a boy excuse himself from saying the lesson [which] he hath torn out of his book.

2. Because wicked men break others of God's commandments, it cannot justify them in the breaking of this: sin doth superinduce a new obligation, namely, to punishment, but doth not cancel their former, namely, to duty.

3. Wicked men sin not in praying, but in praying so.

4. Doubtless the wickedest man in the world is bound to desire grace.

OBJEC. III. "But doth not this make God a respecter of persons, since he will hear none but his own children, and them that love him? If a judge should favour his relations in judicature, he should be unjust."

I answer, No; God is no respecter of persons, by doing thus:—

1. Because the prayers of saints are better, as well as their persons nearer; for the prayers of the wicked are lazy, irreverent, brutish, wanton prayers. (Hosea vii. 14.) If God's people should pray so, God would not hear them either.

2. If unbelievers could pray better than saints, yet God might acquit the saint, and condemn the unbeliever; as a judge may pass sentence against one who hath paid ninety and nine pounds of an hundred, and acquit another who hath not paid a farthing, if his surety hath paid it.

3. Though in matter of justice we are not to respect persons, (Lev. xix. 15,) yet in matters of favour we may. (Gal. vi. 10.) This may be the first meaning of the words, but not the only, nor as I conceive the chief. Therefore,

(II.) To "*ask in faith,*" is, *to believe that all we say in prayer is true.*—When we confess ourselves to be grievous sinners, we are to think ourselves to be as great sinners as we say we are; when we call God Almighty "our Father," we are to believe him to be so.

Then the poor soul will say, "Alas! I cannot pray in faith; for I cannot say, 'Our Father,' since I do not believe that I am his child! How, then, can I call him *Father*?"

I answer: 1. Thou mayest call him *Father*; for he is thy Father. If thou shouldest see divers children playing some untowardness in the street, and shouldest see a man that passed by go and single out one of them, and correct him, and yet the child should follow him, would you not say he was the father of that child? For a strange child would fly from him, or fly at him, if he should strike him. Dost thou not follow God when he corrects thee? Be of good comfort; God is thy Father, and thou art his child.

When that precious man Mr. Murcot was in great anguish, fearing that God was not his Father, these words were impressed on his mind: "If I am not thy Father, why dost thou follow after me?"

2. Nay, not only God is thy Father, but thou *thinkest* so also. When Naaman's servants called him *father*, what did they mean, but to show that they acknowledged that he carried himself rather as a father than a master? When the prodigal returned, though he acknowledged that he was not worthy to be called his son, yet he called him *father*, since he had failed of nothing that might be expected from a loving, tender father. Mayest not thou call God thy *Father* upon this account? Hath he not dealt with thee in abundance of tender compassion; nay, more than the tenderest parent in the world? Give God the glory due to his goodness, call him "Father;" for thou mayest truly say he hath dealt so with thee. The same Mr. Murcot, being troubled upon the same account, namely, the fear that God was not his Father, had these words come into his mind with power; namely, "If I am not thy Father, am I thy enemy?" God argues thus with the Jews. (Deut. xxxii. 6.)

(III.) *We are to believe, that whatsoever we ask of God in prayer is according to his will.* (1 John v. 14.)

The poor doubting soul will say, "Then I dare not pray for the recovery of my child, since I know not whether it be the will of God it shall recover or no."

I answer: Thine asking what God hath decreed not to give, makes not thy prayer sinful; but thine asking what he hath forbid thee to desire. For the will of God's decree is not the rule for us to walk by, but the will of his command. (Deut. xxix. 29.) If what we pray for be such as is lawful and good for us to desire, though God should tell us by a prophet that he would not grant it, yet we might lawfully pray for it, and be blameless; for so did David. (2 Sam. xii.) Nay, though God should send us word by a prophet that we should die and not live, yet we might pray, and not only be blameless, but successful; for so was Hezekiah. Nay, though God should forbid us to pray, yet since he commands us to pray in his word, we may pray and be heard; for though God bid Jacob let him go, yet he wrestled on, and obtained the blessing; and

Moses, though God bid him let him alone, yet Moses did not let him alone, and prevailed. So, then, to ask things according to the will of God, is to ask nothing that is unlawful to ask; as for one to pray that God would prosper us in evil ways,—this is to ask what is not according to his will. I say, you are to pray for nothing that is any way unlawful to be desired. Now, it is not enough that the thing itself be lawful to be desired, but the end for which we desire it must be lawful; for if we desire lawful things for unlawful ends, we ask amiss. (James iv. 3.) The end why we desire such a mercy must be such as God approves of by his word, as well as the thing itself. To desire gifts of edification for ostentation, though according to the will of God as to *the thing desired*, yet as to *the end* it is abominable.

II. As concerning the matter of our prayers we are to believe as hath been said, so as to God we are to believe several things. Indeed, scarce any of his attributes but some way or other we are to act our faith upon in prayer: but I shall choose some few on which the eye of faith is especially fixed in prayer.

1. The first is *God's omniscience*; for else we shall be at a great loss. If we believe not this, how can we be assured that God hears our prayers? For,

(1.) *In respect of the number of prayers.*—There being millions of prayers put up at the same time to God, if he be not omniscient, how is it possible he should hear all? If any should not be heard, how knowest thou that thine is not the prayer that is not heard?

(2.) *In respect of the secrecy of prayer.*—For except God know our hearts, he cannot know our prayers: for “it is the heart that prays; the tongue only speaks:” *Orat mens, lingua loquitur.*

(3.) *If God knew not the heart, the poor soul who prayed with sighs and groans that cannot be expressed, should find no acceptance*; when the hypocrite, that speaks much and means nothing, shall be heard for his much babbling.

(4.) *The saints ask such things that require infinite knowledge and wisdom to do for us.*—For when we desire God to make us know him, it requires more wisdom than for us to teach an infant the mathematics. So we desire God to cure us of our spiritual distempers. Alas! they are so various, so contrary, so deeply-rooted in our natures, we are such froward unruly patients, that it requires infinite wisdom to heal us; for when God goes to cure our pride by afflicting us, then our impatience is increased. That which is the cure of one corruption increaseth another.

If we believe not God's wisdom and omniscience, we cannot acquiesce in God's answer of prayers; for we may *suffer*, but not *acquiesce in*, God's answer of prayers.

2. *We are to believe God's providence, that he rules and orders all things.*—Whoso thinks that all things are ruled by second causes, by the power and policy of men, or by the stars, or chance, they will not pray at all, or go to God merely as a refuge: we shall pray to God, but trust to ourselves; or to medicines when we are sick, and to our food when we are well. We may be confident we shall be delivered; but we shall not at all trust that God will deliver us. To strengthen our faith in

this, we must know, that those things that seem to be least within the compass of Providence, are wholly guided by it.

(1.) *Things natural*.—God makes the sun to arise, and the rain to fall; (Matt. v. 45;) gives “to every seed his own body.” (1 Cor. xv. 38.)

(2.) *The smallest things*.—They escape not Providence; God numbers the hairs of our head. (Matt. x. 30.)

(3.) *Things casual*.—That which we call “chance-medley” is providential as to God: (Prov. xvi. 33:) the man “drew a bow at a venture,” and yet God directed it to an hair’s breadth. (1 Kings xxii. 34.)

(4.) *The counsels of men*, yea, against God, yet are ordered by the determinate counsel of God. (Acts ii. 23.)

(5.) *Things most unruly*.—The raging sea goes so far, and no further, by God’s decree. The “roaring lion” cannot destroy a swine, nor afflict nor tempt a saint, without God’s leave. (Job i. 12; Luke xxii. 31, 32.) The wrath of man, as well as the rage of the devil, is ordered and restrained by the wisdom and power of God. (Psalm lxvi. 3.)

(6.) *The skill and inventions of men*. (Isai. xxviii. 27—29.)

(7.) *Sin itself*, whether of omission or commission, (as silence and discord in music,) serves to make the harmony sweeter.

3. *God’s omnipotence is to be believed*.—Else we will stagger through unbelief. This was that in which the eminency of Abraham’s faith did appear; (Rom. iv. 21;) and of the centurion’s; (Matt. viii. 8—10;) and Christ far more blames them that question his *can* than his *will*: for He doth not so much as reprove the leper in Matt. viii. 1—4: but so sharply reproves *him** that he makes him weep, because he said, “If thou canst;” and he saith, “If thou canst believe,” to show that we cannot believe, if we do not believe God’s power. (Mark. ix. 22—24.) We, doubtless, are generally faulty this way, though we are ashamed to own it; as you may see by this instance: If we have two children sick; the one whose death would be far more afflictive to us hath some cold or some other small distemper; the other [is sick] of some mortal disease, and given up by physicians. Thou prayest for the recovery of both; but for which of those two recovery † art thou least confident? Is it not of his who is most sick? And why so, but because thou questionest God’s power or providence? If thou shalt say, “My sins are so great, God will not hear my prayers and heal my child;” for if, indeed, that were the reason of thy fearing that God will not hear thee, thou wouldest rather fear it as to thine other child, since his death would be more afflictive.

Now, the saints have more reason to strengthen their faith in the omnipotence of God in prayer, than wicked men: because the things worldly men desire need not Omnipotence to do. A creature may do what they desire, except God will withdraw his common providence. For one that is worth an hundred thousand pounds can make a poor man rich; and some medicines, in an ordinary way of providence, have virtue to cure many diseases. But the things [which] the people of God desire cannot be done but by Omnipotence. (Eph. i. 19.)

* The father of the demoniac.—EDIT. † The construction ought to stand thus: “But for the recovery of which of those two art thou least confident?”—EDIT.

4. *We must act our faith upon his goodness and bounty.*—For we must not only have high thoughts of God's other excellences, but of his goodness also, of his abundant willingness to do us good, and loathness to afflict us; for surely he never afflicts us but in case of necessity. "If need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations." (1 Peter i. 6.) When he afflicts us, he only gives us *necessaries*; but when he bestows mercies, he gives us not only for our necessity, but "richly to enjoy." When we go to a covetous man for money, he parts with every penny as with a drop of blood. For us to think God parts so with his mercies, that he is hard to be entreated, and that he is an hard master either for work or wages, are thoughts utterly unworthy, and shamefully dishonourable to the goodness of God. If thy child, whose finger if it should but ache, thine heart aches, should think thou grudgest him every bit of meat [which] he eats, thou wouldest think him a wretched child, unworthy of thy tender affections: and must it not be far worse in thee to have such thoughts of God, since *tam pius nemo, tam pater nemo*?* Was it so great a grief to Peter to have Christ question his love, (John xxi. 17,) though he had given but sad testimony of his love but lately? and can it choose but much offend God, for thee to question God's love to thee, nay, his goodness in itself, when God hath given thee no cause of either? (Mal. i. 2.) We should go to God with as much confidence of his love, and readiness to do us good, as the child doth to the tenderest parent, as we do to the dearest friend we have in the whole world, and much more abundantly. If we do not believe that *the goodness* of God is as much above the goodness and love of our dearest friend, as we account his *wisdom and power* above our friend's, we have unworthy thoughts of that attribute which God hath most abundantly manifested, and would have [to be] most glorified; and the love our friend bears us is but a drop from and of that ocean that is in God. Doubtless, God loves his enemies more than we love our friends; he loves us more, if we love him, than we love ourselves or him. Surely, God loves the weakest saint on earth more than the highest angel in heaven loves him; for when God saith, that he "so loved the world," it was such a *sic* ["so"] there was no *sicut* ["as"] for it; it might not be said, "as the angels loved God." Ah! we deal unworthily with God in having base, low thoughts of his goodness: He hath little deserved it at our hands,—he that hath done such wonders and miracles of mercies for us, and hath promised to do more. Say, that every mercy is too great for thee to receive; but say not, that any is too great for God to give. Surely, surely God is more willing to give, than we are to receive, mercies.

But you will say, "If God be so willing to bestow mercies, why doth he not bestow them without prayers, and such importunity?"

I answer: God doth not thus because he is not willing, but because we are not fit for mercies; for God "waits to be gracious." The tender mother had rather give her child cordials than bitter pills; but her child is sick. By our prayers we make not God more willing, but we become more prepared for mercies; for our prayers exercise, and so

* "No one is so compassionate as God; no one possesses such paternal affections."—EDIT.

strengthen, grace; and strong grace weakens and mortifies corruption; and then we are fit for mercies. God only stays while he may bless us indeed, as Jabez phraseth it. One that is in a boat, and pulls a rope whose other end is tied to a rock, pulls not the rock to the boat, but the boat to the rock; so our importunities move not God, but us.

But you will say, "When we pray for others, this reason holds not; for their graces are not increased by our praying for their deliverances from misery or danger, or the church from persecution."

I answer: It is true; but our prayers add to our reward; for God is in goodness as Satan is in badness, and much more abundantly; whereas when Satan hath a commission, and intends to do some mischief, he, as oft as he can, engageth witches to put him upon doing that which he intends to do, howsoever that he may involve them in the guilt; as if they themselves [had done it], or that he had not done it if they had not put him upon it. So God, that the saints may have the reward of the good he doeth to others, (as if they themselves had done it, or as if God would not have done it without their prayers,) puts them upon praying for those mercies for others, which he will do howsoever. (Isai. lix. 16.)

III. The third object of faith are *the promises*; and there are three kinds, some *to* prayer, some *of* prayer, some to the *person* praying. We are to act our faith upon all; but, for brevity-sake, (for I am forced to contract,) I shall answer but one objection.

The poor soul will say, "I do not believe I have any interest in the promises; therefore I cannot pray in faith."

I answer: To obtain the mercies included in a promise, it is not required that we should believe our interest in it, but the truth; not that God will perform to us, but to those to whom it belongs, though you do not believe it belongs to you, for the promises made to graces are made to them that have them, not to them that believe. As, for example, the promises made to faith are made to them that have faith, though they believe not that they do believe; and that poor souls doubt that God will never make good any promise to them, proceeds not from any doubt of God's veracity or faithfulness, but of their own unworthiness and non-interest in them.

IV. The fourth and main object of faith which our faith must eye in our prayers, is CHRIST, in whom "all the promises are Yea and Amen;" who hath reconciled the person and attributes of God: and concerning Christ we are to believe,

1. *The great love God bears to Christ.*—Which is doubtless greater than to the whole creation. "For to which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my beloved, in whom I am well pleased?" God's love to Christ is not only greater, but diffusive; for the love that God bears to Christ is as the oil that was poured upon the head of Aaron, which ran down to the skirts of his garments; so the love that God bears to Christ terminates not in the person of Christ, but is communicated to all that are his. As Haman, to show the great hatred he bore to Mordecai, would not bound his malice on the person of Mordecai, but would destroy the whole nation; so God thought it too small a testimony of

his love to Christ to be well-pleased with Christ, (for so he is with the angels,) but he is well-pleased in Christ with the whole world; I mean, all nations. We must believe this, or we cannot expect any favour for his sake. His love to Christ is so great, that his love to Christ is greater than his hatred to sinners; so that any sinner may be reconciled and accepted through Christ. Christ came to reconcile God and sinners, not God and sin: as one who desires the king to be reconciled to such a traitor doth not desire him to be reconciled to the treason, but to the traitor.

2. *We are to believe the fulness of Christ's satisfaction, and the greatness of the value and efficacy of the death of Christ.*—For if justice be not satisfied, we have no throne of grace, but a seat and bar of justice, to come before. The blood of Christ hath a pacifying, purifying, purchasing, perfuming, reconciling, satisfying, justifying, virtue. It pacifies God's wrath, it reconciles and justifies our persons, it purifies our nature, it perfumes our duties, it purchaseth our inheritance.

3. *We are to believe the efficacy and infallible success of Christ's intercession.*—The fulness of Christ's intercession is in this, that he doth three things for us, all that we stand in need of, according to what was typified by the high-priest; for he did three things:—

(1.) *He sprinkled the blood upon the mercy-seat.*—Hereby an atonement was made as to our sins, they being pardoned.

(2.) *He went in with incense.*—Hereby our duties were perfumed; so God is said to "inhabit the praises of his people," and to "dwell in thick darkness," that is, in the thick smoke of the incense.

(3.) *He had the names of the tribes engraven on his breast or heart.*—Christ pleads the love [which] he bears to his people. Three places the names of the saints are written in, out of either whereof nor men nor devils can blot them out, namely, in the book of life, on the palms of his hands, and on the heart of Christ. I may add the fourth thing the high-priest did when he entered into the holy place, namely, he went in with all his rich priestly garments, to show we should be clothed with the rich robes of Christ's righteousness; for what the high-priest did, he did not in his personal, but in his public, capacity. Now, the efficacy of his intercession was not only from the wonderful love [which] God bore to Christ, from the unparalleled interest [which] Christ had in the Father; by these means we may expect all acts of favour, but we have justice on our side; for favour is an arbitrary thing; therefore Christ is our Advocate; (1 John ii. 1, 2;) he presents our case not by way of petition, but by way of pleading; for advocates do not petition, but plead.

So then Christ doth four things as to our prayers. (1.) He indites them by his Spirit; (2.) He perfumes them by his merit; then, (3.) He presents our prayers and persons; for we have access through him; (Eph. iii. 12;) and then, (4.) Superadds his own intercession, his blood crying louder than our sins, and better things than our prayers.

4. *We are to believe and improve this truth;* namely, *That the Father exceedingly delights to honour Christ.*—And hereby God wonderfully honours Christ, by pardoning and receiving into favour such rebel-

lions sinners as we are, for his sake, by forgiving any thing for his sake. A sinner cannot please God better than by coming with confidence for pardon for his sake. If we come for pardon or mercies, and our confidence ariseth from our low thoughts of the number or sinfulness of our sins, or of God's hatred of sin, or our ability to satisfy justice or deserve mercy, our confidence is desperate impudence and arrogance: but if purely from the high esteem [which] we have of the incomprehensibility of Christ's satisfaction, and of Christ's interest in God's love, and of the Father's delight to honour Christ, such confidence is precious and acceptable with God; and whosoever hath it may go with as much freedom and assurance of favour as if he had never sinned; with as much as Adam in his innocency, or the angels in glory. Alas! we do not believe or not improve these truths; for if we did, we might have any thing; for Christ hath interest enough in God to bear us out, and procure any mercy.

5. *We are to believe, improve, and obey Christ's command.*—Namely, in John xiv. 13, 14; xvi. 23. The former truths give us great hope, but *this* strong consolation; for though such a great person had never so much interest in some other great person, with whom we had to do, yet without a commission from him we might not go in his name; but Christ hath not only given us leave, but a command; and now it is not an arbitrary thing, we *may* do or not do, but we *must* do. This is the incomprehensible goodness of God, that what is for our good he commands us, that not only we may be put-on the more to obtain what is good for us, but that it may be an act of obedience, and so we may be rewarded for procuring our own happiness.

So much for the things we are to believe; now for the manner of believing.

1. *We are to believe these things of God and Christ with an historical faith.*

2. *With a faith of recumbency.*—We are to rely upon the power, wisdom, and goodness of God, and upon Christ's interest in God, &c.

3. *Saints are, by way of duty, but not by way of a necessary condition of obtaining whatsoever they ask, to believe with the faith of assurance of obtaining whatsoever we pray for.*—By faith here in the text is not meant, that we must, without any doubt or wavering, believe that we shall receive in kind whatsoever we ask, even the very thing we pray for.

(1.) The leper was cured, though he prayed with an "if thou wilt."

(2.) Those in desertion should put up no acceptable prayers, since they have not faith of assurance of obtaining.

(3.) Christ, when he comes at the day of judgment,—he shall not find this faith on the earth; (Luke xviii. 8;) and yet it is said, in verse 7, God will hear those prayers.

(4.) The apostle forbids this faith; (James i. 7;) therefore it is not the faith here commanded; for then it should run thus: "You must believe you shall receive the thing you ask for; but if you do not, you must not." Many more arguments may be brought to prove this; but these shall suffice, beside what shall be said in the positive handling this

question, namely, *What faith is required as to our believing absolutely and undoubtedly in kind the very thing we ask ?* which I shall answer in several

PROPOSITIONS.

PROP. I. *When we ask temporal blessings as we ought, we are bound to believe we shall receive them as we ask them.*—For our prayers for temporal things should be spiritual as to the end, and moderate as to their measure, and conditional as to their effect upon us ; that is, if it be for our good. Now, since our desires are to be conditional, and God's promises of temporals are conditional, we must not absolutely believe we shall receive what we ask : a conditional promise cannot be a foundation for an absolute faith.

PROP. II. *Our faith and confidence of obtaining the thing we ask should proceed pari passu, should be as strong to the event as it is to the conditions.*—If we are very confident [that] what we ask is for the glory of God or [for] our good, we must be as confident that we shall have it ; for as we are to put no condition to absolute promises, since God hath put none ; so we are to add no more conditions to conditional promises than God hath put ; and upon those conditions we are as fully to rely upon God's performance, as upon his performance of absolute promises.

PROP. III. *Though we cannot nor ought not certainly to believe the obtaining the thing we ask, if it be temporal, by virtue of the promise ; yet, by virtue of an immediate assurance God may give us of receiving the very thing we ask, we may, and indeed cannot choose but, expect it.*—We read of God's dealing so with several of his saints ; with Mr. Fox, and many others.

PROP. IV. *As for spiritual blessings, they are of four sorts.*

1. *Of edification ;* as gifts ; such as speaking with tongues, and prophesying in the primitive church, and the gifts of preaching and praying now. Or,

2. *Of consolation ;* as assurance, and the comforts of the Spirit, the privileges of the kingdom of God, as peace and joy in believing.

3. *Of sanctification ;* as grace and glory. For the former, the same rules as belong to temporals belong to these ; but for saving grace, as our prayers ought not to be conditional, since we are sure it is for our good and the glory of God for us to be holy ; so our faith ought not to be conditional, but absolute and particular, that God will give us grace and glory, if we sincerely and fervently ask it.

4. Yet though I should believe that God certainly will give grace, nay, and all other things, if good for me ; yet my not believing that God will give me grace, doth not null mine interest in the promise, but only my comfort ; nor shall it hinder God's performance, though it hinders our expectation of receiving.

PROP. V. *Though we are not absolutely to believe we shall receive temporal blessings, or those of consolation or edification ; yet that we do not more confidently expect the performance of such prayers in kind, proceeds generally from our not believing and improving the power and goodness of God, and the great interest Christ hath in God, and the rest that I*

have spoken of.—For, generally, we are more confident that the thing we pray for is good for us, than we are that we shall have it.

PROP. VI. *We may be confident that the restoring of ourselves or our relations to health, or deliverance of them out of danger, is for our good; as they, in our Saviour's time, who prayed to him for these mercies, were.*

PROP. VII. *As the case stands between justifying faith and assurance, so the case stands as to our receiving, and our expecting, the answer of our prayers in kind.*

1. As we may and shall have all the promises that are made to faith made good to us, though we do not believe that we have faith, and by consequence do not believe we shall have them made good to us; so when we pray for those things [which] God hath promised to those who love or fear God, or walk uprightly, (though we do not believe we have that fear or love, or that we walk uprightly,) if we have those graces, we shall receive the promises made to them.

2. As there are two kinds of assurance, one which comes from the testimony of our own spirits, when, upon serious examination of ourselves, we find that we do believe; the other, which comes from the testimony of the Spirit of God, witnessing with our spirits: so there are two kinds of assurance of receiving the thing we ask; one which proceeds from our believing, and improving our believing, the power and goodness of God, and Christ's interest in God, and God's delighting to honour Christ, by giving the mercies we ask in his name; the other, from God's immediate assuring us that we shall receive the very mercy we pray for.

3. As the immediate testimony of the Spirit comes with more evidence than the testimony of our own spirits; so the immediate assurance that God gives that we shall receive the things we pray for, is clearer and fuller than that which we have by our relying upon the power and goodness of God; or, to speak more properly, we do more fully rely upon the goodness and power of God, when God doth immediately enable us so to do, than when we work out this confidence by our own endeavours, assisted by the ordinary concurrence of the Spirit.

4. As it is not our sin to want the immediate testimony of the Spirit, so it is not our sin not to have this particular assurance of receiving what we ask. These parallels may be far more enlarged, and will hold, as I think, in all particulars.

USES.

The use of this is,—

1. For *consolation*, to all that love and fear God; for thy not believing [that] God will grant thy prayers, shall not hinder thy prayers from being accepted and granted. For although if thine unbelief were built upon thy not believing God's power or goodness to do what thou prayest for, [it] would hinder thee; yet, since thy diffidence proceeds from thy not believing that thou art such an one as the promises are made to, such thine unbelief shall not make the promise of God of no effect. (2 Tim. ii. 13.) In verses 11, 12, the apostle saith, "If we are dead with Christ," (not, "If we believe [that] we are dead with Christ,") "we shall also

live with him ;” though we do not *believe* [that] we are dead, if we are dead it shall not hinder : “for if we believe not, God is faithful.” (2 Tim. ii. 13.) For suppose one dies, and leaves such an one a legacy ; though he to whom the legacy is left doth not know of any such legacy, yet the executor will not therefore not give him the legacy ; nay, though he will hardly believe it when he tells him, yet he will keep it and give it him : so the legacies that Christ hath left to the saints, though they little think any such legacies are left by Christ to them, yet their ignorance shall not frustrate Christ’s love ; nay, though they will not for the present extend their hand of faith to receive it, yet God will and doth keep mercy for thousands, until they will receive it. (Exod. xxxiv. 7.)

2. The second use is an use of *exhortation*.

(1.) *Put in thy claim for mercy* ; for thy claim will hold, not according to thy sense, knowledge, or belief, that thou hast an interest, but according to the truth of thine interest. Suppose thou shouldest promise to give to every one of thy children such a gift, if they were good children. Suppose one of your children who had obeyed your commands, and had been very inquisitive to know your will ; I say, suppose such a child should sit weeping because he thought he had not obeyed your commands, and because he thought you were angry with him, and upon that account would not come for your promised gift ; would you not therefore give it him ? Nay, would you not only be pleased with his obedience, but that he took so to heart your supposed anger ? So, O poor soul, that sittest weeping with thine eyes full of tears, and thine heart full of sorrow, under the sense of God’s supposed displeasure ! shall not God “wipe all tears from thine eyes,” and give thee the promises he hath made to thee, though thou, through the sense of thy unworthiness, dost not believe thou hast any interest in them ?

(2.) The second advice is, *that thou shouldest endeavour to obtain the graces to which the promises are made* ; namely, fear and love of God, and uprightness of heart, &c. Whilst others are examining, and going from minister to minister, to know whether they have those graces, be thou getting of them. For, (i.) Thou shalt be sure to get an interest in the promises, for they are made to such as have the graces, not to those that know that they have those graces ; and if thou hast a title, thou shalt have possession. (ii.) By getting greater degrees of graces, the trouble of examination will be needless ; it will save thee that labour ; whereas, otherwise, thou wilt perpetually be put to examination : as for instance : Thou findest a spark of fire, and coverest it up again, and lettest it lie wet ; to-morrow thou wilt be as far to seek, and wilt as hardly find, the spark, and know whether there be any fire to-morrow as to-day. Another, knowing where to have fire close by, knows she can as soon fetch it from her neighbour as find it on her own hearth, if there be but a spark or two : she therefore fetches some, and blows up into a flame, and she lays on fuel to keep in the fire : so thou knowest where thou mayest have God’s love, namely, from God, “who is near unto them that call upon him.” They know they may have it sooner by prayer, than find it by examination ; this they blow into a flame : and as when the fire flames we may be sure there is fire, without poring to find it ; so

when thy graces are in an eminent degree, they are so apparent, that one that hath but half an eye may see them. (iii.) By getting the conditions to which the promise is made, thou shalt often get what is better than the promise itself; for the promise is often temporal, when the condition is spiritual.

(3.) *Study much, or rather meditate much upon, these great gospel mysteries of Christ's satisfaction, of Christ's interest in the Father's love, and of the Father's delight to honour the Son, by giving mercies, and pardoning sinners, for his sake.*—Know that thou greatly dishonourest Christ when thou goest timorously to God for any mercy in his name, and it greatly argues thine infidelity. Suppose thy friend, that was bound with thee for some great sum of money, and he, hearing there were serjeants to arrest thee, should put himself into their hands to save thee from prison, and he should be carried to prison, and pay the debt, and send thee word that he had paid the debt every farthing; if thou shouldst, notwithstanding, be afraid to see thy creditor, or stir abroad, would it not argue that thou believedst not thy friend had paid the debt?

(4.) *Go, then, with confidence to God, in the name of Christ, since Christ hath bid thee, or else thou hast strange thoughts of Christ.*

Suppose a friend of yours should bid you go to such a great man for such a courtesy, and should tell thee that he had spoken to him in thy behalf, and bid thee not fear, for he could have any thing of him that he spoke to him for, and should bid thee go to him in his name, and tell him he sent thee; if thou shouldst stand considering what to do, and shouldst fear, that, for all thy friend professed he had so great an interest in that great man, you should not find it so when you came to him, would not this show that you feared your friend boasted of more interest than he had?

Christ hath plainly bid us go to the Father in his name from him, and that we shall have any thing whatsoever: if we doubt whether, when we go to the Father in his name, we shall obtain, doth it not plainly argue our low thoughts of Christ's interest in the Father's love, and that Christ hath higher thoughts of his interest in his Father's love than indeed he hath? The sense of thine own unworthiness should by no means hinder thee, except thou wentest to God in thine own name; for the question in this case is, not how God loves thee, but how God loves Christ. Thou hast thoughts high enough of God's love to Christ, if thou knowest that God loves Christ more than he hates any sinner in the world. Thy thoughts are not high enough of Christ's love to thee, if thou thinkest Christ will deny thee any thing; nor hast thou worthy thoughts of God's love to Christ, if thou thinkest God will deny Christ any thing, or any one that comes to him in his name, whom he bids so to do; for in so doing, he doth not so properly deny thee, as Christ.

SERMON XV.

BY THE REV. ELIAS PLEDGER, A. M.

OF THE CAUSE OF INWARD TROUBLE; AND HOW A CHRISTIAN SHOULD BEHAVE HIMSELF WHEN INWARD AND OUTWARD TROUBLES MEET.

And they said one to another, Yea, but we are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us. And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required.—Genesis xlii. 21, 22.

IN this chapter we have the description of our fathers, the patriarchs; their first journey into Egypt for corn, to relieve their famine in Canaan. Herein is considerable,—

1. Their entertainment there: it was harsh, with much trouble, more danger: the great Lord-Treasurer of Egypt would not know them, but treats them roughly; (verse 7;) takes them for spies; (verse 9;) rejects their defence; (verse 12;) renews, and out of their own mouths re-enforceth, his charge and suspicion of them; (verse 14;) threatens to commit them; (verses 15, 16;) commits them; (verse 17;) puts bonds upon one of them, till the rest should quit and clear themselves and him of suspicion. (Verses 19, 20.) This is their cold and sad welcome and entertainment.

2. The consequent of this their hard and distressful usage and entreatment; and that is trouble of mind, horror and perplexity of spirit: “And they said one to another,” &c.

The words, then, are the Holy Ghost’s report of the case of the sons of Jacob, their being spiritually troubled, by way of conviction, or judgment in their own (which also is the Lord’s) court of conscience.

Wherein we observe,

1. *The actors themselves*: [being] the registers, accusers, witnesses, judge, [and] tormentors.

2. *Process in judging themselves*: wherein,

(1.) Self-accusation of the cause of their trouble, their sin, with the utmost aggravations; namely,

(i.) In general: “We are guilty.”

(ii.) In particular: Of envy, wrong against a brother; whom in bitterness we saw without pity, and were deaf to his entreaties; obstinate to the admonition of Reuben, and abiding therein.

(2.) In self-condemnation: “Therefore is this distress come;” and his blood required.

3. *Execution*: wherein,

(1.) The smart, by inward terror and consternation; their heart, mis-giving them, is deeply affected, and that makes them very abrupt: "Yea, verily," that is, Alas! what shall we do?

(2.) The circumstance of the time when; couched in, "and."

(i.) In general: many years after the offence was done.

(ii.) In special: now that they were outwardly in an afflicted condition.

DOCTRINES. I. Every man hath a conscience within himself.

II. The guilt of sin turns a man's conscience, that is, himself, against himself.

III. Conscience is apt to be very sensible, when it is awakened, not only of sin, but particular sins, and the particular circumstances and degrees thereof to the utmost; and charge all upon a man's self, not upon God's decrees or providence, nor upon the devil or evil company, &c.

IV. Envy, unnatural affection, cruelty, deafness to the entreaties of the distressed, obstinacy against warning and admonition, continuance in sin without repentance, &c., are very heinous and dangerous.

V. The accusations and condemnations of conscience are terrible, or cause terror beyond all expression.

VI. There is a time when God will call over sins that are past, and charge them upon the conscience.

VII. Inward trouble of mind sometimes (yea, usually) comes upon the people of God, when they are outwardly in some distress.

I shall speak of the two last, and in them something of all the other, saving the fourth, containing the particular matter of fact; namely, cruelty and blood, which I shall not meddle withal.

These are then the two

DOCTRINES.

I. *There is a time when God will call over past sins with horror, &c.*

II. *This time of inward horror falls in with outward trouble.*

DOCTRINE I.

There is a time when God will call over sins that are past, without repentance, and charge them upon the conscience with horror.

Here is the case: The sons of Jacob had formerly trespassed against God in the matter of their brother, "And they said," &c.: now, and not till now that we read of, are the guilt and horror of it reflected upon their consciences. In sin, the *act* passes, the *guilt and consequent* remain.

Sin is like some poison, which may be taken at one time, and work at another, it may be seven years after. It was now more than seven and seven years, that the poison of this sin began to work.

It is true of family sins; (Hosea i. 4;) of national sins; (Ezek. iv. 4, 5; Lam. v. 7;) and of personal sins, as here. And that is the case,

1. Not only of the wicked, as in the case of Cain: "If thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door," (Gen. iv. 7,) to shut out mercies, and let in judgments; and that as a fell mastiff, or a sleeping lion, ready to take thee by the throat, whenever the Lord awakens guilt in the conscience.

2. But also of the godly : "Thou makest me to possess the sins of my youth." (Psalm xix. 12 ; xxv. 7 ; Job xiii. 26.)

REASONS.

REASON I. *From God.*

1. *God remembers all* : "The Lord hath sworn, Surely I will never forget any of their works." (Amos viii. 7.) "I remember that which Amalek did," &c. (1 Sam. xv. 2.) God hath three books :

(1.) *Of pre-science* ; wherein he writes down our names, and his purposes concerning us. The Arminians deny that book.

(2.) *Of providence* ; wherein he writes down our names, and all his care over us. The epicure and atheist deny this, as also the former.

(3.) *Of post-science or remembrance* ; wherein he writes down our names, and all the particulars of our carriage towards him :—

(i.) Whether they be *good*.—No act of piety or charity, not a cup of cold water from the spring of love, not a drop of tears from the spring of godly sorrow, not a sigh from the bottom of a broken heart, but it is taken notice of, bottled, recorded. (Mal. iii. 16.)

(ii.) Or *bad*.—Not a wicked thought, a malicious scoff, or wicked action, word, motion, but God marks it, and sets it down in the book of his remembrance. (Psalm l. 21.)

2. *God need not reflect, or look back* ; for he hath all things present before him, that ever were, are, or are to come ; namely, (1.) *In speculo decreti*. (2.) *In causis particularibus*.*

God's knowledge (called fore-knowledge, and remembrance, in respect of us, and the things known) is as his being, altogether in *puncto æternitatis* ["in the point of eternity"]. There is not in God *first* and *second* of time, and cause ; no *was* and *is to come*, but all *is*. There is not with God beginning, succession, and end ; but his name is I AM ; and so is [his] knowledge as himself, "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." (Heb. xiii. 8 ; 2 Peter iii. 8.) The knowledge of men is as of one standing on the shore, where some ships are past, and out of sight one way ; others to come, and out of sight another way ; others in sight right over against him ; but the knowledge of God is [as] of one on the top of an high mountain, where with one view all things are present. (Heb. iv. 13.)

3. *God also seals up our iniquities as in a bag*. (Job xiv. 17.) As the clerk of the assizes seals up the indictments for the next circuit ; nay, God himself will bag them, and seal them up with his own hand and signet. God, speaking of the provocations of his people, saith : "Is not this laid up in store with me, and sealed among my treasures?" (Deut. xxxii. 34.) So strict and earnest is God for security, as we say, "*Sure bind, sure find*." What more sure and safe than that which God himself lays up in bag and cabinet, and seals among his jewels ? As when God makes up his jewels of mercy, he will remember them ; (Mal. iii. 17 ;) so when he casts up his treasures of wrath, he will remember them.

4. *God's truth engages him in this case*.—His word cannot pass away, now he hath said it. He will by no means acquit the guilty ; (Exod. xxxiv. 7 ;) that is, unless the blood of sprinkling for repentance and remis-

* "1. In the glass of the decree. 2. In the particular causes."—EDIT.

sion be applied. It is said, again: "God shall wound the head;" (Psalm lxxviii. 21;) and again: "The sinner an hundred years old shall be accursed!" (Isai. lxx. 20.)

Now, as the godly look to have God as good as his word for good: so the wicked must look to have God as good as his word for evil: "Did not my words take hold of your fathers?" (Zech. i. 6.)

5. *No time can remit God's anger.*—If you offend a man, and he be angry, you may get out of the way, and time will wear off the memory of the offence, or at least assuage his passion; but it is not so with God; for if he be once angry, he is for ever angry, the same cause, which is sin unrepented, remaining. "God is angry with the wicked every day," (Psalm vii. 11,) for the sins he commits one day; the anger of the Lord, unless he works a change in us, abides upon us, burning to the bottom of hell. O, as his fear is, so is his wrath, (Psalm xc. 11,) and a thousand times more.

6. Lastly: *The sinner is as much under the power of God at one time as at another.*—Forty, a hundred, a thousand, years after a sin is committed, as when the sin was first done.

As the people of God are borne up with that word, "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that he cannot save;" (Isai. lix. 1;) so the wicked sink under the terror of that word, "Can thy heart endure, or can thine hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee? I the Lord have spoken it, and will do it." (Ezek. xxii. 14.)

This is the first reason from God.

REASON II. *From sin.*—In a twofold consideration of every sin, wherein there are two things which make sin, unrepented, sure to be called back:—

1. *There is in every sin a breach of the eternal rule of righteousness.* (1 John iii. 4.)—Now, the breach of an eternal law must needs be eternal, unless he which is eternal make it up, that is, Christ in giving repentance and remission. Make a breach in a stone-wall, you may come many years after, and find it as you left it; and it must hold as long as the wall holds, if it be not made up: even so it is in this case. Let one come from the dead and warn us, those poor cursed cast-aways are still, and must be still and ever, crying out under the wrath of God. What is the reason, I pray? Verily, not only because they sinned out of an affection and spring to sin for ever, but also because every sin is objectively infinite and eternal, being against the infinite, eternal law of the eternal God. Now, the law, being wronged by the sinner, demands and solicits the justice and vengeance of God against him, till it be satisfied to the utmost farthing; therefore, till then (that is, for ever) must the wrath of God abide upon him; and if time wears not out the breach of the eternal law in hell, much less doth it make any alteration therein here, while thou doublest and treblest thy sin, by going on with an impenitent heart.

2. *There is also in every sin, a spot, stain, or brand, whereby the sinner is marked out for judgment and condemnation.* (Deut. xxxii. 5; Jer. xiii. 23; xvii. 1.)—As we say of a murderer as to man, so we may say of every sin (which is hatred, and so murder of the blessed God) as to God: There is always some mark or token whereby he is known; and that is the

macula ["spot"] which sin doth impress upon him. Now this also is an indelible character, as the former of guilt was, save only when upon the penitent, heart-changing application of the blood of sprinkling, there is made an alteration of the case. It is plain, "it is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond:" (Jer. xvii. 1 :) "Though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord God." (Jer. ii. 22.) David cries out so: "O wash me, purge me," &c. (Psalm li. 2. 7.) This is the second reason from sin.

REASON III. The third is *from the sinner himself*; that is, from his own conscience.

There is in every rational creature a certain thing called "conscience;" upon the account of which also, sin must needs be kept upon the file for a back-blow. Know here, that there are divers acts of conscience, and all of them unavoidable.

1. *Directive*, as to that which is to be done: it being the law written in the heart, it points to all the duties and sins, whereby that law is kept or broken; warning from the one, and putting on to the other. "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Gen. xxxix. 9.) "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies." (Psalm cxix. 59.) Thus conscience is a monitor.

2. *Reflexive*, both gratulatory and reprehensive as to all that which is doing or done.

(1.) Considering, observing, and recording, whether it be done or no; the matter of fact simply, with the natural circumstances of action, negative and positive, both in the point of omission and commission:—*Item*, "This is done, or not done."

(2.) Taking notice, and recording the quality of the fact in a comparative act; comparing it with the rule, together with the moral circumstances thereof. Thus conscience is a surveyor, witness, register:—*Item*, "In the doing or omitting of this and this, the law is broken, and the forfeiture and penalty is incurred."

(3.) It applies this, and sets it home upon the sinner. "Thou art the man." "This thou hast done, verily thou art guilty," &c. Thus conscience is a judge also, and gives sentence touching both the sin and sinner, *pro* or *con*, as the case is.

(4.) It never leaves, nor gives-over these acts of warning, observing, recording, witnessing, and judging, till judgment take place, and the law and sentence be fulfilled upon the sinner. "Verily, I am guilty," &c. Thus conscience is tormentor and executioner also, executing its own sentence, by affecting the heart and moving the affections, as of joy and boldness, if the case be good; so of horror and fear, shame and sorrow, if the case be bad, &c.

Now these acts of conscience, though haply for a time suspended, as it were, are unavoidable, upon a double account: and conscience cannot be bribed:—

1. *Because of that relation that conscience hath to God.*—It ever takes God's part, and God its; it is God's deputy and viceroy; and so its voice and judgment is the very voice and judgment of God himself, who

can and will maintain it in its office, till he brings forth judgment unto victory.

2. *Because of its relation to a man's self.*—It is, *Sensus et præjudicium judicii Divini*.* Nothing so intimate to a man, and inseparable from life, as this bosom-judge, and God's court within a man: it is a part of a man's soul and self, as subordinate to God and his judgment; so that if a man can run away from God or himself, then he may escape the reflection of his sin upon him; but if not, then know, it must be an evil and bitter thing that thou hast departed from God in any known sin, either to thy penitent amendment, or penal condemnation and confusion; and that upon all accounts: (1.) In respect of God. (2.) Of sin. (3.) Of the sinner himself: "Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee." (Jer. ii. 19.) All the time thou abidest in sin, thou art gathering either hemlock to poison thee, or wormwood to make thy life bitter.

USES.

1. *Instruction.*

(1.) See, then, the malignity and danger of sin. "Fools make a mock of sin."

(2.) See the vanity, sinfulness, and desperate danger of presuming upon any bottom of peace and satisfaction, or security, whilst sin remains. Of a truth, thy peace and hope thereof shall be as a spider's web, and as the giving up of the ghost; and thy presumption must end in despair. Bribe thou thyself with a persuasion of peace, presuming and leaning,

(i.) Upon God's patience? Remember, forbearance is no payment or forgiveness, nor sign thereof.

(ii.) Upon outward privileges? God knows thee not, whilst thou art a worker of iniquity. (Matt. vii. 21—23.)

(iii.) Upon the mercy of God? He is holy, and therefore must be just; and because just, angry; and because angry, ever angry; unless Christ be thy peace, upon faith and a thorough change.

(iv.) The blood of Christ? Though it be an ocean, yet not a drop of it can do thee good, unless it turn thee from all thine iniquity. (Acts iii. 26.) All this is but physic in thy pocket.

(v.) The promises of the gospel? They are sweet, but poison to the impenitent: as bread to a dying man.

(vi.) Upon thy faith in all this? Whilst impenitent, all is but notional and imaginary; and so thy peace and happiness is but a notion.

2. *Therefore be exhorted to get thy sin off.*

I shall here do two things: I. Give you some directions how to put you in the way to escape this doom. II. To awaken myself and you to the serious use of them by some motives.

I. Then if you ask, "How?" I answer,

DIRECTION 1. *Attend to, and comply with, the word and Spirit therein, in summoning thyself to God's and thine own bar of conscience.*—Suffer thyself to be stopped, as a loose and skulking malefactor; seize and sequester thyself to hearken to the call and treaty of the word about

* "The perception and feeling formed within a man prior to the final judgment of God."

thy condition ; the *hue and cry* of the word is after thee to apprehend thee.

DIREC. II. *Let inquisition and diligent search be made into the matters between God and thy soul.*—This is the way : “ Let us search and try our ways, and turn,” &c. : (Lam. iii. 40 :) this is the miscarriage : “ No man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done ? ” (Jer. viii. 6.) The first step to peace with God is inquiry : “ If ye will inquire, inquire ye : return, come.” (Isai. xxi. 12.)

DIREC. III. *Declare against thyself.*—Turn God’s faithful pleader against thy own soul ; accuse thyself in free and particular confession, whereof thou art guilty, with all the killing circumstances thou canst find out. This will prevent the “ accuser of the brethren.”

DIREC. IV. *Condemn thyself.*—Charge thyself with fault, guilt, punishment ; so shalt thou prevent the condemnation of the Lord. (Lev. xxvi. 40, &c.) Though thou canst not satisfy the justice of God in the least, yet thou must glorify it to the utmost thou canst. (1 Cor. xi. 31.)

DIREC. V. *Be thorough and to purpose, and constant herein.*—For if thy sense of thy condition be not real, thy cure will not be real : there will be no more reality in the application of the word for the one, than there is for the other. To no more purpose wilt thou apply the word to thyself, than thou appliest thyself to the word : therefore give thyself to it, to dwell upon thy case ; hold the object close to the faculty, till it make some impression, and thy heart yield.

DIREC. VI. *Fly to the Lord Jesus, and the mercy-seat in his blood.*—(i.) For repentance. (ii.) For remission. He is exalted to give both. (Acts v. 31.) None can take up the quarrel between God and thee, save only Christ alone ; he, he is the way ; (1 Sam. ii. 25 ;) God’s way to thee for grace and mercy, and thy way to God for faith. “ Lord, I am a guilty, helpless creature ; but thou hast laid help upon One that is mighty to save from the utmost to the utmost.”

DIREC. VII. *In him therefore cry to God for mercy and grace with thy whole heart.*—“ O mercy, mercy, Lord ! I have wronged thee, Lord, forgive me ! I have defiled my soul, Lord, wash me ! I have wounded and cast away my soul, Lord, heal me ! Lord, save me ! ” &c. (Psalm li.)

DIREC. VIII. *Cry for mercy, till God have mercy upon thee.* (Psalm cxliii. 2, 3.)—Take heed thou be not temporary for a fit ; but set thyself in an habitual tenor, restless after [an] interest in Christ, and the great work, till it be done.

DIREC. IX. *Accept of Christ upon the terms of the gospel.*—Not thine own, or picking and choosing ; but as he in Acts ix. 6, “ Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ? ” Consent and resign thyself, stooping to his articles of peace ; to deny thyself of the dearest, bear the heaviest, do the strictest, as he shall call. Not that thou canst do any thing, but upon these terms :—If he will receive thee, and furnish thee with grace, thou wilt follow, and cleave to him with full purpose of heart.

DIREC. X. *Cashier and discharge, in thy purpose and endeavour, in dependence on this Christ in the promise, whatever thou knowest offends in heart and life, whatever belongs to a carnal mind, which is enmity to*

God; and addict thyself to the pleasure of God in all known commands, and whatever savours of the Spirit, and the kingdom of God.

DIREC. XI. Upon these terms, consenting to embrace Christ in the offer of grace, rest upon Christ; who is assuredly thine, and will never be otherwise.

II. The motives.

MOTIVE I. *The comfort of this way.*—Now then “there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ,” &c.; (Rom. viii. 1;) their iniquities shall never be remembered. God sees no iniquity in Jacob; there is no fury in God. O “blessed is the man to whom God imputes not his sin,” &c. (Psalm xxxii. 2.) Now, Christ is Jehovah thy righteousness. Thy Judge is thy Advocate, thy God reconciled. Thy Comforter is come to apply Christ, in all that he is for thee, to thee, and shall abide for ever with thee. He is thy seal unto the purchased possession. The law is satisfied, the curse is removed, all the promises are thine, and the Spirit of promise to confirm thy title thine, the stain or mark of sin washed off quite as to justification and present acceptation; and in part begun as to sanctification and purity of heart and life. Thy conscience is pacified with “the blood of sprinkling,” as to what the word declares concerning thee, though not as to what thou feelest; and where the judge acquits, there conscience, which is the serjeant, cannot condemn; but that it is not always set right according to the word.

MOTIVE II. *The terror of being yet, and going on, in sin.*—But O, the terror of having sin upon the file against us! And dost thou remain in sin unrepented? Dost thou go on to add sin to sin, not caring how many sins thou loadeest thy conscience withal, as if there were no time of reckoning? “Be sure your sin will find you out.” (Num. xxxii. 23.)

Do not say, “Hast thou found me, O my enemy?” Or, as the wicked one, “Art thou come to torment us before our time?” But as thou lovest thy soul, take all I say in good part; for God knows, I speak out of tender respect to your eternal good.* Consider, then,

1. *The innumerable number of sins thou standest guilty of.*—“Who can understand his errors?” (Psalm xix. 12.) Methinks there is no sad sight in the world but the sinner in his sins.

Suppose you had seen Herod covered over with worms; alas! what is this to one worm of conscience?

Suppose you had seen every member in the senate run upon Cæsar to give him a stab; would not you have given him over for dead a thousand times? Brethren, every sin you commit is an envenomed knife to stab you at your very heart.

Suppose, again, you should see a malefactor at the bar for a capital crime, the evidence clear; “O,” you will say, “it will go hard with him!” But when you see another, and another, and many other indictments sworn home against him, and every one touching his life, will you not say?—“There is no hope; he is a dead man; and all the world cannot

* *Sic mihi semper contingat tractare et bears amicos, non dulcibus verbis sed sanis terroribus.*—BERNARDUS. “May it ever be my part thus to conduct myself toward my friends, in promoting their blessedness, not by smooth and sweet verbiage, but by the application of salutary terrors.”—EDIT.

314 SERMON XV. HOW SHOULD A CHRISTIAN BEHAVE HIMSELF
save him!" Remember, this is thy case, and it will be certainly called
over.

If one poison be enough to dispatch a man, without an antidote, what
doth that man mean that drinks off a thousand poisons, and refuses the
antidote of the blood of Christ?

If one sin be as a thousand mill-stones to sink all the world into the
bottom of hell, what dost thou mean to tie so many thousand mill-stones
about thy own neck?

2. *Old debts vex most.*—The delay of payment increases them by use
upon use; and the return of them being unexpected, a person is least
provided for them. We count old sores, breaking forth, incurable.
Augustus wondered at a person's sleeping quietly that was very much in
debt, and sent for his pillow, saying, "Surely, there is some strange vir-
tue in it, that makes him rest so secure." My brethren, if one debt unto
God's law be more than the whole creation can satisfy, what do any of us
mean to rest secure with so vast a burden upon our consciences and
account? O take heed thou beest not surprised and arrested with
old debts! "O remember not against us former iniquities." (Psalm
lxxix. 8.)

3. *God will call over and charge thy sins upon thee, when all the sweet
is gone.*—Thou makest a shift to swallow the hook with pleasure, when
it is covered with the sweet bait; O, but when that is digested or dis-
gorged, and the naked hook piercing and raking thy heart, what wilt
thou do then? O how bitter is the pill when all the sugar is melted off!
Now this will be thy case; Job found but a taste of it, and O, how he
cries out!—"Thou writest bitter things against me;" that is, "bitter-
nesses." (Job xiii. 26.)

4. *With old sins must come old wrath.*—"Thinkest thou, O man, that
thou shalt escape the judgment of God? or despisest thou the riches of
his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the
goodness of God" doth not only give thee a space of, but "leadeth thee to
repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest"
(tunnest) "up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath," &c. (Rom.
ii. 3—5.)

There be three sorts and degrees of wrath [which] will come with old
sins:—

(1.) Wrath for old sins. (2.) Wrath for the forbearance of that
wrath. (3.) Wrath for the abuse of that forbearance. O what wilt
thou do in the day of thy visitation?

5. *The former admonitions, &c., nips of conscience, will come again:
and they with the present will be unsufferable, beyond all that can be
expressed.*—This is their terror here: say they, "He besought us, and
we would not hear;" and saith Reuben, "Said I not to you, did I not
tell you, warn you what it would come to, and ye would not hear?"
O, he who hardens his neck to reproof shall surely be destroyed. O,
timely and fair checks and warnings, obstinately rejected, are the racks
of conscience, the sharp sting and teeth of the worm thereof!

6. *And what will now become of thee? As the Lord lives, thou wilt
come to thy distracting, misgiving thoughts.*—"Yea, but, and verily

we are guilty," &c. "Methinks," saith Luther, "every cloud is loined * with thunder against me." Thou wilt take every visitation from God as a messenger of death; nay, that God himself sets-in against thy life. Suppose you saw two desperate enemies grappling, closing-in upon each other: "O," say you, "they are armed with some instruments of death; they owe each other a deadly grudge; there is of old a mortal feud between them; they will take this opportunity to vent their malice to the utmost! O, one of them will fall and die for it." My brethren, God and the sinner in his sins are, according to the tenor of this book, enemies, hated of and hating one another; and when God visits sin upon him, he falls upon him, and deals with him, as I may say, hand to hand; and now one of them must go to the walls; God or the sinner must fall. Take it in God's own challenge, Ezek. xxii. 14: in verse 13, God complains [that] the sinner had given him a blow; but then, saith God, "Canst thou indeed make thy part good, when I shall be in good earnest with thee? Can thy heart hold out? Can thine hands be strong in the day that I shall deal with thee?" O consider and tremble at it, how God will thus deal with thee, and how infinitely thou, being a guilty worm, art over-matched by Omnipotency, whose wrath will one day wax hot against thee, even to the utmost! O, saith David, "When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty," even all his hopes and desires, "to consume away as a moth," &c. (Psalm xxxix. 11.)

Sad was the case of the children of Benjamin, of whom we read in Judges xx. They had fought against their brethren twice, and prevailed. They ventured out the third time; but then the battle went against them, the ambuscadoes cut them off, and others fired the town behind them. O the horror and amazement they were struck withal, when they could not stand before the face of the tribes which were before them, and they saw their city all on a flame behind them! O, said they, "Now is evil come upon us;" and they were trodden down as dirt. Thou wretch, who art still in thy sins, hast fought against God many and many times, and seemed to carry the day; but when God shall come upon thee in his strength, and thou shalt see all the refuge of creature-comforts in despairing case, as on fire behind thee, what reprobate astonishment will then take hold on thee! Now come thy distracting, misgiving, despairing thoughts!—"Now evil is befallen me! Now is God come upon me, and will make an end of me at once! Now come the floods of my ungodliness in amain, and the flood-gates of God's wrath are opened upon me! Now 'the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me!' (Job vi. 4.) And as the church: Now hath God summoned and mustered, as in a solemn day of battle between him and my poor soul, my terrors round about me!" (Lam. ii. 22.) O, you that have been twenty, thirty, forty, fifty years, even ever since you were born, a provocation, and yet also forget God, "consider this," before he fall upon you, and "tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver;" (Psalm l. 22;) for, assure yourselves, there is a

* The first edition has the correct and forcible word *loined*; the others have gradually softened it down to *lyned* and *lined*.—EDIT.

316 SERMON XV. HOW SHOULD A CHRISTIAN BEHAVE HIMSELF
time when God will call over sins past, and charge them home upon the
conscience.

QUESTION. But you will ask, "What is the sign, and when shall
these things be?"

ANSWER. I answer: The God of spirits can at any time, and will in
his own time, certainly fall upon thy spirit with horror and confusion;
(Deut. xxxii. 25;) especially and usually at these particular instants:—

1. *After a certain term of patience abused and expired.*—God is
patient toward all men; and this patience is as the banks which keep-in
his wrath, that it breaks not in upon thee. But it will not be always so:
these banks have their bounds; and as thy sin abides, it rises with thee;
and as God's wrath abides on thee, it rises with God, till at last it swells
up to the bank of his patience; and then it is a thousand times more
dreadful than the sea to overwhelm thee.* God's patience, and thy
respite, hath [each] its date; (Gen. vi. 3;) one hundred and twenty
years to them, and then—So it may be so many years, or months, or
weeks, or days to thee, and then—*Læsa patientia fit furor*; † and as
lead, the colder when cold, the hotter when hot.

2. *When the sinner is secure.*—The less fear, the more danger; the
more thou putteth the evil day from thee, the nearer it is to thee. (Amos
vi. 3.) God shall cut thee off in an hour when thou art not aware;
when thou sayest, "My lord delayeth his coming;" (Matt. xxiv.
48—50;) as the flood came upon the old world, as some say, in the
spring or summer, ‡ when they would least have dreamed of it. God
deals with a sinner, as Samuel with Agag: when he said, "Surely the
bitterness of death is past," then comes the messenger of death from the
Lord to cut him in pieces. (1 Sam. xv. 32, 33.) When the wicked cry,
"Peace, peace," (nothing but peace,) "then sudden destruction cometh
upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not
escape." (1 Thess. v. 3.) Dost thou bless thyself in thy sins, as if thy con-
dition were good, or thy account far off? (Deut. xxix. 19.) "As the Lord
liveth, there is but a step between thee and death." [1 Sam. xx. 3.]

3. *After the commission of some great sin.*—This [is] like some great
blow, which awakens the conscience to see the whole account; as in
Cain, Judas, &c. God deals with the sinner, as Solomon with Shimei: he
reviled his father David; but David seems to forget it; and so did his
son Solomon; only he is bound by an oath not to go out of Jerusalem.
He breaks his oath, and goes out; Solomon, upon this, comes upon him
for the breach of his covenant and oath; and also for former rebellions:
"And I remember," saith he, "what thou didst to my father David."
(1 Kings ii. 44.)

4. *On thy death-bed, (not to speak of judgment, when we must account
for every particular, 2 Cor. v. 10.)*—God comes to the sinner, as to Adam in
the cool of the day, (Gen. iii. 8,) in his cold sweat, when his sun is setting,
and he is going to make his bed in the dark; his life and soul sits on his
pale, trembling lips, ready to take her flight into eternity: and whereas

* *Tarditatem vindictæ compensat gravitate supplicii.* "He counterbalances the slowness
of his vengeance by the severe aggravation of the punishment inflicted."—EDIT.

† "When once patience is tired out and wounded, it becomes perfect fury."—EDIT.

‡ MUSCULUS in Gen.

thou wert before as the "deaf adder," or the "wild ass snuffing up the wind," or the "dromedary traversing his way," without all regard of any check, now, taken in thy month: [Jer. ii. 24:] "O my contempt of the means of grace! O my profaning sabbaths, sacraments! O my breaking bonds of oaths, covenants, promises, and casting away cords of discipline and government! O my malice against God's people! O my hardening my heart against the word and the rod!" &c., as the rankling thorn in the flesh pains most when thou goest to bed.

5. *Before this, in a time of outward calamity and distress.*—And this is the second DOCTRINE, from the special circumstance, when they were troubled: "And now."

DOCTRINE II.

This inward horror and trouble of mind falls-in (even to God's people) with outward trouble.

This is the case here: the patriarchs, the children of the promise, are in distress and danger, by their brother Joseph's seeming severity toward them. "And they said one to another, We are verily guilty," &c.: with the pressure on the outward man, comes a snare upon the conscience.

If any find it otherwise, (as there are some, with whom, when there is a storm without, there is a calm within; and when a storm within, there is a calm without,) let them bless God. But in the experience of God's people, it is often found, that when their outward condition is troubled, their inward state and frame is full of perplexities and fears.

David found it so: "The sorrows of death compassed me, and" then also "the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow;" (Psalm cxvi. 3;) that is, very much perplexity, both inward and outward at once. So again: Then "I said in my haste," (that is, when I was flying for my life before the face of Saul, and hard put to it, 1 Sam. xxiii. 26,) "I am cut off from before thine eyes." (Psalm xxxi. 22; xlii. 7.) Thus it was with Jonah: in the depth of his distress, saith he, "I am cast out of thy sight." (Jonah ii. 4.) Sad conclusions! touching not only God's providential care over them, but his love towards them. Thus with Paul: "Without were fightings, within were fears;" that is, spiritual conflicts. (2 Cor. vii. 5.)

We find the whole church, in the Lamentations, at the same pass: "Thou hast removed my soul far off from peace: I forgot prosperity. And I said, My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord." (Lam. iii. 17, 18.) Alike sad is that swoon of Israel's faith, when they were in the captivity. (Ezek. xxxvii. 11.)

REASONS.

You will ask what the reason and cause of this should be.

1. *It ariseth from their ignorance.*—Especially in the fundamental points of religion, as touching our disease, and the remedy, and way of cure, the tenor of the covenant of grace, according to which God exactly proceeds in all his dealings with us, and we should ever carry it towards God. If a man be taken with a fit of sickness; knows not what he ails,

nor what to take, nor how to apply that which is prescribed, nor how to order himself; is unsatisfied touching the way, skill, and faithfulness of his physician; by his ignorance he is put to a sad plunge, and at his wits' ends, ready to sink and welter: thus it is in our spiritual condition. David is dangerously tossed in his spirit upon waves of temptations, and much staggered about his condition; his "feet were almost gone," he almost wrecked, and cast away. See the reason: "So foolish was I, and ignorant:" (Psalm lxxiii. 2, 16, 22:) ignorance is darkness: it will either find fears, or make them.

2. *This ariseth from the ill and imprudent carnal management of a more prosperous state.*—It is rare to receive much of this world, and not, as the prodigal, to go afar off. (Luke xv. 12, 13.) It is hard to keep close to God in prosperity, when we have much of this world to live upon and content ourselves with; to live upon God, and make him our content and stay, as if we had no other life nor livelihood but in him. We are very apt, in such a case, to contract a carnal frame, let go our hold of God, disaccustom ourselves to the exercise of faith, abate and estrange our affections from God. See how it was with David: "I said in my prosperity, I shall never be moved. Thou hast made my mountain to stand strong." "I solaced myself in these outward accommodations, as if I needed no other support, strength, or content, and there were no fear of a change; no care now to make God my constant joy and stay, and reckon upon God only for my portion, and that I must follow him with a cross, and be conformed to my Saviour in being crucified to the world." What comes of this? "Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled;" (Psalm xxx. 6, 7;) namely, because he had too much indulged a life of sense. Children that are held up by their nurse's hand, and mind not to feel their feet and ground, when the nurse lets them go, they fall as if they had no feet or ground to stand upon. Or thus: we are like children, who, playing in the golden sunshine, and following their sport, stray so far from their father's house, that, night coming upon them ere they are aware, they are as it were lost, and full of fears, not knowing how to recover home. The world steals away our hearts from God, gives so few opportunities for the exercise of the life of faith, and such advantages to a life of sense, wears off the sense of our dependence on God and need thereof; so that when we are put to by affliction, we are ready to miscarry, ere we can recover our weapon or hold. Faith is our cordial. Now, if it be not at hand, (as in health, when we have no need of it, it uses to be,) we may faint ere we recover the use of it. (Psalm xxvii. 13.)

3. *It ariseth from the shortness and dimness of our spiritual evidences.*—Our evidences, you know, are great matters in point of estate and livelihood; and in affliction we are put to prove them; at which time, if they be either not clear or not at hand, we are at a great loss and plunge. A good man makes always conscience of "making his calling and election sure;" but he is especially put upon this work in affliction. Then he considers, then searches more than in his ordinary course. Afflictions are as sharp, searching winter-weather; [they] will search whether your house be tight or no: those garments, walls, and windows

that will serve in [the] summer of prosperity, will be found defective in [the] winter of adversity. "Then how stands the case between God and me? What ground of my confidence, what evidence that I am in Christ?" &c. Though the least degree of faith will save the house from falling, yet it will be a poor, cold, uncomfortable dwelling in winter, unless you mend the cracks and flaws, to defend you against driving, piercing winds and storms.

4. *It ariseth, as it did here, from the remembrance of some sin unmortified, and therefore it may be, for aught we know, unpardoned.*—Affliction puts upon the remembrance of sin with more circumstances and aggravations, and to more purpose, than ordinarily; even the best (which make most conscience hereof) attend to it in time of freedom: "If they be bound in fetters, and be holden in cords of affliction; then he showeth them their work, and their transgressions that they have exceeded." (Job xxxvi. 8, 9.) "Art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, in slaying?" (afflicting me with the loss of) "my son?" (1 Kings xvii. 18.)

In stormy change of weather, when clouds gather black over us, and it begins to drop, then we feel it in our bones, what bruises or aches we have gotten. When a man is arrested by one creditor, all his debts come in upon him. Even so when a man is arrested with sickness, or some other outward distress, then come in upon him the debts wherein he is bound over unto the divine law: when all is well with us, we can easily cast these debts on the score of Christ; but now it is hot work. Affliction is the glass of sin, and the opening and awakening the conscience to see it; and thence comes the trouble upon the spirit. It is not all the stormy winds upon the face of the earth, but some generated in the bowels thereof, which make the earth shake.

5. *It ariseth from Satan.*—When the eye of conscience is most open, he is most busy to present either that which may close it, or that which may trouble it: when the heart is most tender, he is most ready to bruise and wound it. In affliction, he would make breaches between God and us, us and God, and us and ourselves, if we must needs be sensible of them; gulfs out of which there is no redemption. He tempts us *unto* sin in prosperity, and then *for* sin in adversity; as we find in Job's case: even in those who he knows are out of his reach, where [he has] least strength and ground to do any thing, there he is most malicious; as it appears in his bold attempts upon our Lord. If he cannot run thee upon a rock, yet he will disquiet thee with a tempest; if he cannot rob thee of thy grace, yet he will of thy peace and comfort.

6. *It ariseth from the weakness of faith, and strength of sense.*—Apprehending God in affliction as our enemy; especially if there be some willing correspondence between us and any thing which God hates, God is a terror to us. Thus sense wrought in Job: "Behold, he findeth occasions against me, he counteth me for his enemy." (Job xxxiii. 10. [See] also chap. xvi. 12—14.) And in the church: "He hath bent his bow like an enemy," &c. (Lam. ii. 4, 5.) O, if thou comest to that of Jacob: "Surely 'all these things are against me;' (Gen. xlii. 36;) and in them God against me;" it is sad with thee. This is the triumph of

faith: "If God be with us, who can be against us?" This the shriek of thy fainting: "God is against me! and then who can be for me?"

7. *It ariseth from God's withdrawing.*—Thus with Christ; when God would make his condition sad, and his burden heavy indeed, the Father and his own Divinity withdraw, and withhold their comfortable influential presence from the apprehension of the human nature; and when was he thus spiritually afflicted, but when most outward trouble came upon him, when his murderers and the traitor were upon him, and his life drew near to the grave? As it was prefigured in David, when the sorrows or dangers of death compassed him about, then the terrors of hell took hold upon him; (Psalm cxvi. 3;) that is, terrors arising from this,—the withdrawing of the divine love and countenance. Now come his astonishing, dismaying fears and sorrows, pressing even to death, making him as it were to shrink from the great work of his own mercy. (Mark xiv. 34.) Now he cries out, as his type: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Psalm xxii. 1; Matt. xxvii. 46;) the perpetual shriek of them who are cast away. When we can, with David, encourage ourselves in our relations to and interest in God, (1 Sam. xxx. 6,) then every, even the heaviest, burden, even death itself, is light; and we can in Christ's strength shake it off, or run away with it, as Samson [did] with the gates of the city. But, as when the sun is down or eclipsed, the flowers fold up and droop; or, when the face before the glass turns away, the face in it vanisheth; even so, when God hides his face, and we doubt of our title and interest, we are troubled; and then we are as Samson when his covenant [was] broken, and his locks, the sign thereof, cut: we are as other men, our strength is gone; any cord will bind us, any burden sink us. (Isai. lxiv. 7.)

8. I might add, *it may arise from our disacquaintedness with afflictions, as to our expectation and resolution.*

USES.

But for use:—

USE 1. *A word to them which are yet in their sins, out of Christ: and it is, 1. Of conviction. 2. Counsel.*

1. *Conviction and terror to them who are out of Christ.*—If God's people be liable to inward and outward trouble at once, wherein yet there is not a drop of wrath; what shall the visitation of the rest be, wherein there is not a drop of saving pity? If they may be so hardly put to it who yet are ever secretly and mightily supported, what shall they do that have no strength but their own to bear up under the mighty hand of God? Surely, if they smart sevenfold, the wicked must be avenged seventy times sevenfold. If the cup of affliction, by reason of the bitter ingredient of inward perplexity, be so bitter to them; what becomes of them for whom the dregs of that cup are reserved? The godly may stand condemned at their own bar; but the wicked at God's too; and nothing remains to them but a certain expectation of execution, without a change. O, if Jacob halt, sure Esau's back and bones must be broken; if the righteous be, by reason of sharp afflictions within and without, "scarcely saved," (to whom yet all afflictions are through grace ever

sufferable, short, and sanctified,) "where shall the sinner appear" when his sins and sorrows shall meet together? There be three days wherein thou shalt never be able to hold up thy head, and yet thou must appear: First, A day of extreme calamity: Secondly, Of death: Thirdly, Of judgment. O remember how sad it goes with the godly in a day of outward calamity, because of inward trouble joining with it, through gradual want of knowledge, faith, and evidence, the venom of sin un-mortified, malice of Satan not yet quite trodden under their feet, and the withdrawing of God's grace and countenance in part! And consider how thou wilt speed, who hast no saving knowledge, no faith, no interest, art under the reign of sin and Satan, whom the holy and jealous God cannot endure to behold but with revenge and execration. David had fainted in his affliction, had he not believed, &c. (Psalm xxvii. 13.) Surely, then, thou must utterly faint, because thou hast not obtained an heart to understand and believe to this day. The children of God, notwithstanding all their inward and outward pressures, can say, as Paul sighs for them all: "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed," so as there is no way to escape or bear up; "we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not" quite "destroyed." (2 Cor. iv. 8, 9.) But if thou lookest not to it betimes, such a day will come upon thee, wherein thou shalt be so beset with trouble, that thou wilt be absolutely concluded and shut out from all relief; so "perplexed," that thou wilt despair; so pursued by the avengers of blood, that thou wilt be quite "forsaken" of heaven and earth; so "cast down," that thou wilt be utterly "destroyed" and dashed in pieces. O if trouble, such trouble, may seize on God's dear ones, what reprobate fear and astonishment shall take hold on thee that art a stranger, a slave, an enemy, and yet secure and presumptuous in that condition!

2. *It is a word of counsel to thee, as to be an alarm to thy security, so an antidote to thy presumption and censoriousness in reference to the godly.*—The men of the world can easily pass over the beams of raging wickedness in themselves and their own; but they maliciously and proudly aggravate the motes of infirmity in the godly. If they carry themselves unbecomingly by any impatience under the hand of God, now they are hypocrites presently, now they sink, notwithstanding they would seem to have special interest in, and acquaintance with, God to bear them up. Thus was Job censured, even by his friends; for which God censures them, and that with wrath. (Job xlii. 7.) Thus God's people serve themselves, but especially they have this measure from the men of the world: they see them droop and walk heavily under some outward burden, which they think is but ordinary; they see them faint, having drunk of the cup of affliction which is common: but, alas! they consider not what may be the weight of their burden within, what bitter ingredients may be in their cup, as to their inward man. Now, the spirit is the man, the mind is the strength; and they are not aware how tender the love of God hath made that, and how grieved and broken that may be upon some spiritual account between God and them. Job reproves David for mourning so excessively for Absalom; and at first sight we may think it strange that so eminent a saint as David

should so take-on for an outward loss, more, as it seems, than for the loss of God's favour and grace. But Joab did not know and consider what visitation there might be within David, while God stood over him with that outward rod; how God might set-on that outward blow with some inward smart and rebuke upon his spirit, in such an intimation as this: "O David, thou that wert so obliged to me, more than thousands! I will make thee know it is an evil and bitter thing to provoke me, and dishonour my name, as thou hast done. Thy child is dead, Absalom is gone with a curse, and Adonijah shall follow; and now, what hast thou gotten by hearkening to temptations, and pleasing thyself in the enticements of thy naughty heart?" No question but there were some such workings of God's displeasure within him; and therefore no wonder he took-on so heavily, as in Psalm xxxix. 11. Therefore, do not pass sentence upon the godly in their extremities, till thou canst hear and see all the bitterness of their condition.

USE II. *The second word is to the godly.*—1. They who are not, but may be, beset with this double perplexity. 2. They who are.

1. *Art thou in a state of freedom and exemption?*—Bless God; thy lot is very comfortable; but be not secure, indulge not thyself with a persuasion that it will always last. For,

(1.) *Thou hast married Christ with his cross, or not at all.*—Thou art delivered from *the curse* indeed; but thou art appointed to *the cross*, and canst not with integrity except against any part thereof, that without or that within.

(2.) *Outward afflictions and troubles may be many and heavy:*—One upon the neck of another; and by reason of them, though they come single, thou mayest endure an hard brunt, and have enough to exercise thy whole strength of faith and patience.

(3.) *Inward affliction may come:*—And that is far more heavy and grievous. The soul is infinitely more tender than the body; and yet scalding water upon the eye can very hardly be endured. O, then, a wounded spirit—who can bear that?

(4.) *It is not improbable, nor unusual, that both these rods may come upon thee at once.*—And then thy affliction is as a load upon a broken back; now thou wilt have thy hands full indeed, and very hardly be saved; now thou wilt need not only all the strength which thou hast, but all which thou mightest have had.

You will say, "Sirs, what shall we do?"

I answer, as in natural distempers, (i.) You must take some preparatives and prophylactics, to prevent the disease, if it may be, or at least to break the strength of it, if it doth come, that we may not sink under it.

(ii.) Some cordials, restoratives, and therapeutics for the cure of the malady when it is come. I shall endeavour, by the grace of God, to help you in these two cases, and conclude.

DIRECTIONS.

I. Then for direction *by way of preparation.*

DIREC. I. *Labour to be well-seen in points of saving knowledge, especially fundamentals.*—Ignorance, I told you, was the cause of soul-

distress ; and it is so, the impregnable impediment of comfort most-what in the godly ; they are not thoroughly informed, they do not understand themselves well in the matter of the covenant of grace ; the doctrine, way, benefit, terms of it, and the mistakes about it. If they were clear in these things, they would have a fairer way to comfort, and more easily go to the wells of salvation to draw water of life at any (even the darkest) time. Our Saviour prescribes this receipt in John xvi. 33 : "These things I have spoken unto you," &c. ; (namely, the great things of the gospel, such as those in verse 28 : that "I came forth from the Father," that is, to purchase all, "and go to the Father," that is, to procure and apply all ;) "These things," say the disciples, "thou hast spoken plainly ; thou hast given us clear evidence and full information of these, &c., points of knowledge." And what advantage did Christ's teaching and their learning and understanding of these great matters tend to ? "That in me ye might have peace ;" when "in the world ye shall have tribulation." Christ had promised he would not leave them comfortless ; (John xiv. 18 ;) and this is the course he takes, and the way he puts the disciples into, to prevent or prepare for tribulation, that it might not spoil them of their inward peace ; namely, instruction and knowledge. O, the Lord give you with utmost diligence to follow on to know, and to work-in what you know into your hearts ! So shall you have that within you, which, in dependence on Christ in the many points well understood, will be of singular use and advantage, to quiet and compose your spirits in all your troubles and languishments : grounds of knowledge are grounds of support and comfort.

DIREC. II. In order to the forenamed second cause of this distemper, *be sure you be close with, and often taking hold on, God by renewed acts of faith.*—My brethren, faith is not to be acted only at first, for our entrance into the state of grace ; but it is our duty and wisdom to carry on the exercise of faith for our continuance and progress in that state, and passage through all those temptations, difficulties, oppositions, discouragements, we are to meet withal therein. Faith and prayer must be as the breathing of our souls in and out, to keep the heart in life : "The just shall live" (that is, every part, degree, and act of life) "by his faith." This, again, is the order the great Physician of our souls prescribes : "Let not your heart be troubled ;" (John xiv. 1 ;) why, how shall they prevent or help it ? "Believe !" they were believers already. O but they must still [believe] in reference to every change and condition, or occasion of life, especially in order to this, that they may not be troubled in trouble, that the storm get not into their hearts, to shake and shatter them within, they must believe, that is, they must be much in the acting and exercising of faith, upon the grounds thereof. It is sad that I shall now say : We come to some Christians in their dumps and despondencies. Show them the promise, Christ in it, the way to it : they are so to seek that they scarce know what we mean ; "we are as barbarians to them ;" they are ready to faint under our hand, before we can, as it were, stanch their bleeding, or apply any plaster or cordial, or make them understand their way and ground of support and comfort : and all this for want of use and exercise of faith. The acting of any

faculty (where life is not come to the declining state, as it never fares with the life of grace) strengthens that faculty; and that person can readily, even in the dark, go to his rest or cordial, where he uses himself to be. Therefore, take a Christian, who makes conscience to bear his weight on the ground and object of faith, (Christ in the promise of free grace,) to a sensible, lost, undone sinner; let [the] world and [the] devil conspire to trouble him, and God try him; saith he, "I know not what to do; but I will try my old way: it is good for me to draw near still; (Psalm lxxiii. 28;) I will do so still as I use to do, I will cast myself down* upon the free grace of Christ in the promise; I will lay the weight of my sinking spirit there; I will renew my hold, life, expectation there: this is my old path; I will never be turned or beaten out here." This Christian in his strength may challenge all the gates of hell. (Isai. xxvi. 3.) This was David's course: "Thou art my trust from my youth," &c. (Psalm lxxi. 5.) Thence was it that he could say in Psalm lvi. 3: "At what time I am afraid, I will trust in thee." His shield and sword was always in his hand; therefore, he could make use of it when fear and inward trouble offered themselves. *Afraid*, alas! who is not? But what course will you take then? Even what course you use to take; that is, believe; use faith always, and have it now.

DIREC. III. In reference to the third and seventh cause of trouble of mind, (coming in conjunction with trouble in outward things,) namely, short and dim evidence, "*give diligence to make your calling and election sure*: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall;" (2 Peter i. 10;) that is, under the power of sin and wrath, which make up the spiritual burden; but "so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom," &c.; that is, you shall have a safe and secure, peaceable, quiet, comfortable, well-assured passage through all the straits and storms we can meet withal on this side the kingdom, even death itself. Rest upon Christ always by faith of adherence on gospel-terms, and you are safe; but rest not, sit not down with this faith; for it is not enough *to comfort* you in an evil day, though *to support* it is.

OBJECTION. "O, but I have laboured and waited, and yet cannot obtain."

ANSWER. But go on, and thou canst not miss it; for it is promised; (Isai. xxxii. 17; lvii. 19; Rom. viii. 16, &c. ;) and thou shalt have assurance in thy greatest need. Better affliction find thee in this work and pursuit, than put thee upon it, as for certain it will to thy cost. When affliction comes, then first for a man to begin to put the question, "Am I in Christ? am I in the state of grace, favour of God," &c.; O thou wilt find it hard to get above thy fears; but "God is a very present help in trouble;" (Psalm xlvi. 1;) that is, for assurance in a darksome state, when thou canst make no shift without it. Do thou very much seek God for it in thy freedom, and thou shalt be sure of it in thy need: he will be "very much found" (Hebrew) as before; give all diligence to *make*, and thou *art sure*.

* *And away*, are here added, in the first edition.—EDIT.

DIREC. IV. *Add hereunto, in order to the promoting of a well-grounded evidence and assurance, a prudent observation of, and careful attendance to, the doubts which arise, upon occasion, about your condition.* There is no Christian [who] attains to that degree of assurance, but is sometimes troubled with doubts; namely, such as these:—

“(1.) I was never humbled enough. My sore was never searched to the bottom: can my cure be done with so little pain?”

“(2.) I never knew the beginning or manner of my conversion: can grace, like dew, come without noise, in insensible degrees? Surely I am at best but a refined moralist.

“(3.) I can be heartily and excessively afflicted for outward losses, &c.; but sin, as sin, is not such a burden to me; and the loss of God’s favour goes not so near me.

“(4.) I can pour out my heart in vain delights; but have little liveliness of affection for spiritual things.

“(5.) I grow heavier and heavier in duties; and I think, were it not for shame, I should be ready to lay them aside, and tread them under foot; so little joy do I take in them, so little good do I get by them;” and the like.

Now, what dost thou? [Dost thou] shift off and let pass these and other like doubts, without endeavouring, by what means thou canst, to salve and assolt them with some resolution and satisfaction? * This will be of ill consequence: I will tell thee what will come of it: they will return upon thee, and be as motes in thy eyes, gravel and thorns in thy feet, when the hand of God is upon thee; whereas, if they were well weighed, there would scarce a scruple be found in them.

DIREC. V. To meet with the fourth cause of the disease, which is some sin returning, &c., *cast up thy spiritual accounts, and set them even every day.*—Observe thy particular sins, offences, breaches, which we are ever making between God and us. Humble thyself in a heart-breaking, soul-grieving particular acknowledgment of them; and strengthen thyself, and set thyself aright, by a particular application of Christ in the grace of the promise, in reference to these particular offences, so acknowledged. Sins that through negligence escape thy observation, will return to make cracks and flaws in thy evidence, which affliction will find out to thy terror and disquietment; but if thou takest this course, the word is for thee: “If we confess,” &c. (1 John i. 9; Psalm xxxii. 5; Lev. xxvi. 40;) and now if this or that sin return, what mayest thou say?—“Truth, Lord, I am guilty, and my guilt thou dost justly suffer to be awakened in this evil day, and hour of temptation. But, Lord, thou knowest this; and this sin in particular hath been my burden, under which I have poured out my heart in groans and complaints, imploring and applying Christ in the promised grace of pardon, and power in reference to it; and thou hast heard it and known it.” In this case, though afflictions seem to search out iniquity, yet it shall not be found; but when affliction starts some sin, which thou didst wink at or slightly pass over, then thou wilt find trouble and sorrow indeed.

* The fourth edition has, very properly, an interrogation at the close of this sentence.—
EDIT.

DIREC. VI. Because there is much malignity in this distemper, let me here also add, in reference to the same cause, and the sixth, this preventive: *Follow on the work of mortification close.*—There is a combat between flesh and spirit: be sure you take the right side. If sin be it which embitters thy life, and gives a sting to every affliction, disarm affliction, and kill that which will kill thee. (Isai. xxvii. 9.) The design of the Lord in affliction is mortification: now, if thou joineest thy hand in the same work, God is ever with thee in the same way, and not against thee. But in case thou connivest at, hidest, shelterest, some known corruption, then thou canst hardly apprehend God but as thine enemy coming against thee.

As it was with the city of Abel, they were terrified at the approach of Joab and David's army: "O!" saith the woman upon the wall, "Art thou come to destroy the inheritance of the Lord?" "No," saith Joab; "but there is a traitor, Sheba, harboured here," &c. It is he that put the city into fear and danger, and made Joab seem their enemy. When his head was delivered, all was quiet. (2 Sam. xx. 14—22.) Now, when thou insistest on the business of mortification, thou wilt joy when thou fallest into tribulation; as it was with Jael: having done execution upon Sisera, "Come," saith she to Barak, &c., "welcome, my lords: I know whom you pursue: here he is, dead at your feet. Behold the nail in his temples!" (Judges iv. 22.) "O," saith one, visited with the stroke of death, "I have been long getting down this body of death, and now God will do all my work at once." Be not slack in this work, and afflictions will be more joyous than grievous.

DIREC. VII. Yet, again, to come to the root of this malignity, and in order to the advancing of the work of mortification, *endeavour after mortified affections to the world.*—These are the suckers that draw away thy strength from God, and the fuel and foment and strength of all that corruption that must be mortified. Aversion from God, with an immoderate clinging and cleaving to the creature, is the whole corruption of nature. Affliction is the reducing thee to God, and the ungluing, disengaging, and divorcing thee from a carnal, worldly interest: therefore, *minus gaudebis, minus dolebis*, "the less thou joyest, the less thou ruest;" the less thou layest a world-interest near thy heart, the less that affliction which is the parting work will go to thy heart; therefore let all creature-comforts and advantages be loose about thee as thy clothes, which thou mayest easily lay aside; and not as thy skin, which cannot be pulled off without great torture. Affliction endangers nothing but that which is outward; therefore let not thy excessive respect to that which is without thee make thy affliction an inward terror. If thou countest the world of no value, thou wilt be able, without inward perplexity and fear, to pass through all places of danger and plunder; as the traveller, when he carries but a small matter, which, he knows, if he loses it, will not at all undo him. Besides, "if thou lovest the world, the love of the Father is not in thee;" and this will be a desperate venomous sting to thy soul in thy affliction. If thou wouldest not have the world thy plague and thy poison in the enjoying, thy rack and thy terror in the losing, comply with the word and Spirit of grace, in the application of a Christ crucified

for the crucifying and mortifying of thy affections unto every earthly interest.

DIRC. VIII. In reference to the eighth cause, (unacquaintedness with affliction,) *live in the meditation and expectation of the cross.*—Be much in the knowledge of the necessity, nature, and design of afflictions.

(1.) *Necessity.*—If need be, you must be in heaviness for a time. (1 Peter i. 6.) In respect of the terms of the covenant, which lie in this, “Deny yourself, and take up your cross,” &c. ; and in respect of our disposition, we cannot be without them to wean us from the world, to embitter the creature to us, to conform us to a crucified Saviour, and make us partakers of his holiness.

(2.) *The nature and design of afflictions.*—They are fire, not to consume our gold, but to purge away our dross ; they are not revenging judgments, but fatherly medicinal corrections ; not judicial poison, but remedial physic, &c. Therefore “think it not strange,” be not strangers, as the word imports, to the fiery and greatest trial ; (1 Peter iv. 12 ;) and thou wilt not be dismayed when it comes. Even poison may be habituated and made innocent. If a stranger come in unexpected into our house, grim, and armed with instruments of mischief, we know not whence he is, nor what he comes for ; it will startle and appale* us : but if we be acquainted with him and his design, and expect him, we are quiet, and composed to entertain him. So when affliction comes, we can say, “This is the cup my Father gives me, who, I am sure, means me no hurt : this is but what I looked for every day,” &c. Inure we, therefore, ourselves to the cross, and make it familiar, conversing with it in our meditation and expectation. Seest thou one afflicted with the loss of a wife, another of a husband, another of a child, another of estate, another begging bread in prison or distress, &c. ? bear part of his burden in sympathy and pity, and readiness to succour him, and put thyself in his or her case ; supposing thou wert so and so, (it will do thee no hurt,) what shouldst thou do ? And so God will make thy burden light. (Psalm xli. 1.) So thou wilt be prepared to entertain and meet the burden, and it shall not fall upon thee and upon thy spirit, to crush and sink thee, &c. Think often, and think not amiss, (have no hard conceits,) of affliction ; and it shall not be hard upon thee. Take this course ; and then, as for the malice of Satan, in accusing and tormenting, and the seeming severity of the Lord, in withholding and withdrawing, thou shalt not need to trouble thyself ; for Satan is a restrained and conquered enemy, and cannot hurt thee ; and God is reconciled, and will not hurt thee. He may try thee, by intercepting the sweetness of fruition ; he will never curse thee, by intermitting or breaking the firmness of the union ; and if he hide his face for a moment, lament after him, and he will visit thee with the everlasting kindness of his compassion, which changes not, though there may be a change as to what thou feelest.

* This was the original orthography of our modern word *appal*, and continued in common use till near the time of the abdication of James II. It conveys an accurate impression of the *pallor* or “paleness” which is produced by such a sudden fright as that which is described in the text.—EDIT.

Thus much for the preventives, to prepare for double afflictions upon the inward and outward man before they come.

II. Now, secondly, *what shall they do that are already under them?*

DIREC. I. NEGATIVE. 1. *Do not go about to settle thy mind by diversion, or turning thy thoughts another way, nor think that time will wear off this trouble.*—For this will but increase thy disquiet in itself, or in the causes of it, and wear off the sense of thy condition, which is occasional and preparative to thy well-grounded peace and settlement.

2. *Design not a little ease.*—The sore that is but skinned over will break out again and be more dangerous: put-in, therefore, for a cure, and that not partial, but thorough.

DIREC. II. POSITIVELY. *Take this course upon the sense of thy condition, and the actual knowledge of the fundamental matters of the covenant of grace.*—First, and immediately come, at least look, unto Christ for faith, and then, by faith looking to him as the author of faith, believe; that is, consent with all thy heart to receive him, and rest on him, on the terms of the gospel, to be saved by him only in his own way, at his own rate. This is the course [which] David, Jonah, the church, in the places aforementioned, took; this is the course the Lord prescribes: “Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant? let” this child of light, (and such thou art, if thou takest this course, fearest to sin against God, and hearkenest to this word I now speak,) “walking in darkness, and having no light,” (there is the depth of trouble of mind,) “trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.” (Isai. l. 10.) His name is “the Lord God, gracious,” &c.; (Exod. xxxiv. 6;) Emmanuel, a Saviour, spreading his arms all the day long, (any time before the night of death close thy eyes and Christ’s bowels,) even to the disobedient, and will in no wise cast out or lose any that come to him upon all his own terms. Thou dear troubled heart, how wilt thou heal and settle thyself? What wilt thou do? Wilt thou first make satisfaction by thy mourning, humiliation, reformation, purpose of amendment, and so commend and ingratiate thyself to Christ? Thou nestlest upon a false bottom, and thy heart deceives thee; sound rest and peace is not to be had this way, if it be thy first, principal, or only way.

On the other hand, are you willing to let Christ let you into heaven, and not lead you his own way, that is, under his government in all things? Then you run away from Christ, and cannot be saved by him as such. But dost thou freely and willingly consent, upon the sense of thy lost condition, to take Christ for all purposes, for grace and glory? Thou art welcome to him; and let this be thy rest, in coming to him burdened and weary, willing to take his yoke upon thee: (Matt. xi. 28:) he saves thee to the utmost, only upon coming. Let this be satisfaction and settlement in thy trouble, from whatever cause it comes. O how clear is this way according to the contents of the covenant of grace! which is thus: Christ stands always ready to receive any that is willing to come to him upon his terms, and will never cast them off.

OBJECTION. “O, but if he were my God and my Christ, I would come to him and believe in him.”

SOLUTION. Your coming thus to him upon his own terms makes him yours ; gives the interest, and shall give the true rest.

OBJECTION. "O, but I have long stood out against his invitations, and rejected his importunities ; Christ hath called graciously, and I have heard ; his Spirit hath knocked, and my conscience hath pressed me to believe and come, and yet I have stood out ; and now I may expect he will throw me away with indignation ; I have denied mercy so many times, and mercy will surely now deny me : " and here comes-in thy trouble.

SOLUTION. No ; he will not in any wise cast thee out, if thou art willing to come. He knew that all that belong to his grace, till they are effectually called and quickened, and drawn to close with mercy in the offer, will serve him thus ; and therefore he waits still, and still, till they can be gotten to be willing to accept and close with him, and then for certain he closeth with them.

OBJECTION. "O, but I have made my address, and seemed to come to him, and have made profession, and been taken for a believer many years ; but I have falsified with him. I am a studied hypocrite, and have compassed God with lies : surely, then, there is no mercy for me."

SOLUTION. All this ariseth from thy ignorance of the tenor of the covenant of grace, which calls thee to believe upon the sense of this also. Suppose all this, (though these sad workings of thy doubts and troubles are no bad signs, being but part of thy combat,) yield all against thyself, if there be no other way ; (and it may be there is no better way in this juncture ;) yet now be willing on gospel-terms, and it is done, and thou mayest be at rest, as if all thy former work had been true. And, it may be, it was true ; but, however one or the other, thy way is immediately to come : and that shall be cleared up afterward ; and if thou hast doubled with God, thou wilt the rather be afraid to do so still.

OBJECTION. "O, but *now* come ? This would be only self and slavish fear ; my necessity compels me now ; I can make no other shift : there is no ingenuity [ingenuousness] in such a faith as I am like to put forth in this my extremity."

SOLUTION. Thou must yet be willing, &c., and all is well. The occasion of believing is always extremity and necessity ; for none ever came to Christ as long as they could make any shift without him ; but the cause, if thou comest, is the mighty power of God to make thee unfeignedly willing upon all the terms ; and thou art no less acceptable to God, because thou art constrained by grace, upon the pinch of thy necessity, to come. (Rom. xi. 32 ; Hosea v. 15.) God puts thee to this pinch, that he might hear of thee : in that latter place, it is as if God had said, "Well, I have called again and again, and used variety of means with this people, but all in vain : I will take another course, I will leave them, go to my place, hide myself, that trouble, and horror, and anguish shall take hold on them." And what then ? Shall it be unseasonable and too late to come ? No. "Then they will and shall seek me early." See how welcome a sinner is in this case to Christ. The prodigal,—he runs his course, spends all in riot and luxury, and was reduced to utter extremity ; and then he bethinks himself of coming home : "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I

perish with hunger!’ There be ‘many mansions in my father’s house.’ ‘I will arise and go to my father,’” &c. (Luke xv. 17, 18.) Being, upon this knowledge of his father’s fulness, drawn, and upon sense of his own lostness, driven, he comes; and what salutation do you think his father *might* give him? “What! are you come indeed? In good time! You, that have all this while taken your swing in all wickedness, as long as you could live, my house was not good enough for you; and now, that you have laid me under the reproach of your lewdness, and fulfilling your lusts, as long as you had a penny in your purse, or a rag to your back! do you now come to me? There is no duty or affection to me that sways you hither; but you are compelled by the extremity you have brought yourself to! Get you gone with a sorrow, and never look me in the face more!” Thus we would have thought; but it is quite otherwise: his father, when he did but say he would come, meets him afar off, falls on his neck, kisses him, brings him home, provides the best room, the best robe, the best kid, all the best, and there is great joy. His father doth not question what draws, or what drives; whether he comes out of compelling necessity, or out of ingenuity and dutiful affection: but he is come, that is enough. “This my son was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found;” and there is all done that possibly may make him welcome. Apply it for your encouragement to believe, and settlement in your undoubted interest by faith. Though you seem to come late, and out of necessity, yet God’s thoughts are not your thoughts. Yours may be thoughts of wrath, &c.; but God’s are of pity, love, acceptance upon your coming. Thus, you see, your way is immediately to come and cast yourselves upon Christ, on the terms of the gospel, and your great trouble shall be removed. Make not a judgment of your condition from what you feel, but from what you hear from the word of grace, which now gives sentence on your side.

DIREC. III. Then, having this for your support, *search, look back to experiences.*—Look into yourselves, what marks you can find of the truth of your faith; and in this, be sure you take hold on the promise that lies nearest to you, that is, is most suitable to your present condition, as in point of fear to sin; (Isai. l. 10;) lostness; (Matt. xviii. 11;) poverty of spirit, longing and thirsting after righteousness, &c.; (Matt. v. 3, 4, 6;) and so one grace and promise will draw-in all.

DIREC. IV. *In dependence on Christ in the promise, wait till he speaks peace and assurance:*—Ever fearing to offend God, especially by casting off duty, distrusting of him, charging him with folly, limiting him to time or means; knowing and assuring yourselves, that you cannot so please God in any thing as in resolved faith to cleave to him, and to follow him fully in the patient expectation of the promise of grace and glory.

Thus accepting Christ in the covenant, in the strength of the grace thereof, give up thy whole self to Christ in a covenant of willing, universal, unreserved obedience; and say with David, “I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints;” that, by the power thereof, they “turn not again to folly.” (Psalm lxxxv. 8.)

SERMON XVI.

BY THE REV. JOSEPH HILL, B.D.*

SOMETIME FELLOW OF MAGDALEN COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

IN WHAT THINGS MUST WE USE MODERATION, AND IN WHAT NOT?

Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.—
Philippians iv. 5.

WHAT St. Austin said, in his days, of another scripture, that “it stood more in need of good practising, than any learned interpretation,” THAT may I say, in these days wherein I live, concerning the words that I have read to you at this time. I shall not therefore detain you, with showing their coherence, (especially considering their entireness,) or with any glossing upon them; but haste to open the nature of this duty, and press the practice thereof upon you all. In the verse you have two general parts:—

1. An exhortation to the showing [of] moderation, which, being in *materia necessaria*, [“in its matter necessary,”] is a command.

2. The argument enforcing it: “The Lord is at hand.”

The former will bound my present discourse, which I need not alter, but, according to the grammatical order the words stand in, might consider the *personæ, res, et actiones*, [“the persons, the things, and the actions,”] expressed therein: all which make up the whole of the duty enjoined. Yet, if you please to have the proposition formed, take it thus:—

DOCTRINE.

It is God's command, and our duty, to let our moderation be known unto all men.

Which I shall prosecute, according to the order of nature, in this method: I. In opening the nature of moderation. II. In showing its exercise. III. By whom, and to whom. IV. Why. V. And, lastly, make application.

MODERATION OPENED.

I. Concerning the *nature of moderation*, or what it is: wherein *the signification of the word, description of the thing; its subject, kinds, rule, and extremes.*

1. And here I confess I enter upon an unbeaten path: the word *ἐπιεικῆς*,—and *ἐπιεικεία*, which descends from it, and for which, by a

* The character of Mr. Hill is held, to this day, in high estimation among all classical scholars, for the very great and important improvements which he introduced into Schrevelius's Lexicon, and by which it was rendered the best manual then extant for students. See his elegant preface to the ninth edition of that useful work, in 1707, which contains a well-merited eulogium on the learned printer, the elder Bowyer, and which has been retained in all subsequent impressions.—EDIT.

Græcism, it is used in the text,—being of such multifarious signification, and no where in scripture rendered in that extent as here, nor any where else that I can find by “moderation,” which also occurs in no other place of all the Bible. In signifies properly “that which is fit, decent, due, meet, convenient;” * and is accordingly rendered by former interpreters, *modestia*; not as opposed to pride or haughtiness, in its strict philosophic acceptation, (which some not attending to, have therefore quarrelled with,) but that which doth moderate our actions, in which sense the masters of that language frequently use it; † and by later [interpreters] for avoiding that ambiguity, *moderatio*, from whence is formed our English word “moderation.”

2. Which, in its latitude, is not any particular grace or virtue, but that fit and proper temper [which] we ought to observe in the governing of our hearts and lives; that equal judgment which should command our wills and affections, and all our human actions, which are capable of excess or defect, by proportioning them according to the quality of the object, and the end for which and [for] whom they are employed, for the preserving of peace within ourselves and with others; that there may be no contumacy or rebellion in our affections to disquiet ourselves, or in our actions to disquiet others.

3. So that moderation, according to *its subject*, is either that of the mind, which is as a cause; or of the will and affections in their actings, which is as the effect: from all which the whole man is denominated “moderate.”

(1.) The former, or that of the mind, is that part of Christian prudence which proportions our actions to the object which the will chooseth, and its end, according to the variety of circumstances the agent is in, by applying the general rules of scripture for our walking, to our particular actions; and is accordingly well rendered here, by one of the ancients, ‡ *rationalis conversatio*, “your reasonable or equitable conversation.”

(2.) The latter, of the will, pertains to the several and particular virtues therein, especially those that serve for the restraining our most strong and impetuous passions, which offer the greatest violence to the equality of our minds. § And, therefore, although it most properly be of the judgment, yet being most conspicuous and discernible in the exercise of such virtues, it doth, according to the quality of the object about which they are conversant, assume their several notions and names. The most violent passions in reference to ourselves being the lusting power after the good things of this life, and, consequently, the grief which arises from the want or loss of them; it is therefore, in reference to the former, *temperance*, in its large acceptation; and the latter, *patience*: and in relation to others, the raging power of anger and revenge, with what flows from them; in which regard it is in the magistrate, *clemency*; and

* Καθηκον, ωρεπον, ωροσηκον, ικανον.—HESYCHIUS. Επεικεις, το ωρεπον.—*Etymologicum Magnum.* † *Modestia dicta est a modo: ubi autem modus nec plus est quicquam nec minus.*—CICERO. “It is called *modesty* from a *mode* or limitation. But where any thing is completely *modified* and bounded, it has neither excess nor deficiency.”—EDIT.

‡ AMBROSIUS *in loc.* § *Est autem modestia in animo, continens moderationem cupiditatum.*—CICERONIS *Rhetor.* lib. iii. cap. 2. “It is *modesty* or *soberness* of mind, and comprises within it the government or moderation of the passions and desires.”—EDIT.

humanity, meekness, gentleness, lenity, in all. In this variety is the word used by authors, sacred and profane, which I will not clog you with. And for this cause, it consists in that mediocrity which approaches nearer to the extreme of defect, and consequently is opposed to violence, impetuosity, or inordinacy of affection, (not as placed upon *undue* objects, for that is materially evil and to be wholly declined, not moderated, but upon *lawful* [objects] immoderately,*) and in general, to all excess in human actions.† Hence it is, by the way, as I conceive, that it is commanded so frequently in scripture by negative precepts; as, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.” (1 John ii. 15.) “Take no thought for your life, for the morrow.” (Matt. vi. 25, 31, 34.) “Fear not them which kill the body.” (Matt. x. 28, 31; Luke xii. 4, 7.) “Let not your heart be troubled;” (John xiv. 1;) and many the like, which I cannot stand to mention; and sometimes by the action contrary to its opposite vice; as, “Turn the other cheek: Let him have thy cloak also: Go with him twain;” (Matt. v. 39—41;) that is, rather than violently resist, and revenge thyself.

4. Moderation, then, being no particular grace or virtue, (as you have heard,) cannot have any peculiar object, but only in common with the principles and actions wherein it is employed; whereby it becomes incapable of any future accurate division into several *kinds*. For although it be of a general consideration, yet not as a principle which acts upon its object, but that which peculiarly respects the actions themselves when the object is pitched upon; it being moderation’s office to regulate and govern principles in their actings upon their due objects chosen, that they exceed not therein. So that as all those graces and virtues which respect the manner of actions, as zeal, sincerity, &c., that respect the moral quality, as this doth the moral quantity, degree, or measure of them, are of so many several kinds, as the actions are wherein they are conversant; so also is moderation.

5. And in regard our particular actions are so very many, so diverse, and clothed with such infinite variety of circumstances, it is impossible to lay down any certain *rule*, that may determine wherein moderation in them all should consist; the *τα δεοντα*, or “the things that are just, necessary, and convenient,” and no other, being always in particular actions very difficult to define, as the philosopher acknowledgeth, who saith, “There is nothing more full of difficulty than in every thing to find the mean;” the rule [which] he lays down to walk by is reason, and a prudent man’s determination; the best [which] nature affords, and are especially good for the duties of the second table, which he only (though not to all) speaks of; yet we, through the goodness of God, have a more sure and certain one to guide us, to which we shall do well to take heed, even the scriptures, which are able to make us wise unto salvation. It will be worth our while to speak briefly what we can touching the rule, which in general must guide and determine our moderation:

* All the editions except the first have culpably changed this appropriate adverb into the noun *moderation*.—EDIT. † *Επιεικεις τῆ βιαῖ ὀρρονιτ Ηερμογενες. Μηδεν υπερβαλλοντας, αλλα μετρωως, επιεικως, &c.*—ISOCRATES. “Hermogenes places *befitting or moderate* in opposition to *that which is violent or outrageous*.” “Let nothing be done in excess, but with much equanimity and moderation.”—EDIT.

for which end we must know, that all our human actions, which are capable of moral good or evil, are of two sorts, especially according to their objects, religious or civil: (1.) The former requires a spiritual principle, end, and rule, by which we must perform them for their manner and measure; which scripture doth abundantly (for the internal by its *particular*, and sufficiently for the external by its *general*, precepts) declare. (2.) For the latter, or civil actions, as a natural principle and end referrible to God's glory; so also for their manner and measure, the general rules of scripture to allow and prescribe them is all we can reasonably expect, and is sufficient for the same. In the application whereof, reason and prudent determination are three ways subservient:—

(i.) In judging the nature or quality of the objects in general, which we are particularly employed about, (as the good things or [the] evils of this life, in the particulars wherein we are conversant,) according to what scripture declares them to be, when it speaks of them, especially not comparatively, but absolutely what they are in themselves.

(ii.) Of the end God hath ordained such things for, about which he hath commanded us to be employed, and accordingly to proportion our actions; it being a known rule in the schools, *Omnium appetibilium finis est mensura*; or, that “the end is that which must prescribe the measure of our actings,” according to its double respect, *rei, et personæ*, “for *what* and for *whom*” the action is.

(iii.) Lastly. In due consideration of the circumstances of the agent; wherein is such great variety, not only in regard of the person, which involves *the end for whom* the action is, but all the adjacent circumstances, that herein occurs by far the greatest difficulty. For example, in meats and drinks. Consider diligently their nature in those set before thee; then their end, for refreshing us, not feeding our lusts; and of thyself, what is sufficient and convenient for thee in the circumstances thou art then in, and accordingly use them, or put “a knife to thy throat,” and refrain, as the wise man speaks; (Prov. xxiii. 2;) for that which may but be sufficient for one, may serve for another to make his belly his God; yea, that which may be only convenient to the same person at one time, may be gluttony and excess at another. And as about things, so in our dealing with others much more variety, both in respect of ourselves, and those we have to do withal. As we must remit that to one, we need not (nay, sometimes ought not) to another, according to our own and their capacity; as they are poorer or richer than ourselves, as they are weak, or wilful and malicious opposers of truth or equity; and a thousand such-like considerations, which occur in our actions; which, though always sufficient in themselves to determine us, yet because of our shortness of sight, are often but as the uncertain twinkling star-light to us, whereby to steer our course.

6. All that is said of moderation will more clearly appear, if we consider its *extremes*, from the nature of God's commands, which are of two sorts:—

(1.) Some are affirmative; and those either general, what we must do, &c., and imply the end for which, and all the circumstances that necessarily attend our doing it; or particular, and express *the circum-*

stances external, as time and place, and *internal*, (usually called the manner,) which comprehends the quality, and the moral quantity or proportion we are speaking of; which implies the intenseness, frequency, and duration of our actions. These continually oblige us, though not to continual practice, but only when God requires; the former by way of more absoluteness, the latter more conditionally, as depending thereupon.

(2.) The other sort of precepts are negative; some, what we must not do, and so, consequently, at once forbid all the concomitants of such actions as are prohibited; others, not forbidding us the object, but rectifying us about it, in the end we most do it for, manner how, &c.; both which oblige us to continual observance; and, in morals, to the contrary duties. By which it appears, in our not right proportioning our actions, we sin *in omission*, by not doing so fully as he commands; *in commission*, when we do those things that are our duty, but exceed therein, and go beyond the bounds [which] God hath set us: and this is formally immoderateness, which is rectified by moderation. As for actions materially evil, as Jonah's being angry with God, hating virtue, and loving vice, &c., which are absolutely forbidden, no proportion is to have place, but it and all other circumstances, together with the action, wholly avoided or suppressed; because towards undue objects forbidden us there can be no defect, in regard there should be no action, and therefore no moderation or government thereof. For instance, in those two great commands, on which hang all the Law and the Prophets, as our blessed Saviour tells us: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself." (Luke x. 27; Matt. xxii. 37—40.) Here is the grace of love required to act towards God; the manner expressed in *heart, soul, strength, mind*; the measure, in the four *alls*, the New Testament adding one to the three of the Old Testament, so far is the gospel from detracting from duty. Here can be no excess, in regard we can never love him as he deserves; not only in regard of what he hath done for us, but is to us, being our end and happiness; and towards our neighbour, the manner expressed, "as thyself," that is, truly and sincerely; but not "with all thy heart," &c., that is only God's due, who is absolutely to be loved for himself, others for him. Herein, alas! grace is defective, but never exceeds, so that moderation hath here no place; for if we love any person or thing more than God, Christ, and ourselves, it is not the action of grace, but sinful affection, which is to be moderated. For he that with his natural affection loves father or mother, wife or child, (whom yet they ought greatly to love,) more than God or Christ, is not worthy of them.

I am not ignorant all this while, that this word *επιεικεια* is most frequently used in a forensical or law sense, more strictly; the Moralists, Schoolmen, and Civilians borrowing it from Aristotle, and restraining it to that particular moderation of mitigating strict justice in the execution of human laws, and so is rendered, *equitas*, "equity." Which is either, 1. That of the magistrate in his public capacity, and is so *clementia*, "clemency," and is opposed to cruelty; the magistrate being

obliged, as not to write his laws in blood, like Draco's, so also not to execute them with cruelty, (though, where requisite, with severity,) but to moderate them by the law of nature, other laws, former precedents, constant customs, which have the nature of laws, or the reason and end of the law, which is more equitable (and more law, say some) than the letter, and, amongst Christians, by the written laws of God, that there may be *convenientia pœnæ ad delictum*, or "a proportioning punishment to the quality of the offence," all circumstances (which the law cannot possibly foresee or provide for) being duly considered. This includes all superiors, political, ecclesiastical, domestical, &c., and is frequently joined with "justice" and "judgment" in scripture, as executed both by God and man. (Psalm xcvi. 9; xcix. 4; Isai. xi. 4; Prov. i. 3; ii. 9; xvii. 26; Micah iii. 9, &c.) Or, secondly, that of private persons, or public in their private capacity, which is between party and party, when, according to the rules of equity, we omit what the rigour of the letter of the law would adjudge us, thereby neither injuring ourselves nor others; which is usually called *probitas*, or *honestas*; by us, "common honesty" that should be twixt man and man. And hence some borrow it, and restrain it to that carriage [which] the law takes not cognizance of in our meekness and gentleness, making it that single virtue the moralists call *mansuetudo*, we, "meekness." But though it be all these, yet it is also more, these not reaching the latitude of the word *επιεικεια*, nor the extent of the duty here enjoined; the word being not used here in that strict sense [in which] the philosophers use it, as the learned Grotius well observes upon the place; but for that equalness of mind and spirit that becomes us in our conversation, and diffuseth itself through many, very many, other actions, than are proper to these virtues; and though sometimes restrained to this or that particular kind of moderation, yet in its latitude, as the best philologers tell us, [it] denotes "mediocrity, indifferency, equality," or the like.* And in this general acceptation, which I may call "the moral or theological sense," not restraining it to, though not excluding, the forensical and stricter acceptation thereof, I shall, through God's assistance, handle it; the rather, because our judicious and learned Perkins hath in a peculiar little tractate already spoken sufficiently to that particular, of the moderation of justice by the magistrate, and private persons, in reference to their remitting from the rigour of the law; which every one may peruse, and I seriously wish they would also practise.

THE EXERCISE OF MODERATION.

II. The second general now follows: *the exercise of moderation*; wherein the case proposed is included; namely,

CASE. *Wherein must we practise moderation?*

Which necessarily implies the external object, or about what our moderation must be conversant, and appear to all; call it *the object of the faculty* or *of the action*, or *of moderation* when employed in

* *Μετριοι, επιεικεις.*—HESYCHIUS. *Επιεικως σημαίνει το μετρωσ.*—*Etymologicum Magnum.*—*Επιεικως, μετρωσ.*—SUIDAS. *Την τούτων μετριότητα, &c., id est, επιεικειαν.*—SCHOLIASTES in *Thucydiden*, lib. i.

governing these, and so hath the same object with them, as is said before, it all comes to one.

And [it] formally includes, 1. *What it is that we must moderate*; or the faculty, or principle, of what kind soever internal and external, from which the action flows. 2. *In what actions*. And, 3. *How*, or the measure and proportion to be observed in such our actions. Which three are always distinct in themselves, though not always easily distinguishable to us, and therefore often seem coincident. I shall therefore join them together in the prosecution of the case.

For the general object of moderation, or about what it must be exercised and appear.

NEGATIVELY. 1. *Not [about] such things as are materially good.*—About such things, or in such actions as are materially good, moderation hath no place, because all the good we can possibly do is too little, so that there can be no excess in these, and therefore no moderation: for the office of moderation being to restrain excess, where there can be none of this, that can have no employment. For example: we cannot believe in, hope, love God and Christ too much, nor hate sin and Satan, as the schoolmen affirm, in regard of his wholly losing the image of God, too much. In all our internal religious duties, and actings of grace, as such, no moderation therefore can or ought to have place.

2. *Not about such things as are materially evil.*—For herein we cannot be defective. Where the object is absolutely forbidden us, and no circumstances can make the action good, there we are wholly to abstain or suppress the action, if in it, there being inordinacy in the principle or faculty; for though moderation is to govern even the principle, yet not in the choice of its object, but in its exercise about a due object chosen, that it exceed not. And though we call any great acting upon an undue object, or great omission towards due, “immoderate,” because of their excess, yet this is not properly immoderacy; for so every sin would be it formally; whereas those only which respect the moral quantity of our actions are properly immoderacies. Both these sufficiently appear by what is said before.

POSITIVELY. But about such things as are in themselves of an indifferent nature, and neither absolutely commanded as things materially good, or absolutely forbidden as those materially evil, but only conditionally according to the circumstances we are in: which, though of an indifferent nature, yet become morally good or evil to us, as we are actually conversant about them. In these properly may be excess; in regard of which, moderation is to take place to restrain and keep all within due bounds, being formally *the modification* (to use the school-term for once) of such actions. Wherein we must carefully distinguish of the several formalities of the object, grace and nature being conversant about the same object, but not in the same respect.

For its exercise, therefore, or what, wherein, and how we must practise it.

Which I shall speak of,

1. **ABSOLUTELY**, in reference to ourselves, for preserving peace within, as it is to be exercised towards the good and evils of this life.

2. RELATIVELY, or in relation to others for external peace, wherein we must exercise it, in civil and in religious matters. The former I shall call *moderation towards things*, the latter *towards persons*.

I. MODERATION TOWARDS THINGS.

First, then, for *moderation towards things*, as it is absolutely taken in reference to ourselves.—This being so clearly enjoined in the text, as appears not only by the word *ἐπιεικεία*, but the duty *γνώσθητω*; the apostle not saying, “Use moderation towards all men,” but, “Let it appear to all men,” which even that which is internal doth in our external conversation. But though there be abundance of excellent fruit on this branch of moderation, yet in regard I conceive that towards persons principally intended, I will not stand to shake it down, but only point you out briefly the boughs, on which it especially grows, that you may gather it yourselves; and proceed to the second, moderation towards others, which I shall only prosecute afterwards in all the following discourse. Now the good things of this life being either *internal*, of the mind, as parts, learning, &c.; of the body, as health, strength, beauty, and the like; or *external*, as the riches, honours, relations, and lawful pleasures of the world, and what [are] comprehended under them: and the evils of this life, such as are contrary to these, as shallowness of parts natural or acquired, sickness, weakness, death, deformity, poverty, losses of friends or estate, infamy, reproaches, troubles, wars, hunger, thirst, nakedness, imprisonment, captivity, banishment, and such like: we are towards these to exercise moderation.

1. *Towards the good things of this life.*

(1.) *We must moderate our judgments in the valuation of them.*—As forbidden fruit must not be looked upon, so lawful must not be judged by us more desirable than it is. As we may not undervalue these good things, and, with the Stoic, despise and cast them away; so we must not over-value them, beyond their intrinsic worth, and the ends for which God allows them, the end and use being the measure of every thing's estimation. For though every creature be good in itself, and some better in themselves and to us than others; yet those that are the best, and best for us that the world affords, are still but creatures who are most of them serviceable only to our bodies, that they may be serviceable to our souls, in the service of our heavenly Father; which when we too much estimate, we quickly fall to admire, and so bow down to them, and commit idolatry with them. For, an over-valuation of the judgment begets in us admiration, and so an over-valuation of them also in our affections. These sensitive objects make such impressions upon our imagination when absent, and our passions when present, that if grace and reason moderate not our judgment of them, our whole man becomes inflamed therewith, and violently carried out towards them, by an excessive admiration of their seeming excellency, love to them for the same, and desire after them for their apprehended suitableness, hope to obtain them, (seeming possible,) using means for obtaining them, and delighting and glorying in them. Therefore our Saviour prescribes wisely, that our hearts may not be in them, the light of our minds being single. (Matt. vi. 22, 23.)

the nation, that no more; as Cyrus, Darius, and Xerxes, mighty princes, yet they wanted Greece, they thought, which caused their expeditions against it. Thus passing by still what we have, and reckoning what we have not, [we] never think we enjoy enough; *αδικων ουκ αδικουμενος*, 'every one herein being injurious to God, not injuriously dealt with by him.' 'Keep, therefore, thy heart,' and moderate it, that it break not out in these things, 'with all diligence,' lest the swarms of these lusts, whatever sweetness they seem to bring with them, sting thee to death."

(3.) *Moderate thy pursuit and endeavours after the acquiring and retaining these, by the ends for which, and subordination wherewith, thou mayest and oughtest desire them.*—This, speaking only the execution of the former particular, must needs be accordingly bounded. What we may lawfully desire, that we may use lawful means to attain; and so far forth as we must desire, so far only must we use the means. We must seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness absolutely, and in the first place; then the things convenient for us in this life, according to their subserviency thereto, and his seeing good to bestow upon us. As it is the statute-law of Heaven, that "in the sweat of our brows we should eat our bread," and should be our daily prayer, that our "Father which is in heaven" would "give us this day our daily bread," that is, all things requisite and convenient; so is it that we should "not lay up for ourselves treasures upon earth," nor serve these as our masters, nor "take thought for our lives, what we shall eat, or what we shall drink, or wherewithal we shall be clothed;" which three are the total sum all these externals amount to in their use; (Matt. vi. 19, 24, 25, &c.) our blessed Saviour, from verse 19 of that chapter, forbidding this immoderate pursuit in those negative precepts which he presseth with several cogent arguments and expostulations; and not absolutely, but so as they may be not our "treasures" that we set our hearts upon, our "masters" that we serve; whenas they are but our servants, and so as that we oppose them not to, and set them in competition with, the "treasures in heaven," and God our great "Master," whom we ought to serve even in the following [of] our employments for these; as appears [from] verses 19, 24; nor absolutely our taking thought, but our too solicitousness about the choice of, and using means, and especially their event, and so, consequently, what shall become of us, if we be not blessed but blasted therein, as appears by the word *μεριμνατε*, in the last verse of the chapter. And yet, alas! after all this, how do we seek them as if they were our treasure, our happiness, our all! as if here was our continuing city, wherein we should always live and have these treasures, and none other to come that hath better! Though these be things after which "the Gentiles seek," yet they will be excusable who know no better in comparison of thee and me, who know the true pearl of price, are invited and called to better dainties, and yet make light thereof, one preferring his farm, another his merchandise. (Matt. xxii. 5.) And yet, though the generality of the Gentiles which had not the gospel, (as the Jews in our Saviour's time,) were so immoderate; yet many of them were such, as appears by their works and lives, as, I fear, will rise up in judgment in this particular against most of us that call ourselves Christians. They,

beholding the busy world, (as one of them speaks of the souls in the other,) as the ant carrying a straw, or some little thing of like moment, into her hole in the mole-hill; which yet dazzles our eyes with their seeming lustre, and makes our hearts say of these our houses, as if they were our homes, "It is good for us to be here."

(4.) *We must moderate our whole man in the use and enjoyment of these, in our loving, delighting, rejoicing, and glorying in them.*—We must not, in our using of them, exceed the bounds within which they are allowed us; nor in our love towards them, ("Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world," 1 John ii. 15,) by taking too much complacency and delight in them; not our rejoicing. If thou dost, "know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." (Eccles. xi. 9.) Nay, our Saviour, when the disciples "returned with joy, that the devils were subject to them," which was a divine and extraordinary gift, calls them off, and shows them a fit matter of rejoicing, wherein they could not exceed; not absolutely forbidding, but limiting them with a "*rather*." "But *rather* rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." (Luke x. 17, 20.) Nor in our glorying in them. (Jer. ix. 23, 24.) O what need of moderation here! In our eating, drinking, sleeping, lawful recreations, raiment; in the using of our parts, learning, riches, honours, and other creature-comforts! If the enjoyment of these outward things had been so considerable, think you our blessed Saviour, who could have commanded them, would have wanted them? What are the best of them? Are thy riches any thing but of the earth and earthly? thy pleasures any thing, but a little titillation of the flesh, of no permanent nature; lives but one instant, and dies as fast? thy honour any thing beside a hollow echo or noise, that, like the circle of the water, is but of little circumference, and soon gone? doth not every cross wind or wave break and dash it away? Is not he that is great in this city scarce known in the next? he that is king in one nation, unknown to many other nations? How short-lived, I pray? Have there not been many great ones [whom] we never heard of? Those [of whom] we read, do we not skip their names often, not troubling ourselves with the thought or remembrance of them? If we do, what are they the better? Read Psalm ciii. 14—18. Nay, have not the greatest judgments of God followed excess in things lawful? I will trouble you with none but a few scriptural examples: two of the greatest the world ever knew,—the flood, and [the] destruction of Sodom and the rest of the cities of the plain. To what are they ascribed but security and excess? "They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage:" what follows? "The flood came, and destroyed them all." "Likewise in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;" (all, again, things lawful in themselves;) "but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all." (Luke xvii. 27—29.) If David take too much pride and glory* in the number of his people, and fall to numbering them, God quickly follows with pes-

* In the first edition, the author employed *pride* and *glory* as verbs, without the use of *like*.—EDIT.

tilence, and makes them decrease seventy thousand. (1 Chron. xxi. 14.) If Nebuchadnezzar will vaunt, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" while the word is in the king's mouth there falls a voice from heaven, saying, "The kingdom is departed from thee;" and he is turned to grass with the oxen. (Dan. iv. 30, 31, 33.) And his son Belshazzar's great feast fills up the measure, for which he was that night slain, and his kingdom taken. (Dan. v. 1, 30, 31.) If the rich man will think thus: And so "will I do, and say, 'Soul, thou hast goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry:'" he is not only stigmatized for a "fool," but, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee" follows. (Luke xii. 19, 20.) Nay, if the wicked servant begin to "eat and drink with the drunken," his lord will come unexpectedly, and "cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites." (Matt. xxiv. 49, 51.) How great, then, this sin is, God's judgments being always equal, and proportioned to our offences, what slight thoughts soever we may have of it, you cannot but by these examples perceive; nay, rather, what a big-bellied monster is it, full of many deadly sins, of atheism, unbelief, idolatry, carnal security, preferring these things before God, Christ, heaven, and happiness! Take heed, and beware, therefore, herein, lest, while they speak thee fair, they wound thy heart.

2. Towards the evils of this life.

(1.) *We must moderate our fears of these befalling us, according to the good they threaten to deprive us of.*—As we must not fear these groundlessly, so when there is just cause, and apparent danger, we should not be senseless and secure, nor fear all alike, or over-fear any. Security is the forerunner to destruction; (1 Thess. v. 3;) which these should awake us out of, but not so affect us, or affright us, as to put us past ourselves and our duty. When the storm threatens us, we must not, with Jonah, be asleep, but praying and endeavouring, as the poor mariners, for preservation; or, as the disciples, "Lord, save us, we perish!" though they were too fearful in regard of Christ's being with them, who was sufficient security for their safety. There is a *provident fear*, that opens our eyes to foresee dangers, and quickens us in the use of lawful means for their prevention. Such was the good patriarch Jacob's [fear] of Esau's destroying him and his company; that makes him pray, send presents to his brother, divide his bands, and use all prudent means of preservation. (Gen. xxxii.) This we must have; for, security and putting far away the evil day, when God threatens us even with temporal judgments, is a great sin, and hath a "woe" pronounced upon it; (Amos vi. 1;) whereas this makes us wisely serve the providence of God. But then there is a *diffident fear* that distracts us, and cuts all the nerves and sinews of lawful care and endeavours, that brings a snare with it, (Prov. xxix. 25,) and often drives us upon unwarrantable means, or makes us sit down in despair. This we must beware of, by a due moderating our fears according to the impendent evil, which must be judged by its opposite good; not fearing all evils alike; the loss of some wealth like the loss of our health, because health is the better good: no, nor all

evils of the same kind alike ; not a tertian ague like the stone ; this, by its exquisite pain, depriving us more of the natural comfort of health, and more endangering our lives. And not overfearing the greatest, namely, death, called by Job, "the king of terrors," (Job xviii. 14,) and by the philosopher, φοβερων φοβερωτατον, "of all terribles the most terrible ;" which our Saviour, as man, feared with a natural fear, yet chargeth we should not over-fear it. (Matt. x. 28 ; Luke xii. 4.) Yea, though we should fear political or public evils, as wars, famine, pestilence, more than our own personal, (of which, you see, I speak only all along.) in regard those are greater, the public good being better and to be preferred before any private ; yet not these too much.

(2.) *We must moderate our grief and trouble for these, according to the good we want or lose by them.*—There are *imaginary evils*, that are of our own creation, begot, brought up, and nourished by our own brain : these we must carefully avoid, and, if formed, not be cruel to ourselves, in being compassionate to them, but dash them in pieces. And there are *real evils*, which come not forth of our own dust, nor spring out of the ground, but are from above, of God's creating and framing, (Amos iii. 6 ; Isai. xlv. 7 ; Jer. xviii. 11.) These we are not to be senseless under, but duly affected with, and yet not over-affected, so as to murmur and repine, much less quarrel with God. A stoical apathy becomes us not, and yet better than quarrelling at God's providence ; it coming nearer moderation ; for "wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins ?" (Lam. iii. 39.) Little reason whilst thou art living, seeing it is less than thy desert ; and no reason even for death and hell, for they are but equal to thy desert : if thou confess thyself a sinner, thou must confess this. Plato said, that God doth *ασι γεωμετρειν* ; which is expounded by Plutarch well : that "God is said always to act the geometrician, in regard of his equal dealing with all men, in proportioning rewards and punishments to their deserts."* And a greater than he, yea, the greatest that can be, God himself, appeals to the sinner's own conscience : "Is not my way equal ? Are not your ways unequal ?" (Ezek. xviii. 25 ;) which whole chapter is a defence of his equity. Troubled, then, *we may be*, murmuring and discontented *we must not be*. Nay, troubled *we ought to be*, as the evils are greater or less, which must be judged by the good they deprive us of ; more for public, because that good is greater ; less for private evils, because our own good is not equal to the community's. But in the body politic it is quite otherwise than in the natural body : we are usually too senseless under public, and too sensible of and immoderate under our own particular, evils ; rather apt to quarrel with God, like Jonah, for a gourd, or some inconsiderable concerns of our own, than be troubled at the destruction of a great Nineveh ; more troubled at our own houses being on fire, or child sick, than all our neighbours in the city about us burnt and dead. Therefore, scripture accordingly calls for affection for the public, and forbids it in our own concernments, in regard [that] we are generally defective in the former, and excessive in the latter ; nay, even towards others, when just cause of compassion, if excessive. So our Saviour, when the women lamented his

* *Symposiac.*, lib. viii. quæst. 2.

death, (which was matter of grief, as in respect of him, though of greatest joy in itself, as to them and the world,) bids them, "Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children," in regard of the public calamities that were coming upon Jerusalem; (Luke xxiii. 27—29;) every particular being concerned in the community. Now, of these evils, seeing all are privations of good; *some are of the good we want, and never enjoyed*; as deformity of body, defect in parts, constant poverty, &c. And here we must beware we judge not those [to be] evils which are none, and so trouble and torment ourselves without cause, and reproach our Maker; saying, "Why hath he made me thus?" "Why am I no nobler born, no more beautifully made, no greater heir, no quicker-parted? Why am I not as such, or such, not as they, this, or that?"—when thou hast what is suitable and convenient for thy condition; for this all may say of those that excel them, (and the best of imaginary excellences,) as well as thou. *Other evils are [privations] of the good we have enjoyed, and are deprived of*; as sickness [is a privation] of health; losses, of friends and estate; reproaches, of our good name; imprisonment [a privation] of liberty; and the like, which are incident to our present state.* These are they especially which the world lament, and cry out after, as foolishly as Micah: "Ye have taken away my gods: and what have I more? and what is this that ye say unto me, What aileth thee?" (Judges xviii. 24.) We must not here be too passionately excessive, either in the degree or duration of our trouble; we must be affected with the providence of God in these evils, according to their greatness to us, (a little loss in itself may be great to a poor man; as the widow's two mites were more to her than their far greater sums were to them that cast them in; the death of an only child greater than when a number,) and so trouble and sorrow for them; but discontented we must not be, nor distracted in the duties [which] God requires; nor refuse to be comforted, because our husbands, wives, children, pleasures, honour, riches, are not; for as there is a time to weep, so a time to take up, and refrain from weeping: we must love them so as we may lose them; that when we do, we may not lose ourselves. *Amavi hæc omnia tanquam amissurus*, let us every one say at parting with them: "I loved you so as I can lose you." Take heed of murmuring with the Israelites, cursing thy stars with the profane; of discontentedness, which the best are apt to fall into; nay, wish for death rather than life, as several of the prophets. Maintain that equilibrious frame in thee, as David: "Here am I, let God do to me as seemeth good unto him;" (2 Sam. xv. 26;) which is the mother of patience, and, like it, makes these evils, though not none, yet become none to us.

Thus I have done with *moderation towards things*, most of whose particulars mentioned you have pressed by the apostle Paul, and by the same argument of the text: "The time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced

* In all editions except the first, this sentence has been left in a very faulty state, no reference having been made to the author's preceding proposition: "Seeing all these evils are privations of good;" which is the proper key to all that follows.—EDIT.

not ; and they that buy, as though they possessed not ; and they that use this world, as not abusing it : for the fashion of this world passeth away." (1 Cor. vii. 29—31.) And though I have stood longer upon this than I intended, and promised both you and myself, in regard the fruit hung so thick about me, that I could not but pluck some of it, and, after I had tasted it, more ; yet I hope it will prove so pleasant also to the taste, that you will pardon me ; especially considering how much this *moderation towards things* conduceth to that which respects persons ; (the contentions in the world arising usually from our want of moderation to the things of the world, as in civil matters it is patent ; and in religious, though less obvious, yet most frequently as certain, that these are the springs from which they flow ;) and how necessary it is for us all to know and practise it ; for *licitis perimus omneis*, "We usually perish by the hand of these lawful things."

II. MODERATION TOWARDS PERSONS.

Having spoken of moderation, as it respects ourselves, for preserving peace within, (this, as all government, having peace for its end,) which appears, and is made known to others, by our conversation ; let us now look abroad, as we are members of the public, and have to do with others, and see what moderation we must use for the preserving external peace. Now, each Christian having a double capacity ;—*as a man*, his civil capacity in the state ; *as a Christian*, his religious capacity in the church wherein he lives ;—I shall speak to both these, in reference to peace, political and ecclesiastical ; to the former more briefly, being so near akin to that part we have already dispatched.

1. *In civil matters.*

Herein we may be considered *actively* or *passively*.

(I.) *ACTIVELY.*

1. *We must moderate our speeches, that we give no just provocation thereto, according to prudence.*—That we may neither provoke those of whom or to whom we speak, we must duly consider the nature of the matter we speak of, and the quality and temper of the persons concerned.

In our discourses with others.—Not trifling in weighty matters, and fervent in trifles of no moment ; not rashly to thy superiors, without respect ; not superciliously to thy inferiors ; not contentiously to thy equals. We also must have regard to their temper, if passionate and angry, with soft, not grievous, words ; or, if tender and meek-spirited, with the like ; (for these two different tempers must be alike, though for different ends dealt withal ;) if contumacious, more sharply ; if flexible, gently ; if testy or jealous, more tenderly and cautiously ; if equal, with more freedom and liberty ; and so of all others. Yea, we must also observe their present condition, if distressed, or joyful and comfortable, and the like ; and the disposition they are in, (which for the most part is suitable thereto,) as sad and dejected, or cheerful and pleasant, beyond their accustomed temper, and accordingly moderate our speeches, as the wise man adviseth ; (Prov. xxv. 20 ;) at no time stirring up contention, or speaking swords and darts ; but as the wise, whose "tongue is health." (Prov. xii. 18 ; xviii. 6.)

In our judging, characterizing, and censuring of others.—We must also consider for what, of whom, and to whom we do it; not for every failing, and weakness, or miscarriage, nor upon slight grounds; not readily taking up a reproach against our neighbour, and rashly venting it; (Prov. x. 12;) nor jealously framing one, and according thereto passing verdict; for though there be a charitable and godly jealousy we may exercise towards those we have special interest in or charge over, such as St. Paul's towards his Corinthians; (2 Cor. xi. 2;) and Job's [towards] his children, (Job i. 5,) in reference to our admonishing or other dealings with them, yet not to our judging and censuring them to others. And when the carriages of others are such as no due candour can excuse, we must rather interpret them better, than aggravate them as worse, according to the favour of charity to the offender, though in no wise to the offence: nor this without necessity; nor to every one blazoning others; nor of all alike, without respect to quality, age, temptations, and the like; of which, and all other circumstances, consideration must be had, and due allowance made.

In our rebuking and reproving of others.—We must likewise see, that it be a matter so deserving, and consider the persons we so deal with. In counsel and admonition, though prudence be required, yet in them we assume not so much to ourselves, nor [are we] apt so passionately to miscarry. Great need of this in superiors, masters especially towards servants and scholars, that they deal with them according to their dispositions, "forbearing" (or, as the Greek, "moderating") "threatening," (Eph. vi. 9; Prov. xvi. 24;) and parents often towards children: "Fathers, provoke not your children, lest they be discouraged." (Col. iii. 21.) And as [there is] great need of superiors moderating their passion towards inferiors, so [is there] great need of these using prudence towards those and their equals. "Rebuke not," therefore saith Paul to Timothy, "an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren." (1 Tim. v. 1.)

2. *We must moderate our contests with others according to equity.*—So long as sin, Satan, and *meum et tuum*, "thine and mine," are in the world, there will be strife and contention about the things of the world. And where interest engages us, we are subject to be biassed thereby, and drawn away by our passions from all equality. Great need, therefore, of moderation here:

(1.) *In considering the matter, that it be of moment, and the person we have to do withal, whether faulty;* and not about toys, and rashly, with any that is next us [whom] we think upon the blush guilty, enter the lists of contention and strife. "Go not forth hastily," saith Solomon, "to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame." (Prov. xxv. 8.)

(2.) *If so, in trying by all fair means the obtaining [of] thy right,* whether of estate, good name, honour, or the like, by arguments and persuasions, by seeking accommodation, by willingly referring it to the equal judgment and determination of others, or the like. "Agree," saith our blessed Saviour, "with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him;" (that is, "to the magistrate," as Luke expounds it, xii.

58;) "lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison." (Matt. v. 25.)

(3.) If these will not prevail for thy right, *in voluntary yielding some part thereof, rather than contest.* It must be thy own right [that] thou must yield, not another's, except thou be intrusted therewith, and so far forth as he consents thereto; for this being a gift, must be of such things as are our own, which thou oughtest to do for peace' sake. How eminent was Abraham for this! who stood not upon his terms of superiority with Lot, though his uncle and guardian formerly and governor, nor his right, nor his nephew's first seeking to him, and the like; but that there might be no strife, [he] offers him his choice of the land: "If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left;" (Gen. xiii. 8, 9;) and performs accordingly. How far are we from following our father Abraham's example! How many that will not yield others any of their right, but by compulsion of law! How few that yield their own right voluntarily! how far, or how much, we must yield, our own (and those we deal with) circumstances best determine. We must not be injurious to ourselves; for, as St. Austin saith well, *Quis aliis æquus, qui sibi iniquus?* "Who that is unequal to himself, will be equal to others?" We must not yield that which is greatly to our detriment, except our yielding be on as easy terms as further contesting; as it proves often when we proceed to law, &c. And here that may be very considerable to one, that is but small to another, as poorer or richer for matters of estate, as entering the stage of the world, or well known in it, for credit and good name, &c.; and very considerable to the same man at one time, that may be small at another; as if upon preferment to have reports made of him, or the like. Nay, there may be grounds for not yielding the least we can possibly obtain, which we must conceal from the public, though we may satisfy private Christians; as when we know our estate is small, though, living upon credit, others judge it great; or the like cases. But here is not such difficulty; every one knowing his own circumstances, for the most part, pretty well, which should be a ground for our charity, that we censure not men whose circumstances we know not; nor are we apt to miscarry in departing from our own interest. We should especially, therefore, consider the condition and circumstances those are in [whom] we have to do withal: if greater, we usually make a virtue of necessity, and yield most where we should yield least: but here, in our speeches and carriages, we should especially yield, and [the] least we can of our purses; and on the contrary, if they be meaner and poorer: not when others are low, or in present exigencies, to take them by the throat, saying "Pay me what thou owest;" (Matt. xviii. 28;) but to be equal, merciful, and considerative of others as well as ourselves, and accordingly to deal.

(4.) If all thou must yield will not satisfy, *in thy chargeable appeal to the civil magistrate.*—As all lawful means must be essayed for public peace before by war appeal be made to God, so should all lawful means be used before we appeal to his vicegerent for private peace: and when we do, with charity to the person against whom we proceed; for it is a

great mistake to think we cannot be in charity and law together: and, though with vigilance and circumspection, yet not with violence and passion, to manage the prosecution.

Lastly. *In the issue or event of appeals.*—If we overcome, in admitting equal compensation for the loss of riches, credit, or the like thou contestest about. For some men's natures, others' necessities, are such as make them obstinate, and persist, to their ruin and destruction; and laws in some things are severe, though just; which though the magistrate moderate according to equity, yet [they] often adjudge more than we should take. And if thou be overcome, and lose thy right, by no means seeking revenge, or righting thyself, but use moderation, in committing thy cause "to Him that judgeth righteously."

3. *We must moderate our whole carriage and conversation towards others, according to the rules of modesty and sobriety.* (Prov. xxv. 6.)—Avoid all occasions of giving just offence to others. Seek peace and pursue it; but fly occasions of quarrelling and strife, lest the wrath both of God and man pursue thee. Consider, that not only "hatred" and "wrath," but "variance, emulations, and strife," are reckoned amongst "the works of the flesh," which "they that do shall not inherit the kingdom of God;" whilst "peace, long-suffering, gentleness, and meekness," "fruits of the Spirit," shall. (Gal. v. 20—23.) Let not thy immodest looks efface others' modesty, nor thy gestures offend their gravity. For St. Ambrose extends this moderation to gestures, gait, and bodily motions; speaking also his own experience herein, how he refused to admit one into orders, merely for his immodesty in these.* Let not, then, any taunting jests, bitter sarcasms, or any other words, or mimical gestures, foolish wagers, recreations, or the like, become snares to entrap thy peace with others. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest," (or "grave and venerable," *σεμνα*,) "whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things," speak these things, do these things: "and the God of peace shall be with you." (Phil. iv. 8, 9.)

(II.) PASSIVELY.

Thus we are considered in our suffering from others; wherein, as we must cordially forgive them all; (Matt. vi. 15;) so in our carriage we must moderate our spirits, passions, speeches, actions, and punishing thereof, towards those that are the offenders.

1. *We must moderate our spirits, by an equal bearing with the weaknesses and natural infirmities of others.*—"He that hath no rule over his own spirit, is like a city that is broken down, and without walls;" (Prov. xxv. 28;) that is, soon overcome. We must consider *their years*; as the fervour of youth, testiness of old age: *Their temper*; some are more dull and phlegmatic, others more melancholy and suspicious; some more choleric and boisterously passionate; others more agile, quick, and sprightly: *Their education*; some are with study morose; others, according to those they converse with, more rude, or complimentary and

* *De Officiis*, lib. i. c. 18.

courtly; according to which, and their present condition, we should give due grains of allowance, in our speeches and conversations towards them, and retain our equality of mind; as the orator said, "*Tranquillus animus meus, qui æqui boni facit omnia.*"* (1.) By a prudent dissembling them. (1 Sam. x. 27.) (2.) By a charitable covering them. (Prov. x. 12.) (3.) Interpreting them; not putting any sinister interpretation, but most favourable, nor aggravating the offence. (1 Cor. xiii. 5, 7.) (4.) Admonishing them. (Matt. xviii. 15; Gal. vi. 1.) Lastly, pardoning them: "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another," &c. (Col. iii. 13.)

2. *We must moderate our passions in their due exercise, in case of greater and wilful offences, according to the nature and quality thereof.*—Our anger towards such offenders, aversion of them, severity with them, and the like; avoiding of and suppressing all wrath, envy, malice, revenge, and the like sinful passions, that have the stamp of hell upon them; (James iii. 15;) which come thence, and lead thither. (Gal. v. 20, 21.) In God's cause we must be angry against sin; and in the public's, against the impediments of peace and truth. (Neh. v. 6; Acts xvii. 16.) But these I am not speaking of. In our own we may be angry, but we must not sin. (Eph. iv. 26.) "Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment," saith our blessed Saviour. (Matt. v. 22.) In which three things are considerable: (1.) With whom; and that is clearly the offenders, not every one that is next us. (2.) For what; which the philosopher and all acknowledge difficult to determine, being in particulars: the only help is from the consideration of the quality of the offence. (i.) Not for every trifle, but material in itself, or in its consequence. (ii.) Not for natural defects and weaknesses; as when they are slow of parts, weak of strength, or the like, and can do no better: here we may find fault, and admonish gently to quicken, not be angry to discourage, those we have power over, or interest in. (iii.) Nor for purely involuntary and casual offences, such as no due circumspection could prevent; but for errors and mistakes which might have been avoided, [for] carelessness and negligence in the doing or omission; wilfulness or maliciousness in the end for which others offend us. When these appear, and as they appear more or less, we may be angry; least for the first, more with the next, and most with the last of wilfulness and malice. Lastly. The measure of our passion is considerable, which must not be beyond the nature of such offences, in the degree or duration. "Be ye angry, and sin not:" (the same words in the original the Septuagint renders Psalm iv. 4, by "Stand in awe, and sin not;" when we are angry with others, we had need stand in awe of God, that we sin not:) "let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil;" (Eph. iv. 26, 27;) that is, we must neither too deeply, nor too long, be angry, lest the devil, who is ready at hand, take occasion thereat to blow us all into a flame of wrath, malice, revenge, and what not: all which are to be wholly avoided.

* CICERO *ad Atticum*, lib. vii. epist. 7. "In a state of perfect tranquillity, my mind views all things favourably, and receives them in good part."—EDIT.

3. *We must moderate our speeches and actions towards such wilful offenders.*—By no means rendering railing for railing, or “evil for evil,” but “overcoming evil with good.” O that our blessed Saviour’s known precept, Matt. v. 44, &c., was but as well known in the practice, and that his copy was but writ after by us! how would the world be reformed thereby! If those many places of holy scripture, of “forbearing, and forgiving one another,” under the penalty of damnation, were duly believed, they would marvellously restrain men at least, and becalm the world. But let us see our practice.

(1.) *By a prudent silence, or slighting the presumptuous offenders of us, when secret, or not greatly to our detriment.*—Not to hearken or regard every reproach, scorn, and contempt, that is cast upon us, nor every trespass of our neighbour. (2 Sam. xvi. 10.) “The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.” (Prov. xix. 11.) It is his glory, not only as it shows a spirit above such dealings, but wisdom, many times, more ashaming and silencing such thereby than by our contending with them.

(2.) *By yielding to the unequal demands of others for peace, wherein we are solely concerned, and not greatly prejudiced.*—How eminent is our Saviour’s example herein, who, though free from tribute, yet, rather than he would offend, works a miracle for the solution thereof! (Matt. xvii. 27.) He fairly shows first that he is so, and then notwithstanding pays; whose wisdom and practice herein let us follow.

(3.) *By admitting equal compensation, or less than our wrong, for such manifest injuries as we may and ought to right ourselves in, when the offender is willing to make us satisfaction.*—If in our reputation, let us not insist too much upon the punctilios of honour; if in estate, upon the strict terms of right; but herein observe the golden rule, by putting off *self*, and putting on *thy neighbour*, doing to him as thou wouldest he should do to thee. (Matt. vii. 12.) Nay, in real wrongs of estate, we should, in case of their incapacity of recompensing, accept, for present, verbal satisfaction, till they be better enabled, and, if never, to lose all, rather than, by imprisonment or otherwise, to bring upon them, and often theirs also, utter destruction. (Matt. xviii. 29, 30.) For, as the moralist well [observes]: *To δικαιοῦν ἴσον*, but not *To ἴσον δικαιοῦν** “Though all justice be equal, yet all equality is not justice, but that which is proportioned to persons.”

(4.) *Lastly, We must moderate our prosecution of such injuries and wrongs as we ought to vindicate ourselves from, and see punished.*—Though we must forgive all injuries, as to ourselves, by charity to others; yet we may, nay, we must, in some cases have so much charity also to the public and ourselves, that in notorious injuries we should do right to both, in the prosecution of such offenders as will not otherwise be restrained, or do us right. If thy brother sin against thee, not only seven, but seventy-seven, times a day, thou must forgive him; (Matt. xviii. 22;) that is, if he frequently wrong and injure thee, (for so the word “sinning,” when against us, signifies, as the Septuagint, 1 Sam. xix. 4, Gen. xlii. 22, and elsewhere, frequently use the Greek words, *Av*

* PLUTARCHI *Symposiac.* lib. viii.

ἀμαρτη ἕκαστος τῷ πλησίον' [1 Kings viii. 31:] "If any man trespass against his neighbour," that is, injure or wrong him,) yet thou must constantly forgive him; but, notwithstanding, thou mayest seek thy right from him, and if by no fair means canst obtain it, prosecute him before the magistrate for the same. Nay, thou not only *mayest*, but sometimes *must*.

(i.) *When God is concerned therein, as in the church's right.*—Thus Moses, though the meekest man upon earth, would not abate Pharaoh "an hoof; for thereof must we serve the Lord," saith he; "and we know not with what, until we come thither," that is, to Canaan. (Exod. x. 26.) A minister may yield his own, but he must not the church's, right.

(ii.) *In case of trust from others.*—Either from the public, or private persons, which allow us not to make terms of concession, but stand upon strict justice and right. Here, so far as others consent who are proprietors, we should compose, yield, and take up controversies; further we justly cannot: for in cases of trust, a man must be regulated by the will of those that intrust him; as arbitrators and solicitors for others; so executors frequently, and guardians, that are intrusted for those that are young, and not yet *sui juris*, "at age to consent and dispose of their own;" and the like cases, wherein the intrusted are responsible for what is not legally done therein; the law's determination being by all presumed just.

(iii.) *In our own personal injuries, wherein the public is concerned.*—First. When public peace, order, and government are much violated and broken thereby; as in notorious thefts, attempts of murder, and the like; which if tolerated, the world would become a great *latrocinium** and slaughter-house, wherein the longest sword and strongest arm would sweep away all; a place for beasts, but no quiet habitation for men. Secondly. When the public emolument or estimation suffers in our injuries. As magistrates, ministers, and all others employed in public affairs, when grossly defamed, so as the public is thereby reflected on, ought fairly to vindicate their integrity, so far at least that those that employ them and the public suffer not thereby. And, lastly, When thy serving the public, and, consequently, the public good, is thereby hindered. How ample is the apostle Paul in his own vindication against the false apostles' defamation of him, in his second epistle to the Corinthians, which is much of it apologetical! And, good reason; for where the person is traduced, his employment is not likely to be much effectual or advantageous to the public, and his example less; as Quintilian,† and many others, yea, constant experience tells us. In these cases thou must do thyself justice, but so moderately, as not doing to others injustice thereby.

In all other merely personal wrongs and injuries, when they are considerable in themselves, or their issue to thee, provided thou canst no other way obtain right, thou mayest publicly prosecute thine injurers, oppressors, public defamers, and the like wrongers of thy estate, reputation, and other thy temporal good things; in charity, and according to equity, equally seeking thy own right and good, not thy neighbour's wrong,

* "An asylum for robbers."—EDIT.

† *Institution. lib. ii. cap. 3.*

much less ruin and destruction. And thus for moderation towards others *in civil matters*.

2. *In religious matters.*

Although I have spoken, in the opening, [of] the nature of moderation, and *the general object*, that which might serve to direct us herein ; yet, lest I be mistaken, and thence any of you mistake your duty, I shall further open *this particular object*, by speaking to it *negatively*, about what moderation is not to be practised, and *positively*, wherein it must.

NEGATIVELY. 1. *Not in matters of faith.*—For the believing these, being not only absolutely required of every Christian, and in that measure that we cannot fully come up to, in regard of the great truth and reality of spiritual objects, and their revelation, the best being, alas ! miserably short and deficient herein ; but also internal, the profession of these being matter of practice, moderation cannot possibly here have any place, much less that which respects others.

2. *Nor in matters of moral practice ; such as the moral law requires, and grace and virtue should perform.*—For in these can be no excess, either in degree or duration. We cannot love God too much, nor, with grace, our neighbour, nor too constantly. Consider father, mother, wife, children, as moral objects, so we exceed not, as natural goods ; and so in the exercise of natural affection, we frequently, as is said before, do exceed, which is discernible especially by the end ; with grace we love them for God ; with the moral virtue of love, for the relation they stand in to us ; with the affection of love, when we sinfully over-love them for ourselves : for though the natural affection co-operates with the former, yet it solely exceeds. But it being difficult for us to discern these *formalities* in objects, and the operations of principles about them, it is our only way to have recourse to God's laws, (which, though founded upon the nature of things, yet show us plainly our duty, where we cannot discern them,) which, in all things wherein we may exceed, (as in the externals of the first table, and the duties of the second,) not only prescribe us what, and also particularly how, to act by *positive* precepts ; but, lest we should miscarry, by *negative* also, which respect the end, manner, measure, &c., of such duties, restraining and bounding us that, we exceed not. Both which are moral, and comprehended in this particular ; it being equally moral not to over-love, as to love thy neighbour ; the former being forbidden, as well by the *negative*, as the latter enjoined by *positive* precepts.

In negatives, which forbid the action *absolutely*, (as blasphemy, adultery, &c.,) no need of any such precepts to regulate us ; for the actions being not to be done, no need of direction for their manner, and consequently no place for moderation ; such being to be subdued and suppressed, not ordered or regulated, as I have formerly spoken ; and in things only *indefinitely* forbidden, (as swearing, travelling on the Lord's day, &c.,) when we are to practise them, we have the rules for positive actions, affirmative and negative, to direct us sufficiently.

3. *Nor especially in the weightier matters of the law or religion.*—I must speak a little to this ; because that may be commanded *absolutely*

in itself, which *comparatively*, when it comes in competition with other duties of greater moment, becomes only conditional. For affirmative precepts are so many, it is impossible they should bind *ad semper*; ["perpetually;"] so that when two or more duties come together, man, in regard of his finite capacity, being not able to perform them at once, must duly consider the weightiest, and that do; it being requisite, in terms of inconsistency, that the lesser always give place to the greater, and cease *pro hic et nunc*, or "for that present," to oblige us. Thus David's eating the shew-bread, and the disciples' plucking the ears of corn on the sabbath-day, when hungry, is defended by our Saviour. (Matt. xii. 3, &c.) Yea, even frequently the externals of the first table give way to the weighty exigent duties of the second; as the sanctification of the sabbath, to the defending the city in the Maccabees' case; according to that, "I desired mercy, and not sacrifice." (Hosea vi. 6.) Not only "*rather than sacrifice*," but, in such cases, "*not sacrifice*;" God dispensing with the lesser, so that its omission becomes no sin; as is clear, in our Saviour's practice, in his healing the man with the withered hand, &c., as well as in his defence of his disciples. (Luke vi. 3—10.) For that may be our duty, and necessary at one time, which, at another, when a weightier comes that should take place, ceaseth to be so, by virtue of the reason and constitution of the laws themselves, that the superior law take place.

Therefore, under the notion of moderation, to omit moral, and especially the great and necessary, duties required, and practise only the less, is pharisaical hypocrisy, not Christianity. If to do the great duties of religion God requires of us, be accounted immoderateness, let us say with David, "If this be to be vile, we will be more vile still." God's laws admit of no *επισημια*, or dispensation from us, but what he hath admitted himself: we must neither add nor detract. (Deut. iv. 2.) Thou canst neither mitigate their execution, nor any other beside himself, on thee for thy transgressing [of] them. If the wise Romans were so careful to preserve their laws from others, [rather] than the supreme dispensing with them, lest they should prove a Lesbian rule; * much more the great and wise God hath reason to keep up the authority of his laws, and expect our punctual observance of them. Moderation in religion and religious duties is the devilish precept of Machiavel, not the doctrine of the gospel or St. Paul. To engage or wade no further in religion than temporal interests will permit us to come safely again to shore, was the resolution and speech of a greater courtier of France than of heaven, and of such as resolve more to save their skins than their souls. How doth Christ every where arm those that will be his disciples against their desisting from their necessary duty, for the offence of the world! [He] is so far from concealing this, that it is the first thing he tells them of; invites them upon no other terms than the cross; tells them, they must trust him in this world, for compensating them in the future, &c. (Matt. xvi. 24—38.) And how eminent was he in the practice of this! How did the zeal of God's house eat him up, and he persist in doing the work he was sent about, notwithstanding all the offence the Jews took! And yet, in his

* *Digest. de Legibus et Senatús-Consult.*

own private concerns, how meek, gentle, patient! which none can be ignorant of that read the gospel, and which he commands us to learn of him. (Matt. xi. 29.) Great, then, is the mistake of those that think zeal and moderation, which were thus eminently centered in Christ, should be inconsistent. No lovelier match than of this blessed couple in our souls; nor of more universal use to us throughout the course of our lives, if rightly ordered: the one for God, the other for the world; *that* giving life and intenseness in our duties towards him, *this* restraining us in our personal concerns; *that* edging* and quickening us in desires, motions, and endeavours for heaven, and *this* stopping us, and retarding the wheels, when we drive too furiously after our own interests; *that*, according to knowledge, supplying us with resolution for and fervour in the *great* duties of religion, *this*, according to charity, duly qualifying them in the *less*, that our love to God and one another may walk hand in hand heaven-ward, and neither leave the other behind.

POSITIVELY. *It must, then, be in matters of opinion and Christian liberty and indifferency, as they all refer to practice.*—And here let none expect I should determine what things are only matters of opinion, liberty, and indifferency, which so much trouble the world, what not; for every one herein must, according to the scriptures, be, in some respect, judge for himself and his own practice. (1 Cor. x. 29; Rom. xiv. 4, 12.) Upon which I shall proceed and show our moderation, in *principles, passions, speeches, and practices.*

1. *We must moderate our principles or judgments concerning these, by forming them according to the nature of truths and duties.*—This is necessary, not only in regard of ourselves, (for as the judgment, such is the practice,) but others also, for the moderating our prejudices towards them. We must therefore carefully distinguish between matters of faith and necessary duty; and matters of opinion and conditional practice. For though every ray of truth be excellent in itself, and absolutely there be no *minimum in religione*, [“matter of small account in religion,”] as the Heathen said; yet, comparatively, there is great difference in truths, some differing from others, as one star from another in glory. Nor have all the like clearness of revelation, nor shine forth with that lustre as others, nor [have] all a like consequence. Some are *βαρύτερα νομῶν*, [“the weightier matters of the law,”] great in themselves, clear to us, and weighty in their consequence. (Matt. xxiii. 23.) These we must hold fast, practise carefully, contend for earnestly. (1 Tim. i. 19; 2 Tim. i. 13; Jude 3.) Others are such as, *salvâ religione*, [“without injury to piety,”] we may and do differ in, both in judgment and practice, without the endangering our happiness: “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;” (Rom. xiv. 17;) that is, in the opinion or practice of those, [which] the false apostles would have obtruded as necessary. In these things, our principles should give us leave to meet one another in our practice; keeping the unity of the Spirit in the former, and the bond of peace by the latter; as the apostle enjoins. (Eph. iv. 3.)

2. *We must moderate our passions in these, our heat and fervour for*

* In the active sense of “giving an edge or sharpness to any thing.”—*EDIT.*

them, our anger against those that differ from us in them.—In these things, wherein the way to heaven is broad enough, there may be difference without division; and let any take heed how they straiten it, taking upon them to be wiser than Christ, who, well knowing human frailty, so chalked it out to us, telling us, “He that doeth the will of his Father,” not [he] that is for or against these things, “is his brother, sister, and mother;” and, consequently, [they] should be brethren and sisters amongst themselves. It is strange to consider, how, upon principles and prejudice once sucked in, passion blinds men in their own opinions and practices, and what woful divisions have in all ages arisen thence. That the eastern and western churches, wherein were so many grave, holy, learned, and wise men, should so fall out as to make a separation; every one would be ready to think and say, “Surely it was some great matter that occasioned it:” would you know? Nothing but about the time of the observation of Easter. Though Irenæus and others were mighty advocates for peace, yet nothing would serve Victor, bishop of Rome, but exact uniformity in these indifferencies; and thence arose, about two hundred years after Christ, that great breach of unity betwixt those two great and famous churches. How do all the zeal and fervour [which] we should bestow upon the great things of religion run out at this time amongst us about these things! May not I say, *Quorsum hæc perditio?** “Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not?” Why do we stand thus busily hewing good timber into chips, and, leaving out the figures, spend our time in the bare ciphers? How many, on both sides, at this day, make it their religion to be for or against those things that they account indifferent in themselves! So true is the moralist’s observation, that “the devil always labours that mankind may either wholly neglect a Deity, or be wholly taken up in the externals of worship.” Quite contrary to scripture, that teacheth us to mind every thing as of consequence in its place; to do the great and weighty things, and not to leave the other undone. My beloved, “the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.” When Elijah, that good prophet, was discontented, and passionately requests he may die, and professeth his zeal for the great things of religion, God passeth by him: but in the great and strong wind, or in the earthquake or in the fire, the Lord was not; but “in the still small voice,” showing him and us thereby, that he is not in our passions; (1 Kings xix. 4, 10—12;) and if not for the great, how much less for these things of religion wherein the apostle’s rule for peace and edification should be observed! (Rom. xiv. 19.) God never suspended his church’s peace upon these; for if I should not love others till I knew they were of all † my opinions and my practice in these, I might perhaps never love any.

3. *We must moderate our speeches, in our discourses of, debates and contests for or against, these.*—Some speeches [which] we are too apt to,

* “What is the course of this widely-spreading ruin, and whither does it tend?”—EDIT.

† All the editions have this reading: some persons may think that it ought to be, “They were all of my opinions,” &c. But the transposition is not authorized; and perhaps the clause as it now stands correctly conveys the writer’s meaning.—EDIT.

we must wholly forbear, others we must moderate. (1.) We must beware of judging and censuring others for these. We may, in apparent transgressions of God's law, censure, upon occasion, the offenders, though not rashly, or for hypocrites, reprobates, or the like; but, for these we must not at all. (Rom. xiv. 4—18.) For, in these, through another's knowledge *that* may not be a sin in him *which* would [be] to thee; and [which] thou judgest sinful therefore in others, for want of charity. How much malice, and how little candour, do we use in this! How do we almost make it the characteristic note of Christianity, to be of such or such a way which none account essential to religion! We are apt (as those in Africa, in Tertullian's time) to account it enough, that we or others are of such a party; and to empale the church, and impropriate Christ and salvation, every one of us, to our own side: and this many times the most by the vulgar: so true is that of Seneca, *Qui pauca respiciunt, facillè pronunciant*: "Those that discern the least, being apt to judge most." (2.) We must take heed of despising and contemning others for these. (Rom. xiv. 3.) As the former, (of not judging,) so this, (of not despising,) is a necessary duty internally as to ourselves, and in our carriage and speeches especially as they respect our external duty towards others; our sinning in both arising from uncharitableness, in that to others' liberty, in this to that we judge their weakness. Our hearts and tongues are too apt to follow our judgments, and break out into these exorbitancies; but, my brethren, these things ought not so to be. Judge not, censure not, according to outward appearance or inward prejudice, but righteous and charitable judgment rather, that we mutually bear with one another in these. And when we have occasion to discourse or debate concerning what things are such or their practice, not measuring all men's judgments by the model of our own apprehensions, or, like dictators, thinking ourselves infallible, obtrude those things for necessary which, it may be, others of as piercing sight account but indifferent; or those things for *indifferent* which they reckon amongst the number of *unlawfuls*; but modestly declaring our judgments herein. For, as I told you in the entrance, I take not upon me to determine what are such, nor the magistrates' duty: (concerning which, I think, he said well and wisely, that "it were good [that] they require as little as they can," what is necessary for the safeguard of religion, as contained in the scriptures, "and [that] subjects practise as much as they can:") but only for the direction of every one how to order their conversation in the diversity of judgments that are amongst us.

4. *We must moderate our practising of these, according to the circumstances we are in, and as they are convenient and expedient for us.*— Sometimes the practice of these must be wholly waved: for the laws concerning them being *conditional* as to their doing or not doing, (though not as to the manner thereof,) and *not absolute* as of necessary duties, their practice becomes suspended on such conditions; which (beside that I formerly mentioned, namely, when they come in competition with greater matters) are especially three: in regard of ourselves, *dissatisfaction of conscience*; in regard of others, *known scandal*, and

disturbance of public settled peace. When any of these cases occur, wherein the condition on which the command is suspended is wanting, the command there, as all other conditionals, becomes negative. For we are obliged absolutely in moral duties to do them, and for the manner rightly, they being no ways suspended as to practice; but in these only absolutely for the manner, that, if we do them, we do them rightly; and conditionally, if we be satisfied in our judgments, and offend not others thereby, or disturb the public peace; the first being *knowledge in ourselves*, the other two *charity to others*, if we do them. And therefore where there is no place left for charity to others, (as in case of equal scandal on both hands,) thy doing or forbearing, there thou art at liberty. In which case, in smaller matters, that which is least observable is best; in greater matters, according to thy concernments, and charity to thyself, and for general good, if the public be interested in thee. For when we cannot know on which side our doing or not doing most evil to others lies, charity to ourselves preponderates suppositions of the issue.

But time permits me not to launch out into discourses of these cases, my subject also confining me to the exercise of moderation, which when the action is to be wholly omitted, is not required, its office being only, as I have often said, in the regulating of actions. As we must therefore use modesty in our speeches for or against these, so also in our practising them according to conveniency and expediency; not too violently running ourselves out of breath, or a-tilt at others, in our practising them; but with that equalness of spirit and candour towards others as becomes us. (Rom. xiv. 19, 23; 1 Cor. xi. 16.)

Thus I have done with the case, wherein I have been too large, I confess, in the whole, though perhaps too short in several particulars, and I hope not very tedious in any. A little more time for that which remains will give a release to my pains and your patience.

THE PERSONS.

III. For the third general, the *persons*.

1. *Who* must exercise this moderation.—And that is, in a word,—all.

2. *To whom*.—And that is also all with whom we have to do, of all ranks, degrees, and qualities, superiors and inferiors, as well as equals, of all tempers and carriages; not only to the gentle, but also to the froward; not only to friends, and those equal and fair to us; (for then what singular thing do we?) but to those that are, or we repute, our enemies, that despitefully hate us, and injuriously persecute us, as our Saviour teacheth. (Matt. v. 44.)

3. *Before whom*.—And that is expressed in the text, “all men;” our conversation in all the good and the evil things of this life, and towards all, must to all that see, and observe, or hear thereof, be known to be moderate.

REASONS.

IV. The fourth general, or the equity of this command, which I shall show for that towards persons, (waving that towards things, both in this, and [in the] application, as I told you, being by many sufficiently handled,) in three particulars:

1. *This is no other than what God himself exercises towards us.*—In all his dealings with mankind, from the fall, to the consummation and end of the world. This doth eminently and always will appear ; so that good reason we should do it, “that we may be the children of our Father which is in heaven ;” (Matt. v. 45 ;) who spareth us continually, when we offend and sin against him. If God was not more moderate than man, the world would quickly crack about our ears ; for if man had power to his will, it would scarcely be habitable ; but he that hath power, if he should but exercise it even justly, and not use moderation, it would no longer be inhabited. “Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all : shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant ?” (Matt. xviii. 32, 33.)

2. *Christ did use moderation eminently towards us, and hath left us his example to follow, in our exercising it towards one another.*—Though he was equal with God, yet he “made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross ;” (Phil. ii. 7, 8 ;) whose example how pathetically doth the apostle urge, that “nothing be done through strife or vain-glory ; but in lowliness of mind esteeming other better than ourselves ; not looking every man on his own things, but the things of others ;” (Phil. ii. 1—4 ;) likewise Matt. xi. 25, and many other places well known.

3. *Because we have all need of this from one another.*—We are all men subject to like passions ; nay, usually those that need it most from others, use it least ; such as are passionate and boisterous, and though good men, yet, as a wise man said of one of such a rugged temper, “Though he had grace enough for seven others, yet had little enough for himself.” But yet, if there be any so equal-tempered by nature, so polished by education, so ruled by grace in all things and towards all, that he hath no need of moderation from others, let him take the first stone, and violently throw at his neighbour. Read, I pray, Matthew xviii. 21—35 ; which is the great scripture for our moderation to one another, and is most ample therein, where you will see both the equity and necessity thereof to salvation.

USE.

V. For the last particular, which is the use and application of this moderation towards one another.

1. *Use of information.*—That it is not enough that we have moderation, which all pretend to, though few practise ; but we must show it ; nay, not only show it sparingly, or at some times and to some, but usually, frequently, constantly, and to all men.

2. *Therefore use of exhortation.*—Wherein let me plead with you a little for moderation towards one another, this so much a-wanting, and yet so necessary duty, besides the equitableness thereof in the reasons, consider briefly the necessity, utility, and jucundity thereof.

(1.) *How necessary.*—Are there not δυσνοητα, or “difficulties ?” Have all the like apprehensions ? Is not the balance of reason very deceitful ? Are any of us infallible ? Nay, doth not the pretence thereto declare the contrary ?

(2.) *How profitable is this to us all.*—Moderation doth not a little conduce to the health of our bodies, as the great Hippocrates and experience tell us; nothing more destroying us than not only immoderateness in things, but our passions against others; and not less to the peace and tranquillity of our minds, for the enjoyment of ourselves, and most to the serving and enjoying of God. If good Jonah be in a passion, he is not only weary of his life, but his praying is nothing but quarrelling with God. (Jonah iv.) Nay, it hath an especial promise both from God and Christ: “The meek shall inherit the earth;” (Psalm xxxvii. 11;) whom our Saviour therefore pronounceth “blessed.” (Matt. v. 5.) Whosoever, therefore, may curse them, or count them fools for the same, He having blessed them, blessed they shall be.

(3.) *How sweet and pleasant a thing is moderation, both to ourselves and others.*—It being the foundation of that sweet fellowship and communion of saints which is one great article of our creed.

Experience tells every one how sweet the fruit of moderation is, so that felicity and it (as the heathen said) constantly dwell together, in families, in nations, all the world over.* Without it, this world would be a desert, barren of all comfort, and nothing but a vast howling wilderness for bears and wolves, not civil men or Christians, to dwell in. Let, therefore, the *necessity* of moderation persuade thee, let its *profit* and *pleasure* draw and allure thee, to the practice thereof.

Lastly. To these motives, let me add that of the text, “The Lord is at hand.” For so I look upon this and all other arguments subjoined to exhortations and commands; for though they be materially reasons to convince, yet are formally motives to persuade and quicken us to the duties enjoined. Flesh and blood may say, “Others are insolent; and the more we are ready to bear, the more they are apt to injure us;” as the Heathens to the Christians of old cried, “Blessed are the poor,” and so plundered them: therefore, *ululandum inter lupos*,† “we must retaliate like for like.” O no, saith the apostle, Ὁ Κύριος ἐγγυς, “The Lord is nigh” to observe them, and how they carry [themselves] in his family; whose wisdom governs their petulancy, and whose power and goodness can overcome all their malice and unkindness;—“is nigh” to observe thee, and to help thee in his due time, if injured;—and “is nigh” also to judge both, to punish those that miscarry, (Matt. xviii. 34, 35,) and reward those that herein are his children. The not believing this, that “the Lord is at hand,” in his providence and with his judgment, is the great reason of the want of moderation in the world. Let us, therefore, all live under a continual sense of this, and all pray for and practise moderation. “Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing;” (1 Peter iii. 8, 9;) and that “the Lord is at hand,” ready to bestow it upon all those that make their “moderation known unto all men.”

* VALERIUS MAXIMUS, lib. ix. cap. 5.
wolves.”—EDIT.

† “There must be mutual howlings among

SERMON XVII.

BY THE REV. THOMAS MALLERY, D.D.*

HOW MAY WE HAVE SUITABLE CONCEPTIONS OF GOD IN DUTY ?

And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes.—Gen. xviii. 27.

THIS text presents to us Abraham's standing before the Lord, pleading for the preservation of the righteous, in the destruction of Sodom, and for the preservation of Sodom, if possible, from destruction, for the righteous' sake.

That which we have in it more especially to take notice of, in reference to this present exercise, is, with what apprehensions or conceptions of God Abraham did speak to God, did deport himself towards God, did manage this great undertaking with God : concerning which, four things present themselves for our observation :—

1. That those apprehensions or conceptions [which] Abraham had of God, did highly exalt and magnify the greatness and excellency of God in his heart : "Behold, now I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord ;" One who hath excellency, and sovereignty, and majesty, and dominion, and power, and glory.

2. That they were such conceptions of God as did humble, vilify, and abase Abraham in himself in comparison of God : "I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes ;" a sinful, weak, worthless, frail piece of vanity and mortality.

3. That they were such conceptions of God as did represent him gracious, propitious, benevolous to the creature, notwithstanding the greatness and excellency of God, and the meanness and unworthiness of the creature : thus much seems to be comprehended in the note of admiration, "behold !" O what admirable condescension is this in the great God ! O what wonderful mercy and grace is this, that such a poor vile creature should have liberty to speak to him, to parley with him !

4. That they were such apprehensions of God as did beget in Abraham a faith of acceptance with God in the performance of that duty, without which it had been dangerous presumption in him, "who was but dust and ashes, to take upon him to speak unto the Lord."

This example of Abraham I shall endeavour to draw forth for our practice and imitation. He who is made to us a pattern of faith may be to us a pattern of true worship ; and such apprehensions or conceptions

* It is highly probable that this is the person who proceeded to the highest degree in Divinity, December 1st, 1660 ; and who, in the second edition of the "Catalogue of all Graduates in Divinity, Law, and Physick," &c., Oxford, 1772, (p. 229,) is described as being a member of New College. Dr. Thomas Mallory, Dean of Chester, who is supposed to have been one of his kindred, died in 1644.—EDIT.

[as] Abraham had of God in speaking to him, such conceptions of God we are to have in our prayers and performances to him.

For which end I shall lay down this general proposition :

DOCTRINE.

That such as speak to God or speak of God, such as draw near to God or have to do with God in any part of divine worship, must manage all their performances with right apprehensions and due conceptions of God.

The truth of this general proposition I shall endeavour to manifest and make clear, by laying down four particular propositions, which must give evidence to it.

1. The **FIRST** proposition is this : *That we cannot have any true, right apprehensions or conceptions of God, except we have a true knowledge of him.*—Such as have not known God, have slighted him : “Who is the Lord,” saith Pharaoh, “that I should obey his voice? I know not the Lord.” (Exod. v. 2.) Such as know not God, nor desire to know him, are so far from drawing near to God, that they drive him as far from them as they can; they say unto the Almighty, “Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.” (Job xxi. 14.)

What counsel Eliphaz gave Job, (whom he supposed to be a greater stranger to God than indeed he was,) may be an useful instruction to us : “Acquaint now thyself with God.” (Job xxii. 21.) To know God, and to be known of God, is our highest privilege : “Acquaint thyself now with Him, and be at peace.” The reason why any are real enemies to God, is, because they know not God; and the reason why many think God is an enemy to them, is, because they are not acquainted with God so intimately as they should. “Acquaint thyself now with God,” saith he; and “thereby good shall come unto thee.” But what good? and how shall this good come? It is partly expressed in verses 22—25; but more fully in verses 26, 27 : “For then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God. Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee, and thou shalt pay thy vows.” So that, except we know God aright, and have some acquaintance with him, we cannot delight ourselves in God, we cannot make our prayer to him, nor lift up our face unto him.

2. The **SECOND** proposition is : *That we cannot know any thing savingly of God, further than he is pleased to manifest and make known himself to us.*—No man can make known God but God himself. Moses, who had seen as much of God’s glory as any man, when he desired a further manifestation of God’s glory, in a higher measure or degree than formerly he had seen, he goes to God himself for it : “I beseech thee, show me thy glory.” (Exod. xxxiii. 18.)

The great promise [which] Christ maketh to them that love him and keep his commandments, is the manifestation of himself to them by himself : “I will manifest myself to them,” for none else can. A disciple puts a question to him about it : “Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?” (John xiv. 21, 22.) We have a clear answer to this, in Luke x. 21. This very doctrine which is so much matter of indignation to the wise and prudent of the world, is matter of

rejoicing and exaltation to the Spirit of Christ. And he said, "I thank thee, O Father, that thou hast hid and hast revealed; for so it seemed good in thy sight:" hence is that of our Saviour, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee; but these have known." (John xvii. 25.)

3. The **THIRD** proposition is: *That the clearest manifestations of God to us, and such as can beget in us right apprehensions and due conceptions of him, are made out to us in and by Jesus Christ.*—"No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." (John i. 18.) Therefore no man ever did or can apprehend any thing of God truly, that is, upon a saving account, but in and by Jesus Christ.

The divine essence or Godhead "no man hath seen, nor can see" in itself. (1 Tim. vi. 16.)

Something of this eternal Godhead is manifested in *the works of creation*: "The invisible things of God, even his eternal power and Godhead," are "clearly seen," in "the things that are made." (Rom. i. 20.) But yet this knowledge of God in the creature could not bear down the vain imaginations, or idolatrous conception of God, in men's hearts; as appears in verses 21, 23.

Much of the eternal Godhead is manifested in *the works of providence*: God "doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number. Lo, he goeth by us, and we see him not: he passeth on also, but we perceive him not." (Job ix. 10, 11.) God is invisible in himself, and incomprehensible in his works; Job made it his work to trace God in his works. (Job xxiii. 8, 9.) Sometimes God was working forward, or before him; sometimes backward, or behind him; sometimes on his right hand, sometimes at his left hand. Job follows him up and down, if he might apprehend him, and the reason and design of God in all his works. But he could not perceive him; God hid himself from him.

Much more of the eternal Godhead was manifested in *his most righteous and holy law*; but the manifestations of God here affrighted them that saw it; the people cry out, "Let not the Lord speak any more to us, lest we die;" and Moses himself said, "I exceedingly fear; so terrible was the sight" of God there. (Heb. xii. 21.)

Hence it will follow, that the clearest, sweetest, most comfortable, manifestations of God to us, and such as can beget in us right apprehensions and conceptions of God, are made out to us only in Jesus Christ, "who is the image of the invisible God;" (Col. i. 15;) in whom God hath made such discoveries of himself, as can no where be seen but in Christ: he is the "express image" or character of his Father's "person;" (Heb. i. 3;) the exact resemblance of all his Father's excellences in their utmost perfections; therefore, when Philip desired him to show them of the Father, to give them a sight to satisfaction; "He that hath seen me," saith Christ to him, "hath seen the Father; believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me." (John xiv. 9, 11.)

In the works of creation, God is a God *above* us; in his works of providence, a God *without* us; in the law, a God *against* us; in himself, a God *invisible* to us. Only in Christ he is *Emmanuel*, "God manifested in our flesh," God *in* us, "God *with* us," God *for* us.

4. Hence follows the **FOURTH** proposition: *That the manifestations of God to us in Christ are those which alone can beget those due apprehensions and right conceptions of God, with which we must draw near to him, and perform all our worship to him.*

As Abraham is held forth to us a pattern of faith; so he may be to us a pattern of worship, inasmuch as all true worship to God is performed by faith, by faith in Christ. Such apprehensions, therefore, [as] Abraham had of God in his worship, such apprehensions of God we are to have in our worship; and as Abraham had those conceptions of God by faith in Christ, so can we have the like conceptions of God by faith in Christ only.

(1.) *Those apprehensions Abraham had of God did beget, as we have shown, high thoughts of God.*—With such apprehensions of God we must perform all our worship. See what high thoughts of God his people have always had in worshipping him: Nch. ix. 5, 6; 1 Tim. i. 17; vi. 16.

Low thoughts of God will ever perform but low, base, contemptible service and worship. They brought God the blind, the lame, the sick for sacrifice: Go, saith God, “offer them to your governor,” and see if he do not scorn your present, as undervalued by it! And “should I accept this at your hand,” which a petty lord will reject with indignation? “For I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts.” (Mal. i. 8, 13, 14.)

Now, such high thoughts and conceptions of God with which all our worship must be performed to him, can spring only from the manifestations of God in Christ, who is the highest revelation of the glory of God, (Isai. xl. 5,) the brightness, the effulgency of his glory. (Heb. i. 3.) When God had yielded to give Moses a sight of his glory, he put him into the cleft of the rock, (which was a resemblance of Christ,* as a learned divine hath observed,) and so made his glory to pass before him. (Exod. xxxiii. 22.) Certainly, Moses had here a sight of God’s glory beyond all that ever he had seen before. Compare with this that text: “God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ:” (2 Cor. iv. 6 :) all the other manifestations of God’s glory were but dark and dim, in comparison of those which appear in the face of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we can attain no where such high, so great, so glorious conceptions of God as in Jesus Christ.

(2.) *Abraham had such conceptions of God as humbled, emptied, and abased him in himself in comparison of God.*—And with such apprehensions of God must we perform all our worship to him. We are exhorted to “come and worship, and bow down, and kneel.” (Psalm xcv. 6.) In all worship we are to testify, as our absolute subjection to God, so our humblest submission to him. Observe what self-abasing thoughts the apprehensions of God’s goodness wrought in David when he went to worship before the Lord. (2 Sam. vii. 18—20.)

Now, such conceptions of God, which, above all others, humble, and lessen, and abase the creature before God,—they spring principally from the manifestation of God in Christ.

It is the general opinion of the Schoolmen, that the angels, in the first instant of their creation, did not enjoy that sight of God [which] we call

* DR. RAINOLDS on Psalm cx. p. 166.

“beatifical vision,” and that the angels that fell never had sight of it at all; for if they had, they could not have fallen.* But what they talk of the good angels’ meriting that beatifical vision of God, in the second or third instant of their creation, is popish foppery: divines unanimously attribute their station and stability in holiness to Jesus Christ. We may upon good grounds also attribute to Jesus Christ their first admission into the presence, sight, enjoyment of God, their state of supernatural blessedness. Pardon this digression; it is to make the way clear for the demonstration in hand, namely, that the angels, before they had a sight of God, or of themselves in Christ,—many of them waxed proud and fell; the same pride that ruined some might have ruined all; but after they had a sight of God in Christ, how humble were they! That vision spoken of, Isai. vi. 1, 2, was manifestly an appearance of the glory of God in Jesus Christ: “I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.” What the carriage of the seraphims was towards God in this his appearance is expressed: “Each one had six wings; with twain they did fly;” noting their ready execution of God’s commands; “with twain they did cover their face;” noting their natural impotency in themselves to behold the surpassing brightness of divine glory; “with twain they covered their feet,” as humbled in the sense and shame of their own creature-imperfection in comparison of the infinite purity and holiness of God.

Thus, when Moses had had a sight of the glory of God in Christ, he “made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped.” (Exod. xxxiv. 8.) Quickly is the soul humbled at the manifestations of God in Christ. In Christ we have seen God humbling, emptying, lessening, dishonouring, himself for us. (Phil. ii. 5—7.) Who can be proud, that hath had a true sight of God humbled for him?

By the manifestations of God in Christ are begotten the deepest soul-humiliations for sin: “They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, and shall be in bitterness for him.” (Zech. xii. 10.) This great sorrow was not for the piercing of the humanity of Christ, barely considered; but for piercing God in Christ, though the Godhead was not in the least passive; therefore that blood which was shed is called the blood of God; (Acts xx. 28;) and that person who was pierced [is] called, “the Lord of glory.” (1 Cor. ii. 8.) Sins against the manifestations of the love, mercy, grace, compassions, goodness, and glory of God in Christ, beget the deepest humiliation of soul in all our confessions.

(3.) *Abraham had such conceptions of God as did represent him gracious, propitious, benevolous to the creature, a bountiful rewarder of him that serveth him, notwithstanding the greatness of God, or the unworthiness of the creature.*

Such apprehensions we must have of God in all our approaches to him, in all our performances of duty and worship.

When Cain could not apprehend so much favour and grace in God as could pardon his sin and remove his punishment, he then “went out from the presence of the Lord;” (Gen. iv. 13—16;) that is, as interpreters of

* See SALKELD *de Angelis*, c. 34, 35; AQUINAS, pars i. quæst. 62, art. 1.

good note render it, he left the church of God in his father's family, the worship of God, the ordinances of God, the service of God, the profession of God, and all. Such as cannot have apprehensions of God as gracious, propitious, will not come into the presence of God.

Nor such as cannot apprehend him a bountiful rewarder of them that come to him. They bid God depart from them who question whether God can do any thing for them, or whether there be any profit in his service. (Job xxi. 14, 15 ; xxii. 17.) When those mercenary hypocrites had lost their worldly profits and preferments which they had gained by the profession of religion, when the tide was turned, and profaneness only countenanced, they cast off all, and said, "It is vain to serve God : and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinances ?" (Mal. iii. 14, 15.)

But he that cometh to God must have such apprehensions of him as render him gracious as well as glorious, merciful as well as righteous ; for we come to God sitting on his throne of grace, and we have to deal with mercy for supply to all our needs. (Heb. iv. 16.)

And "he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Heb. xi. 6.) Why did David prefer the lowest place or office in the house or church of God, a porter's place, before the highest preferments in the tents of ungodliness ? He gives the reason : "For the Lord God is a sun and shield ;" a sun to confer all good, a shield to preserve from all evil. "He will give grace and glory,"—what can a man desire more ? yet, if there be any "good thing" beside grace and glory, he will not "withhold" it ; such a bountiful master is God in his house, and such an one his servants apprehend him. (Psalm lxxxiv. 10, 11.)

Now, we cannot have right apprehensions and due conceptions of the grace, mercy, good-will, of God to us, but from the manifestations of God in Jesus Christ. It is God in Christ reconciling the world to himself, and beseeching us to be reconciled to him. (2 Cor. v. 19, 20.) When God gave Moses a sight of his glory in the cleft of the rock, "I will," saith God, "make all my goodness pass before thee ;" and he proclaimed the name of the Lord : "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin." (Exod. xxxiii. 19 ; xxxiv. 6, 7.) He presents himself in his richest robes of state, and all his attributes arrayed in a livery of grace.

Nor can we have right apprehensions of God as a bountiful rewarder of his servants, but through the manifestations of himself to us in Christ ; for we cannot expect the reward *of debt*, but *of grace*. God in Christ, and upon the account of Christ, is the most bountiful rewarder. So Christ tells his disciples : "If any man serve me, let him follow me ; and where I am, there shall also my servant be : if any man serve me, him will my Father honour." (John xii. 26.) We serve the Father in serving the Son : never was service rewarded with such honour ; "For," saith Christ, "the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God." (John xvi. 27.)

(4.) *Abraham had such apprehensions of God as did beget a comfort-*

able persuasion of faith for his acceptation with God in that his drawing near to him.

It is the mind of God that such as come to him should have such apprehensions of Him as One that will accept them, embrace them ; when he discovers nothing but wrath and displeasure against them that stand in opposition against him : “ Fury is not in me. Let” a man “ take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me ; and he shall make peace with me.” (Isai. xxvii. 4, 5.) That holy man knew that all his happiness consisted in the enjoyment of God ; therefore he said, “ It is good for me to draw near to God ;” but was he sure God would accept him ? “ I have put my trust,” saith he, “ in the Lord God.” (Psalm lxxiii. 28.)

Now, such apprehensions of God as beget a faith of acceptation with God in our approaches to him, can spring only from the manifestations of God to us in Christ. That is supposed, by judicious interpreters, to be spoken of Jesus Christ, who is said to engage his heart to approach unto the Lord ; and God saith, “ I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me.” (Jer. xxx. 21.) Christ hath boldness and liberty, full security of acceptation with God ; and hereby he hath procured us liberty, boldness, and acceptation with God. “ Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, let us come boldly to the throne of grace.” (Heb. iv. 14, 16.) “ Having boldness to enter into the holiest, and having an High Priest over the house of God ; let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith,” (Heb. x. 19, 21, 22,) for the acceptation of our persons and services : “ In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.” (Eph. iii. 12.)

From what hath been laid down, we may conclude, that such apprehensions or conceptions of God wherewith we are to draw near to God, to perform every duty, and every part of divine worship, must flow from the manifestations of God in Jesus Christ.

USE.

The use I shall make of this point is, to inform Christians how much it concerneth us to acquaint ourselves more intimately with God as he hath manifested himself in Jesus Christ ; in whom alone we can have right apprehensions and due conceptions of God ; without which we cannot perform aright any kind of worship to God.

1. *Without due apprehensions and conceptions of God, we cannot perform any part of that NATURAL worship we owe to God.*—We cannot love him, fear him, trust in him, pray unto him, praise him, &c.

2. *Without the right apprehensions and due conceptions of God in Jesus Christ, we cannot perform aright any part of his INSTITUTED worship.*

(1.) *For all the ordinances of God’s instituted worship (as the sacrifices and sacraments under the law, so the sacraments and other ordinances under the gospel) seem to have immediate relation to, and near dependence on, Christ.*—“ God manifested in the flesh.” You may observe, they consist of two parts, the one natural, the other spiritual ; the one external, the other internal ; the one, as it were, the body, the other, the soul, of

it ; the one representing the humanity, the other the divinity, of Jesus Christ : so that every ordinance of worship is, as it were, a representation of Christ incarnate.

(2.) *The divine essence or Godhead in Jesus Christ seems to be the proper object of all worship.*—The Schoolmen have concluded, (to which I find our learned and pious divines have given their assent,) that “the essence of the Godhead is the primary and proper object of worship.”*

This divine essence is wholly in Christ : “In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” (Col. ii. 9.) In that body or human nature of Christ the fulness of the Godhead dwelt not locally, as *locatum in loco*, or *contentum in continente*,† but by personal union. And the divine essence, as it is in Christ, seems to be the proper object of all gospel-worship : it was so under the law in types and figures ; and such was the tabernacle and temple-worship in its spiritual notion.

The tabernacle or temple was God’s habitation or dwelling-place. (Psalm lxxvi. 2.) There was the only place of public worship. (Psalm xxix. 2.) No sacrifice was to be offered in any other place. There the spiritual worshippers had by faith a sight of God, and communion with God. (Psalm lxiii. 2 ; lxxviii. 24.) Towards God in this place they were to make all their supplications and prayers wherever, or in what country soever, they were. (1 Kings viii. 29, 30. See Dan. vi. 10.) Now the tabernacle and temple were a type of the body or humanity of Christ, as himself explaineth ; (John ii. 19 ;) in which the divine glory of the Godhead dwelt. “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,” (or “tabernacled in us,” as the Greek word signifies,) “and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father.” (John i. 14.) Therefore, what the tabernacle or temple was to them under the law, that is Christ Jesus to us under the gospel. And as God manifested to them in the temple was the proper object of worship to them, so God manifested to us in Christ is the proper object of worship to us.

(3.) *The flesh or humanity of Christ is the medium or mean by which we have access to God in all our worship.*—This is expressed : “Having boldness to enter into the holiest,” where the divine glory appeared between the cherubims on the mercy-seat, “by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.” (Heb. x. 19, 20.) By the “flesh” of Christ here, I do not understand his natural flesh barely considered as such, but in that notion as it is to be understood in John vi. 53—56 ; where Christ, speaketh of eating his flesh and drinking his blood unto life ; where Christ’s flesh, by a metonymy of the cause for the effect, signifies the righteousness, satisfaction, reconciliation, grace, peace, glory, [which] Christ procured for us by the obedience he performed to God in that flesh. By the flesh of Christ in this sense, we have access to God in all our worship.

Yet is not the consideration of Christ’s natural flesh altogether useless unto this end ; for whereas we are apt to frame images and similitudes of God in our minds, the right apprehensions of God dwelling in the human

* DR. OWEN’S “Communion with the Holy Ghost,” chap. viii.

† “Confined in one place, or contained in a container.”—EDIT.

nature of Christ, who is the true "image of the invisible God,"* may be effectual to remove all other images and likenesses of God out of our minds. But then we must be careful that we do not terminate our conceptions of God in the man Christ, or in the manhood of Christ; for then we shall make the human nature of Christ the image of the Godhead, and that would be an idol. But when we have taken up an apprehension of the humanity of Christ, if our conceptions pass "through the veil into the holiest," if we are led thereby to worship that Godhead that dwells in it, this is a right conception and true worship.

The humanity of Christ was to the Godhead as a back of metal to a crystal glass: look on such a glass in its pure substance, and it is transparent; put a back of metal to it, and it gives a beautiful reflex. So, if we take up conceptions of the Godhead in its pure essence, it is transparent: if we consider God infinite, almighty, immense, eternal, what is this to the creature, or our comfort? If we consider him in his power, justice, wisdom, holiness, goodness, truth, what is this to us? Yea, all these are against us as we are sinners. But if we take up conceptions of God in all these attributes as they appear to us in Christ, as they are backed with the humanity of Christ, so they make a most comfortable reflex upon us. In this glass we behold "the glory of the Lord," and "are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. iii. 18.) In this glass we behold that wisdom by which we are instructed, that righteousness by which we are justified, that power by which we are preserved, that grace by which we are chosen and called, that goodness by which we are relieved and supplied, that holiness by which we are transformed, that glory to which we shall be conformed.

The conclusion of all this is, that our right apprehensions and due conceptions of God must spring from the manifestations of God in Jesus Christ.

* MR. BYFIELD'S Comment on 1 Peter ii. 12, p. 410.

SERMON XVIII.

BY THE REV. THOMAS LYE, A. M.

HOW ARE WE TO LIVE BY FAITH ON DIVINE PROVIDENCE ?

Trust in him at all times, ye people.—Psalm lxii. 8.

THESE words are a serious and pathetic exhortation to a most important and spiritual duty. In them we observe,

1. *The duty proposed and enjoined.*—That is, trust :* “Trust in him ;” confide in, or securely repose yourselves upon, him, for assistance, support, direction, protection, provision, deliverance, complete salvation.

2. *The subjects of this trust.*—Or the persons on whom this duty is incumbent, and from whom it is expected ; that is, “ye people.” Wherein we note,

(1.) *The echphonesis* that lies couchant in the words, which is apt to excite intention and affection : as if he had said, “O ye people.” So the Arabic translator renders the word, *O populi*.

(2.) *The universality of its concernment*, to all people.—It is an indefinite expression, and holds parallel with an universal : “Ye people :” † as if he had said, “O all ye people, of what sex, age, degree, condition, relation soever.” Thus the Septuagint render the word, *πασα συναγωγη λαου*, and the Vulgar [Latin] follows them ; that is to say, *Omnis congregatio populi*. ‡

(3.) *The speciality of its obligation*, on some people, more than others, —It is true, all the families of the earth must trust in God ; but there is a *μαλιστα δε*, § “a more special tie” that lies on the household of faith, the commonwealth of Israel, and assemblies of the saints ; those that are the dearly beloved of God’s soul. These are strongly obliged, beyond and above all others, to trust in the Lord their God. Thus the Chaldee paraphrase, *Popule, Domus Israel* : and the Psalmist elsewhere, “O Israel, trust thou in the Lord. Ye that fear the Lord,” whether Jew or Gentile, “trust in the Lord.” (Psalm cxv. 9, 11.)

3. *The grand object of this holy trust*, or the person in whom this trust must be reposed ; namely, “in him,” that is, the Lord Jehovah ; as appears from verse 7. “In him, and in him alone.” || It is an exclusive participle : “In him, and in nothing beside him.”

4. *The modification of this trust*, or the circumstance of the time when, and the duration how long, this trust is to be exerted.

(1.) *Quando* : When must we trust ? “At what time ?”

SOLUTION. At all times, *omni hora*, “every hour :” so the Syriac version. As a true friend is to love, so a sound believer is to trust, at all times. (Prov. xvii. 17.)

* א פשוט *Confessus est. Fiduciam posuit.* † מ ע *Singulare collectivum pro plurali, per synthesisin Hebraeis usitatissimam.*—MOLLERUS. “A noun of multitude in the singular number, instead of the plural, according to a syntactical form very common with the Hebrews.”—EDIT. ‡ “The whole congregation of the people.”—EDIT. § “Yet more particularly.”—EDIT. || *Ei, id est, Ei soli.*—JUNIUS et TREMELLIUS.

(2.) *Quamdiu* : The duration of this trust : "How long?"

SOLUTION. "All the day long." (Psalm xlv. 8.) All our lives long : all the days of their appointed time must God's Jobs not only "wait," but "trust," till their change come. Yea, "for ever;" (Isai. xxvi. 4;) nay, "for ever and ever." (Psalm lii. 8.)

Having thus unlocked the cabinet; the jewel or truth that we find laid up in it, is this; namely:—

OBSERVATION.

It is the great indispensable duty of all believers, at all times to trust in the Lord, and in him alone.

All that I have to say on this practical truth, I shall couch under these six generals:—

I. 'Or*i*, That trusting in God is a believer's duty.

II. What it is to trust in God.

III. What is and ought to be the grand and sole object of a believer's trust?

IV. What are those sure and stable grounds, those corner-stones, on which the faithful may firmly build their trust in God?

V. What are those special and signal seasons which call aloud for the exerting of this trust?

VI. How faith or trust puts forth, exerts, demans, bestirs itself in such seasons.

I. 'Or*i*, *That trusting in God is a believer's duty.*—The Lord is, or at least he should be, "the confidence* of all the ends of the earth." (Psalm lxxv. 5.) "Trust in the Lord with all thy heart," (Prov. iii. 5,) on the arm of his power; (Isai. li. 5;) "on the word of his truth,"† in his faithful promises, in his freest mercies; (Psalm lii. 8;) in his full salvation. (Psalm lxxviii. 22.)

II. *What it is to trust in God.*

SOLUTION 1. *Negatively.*—To presume on God, to tempt God, to conceive false hopes of God's gracious favour and protection, whilst in a way of sin, is not to trust in God. To gallop down a precipice, and to say confidently, "I shall not fall;" to cast ourselves down headlong from a pinnacle of the temple, and yet to expect the protection of angels; (Matt. iv. 5—7;) to "teach for hire," and to "divine for money," and yet to "lean upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord among us? None evil can come upon us;" (Micah iii. 11;) to bless a man's self in his heart, and to say he shall have peace, though he walk in the imaginations of his evil heart; (Deut. xxix. 19;) all this is not to trust in God, but to "trust in vanity," (Job xv. 31,) and to spin "the spider's web." (Job viii. 13, 14.)

2. *Positively.*—And so more *generally*, and more *particularly*.

(1.) *More generally.* To trust in God, is to cast our burden on the Lord, when it is too heavy for our own shoulder; (Psalm lv. 22;) to dwell "in the secret place of the Most High," when we know not where to lay our heads on earth; (Psalm xci. 1;) to "look to our Maker," and

* *Metonymiâ adjuncti, actus pro objecto.* "By a metonymy of the adjunct, the act is here put for the object."—EDIT. † *In verbis ejus.* So the Chaldee Paraphrast renders our text.

to "have respect to the Holy One of Israel;" (Isai. xvii. 7;) to lean on our Beloved; (Canticles viii. 5; Isai. xxxvi. 6;) to stay ourselves, when sinking, on the Lord our God; (Isai. xxvi. 3;) in a word, trust in God is that high act or exercise of faith, whereby the soul, looking upon God, and casting of itself on his goodness, power, promises, faithfulness, and providence, is lifted up above carnal fears and discouragements, above perplexing doubts and disquietments, either for the obtaining and continuance of that which is good, or for the preventing or removing of that which is evil.

(2.) *More particularly.* For the clearer discovery of the nature of divine trust, we shall lay before you its *ingredients, concomitants, effects.*

(I.) *The ingredients of trust in God.*—They are three:—

1. *A clear knowledge or right apprehension of God, as revealed in his word and works.*—"They," and they only "that know thy name will put their trust in thee." (Psalm ix. 10.) The grand reason why God is so little trusted, is because he is so little known. Knowledge of God is of such necessity to a right trust, that it is put as a *synonyme* for trust: "I will set him on high, because he hath known," that is, trusted in, "my name." (Psalm xci. 14.)

2. *A full assent of the understanding, and consent of the will, to those divine revelations, as true and good, wherein the Lord proposeth himself as an adequate object for our trust.*—This act the Greeks express by the word *πιστευειν* the Latins, by *credere, fidem habere, testimonium recipere*; the Hebrews, by *אמין*: all importing "believing" or "giving credit to." Thus the Israelites are said to "believe the Lord and his servant Moses;" (Exod. xiv. 31;) and thus the soul that trusts looks upon the words of promise, *ως πιστοι, και πασης αποδοχης αξιοι*, "as faithful and worthy of all acceptance." (1 Tim. i. 15.)

3. *A firm and fixed reliance, resting, or recumbency of the whole soul on God.*—Or a firm persuasion, and special confidence of the heart, whereby a believer particularly applies to himself the faithful promises of God, and certainly concludes and determines with himself, that the Lord is able and willing to make good to him the good promises he hath made. This indeed is the very formality of trust; one of the highest and noblest acts of faith. This is that which the Greeks term *επιστοιθεις*, and which Paul so frequently useth in several of his epistles. Thus Abraham is said to be "strong in faith, giving glory to God;" and was "fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able" and willing "to perform." (Rom. iv. 20, 21.) This the Latins call *fiducia*; ["trust;"] the Schools, *fiducia fidei*; ["the assurance of faith;"] the Hebrews, by a word that signifies "to lean on," or "cast the weight of one's body on, for support and stay." Thus, "The house of Jacob shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth." (Isai. x. 20.)* Thus for the ingredients of trust.

(II.) *The concomitants of an holy trust.*—And these are,

1. *An holy quietness, security, and peaceableness of spirit springing from a full persuasion of our safety.*—By this the soul is freed from

* *נשען, firmiter innitotur, incumbet.*

distracting cares and jealousies about our state and condition. Hence that of the prophet: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." (Isai. xxvi. 3.)* An holy security, I say, not a carnal security like theirs mentioned, in Zeph. i. 12, that were "settled on their lees: that said in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil;" nor like that of the scarlet whore, that says in heart, "I sit a queen, and shall see no sorrow." (Rev. xviii. 7.) No, but an holy security; as we have it Prov. xviii. 10: "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it," that is, by the feet of trust, "and is safe:" † as safe as a man judgeth himself to be, when got into an high tower, well fortified, and fears not the sharpest or swiftest darts that can be shot against him, safe as the chickens take themselves to be, "when housed under the covert of their dam's wing;" or safe as the manslayer is from the pursuit of the avenger when lodged in a city of refuge. (Psalm xli. 1.) ‡ Thus, when a man trusts in God, he doth sweetly acquiesce and repose himself in God's bosom, troubles himself no more, casts no jealous thoughts about his condition. Thus David resolves: "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety," or "in trust." (Psalm iv. 8.)§

2. *A steadfast, well-grounded hope.*—Trust and hope are *gemi*, "twins," born together, bred up together. Hence [they are] often conjoined in scripture: "Thou art my hope, O Lord God; thou art my trust from my youth:" (Psalm lxxi. 5:) and, "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is." (Jer. xvii. 7; Psalm cxix. 42, 43, 49.) Hence the Septuagint usually render the word put for "trust," as also in the text בַּטְחוּ, Ελπιστατε, and Arias Montanus, and divers others, *Sperate*, "Hope ye in the Lord." Hope, then, is that *fidus Achates*, "the faithful companion," of trust. Now, in this hope, there are two things:—

(1.) *A holy and confident expectation and looking out after God's gracious presence.*—Trust believes, and hope expects, to enjoy what God has promised. Thus the prophet: "I will wait upon the Lord, and I will look for him." (Isai. viii. 17.)|| Hope looks, and looks out, as expecting God's appearing; not as Sisera's mother once did, who looked for a victorious success, and expected that her son should have returned a triumphant conqueror, richly laden with spoils and booty, whenas the wretch lay bleeding at the feet of Jael; (Judges v. 28;) nor like those sinful, miserable people, who "looked for peace, but," behold, "no good came." (Jer. viii. 15.) No: such a vain, groundless hope draws a blush into the cheek, and covers the face with confusion. But this is a hope which makes not ashamed; (Rom. v. 5;) whose earnest expectation shall assuredly end in sweet fruition.

* שלום *pacem* שלום *pacem*. † ונשגב *Et exaltabitur*. "And shall be exalted."
—EDIT.

Celsus ab alto

Infra te cernes hominum genus.—SILIUS ITALICUS, lib. xv. 106.

"Shalt see, when stooping from thy lofty seat,
The common race of men beneath thy feet."—EDIT.

‡ *Ut pulli sub alis gallinae.* § לבטח *confidenter*. || וקייאתי *et expectabo eum*.

(2.) *An humble and constant waiting on God's leisure.*—Looking out, and waiting on God, both put together: "Therefore I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me." (Micah vii. 7.) Faith gets up to the top of its watch-tower, looks out, sees whether relief be coming. But suppose none appears in ken;* suppose help deferred: yet now it waits, and tarries God's time. Faith knocks at heaven's gate; no answer from within. Faith knocks again; still there is silence. However, faith concludes, "My God will hear, yea, and answer too; but it is fit I should wait his time." "The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry," I must and will "wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." (Hab. ii. 3.) Thus David: "My soul, wait thou only upon God;" or, keep thou silence unto God; "for my expectation is from him." (Psalm lxii. 5.) David, when he shuts his mouth, opens his ear; waits and listens what God will say, and concludes, *contra Gentes*,† "The Lord will," in his own best time, "speak peace." (Psalm lxxxv. 8.)

3. *An humble, holy, and undaunted confidence.*—Thus Solomon: "In the fear of the Lord," in the filial, awful, reverential fear of God, "there is strong confidence,‡ and his children shall have a place of refuge." (Prov. xiv. 26.) This holy confidence is nothing else but faith pegged up to its *E-la*.§ A confident soul moves in an higher orb than other saints, leads up the van of the militia of heaven. As patience is nothing else but hope lengthened; so confidence is nothing less than faith strengthened, the very spirits, the mere elixir, of faith; which carries with it,—

(1.) *Christian courage and fortitude, opposite to carnal fear and despondency of spirit.*—"Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength." (Isai. xii. 2.) "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord." (Psalm cxii. 7; xci. 5; xlvi. 1—3.) Thus David, undauntedly: "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalm xxvii. 1.) His confidence in God quite extinguished in him all base, sneaking fear of man. (Psalm lvi. 4.)

(2.) *Christian boldness and adventurousness, opposite to cowardice.*—Holy confidence steels the heart of Joseph of Arimathea to go in *τολμησας*, boldly to "Pilate, and to beg the body of Jesus." (Mark xv. 43.) This [it] was that enabled David to encounter Goliath, that made

* Within sight.—EDIT. † "Against the Gentiles," in opposition to the wishes of the Heathen by whom the Israelites were oppressed.—EDIT. ‡ *יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ* *fiducia fortitudinis*. "The assurance of strength."—EDIT. § An allusion to a stringed instrument, stretched up to *e-la*, one of the highest notes in the scale of music.—EDIT. || *Beatus ille, qui undique petitus, firmius stetit: qui exhausit demonis pharetram, nec concedit, imò ne de gradu quidem tantisper motus est.*—NIC. "Blessed is that man who, though attacked on all sides, has maintained his ground with firmness, has exhausted the devil's quiver of all its arrows, and who yet exhibits no symptoms of surrendering; but who, on the contrary, does not recede a footstep from the favourable position which he had previously occupied." The first syllable only, in the name of the author of this passage, is given by Mr. Lye, like many others in the volume; and, not being able to verify the quotation, I have no means of knowing whether the author's name was Nicæus, Nicephorus, Nicellus, Nicolaus, or Nicetas.—EDIT.

him dare to take a bear by the teeth, and a lion by the beard. It is for sluggards to say, "There is a lion without;" (Prov. xxii. 13;) but let a believer that makes God his trust but once know his duty, it is enough: he will, with a courageous and undaunted mind, cheerfully undertake it,* and commit both himself and the success to God. (Acts iv. 13, 19; xx. 22; xxii. 13; Jer. xvii. 7, 8; Dan. iii. 17, 18; Esther iv. 16; Heb. xi. 34—40.)

(3.) *Holy and humble boasting, opposite to sinful concealing of what God hath done for us.*—A believer that dares not boast of himself or riches, of any thing within, that "has no confidence in the flesh," yet dares boast of his God. "In God we boast all the day long, and praise thy name for ever." (Psalm xlv. 8.) Thus the church challenges the eyes and ears of all that were round about her; saying, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us." (Isai. xxv. 9.)

(III.) *The effects of a holy trust.*—And they are such as these:—

1. *Ferrent, effectual, constant prayer.*—Thus, in our text: "Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your hearts before him." (Psalm lxii. 8.) While Joshua is in the valley, conflicting with Amalek, Moses gets him up into the mount to pray. (Exod. xvii. 9, 11; Psalm lxxxvi. 1, 2; 1 John v. 14; Psalm xviii. 2, 3.) Moses knew full well, that as prayer without faith is but a beating of the air, so trust without prayer was but a presumptuous bravado. He that promises to give, and bids us trust his promises, commands us to pray, and expects obedience to his commands. He will give, but not without our asking. (Ezek. xxxvi. 37; Psalm l. 15.)

2. *Sincere, universal, spiritual, cheerful, constant, obedience.*—They that expect to enjoy what God promises, will be sure to perform what God enjoins. Holy trust takes it for a maxim, that he that contemns the commands of a God as his Sovereign, has no share in the promises of a God as all-sufficient. If we trust in the Son with a faith of confidence, we shall be sure to honour the Son with a kiss of obedience. (Psalm ii. 12.) Thus David: "I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments." (Psalm cxix. 166.) As faith shows itself by its works, (James ii. 18,) so trust discovers itself by its obedience; especially in the use of such means as God prescribes for the bringing about his appointed end. If Naaman will prove that he trusts the God of Israel, he must go and wash in Jordan. True, indeed, the waters of Bethesda could not cure, unless the Angel stirred those waters; and yet the Angel would not cure without those waters. Paul trusted that himself, and the men with him, should all get safe to land; but then it was with this proviso, that they all kept in the ship. (Acts xxvii. 24, 31.) God's means are to be used, as well as God's blessing to be expected.

3. *Soul-ravishing, heart-enlivening joy.*—Thus David: "I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation." (Psalm xlii. 5.) If the Lord be our trust and strength, he will be (he cannot but be) our joy and song. (Isai. xii. 2.) "In whom believing," (let me add,

* *Invictus ad labores, fortis ad pericula, rigidus adversus voluptates, durus adversus illecebras.*—AMBROSIIUS. "He remains unconquered by labour, armed with fortitude amid all perils, rigid against pleasures, and severe against all enticing allurements."—EDIT.

in whom trusting,) "ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." (1 Peter i. 8.) Thus trust and joy are linked and lodged together in that: "The righteous shall be glad in the Lord, and shall trust in him; and all the upright in heart shall glory." (Psalm lxiv. 10.) See to what a cue of joy Habakkuk's trust had raised him. (Hab. iii. 17—19.) The soul that truly trusts cannot but sit down under God's "shadow with great delight: his fruit" must needs be exceeding "sweet to our taste." (Canticles ii. 3.) Is Jonah "exceeding glad" with the shadow of his gourd? (Jonah iv. 6;) how, then, must a saint needs rejoice in the protection of a God! And thus I have despatched the *second* general proposed; namely, a full discovery of the nature of trust in God, what it is, what [are] its ingredients, concomitants, effects. I proceed to the *third*, namely,

III. *What is, or at least ought to be, the grand and sole object of a believer's trust?*

SOLUTION. The text and doctrine tell us, it is the Lord Jehovah, and he alone. He is, or at least should be,

1. *The GRAND object of a believer's trust.*—"Put your trust in the Lord." (Psalm iv. 5.) In whom should a dying creature trust, but in a "living God?" (1 Tim. iv. 10.) In stormy and tempestuous times, though we may not run to the bramble, yet we must to this Rock, for refuge. (Isai. xxvi. 4.) When the sun burns hot, and scorches, a Jonah's gourd will prove insignificant: no shadow like that of a God's wings. (Psalm xxxvi. 7.)

2. *The SOLE object of a believer's trust.*—Holy trust is an act of worship proper and peculiar to a holy God. No creature must share in it: whatever we trust in, unless it be in subordination unto God, we make it our God, or at least our idol. True trust in God takes us off the hinges of all other confidences: as we cannot *serve*, so we cannot *trust*, God and Mammon. There must be but one string to the bow of our trust; and that is the Lord. More particularly, we may not, must not, repose a holy trust in any thing besides God, either *within us*, or *without us*.

(1.) *Not in any thing within us.*—And so,

(i.) *Not in our heads, understanding, wisdom, policy.*—No safe leaning to our own understanding. (Prov. iii. 5.) Carnal wisdom is but an *ignus fatuus*, that misleads into a bog, and there leaves us. "Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee." (Isai. xlvi. 10.) He that is wise in his own eyes, will be found at last to stand in his own light.

(ii.) *Not in our own hearts.*—It is folly, the height of folly, to trust those lumps of flesh, that are so deceitful, so desperately wicked. (Prov. xxviii. 26; Jer. xvii. 9.)

(iii.) *Not in our bodily strength and vigour.*—Those hands, that are now able to break a bow of steel, will eftsoons hang down and faint. (Eccles. xii. 1—3.) The most brawny arm [will be] utterly unable to ward off, or wrestle with, the assaults of death or sickness. Those legs, which now stand like pillars of brass, will shortly appear to be, what indeed they are, but sinking pillars of mouldering clay. Raise the

strength of man to its highest ἀκμή, [acmé,] yet even then it cannot make so much as one hair either white or black. (Matt. v. 36.)

(iv.) *Not in any natural or acquired excellences.*—Be they what they will, or should they be far more than they are. Should all the lines of created perfections meet in one man, as in their centre; yet surely that man, in that his best estate, is altogether vanity, (Psalm xxxix. 5,) and therefore not to be trusted in.

(2.) *Not in any thing without us.*—To trust in any creature without us, is to feed not so much on bread as ashes, (Isai. xlv. 20,) or rather on gravel-stones, which may easily break the teeth, but can never fill the belly.

(i.) *Not in riches.* (Jer. ix. 23.)—No, not in the abundance of riches. (Psalm lii. 7.) Though riches increase, our hearts must not be set upon them. Riches, when in their fullest flow, are most uncertain. (1 Tim. vi. 17.) “Wilt thou,” therefore, “set thine eyes on that which is not?” (Prov. xxiii. 5.) Though they seem to have a being, yet they are indeed but fair-faced nothings, gilded vanities. Or, suppose they are, yet the next moment they may not be; like birds on the wing, ready to take their flight. Treasures, then, are not to be made our trust. They cannot “profit in the day of wrath.” (Prov. xi. 4.) Nay, if we trust in our riches on earth, never expect a portion in heaven. Sooner shall the camel go through the eye of a needle, than such an one pass through the gate of glory. (Mark x. 24, 25.)

(ii.) *Not in idols.* (Psalm cxv. 8.)—Baal, Dagon, Ashtaroth, and the whole pack of those senseless abominations, cannot save themselves; much less can they preserve their bewitched votaries.

(iii.) *Not in man, or human allies or assistances.* (Psalm lxii. 9, 10.)—Egypt and all her chariots, when trusted in, prove not supporting-staffs, but broken reeds, which run into the side and bear not up, but wound the body. (2 Kings xviii. 24; Jer. xlvi. 25.) If the shadow of Egypt be our trust, the end of that trust will be our confusion. (Isai. xxx. 2, 3.) Might we build the nest of our trust on the sons of men, reason would bid us pitch on the topmost branches of the tallest cedars; I mean those earthly gods, the princes of this world. But, alas! these, though styled gods, must die like men, (Psalm lxxxii. 6, 7,) yea, like other men. Their breath is in their nostrils; they soon return to their dust, from whence they sprang; and then all their thoughts, and, with them, our hopes on them, perish. (Psalm cxlvi. 4.)

(iv.) *Not in any thing clad in mortal flesh.*—He that presumes to make flesh his arm, will be sure, at a long run, to find the Father of spirits his foe. “Thus saith the Lord: Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm.” (Jer. xvii. 5.) And thus we have despatched the third general.

IV. *What are those sure and stable grounds on which saints may firmly and securely build their trust on God?*

SOLUTION. There is nothing which the eye of faith or reason can discover in God, but the arm of trust may safely lean on. But more particularly,—

1. *God's almighty arm and power.*—The Lord hath an arm, an out-

stretched arm; (1 Kings viii. 42;) a hand, an omnipotent hand; a hand that spans the heavens, (Isai. xl. 12,) that stretcheth them out as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in. On this Almighty arm may believers trust. (Isai. li. 5.) The Lord is a strong and mighty God, (Psalm xxiv. 8,) that created the world with a word, (Psalm xxxiii. 9,) and can as easily speak or look it into its first nothing. He is a wonder-working God. (Exod. xv. 11.) [אֱלֹהֵי שָׂדֵי] *El-shaddai*, (Gen. xvii. 1.) "Able to do," *ὕπερ ἐκ περισσοῦ*, "far more exceeding-abundantly than we can ask or think." (Eph. iii. 20.) His vast power far exceeds our wants, prayers, thoughts, all that we can need, beg, imagine. We want much, can ask great things, can think greater. Our imaginations exceed our expressions; yet God's power far exceeds both. Open we our mouths never so wide, his open hand can more than fill them. (Psalm lxxxi. 10.) God's power, then, is a most firm basis, whereon to fix our trust. "Trust ye in the Lord Jehovah; for in the Lord Jehovah is עוֹלָמִית עֹז־יְהוָה everlasting strength."* Creature-props are not able to bear the weight and stress of an immortal soul. They are sandy foundations, apt to sink and crumble under us. But an almighty God is a Rock, a Rock of Ages; on which he that builds his confidence, though the winds blow, the rain descends, and the storms beat upon him, yet shall he not fall. (Matt. vii. 25.) On this power of God Abraham built his transcendent faith, (Rom. iv. 21,) and David his impregnable trust. (2 Sam. xxii. 2, 3.)

2. *God's infinite and free goodness, mercy, and bounty.*—"The Lord is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works." (Psalm cxlv. 9.) "With the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption." His bowels are as tender as his arm is strong. He is no less willing than able to relieve; therefore, "let Israel hope in the Lord." It is the Psalmist's inference. (Psalm cxxx. 7.) "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." (Psalm ciii. 13.) That father that sees his child in want, and pities not, and pitying, if able, relieves not, forfeits the name of *father*, and may write himself, not *man*, but *monster*. It is enough for our heavenly Father, that he knows we have need of any thing. (Matt. vi. 32.) The Lord is all that to his people, yea, and infinitely more than that, which *Isis Mammosa* was to the Egyptians: "a God full of dugs;" and whilst he hath a breast, let not saints fear the want of milk. The character that the Heathens idolatrously gave their Jupiter, may *far more truly* (indeed *only*) be ascribed to our Jehovah: He alone is that *Εὐς τε, Μεγας τε*, that *Optimus Maximus*, "the Best, as well as the Greatest, of Beings." Goodness is God's darling attribute; it is that which he looks on as his glory. "I beseech thee," saith Moses, "show me thy glory." (Exod. xxxiii. 18.) "Moses, thy prayer is heard, and it shall be answered." But what says God in answer to this request? "I will make all my goodness pass before thee." (Verse 19.) The thing requested was a view of God's glory: the thing promised was a discovery of God's goodness: which hints unto us, that, however all the attributes of God are in themselves glorious, yet the Lord glorieth most in the manifestation

* *Petra sæculorum*. ["The Rock of Ages."] Isai. xxvi. 4.

of his goodness. So, then, though we have nothing to plead or prevail with God, as in or from ourselves, yet there is an orator in his own bosom that will certainly and effectually intercede for our relief; and that is his goodness. This was that, that buoyed up David; this was the cordial that kept him from fainting: "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." (Psalm xxvii. 13.)

3. *God's many, choice, exceeding great, and precious promises.*—These are the flagons that faith keeps by her, the apples [which] she hath hoarded up in store, to revive and quicken in a day of swooning. Who will not trust the word, the promise, the protest of the King of kings? God hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." (Heb. xiii. 5.) The Greek here hath five negatives, and may thus be rendered: "I will not, not leave thee; neither will I not, not forsake thee."* "Five times," as one observes, "is this precious promise renewed, that we may suck and be satisfied with the breasts of its consolations, that we may milk out and be delighted with the abundance of its glory." Leave us God may, to our thinking; but really he doth not, will not. Or if he leaves us for a time, a small moment, yet he will not forsake us utterly. Desert he may, but not disinherit; forsake us, it may be, in regard of vision, not of union; change his dispensation, not his disposition. Dost thou pass through the waters? Thy God hath promised to be with thee: he was so with Noah, and the Israelites in the Red Sea and in Jordan. Dost thou walk through the fire? Warmed thou mayest be, "thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." (Isai. xliii. 2.) The three children were living monuments of this truth; God "sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him." (Dan. iii. 28.) The Lord hath graciously engaged to "create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Sion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day," for her protection, and the shining of a flaming fire by night," for direction; to be a shield and sun, yea, and "a shadow from the heat, and a place of refuge, and a covert from storm and from rain." (Isai. iv. 5, 6.) In such promises as these holy David trusted: this was his comfort in his affliction, the word of his God quickened him. (Psalm cxix. 49, 50.) God's promises are some of his bonds and obligations whereby he is held firmly bound to believers. *These* faith makes bold to put in suit, to plead the security that God hath given. "Lord," saith faith, "here is thy bill obligatory; behold, see here thy hand and seal. Discern, I pray thee, whose are these, the signet, and bracelets, and staff." Thus David: "Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope." (Psalm cxix. 49.) The word of promise was all that David had to show; and he counts that enough to set his faith on work.

4. *God's inviolable, steadfast, never-failing faithfulness.* (1 Cor. x. 13.)—God's goodness inclines him to make good promises, and his faithfulness engages him to make those promises good. If the word be once gone out of his mouth, "heaven and earth shall sooner pass away, than one

* Ου μη, ουδε ου μη. "Never, in no wise, in no case; whatever I do, I will not do this, whatever shift I make."

iota of that word fail." (Luke xxi. 33.) This faithfulness of God Joshua asserts to the height: throws down the gauntlet, and does, as it were, challenge all Israel to show but that one thing that God had failed them in, of all the good things that he had promised. (Joshua xxiii. 14, 15.) If God in very faithfulness afflicts, (Psalm cxix. 75,) to make good his threatenings; much more in faithfulness will he preserve, to make good his promises. God never yet did, never will, fail that man that puts his trust in him. (Psalm ix. 10.) It is true, God may frown on, yea, and severely lash, a Solomon, a Jedidiah, when they break his statutes, and keep not his commandments: "Nevertheless, his loving-kindness he will not utterly take from them, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail." (Psalm lxxxix. 33.) God never yet brake his word by deceiving; nor cracked his credit by compounding, for less than was due, with any mortal living. So faithful is God, so true to his word, that let God but promise a victory, and Jehoshaphat will sound an *Io Triumphe* before the battle. (2 Chron. xx. 17, &c.) And let but him threaten Babylon's ruin, and the angel cries, "Babylon is fallen." (Rev. xiv. 8.) Thus then God's faithfulness calls for saints' trust. (Psalm cxlvi. 5, 6.)

5. *God's most holy, wise, powerful, gracious providence.*—This also is a prop for trust. It is the Lord that "gives unto all life, and breath, and all things." It is "in him we all live, and move, and have our being." (Acts xvii. 25, 28.) "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding" of and providing for "the evil and the good." (Prov. xv. 3.) This Divine Providence the Egyptians acknowledged, and held forth in that significant hieroglyphic of a sun portrayed in a ship tossed with wind and water. (EUSEBIUS *De Prepar. Evang.* lib. iii. c. 3.) God hath an eye in the wheels and motions of all inferior creatures. (Ezek. i. 18, 20.) Ουδεν ακρονοητον ουδ ημελημενον παρα τω Θεω παντα σκοπει ο ακοιμητος Οφθαλμος.* Hence that holy symbol of our English Josiah, Edward VI.; namely, a celestial globe, with this motto, *Nihil sine Deo*, ["Nothing without God."] It is the Lord that feeds the sparrows that have no barn, and the ravens that have no granary. It is he that so gorgeously clothes the lilies that have no distaff. Not a bird descends from his perch, not an hair falls from the head, without his Father. "Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows." (Matt. x. 29—31.) Where God sends mouths, he will not grudge meat. And he that feeds the young ravens, will not starve the young herons.† Faith contemplates what God doeth, recounts what God hath done; and from thence concludes what God will do. Hence it prays with the Psalmist: Psalm xvii. 7, and xxxi. 19. Faith reflects on former experiences, its own and others; and by the holy skill it hath in the physiognomy of providence, clearly reads and collects what God will do, in what God hath done. It casts its eye on,

(1.) *The experiences of others.*—And judges herself to have an interest

* "There is in God no deficiency of provident solicitude or tender care concerning any of his creatures. That benignant and ever-wakeful Eye brings fully within the range of its observation all things that exist."—EDIT. † [The saying of] Mr. Heron, when dying, to his wife, somewhat desponding by reason of her many children, and small provision for them.

in those very providences of grace which they enjoyed. Thus the church, a thousand years after that heavenly combat betwixt God and Jacob, tells us, that God found Jacob "in Bethel, and there he spake with us," (Hosea xii. 4,) several ages before they were born; yet *with us*, that is, with Jacob for our good, on our account, for our interest. Faith remembers, there was once a Joseph in a prison, a Jeremy in a dungeon, a Daniel in a den, a Peter in chains, a Hezekiah on a supposed death-bed; and Providence assisted them: why not me? * "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him;" (Psalm xxxiv. 6;) and, "Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them." (Psalm xxii. 4, 5.) "Lord, thou art 'the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;' why, then, may not I expect salvation from thee?"

(2.) *Its own experiences.*—Thus David confidently replies to Saul, that thought him no match for Goliath: "The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this uncircumcised Philistine;" (1 Sam. xvii. 37;) and thus Paul: he had the sentence of death upon him; the black stones were thrown down into the urn against him; but his God had [delivered] and did deliver, and therefore in him he trusts, "that he will still deliver." (2 Cor. i. 10.)

6. And, lastly, I argue from *those dear relations in which the Lord is pleased to stand and own towards his people.*—These cry aloud for their trust in God. Is he not our Creator? (Isai. xl. 28.) Hath he built the house, and will he not keep it up? He that made us will assuredly take care of us. We may safely give up ourselves, our trust, our all, to him, who hath given us ourselves and our all. This relation the apostle makes the ground of trust. (1 Peter iv. 19.) Is he not our Redeemer? Will he part with his blood for us, and yet deny us bread? Is he not our Father? (Isai. lxiii. 16.) Are we not his children? And shall he not provide for his own children? (1 Tim. v. 8.) Hath the great God put such a philostorgy, or "natural affection," into the bear, pelican, dolphin, lioness, [and] eagle, towards their young, and shall not he much more carry his own upon eagles' wings? (Exod. xix. 4.) Is he not our King, Head, and Husband? In a word, all those relations wherein we stand to God, or God to us, are stable grounds of our trust upon him, and strong engagements of his assistance to, and providence over, us. Thus much for the *fourth* general. The *fifth* followeth:—

V. *What are those special and signal seasons which call aloud for the exerting of this divine trust?*

SOLUTION. This holy duty is indeed never out of season. So much the original word עֵת for "time" imports. True, indeed, our Saviour saith, and saith truly, "My time," that is, my time of discovering myself to be a wonder-working God, "is not yet come." (John vii. 6; ii. 4.) Yea, but all time, in respect of trust in God, is an appointed, yea, and an

* ARROWSMITH'S ["Chain of Principles,"] chain 401, 416; JENKIN "on Jude," part i. p. 286. † א תִּפְּץ *tempestive eloqui*. "To speak a word in season." See Isai. l. 4.—EDIT.

accepted, time. The wise man tells us, there is an appointed time for every purpose under heaven : a time to kill and to heal, to plant and to pluck up, to weep and to laugh, to get and to lose, to be born and to die. (Eccles. iii. 1, &c.) In all these, trust in God is not, like snow in harvest, uncomely, but seasonable, yea, necessary. There may be indeed a time when God will not be found, but no time wherein he must not be trusted. *Nullum tempus occurrit regi*, saith the law. Let me add, *Nec fiducia*,* and it is sound divinity : “The time of trusting in God cannot be lapsed.” But, more expressly, there are some special instances and nicks of time for trust :—

1. *The time of prosperity*.—When we sit under the warm beams of a meridian sun ; when we “wash our steps in butter, and our feet in oil ; when the candle of the Lord shines on our tabernacle ; when our mountain is made strong :” now, now is a time for trust ; but not in our mountain, (for it is a mountain of ice, and may soon dissolve,) but in our God. Halcyon days to some are temptations to security ; but to saints, times for trust ; to carnal persons, lures and decoys† to pride, but to believers, seasons for dependence. Now it is that a saint owns God as the author, (not chance, or his own wit and industry,) and implores his God to be the preserver and blessing, of his enjoyments. When our cistern is full, our trust must be not in it, but [in] the fountain. (Canticles iv. 15.) At our fullest tables, we must acknowledge that, as bread is the staff of our lives, so that staff cannot support unless held in God’s hand. (Isai. iii. 1.) God’s blessing is the only stay of that staff of bread. Man lives not by bread alone ; indeed not so much by bread, as by the word of blessing that proceeds out of God’s mouth. (Matt. iv. 4.)

2. *The time of adversity*.—This also is a seasonable time for trust ; when we have no bread to eat, but that of carefulness ; nor wine to drink, but that of affliction and astonishment ; no, nor water either, but that of our own tears. Now is a time, not for over-grieving, murmuring, sinking, desponding, despairing, but for trusting.

In a tempest, then, a believer thinks it seasonable to cast anchor upward. Thus did good Jehoshaphat : “O our God ! we know not what to do : but our eyes are unto thee.” (2 Chron. xx. 12.) Thus David : “What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.” (Psalm lvi. 3.) Times of trouble are proper times for trust, be the trouble either spiritual or temporal.

(1.) *Spiritual trouble*.—Doth the child of light walk in darkness ; in such midnight darkness, that he hath no light ? Now is a time to “trust in the name of the Lord, and to stay himself upon his God.” (Isai. l. 10.) Doth God take Job by the neck, and shake him even to pieces ? Doth he set him up for his mark, and shoot such arrows into his soul, that the poison of them drinks up his spirits ? Why now, when God is killing, yea, though he kills, Job will trust. (Job xiii. 15.) His

* “The king’s rights suffer no injury from lapse of time. Neither does trust or confidence in God suffer any.”—EDIT.

† Instead of *decoys*, all the editions have *DUCKOVS*, a word which was in common use prior to the Revolution, and which bore the same signification as that which, in more modern days, is conveyed by the compound word, *decoy-ducks*.—EDIT.

faith lives in the midst of death. Is a godly Heman so scared with the terrors of God, that he is even distracted? though he be at his wits' end, yet [he is] not at his faith's end. Heman will pray, and trust, and hope even now, in this his day of spiritual trouble. (Psalm lxxxviii. 13, 15.)

(2.) *Temporal.*—Is it an evil time? (Micah vii. 7—9;) a time of personal distress and visitation? a time of wants or weakness? Doth the barrel of meal begin to fail, and the cruse of oil sink? Is there no “fruit in the vine?” Doth “the labour of the olive fail?” “Are the flocks cut off from the fold, and are there no herds in the stall?” Now, now is a time for Habakkuk to believe, believing to trust, and trusting to “rejoice in the Lord, and to joy in the God of his salvation.” (Hab. iii. 17, 18.) Throw a Jonah overboard into the raging sea, bury him alive in the whale's belly, let the floods compass him about, and all God's billows pass over him; yet even then Jonah remembers God, and with the eye of his trust dares look towards his holy temple. (Jonah ii. 1—9.) Let holy Paul have the sentence of death upon him, yet he will trust; (2 Cor. i. 9, 10;) and so will David, though he walk in the very “valley of the shadow of death.” (Psalm xxiii. 4.) Be the trouble what it will be, faith knows what to do, namely, to fly by the wings of trust, to Him that is the hope of Israel, and his Saviour in the time of trouble. (Jer. xiv. 8; Isai. xxxiii. 2.) Trust in God in a sad condition is a believer's *alexipharmacum præstantissimum*, “his choicest medicine, preservative, antidote against faintings, swoonings, sinkings.” It is like that *corneum Indorum poculum*, which Philostrates speaks of; (lib. iii. c. 1;) namely, “a goblet out of which the Indian princes drank,” and then looked on themselves as secure from the assaults either of fire, sword, or poison.

VI. And, lastly: *How faith or trust exerts, puts forth, demans, and bestirs itself in these signal seasons.* (Psalm xxxvii. 39.)

(I.) *In times of fulness and prosperity.*—When it goes well with us and ours; when the candle of the Lord shines on us and our tabernacle; when our lines fall in pleasant places, and our God makes us to lie down in green and fat pastures: when we are as the wings of a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold; when, with Judah, we wash our garments in wine, and our clothes in the blood of grapes: now, now, is a fair opportunity for faith or trust to exert itself, yea, and to appear gloriously. And, indeed, it requires no less than the utmost of faith's skill, to steer the soul handsomely in this serene and smooth-faced calm. And so,

1. Faith or trust looks upward, and there fixeth its eye *on God* and on the things of God.

(1.) *On God.*—And so holy faith delivers herself, in such *effata* [“expressions”] as these; namely,

(i.) “*How full soever my large cistern be, it is the Lord, and the Lord alone, that is the grand Fountain, or rather Ocean, of all my enjoyments.*—‘All my springs are in him.’ (Psalm lxxxvii. 7.) All my streams are from him.” Faith freely and humbly acknowledges, that all outward as well as inward blessings, that “every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.” (James i. 17.) Every good gift; not only those transcendents of grace and glory, of

union with Christ here and full fruition of Christ hereafter ; but also all temporal good things, be they more or less, even to an hoof or shoe-latchet, faith confesseth that it hath nothing, but what it received from God. (1 Cor. iv. 7.) "As God in mercy hath promised, so God in bounty hath given me these earthly enjoyments." (Matt. vi. 33 ; 1 Tim. iv. 8.) "It is the Lord that gave," saith believing Job ; (Job i. 21 ;) riches, honour, advancement, promotion, they all come of God ; "not from the east, nor west, nor south ;" that is, neither this way nor that way, nor any way of man, but "God putteth down one, and setteth up another." (Psalm lxxv. 6, 7.) Faith knows that as all good things come from God, so all success in business, all blessings on our labours, callings, affairs, is only from the Lord. It is the Lord alone that makes whatsoever Joseph doeth to prosper. (Gen. xxxix. 23.) The disciples may fish and tug all night ; but till Christ comes, they can catch nothing. (Matt. iv. 19.) It is the blessing of the Lord alone that maketh rich. (Prov. x. 22.)

(ii.) "Since all that I have is received of God, I may not, I must not, boast, crack, glory, as if I received it not. (1 Cor. iv. 7.)—Let others," saith faith, "thank their own labours, wisdom, policy, parts, wickedly 'sacrifice to their own nets, and burn incense to their own drags, as if by them their portion were fat, and their meat plenteous.'" (Hab. i. 16.) Faith leaves it to the atheist to bless himself in being *fortunæ suæ faber* ;* or, with that dunghill wretch who, being excited to thank God for a rich crop of corn, replies, "Thank God shall I! Nay, rather thank my dung-cart!" Faith is of another kind of complexion. "O far be it," saith she, "that I should so much as in my heart say, that 'my power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth.'" (Deut. viii. 17, 18 ; Dan. iv. 30.)

(iii.) "Inasmuch as all that I have is from God's blessing and bounty, this whole all shall be for his praise and glory.—Since all my enjoyments are of him, it is but just that all should be to him. (Rom. xi. 36.) He that is the Alpha, 'the beginning' of all my mercies, shall be the Omega, 'the end' and centre of all my services.† These earthly treasures," saith faith, "shall be improved for high and heavenly ends: not thrown into the sink of a voluptuous paunch, not so much [as] on a hawk or hound, but laid and locked up in God's treasury ; that is, the backs and bosoms of Christ's poor members." Faith is resolved to improve Satan's greatest weapon (that is, the world and its sweetest enjoyments) against himself: it will break his hairy scalp with his own cudgels, turn his own cannons against him ; that is, by reducing all its worldly enjoyments into a serviceableness and subordination for the glory of God. Faith disdains to take that coarse way of curing the lust of the eyes by plucking them out, and to slake the thirst of riches by a profuse casting of it into

* "The fabricator of his own fortune."—EDIT.

† *Diis te minorem quod geris, imperas :*

Hinc omne principium, huc refer exitum.—HORATII *Carm.*, lib. iii. od. vi. 5, 6.

"You reign by bowing to the gods' commands :

From this your State arose, on this your glory stands."

Translation of Bentley's Horace. (Lintot, 1712.)

the sea, to conquer the world's honour and applause by turning hermit, and hiding of its head in a lonely cave. No; faith prepares the soul for a nobler way of victory, not by slighting the bait, but by digesting of it into food, by using of creature-comforts, as so many rounds in Jacob's ladder, to mount itself and others the nearer heaven. Faith considers that the King of heaven expects his toll, tribute, custom, out of all our receipts; that where much is given, there more is required; (Luke xii. 48;) and justly fears, lest, if it should not pay its God the interest, it should, and that justly, forfeit and lose the principal. Therefore, the more it is dunged, and dressed, and pruned, the more abundant clusters it brings forth, and such as are acceptable to the palate of the vine-dresser. (Isai. v. 2, &c.)

(iv.) "*Because all my enjoyments proceed from God's free-gift, or rather his loan, therefore they must and shall be readily surrendered to God's call.*—If God will continue these outward comforts," saith faith, "I will own and improve his bounty; and yet if he thinks fit to call-in his debts, I will revere, and submit to his sovereignty." Let God give, and give abundantly, Job will bless. Let God take, Job knows he takes but his own, and on that account will bless him then. Job has learnt to bless a *taking* as well as a *giving* God. (Job i. 21.) "Here are lands, houses, children, parents, dear enjoyments indeed; but yet such as are not my fee-simple," saith faith; "I am only a tenant at will. All these, yea, and much more, nay, life, and all must and shall be denied, resigned, when God calls for them." (Luke xiv. 33.) A gracious heart knows that he cannot possibly make so much of his worldly enjoyments any other way as by offering them up for Christ's sake, and resigning them to Christ's call. Mary's ointment could never have been carried to a better market than it was, when poured so freely on her dear Saviour's head. Be a believer's enjoyments what they will, never so great, never so precious, suppose his vessel laden with pearls; yet even these shall [be thrown] overboard, rather than hazard the wreck of faith or a good conscience. (1 Tim. i. 19.)

(v.) "*Now I enjoy most from God, now, even now, it is necessary that I should trust mostly, yea, wholly and only, in God.*"—Thus Jehosaphat; (2 Chron. xx. 12;) thus Asa, though he had an army almost innumerable, no less than five hundred and fourscore thousand men, all of them mighty men of valour; yet he looks on all of them as ciphers, as nothing without a God; and therefore now puts forth his trust in God, and flies to him for help. (2 Chron. xiv. 8, 11.) Here, indeed, was a noble trust. It is difficult to trust God in our greatest wants, but more difficult to trust him in our greatest weal. It was a brave act of trust in Job, when he resolves to trust in God, though he killed him; (Job xiii. 15;) a high attainment in Paul, when he had nothing, to be as one that possessed all things. Yea, but, when God quickens, when we are full and abound, when our cup runs over, now to trust in a God, and not in our cup; when our sails are filled with a trade-wind, then to confide only in our Pilot; when we have all things, and yet then to look on the creature as utterly insufficient, and to lean wholly on God's all-sufficiency:—this speaks the most spiritual and refined trust; and yet this is that which

faith exerts in its fullest enjoyments. Where mercy abounds, trust superabounds; reputed the creature as nothing at all, and esteeming God as all in all.

(vi.) "These outward enjoyments are indeed sweet; but my God, the author of them, is infinitely more sweet.—They have all, even the most defecate of them, a tang and smack of the cask and channel through which they come. *At, at, dulcius ex ipso fonte!** A single God is infinitely more sweet than the enjoyment of all created good things that come from him. Though, indeed, I can smile, when my corn and wine and oil increaseth, and bear a part with my valleys, when they stand so thick with corn, that they even laugh and sing; alas! this, without the enjoyment of a God, is but a mere *risus Sardonicus*; † the leaping of the head after the soul is gone. True, indeed, these are some of God's love-tokens; but what are these to his person and presence? These, indeed, are rich cabinets; but, O the light of his countenance! that, that is the jewel! (Psalm iv. 6.) In having these, I can say, with Esau, 'I have כֶּבֶד *much!*' But, give me Him, I can exult and, triumphing, say, with Jacob, 'I have לֵב *all.*' (Gen. xxxiii. 9, 11.) These are some of his left-hand favours; some of his bottles of milk and gifts; a fit portion for Ishmael and the sons of Keturah. But it is an Isaac's inheritance, waters of the upper fountains, [which] my soul thirsts after; those right-hand blessings, his presence, his soul-ravishing presence, in which there is 'fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore.' (Psalm xvi. 11.) These may serve for my comfortable passage; but nothing but himself can content and satisfy for my all-sufficient portion; (Psalm lxxiii. 26;) according to that, [in] Psalm xxxvi. 8. He alone can fill up all the gaping chinks and chasms of my soul. He is my 'sun and shield;' (Psalm lxxxiv. 11;) my root and branch; (Isai. xi. 10;) my 'foundation and corner-stone;' (Isai. xxviii. 16;) my 'sword and shield.' (Deut. xxxiii. 29.) He only can answer all my desires, all my necessities. *Deus meus et omnia*, 'My God and my all.'" Thus faith fixes its aspect on God.

(2.) *On the things of God.*—And so faith concludes: "I have higher and nobler projects, designs of deeper concernment, ‡ than to sit down, ingulf and please myself in these poor, earthly, drossy, dirty things here below.§ I have many corruptions within,—these are to be mortified; many temptations without,—these are to be resisted; many sweet motions and whispers of the Spirit,—these are to be cherished; many weak graces,—these are to be strengthened; many personal, relational duties,—these are to be performed; in a word, an effectual calling and election to be made sure,—this, above all, is to be regarded." Faith discovers a world beyond the moon, and trades thither; leaving the men of the earth to load themselves with clay and coals, faith pursues its staple commodity, and traffics for grace and glory. Thus David, when he had branded the worldling for "disquieting himself in vain, for

* "But how much more delightful is it to drink at the fountain itself!"—EDIT.

† "Hysterical laughter."—EDIT.

‡ *Altiora sapio.*

§ *Excelsa piæ mentis*

generositas supra omnem rerum humanarum speciem erecta. "The elevated generosity of a pious mind is raised far above all the specious variety of human affairs."—EDIT.

heaping up riches, and knowing not who shall gather them," with an holy disdain turns his back upon the world, as not worth his thoughts; saying, "And now, Lord, what wait I for?" (Psalm xxxix. 6, 7.) As if he had said, "It is true, I have riches, and honour, a crown, a kingdom; but is this the portion I could be content to sit down with? No, no; 'My hope is in thee. Deliver me from all my transgressions.' (Verse 8.) Let them that love the world enjoy it; but, Lord, pay not my portion in such adulterate coin, but in pardon of sin, and peace of conscience: this, this is that I wait for." Thus Luther, having a rich present sent him, "professed, with a holy boldness to God, that such things should not serve his turn." * He was not taken with pebbles; his nobler soul flew higher, and was fixed on pearls.† It is God's favour that the subjects of the King of heaven desire rather than his preferment; like him that preferred Alexander's kiss before a great sum of money, given by Alexander to another. Thus faith looks upward on God, and the things of God, and acts accordingly.

2. *Faith or trust looks downward, on its fullest and sweetest temporal enjoyments.*—And so it accurately weighs these enjoyments in the balance of the sanctuary, and so makes a just estimate of them as to their worth and value. Faith knows that generally men look at the things which are seen; and therefore the things that seem best, that glitter most, are the best delights of most of the children of men, the desire of their eyes, the joy of their hearts. These they over-rate; and not only esteem them highly, but adore them superstitiously, as a God, or their chiefest good. But now faith brings these to the touchstone and standard, and there interprets them as they are, according to their just value, finds them to be but the delights of sense, *fortunæ ludibria*,‡ the sports of nature, the trials of human folly, at the best but helps of human frailty. Particularly, faith passes a twofold judgment on them, *negative and positive*.

(1.) **NEGATIVE.** And so faith concludes,

(i.) "*These, and all such like, earthly enjoyments, never yet of themselves benefited any man for heaven.*—True, some things are so good in themselves, that he that hath them cannot but be good, and the better for them: such as are the grace of God to us, and the graces of the Spirit in us. These find us evil, but make us good; but no man was ever made good, merely by riches and worldly wealth. These, indeed, have found some really good, and made them less good than they were; and have found many seemingly good, whom they have made stark naught. How often hath a fat preferment spoiled a good preacher, and caused him, (with him,) *when the fish is caught, to lay aside his net!* Usually the more we have of this world, the less we mind the world to come. Our place in Paris makes us forget our portion in paradise. That earth which we tread under our feet, gets up into our hearts, and makes them more earthly than the earth we tread on.

(ii.) "*This high mountain, on whose top I stand, adds not a cubit to my stature in God's eyes.*—God values not, as men do, by the rate- or

* *Valde protestatus sum, &c.*
never stoops to catch flies."—EDIT.

† *Aquila non capit muscas.* "The towering eagle
‡ "The mockery of fortune."—EDIT.

subsidy-book. 'Not many wise, not many noble, not many rich,' &c. ; 'but God hath chosen the poor of this world rich in faith.' (James ii. 15.)

(iii.) "Therefore my true blessedness doth not, cannot, consist in the fullest confluence of these worldly enjoyments.—I may not, I dare not, with that rich fool, sing a requiem to my soul, and bid it take its ease, for it hath goods laid up for many years. (Luke xii. 19.) Here is not my rest." Faith, like the turtle, finds no rest for the sole of its foot even in a deluge of creature-comforts. Suppose a believer's "sons as plants grown up in their youth," and his "daughters as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace;" suppose his "garners full, affording all manner of store," his "oxen strong to labour," and his "sheep bringing forth thousands and ten thousands in the streets;" though the blear-eyed world should pronounce him happy that is in such a case; how would the believer immediately reply with the Psalmist's *epanorthosis*, (or, "in express contradiction rather to so gross a mistake,") "Yea, happy is that people," they rather, or they only, are blessed, "whose God is the Lord." (Psalm cxliv. 12—15.) Thus faith concludes negatively.

(2.) POSITIVELY. That divine lesson which Solomon, the wisest of mere men, had by such difficult and costly experiments at length learned, faith hath got by heart; and in the face of the world concludes with him: "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." (Eccles. i. 2.) The assertion is repeated, as in Pharaoh's dream, to show its certainty, and the term of "vanity" doubled, to manifest the transcendency and multiplicity of this vanity. There is a fivefold vanity, which faith discovers in all its creature-enjoyments; namely, in that they are,

(i.) *Unprofitable*.—Thus the Preacher: "What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?" (Eccles. i. 3.) *What profit?* Why, he hath filled his hands with air, he hath "laboured for the wind." (Eccles. v. 16.) Just so much and no more than Septimius Severus got, who, having run through various and great employments, openly acknowledges: *Omnia fui, sed nihil profuit*.^{*} Creature-comforts are not bread. (Isai. lv. 2, 3.) They profit no more than the dream of a full meal doth an hungry man, or that feast which the magician made the German nobles, who thought they fared very deliciously, but, when they departed, found themselves hungry.† In a day of wrath, sickness, death, can riches profit? (Prov. xi. 4; Ezek. vii. 19.) Just as much as a bag of gold hung about the neck of a drowning man.

(ii.) *Hurtful and pernicious*.—Solomon observed, that "riches were kept for the owners thereof to their hurt." (Eccles. v. 13.) Hence it is that Agur prays against them: "Give me not riches, lest I be full and deny thee;" (Prov. xxx. 8, 9;) as if abundance made way for atheism, in those that know not how to manage it. Maximilian II. was sensible of this, who refused to hoard up a mass of treasure; fearing lest, by falling in love therewith, of a sovereign lord, he should become a

^{*} "In all public employments I have borne a conspicuous part; but, in the end, none of them yields me relief or satisfaction."—EDIT. † CORNELIUS A LAPIDE, *Comment.* in Isai. lv. 2.

servant to the mammon of unrighteousness. Now, the hurtfulness of creature-comforts shows itself in several particulars:—

First. *Faith knows that they are apt to puff up and swell the heart with the tympany of pride.*—Hence that great caution, Deut. viii. 10—20. The usual attendants on riches are pride and confidence. Hence Paul to Timothy, “Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded.” (1 Tim. vi. 17.) How apt are men to be lifted up with the things of this lower world! Riches at once sink the mind downward in covetous cares, and lift it upward in proud conceits. To see a man rich in purse, and poor in spirit, is a great rarity.

Secondly. *Faith knows, that great enjoyments are great snares, and powerful temptations, to many other lusts.*—Such as are covetousness, lust, luxury, security, &c. The plenty of places oft occasions much wickedness in persons. Rich Sodom was a nursery of all impiety. Jeshurun, when he waxeth fat, is apt to kick. (Deut. xxxii. 15.) And when Israel is fed to the full, then she commits abomination. (Ezek. xvi. 49, 50.)

Thirdly. *Faith is sensible how apt temporal comforts are to make us slight spiritual graces, and heavenly communion.*

[i.] *Spiritual graces.*—Our digging for silver and searching for gold makes us too, too apt to neglect that which is better than thousands of gold and silver, even durable substance. The radiant splendour of these things here below dazzles our eyes to those things above. While Martha is much cumbered about many things, she forgets to act Mary's part, and to pursue that one thing necessary. (Luke x. 41, 42.) How often do outward comforts entangle the spirits, weaken the graces, strengthen the corruptions, even of good men! There was a serious truth in that atheistical scorn of Julian, who, when he spoiled the Christians of their outward estates, told them, he did it to make them “more ready for the kingdom of heaven.” Many really godly lose much in spirituals by gaining much in temporals; they have been impoverished by their riches. They are indeed rich in grace, whose graces are not hindered by their riches; whose souls prosper when their bodies prosper. To see the daughter of Tyre come with her gift; to see the rich among the people entreat Christ's favour, and give up themselves to him;—this indeed is a rare sight. (Psalm xlv. 12.) To be rich or great in the world, is a great temptation. When we flourish in the flesh, we are apt to wither in the spirit. The scorching sunbeams of prosperity too, too often cause a drought, and then a dearth, a famine in the soul, and make us throw off those robes of righteousness which the wind of affliction makes us to gird on the faster. The world is of an encroaching nature: hard it is to enjoy it, and not come into bondage to it. Let Abraham cast but a little more than ordinary respect on Hagar, and it will not be long ere she begin to contest with, yea, crow over, her mistress.

[ii.] *Spiritual communion with God.*—Worldly comforts are always dogged with worldly business; and this too often eats up our time for communion with God. It is a very difficult thing to make our way into the presence of God through the throng of worldly incumbrances.

Worldly employments and enjoyments are exceeding apt, not only to blunt, but to turn, the edge of our affections from an holy commerce with God. Faith knows what a task, what an Herculean labour, it is, after it hath passed a day amidst worldly profits, and been entertained with the delights and pleasures [which] a full estate affords, now to bring a whole heart to God, when at night it returns into his presence. The world in this case doeth by the saint, as the little child by the mother: if it cannot keep the mother from going out, it will cry after to go with her. If the world cannot keep us from going to religious duties, it will cry to be taken along with us; and much ado there is to part it and our affections. Thus faith discovers the danger and hurtfulness of creature-enjoyments. But, more than this:

(iii.) *Faith knows that these outward things are perishing as well as unprofitable and hurtful.*—Mutable, inconstant, “fading vanities,”* bubbles, pictures drawn on icy tablets, grass growing on the tops of houses. Faith hath seen and heard the providence of God ring the changes of men’s estates all the world over: now, exalted and lifted up; within a while, depressed and cast down: now, honourable; eftssoon, abased; the rich becoming poor, Naomi becoming Mara, hills levelled into valleys, and great mountains becoming plains. That spoke of the wheel which is now aloft, as the captive king told his conqueror, is quickly turned to the ground and brought low. The best earthly estate is in itself a tottering estate. No mountain so strong but may soon be moved. (Psalm xxx. 6, 7.)† What we call *substance*, faith knows is but “a shadow,” and hath no continuance. There is no assurance in any earthly inheritance. How soon doth God sequester it from us, or us from it! These externals cannot be held with all our care, nor kept with all our policy and power. The best of earthly excellences may soon be taken from us. Job’s crown quickly falls off from Job’s head. (Job xix. 9.) Not only is “all flesh grass,” but “all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field.” (Isai. xl. 6.) Not only is man of a brittle constitution in nature, but all the perfections which he hath, be they either moral or civil accomplishments, on this side grace, are brittle too. Reason, scripture, experience, abundantly attest this truth: “The fashion of this world,” saith the apostle, “passeth away.” (1 Cor. vii. 31.) As fashions in the world alter and change every day, so doth the fashion of this world. Creature-comforts are “not so properly possessions as pageants, which, whilst they please us, pass away from us in a moment.”‡ Those we have here are running banquets, delicate, and served-in with state, but soon over.

(iv.) *Faith makes yet a farther discovery, and finds that these creature-comforts are false, deceitful, lying vanities.*—Which appears,

First. *In the report they make of themselves, and of their own worth.*—If you look upon the bill of the creature, it puts down not only an hundred for fifty, but a million for a mite. Like the title-pages of some empty pamphlets, more in them than in the whole book.

* *Felicitas umbratilis.* † *Summis negatum est stare diu.* ‡ *Quod miraris pompa est. Ostenduntur istæ res, non possidentur, et dum placent transeunt.*—SENECA, *Epist.* 110.

Secondly. *In the promises which they make to us.*—It promises that in the enjoyment thereof we shall be happy; whereas we are both poor and miserable in the fullest possession of the creature, unless God himself be our portion. It promises to ease us of our cares, yet it doth but multiply them. Like drink to a dropsy-man, so far from slaking, that it inflames the thirst. Riches are not food, but fuel, to our desires; and are so far from satisfying, that they but widen the throat. They do not allay our appetite as bread doth, when received and digested; but inflame it, as oil doth, when cast into the fire. It promiseth to protect us, but performs no more than the great tree doth from a soaking and lasting storm. It promises to continue with us; though father and mother forsake, yet it will not: whereas it usually proves like Absalom's mule,—then apt to go from under us when we most need it. Thus the creatures are deceitful, that is, they are objectively deceitful; through the deceitfulness of our hearts and lusts, we are deceived about them, if not by them. They frustrate our expectation, when our hopes of advantage by them are at the highest; seldom or never make good to the enjoyer what they promised to the expectant. Like Jonah's gourd, when most needed, then they wither; like Esther's invitation of Haman to a banquet with the king, which filled his bladder with windy hopes, but soon after ended in his ruin.

(v.) And lastly. *Faith knows that creature-comforts are unsatisfying vanities.* (Isai. lv. 2.) This the philosopher saw by the dim eye of nature, concluding, that the world, being orbicular, (of a round figure,) could never fill up the corners of a heart, which is triangular. The creature were a god to us, if it could do this to us. Kindle thirstings it may, but quench none; can beget a thousand fears and cares, but quiet none. Here "the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing," (Eccles. i. 8,) the soul still crying out, "Give, give." It is God alone [who] satisfies. (Psalm xxxvi. 8, 9.) It is only a God in Christ that can give the soul rest. (Matt. xi. 29.) God would not rest from his works of creation till man was formed. Man cannot rest from his longing desires till God be enjoyed; and then, and not till then, can a holy David sing a lullaby to his soul: "Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." (Psalm cxvi. 7.) Faith, having thus expressed her judgment concerning the true nature and worth of creature-comforts, concludes her work in three resolves:—

First. "*In the midst of these my enjoyments, I must take heed that my heart sits loose from them.*"—These handsome pictures must be only hanged on the wall, not glued to it. Though riches increase, I may not, must not, set my heart on them. Thus the Psalmist, Psalm lxii. 10. Use them I may, love them I may not. (1 John ii. 15, 16.) My affections may perchance pitch, but must not fix, on these things below. (Col. iii. 2.) Look upon them I must with an holy indifferency, and use them as if I used them not, possess them as if I possessed them not. (1 Cor. vii. 31.) The zeal of my spirit must be for heaven and heavenly things. My soul must press hard only after God, as David did. (Psalm lxiii. 1, 8.)"

Secondly. "*Though I have all these comforts, yet I may not, must not, inordinately, immoderately, carnally delight and rejoice in them.*"—Thus

the apostle enjoins: 'It remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it.' (1 Cor. vii. 29—31.) As we are apt to *underdo*, to do too little, in heavenly things; so we are apt to *overdo*, or to do too much, in worldly things."

Our two great failings are [these], namely, that we do but make use, as it were, of those things [which] we should enjoy, and that we enjoy those things [which] we should only make use of. O, the divine art of holy moderation in the use of our sweetest worldly enjoyments is known and practised by few!

Thirdly and lastly. "*As I do not over-love them, nor inordinately delight in them,*" saith faith, "*so, least of all, may I put the least trust or confidence in them.*"—I must not in the least lean upon them; not say to gold, to fine gold, 'Thou art my confidence;' (Job xxxi. 24;) that is, My soul may not securely rest and rely on gold, or golden enjoyments; as if these could stand by me, when all friends fail; as if these would not see us want any thing, nor suffer us to be wronged as long as they last, which, God knows, is but for a moment. All these enjoyments can neither make me better nor wiser, nor render my life more safe and comfortable; not sanctify our souls, nor satisfy our desires: 'Therefore,' saith faith, "I will trust in God only, whom I can never trust too much; not in the creature, which I can never trust too little."

(II.) *In times of sadness, afflictions, wants, sufferings, miseries.*—When the hand of the Lord is gone out against us, and he greatly multiplies our sorrows; when he breaks us with breach upon breach, and runs upon us like a giant; when his arrows stick fast in us, and his hand presseth us sore; when he sows sackcloth on our skin, and defiles our horn in the dust; when we are fain to eat ashes like bread, and to mingle our drink with weeping;—now, now is a time for a saint's trust to bestir itself to purpose. In this storm and tempest, wherein the waves mount up to heaven, and go down again to the depths, faith sits at [the] helm, and preserves the soul from shipwreck. Faith takes this serpent by the tail, handles it, and turns it into an harmless wand, yea, into an Aaron's rod, budding with glory and immortality. Faith encounters this seeming Goliath of affliction, grapples with it, not as a match, but as a vanquished underling. Let misery dress herself like the cruellest fury, come forth guarded with all her dismal attendants,—sighs, groans, tears, wants, woes; faith sets its foot on the neck of this queen of fears, insults and triumphs over her. When the heart and flesh are apt to fail, when soul and spirit are apt to sink and swoon away, faith draws forth its bottle, and administers a reviving cordial. In a word: in a sea, an ocean, a deluge of trouble, amidst all storms, winds, tempests, yea, an hurricane of sorrows and miseries, faith knows where and how to cast anchor. According to that of our Saviour: Μη ταρασσεσθω υμων η καρδια. "Let not your heart be troubled," so troubled, as a ship tossed in a tempest:* "ye believe in God, believe also in me." [John xiv. 1.] Faith is that great antidote, cordial, *panacea*, *catholicon*, "healer

* *Ne perturbetur, commoveatur.*

of all diseases." This is *that* that makes a believer live in the midst of death. But, more particularly, in this tempestuous condition, faith doth these three things :—

1. It warily avoids some dangerous rocks and quicksands.
2. It heedfully looks to its bottom in which it sails.
3. It accurately observes its compass by which it steers.

1. *There are some rocks, shelves, quicksands, like Scylla and Charybdis, against which, in such a dark condition, the soul is apt to split itself.*—These faith avoids with utmost care. They are six :—

(1.) *Distracting, distrustful, carking, corroding, heart-dividing, heart-stabbing cares.*—Faith, according to the apostle's command, *μηδεν μεριμνα*, is carkingly "careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication makes its requests known to God." (Phil. iv. 6.) True, indeed, a believer is not, may not, dares not be slothfully, negligently careless of his body, estate, relations, affairs, particular calling. (Rom. xii. 11—17.) Faith knows, that he that endeavours not, by honest, prudent, diligent care and foresight, to "provide for his own, is worse than an infidel." (1 Tim. v. 8.) And yet faith is far from all carking cares, such as distract the head, and divide the heart from other and better things. Faith "takes no thought for its life, what it shall eat; nor yet for the body, what it shall put on." (Matt. vi. 25, &c.) Faith leaves that to God, who feeds the sparrows and clothes the lilies. It is for Gentiles and unbelievers to cry out solicitously: "What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" My heavenly Father knows that I have need of all these things. It belongs to him to provide. It is his work: I leave it with him. All that care I cast upon him: he doth and will care for me. (1 Peter v. 7.) "I may not, must not," saith faith, "speak against God, as did the Israelites, saying, 'Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?' As he hath given waters, 'can he give bread also: can he provide flesh for his people?'" (Psalms lxxviii. 19, 20.)

(2.) *Carnal counsel, using unlawful and carnal confidence, trusting in lawful means.*—Say not, when God pursues, "Asshur shall save you, and you will ride on horses." (Hosea xiv. 3.) In sickness faith will not run first to the physician. That was good Asa's great sin. (2 Chron. xvi. 12.) It was holy David's great failing, to say, though but in his heart, "Nothing better for me than that I should escape into the land of the Philistines." (1 Sam. xxvii. 1.) Alas, poor David! to what a shift art thou now driven! What! to the uncircumcised Philistines? Is it because there is not a God in Israel? O, thou wilt quickly find this starting-hole to be only a going out of God's blessing into a warm sun! To think by sinning to avoid suffering, is, by saving the finger, to make way for a stab at the heart. To pursue and obtain deliverance, by unlawful ways, is to fish with, and lose, a hook of gold, and only to catch a gudgeon; to preserve the body, but to destroy the soul.

(3.) *Stinting and limiting the Holy One of Israel to this or that particular means, way, time, and manner of deliverance.*—So as to say, If God help not this way, nothing will do; if not now, never. Faith remembers, this was the Israelites' God-provoking sin. They "limited the

Holy One of Israel." (Psalm lxxviii. 41.) Thus Naaman: "Behold," saith he, "I thought, he will surely come out to me, and stand, and call, and strike;" (2 Kings v. 11;) and no other way will serve him. He thought thus, and thus; but the man was no less blind than leprous. He was at once both proud and vain in his imaginations; and he shall know that the Almighty will not sail by his narrow compass, nor dance, as I may so say, after his pipe. God hath more ways to the wood than one; and always more than many out of it, though we at present see them not. God hath extraordinary means to bear up, when ordinary ones fail. God can turn poisons into antidotes, hinderances into furtherances, destructions themselves into deliverances. Has Elijah no meat? Rather than fail, the devouring ravens shall be his caterers. (1 Kings xvii. 6.) Is Jonah in danger of drowning? Rather than sink, a whale shall have commission to be both his ship and pilot too, to set him safe on shore. (Jonah ii. 10.) Faith knows that an Almighty God can work with, yea, and without, above, contrary to, means; and doth on purpose many times stain the pride and glory of some means that seem most probable, that we may observe and adore his wise Providence in finding out and blessing the use of others more unlikely, that we may prefer his Jordan before our Abana.

(4.) *Impatient fretting, murmuring, and quarrelling against God's dispensations.*—This was poor Jonah's great stumble. Peevish man! "Doest thou well to be angry," and that with thy God? "Yea," saith he, "even unto death." (Jonah iv. 9.) The most foolish answer that ever dropped from the mouth of a holy man! Humble Aaron was better-instructed. He knew it was no safe kicking against the pricks; that nothing was to be got by striking again, by repining against God, but more blows; and therefore, when God had killed both his sons at a blow, he humbly "holds his peace," his heart and tongue were both silent. (Lev. x. 2, 3.) True, indeed, we may not be senseless and stupid under sufferings. Had all the martyrs had the dead palsy before they went to the stake, their sufferings had been far less glorious. But yet, though we may not be stupid or stoical, we must be patient and submissive. Though we may not be like the Caspian Sea, that neither ebbs nor flows, yet we must take heed of being like swelling, roaring waves and billows. Though God's turtles may, through infirmity, flutter, yet they may not be like bulls, when caught in a net, raving. "I was dumb," saith David, "because thou didst it." (Psalm xxxix. 9.) Away, then, with those surly looks, that do, as it were, enter a protest against what we suffer; nay, more, beware of those murmuring echoes and replies of spirit within, against God, who, though they seem to yield and run, yet, with the flying Parthian, shoot their arrows backward in discontent against God.

(5.) *All sinful and ungrounded doubting of God's love, in and under sufferings.*—How God's heart inclines, cannot infallibly be gathered from God's hand. Faith many times discovers love in God's heart, when it sees nothing but frowns on God's forehead, and knows that frequently when his tongue chides, his bowels yearn. "Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child?" Is he? Alas, no! rather, he is a pettish, untoward, undutiful child. True, but yet a child; and, therefore, "since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; there-

fore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him." (Jer. xxxi. 20.) Yea, more, faith is so far from arguing, that God has thrown his love out of his heart, when he takes his rod into his hand, that it rather from thence argues the quite contrary: "I am now therefore beloved, because chastised." "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." Faith knows, that a Father's correction is so far from being an argument of wrath, that it is one of the clearest evidences of love. Better far to be a chastened son, than an undisciplined bastard. (Rev. iii. 19; Amos iii. 2; Heb. xii. 6, 8.) No anger like that: "Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more:" (Isai. i. 5;) and, "I will be quiet, and will be no more angry." (Ezek. xvi. 42.) "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone." (Hosea iv. 17.) "Then is God most angry of all, when he refuseth to be angry." *

(6.) *Fainting, sinking, desponding, despairing, under God's correction.*—As faith looks upon it as a great sin to despise the Lord's chastening, so it holds it for no small infirmity to faint, when corrected by him. (Heb. xii. 5.) This was that for which David so roundly chid and rated his soul: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God." (Psalm xlii. 11.) "If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small." (Prov. xxiv. 10.) It argues thee to be a man of a short, narrow, pusillanimous, poor, low soul, to faint and sink in such a day. Thus we have shown you the rocks, the dangerous rocks, which faith warily avoids.

2. *Faith heedfully looks to its ship or bottom, in which it sails.*—Wherein she views the keel, ballast, sails; takes care that these be tight, and in good condition.

(1.) *The keel, bulk, or body of the ship in which faith sails; and that is holy contentation.*—This was the grand and highest lesson that ever a believing Paul learnt and practised; namely, "In every state therewith to be content." (Phil. iv. 11.) What some observe of that earthly angel, that glory of her sex, the Lady Jane Gray, "That she made misery itself seem amiable, and that the night-clothes of adversity did as much become her as her day-dressing," is much more true of holy contentation: it renders every condition, even the blackest, lovely. An afflicted Christian, if contented, may truly say with the spouse, "I am black, but comely." (Canticles i. 5.) Faith, therefore, mainly looks to this, and professes, that though she cannot be satisfied with the whole world for her portion, yet she must, will be, and is contented with the least pittance of it for her passage. Has an Agur food? what, though יקק לם coarse, ordinary commons? (Prov. xxx. 8,) yet it is "food." Has John Baptist raiment? what, though of camel's hair? (Matt. iii. 4,) yet it is "raiment." And so long faith looks upon herself as obliged to be therewith content. (1 Tim. vi. 8.)

(2.) *The ballast that poises the ship; and that is humility.*—This is that that keeps the soul steady, and makes it ride out the storm. Pride is that which swells the heart. Now, when a member is swollen, though it grows bigger, yet it grows weaker, and so the more unfit and unable

* *Tunc maximè irascitur, quando non irascitur. Super omnem iram miseratio ista.*—BERNARDUS. "This forbearing pity rises far above all anger."—EDIT.

to bear any burden laid upon it. It was humility that steeled Athanasius against all his adversaries and sufferings, in that he was, as Nazianzen reports him, as truly low in heart as really high in worth. The humble soul judges itself "less than the least of mercies," (Gen. xxxii. 10,) justly obnoxious to the greatest judgments; and therefore no wonder if it can patiently want or undergo any thing.

(3.) *The sails whereby this well-ballasted ship is carried; and that is heavenly-mindedness.*—This, indeed, is faith's top, and top-gallant, whereby it sails with a full forewind into its port and haven. Faith minds, savours, sets its affection on things above, not on things below. (Col. iii. 2.) Its heart is, where its treasure is, in heaven. Faith knows, that mixture of earth and dross much weakens the soul, and makes it unable to suffer; whereas a soul quickened with heavenly-mindedness, that flies high, and looks beyond the stars, concludes, that a little, a very little, of the dreggy creature will serve turn to pass it through this worldly pilgrimage; and this greatly enables for suffering; and thus faith heedfully looks to her bottom.

3. *Faith accurately observes its compass by which it steers.*—Now there are several points in faith's compass, or, if you will, there are several choice maxims or axioms of faith, by which a believer sails in and through the blackest storms and tempests. Such as these:—

(1.) *Whatever the stone be that is thrown, it is the hand of Heaven [that] flings it.*—In all the evils we either fear or feel, faith looks beyond the creature, and carries up the heart unto God. No evil in the city, no penal evil, either on me or mine, but the Lord hath done it. (Amos iii. 6.) Thus David: "I was dumb, because thou didst it." (Psalm xxxix. 9.) And the Lord hath bid Shimei curse. (2 Sam. xvi. 10.) David could read God's hand at the foot of the commission, though his commanders could not. "Thou couldest have no power against me, except it were given thee from above," saith our Saviour to Pilate. (John xix. 11.) And holy Job, when plundered of all, saith not, "The Lord gave, and the Chaldeans and Sabeans have taken away; the Lord enriched, but Satan hath robbed me:" no; but as if they all had been but ciphers, and mere standers-by, "The Lord gave; and the Lord" only, or at least chiefly, "hath taken away." (Job i. 21.)

(2.) *Let the King of heaven do his worst, yet, even then, he can do no wrong.*—This is a grand maxim in the rolls of eternity; one of the fundamental laws of heaven; and that because,

(i.) *God is the most sovereign God, the supreme Lord, that knows no law but his own will, which is the highest and the most unerring rule of righteousness.*—God's hand is God's only rule; and therefore, whatever line he draws, it must needs be right. Our God is a law to himself, who only can write on his imperial edicts and proceedings,—

STAT PRO RATIONE VOLUNTAS.*

God doth and may justly do whatsoever pleaseth him, (Dan. iv. 35,) and "can most justly resolve the reason of all his actions into his own will."

* JUVENALIS *Satir.* vi. 222..... "I command:

"It is my sovereign will! Who dares withstand?"—OWEN'S Translation.

That Great Potter may do with his clay what he pleaseth, and that without the least control or contradiction. (Rom. ix. 20, 21.) On this account, faith counts it wisdom not to play the censorious critic on God's administrations, considering that He alone is *ανευθυνος και ανεπευθυνος*,* according to that of Elihu: "God is greater than man. Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters." (Job xxxiii. 12, 13.)

(ii.) "God, as he is most just in himself, so also he acts most justly to me," saith a believer.—Faith justifies God in all his proceedings; that is, subscribes and gives testimony to the righteousness of God, even in his sharpest corrections. Thus David: "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right." (Psalm cxix. 75.) Thus the church, when under the Babylonish captivity, (the heaviest judgment ever inflicted on any people,) yet then humbly sets her seal to God's justice: "The Lord is righteous; for I have rebelled against him." (Lam. i. 18; Neh. ix. 33.)

(3.) *It is not fit that poor, weak, short-sighted, sinful creatures should be their own carvers.*—If they should, they would, like rash children, cut either too much or too little, or their own fingers. Well for us, that as our times, so our conditions, are not in our own (but in God's) hands. (Psalm xxxi. 15.) "Not what I please," saith faith, "but what my God pleaseth. He knows best what is good for his people; and I know, had God granted my requests, and fulfilled my desires, I had long since been undone. The cooling drink, which I so passionately desired in my burning paroxysm, would have added to my flame, and quickly dispatched me to the house of darkness." Hence it was that the honest shepherd, being asked what weather it should be to-day, replied, "Even what weather I please." "Not so," saith the other; "but what pleaseth God." "Yea so," replies the shepherd; "for whatever pleaseth God, shall be sure to please me."

(4.) *Better to want outward comforts, than enjoy them without my Father's good-will.*—Israel had been better to have been without quails. They had sour sauce to their sweet meat: while the flesh was in their mouths, the plague of God was in their nostrils. (Num. xi. 20.) You will needs have this, and that, and the other thing: "Why, take it," saith God; "but then take my curse with it too; the sack, but poison with it. You shall have it, but in wrath." (See 1 Sam. viii. 5, 6, 10—12; Hosea xiii. 11.) Rachel, you will have children, or else you will take pet and die. (Gen. xxx. 1.) You shall have children, a *Benjamin* to your Joseph, which yet shall prove a *Benoni*. His *intrat* ["entrance"] will prove your *exit*; his life, your death. (Gen. xxxv. 18.) Better were it for David to be without Michal, than that she should, being enjoyed, become a snare. (1 Sam. xviii. 21.)

(5.) *Seem it never so ill, yet it is really well.*—On these two accounts:—

(i.) *It cannot but be well with him with whom God is.*—It was not ill with the three children, though in a fiery furnace, so long as God was there. (Dan. iii. 25.) Suppose David, walking in the suburbs of death

* "Without any superior to whom he is accountable, or by whom he may be directed and controlled."—EDIT.

and danger; yet [it is] not ill with him, because God [is] with him. (Psalm xxiii. 4.) When God says, "I will be with you," (as he has, Isai. xliii. 2,) "and I feel him," saith faith; "it is infinitely more to me than if he should say, 'Peace, health, credit, honour, plenty, shall be with thee.' God being with me, is all these, and infinitely more. In these I could have but a particular good: in a single God I have all good." Now God, who is with his people at all times, is most with them, and most sweetly with them, in the worst times.* As their afflictions increase without, so do their consolations within. (2 Cor. i. 5.) When the child is most sick, then it is most dandled on the mother's knee; when it begins to faint, then is the closet ransacked for the choicest cordial. This blessed Baynham found, when at the stake he told the bloody Papists: "O ye Papists," said he, "you talk of miracles; behold here a true one: these flames are to me a bed of roses." God is wont to give believers, in such a time, their *exceedings*, their "five messes." That part of the army which is upon action in the field, and upon hard service, shall be sure to have their pay. What are all the promises, but vessels of cordial wine, tunned on purpose against a groaning hour, when God usually and speedily broacheth them? (Psalm l. 15.)

(ii.) *All is well that ends well.* "Now," saith faith, "all sad and gloomy dispensations have sweet ends, whether I respect God or myself:"—

First. *In respect of God.*—And that,

[i.] *For the manifestation of his infinite wisdom.*—Who so contrives the passages of his providence, as that one shall qualify another. God knows, that should I always prosper, I should have been apt to swell and presume; and therefore he pricks my bladder, to let out that wind. Had I been always fed with sweetmeats, it is very probable I might have surfeited; and therefore he mingles my sweets with these tart ingredients. Were not this bass added to my treble, I should never have made any harmonious music.

[ii.] *For the declaration of his Almighty power.*—God many times brings his people into such a condition, as not to know what to do, that they may know now what the Lord can do. Thus: "The Lord shall judge his people, when he seeth that their power is gone." "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no God with me." (Deut. xxxii. 36, 39.) Thus: "Nevertheless he saved them for his name sake." But what name? even that glorious one of his power: "that he might make his mighty power to be known." (Psalm cvi. 8.)

Secondly. *In respect of believers.*—The life of every saint is a tragedy, and the last act of it crowns the whole play. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace." (Psalm xxxvii. 37.) Out of the eater shall come meat. This affliction and that affliction, yea, the whole series of them, "shall work together for my good." (Rom. viii. 28.) Saints' good is God's aim. As love is the principle [which] he constantly acts from, so the saints' good is the

* *Domitianus in Jovis sinu.*—SÜETONIUS. "Domitian in the bosom of Jupiter." This phrase is not applied by Suetonius to Domitian. But one somewhat similar in import may be found in lib. ii. 94, referring to Augustus: *Jovem Opt. Max. unum secrevisse, atque in ejus sinum signum reipublice reposuisse; ad, in sequenti, animadvertisse se in gremio Capitolini Jovis eundem puerum, &c.*—EDIT.

end [which] he propounds and aims at, in all his dispensations. From this he never swerves. The fire of love never goes out of his heart, nor the saints' good out of his eye. When he frowns, chides, strikes, yet then his heart burns with love, and his thoughts are to do them good. (Jer. xxiv. 6, 7 ; xxix. 11 ; Deut. viii. 2, 16.) But what good? Much every way, chiefly with respect to their corruptions, graces, services, glory.

[i.] *Saints' corruptions, to purge and subdue them.*—"This is all the fruit, the taking away of their sin." (Isai. xxvii. 9.) Afflictions are God's brine and pickle to preserve the saints from putrefying. Paul's thorn in the flesh was given him to prevent and mortify pride. (2 Cor. xii. 7.) All the harm which the fiery furnace did the young men, in Dan. iii. 24, 25, was but to burn off their cords. Our lusts are cords, cords of vanity: fiery trials [are] sent on purpose to burn and consume them. Adversity, like winter-weather, [is] of great use to kill weeds and vermin, which the summer of prosperity is wont to breed. God is fain to rub hard many times, to fetch out the dirt that is ingrained in our nature. This thunder serves to clear the air from infectious vapours. This bitter potion purges out ill-humours. Be the teeth of thy troubles never so many, never so sharp, it is but to file off thy rust. This tempestuous tossing in the sea will more purge the wine from its lees. It clarifies the soul: according to that, "I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined." (Zech. xiii. 9.)

[ii.] *Saints' graces.*—And that,

First. *For their trial and experience.*—"That the trial of your faith," &c. (1 Peter i. 7.) The fire tries the gold as well as the touch-stone. Diseases not only need, but try, the art of the physician; and tempests, the skill of the pilot. The saints' sufferings are but as so many touch-stones. Now, now shall the saint clearly know, whether the conscience be sound or foundered, if it will pace well in rough ways. Here, "here is the faith," that is, the trial of the saints' faith and patience. (Rev. xiii. 10.)

Secondly. *For their increase and growth.*—The snuffing of the candle makes it burn the brighter. Hence it is that the saints "glory in tribulations," (Rom. v. 3,) because their sufferings add strength to their graces. Never are God's spiritual nightingales apt to sing more sweetly, than when the thorn is at their breast. Saints are indeed made of precious metal; and yet they are too, too apt to lose their edge. Hence it is that God by afflictions whets and sharpens them. He beats and bruises his links, to make them burn the brighter; loads his choicest ships with sufficient ballast, to make them sail the steadier; bruises his spices, to make them send out an aromatic savour. (Jer. xxii. 21; Isai. xxvi. 16; Heb. xii. 10.)

OBJECTION. "But I find not this precious benefit."

SOLUTION. Afflictions do not presently work; at least, thou mayest not presently feel their operation. As Christ to Peter: "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." (John xiii. 7.) So afterward it brings forth the fruit of righteousness. (Heb. xii. 11.)

[iii.] *With respect to saints' future services.*—Great sufferings are many times sent to prepare saints for extraordinary services. See it in Joseph and Paul. Joseph thrown into a pit, sold a slave into Egypt, there cast into

a prison, [was] by all fitted for a palace, and to be a nursing-father to the church. (Gen. xli. 40, 41.) God bestows more chopping and hewing on corner-stones, because [that] he intends they shall not only support, but adorn the building. God means to build high upon them ; therefore lays his foundations very low : intends to sell these diamonds at a high rate ; and thence it is he spends so much time and art in cutting them.

[iv.] *With respect to the furtherance of their future glory.*—Christ went from a cross to Paradise ; so do Christians. The Master was made “ perfect through sufferings ; ” (Heb. ii. 10 ;) so are saints his servants. Though the saints’ cross cannot merit, yet it makes way for, a crown of life. (James i. 12.) Their “ light affliction, which is but for a moment,” occasionally works for them “ a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” (2 Cor. iv. 17.)

(6.) *Be it really ill, never so ill, yet it might well be worse.*—Be the suffering what it will, yet whilst here, whilst above-ground, it is far less than I have deserved. (Ezra ix. 13.) “ Blessed be God,” cried out that man of God,* when in the paroxysm of his gout, “ this, though sharp, is not hell.” The worst that we can feel here is not the hundred thousandth part of what we have deserved hereafter. “ Every step on this side hell is mercy,” saith a sensible believer. God is gracious in his greatest severity, remembers mercy in the midst of judgment. As it is said of Asher, “ His shoes were iron and brass, yet he dipped his foot in oil ; ” (Deut. xxxiii. 24, 25 ;) so God tempers his greatest severities with the oil of mercy ; corrects but in measure, (Isai. xvii. 6,) nay, in mercy, in infinite mercy. I that have deserved the blow of an executioner’s axe, am sent away with a lash only of a father’s rod. God only lops off some luxuriant branches, when in justice he might cut up the vine, both root and branch, and cast them into everlasting flames.

(7.) And lastly. *Be it now never so ill, it will certainly be better.* †—Thus the Psalmist : “ All thy waves are gone over me. Yet the Lord will command his loving-kindness.” (Psalm xlii. 7, 8.) Thus the church, Micah vii. 7—9. More particularly, faith concludes :—

(i.) “ *My afflictions, though lasting, will not be everlasting.*—Though the night be dark and long, yet there will come a day-break and comfortable dawn ; my God will not always chide, ‘ neither will he contend for ever.’ ” (Isai. lvii. 16 ; Rev. ii. 10.)

(ii.) “ *My greatest extremity of distress is God’s fairest opportunity for deliverance.*”—When the Cassians are most infested with locusts, then, and not till then, do the Seleucidian birds come-in to their assistance. ‡ (CAUS. *Hier.* l. 6. c. 31.) “ Now will I arise, saith the Lord.” (Psalm

* MR. WHITAKER.

† *Nemo desperet meliora lapsus.*—SENECÆ *Tragœdiae.*

“ When at the lowest ebb, indulge no fear ;

Soon will the flowing current re-appear.”—EDIT.

‡ The Cassians were the inhabitants of Catieh, near the ancient Pelusium, now Tineh, in Lower Egypt ; and “ the Seleucidian birds ” to which Causin refers in his account of Egyptian antiquities, were those innumerable flights which congregate on the immense plain between the Tigris and the Euphrates, in the immediate neighbourhood of the city of Seleucia, (which was intended, by its celebrated founder, to become the capital of the East,) and Bagdad, the ancient site of which was on this account called by the Turks, *Kushlar Kalasi*, or “ the Castle of Birds.”—EDIT.

xii. 5 ; Deut. xxxii. 36.) *Cum duplicantur lateres, venit Moses.** In the mount there will God be seen. (Gen. xxii. 14.)

(iii.) And lastly. "*Heaven will pay for all at last.*"—Where every tear shall be wiped off. (Rev. xxi. 4.)—The pleasantness and security of the port will make more than full amends for the danger and difficulty of the passage.† And this is that wherein faith triumphs, as knowing that he that for Christ's sake, in obedience to Christ's will, in conformity to Christ's word, in aiming at Christ's glory, wears the sharpest crown of thorns here, shall, by Christ, have his temples encircled with the fairest crown of glory hereafter.‡ As in this life an hundred fold, so in the world to come, eternal life. (Mark x. 30.)

SERMON XIX.

BY THE REV. THOMAS MANTON, D.D.

HOW MAY WE CURE DISTRACTIONS IN HOLY DUTIES?

Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.—Matthew xv. 7, 8.

IN this chapter you will find a contest between Christ and the Pharisees, about their traditions and old customs, which they valued above the commandments of God, as it is usual with formal men to love chains of their own making, and to make conscience of a tradition when yet they can dispense with a commandment; and thereby discovering themselves to be very hypocrites, who are more in externals than in internals, in show than substance, minding the formality rather than the spirit and life of service to God. Our Lord confirms his censure by the testimony of the prophet Isaiah, "Ye hypocrites," &c.

I shall not stand explaining the words. *Drawing nigh*—Is a phrase peculiar to worship, especially to invocation. *Mouth and lips*—Are put for all external gestures, and that bodily exercise which is necessary to the worship of God, especially for words. *But their heart is far from me*—It chiefly intendeth their habitual averseness from God, but may also comprise the wandering and roving of the mind in duty, which is a degree and spece § of it. Of that I shall treat at this time; and my note will be,—

* "When the tale of bricks is doubled to the children of Israel in Egypt, then Moses appears."—EDIT.

† *Superata tellus sydera donat.*—BOETIUS.

"When these realms our spirits leave,
Heaven the exiles shall receive."—EDIT.

‡ *Felix post fata. Ad delicias juvat ire periculis.* "Happy, after enduring all the emergent ills of life." "Our delights are enhanced when we pass through dangers to their enjoyment." *Ἐκ πονοῦ κλεος.* "Through trouble and difficulty we obtain glory."—EDIT.

§ This word is printed *spece, spive,* and *spice,* in the different editions; but *spece,* the reading of the first, is proper, signifying "a sample, a specimen."—EDIT.

That distraction of thoughts, or the removing of the heart from God in worship, is a great sin, and [a] degree of hypocrisy.

The text speaketh of gross hypocrisy, or a zealous pretence of outward worship without any serious bent of heart towards God. But any removal of the heart from him in times necessary to think of him, is a degree of it ; for though distractions in worship are incident to the people of God, yet they are culpable, and do so far argue the relics of hypocrisy in them. I shall show,—

I. The GREATNESS of the sin.

II. The CAUSES.

III. The REMEDIES.

I. That there is such a sin, sad experience witnesseth : vain thoughts intrude importunately upon the soul in every duty. In hearing the word we are not free ; (Ezek. xxxiii. 31 ;) nor in singing ; but chiefly they haunt us in prayer ; and, of all kinds of prayer, in mental prayer, when our addresses to God are managed by thoughts alone, there we are more easily disturbed. Words bound the thoughts, and the inconvenience of an interruption is more sensible, as occasioning a pause in our speech ; and as in mental prayer, so when we join with others, to keep time and pace with their words, (unless the Lord quicken them to an extraordinary liveliness,) we find it very hard. But how GREAT a sin this is, is my first task to show. I shall do it,

1. By three *general* considerations.

2. By speaking *particularly* to the present case.

1. *Generally*.

(1.) *Consider how tender God is of his worship.*—He hath said, that he “will be sanctified in all that draw nigh unto him.” (Lev. x. 3.) *To sanctify* is “to set apart from common use.” Now, God will be sanctified ; that is, not treated-with as an ordinary person, but with special heedfulness of soul and affection becoming so great a Majesty. When you think to put him off with any thing, you lessen his excellency and greatness, and do not sanctify him, or glorify him as God ; and therefore God pleadeth his Majesty when they would put a sorry sacrifice upon him, as if every thing were good enough for him. “Cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing : for I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts.” (Mal. i. 14.) To be slight in his service argueth mean thoughts of God. “Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God : for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth.” (Eccles. v. 2.) We forget our distance, and by a bold profaneness are too fellow-like and familiar with God, when we are not deeply serious and exact in what we do and say in his presence, but only babble over a few impertinent words without attention and affection. Certainly, God is very sensible of the wrong and contempt we put upon him ; for he noteth all : “All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.” (Heb. iv. 13.) And he will not put it up ; * for he telleth us, that he “will not hold him guiltless that taketh his

* This is an old form of English speech, tantamount in meaning to its cognate, *not to put up with it*, “not to endure it without expressions of anger or dissatisfaction.”—EDIT.

name in vain;" (Exod. xx. 7;) and he will be as good as his word; for the least disorders in worship have been sorely punished: witness the stroke from heaven upon Aaron's sons; (Lev. x. 2;) the breach made upon Uzzah; (2 Sam. vi. 7;) and the havoc made of the Beth-shemites; (1 Sam. vi. 19;) the diseases that raged at Corinth. (1 Cor. xi. 30.) And though judgments be not so rife and visible now upon our unhalloved approaches to God, yet he smiteth us with *deadness* where he doth not smite us with *death*: for a man is punished otherwise than a boy; and judgments are now spiritual, which, in the infancy of the church, were temporal and bodily. Certainly, we have all cause to tremble when we come before the Lord.

(2.) *The more sincere any one is, the more he maketh conscience of his thoughts.*—Is more observant of them, and more troubled about them. "Let the unrighteous man forsake his thoughts," &c. (Isai. lv. 7.) Then he beginneth to be serious, and to have a conscience indeed when his thoughts trouble him. So David: "I hate vain thoughts: but thy law do I love." (Psalm cxix. 113.) We think thoughts are free and subject to no tribunal. If there be any error in them, we think it is a very venial one. They betray us to no shame in the world, and therefore we let them go without dislike and remorse. But a child of God cannot pass over the matter so; he knoweth that thoughts are the immediate births of the soul, and do much discover the temper of it; that there actions begin; and if "vain thoughts" be suffered to lodge in him, he will soon fall into further mischief; and therefore he considereth what he *thinketh*, as well as what he *speaketh* and *doeth*: and if at all times, especially in worship, where the workings of the inward man are of chief regard, and the acts of the outward only required as a help to our serving God "in the spirit." (Phil. iii. 3.)

(3.) *Carelessness in duties is the high way to atheism.*—For every formal and slight prayer doth harden the heart, and make way for contempt of God. Men that have made bold with God in duty, and it succeeds well with them,—their awe of God is lessened, and the lively sense of his glory and majesty abated, till it be quite lost: by degrees they outgrow all feelings and tenderness of conscience; every time you come to God slightly, you lose ground by coming, till at length you look upon worship as a mere custom, or something done for fashion's sake.

2. *Particularly.*

(1.) *It is an affront to God, and a kind of mockery.*—We wrong his Omniscency, as if he saw not the heart, and could not tell man his thought. It is God's essential glory in worship to be acknowledged an all-seeing "Spirit," and accordingly to be worshipped "in spirit and in truth." (John iv. 24.) Thoughts are as audible with him as words; therefore, when you prattle words, and do not make conscience of thoughts, you do not worship him as a Spirit. We wrong his Majesty when we speak to him in prayer, and do not give heed to what we say. Surely, we are not to prattle, like jays or parrots, words without affection and feeling; or to chatter like cranes; or be like Ephraim, whom the prophet calls "a silly dove without a heart." A mean man taketh it ill when you have business to talk with him about, and your minds are else-

where ; you would all judge it to be an affront to the Majesty of God, if a man should send his clothes stuffed with straw, or a puppet dressed up, instead of himself, into the assemblies of God's people, and think this should supply his personal presence ; yet our clothes stuffed with straw, or an image dressed up instead of us, (such as Michal put into David's bed, 1 Sam. xix. 12, 13,) would be less offensive to God than our bodies without our souls. The absence of the spirit is the absence of the more noble part. We pretend to speak to God, and do not hear ourselves, nor can give any account of what we pray for. Or rather let me give you Chrysostom's comparison : A man would have been thought to have profaned the mysteries of the Levitical worship, if, instead of sweet incense, he should put into the censer sulphur or brimstone, or mingle the one with the other.* Surely, our prayers should be "set forth as incense." (Psalm cxli. 2.) And do not we affront God to his face, that mingle so many vain, sinful, proud, filthy, blasphemous thoughts ? What is this but to mingle sulphur with our incense ? Again : when God speaketh to us, and knocks at the heart, and there is none within to hear him, is it not an affront to his Majesty ? Put it in a temporal case : If a great person should talk to us, and we should neglect him, and entertain ourselves with his servants, he would take it as a despite and contempt done to him. The great God of heaven and earth doth often call you together to speak to you. Now, if you think so slightly of his speeches as not to attend, but set your minds adrift, to be carried hither and thither with every wave, where is that reverence [which] you owe to him ?

It is a wrong to his Goodness, and the comforts of his holy presence ; for, in effect, you say that you do not find that sweetness in God which you expect, and therefore are weary of his company before your business be over with him. It is said of the Israelites, when they were going for Canaan, that "in their hearts they turned back again into Egypt." (Acts vii. 39.) They had more mind to be in Egypt than under Moses's government, and their thoughts ever ran upon the flesh-pots and belly-cheer [which] they enjoyed there. We are offended with their impatience and murmurings, and the affronts they put upon their guides ; and do not we even the same and worse in our careless manner of worshipping ? When God hath brought us into his presence, we do in effect say, "Give us the world again : this is better entertainment for our thoughts than God and holy things." If Christians would but interpret their actions, they would be ashamed of them. Is any thing more worthy to be thought of than God ? The Israelites' hearts were upon Egypt in the wilderness ; and our hearts are upon the world, nay, every toy, even when we are at the throne of grace, and conversing with Him who is the centre of our rest, and the fountain of our blessedness.

(2.) *It grieveth the Spirit of God.*—He is grieved with our vain thoughts, as well as [with] our scandalous actions. Other sins may shame us more ; but these are a grief to the Spirit, because they are conceived in the heart, which is his presence-chamber, and place of special residence. And he is most grieved with these vain thoughts which haunt us in the time of our special addresses to God, because his

* CHRYSOSTOMUS, *Homil. 74 in Matt.*

peculiar operations are hindered, and the heart is set open to God's adversary in God's presence, and the world and Satan are suffered to interpose in the very time of the reign of grace, then when it should be *in solio*, "in its royalty," commanding all our faculties to serve it. This is to steal away the soul from under Christ's own arm. As a captain of a garrison is troubled when the enemies come to prey under the very walls, in the face of all his forces and strength; so, certainly, it is a grief to the Spirit when our lusts have power to disturb us in holy duties, and the heart is taken up with unclean glances, and worldly thoughts, then when we present ourselves before the Lord. God looks upon his people's sins as aggravated, because committed in his own house: "In my house have I found their wickedness." (Jer. xxiii. 11.) What is this but to dare God to his very face? Solomon saith, "A king that sitteth in the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil with his eyes." (Prov. xx. 8.) They are bold men that dare break the laws when a magistrate is upon the throne, and actually exercising judgment against offenders: so it argueth much impudence, that when we come to deal with God, as sitting upon the throne, and observing and looking upon us, that we can yet lend our hearts to our lusts, and suffer every vain thought to divert us. There is more of modesty, though little of sincerity, in them that say to their lusts, as Abraham to his servants: "Abide ye here; and I will go yonder and worship;" (Gen. xxii. 5;) or, as they say, the serpent layeth aside her poison when she goeth to drink. When a man goeth to God, he should leave his lusts behind him; not for a while, and with an intent to entertain them again, but for ever. However, this argueth some reverence of God, and sense of the weight of holy duties; but when we bring them along with us, it is a sign we little mind the work we go about.

(3.) *It is a spiritual disease.*—The soul hath its diseases as well as the body. The unsteady roving of the mind, or the disturbance of vain and impertinent thoughts, is one of those diseases. Shall I call it a *spiritual madness*, or *fever*, or *shaking palsy*, or all these? You know, mad men make several relations, and rove from one thing to another, and are gone off from a sentence ere they have well begun it: our thoughts are as slippery and inconsistent as their speeches; therefore what is this but the frenzy of the soul? What mad creatures would we seem to be, if all our thoughts were patent, or an invisible notary were lurking in our hearts to write them down! We run from object to object in a moment, and one thought looks like a mere stranger upon another; we wander and run through all the world in an instant. O, who can count the numberless operations and workings of our mind in one duty? What impertinent excursions have we from things good to lawful, from lawful to sinful, from ordinarily sinful to downright blasphemous! Should any one of us, after he hath been some time exercised in duty, go aside and write down his thoughts, and the many interlinings of his own prayers, he would stand amazed at the madness and light discurrency of his own imaginations.

Or shall I call it *the feverish distemper of the soul*? *Ægri somnia* ["the dreams of a sick man"] is a proverb. In fevers men have a

thousand fancies and swimming toys in their dreams ; and just so it is with our souls in God's worship. We bring that curse upon us spiritually, which corporally God threatened to bring upon the Jews : " I will scatter you to the end of the earth." We scatter our thoughts hither and thither, without any consistency. The heart, in regard of this roving madness, is like a runaway servant, who, when he hath left his master, wandereth up and down, and knoweth not where to fix ; or like those that are full of distracting business, that cannot make a set meal, but take their diet by snatches.

(4.) *It argueth the loss and non-acceptance of our prayers.*—You are in danger to lose your worship, at least so much of it as you do not attend upon. And, truly, to a man that knows the value of that kind of traffic, this is a very great loss. You that are tradesmen are troubled if you happen to be abroad when a good customer cometh to deal with you. The ordinances of God are the market for your souls : if you had not been abroad, with Esau, you might have received the blessing, and gone away richly laden from a prayer, from the word, and the Lord's supper ; but you lose your advantages for want of attention. Allowed distractions turn your prayers into sin, and make them no prayers. When the soul departeth from the body, it is no longer a man, but a carcass : so when the thoughts are gone from prayer, it is no longer a prayer ; the essence of the duty is wanting. What is prayer ? *Αναβασις του νου*, as Damascene defined it, " The lifting up of the heart to God." Many have prayed *without words* ; but never any prayed *without lifting up* or *pouring out the heart*. If a man should kneel, and use a gesture of worship, and fall asleep, no doubt that man doth not pray. This is to sleep with the heart, and the words uttered are but like a dream, have but a slight touch of reason in them, a mere drowsy, unattentive devotion. The soul is asleep, though the eyes be not closed, and the senses locked up. Can we expect that God should hear us and bless us because of our mere outward presence ? We are ashamed of those that sleep at a duty ; and this is as bad or worse : they may sleep out of natural infirmity, as weakness, age, sickness, &c. ; but this doth more directly proceed from some slightness or irreverence. Well, then, with what face can we expect the fruit of that prayer to which we have not attended ? " It is a great presumption to desire God to hear those requests, a great part whereof we have not heard ourselves : if they be not worthy of our attention, they are far more unworthy of God's." Cyprian, or Ruffinus, or whoever was the author of the explication of the Lord's Prayer in Cyprian's works, hath a notable passage to this purpose : *Quomodo te a Deo exaudiri postulas, cum te ipse non audias ? Vis Deum esse memorem tui cum rogas, cum ipse tui memor non sis ?** " Thou art unmindful of thyself, thou dost not hear thyself ; and how canst thou with reason desire the blessing and comfort of the duty which thou thoughtest not worthy thine own attention and regard ?"

I would not willingly grate too hard upon a tender conscience : it is a question that is often propounded, " Whether wandering thoughts do altogether frustrate a duty, and make it of none effect ;" and " whether,

* CYPRIANUS *De Oratione Dominica*.

in some case, a virtual attention doth not suffice." There is an *actual* intention, and a *virtual* intention. The *actual* intention is when a soul doth distinctly and constantly regard every thing that is said and done in a duty; and a *virtual* intention is, when we keep only a disposition and purpose to attend, though many times we fail and are carried aside. This Aquinas calleth *primam intentionem*; ["the first intention;"] out of the scripture we may call it, the "setting of the heart and soul to seek the Lord." (1 Chron. xxii. 19.) Now, what shall we say in this case? On the one side, we must not be too strict, lest we prejudice the comfort and expectation of God's people. When did they ever manage a duty but they are guilty of some wanderings? It is much to keep up our hearts to the main and solid requests that are made to God in prayer. But, on the other side, we must not be too remiss, lest we encourage indiligence and careless devotion. Briefly, then, by way of answer, there is a threefold distraction in prayer, *distractio invita, negligens, et voluntaria*.

(1.) There is *distractio invita*, "an unwilling distraction."—When the heart is seriously and solemnly set to seek God, and yet we are carried beside our purpose; for it is impossible so to shut doors and windows but that some wind will get in; so to guard the heart as to be wholly free from vain thoughts; but they are not constant, frequent, allowed, but resisted, prayed against, striven against, bewailed; and then they are not iniquities, but infirmities, which the Lord will pardon. He will gather up the broken parts of our prayers, and in mercy give us an answer. I say, where this distraction is retracted with grief, resisted with care, as Abraham drove away the fowls, when they came to pitch upon his sacrifice; (Gen. xv. 11;) it is to be reckoned among the infirmities of the saints, which do not hinder their consolation.

(2.) There is *distractio negligens*, "a negligent distraction."—When a man hath an intention to pray, and express his desires to God, but he prays carelessly, and doth not guard his thoughts; so that sometimes he wanders, and sometime recovers himself again, and then strays again, and is in and out, off and on, with God; as a spaniel roveth up and down, and is still crossing the ways, sometimes losing the company he goes with, and then retiring to them again. I cannot say, this man prayeth not at all, or that God doth not hear him; but he will have little comfort in his prayers; yea, if he be serious, they will minister more matter of grief to him than comfort; and therefore he ought to be more earnest and sedulous in resisting this infirmity, that he may be assured of audience: otherwise, if his heart be not affected with it in time, by degrees all those motions and dispositions of heart that are necessary to prayer will be eaten out and lost.

(3.) There is *distractio voluntaria*, "a voluntary distraction."—When men mind no more than the task or work wrought, and only go round in a track of accustomed duties, without considering with what heart they perform them,—this is such a vanity of mind as turneth the whole prayer into sin.

II. The CAUSES of this roving and impertinent intrusion of vain thoughts.

1. *Satan is one cause*, who doth *maxime insidiari orationibus*, as Cassian speaketh, "lie in wait to hinder the prayers of the saints."—Whenever we minister before the Lord, he is at our right hand ready to resist us. (Zech. iii. 1.) And therefore the apostle James, when he biddeth us "draw nigh to God," biddeth us also to "resist the devil;" (James iv. 7, 8;) implying thereby, that there is no drawing nigh to God without resisting Satan. When a tale is told, and you are going about the affairs of the world, he doth not trouble you; for these things do not trouble him, or do any prejudice to his kingdom. But when you are going to God, and that in a warm, lively, affectionate manner, he will be sure to disturb you, seeking to abate the edge of your affections, or divert your minds. Formal prayers pattered over do him no harm; but when you seriously set yourselves to call upon God, he saith within himself, "This man will pray for God's glory; and then I am at a loss; for the coming of Christ's kingdom, and then mine goeth to wreck; that God's will may be done upon earth as it is in heaven, and that minds me of my old fall; and my business is to cross the will of God. He will pray for daily bread, and that strengtheneth dependence; for pardon and comfort, and then I lose ground; for the devils are the 'rulers of the darkness of this world.' (Eph. vi. 12.) He will pray to be kept from sin and temptation; and that is against me." Thus Satan is afraid of the prayers of the saints; he is concerned in every request you make to God; and therefore he will hinder or cheat you of your prayers; if you will needs be praying, he will carry away your hearts. Now, much he can do, if you be not watchful; he can present objects to the senses which stir up thoughts, yea, pursue his temptations, and cast in one fiery dart after another; therefore we had need stand upon our guard.

2. *The natural levity of our spirits*.—Man is a restless creature. We have much ado to stay our hearts for any space of time in one state, much more in holy things, from which we are naturally averse: "When I would do good," *το κακον παρακειται*, "evil is present with me." (Rom. vii. 21.) O consider this natural febleness of mind, whereby we are unable to keep long to any employment, but are light, feathery, tossed up and down like a dried leaf before the wind, or as an empty vessel upon the waves! It is so with us in most businesses, especially in those which are sacred. The apostle biddeth us "pray without ceasing;" and we cannot do it whilst we pray. He is a stranger to God and his own heart, who finds it not daily. This is an incurable vanity; though we often repent of it, yet it is not amended; a misery that God would leave upon our natures, to humble us while we are in the world, and that we may long for heaven. The angels and blessed spirits there are not troubled with those things: in heaven there is no complaining of wandering thoughts; there God is "all in all." They that are *there* have but one object to fill their understandings, one object to give contentment to their desires; their hearts cleave to God inseparably by a perfect love; but *here* we are cumbered with much serving; and much work begets a multitude of thoughts in us. "The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity." (Psalm xciv. 11.) When we have summed up all the traverses, reasonings, and discourses of the mind,

we may write at the bottom this, as the total sum: "Here is nothing but vanity."

3. Another cause is *practical atheism*.—We have little sense of things that are unseen and lie within the veil, in the world of spirits. Things that are seen have a great force upon us. "Offer it now unto thy governor," saith the prophet. (Mal. i. 8.) God is afar off, both from our sight and apprehension; senses bind attention. If you speak to a man, your thoughts are settled, and you think of nothing else; but in speaking to God, you have not like attention, because you see him not. "Make us gods, which shall go before us:" (Exod. xxxii. 1:) ay, that we would have a visible god, whom we may see and hear: but, the true God being a Spirit and an invisible Power, all the service that we do him is a task performed more out of custom than affection, in a slight, perfunctory way.

4. *Strong and unmortified lusts*.—Which being rooted in us, and having the soul at most command, will trouble us, and distract us when we go about any duty. Each man hath a mind, and can spend it unweariably as he is inclined, either to covetousness, ambition, or sensuality; for "where the treasure is, there will the heart be also." (Matt. vi. 21.) Set but the covetous man about the world, the voluptuous man about his pleasures, and the ambitious man about his honours and preferments; and will they suffer their thoughts to be taken off? Surely, no. But set either of these about holy things, and presently these lusts will be interposing. "Their heart goeth after their covetousness." (Ezek. xxxiii. 31.) The sins to which a man is most addicted will engross the thoughts; so that this is one sign by which a man may know his reigning sin, that which interrupts him most in holy duties; for when all other lusts are kept out, Satan will be sure to set the darling sin a-work to plead for him. If a man be addicted to the world, so will his musings be; if to mirth, and good cheer, and vain sports, his thoughts will be taken up about them; if to the inordinate love of women, his fancy will be rolling upon carnal beauty, and he will be firing his heart with unclean thoughts.

5. *Want of love to God and holy things*.—Men are loath to come into God's presence for want of faith, and to keep there for want of love. Love fixeth the thoughts, and drieth up those swimming toys and fancies that do distract us. We ponder and muse upon that in which we delight. Were our natural hatred of God and of the means of grace changed into a perfect love, we should adhere to him without distraction. We see, where men love strongly, they are deaf and blind to all other objects; they can think and speak of no other thing. But because our love to God is weak, every vain occasion carrieth away our minds from him. You find this by daily experience; when your affections flag in an ordinance, your thoughts are soon scattered; weariness maketh way for wandering; our hearts are first gone, and then our minds. You complain you have not a settled mind; the fault is, you have not a settled love; for that would cause you to pause upon things without weariness. "His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." (Psalm i. 2.) "O how I love thy law! it is my medita-

tion all the day." (Psalm cxix. 97.) David's mind would never run upon the word so much, if his heart were not there. Thoughts are at the command and beck of love: where love biddeth them go, they go; and where love biddeth them tarry, they tarry; the saints first delight, and then meditate.

6. *Slightness and irreverence, or want of a sense of God's presence.*—A careless spirit will surely wander; but one deeply affected, is fixed and intent. Jonah, when he prayed in the whale's belly,—could he have a heart to forget his work? Daniel, when he prayed among the lions,—could he mind any thing else? When we are serious, and pray in good earnest, we will call-in all our thoughts, and hold them under command. This question was put to Basil,—how a man should keep the mind free from distraction: his answer was, *Γιγνεται ὁ μετewρισμος ἀπο τῆς ἀργίας τοῦ νοῦ, καὶ ἐξ ἀπιστίας μὴ παρῆναι τὸν Θεὸν ἐξετάζοντα καρδίας καὶ νεφρῶν** that is, that "this evil came from slightness of heart, and unbelief of God's presence; for if a man did believe that God were before his eyes, searching the heart, and trying the reins, he would be serious." "All things are naked and opened to Him with whom we have to do." God looketh on, and so do the angels. He looketh on the heart, and will not you be serious? Scholars that have a truantly mind,—yet the presence of their masters forceth them to their books,—the great God who telleth man his thought,—he seeth. Our desires and thoughts speak louder in his ears than our words: therefore, possess the heart with a dread of his glorious presence, and with the weight and importance of the work we are about. Were we to deal with another man in a case of life and death, we would weigh our words, and not rove like madmen.

7. *The curiosity of the senses.*—These occasion a diversion. It is the office of the fancy to present, as in a glass, whatsoever is received by the external senses, or offered by the memory; and so the understanding taketh notice of it. The wandering eye causeth a wandering heart. Solomon saith, "The eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth." (Prov. xvii. 24.) First his eyes rove, and then his heart. The apostle Peter saith of unclean persons, that they have "eyes full of adultery;" *μοιχαλιδος*, "of the adulteress," as the word signifieth. (2 Peter ii. 14.) The eye is rolled upon the object, and then the dart by the fancy is transmitted to the heart. Senses are the windows and doors of the soul: keep the senses, if you would keep the heart. Job was at a severe appointment with his eyes. (Job xxxi. 1.) It is good when we go to God to renew these covenants; to agree *with the heart*, that we will not go to God without it; *with the eyes and ears*, that we will not see and hear any thing but what concerns our work. It was a strange constancy and fixedness which Josephus speaketh of, when Faustus, Cornelius, and Furius, and Fabius, with their troops, had broken into the city of Jerusalem, and some fled one way and some another; yet the priests went on with their sacrifices and the holy rites of the temple, as if they heard nothing: though they rushed on them with their swords, yet they preferred the duty of their religion before their own safety.† And strange

* BASILIUS in *Regulis brevioribus*.

† JOSEPHUS *De Bellis Judæorum*.

is that other instance of the Spartan youth, in Plutarch, that held the censor to Alexander whilst he was sacrificing; and though a coal lighted upon his flesh, he suffered it to burn there, rather than, by any crying-out, he would disturb the rites of their heathenish superstition. Certainly these instances should shame us Christians, that do not hold the senses under a more severe restraint, but upon every light occasion suffer them to trouble and distract us in worship.

8. *Carking and distrustful cares.*—When we are torn in pieces with the cares of the world, we cannot have a composed heart; but our minds will waver, and our dangers will recur to our thoughts, and hinder the exercise of our faith. God took special care of the Jews, when they went up to worship, that they might have nothing to trouble them; and therefore he saith, “The nations shall not desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God thrice in the year;” (Exod. xxxiv. 24;) and Augustine gives the reason of it: “Lest they should be distracted with thoughts about their own preservation,” *vult Deus intelligi ut securus quisque ascenderet, nec de terrâ sud sollicitus esset, Deo promittente custodiam.** And one of the arguments by which Paul commendeth single life, is freedom from the incumbrances of the world: “That ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction.” (1 Cor. vii. 35.)

REMEDIES.

III. I might speak many things, by way of mere counsel, about guarding the senses, the use and abuse of a form, &c.; but all these are but like external applications in physic, or topical medicines, as the binding of things to the wrists of the hands, &c., which work no perfect cure of a disease, unless the distemper be purged away. Therefore I shall speak to those things that are most effectual.

1. *Go to God, and wait for the power of his grace.*—David, speaking of it as his work, [says,] “Unite my heart to fear thy name;” (Psalm lxxxvi. 11;) fix it, gather it together. *Ἐνωσον την καρδιαν μου*, saith the Septuagint, “Make it one.” The heart is multiplied when it is distracted by several thoughts. God hath our hearts in his own hand; and when we can keep them up no longer, then he holds them up; when he withdraws his grace, we lose our life and seriousness. As meteors hang in the air as long as the heat of the sun is great, but when the sun is gone down they fall: as long as the love of God and the work of his grace are powerful in us, we are kept in a lively, heavenly frame; but as that abateth, the soul swerveth, and returneth to vanity and sin. We read, that “the Lord opened the heart of Lydia, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.” (Acts xvi. 14.) *Attention* there beareth somewhat a larger sense than we now consider it in; namely, “a deep regard to the doctrine of life;” yet this sense of fixedness of spirit cannot be excluded. Go to God, then; pray him to keep thy heart together: he that hath set bounds to the sea, and can bind up the

* AUGUSTINUS, *Quæst.* 161 in *Erodum*. “God wished them to understand, that they might (each of them) go up to the holy city with perfect security, devoid of all solicitude respecting their land; for He promised to become its Guardian in their absence.”—EDIT.

waves in a heap, and stop the sun in its flight,—certainly He can fasten and establish thy heart and keep it from running out.

2. *Meditate on the greatness of Him before whom we are.*—It is of great consequence in duties to consider whom we take to be our party, “with whom we have to do.” (Heb. iv. 13.) In the word, God is the party that speaketh to us: “Thou shalt be as my mouth;” (Jer. xv. 19;) “As though God did beseech you by us.” (2 Cor. v. 20.) It is God [that] speaketh; and the heathen king of Moab showed such reverence, that when Ehud said, “I have a message from God unto thee, he arose out of his seat.” (Judges iii. 20.) So in prayer, you have to do with God; you do as really minister before him as the angels that abide in his presence. O, if you could see Him that is invisible, you would have more reverence! A man that is praying or worshipping should behave himself as if he were in heaven, immediately before God, in the midst of all the blessed angels, those “ten thousand times ten thousand” that stand before God. O, with what reverence, with what fear, should a poor worm creep into his presence!* Think, then, of that glorious, all-seeing God, with whom thou canst converse *in thoughts*, as freely as with men *in words*. He knoweth all that is in thy heart, and seeth thee through and through. If you had spoken all those things you have thought upon, you would be odious to men. If all our blasphemy, uncleanness, worldly projects, were known to those that join with us, should we be able to hold up our heads for blushing? And doth not the Lord see all this? Could we believe his inspection of the heart, there would be a greater awe upon us.

3. *Mortify those lusts that are apt to withdraw our minds.*—He that indulgeth any one vile affection will never be able to pray aright. Every duty will give you experience what corruption to resist. What thoughts are we haunted and pestered with, when we come to God? God requireth prayer, that we may be weary of our lusts, and that the trouble that we find from them in holy exercises may exasperate our souls against them. We are angry with an importunate beggar, that will not be satisfied with any reasonable terms, but is always obtruding upon us. Every expe-

* *Omninò nos oportet orationis tempore curiam intrare cœlestem; illam, utique, curiam in quâ Rex regum sedet in stellato solio circumdante cum innumerabili et ineffabili beatorum spirituum exercitu, ubi et ipse qui viderit, quia majorem numerum non invenit, Millia, ait, millium ministrabant ei, et decies centena millium assistebant ei: quantâ ergo cum reverentiâ, quanto timore, quantâ illuc humilitate accedere debet e palude suâ procedens et repens ranuncula vilis: quàm tremebundus, quàm supplex, quàm demique humilis et sollicitus, et toto intentus animo majestati gloriæ, in presentia angelorum, in consilio justorum et congregatione, assistere poterit vilis homuncio.*—BERNARDUS *De quatuor Modis orandi.* “At the time of prayer, it is our paramount duty to enter into the very court of heaven; even into that court in which the King of kings is seated on his high and starry throne, encircled with an innumerable and indescribable army of blessed spirits; which when he who saw them attempted to enumerate, his mental powers could furnish him with no higher numerical expressions than these: ‘Thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him!’ (Dan. vii. 10.) With what profound reverence, therefore, with what great awe, and deep humility, ought a vile and crawling frog to emerge from its muddy pond, and to approach into such an august and overpowering Presence! And how trembling and suppliant, how humble and anxious, while gazing with all the intensity of his spirit on the majesty of the Divine glory, will he who thus feels himself to be a mean ‘worm and no man’ be able to stand within the angelic circle, ‘in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation!’ (Psalm cxi. 1.)”—EDIT.

rience in this kind should give us an advantage to free our hearts from this disturbance. The whole work of grace tendeth to prayer; and the great exercise and employment of the spiritual life is, "watching unto prayer," (Eph. vi. 18,) and that prayer be not interrupted. (1 Peter iii. 7.)

4. *Before the duty there must be an actual preparation or a solemn discharge of all impediments, that we may not bring the world along with us.*—"Put off thy shoes from off thy feet," saith God to Moses; "for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." (Exod. iii. 5.) Surely we should put off our carnal distractions when we go about holy duties. "Gird up the loins of your mind," saith the apostle Peter; (1 Peter i. 13;) an allusion to long garments worn in that country. It is dangerous to come to prayer with a loose heart. "My heart is fixed," saith David, "O God, my heart is fixed;" (Psalm lvii. 7;) that is, fitted, prepared, bended to God's worship. The soul must be set, put into a dexterous, ready posture. *Claudatur contra adversarium pectus, et soli Deo pateat, ne ad se hostem Dei accedere tempore orationis patiatur.* (CYPRIANI *liber De Oratione Dominicâ.*) "There must be a resolved shutting of the heart against God's enemy, [and the opening of it only to God, in the hour of prayer,] lest he insinuate with us, and withdraw our minds."

5. *Be severe to your purpose.*—And see that you regard nothing but what the duty leadeth you unto. It is the devil's policy to cheat us of the present duty by an unseasonable interposition. Satan beginneth with us in good things, that he may draw us to worse. What is unseasonable is naught. Watch against the first diversion, how plausible soever; it is an intruding thought that breaketh a rank. In this case say, as the spouse, "I charge you, that ye stir not up, nor awake my Love, till he please." (Canticles iii. 5.) Such a rigid severity should you use against the starting of the heart. If Satan should at first cast in a thought of blasphemy, that would make thee quake and shake: therefore, he beginneth with plausible thoughts. But be careful to observe the first stragglings. Yea, be not diverted by thy very strivings against diversions; and therefore do not dispute with suggestions, but despise them; nor stand examining temptations, but reject them; as blind Bartimeus regarded not the rebukes of the people, but cried the more after Christ; or as travellers do not stand beating back the dogs that bark at them, but hold on their course. This is to be religiously obstinate and severe to our purpose. Satan, contemned, hath the less advantage against you. When he is writing images upon the fancy, do not vouchsafe to look upon them. A crier in the court that is often commanding silence, disturbeth the court more than they that make the noise; so disputing with our distractions increaseth them; they are better avoided by a severe contempt.*

* *Est praterea optimum ad attendendum remedium: si imagines rerum irruentes non solum non advertas, non excutias, non examines, sed illa te habeas quasi eas non aspicere digneris: nam ipsum advertere et examinare istas cogitationes, evagari est; et jam adversarius atiquid a nobis extorsit, &c.*—JACOBUS ALVAREZ. "Besides, the best remedy which you can adopt is strict attention in this duty: if images of things begin to rush in crowds into your mind, you should not only be unconcerned about them, stopping neither to cast them away nor to examine their quality, but you should also comport yourself as though you

6. *Bring with you to every holy service strong spiritual affections.*—Our thoughts would not be at such a distance from our work, if our affections were more ready and more earnestly set: it is the unwilling servant that is loath to stay long at his work, but is soon gone. Could we bring ourselves more delightfully to converse with God, our hearts would hold our minds close, and we would not straggle so often as we do: therefore, see you do this, or you do nothing. “I was glad,” saith David, “when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.” (Psalm cxxii. 1.) Were we of this frame of spirit, many directions [we] would not need. Now, what should hinder us from being thus affected? Are not the ordinances of God the special means of our communion with him? and the throne of grace, the very porch of heaven? Can we be better than in God’s company, pleading with him for our soul’s good, and waiting for his blessing? Therefore, let us be glad, and rejoice in his presence; and you will not easily find such out-strayings of mind and thought.

7. *Remember the weight and consequence of the duties of religion.*—That is a cure for slightness. You are dealing with God in a case of life and death; and will you not be serious? With what diligence and earnestness doth an advocate plead *with a man*, in a case wherein he himself is not concerned, either for the life of another, or the inheritance or goods of another! And wilt not thou plead earnestly *with God*, when thy soul is in danger, when it is a case of eternal life and death, as all matters that pass between God and us are? * Certainly, if we did consider the weight of the business, the heart would be freed from this garish wantonness. If Christ had taken thee aside into the garden, as he took Peter, James, and John, and thou hadst seen him praying and trembling under his agonies, thou wouldst have seen that it is no light matter to go to God in a case of the salvation of souls, though thou hast never so much assurance of the issue; for so Christ had. The frequent return of Christian duties maketh us to forget the consequence of them. In hearing the word, be serious; it is your life. “Set your hearts to observe all the words of this law. For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life.” (Deut. xxxii. 46, 47.) Thy everlasting estate is upon trial; and the things that are spoken, concern your souls. Every act of communion

disdained even to look upon them. For the mere turning aside to those obtrusive thoughts, for the purpose of examining them, is itself an act of wandering; and already has the adversary of our souls extorted something from us, and gained an advantage,” &c.—EDIT.

* *Si cum sublimi homine, non dicam pro vitâ et salute nostrâ, sed etiam pro alicujus lucri commodo supplicamus, totum in eum mentis et corporis aciem defigentes, de nutu ejus trepidâ expectatione pendemus, non mediocriter formidantes, ne quid forte ineptum et incongruum verbum misericordiam audientis avertat: Quânto magis cum illi occultorum omnium Cognitori, pro imminente perpetuâ mortis periculo, supplicemus, &c.*—CASSIANUS, col. xxiii. c. 7. “If when we supplicate a man of exalted rank, I will not say, for our own life and salvation, but even for the purpose of obtaining advantages for some other person, fastening all the keen sight of our mind’s eye as well as that of our body intently upon him, we hang with trembling expectation upon the slightest motion of his countenance, entertaining no small dread lest perchance an indiscreet or inappropriate word should escape from our lips, to avert the flow of mercy from the breast of him who favours us with an audience:—with how much greater ardency, caution, and solicitude, then, ought we to address ourselves as suppliants to Him who takes cognizance of all secrets, while we are engaged before him in deprecating the peril of eternal death, which is impending over us, and to which we are obnoxious!”—EDIT.

with God, every participation of his grace, hath an influence upon eternity. Say, therefore, as Nehemiah in another case, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down." (Neh. vi. 3.) Can you have a heart to mind other things, when you are about so great a work as the saving of your souls?

8. *Let every experimental wandering make you more humble and careful.*—If men did lay their wanderings to heart, and retract them, even every glance with a sigh, the mind would not so boldly, so constantly, digress and step aside. All actions displeasing are not done so readily; therefore, it is good to bewail these distractions. Do not count them as light things. Cassianus, speaking of these wandering thoughts, saith, "The most that come to worship, being involved in greater sins, scarce count distraction of thoughts an evil,"* and so the mischief is increased upon them. It is a sad thing to be given up to a vain mind, and such a frothy spirit as cannot be serious; therefore, if we do soundly humble ourselves for these offences, and they did once become *our burden*, they would not be *our practice*. One saith,† that huntsmen observe of young dogs, that if a fresh game come in view, they leave their old scent; but if soundly beaten off from it, they kindly take to their first pursuit. The application is easy: did we rate our hearts for this vanity, and pray against the sins of our prayers with deep remorse, this evil would not be so familiar with us.

9. *A constant heavenliness and holiness of heart.*—If men were, as they should be, *ἅγιοι ἐν πάσῃ ἀναστροφῇ*, "holy in all manner of conversation," (1 Peter i. 15,) in solemn duties, good and proper thoughts would be more natural and kindly to us. They that live in a constant communion with God, do not find it such a tedious business to converse with him. If they have any excursion of thoughts, it is in their daily work, and the offices of the common life, which they are ever seasoning with some gracious meditations and short ejaculations. When they are in duty, they are where they would be: constant gravity and seriousness is a great help to them. Men allow themselves a lawless liberty in their ordinary conversations; and then in prayer they know not how to gather up their hearts. Such as men are *out of prayer*, such they will be *in prayer*. We cannot expect that pangs of devotion should come upon us all of a sudden; and that when we come recking from the world, we should presently leap into a heavenly frame.

10. The next remedy is *frequent, solemn meditation.*—If the understanding were oftener taken up with the things of God, and our thoughts were kept in more frequent exercise, they would the better come to hand. There is a double advantage comes to us by meditation:—

(1.) *The soul gets more abundance of heart-warming knowledge.*—And therefore will not be so barren and dry, which certainly is a cause of

* *Hæc omnia nonnullis qui sunt crassioribus vitiis involuti levia, atque a peccato pene aliena, videntur: scientibus tamen perfectionis bonum, etiam minimarum rerum multitudinem gravissimum est.*—CASSIANUS, col. xxiii. c. 7. "To some who are entangled with vices of the grosser kind, all these wandering thoughts seem to be trivial, and scarcely coming within the verge of sin; but to those who know and value the blessing of perfectness, the multitude even of these very little things is grievous and distressing."—EDIT. † HOOKER on Acts ii. 37.

wandering. "My heart is inditing a good matter;" and then "my tongue is the pen of a ready writer." (Psalm xlv. 1.) A man that boileth and concocts truths in his heart, hath a greater readiness of words and affections: there is a "good treasure" within him, (Matt. xii. 35,) out of which he may spend freely. One expresseth it thus: "He that hath store of gold and silver in his pocket, and but a few brass farthings, will more readily, upon every draught, come out with gold and silver than brass farthings: so he that hath stocked his heart with holy thoughts, will not find carnal musings so rife and frequent."*

(2.) *By use a man gets a greater command over himself.*—When we constantly leave the thoughts at random, and never lay restraints upon them, it is in vain to think we shall keep them in order when we please. Fierce creatures are tame to those that use to command them. Every art is difficult at first, as writing, singing, playing upon an instrument; but we get a facility by use and exercise; yea, not only a facility, but a delight in them: and those things that at first we thought impossible, by a little practice grow easy. Certainly, "the way of the Lord is strength to the upright;" (Prov. x. 29;) and the more we set ourselves to any good thing, the more ready and prepared are we for it.

SERMON XX.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM COOPER, A.M.

HOW MUST WE IN ALL THINGS GIVE THANKS?

In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.—1 Thessalonians v. 18.

THE more comprehensive any mercy or duty is, the greater they are.

There are three duties here together, which the apostle exhorts to; all which have a kind of universality annexed to them; of which my text contains one.

1. *Rejoicing.*—We must "rejoice evermore;" for even holy mourning hath the seed of joy in it, which the soul finds by that time it is over, if not in it. (Psalm cxxvi. 6; xcvi. 12.)

2. *Prayer.*—"Pray without ceasing."† We must be ever, at least, in a holy disposition to this duty, when we do it not actually. "Prayer is the wall that compasses the city: there must be no gap in it. It is as the sun in the firmament: it must always keep its round."‡

3. *Thanksgiving.*—"In every thing give thanks," &c.

Observe in the words these two parts:

- (1.) *A duty enjoined.*
- (2.) *A reason annexed.*

* COBBETT "Of Prayer."

† Though not in the heretical sense of [the] Euchites

and Messalians.

‡ CHRYSOSTOMUS, *Orat. ii. De orand. Deum.*

- (1.) In the *duty* note four things :—
 (i.) The *matter* of it : “ thanksgiving.”
 (ii.) The *object* of it, implied : “ God.”
 (iii.) The *performers* of it : “ believers ;” for to them he writes.
 (1 Thess. i. 1—3.)
 (iv.) The *extent* of it : “ in every thing.”
 (2.) In the *reason* we have three things :—
 (i.) *The ground of the duty.*—It is “ the will of God,” the revealed will of God, the rule of all obedience.
 (ii.) *The manner of declaring God’s will to us in this behalf.*—It is “ the will of God in Christ Jesus ;” * it is a gospel duty. Christ Jesus was the prophet and messenger of it ; it is suitable to the mind of Christ ; it is accepted of God in Christ and for Christ. Lastly, Christ himself was a pattern of it : “ This is the will of God in Christ Jesus.”
 (iii.) *The special application.*—“ This † is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”

Mr. Calvin doth excellently show the sweet harmony between these three duties, how one helps the other ; ‡ but I cannot insist on that.

The lesson, then, which the Holy Ghost would have us learn in the text, is thus summed up :

DOCTRINE.

It is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning Christians, that in every thing they give thanks ; that they be thankful, as our word is more proper to our purpose.

For though we have nothing of our own that is good to give God but thanks, yet neither do we properly give him *that*, seeing both our giving and the right manner of doing it, even in thanksgiving, are of the Lord. (1 Cor. iv. 7 ; 1 Chron. xxix. 14 ; Phil. ii. 13.)

Our *continual praying* shows that we are always beggars, and our *continual thanksgiving* shows us always debtors. Our thanks, then, indeed, is the rebound of mercy heavenward, whence it came, and a holy reflection of the warm sun-beams of God’s benefits shining on us.

That which I principally aim at in the pursuance and pressing of this truth, is, not only to speak somewhat to it in the nature, necessity, and excellency of it, but to the extent of it as a special case : *How Christians may be said to give thanks in every thing, and why ?*

QUERIES.

- I. Who are properly concerned in this duty ?
- II. Why, and upon what grounds, are Christians bound to give thanks in every thing ?
- III. How, and in what manner, are Christians to give thanks in every thing ?

* It is pleasing and acceptable unto God.—BEZA *in locum.* *Vel ista per anthypophoram dicta sunt.*—*Idem, ibidem.* “ Or these expressions are employed in the form of an answer to an objection.”—EDIT. † *Illud autem toto referendum non ad gratiarum tantum actionem, sed et ad preces.*—GROTII *Annotationes in locum.* “ But the word *this* must refer not only to giving thanks, but also to praying without ceasing.”—EDIT. ‡ *Comment. in 1 Thess.*

IV. How in afflictions, and why?

V. How shall we bring our hearts to give thanks to God in every thing?

QUERY I. *Who are or ought to be thankful?*

ANSWER. The Lord hath a return and tribute of praise due to him from all creatures. David names animate and inanimate creatures, and bids them sing hallelujah; (Psalm cxlviii;) as if all the world were but one concert of musical instruments tuned to God's glory. But he looks for it principally from men and angels; from all men.

It is charged as an inexcusable sin, incapable of any apology, upon natural men, "that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful."* Upon which place Beza brings in Galen, a heathen man, praising and blessing God, not with sacrifices and sweet incense, but acknowledging and proclaiming the wisdom, power, and goodness of God, &c. "I write this," saith he, "as a hymn, and account it the true worship of that God."†

The law of thankfulness is written upon the hearts of very Heathens; as may be proved at large, not only from heathen instances, but [from] scripture also; as the Philistines, when they had taken Samson and killed Saul; (Judges xvi. 24; 1 Sam. xxxi. 9;) and Belshazzar, who "praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone," &c.; (Dan. v. 23;) which although it be enough to shame unthankful Christians, yet it signified little; for all wicked men, though they have cause, yet they have no heart to this work, at least not often, nor at all as it should be.

Some are so curious as to inquire whether reprobates in hell have not cause to give thanks that their torments are less than the merits of their sins, and for that the justice of God is glorified in the inflicting of them; but this is foreign to our case.

The persons engaged and most bound to this duty are the Thessalonians that believed, and all the faithful upon the same account.

THANKFULNESS DESCRIBED.

Now, howbeit all the service we perform to God, both mediate and immediate worship, the duties of both tables, yea, and the whole work of our Christian obedience in a holy conversation, be but a return of thankfulness unto God;‡ yet thanksgiving, in the text and doctrine, is taken more strictly for a particular part of God's worship distinct from prayer, (of which he spake immediately before,) which sometimes includes praise and thanks too, by which we render due praise to God for all or any of his benefits promised or bestowed, and that with our hearts, lips, and lives.

Some affirm that much of religion is seen in piety to parents, observance to our betters, and thankfulness to our benefactors. God is indeed all these to us. Yet the proper notion of our thankfulness refers to God

* *Eis to einai autous anakoloyhtous.* (Rom. i. 20, 21.)
Δημιουργησαντος ημας ονον αληθινον, συντιθημι και νομιζω τουτ' ειναι την ορθως ευσεβειαν, &c.—GALENUS *De Usu Partium*, lib. iii.

† *Ιερον λογον εγω, του*
† POLANUS.

as our benefactor, every benefit from God makes the receiver a debtor; * thankfulness is rather the confessing of our debt than the payment of it; and forasmuch as we are bound always to be thankful, it doth acknowledge we are always beholden to God, and always insolvent.

Now, a child of God is bound to be thankful to God above all men, because,

1. He is more competent than any other.
2. He is more concerned than any other.

1. *More competent.*—By acts of reason and grace too. All that the scripture speaks, as to the duty of thankfulness, may be referred to these heads:—

- (1.) To know and acknowledge the Lord's mercies.
- (2.) To remember them; that is, to record and commemorate them.
- (3.) To value and admire them.
- (4.) To blaze and proclaim them.

In all which a gracious soul is much more competent than a mere natural man, though endued with quick understanding, strong memory, and great eloquence. For the Spirit of God hath enlightened his soul, and taught him this lesson: he is principled for it; he is a well-tuned instrument; his heart boileth with good matter, and his "tongue is the pen of a ready writer," as David speaks on this occasion, when he spake of the praises of the king in his "Song of loves." (Psalm xlv. 1.)

This Spirit of God in a thankful soul is as the breath of the organ, without which the pipes make no sound; yea, as the breath of the trumpeter, by which the trumpet gives a certain and melodious sound.

This is it that makes that noble evangelical spirit, yea, that heavenly angelical spirit, in Christians. See a place for it: "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ:" (Eph. v. 18—20:) showing that what wine doth in poets and good-fellows, (it makes them sing and roar out catches, by which they make music to the devil,) so the Spirit of God in saints is the principle of all true thankfulness and holy joy towards God: and, indeed, there was a very gracious frame of spirit this way in primitive Christians.

2. *More concerned.*—As having received more than others: "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required;" (Luke xii. 48;) a proportion of duty according to the degree of every portion of mercy, whether you consider what is given, or what is forgiven, you.

There are two things which every gracious soul will acknowledge: "No man," saith he, "in the world hath deserved less of God than I; and none hath received more of God than I: how much, then, am I concerned to be thankful!"

I have read of a holy man, that was seen once standing still with tears in his eyes, and looking up to heaven; and being asked, by one that passed by, why he did so, said, "I admire the Lord's mercy to me

* "We praise God for all his perfections, we thank God for his benefits."—FILLIUCIUS, out of Aquinas.

that did not make me a toad ;” that vermin being then casually at his feet.

The least common mercy affects a gracious soul that knows his desert [to be] nothing but misery. Mephibosheth “bowed himself, and said, What is thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am ?” (2 Sam. ix. 8;) when David had told him he should have his lands, and eat bread at his table. When the Lord spares our lives, and gives us common mercies, we must admire and adore his goodness.

And this leads me to the second general question.

QUERY II. *Why, and upon what grounds, Christians are bound to give thanks in every thing ?*

ANSWER I. *It is the will of God in Christ Jesus.*

The will of God in Christ Jesus is the clearest rule, and the highest obligation, to any soul for the performance of any duty. O that men would now-a-days study more, act by, and hold fast to, this rule ; and ask conscience in the performance of every duty, “Is this the will of God in Christ Jesus ?”

It was meet that this duty of thankfulness should be pressed and practised under the gospel, because it argues a spiritual and noble frame of soul, the highest pitch of grace, which is a true gospel-frame.

David, under the Old Testament, had a New-Testament heart in this particular : his Psalms, which were all penned upon emergent occasions, are all *tehillah* and *tephillah*, “prayer and praise ;” his heart and harp were so tuned to the praises of God, to “Psalms of Degrees,” to Hallelujahs, that some have thought the Lord is praised with those psalms in heaven.

Yet is it promised under the gospel, that “he that is feeble shall be as David ;” (Zech. xii. 8;) which some understand as to praise and thanksgivings, upon the account of gospel grace.*

More punctually, “this is the will of God in Christ Jesus ;” that is, Jesus Christ shows us the duty of thankfulness, both by pattern and by precept ; for he was not only ushered into the world with songs of thanksgiving by angels, by Zachary, by Mary, by Simeon, by the shepherds, &c., (Luke i. 46, 68 ; ii. 13, 14, 20, 29,) but the Lord Jesus himself was a great Pattern and Precedent of thankfulness all his life long ; and in this also was a true Son of David : he thanked God frequently and fervently : “I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes ;” (Matt. xi. 25;) when his disciples preached and cast out devils. Thus, also, when he raised Lazarus : “Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.” (John xi. 41.) When he was to eat *common* bread, he blessed it with giving of thanks ; (Mark viii. 6;) much more *consecrated* bread. (Luke xxii. 19.)

Thus was he a pattern of thankfulness, he did “in every thing give thanks.”

In like manner we find him reproving the nine lepers for their unthankfulness ; (Luke xvii. 17, 18;) which shows that he held out thankfulness as a duty ; personally, he gave a pattern and precept for it.

Now, though this were enough to show it [to be] “the will of God in

* GREGORIUS, *Hom. xx. in Ezek.*

Christ Jesus," yet these words reach further; namely, to show that it is the strain of the gospel in the apostles' doctrine and practice; for they, through their commission, and the great measure of God's Spirit in them, declared "the will of God in Christ Jesus:" "They worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen." (Luke xxiv. 52, 53.)

What the apostle Paul's spirit was in this, (by whom so much of "the will of God in Christ Jesus" is revealed and penned,) I need not rehearse; for all his Epistles breathe out the praises of God's grace.

ANSWER 2. *Thanks and praise is the homage we owe to God for all we have and are.*—Therefore, in every thing to be rendered.

We live precariously, and at mercy: "By the grace of God we are what we are." (1 Cor. xv. 10.) God in his sovereignty might have left us in the womb of nothing, and never made us, and have crushed us into nothing as soon as he made us; for "hath not the potter power over the clay?" (Rom. ix. 21.) Every moment we depend on him, and hold all from him; (Acts xvii. 28;) his power over us is arbitrary and infinite; to this sovereign God we owe all, and therefore our thanks: "Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." (Rom. xi. 35, 36.) For not considering this, Belshazzar smarted: "The God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified." (Dan. v. 23.) The birds that lift up their bills at every drop they take may mind us of this duty. Common and constant mercies deserve special thanks, because constant.

ANSWER 3. *Christians must give thanks in every thing, because they have spiritual mercies innumerable and invaluable superadded to common mercies.*—Special and spiritual mercies in Christ Jesus: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ." (Eph. i. 3.) "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible," &c. (1 Peter i. 3, &c.) "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation," &c. (2 Cor. i. 3.)

Papists distinguish grace into "grace freely given," and "grace that makes men grateful to God the Giver of grace."* This distinction is idle and untrue; for all grace, as freely given, obligeth us to be grateful; but yet special grace binds us to a more special gratitude; namely, sanctifying and saving grace.

The decreeing and sending of Jesus Christ to and for poor sinners; the opening a fountain of grace in and by him; the making and ratifying a covenant of grace, whereof the Lord Jesus is the Angel and Mediator; the precious promises, both absolute and conditional, thereupon; with all other choice gospel-privileges of grace and glory, as far as God's all-sufficiency, and the infinite merit, satisfaction, and righte-

* *Gratia gratis data, et gratia gratum faciens.*—BELLARMINUS, VALENTIA, &c.

ousness of the Son of God can reach:—this deserves a suitable proportion of thanks and blessing from us, both here and in heaven. “Because thy loving-kindness is better than life,* my lips shall praise thee;” (Psalm lxxiii. 3;) that is, I will render special and continual praise for this above all other things.

QUERY III. *How and in what manner Christians are to give thanks in every thing.*

ANSWER. The difficulty lies here as to the act and the object both. 1. That is, how a man can *always* have his heart and tongue exercised unto this duty. 2. If he could be supposed to do this, yet it seems that *every thing* is not a fit subject-matter of thanksgiving: for, a great part of our life being sin and misery, which is rather the ground of mourning than of thanksgiving, our thankfulness seems to be restrained to a narrower sphere than what the text holds out.

1. “*Can a child of God in any sense give thanks for sin?*”

ANSWER. No, not properly; because, (1.) That which is the ground of detestation cannot be the ground of thanksgiving; but sin is a “detestable thing.” (Ezek. v. 11.) (2.) That which produceth a curse, cannot properly cause blessing; but sin is a cursed thing. (Gal. iii. 10.) (3.) As we may not “sin that grace may abound,” nor “do evil that good may come” of it, (Rom. vi. 1; iii. 8,) so sin cannot be the ground of thanksgiving; being contrary to the honour, image, and will of God. (4.) Sin is none of God’s creatures,† therefore a plague and not a benefit; therefore the subject of sorrow and shame, not of thanks.

Nevertheless, *improperly, by accident*, occasionally and consequentially, as men speak, sin is a ground of thanksgiving. “How?” That the Lord by his unlimited power can so master sin, and by his infinitely wise providence can so permit, dispose of, and bound sin, and by his free grace pardon sin; yea, make grace superabound where sin did abound; fetching light out of darkness, and make great sinners become great saints; and from all lay a foundation, and raise a revenue, of infinite glory to himself:—this is praiseworthy in God.

Now, as Pilate and Herod, Judas and Jews, are not to be praised for their treachery and cruelty against Christ, although they did, by all they did, fulfil and execute God’s decrees in that behalf; so no man must thank sin, or God for sin, albeit God hath extracted treacle out of this viper. (Acts iv. 27, 28.)

Wherefore, when we read of a holy man that said, he was more beholden to his corruptions than to his gifts and graces, because the former made him humble, the latter made him proud;—or when we hear another cry out, *O felix culpa*, &c., “O happy sin of our first parents, happy tree of knowledge, that bore such fruit, that brought forth such a promise, such a Saviour,” &c.;—I say, when we hear such rhetorical strains as these from the devout, ancients or moderns, we must understand them warily.

Yet, when the Lord doth demonstrate the glory of his attributes in overruling and pardoning sin, to the salvation of poor sinners, there is

* A meiosis. † *Deus non est author, sed ultor, peccati.* “God is not the author, but the avenger, of sin.”—EDIT.

reason we should magnify him to the height. (1.) Because all the dishonour which God hath in the world is upon the account of sin. (2.) Because we ourselves, having dishonoured him much that way, it is meet we adore and admire him the more in the power of his grace, that can fetch a pearl out of this dunghill, and by such a foil set-off his glory.

Let us, then, as many as profess to be made partakers of this grace, speak good of the Lord for it, and give others occasion so to do; as the Romans did to Paul: "God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you;" (Rom. vi. 17;) that is, that ye were once sinners, and are now saints.

2. Come we then from moral evil to penal evil; that is, *if we may not give thanks properly for sin, without sin; whether may we give thanks for crosses and calamities?*

ANSWER. Here, say some, we may not properly give thanks for penal evils, because, as such, they are the strokes of God's vindictive justice, the fruit of sin, and destructive to the creature; in which sense they have not *rationem beneficii sed supplicii*, "they are not benefits, but punishments."

But, whereas the Lord hath so ordered that all things shall work together for good to them that are good, and *crosses* are some of those things, they are hereby sanctified and become the matter of thanksgiving to a child of God.

And this was that noble primitive frame of spirit among Christians: under what providence soever, dark or light, sweet or sour, they were thankful in all; always thankful.

St. Augustine, upon Psalm cxxxii., commendeth that ancient custom among Christians, in whose mouths you should always hear these words: *Deo gratias*, "Thanks be to God!" when they met and saluted one another, *Deo gratias*, "God be thanked;" when they heard any tidings of persecution or protection, favour or frown, gain or loss, cross or comfort, still *Deo gratias*, "The Lord be thanked;" at which custom the Circumcellians pick quarrels, but St. Austin defends it as laudable and religious: "What," saith he, "shall brethren in Christ not give God thanks when they see one another? What better thing can we speak, or think, or write, than this? *God be thanked!* Nothing can be more compendiously spoken, nor more gladly heard, nor more solemnly understood, nor more profitably acted, than this; *God be thanked!*"* Thus he. Such a frame of heart had holy Job: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." [Job i. 21.]

And such a one was in the sweet singer of Israel: "I will bless the Lord at all times." (Psalm xxxiv. 1.) Notable is that of Chrysostom: "There is nothing," saith he, "nothing can we study more pleasing to God, than to be thankful, not only in good days, but when things likewise fall out cross. This is the best sacrifice and oblation we offer God."† Of a

* *Quid melius et animo geramus, et ore promamus, et calamo exprimamus, quam "Deo gratias?" Hoc nec dici brevius, nec audiri lætius, nec intelligi grandius, nec agi fructuosius potest, "Deo gratias."*—AUGUSTINUS, *Epist. 77.* † Ουδεν γαρ ούτως τω Θεω περισπουδαστον ὡς το ευχαριστοῦ ειναι και μη μονον εν ταις ευημεριας, αλλα και των πραγματος εναντιως διακειμενων, &c.—CHRYSOSTOMUS in *Psalimum cxy.*

like spirit was famous Mr. Bradford, martyr: speaking of Queen Mary, at whose cruel mercy he then lay, "If," said he, "she will release me, I will thank her; if she will imprison me, I will thank her; if she will burn me, I will thank her," &c. So saith a believing soul: "Let God do with me what he will, I will be thankful."

This made one of the ancients* to say, "It is peculiar to Christians to give thanks in adversity. To praise God for benefits,—this Jew and Gentile can do; but to give God thanks in dangers according to the apostle's sense, and in miseries, and always to say, 'Blessed be God,'—this is the highest pitch of virtue; for a true Christian's language is this: 'I cannot tell how I should suffer less; these things are but little to my sins: I deserve much more at the Lord's hands.' Here is your Christian; such a one takes up his cross, and follows his Saviour: no loss or cross can dishearten him; but, as the poet saith, 'If the world break and fall about his ears, he would not be afraid.'" Thus St. Jerome.

By whom it should seem, that to give God thanks for crosses and afflictions is $\tau\iota$ $\omega\pi\epsilon\rho\iota\sigma\sigma\omega\nu$, "to be numbered among those singular things which Christians are bound to excel in" beyond Heathens and publicans; as to love enemies, to bless them that curse, &c., to which our Saviour exhorts and commands. (Matt. v.)

Papists, indeed, tell us, they are counsels and commands, and therefore required only of *perfect ones*, in order to merit and supererogation; which is a blasphemous fancy. Those duties, and so this of thankfulness, in every thing is required of every Christian, *virtute præcepti*; ["in virtue of the command;"] "This is the will of God concerning you," saith my text.

QUERY IV. *Why and how we do give thanks in and for afflictions?*

ANSWER 1. *We must give thanks for good: afflictions are not evil, but good.*—David tells you so, and wherein: (Psalm cxix. 67, 68, 71:) which every child of God also finds. To this agrees that of the Schools, that crosses are not evil, but good: †

(1.) Because inflicted by the Lord, who is the Chief Good.

(2.) Because suffered by the Lord Jesus, who is the Chief Good.

(3.) They conform us to the Lord, who is the Chief Good.

(4.) They prepare us for communion with the Lord in heaven, which is our chief good: therefore, be thankful for crosses.

ANSWER 2. *We must thank God for every token of his fatherly love.*—But now crosses and troubles are such fatherly love-tokens. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth;" (Heb. xii. 6;) therefore, give thanks for them; as well for the rod, as for bread.

"This is thankworthy:" this is acceptable to God. God will thank us for suffering patiently; therefore we must thank him for inflicting it as a tender Father on beloved sons. (1 Peter ii. 19, 20.)

Would you be counted bastards? Alexander cashiered one of his name that would not fight; the eagle is said to cast off those young ones that cannot bear the sight of the sun; and some Germans counted such

* HIERONYMUS.

† BIEL and others.

children spurious brats that could not swim: so our heavenly Father will never own them for his children that will not submit to his rod, and kiss it too. "Lord, when thou strokest, and when thou strikest, thou art alike a Father," saith St. Austin.*

ANSWER 3. *The Lord by afflicting his people doth prevent sin, and purge it.*—Therefore, give thanks for it, for this is good, because it frees us from the greatest evil.

(1.) *He prevents sin by it.*—"Lest," saith Paul, "I should be exalted above measure, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me." (2 Cor. xii. 7.)

(2.) *He purgeth sin by it.*—"By this," saith the prophet, "shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged." (Isai. xxvii. 9.) †

Now, do we not thank and pay the surgeon that lets out our bad blood, that lanceth our festered sores, that cuts out our proud and rotten flesh? Yes, surely, we do thank him. Do we not also thank the physician that keeps us to a strict diet, confines us to our chamber, gives us bitter pills and potions, and crosses our appetites? Yes, we do thank him; for hereby he cures a disease, defends and preserves both our health and life.

Now, what else, I beseech you, doth the Lord do, more or less, by all that we suffer at his hands? And doth not he deserve our thanks, as well as the physician and surgeon?

"When we are vexed and pinched, then ought we more especially to give the Lord thanks, who, as a most indulgent Father, will not suffer our corruptions to spread further, but represses and corrects them by severe strokes and scourges," saith Lactantius. ‡

"Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell." (Prov. xxiii. 13, 14.) O blessed rod that can do this! God's rod doth it surely. "Then it is better to go to God's house of correction, than to the place of torment." § Happy children, then, who have the Lord for their Father and for their Physician! this he takes for one of his eminent titles, אֲדֹנָי הַרְפוּקִים "The Lord thy Physician." (Exod. xv. 26.) He doth it "skilfully, easily, safely, quickly, thoroughly," || according to all the properties of the best artists; therefore, thank him.

ANSWER 4. *We must thank the Lord for afflicting us, and for laying the cross upon us, because it is so far below what we deserve at his hands.*—What is a drop of wormwood sweetened, to the gall of bitterness? to the lake of fire and brimstone? Hear what Zophar tells Job: "O that God would speak, and open his lips against thee; and that he would show thee the secrets of wisdom, that they are double to that which is! Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth." (Job xi. 5, 6.)

The like saith holy Ezra; and then, surely, we have much more cause

* *Et cum blandiris Pater es, et cum cedis Pater es.*—AUGUSTINUS in *Psalmum* xcviii.
 † CHRYSOSTOM. ‡ *Institut. lib. v. de Justitia, cap. 23.* § ΒΕΛΤΙΟΝ ΕΣΤΙ ΝΥΝ
 παιδεύθηναι η βασανφ παραπεμφθηναι.—GREG. NAZIANZENUS. || *Tuto, cito, sine dolore.*

to say so; and is not this ground of thankfulness? "If thou suffer a thousand evils, thou wilt never suffer what thou meritest," saith that Father.*

Jesus Christ drank off the dreggy part of the cup for us. We do but as it were sip for fashion, that we may seem to pledge; for, to drink as he drank it we cannot, we need not. (Matt. xx. 22.) † Thank God, then, that thou hast so little a share of it, when all was thy portion by right and justice. This is thankworthy.

ANSWER 5. *We must give thanks in every thing, even in and for afflictions, under the rod and cross, because thereby the Lord doth discipline us, and learns us much which else we never would have learned.*—By this David learned God's commandments, and they became dearer to him "than thousands of gold and silver." (Psalm cxix. 71, 72.) By this the Lord "opens the ear to discipline," saith Elihu, even when men are "bound in fetters, and be holden in cords of affliction; then he showeth them their work, and their transgressions that they have exceeded. He openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity." (Job xxxvi. 8—10.) For as wax, unless it be heated and softened, takes no impression of the seal; so no man, unless exercised with much affliction, will receive the prints of divine wisdom. ‡

Παιδεύω, the word commonly used by the Holy Ghost in the New Testament for "chastise," signifies, properly, "to teach a child as a schoolmaster or father, with a rod." (Heb. xii. 5—12; Luke xxiii. 22.) This is God's way of teaching; and the best scholars in Christ's college have come by their learning this way. "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth." (Lam. iii. 27.) By this, the poet saith, wise Ulysses was trained up. We use to say, They are usually the best scholars that have bought their learning dearest. § I am sure this is the choicest saints' academy.

ANSWER 6. *Give thanks in and for afflictions, because hereby the Lord fits us for heavenly glory.*—Saints are called "vessels of mercy, prepared unto glory;" (Rom. ix. 23;) but how do men make and prepare vessels? If it be a vessel of earth, the potter beats the clay to make it well-tempered, then he moulds it on the wheel, then he bakes it in the oven, and then it is fit for use. If it be a vessel of wood, it hath many a turn and many a cut, before it is fit. If it be a vessel of gold or silver, it hath both heats and knocks, before it be complete. So must every vessel of mercy be served, before it be fit for glory. || "We must

* Κατὰ μύρια πάλαι δεύα, οὐδεὶς τὴν ἀξίαν εἰδικας δίκην.—CHRYSOSTOMUS in Psalmum xli. 1. † Vide GREGORIUM, Hom. xvi. in Ezek. x. Hb. 2. ‡ The cross teacheth more the way to heaven than all the sermons of the doctors.—TAULERUS.

§ Qui studet optatam cursu contingere metam,

Multa tulit fecitque puer, sudavit et alsit, &c.—HORATIUS De Arte Poetica, 412.

"A youth who hopes the' Olympic prize to gain,

All arts must try, and every toil sustain;

The' extremes of heat and cold must often prove,

And shun the weakening joys of wine and love."—FRANCIS'S Translation.

|| Sub malleo premitur aurum tusionibus, ut vas fabricetur magni pretii: sic veluti sub malleo sunt iusti, premunturque laboribus, ut fiant vasa magna gloriæ.—GERHARDUS. "Gold is crushed under many and repeated strokes of the hammer, that out of it may be fabricated a vessel of great value. Thus, as under a hammer, are the righteous placed, and are oppressed with labours, that they may become vessels of great glory."—EDIT.

through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." (Acts xiv. 22.) Thus the apostle Peter tells us also, "that the trial of our faith, being much more precious than of gold," will be "found unto the praise and honour and glory" of God; (1 Peter i. 7;) for "the cross is the whetstone of faith,"* and all other grace, setting an edge and lustre upon it; it is the awakening of the north-wind and south-wind, to make these spices flow. (Canticles iv. 16.) The stone that is most hewed, cut, carved, and polished, is usually set in the chiefest part of the building. So are suffering saints prepared for the highest degrees of glory.† For these are prepared the *aureolæ*, those additional "flowers and ornaments" that all shall not partake of, say the Schools.

Those only that were beheaded or slain "for the witness of Jesus," reigned with Christ a thousand years. (Rev. xx. 4.) So that it may be said of the Lord's sufferers, as David speaks: "Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold." (Psalm lxviii. 13.) This may be truly said, when the Lord shall "change our vile bodies, and fashion them like to his glorious body." Notable and curious is that of Tertulian upon Jacob's blessing the two sons of Joseph "with his hands across," (which is granted by all,) *decussatis manibus*, that he might bless Ephraim the youngest with the blessing of the first-born: (Gen. xlviii. 14:) "That we might know, no blessing comes to us more kindly and properly than by the cross."‡ Therefore give thanks in and for thy afflictions.

ANSWER 7. *It is a very high privilege for a Christian to be conformed to Christ.*—To be conformists to Christ, is to be nonconformists to the world. (Rom. xii. 2.) But now, what doth more conform us unto Christ than the cross? Therefore give thanks for it. "That I may know the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." (Phil. iii. 10.) This is part of that excellent knowledge for which he accounted all other worldly privileges but dung. To this conformity in afflictions unto Christ we are predestinated. (Rom. viii. 29.) This privilege appears in verse 17: "If we suffer with him, we shall be glorified together." § This way Christ entered into glory. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" (Luke xxiv. 26.) Now, if we will enter with him, we must follow after him. How? By taking up his cross. "Christ, like a good physician, first tasted the medicine that he gave his patient." || "The cross of Christ sweetens our sufferings in the bitterness of them; as that piece of wood sweetened the waters of Marah, being cast into them." ¶ Therefore, John wrote to the saints, as partakers together of a great privilege, when he said, "Companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of

* *Cruz est cotricula fidei.*—HIERONYMUS. † AUGUSTINUS in *Psalmum xxxi.*
 † *Ut intelligeremus benedictionem non nisi per crucem haberi posse.*—TERTULLIANUS *De Baptismo*, cap. viii. § *Oportet nos crucifigi cum Crucifixo, ut glorificemur cum Glorificato.*—MACARIUS, *Homilia xii.* "With the Crucified One we must be crucified, that we may be glorified with Him who is glorified."—EDIT. ¶ *Christus prius ipse bibit potionem quam suis paravit.*—BERNARDI *Parv. Serm.* ¶ LUTHERUS in *Exod.* xv.

Jesus Christ." (Rev. i. 9.) Then never hope to go another way than the Captain of our salvation hath led us; for if we baulk his track, we are lost.* Must we not then give thanks for affliction that conforms us to our Head?

ANSWER 8. *The cross is a Christian's banner, his honour, and the special favour of the Lord towards him.*—Therefore be thankful for it. Let not this seem a riddle or paradox. "I have you," saith the apostle, "in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace;" (Phil. i. 7;) where by "grace" many understand, a special act of God's favour to him and them, wherewith they were to account themselves highly graced. Hence he saith again a little after, "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." (Verse 29.) This he accounts a peculiar gift of God to them, whereof but few in comparison do partake.† Hence saith one upon that place, "It is a most noble, yea, and almost divine, thing to suffer for the Lord Jesus."‡ For the Lord gave Christ himself, on this very account, "a name which is above every name." (Phil. ii. 9.) Mark what the apostle Peter saith: "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you." (1 Peter iv. 14.) Which words must be understood emphatically§ [as] the highest manifestation and operation of the Spirit of God. God's Spirit manifesteth itself variously in several subjects; but in sufferers for Christ the very spirit and quintessence of glory seems to be extracted and poured on them.

Upon all these accounts, and many more such, we are to thank God for crosses and corrections, because the good of them doth flow from God's goodness, not from their nature. When the horse-leech, by the physician's direction, sucks our blood, and thereby performs a cure, the horse-leech is not to be thanked, but the physician for his application. So the Lord can make the bloody persecutors of his people to be instruments of good to his people: no thanks to them, but to him, for it.

QUERY V. *How shall a Christian bring his heart to this holy and heavenly frame, so as in every thing to give thanks?*

ANSWER. Harken to these few directions, and lay them up in your hearts, and draw them out in your constant practice.

1. *Pray earnestly for the Spirit of God.*—Without that Spirit thou canst never pray or praise God duly, because not spiritually; none can sanctify the Lord God in his heart, (which is the first principle of this work,) but he whose heart the Lord God hath sanctified.|| The Holy Spirit breathing in a man, makes him a living organ, tuned to and sounding out his praise. "Praise is comely for the upright;" (Psalm xxxiii. 1;)

* AUGUSTINUS in *Psalmum* lli. † *Utrumque ostendit Dei donum, quia utrumque dicit esse donatum.*—AUGUSTINUS. "He shows each of these to be the gift of God, because he declares them both to have been given."—EDIT. ‡ VASQUEZ, in *locum*. § הרוח "The Spirit," per He emphaticum. || *Canticum novum et vetus homo male concordant.*—AUGUSTINUS. "The new song, and the old man, (unsanctified human nature,) make sad discord."—EDIT.

but as uncomely in a carnal mouth as a jewel in a swine's snout. The pompous dresses and melodious choirs of *Magnificats*,* without the Spirit of God breathing among them, are but as "a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal." † For, indeed, without the Spirit of God in men, they neither can nor will remember the Lord's mercies, nor consider them, nor value them, nor be affected with them, nor blaze ‡ the praise of them. "The dead," saith David, "do not praise thee;" dead hearts produce dead works; it is the Spirit that quickens.§

2. *Labour to get a continual quick sight and sense of sin.*—This will make thee sensible of every mercy, and thankful for it. So the provocation and merit of sin is nothing but curses; death and wrath being due to it. That yet thou shouldest be so tenderly spared, and instead of miseries shouldest enjoy blessings, how shouldest thou be affected with this, as Mephibosheth was with David's kindness to him! A humble, broken heart is the most thankful heart: this was most eminent in the most eminent saints: Jacob, (Gen. xxxii. 10,) David, (*per Psalmos*,) || Paul, &c. (1 Tim. i. 12—17.) He that knows he hath forfeited all, knows he deserves nothing but the reward of that forfeiture, which is wrath; and he that deserves nothing, thanks God for every thing, even for the least drop and crumb. ¶

3. *Behold every mercy coming to thee in the stream of Christ's blood, and through the covenant of grace.*—This gives the mercy both an estimate and a relish; this doth both sanctify it, and sweeten it, and sublimize it.** A crust of brown bread, coming thus, is better than a purse full of gold another way; as that king's kiss to one friend was said to be better gold than a cup of gold which he gave another friend. †† "He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name." (Psalm cxi. 9.) The deliverance *there* was, in David's account, and that truly, the more thank-worthy, as being upon a covenant-account; for thus every mercy is a token of the Lord's favour to his favourite: it is that which makes common mercies to become special mercies. Carnal men, so they enjoy mercies, they mind not which way they come-in, so they can but have them; but

* *Magnificat*, the well-known title of the song of the virgin Mary, (Luke i. 46,) is adopted as part of the even-song in the ritual both of the church of Rome and of England; in the chanting of which, as a canticle of great joy, the præcentors, vicars-choral, choristers, and other tuneful sprites in cathedrals and collegiate churches, rise up and pour forth their "notes symphonious." By an allowable metonymy it is here used for the persons engaged in this lively service.—EDIT.

† *Non musica chordula sed cor, non clamans sed amans cantat in aure Dei.* "In the ears of God, that is the most delightful harmony which proceeds, not from musical concord, but from a well-tuned heart; not from a loud singer, but from a true lover of Christ Jesus."—EDIT. † In the old meaning of "make known, or spread abroad."—EDIT. § "I will sing with the spirit." (1 Cor. xiv. 15.)

|| "Throughout the book of Psalms."—EDIT. ¶ *Invitat ad magna, qui gratanter accipit modica.*—CASSIODORUS. "When a man receives small favours with thankfulness, his grateful expressions serve as an invitation for his benefactor to bestow on him much greater benefits."—EDIT.

** *Anima immersa sanguini Christi aurea redditur, ut manus in aurum liquefactum injecta deauratur.*—CHRYSOSTOMUS. "A soul immersed in the blood of Christ is rendered golden; even as a hand dipped into a crucible containing the metal in a liquid form, is completely encrusted with gold on its being withdrawn."—EDIT. †† See this anecdote related of Alexander the Great in page 386.—EDIT.

a child of God knows that every thing that comes through Christ's hands is the better for it, and tastes the sweeter by far.*

4. *Look on thy mercies as answers to thy prayers, and bless the Lord for them on that account*:—For that is double mercy:—(1.) That God hath inclined and directed thine heart to beg such a mercy; for this is a special act of the Spirit of adoption. (Rom. viii. 26, 27.) (2.) That he hath answered such prayers; for this is a sign [that] he accepts thee in Christ. Many blessings come-in unasked-for, and unlooked-for: yet these require thankfulness.

But when the Lord is inquired-of for the things we have, and doth grant them to us, this is a blessing upon his own institution, and a seal to his promise. Hear David: "Come and hear," saith he, "and I will declare what he hath done for my soul. I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue;" (Psalm lxi. 16, 17;) as if he had said, "This was a signal favour for the Lord to grant what I petitioned him for; and therefore deserves a special acknowledgment." For this Hannah calls her son, Samuel, that is, "asked of God;" (1 Sam. i. 20;) and Leah calleth her second son, Simeon, that is, "hearing," because God heard her prayer for him. (Gen. xxix. 33.) And Rachel called her son, Naphtali, that is, "wrestling," because she wrestled for him. (Gen. xxx. 8.) Now as Samuels should be Lemuels, that is, "dedicated to God," so all our mercies we get by prayer should be the more solemnly dedicated to the Lord by thanksgiving; and such a frame of a thankful heart is a spiritual frame.

5. *When any of God's dealings do either draw us, or drive us, nearer to God, this is a special mercy*.—When we consider that well, we cannot but be greatly affected with it, and will be accordingly thankful for the mercy, for the dispensation is thereby the more merciful. Mercies are drawing-cords, afflictions are whip-cords to drive us; by both we are brought nearer to God: thank him. If the chief Shepherd hunt us together, and keep us from straggling, and bring us under command, this is a mercy to Christ's sheep. If the Lord "hedge up our way with thorns," that we cannot find our lovers, this is a mercy. And if the Lord recover† his mercies from us, that in the want of them we may know he was the Founder and Fountain of them,—this is a mercy. (Hosea ii. 6—9.) When Absalom burnt Joab's corn, it was to make Joab (who before that kept off) come to him: so all the angry dispensations of God towards his children are, that they [may] return to him. (Amos iv. 6—12.) That storm that sinks and splits some ships, drives others faster into the haven: so do the troubles of this world make a true Christian's voyage toward heaven the speedier.

6. *That soul that is truly and spiritually thankful, will so order his whole conversation, that God may have the glory of it*.—This the Psalmist, who was well skilled in this art, seems to point at often. "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God." (Psalm l. 23.) We cannot better

* *Non tam beneficium, sed ratio beneficii attendenda est.* "We must have regard not merely to the benefit which we receive, but also to the manner and reason of its having been conferred."—EDIT. † In its legal meaning of *regaining*, or *taking back*, in judgment.—EDIT.

glorify God than by a well-ordered conversation : this is in every thing to give thanks indeed. So likewise in Psalm cvi. 1 : "Praise ye the Lord ! *Hallelujah*. O give thanks unto the Lord ; for he is good : for his mercy endureth for ever." There is, (1.) The doxology ; (2.) Invitation ; (3.) The reason that we should, and why we should, give thanks always. But "who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? who can show forth all his praise?" That is, It is impossible for any man in the world to do this great duty aright, and as he should. "Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times." (Psalm cvi. 2, 3.) As if he had said, "This indeed is a vast duty ; but yet *he* makes the best essay towards it *that* sets himself constantly to serve God and keep his commandments." Now, this no man can do, neither perfectly, but only by the merits and in the strength of Christ ; he, making it the desire of his soul to serve the Lord, is accepted, though endeavours fall short ; and therefore [he] is pronounced blessed. For to be "a doer of the work" by evangelical obedience, makes him "blessed in his deed." (James i. 25.) Labour, then, to bless the Lord, not only in words, but in deed, and you shall be blessed.

7. *If we would offer thanks to the Lord acceptably, let us do it "in the name of the Lord Jesus."* (Eph. v. 20.)—Thus are we directed by the Spirit of God, (1.) Because all mercy comes to us by him. (2.) Because nothing is accepted but in him.* (3.) Because it is one part of his priestly office to receive the prayers and praises of the saints in his golden censer upon the golden altar, with much incense. (Rev. viii. 3, 4.) "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name ;" (Heb. xiii. 15;) alluding to that of the prophet, who calls it, "the calves of our lips:" (Hosea xiv. 2:) that through Christ's propitiatory sacrifice our eucharistical sacrifices are accepted, and that we must offer these under the gospel "continually," *jugiter* ; alluding to the daily sacrifice.† Now this must needs sanctify our service, because the "altar sanctifies the gift;" and therefore mention is made of a golden altar in this case.

USES.

Is it the will of God in Christ Jesus that in every thing we give thanks?—Then this serves to condemn the horrid ingratitude of Christians.

1. *Those that in nothing will give thanks, at no time, for no mercy.*—These are swine that devour all that drops from the tree of God's bounty, and never look up whence it cometh. These are worse than the ox and ass that know their owner's and master's cribs. (Isai. i. 3.) These are mere Heathens,‡ who, though they profess "they know God, yet do not glorify him as God, nor are thankful." [Rom. i. 21.] These are like buckets that run greedily down into a well when they are empty with open mouth ; but when they be full, they turn their hinder part upon the

* *Per eundem est decursus beneficiorum et recursus.* "The same Divine Person is the conduit through which our mercies flow down to us in benefits, and are returned in thanksgiving."—EDIT.
 † *Juge sacrificium.* "An unceasing, never-failing sacrifice."—EDIT.
 ‡ *Perraro grati homines reperiuntur.*—CICERO. "Truly grateful men are very rarely to be found."—EDIT.

well that filled them. Thus dō unthankful men call greedily for mercies ; and when God hath filled them, they “turn the back, and not the face.”

2. *Another kind of unthankful men is that sort, who, having received mercies from God, arrogate the honour of them to themselves.*—Let Papists and Pelagians, old and new, who attribute more to free-will than to grace, which the one makes the root of merits, the other gives the casting of the scale in man’s conversion to it ;—let these see how by such principles they can acquit themselves from the crime of sacrilegious ingratitude, for they rob God of his glory ; and then let them hear, not me, but St. Austin, thundering against them : “O Lord, he that assumes the glory of any good he hath to himself, and ascribes it not to thee, that man is a thief, and a robber, and like the devil, who robbeth thee of thy glory.”* Thus also they who attribute their riches, children, honours, victories, health, safety, knowledge, &c., to their wits, labours, merits,—these are ingrateful robbers of God. Thus they burnt incense to their drag and yarn. (Hab. i. 15, 16.) Thus Nebuchadnezzar gloried in the great Babel of his own building. (Dan. iv. 30.) Thus the Assyrian also ranted and vaunted himself, as if by his own great wisdom and valour he had conquered the nations. (Isai. x. 13—15.) But mark the end of these men ; how the Lord took it, and how he dealt with them for it. He turned Nebuchadnezzar out to graze† among the beasts. He kindled a fire in the Assyrian’s forest, and burnt it. He struck Herod, that he was eaten up with worms, because he gave himself, and not God, the glory. (Acts xii. 23.)

3. *Another sort of unthankful ones there is, that seem to be very thankful ; but it is only complimentally, and with the lip.*—These are like apes that eat up the kernel, and leave God the shells ; they care not to go to the cost of a heart- or a life-thankfulness ; they are cursed hypocrites : they put him off with the blind and the lame in sacrifice, and never once give him the male of their flock. (Mal. i. 14.) God will pay them in their own coin ; they are thankful in jest, and God will damn them in earnest. “That man,” saith Lactantius, “cannot be a godly man that is unthankful to his God.”‡ And Aquinas saith, that “unthankfulness hath in it the root and matter of all sin ;” § for it denies or dissembles the goodness of God, by which we live, move, and have our being, yea, and all our blessings, the thankful acknowledgment whereof is our indispensable homage unto God. Unthankfulness was a huge ingredient into Adam’s sin : to sin against his Maker as soon as he was made ; yea, by whom he was so fearfully and wonderfully made,—little lower than the angels ! (Psalm cxxxix. 14 ; [viii. 5.]) Unthankfulness was the sin of Noah and Lot after their deliverances, the one from water, the other from fire ; (Gen. ix., xix. ;) the sin of Israel, that forgot their Rock, their Husband that found them in “the waste howling wilderness ;” (Deut. xxxii. ;) and when they “lay in their blood, no eye pitying them, cast out to the loathing of their persons ;” (Ezek. xvi.

* *Qui de bono suo, O Domine, gloriam sibi quarit, et non tibi, hic fur est et latro et similis diabolo, &c.*—AUGUSTINI *Soliloq.* c. 15. † The editions vary thus in this word : *graze, grise, grass.*—EDIT.

‡ *Non constare homini ratio pietatis potest, &c.*—LACTANTI *Institut.* c. 3.

§ *Materialiter per connotationem, et adhaerentiam.*

1—36;) the sin of David; (2 Sam. xii. 7—9;) the sin of Solomon; (1 Kings xi. 9;) the sin of Hezekiah. (2 Chron. xxxii. 25.)

The great sin of the gospel is unthankfulness, by sinning against the light, love, free grace, and rich patience of God in it.* This is “to turn his grace into wantonness;” to prefer darkness before light, to “neglect so great salvation,” not to come under Christ’s wing when he calls to us, to “despise his goodness and long-suffering, leading us to repentance,” not to “come to him that we may have life;” to resist his Spirit, and trample on his blood.† The sin of the greatest sinners in the book of God is unthankfulness: the sin of the angels that kept not their first station; the sin of Cain in his offering; the sin of the Sodomites; the sin of the old world, the sin of Saul, the sin of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the sin of Nabal, the sin of Hanun, the sin of Judas, the sin of Julian, and of antichrist,—all is unthankfulness.

EXHORTATION.

I shall conclude with a solemn exhortation to all that hear this word, and profess the Lord Jesus, and to be ruled by the will of God in Christ Jesus revealed, that they study and practise this great, this comprehensive duty of thankfulness. Consider, that no people in the world have such cause of thankfulness as Christians:‡ they have received more mercy than any; therefore there is the more of them required; therefore the Lord takes their unkindness the more unkindly. (Deut. xxxii. 6.) Sins against mercy will turn mercy into cruelty, and patience into fury. To be unthankful to a bountiful God, is for a froward child to beat his mother’s breasts that gave him suck, and to kick his father’s bowels. The Lord, that he might upbraid his people’s ingratitude, compares them to a bullock that was fatted in good pasture, and then kicked. (Deut. xxxii. 15—25.) And what this cost you may read there.

When the Lord would preserve in his people the memorial of his mercies, see how he orders them: every man was to come with a basket of fruits; and the priest was to take it, and set it down before the Lord; and he that brought it was to make a solemn confession of his own poverty and wretchedness, of God’s goodness and faithfulness to him, and of his engagements to the Lord for the same. (Deut. xvi. 1—10.) Hereby the Lord let them know that they had all from him, and held all at mercy, and this was their homage that they paid him. O what shall we then render to the Lord for all his benefits? who were “Syrians ready to perish;” [Deut. xvi. 5;] who “with our staff passed this Jordan, and now are two bands;” [Gen. xxxii. 10;] who have not only nether springs, but upper also; the Lord hath opened a fountain and a treasure for us.

* *Peremptoria res est ingratitude, hostis gratiæ, inimica salutis.*—BERNARDI Serm. i. de septem Miser. “Ingratitude is a most destructive vice, the foe of grace, inimical to our salvation.”—EDIT. *Ingratitude est ventus urens, et exsiccat fontem gratiæ, fluentia misericordiæ.*—Idem. “Unthankfulness is a hot and burning wind, drying up both the fountain of grace, and the streams of mercy.”—EDIT. † *Quousque se diffundit gratia, eò patet ingratitude.* “As far as ever grace has been diffused, so far has ingratitude developed itself.”—EDIT. ‡ *Crescentibus donis crescunt donorum rationes.* “Concurrent with the increase of the gifts of God is that of our liability to account for their receipt and employment.”—EDIT.

Think of this, all you malcontents and murmurers; read over your mercies; preserve a catalogue of them; compare them with what others enjoy. It is not with you as with Heathens; you have the gospel; if it totters, as if it were in a moving posture from you, thank your unthankfulness for it. You have had it with peace and plenty; and if that hath glutted you, and the Lord is now curing your surfeit by a sparer diet, thank your wantonness for it.

Yet consider: Turks and Tartars are not in your bowels, burning your houses, ravishing wives and daughters, killing old, sick, and infants, carrying away the rest captives, drinking healths in your dead nobles' skulls digged out of their graves. Yet all this is done among the poor Protestants in Transylvania; sword, famine, and pestilence making havoc in that flourishing country; not to speak of other places, what is felt or feared. Is not this ground of thanks?

Consider, yet again, what we have had long, and still have, though the land is full of sin from one end to the other; what we have deserved, and yet do,—even to be stripped naked of all life and liberty, peace and plenty, to have our doors shut up, our lights put out, our teachers all driven into corners, the good land to spue us out, and the abomination that maketh desolate to enter in among us, our land to keep her sabbaths because we profaned the Lord's sabbaths, the voice of the screech-owl to be heard instead of the voice of the turtle. "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed;" for what privilege or patent have we to be secured and indemnified above others?

How long ago had Divine Justice made short work with us, if Divine Patience had not been stretched to long-suffering; if Mercy had not held back the hand of God's vengeance, as the angel caught Abraham's knife when it was lifted up to kill his son! For, surely, methinks Mercy and Justice have been long wrestling, and the Lord hath said long of England, as he said of Ephraim, "How shall I give up England? how shall I make thee as Admah and Zeboim, as Sodom and Gomorrah?"

Now, consider this, all ye that forget the Lord's benefits, lest he come not only as a moth to you, as he seems to be already in your trade, in your health, in your food, but as a lion to tear and go away. Wherefore, would you value your mercies? consider others' miseries. Would you thank God for them? consider your abuse and unworthiness of them. Would you continue and increase them? be thankful for them. Would you taste sweetness in them? get a sanctified use of them. Would you honour God in every condition? make a holy improvement of every dispensation. Would you be Christians indeed? "in every thing give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." Turn your hearts and tongues to it here, and you shall be chosen into the choir of angels, to perform it for ever in heaven.*

* *Haud quicquam ita propriè terris representat caelestis habitationis statum, sicut alacritas Deum laudantium.*—BERNARDUS, *Ser. 1. in Cant.* "Scarcely any thing on earth conveys to our minds so lively and appropriate a representation of the state of that 'house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,' as does the cheerfulness with which those who praise God, in these his earthly courts, engage in that most delightful service."—EDIT.

SERMON XXI.

BY THE REV. MR. SIMMONS.

HOW MAY WE GET RID OF SPIRITUAL SLOTH, AND KNOW WHEN
OUR ACTIVITY IN DUTY IS FROM THE SPIRIT OF GOD?*Quicken thou me in thy way.*—Psalm cxix. 37.

THIS psalm shines and shows itself among the rest,

*Velut inter ignes
Luna minores :**

a star in the firmament of the psalms, of the first and greatest magnitude. This will readily appear if you consider either,

1. The manner it is composed in ; or,
2. The matter it is composed of.

1. The manner it is composed in is very elegant.
2. The matter it is composed of is very excellent.

1. The *manner it is composed in is very elegant* : Full of art, rule, method, theological matter in a logical manner, a spiritual alphabet framed and formed according to the Hebrew alphabet.

2. The *matter it is composed of is very excellent* : Full of rare subtilities, deep mysteries, gracious activities, yea, glorious ecstasies. The psalm is made up of three things,

1. Prayers ; 2. Praises ; 3. Protestations.

1. Prayers to God ; 2. Praises of God ; 3. Protestations unto God.

My text belongs unto the first, and may fitly be styled "David's Litany ;" where you have,

1. His *Libera, Domine* : "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity."

2. His *Exaudi, Domine* : "Quicken thou me in thy way."

In this, these three parts are considerable :—

1. The act, "quicken." 2. The subject, "me." 3. The object, "thy way."

In the prosecution of which scripture I shall do these three things :—

I. Explicate the terms.

II. Deduce a corollary.

III. Resolve the cases.

I. FOR EXPLICATION. "Quicken." There is a two-fold quickening :—1. Proper and moral. 2. Improper and metaphorical.

1. *Proper and moral*, which is two-fold : (1.) Total. (2.) Partial.

(1.) *Total*.—Which is the raising a dead body to natural life. Thus was Lazarus raised. (John xi. 43, 44.) So was Drithelme of Northum-

* HORATII *Odarum* lib. i. od. xii. 47.

"And like the moon, the feebler fires among,
Conspicuous shines."—FRANCIS'S Translation.

berland raised, if credit may be given to Bede;* and [so was] Herus Armeneus.†

(2.) *Partial*: Which is the restoring a body, declined and decayed with sickness or sorrow, to spirits and vigorous energies. So was David, whose body by grief and sorrow was made a mere skeleton. (Psalm xxxi. 10—22.) Hezekiah by sickness [was] brought so low, that he was become spiritless; yet he was raised up again: upon which he composes that rare hymn or canticle of praise to God, Isaiah xxxviii. 20.

2. *Improper and metaphorical*; which is likewise two-fold: (1.) Total. (2.) Gradual.

(1.) *Total*; which is the raising of a soul stark-dead in sin, to spiritual life: “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” (Eph. ii. 1.)

(2.) *Gradual*; which is the raising of a dull and drowsy soul from sloth and sluggishness to high (yea, highest) degrees of vivacity and activity. For this you have David praying here, and in Psalm cxliii. 11: “Quicken me, O Lord, for thy name’s sake.” In this description it will be very necessary to explain sloth, and activity.

1. *Spiritual sloth* is threefold:—(1.) Resolving sloth. (2.) Delaying sloth. (3.) Disturbing sloth.

(1.) *Resolving sloth* is, when a soul is settled upon its lees, and resolves to lie still, and never to stir in that momentous concernment of its own eternal salvation. Solomon excellently deciphers this: “As the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed.” (Prov. xxvi. 14.) As the door turns upon the hinges, and never stirs from his place, so the slothful turns upon the bed of security, and never turns from his purpose. They were resolved to worship the queen of heaven, come life, come death. (Jer. xlv. 16, 17.) Such was the soldier’s resolution, who had on his target God and the devil pictured; under God, *Si tu non vis*;‡ under the devil, *Iste rogitat*.§

(2.) *Delaying sloth*; when a person doth intend to look after soul-concernments, but not yet, they will borrow a day, a little time. Much like that sluggard: “Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep.” (Prov. vi. 10.) When the sluggard is called to arise in the morning, he resolves to do it; only entreats one little, one short nap more, and then he will arise. So, when some are called to awaken, arise, and walk with God in his way, in the morning of their age, they crave one short nap more first, and then they will do it; give them leave to get such an estate, to obtain such an honour, to match such a child, to satisfy such a lust, and then will they be for God: such a sluggard was Austin: “A little longer! O Lord, a little longer!

* *Historia Angliæ*, lib. v. cap. 13. † PLATO *De Republicæ*, lib. x. FERRARIUS, *Reip.* lib. vii. fol. 162. The clause in the text, and these references to the curious fact of Plato’s entranced man, were the author’s additions, after the publication of the first edition.—EDIT. ‡ “If thou wilt not” consent to gratify me.—EDIT. § “This old one solicits and invites me” to pleasure. The first edition contains no reference to the author of this passage; but the third and fourth give RUFFUT,—a name with which I confess myself to be unacquainted.—EDIT.

presently, presently !” * The five foolish virgins resolved to have oil in their lamps and vessels ; only they would take a nod. O how dangerous is delaying sloth ! The virgins’ deferring provokes Christ to denying. (Matt. xxv. 10.) Archias, being merry at supper, had a letter sent him that concerned his life ; and, though desired to read it, puts it up into his pocket, saying, *Προς αυριον τα σπουδαια* † “ I will mind serious things to-morrow ;” but he lived not unto the morrow, to mind those serious things. Such another sluggard was the rich man : (Luke xii. 20 :) *Stulte, hac nocte.* ‡

Tolle moras : semper nocuit differre paratis. §

Alexander being asked how he came to conquer the world, replied, *Nunquam differre volens.* || If you will overcome more than Alexander did, not only the world, but also Satan, and your own flesh, the worst and strongest enemy of all, you must carefully lay hold on every lock of opportunity, and expeditiously improve the same.

(3.) *Disturbing sloth* is, when a person doth intend and endeavour to walk in God’s way ; but sloth, as rust, hinders the wheels of his soul from coming to and running in the way of God. The *torpedo* if it touch but any part of the angle that a man holds in his hand, *corpus torpescere facit*, ¶ “ it benumbs and stupifies all the members, that they cannot stir or strive.” Such malignant influence hath sloth upon the soul. The chariots of saints’ souls should drive as Jehu’s, heartily and furiously ; (2 Kings ix. 20 ;) and not as Pharaoh’s chariots, heavily and faintly. (Exod. xiv. 25.) All the agility of the soul, and all the ability of the body, are required in God’s way, and about God’s work : whatsoever comes short of this is sloth, as whatsoever comes short of virtue is vice.

2. *Activity in duty* is a victorious conquest over the great Goliath, sloth, and riding triumph in the way, work, and worship of God. Activity is a David’s dancing before the ark with all his might. There are three things which concur and contribute to complete this activity in duty :—

(1.) *Tota animi intensio* : ** “ A straining and stretching of the soul to the utmost peg, and highest pin ;” a putting of it upon the tenter-hooks in service.

(2.) *Inexplebilis cupiditas agendi* : “ An unsatiable and unsatisfiable desire or longing for the effecting and accomplishing of a duty.”

(3.) *Assiduitas in actione* : “ A constant and continual waiting and working until the duty be perfected.”

Take these three exactly shadowed out in Archimedes : he was drawing his mathematical lines, when Marcellus †† entered the gates of Syracuse, yea, when the soldiers entered his study, that he never minded them :

* *Paululum, paululum, modò et modò, et hoc erat sine modo.*— AUGUSTINI *Confessionum* lib. viii. cap. 5. † PLUTARCHUS in *Moralia*. ‡ “ Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.”—EDIT. § LUCANI *Pharsalia*, lib. i. 281 :—

“Haste then thy towering eagles on their way :

When fair occasion calls, ’tis fatal to delay.”—ROWE’S Translation.

|| “Never wilfully to postpone to a future time any thing which ought now to be done.”—EDIT. ¶ PLENI *Nat. Historia*, lib. xxxii. cap. 1. ** BASILIUS in *Regulis*

Brevioribus, resp. 259. †† PLUTARCHUS in *Vita ejus*.

there was the *intension of his mind*. When the soldiers pulled him by the sleeve, he cries out, "Let me alone to finish my scheme:" there was *his inexpleble desire of perfecting it*. When the soldiers drew their swords to run him through, he yet plied his business: there was *his assiduity in his action*: here was *Hoc age*, ["Attend only to this,"] indeed. O what a shame would it be for us Christians, if a Heathen in his way should outgo and outdo us in God's way! Stupendous was the activity of the Jewish priests about their sacrifices, when their enemies were broken in upon them.* I shall commend two texts of scripture to you, which do most lively obumbrate tepidity and fervidity: Τη σπουδῇ μη οκνησοι. "Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord." (Rom. xii. 11.) *In festinatione non lenti*: † here *Festina lentè* ‡ is out of doors. We must fly as upon the wings of the wind; our heart must be like the *primum mobile*, to wheel and whirl us about with a most rapid motion; "fervent in spirit," boiling or burning hot, all on fire and flame; "serving the Lord:" "Continuing instant in prayer," § (Rom. xii. 12,) strenuously and steadfastly wrestling with God, as Jacob did, who as a prince "had power with God." (Hosea xii. 3.) This is that *ultimum virium* || which is expected and only respected of God; God accounts nothing else prayer but this: "And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee;" (Isaiah lxiv. 7;) that is, "with that faith and fortitude to hold God's hands," ¶ as Moses, Jacob, and others did. The cock is a rare emblem of this activity, who raises and rouses himself, claps his wings, and then crows with all his might. "We desire that every one of you do show the same diligence: that ye be not slothful," (Heb. vi. 11, 12,)** not of a slow pace; to want fire, yea, and feet too, that [do] not run in God's way. *Non amo nimium diligentes*, †† was the saying of a Heathen; but God will never say so, because we can never be too diligent and devout in his service; and, surely, if Jacob did serve Laban *toto conatu*,—"With all my power I have served your father," (Gen. xxxi. 6,) then much more should we with all our industry and endeavour serve our Father.

"THY way;" by way of emphasis, in opposition to and exaltation of, above, all other ways.

There is a fourfold way:—

1. *Via mundi*, "the way of the world;" and that is *spinosa*, "thorny."
2. *Via carnis*, "the way of the flesh;" and that is *insidiosa*, "treacherous."
3. *Via Satanæ*, "the way of the devil;" and that is *tenebricosa*, "darksome."

* JOSEPHUS de *Bello Judaico*. † "Not slow in that which requires instant despatch."—EDIT. ‡ "Use caution in your speed."—EDIT. § Προσκαρτερου-
τες, *assidue operam novantes*.

¶ *Eá fide et fiducia, ut Dei manus teneat*.—A LAPIDE in *loc*. ** Νωθοι εν νε et θεω, *non curro*. *Segnis, quasi se igne, sine igne*. "The Greek word in the text which we render *slothful*, seems to be derived from a particle used as a negative prefix in composition, and from a verb which signifies *to run*: thus representing 'the slothful' to be *no-runners*. The Latin word *segnis* has a similar derivation, from two words signifying *without fire*, or *devoid of vigorous animation*."—EDIT.

†† "I feel no admiration for such as are over-diligent."—EDIT.

4. *Via Domini*, "the way of God;" and that is *gratiosa*, "gracious." This way is twofold:—

(1.) *Via velata*, "a concealed way;" and that is of his privy counsels.

(2.) *Via revelata*, "a revealed way;" and that is of his public commands.

(1.) *Via beneplaciti*, "of his privy counsels:" "How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Rom. xi. 33.) He that shall go about to seek and search for that way, must return a *Non est inventa*,* and shall prove himself a true *ignoramus*: "For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?" (Verse 34.) The best of mortals were never honoured with that title, to be one of God's privy counsellors.

(2.) *Via signi*, "of his public and common road of commandments:" "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. Make me to understand the way of thy precepts." (Psalm cxix. 1, 27.) "He will teach" Zion's scholars "of his ways, and" they "will walk in his paths." (Isai. ii. 3.) "Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it." (Isai. xxx. 21.)

We must not be so *impudent* as to desire to walk in the way of his privy counsels, nor so *imprudent* as not to walk in the ways of his public commands.† "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law." (Deut. xxix. 29.)

II. Having thus planed my *way* to the text, or rather explained the *way* in my text, I proceed to the deduction of a *COROLLARY*, or conclusion, from the words, which is the second thing I premised and promised.

DOCTRINE.

Every saint is very apt to be a slug in the way and work of God.

"Quicken me," says one of the chiefest and choicest of saints, "in thy way;" and it is as much as if he should say in plain terms, "Ah Lord! I am a dull jade, and have often need of thy spur, thy Spirit." This prayer of David seems proof enough to this point; but if you desire farther confirmation, I shall produce an *argument instar omnium*, "that none shall dare to deny, nor be able to disapprove;" and that is drawn from the topic of your own experience; and this is *argumentum lugubre*, like a funeral anthem, "very sad and sorrowful." Do you not feel and find, to the grief of your own souls, that, whereas you should weep as if you wept not, rejoice as if you rejoiced not, and buy as if you possessed not; *inverso ordine*, ["inverting this order,"] you weep for losses, as if you would weep out your eyes; you rejoice in temporal comforts, as if you were in heaven; and you buy as if it were for ever and a day. (Psalm xlix. 11.) But *e contrario*, ["on the contrary,"] you pray, as if you prayed not; hear, as if you heard not; work for God, as if you worked

* "It cannot be found."—EDIT. † Τα κεκρυμμενα ου δει ζητειν ουδε τα δεδηλωμενα παντελως αγνοειν.—THEODORITI *Dialogi*, i. "It is improper for us to pry into those things which are hidden; neither must we show ourselves to be completely ignorant of those which are revealed."—EDIT.

not. Now, we know *experto credas* : * a man that sticks fast in a ditch needs no reasons to prove he is in, but remedies to pull him out. † Your best course will be to propose the case how you may get rid of this unwelcome guest, spiritual sloth : it is a case we are all concerned in. *Asini aures quis non habet* ? ‡ Every man and mortal hath some of the ass's dulness and sloth in him ; § and therefore I have brought a whip of ten strings to scourge this sloth and dulness out of us.

1. *Keep a strict watch over your eyes at all times, especially when you are in duty.* ¶—The eyes are the port-holes that sin and Satan creep in at. ¶ It is accounted a great piece of charity to a man's body, to close his eyes when he is dead : I am sure it is more charity to our souls, to close our own eyes whilst we are living. See what a strict guard Job keeps upon his eyes, that would not permit them at any time to view vain or wanton objects : “ I made a covenant with mine eyes ; why then should I think upon a maid ? ” (Job xxxi. 1.) And the prophet seems here to imply, that unless God would turn away his eyes from beholding vanity, he should never be quickened in his way. It is *removere prohibens* : “ beholding vanity forbids the banns between the soul and quickening.” If you will keep your houses warm, you must keep your doors shut. If you will keep your hearts hot in a duty, you must keep your eyes shut. If those doors stand wide open for all comers and goers, either your soul, Dinah-like, will be gadding out, or Satan will be getting in, by which the poor soul will be defiled and defloured.*

2. *Send sin packing, bag and baggage.*—These two mutually generate one the other :—

Mater me genuit, eadem mox gignitur ex me.

“ Sin begets sloth, and sloth begets sin : ” sloth in David made him sinful, and sin in David made him slothful. Sin is the soul's sickness. Now sickness makes men lazy, lither, †† loath to stir. There is a disease

* “ You may yield credence to that of which you have made trial.”—EDIT. † *Cum quidam ruisset in puteum, &c. : Cogita quomodo hinc me liberet, non quomodo huc ceciderim quæras.*—AUGUSTINUS, Epist. 29. “ When a certain man had fallen into a well, where the water was of such a moderate depth as saved him from being instantly drowned, and where his sense of suffocation was not too great to hinder his ready utterance ; a stranger, attracted by his cries, approached the brink, and, on looking down with vacant wonderment on the struggling man, began coolly to inquire : ‘ May I ask, Sir, what unlucky accident has brought you into this awkward situation ? ’ The anxious man smartly rejoined : ‘ Instantly devise some method of extricating me hence, I entreat you ; and not stand there raising useless queries about the mode of my falling-in ! ’ ”—EDIT. ‡ “ Where is the man who has not the ears of an ass ? ”—EDIT. § *Ehes ! quot ovos habet sanctus David, vel potius Spiritus Sanctus, ad suam cytharam !*—PAREUS. “ Alas ! how many confessions of unaptness or ignorance, like that of an ass playing on a harp, are recorded in the Psalms by holy David, or rather by the Holy Spirit ! ”—EDIT. ¶ *Εκ του οραα γινεται το εραν.* [*Vide*] Isai. lvii. 8 et ult. “ In consequence of our beholding any object, we begin to love and desire it. See Isai. lvii. 8, 21.”—EDIT. ¶ *Aperuit nobis in Paradiso oculos Satan : nunc omnis labor in eo nobis est, ut eos iterum claudamus et obturemus.*—LUTHERUS. “ Satan opened our eyes in Paradise : but his most strenuous endeavours are now directed to the sole object of inducing us to shut them again, and keep them closed.”—EDIT. * *Ridiculum est quod quidam respondent, se spectaculis non moveri. Quidnam, an ferrei, an saxei, an adamantini sunt, an sapientiores, fortiores, sanctiores quàm David ?*—CHRYSOSTOMUS in *Psalmum* li. Tom. i. “ The reply is ridiculous which some persons give, that THEY are never moved with any kind of shows and spectacles. What then ! are they formed of iron, stone, or adamant ? Or are they wiser, stronger, or more holy, than David ? ”—EDIT. †† “ Inert, supine.”—EDIT.

incident to man's body, called the lethargy, which makes him drowsy, sleepy, negligent, and forgetful : it springs from a cold catarrh of a pitchy and glutinous nature, which cools and benumbs the brain.* Sloth is the soul's lethargy, which makes it sluggish, negligent, forgetful. This arises from the catarrh of sin, benumbing and stupifying the heart ; and of all sins, turn covetousness out of doors. There is a disease in the body, called the yellow jaundice,† which makes the persons look yellow all over : this springs from the overflowing of the gall, which, overspreading the whole man, makes it lifeless, listless. Covetousness is the yellow jaundice of the soul, which arises from the overflowing of the heart with love to yellow gold, by which a Christian is dulled and deadened. Thrust a knife into the earth, and it takes away the edge : throw earth upon the fire, and it deadens the heat. Let but earthly-mindedness creep into the heart, it takes off the edge, and deadens the heat of it to, or in, any exercise of religion.‡ Solomon calls it " an evil disease ;" (Eccles. vi. 2 :) indeed, the worst of diseases, a complicated disease. This disease does not only deaden, but destroy, the soul ; " drowns men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil." (1 Tim. vi. 9, 10.) " The birth of money is the burial of the mind : " § therefore our Saviour bids us " take heed, and beware of covetousness : " (Luke xii. 15 :) a double caution, that we might have a double care. Above all keepings, keep covetousness out of thy heart ; (Prov. iv. 23 :) for that will not only hinder thee from being active in duty, but help thee to be active against duty. " The Pharisees, who were covetous, derided him." (Luke xvi. 14.) They that drink of the water of the river Hypanis, at first are delighted with it, but afterward are so hurt by it that *non injuriâ execrantur.* || It is most true of Chrysothroas, " the yellow river," at first draught it pleases ; but afterward it makes them so dead drunk, that they become dormice for ever after.

3. *Frequent a quickening ministry.*—" Thy word hath quickened me." (Psalm cxix. 50.) " The word of God is quick and powerful ;" (Heb. iv. 12 :) ζων και ενεργης, " living and operative," not only *formaliter* and in itself, but also *virtualiter* in the virtue and efficacy of it : it makes men lively in their operation : λογια ζωντα, " Oracles making lively : " (Acts vii. 38 :) " I will make my words in thy mouth fire." (Jer. v. 14.) Fire, as it is the most noble, so it is the most active, element ; and makes other things active. ¶ Creatures almost dead for cold, brought to the fire, are made active and nimble : witness Æsop's snake, which the countryman brought in his hand ; but when it had received heat from the fire, it disturbed the whole house. Dr. Ames relates, that there was once such cold preaching in Paris, that the Protestants were

* *Ægris corporibus simillima est ægritudo animi.*—CICERO *De Finibus*, lib. vii. 13. " Grief of spirit bears the strongest resemblance in its symptoms to bodily indisposition."—EDIT. † *Aurugo*, ab *auræ* colore, ut medici. " It is called the golden or yellow disease, from the colour of gold which it assumes, as physicians intimate."—EDIT. ‡ Scythians smothered their gods in the dust, Christians bury their godliness in the dunghill. § *Fonus pecuniæ, funus animæ.*—LEO. || SOLINUS, c. 14. " That with good reason it becomes an object of their detestation."—EDIT. ¶ *Ignis animantibus vim dat mirificam.*—VARRO. " Fire communicates a most amazing power and force to every particle of animated nature."—EDIT.

constrained to go into the country to a godly minister to be warmed. A godly minister will warm a cold heart, and put quickness into a drowsy spirit.

4. *Make out to the Lord Jesus Christ, whose promise and office it is to make us active and vivacious.*—"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (John x. 10.) "Christ came not only to make us alive, but also to make us lively." * Persons who are slothful by reason of cold stiffening their joints, make out † to the mineral and metalline baths, which heal and help them. The blood of Christ is the most precious mineral hot-bath in the world: it will doubtless cure and quicken all cold and dull souls that come into it. It is the "fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness." (Zech. xiii. 1.) Sloth,—it is a very foul sin and filthy uncleanness. "And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin:" (1 John i. 7:) [from] the sin of sloth, which in some sense may be called "all sin," it being *pulvinar Satanae*, "the devil's pillow" that he lays his head on in the soul. Come to Christ the "living stone," and you shall come from Christ "lively stones." (1 Peter ii. 4, 5.)

5. *Get quickening love to the ways of God.*—

Qui non vult fieri desidiosus, amet.†

Pliny tells us, that a rod of myrtle in the hand of a traveller will never suffer him to flag or faint, but keeps him fresh and lively to his journey's end. I am sure, where love is in the heart, it will carry a man in the way of God with life. § The apostles did triumph in their tribulations; and how so? "Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us;" (Rom. v. 5;) [in the] original, "is plentifully poured out," as wine into bottles, which makes it spiritfule. "Love turns all pains into pleasures, and perils into perfumes." || Love is the fore-horse in the soul's chariot, who draws all the other affections and faculties after him. What a loadstone was Shechem's love to Dinah! (Gen. xxxiv. 19.) It makes him communicate his wealth, change his religion, circumcise his fore-skin. ¶ See how spiritual love wrought in Paul: it was as strong physic, ready to work out his bowels: "For the love of Christ constraineth us." (2 Cor. v. 14.) Love hath not only an *impulsive* but also a *compulsive* power, *συμψυχει*. **

* *Anima dat vitam et vivacitatem corpori; Christus dat vitam et vivacitatem anime.* "The presence of a human spirit imparts life as well as vivacity to the body; but it is Christ that imparts vitality and liveliness to the spirit."—EDIT. † "Make out" in that age conveyed nearly the same meaning as our modern colloquial phrases, "Make off," "Run away quickly," &c., when any one is commanded hastily to depart. In this sense also it occurs at the commencement of the paragraph.—EDIT. ‡ OVIDIUS, *Amorum* lib. i. 9, 46.

"Let him whose listless soul no power can move,
Begin to feel the active force of love."—EDIT.

§ *Omnis anime motus radix est amor.*—PARISIENSIS. "Love is the spring of every motion of the heart."—EDIT. || *Ubi amor est, non est labor, sed sapor.*—BERNARDUS, *Serm.* 85, in *Cant.*

¶ *Si tantum potuit cupiditas, quid potest caritas?*—AUGUSTINUS. "If cupidity, or strong natural desire, possessed such potency, what immense power must exist in the love of God!"—EDIT. ** *Metaphora a parturientibus sumpta.*—GROTIUS.

Constraineth us—"A metaphor derived from women who endure the pains of parturition."
--EDIT.

Love is a grace that is always big-bellied, and is in labour, always being delivered of some good duty or other. This love put Paul upon exceeding pains, and excessive perils.

(1.) *Exceeding pains, that never mere man took the like.*—"I laboured more abundantly than they all." (1 Cor. xv. 10.) It must be great pains to preach the gospel fully "from Jerusalem round about unto Illyricum;" (Rom. xv. 19;) *εὐ κυκλῶ, in circulo, or circuitu,** making Jerusalem the point, and the regions round about the circumference; and then the space could not be less than four thousand miles. But if you take it in a collateral line, taking-in the regions of Attica, Bœotia, Achaia, Epirus, Asia Minor, Cilicia, Cappadocia, &c., it was two thousand miles. But if you take it in a direct line from Jerusalem to Stridon, a town in Illyricum, it was above a thousand miles. And though these tiresome journeys might have apologized for sparing, or at least for curtailing, duties; yet Paul never measured out his pains by a few sands in a glass, but spent much time among the saints in praying, preaching, disputing. Very memorable is that pains of his, where Paul spends all the time, from the disciples' meeting together on the Lord's day, until midnight, in holy exercises. (Acts xx. 7.)

(2.) *His excessive perils.*—What a large catalogue have you of them!—"In stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeying often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the Heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." (2 Cor. xi. 23—27.) All this laid together, well may we say with him: † "There was never a more fierce persecutor of the gospel, nor a more fervid propagator of the gospel: the first proceeded from his hatred against Christ, the last proceeded from his love to Christ."

6. *By faith apply the quickening promises, and the promises of quickening.*

(1.) *The quickening promises.*—Promises are steel spurs that will reach the dull heart to the quick; they are singular plasters, if well applied, to draw out the corruption of sloth; they are the sovereign elixirs whose quintessence will make the soul full of spirits. "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature." (2 Peter i. 4.) Precious promises, as stones, ‡ are precious, which have egregious virtue in them, "that by them we might be made partakers of the Divine Nature," not of the substance of God, "as Servetus stubbornly defended even to death," § but of those divine qualities and gracious dispositions which will stand with God's nature to communicate, and our nature to partici-

* BEZA. "In a circle or circuit."—EDIT. † AUGUSTINUS. *Nemo acrior inter persecutores, nemo prior inter peccatores.* (Tom. x. p. 202.) ‡ CARDANUS, *Subst. lib. vii.* § BEZA *in loc.*

pate.* Now, God's Divine Nature is an act, and our Divine nature is active. Now, the right applying promises will be very virtuous† to make us vigorous, to come as nigh the image and life of God as possibly we can. Plato says, it is our chiefest good, *Deo penitus conformem fieri*, "to bear the character of God upon us."

(2.) *The promises of quickening.*—David presses God to be as good as his word: "Quicken thou me according to thy word." He is often upon this string, resolving not to let God alone until he kept his word. (Psalm cxix. 25, 107, 154.) "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." (Isai. xl. 31.) Our soul, as a bee, must suck honey from this flower to quicken itself. Say thus to thyself: "Soul, God hath promised I shall mount up with eagles' wings, fly through difficulties and duties with celerity; he is a God able, true, willing; therefore I may be assured of this assistance." O! this honey will enliven thee more than Jonathan's honey enlightened him; who must die, because he had eaten honey; and if he had not eaten honey, he must have died. (1 Sam. xiv. 26, 29.)

7. *Mind quickening examples.*—A dull jade will put himself faster on when he sees other horses gallop before him.‡ The apostle, having mustered up in rank and file the examples of those famous worthies, does excite the Hebrews with patience to run the race that was set before them. (Heb. xi., xii. 1.) If the rare acts of Miltiades would not suffer Themistocles to sleep, then the famous actions of God's worthies should not suffer us to slumber. View Elias, how he went up in a fiery chariot to heaven *in his spirit*, before he went in a fiery chariot to heaven *in his person*. (James v. 17.) Eye Paul, how industriously and indefatigably he pursues, even as a beagle, his chase with full cry, and all celerity.§ (Phil. iii. 10—15.) Observe Ignatius, how he goes to the beasts to be devoured, as if he had gone to a bridal to be married.|| Lastly, slight not the martyrs in Queen Mary's days, who went to the fire as if they had been going to a bonfire. "Seest thou this woman?" saith our Saviour to Simon, of Mary Magdalene, "with what activity and affection she hath washed and wiped my feet, her tears being the water, her hair the towel: let it provoke thee to more diligence and devotion."¶ (Luke vii. 44, 45.) Examples are pricking and provoking goads, to quicken us; fires to light our candles by, to heat our bodies with.

* *Non transformatione naturæ humanæ in divinam, sed participatione donorum quibus conformes divinæ naturæ simus.*—PAREUS. "Not by transformation of the human into the Divine nature, but by partaking of those gifts through which we may become conformed to the Divine nature."—EDIT. † In the anciently received meaning of "potent, efficacious," from the Latin word *virtus*.—EDIT. ‡ *Coimus in cætum, ut Deum, quasi manu factâ, precationibus ambiamus orantes; hæc vis Deo grata.*—TERTULLIANI *Apolog. adversus Gentes*, cap. 39. "We Christians assemble together in one congregation, that we may form ourselves into a sacred band of suppliants, and by our united prayers importunately besiege the throne of grace: with such holy violence God is well pleased."—EDIT. § *Διωκω more venatorum persequentium feram.*—ARETIUS. "'I follow after,' I eagerly pursue, as hunters do when in warm chase after wild beasts."—EDIT. || *IGNATIUS, Epist. ad Romanos.* ¶ *En, amo te; et hoc parum est, amem validius.*—AUGUSTINUS, *liber de Meditationibus*, c. 18. "Behold, I love thee, O my God! and since this is indeed a feeble expression of my affection, I would love thee with still greater intensity."—EDIT.

8. *Keep quickening company.*—As bad company is water to quench, so good company is oil to quicken, fervour ; * as iron sharpens iron, so one gracious heart sets an edge upon another. (Prov. xxvii. 17.) Holy companions are bellows, *αναζωπυρειν*, “to blow up, and make burn,” the graces that lie in embers. (2 Tim. i. 6.) The gracious affections of saints are called beds of spices. (Canticles vi. 2.) Holy conference of holy company is the rubbing and chafing those spices to make them scent and send forth their perfumes. Alexander, wherever he came, perfumed the room with his presence ; so does every believer with his speeches. David, who desires quickenings, picks out quickening company : “ I am a companion of all them,” rich or poor, “ that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.” (Psalm cxix. 63.) Paul is “ pressed in the spirit ” by the company and conference of Silas and Timotheus : (Acts xviii. 5 :) the two disciples’ hearts burned within them in their journey to Emmaus, by that sweet discourse [which] they had with Christ. (Luke xxiv. 32.)

9. *Consider quickening considerations.*—They that are apt to faint and tire in a journey, carry-about their bottles of water to quicken their spirits. Let these ten considerations be such bottles to you, when you tire in the journey of a duty :—

(1.) Consider *how odious and abominable sloth is to man or God.*—The Romans judged sloth and idleness worthy of the greatest contempt. † *Asinus ad lyram, Asinus ad tibiam*, ‡ are proverbs of the greatest derision and disgrace. § How contemptibly does Jacob speak of Issachar, “ A strong ass couching down between two burdens ! ” (Gen. xlix. 14, 15 ;) yea, God himself refuses the first-born of an ass in sacrifice. (Exod. xiii. 13.) Bellarmine gives this reason, because it was *animal tardigradum*, “ a slow-paced and sluggish creature,” which God hates : God, being a pure act, loves pure activity. || O what thunder-claps and cracks of threatenings may you hear from the Mount Ebal of his word, able to make the most sluggish Caligula to creep under his bed for shelter ! “ Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord *negligently*.” (Jer. xlvi. 10.) “ Cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing.” (Mal. i. 14.) God threatens to remove the candlestick from the church of Ephesus, because she was grown remiss in her first love. (Rev. ii. 5, 6.) He terrifies the church of

* *Bonus comes pro vehiculo.* “ A good companion is as useful as a carriage in aiding us in our journey through life.”—EDIT. † *ZONARÆ Annales*, lib. ii. ‡ In these

proverbs, the ancients referred to the alleged absence of musical taste and perception in the ass ; for it was averred, that whenever the most delicious music was within hearing, he remained insensate and supine, betraying not the slightest emotion of pleasure, all other animals at the same time exhibiting undisguised symptoms of delighted sensation. It is a case widely different from that of the adder, mentioned by the Psalmist, which had the faculty of stopping or opening its ears, at option, when it was within the sound of the siren “ voice of charmers.” (Psalm lviii. 4.) This peculiar defect in the ass seems to have anciently affixed to his character the opprobrium of natural hebetude and incurable dulness ; which, by an easy figure of speech, has been transferred to those human beings whose power of option has been more perversely exercised than their power of perception.—EDIT. § *PEIRESC.* 87. d. lib. iii. cap. 16. || *Enerves animos odisse virtus solet.*—*VALERIUS MAXIMUS*, lib. ii. cap. 7. “ Those who possessed natural courage have always evinced the utmost contempt for men of pusillanimous spirits.”—EDIT. *Tardis nam mentibus virtus non facile committitur.*—*CICERO, Quæst. Tusculan.* lib. v. “ He must be a man of extraordinary capacity ; for virtue is not easily connected with dull minds.”—*MAIN’S Translation.*

Laodicea with the menace of spuing her out of his mouth for her lukewarmness. [Rev. iii. 16.] The servant who had not returned *cent. per cent.* for his talent is called "wicked and slothful servant," and cast into the darkest dungeon. (Matt. xxv. 26, 30.) How would this consideration, well considered on, cause all slothful servants' ears to tingle, and their hearts to tremble!

(2.) Consider, *sloth exposes you to all manner of sin*, especially these two desperate and dangerous ones:—(i.) Sordid apostasy. (ii.) Spiritual adultery.

(i.) *Sordid apostasy*.—Sloth in the soul is like the green sickness in the body of a virgin, which makes her not only fall from her colour, strength, stomach to wholesome food, but also to long and lust after trash and trumpery, coals, soot, ashes. The Galatians, because they were *ανοητοι*, "without mind and mettle," do therefore prove apostates, beginning in the Spirit, ending in the flesh; (Gal. iii. 1, 3;) falling off from fervour, will turn to falling away to folly.* "The slothful man will not bring his hand to his mouth." (Prov. xix. 24.) It is expounded of a slothful minister who will not bring *voci suæ vitam suam*, "his works to his words."† Though this be an undoubted truth of lazy and slothful ministers, yet the proverb holds true of all sluggards' tendency to falling away in their hand from their mouth, that is, from what they have formerly professed. Consider how great and grievous a sin apostasy is: it was the first sin that ever was committed; it was the sin of the devils, for which they were cast out of heaven, and cast down into hell. "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him;" (Heb. x. 38;) a metaphor taken from a sluggish jade, who, finding the load come heavy, draws back again. "The backslider in heart," much more in hand, from God's way, "shall be filled with his own ways;" (Prov. xiv. 14;) that is, he hath run away from his captain, colours, cause, and he shall have martial law for it. It will be worth my pains and your patience, to give an instance what severe martial law God hath executed on all renegadoes and revolvers.

[i.] *Ministers*.—Judas, who revolted from his Master and ministry, turning from being a guard to his Saviour, to be a guide to the soldiers, afterward hanged himself, his bowels burst out of his belly, and so he took his proper and peculiar place in hell. (Acts i. 17, 18, 25.) John Speiser, preacher at Ainsborough in Germany, who preached so profitably and powerfully, that the common strumpets left the brothel-houses, then tolerated, and betook themselves to a better course, *anno* 1523; yet, afterward revolting to the Papists, he perished miserably.‡

[ii.] *People*.—"Remember Lot's wife;" (Luke xvii. 32;) who, turning back to Sodom,§ was turned into a pillar of salt, "to season us, that we may be preserved from the stinking sin of apostasy."|| Lucian, a great professor in the days of Trajan, but revolting, was torn in pieces, and devoured of dogs. The emperor Julian the Apostate was wounded

* *Tepiditas, si callum obduserit, fiet apostasia*. "If lukewarmness superinduce a callous insensibility, it will soon degenerate into apostasy."—EDIT. † GREGORII *Moral.* lib. xxii. cap. 5. ‡ SCULTETI *Annales*, 118. § JOSEPHI *Antiq.* lib. i. cap. 12. || *Quoddam præstitit condimentum, quo sapiunt aliquid, undè illud caveatur exemplum*.—AUGUSTINUS *De Civitate Dei*, lib. xvi. cap. 30.

with an arrow, none knowing from whence, in his war against the Persians, who, throwing his blood up to heaven, died, scornfully crying, *Vicisti, Galilæe, vicisti!* *

(ii.) *Spiritual adultery*.—Bodily sloth exposes to corporal adultery.

Quæritur, Ægisthus quare sit factus adulter?
In promptu causa est: Desidiosus erat. †

David's instance clears it sufficiently. Spiritual sloth exposes to spiritual adultery. (2 Sam. xi. 2.) "When they knew God, they glorified him not as God." What follows upon this sloth in not glorifying God as he ought to be glorified? They "changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." (Rom. i. 21, 23.) Sloth is the highway to superstition, and idleness the road-way to idolatry: "Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play;" (1 Cor. x. 7;) by which is implied, their idleness was the cause of their idolatry. When Demas grew lazy and slothful in his ministry, he turned priest in an idol's temple, where he had less work and more wages. † (2 Tim. iv. 10.) Consider idolatry and superstition are God-provoking, land-destroying, soul-damning, sins; § no wonder John should conclude his epistle with,— "Keep yourselves from idols." (1 John v. 21.)

(3.) Consider *how impossible it is, that creeping snails in God's way should ever get to their journey's end*.—"Fair and softly" goes far, but never so far as heaven. || "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent," *ἀπρᾶζουσιν*, "take it by force;" (Matt. xi. 12;) a metaphor taken from storming cities and castles. ¶ They storm heaven, hang their petards of prayers on heaven-gates, and blow them open, that get heaven by a conquest: storming is not work either for the fearful or the slothful.** "So run, that ye may obtain;" (1 Cor. ix. 24;) not creep, but run; not run, but *so run*; not indifferently, but industriously; as the racers in the Isthmian games, to which the apostle here alludes, who did stretch and strain their legs and limbs, that they might gain the prize. †† "Strive to enter in at the strait gate." Heaven hath a

* "Thou hast conquered, O Galilean! thou hast conquered."—EDIT. † OVIDII *Remed. Amor.* 161. "Ask ye the cause of vile Ægisthus' crime? In idleness he spent his weary time."—EDIT.

‡ DOROTHEUS in *Synopsi*. *Adeò proclive est ex servo Mammonæ transire in sacerdotem diaboli*. "Such a strong propensity is felt by a servant of Mammon to become a priest of the devil!"—EDIT. DR. ARROWSMITH'S *Tactica Sacra*. § *Gravissimum peccatum*.—AQUINAS, *Secunda Secundæ*, Quest. 94. Act. iii. "A most grievous sin." *Principale crimen, et summus hujus sæculi reatus*.—TERTULLIANUS. "The principal crime and highest guilt of the present age."—EDIT. || *Omnes qui ad Paradisum redire desiderat, oportet transire per ignem et aquam*.—AUGUSTINE in *Serm. ad Lipp.* "Every one who feels desirous of returning to Paradise must pass through fire and through water."—EDIT. ¶ BRUGENSIS. ** *Non dormientibus provenit regnum colorum, nec otio et desidid torpentibus beatitudo aternitatis ingeritur*.—PROSPER de *Vita Contemplativa*. "The kingdom of heaven has no place, and does not flourish, in sleepy Christians; neither is the blessedness of eternity held out for acceptance to those who are in a state of torpor through their sloth and inactivity."—EDIT. †† *Qui stadium currit, eniti debet et contendere quàm maxime possit ut vincat, &c.*—CICERO De *Officiis*, lib. iii. 10. "The man who runs a race ought to stretch and to strain all he can, in order to come in foremost; but he ought by no means to jostle or to trip up the heels of the man with whom he runs."—GUTHRIE'S Translation.

very strait gate: we must crowd, yea, crush, ourselves, if ever we get in; αγωνιζεσθε, "play the champions to a very agony;" "for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able;" ζητησουσιν, "shall seek with industry and endeavour."* (Luke xiii. 24.)

(4.) Consider *how equitable it is that you should be as active in the way of God, as you were once in the way of sin and Satan.*—"I speak after the manner of men," that is, I speak reason as well as religion; † "as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity;" ("as," not of quality but equality;) ‡ "even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness;" (Rom. vi. 19;) "even so;" in the same manner and the same measure. This very consideration wrought effectually upon Paul himself, who, as he had formerly sinned more than all, so afterwards he laboured more than all: § the time he could not recover by recalling, he does recover by redeeming. What a piercing and prevailing spur would this be to a dull and sluggish soul! "Ah soul! what a shame, what a sin is this, to be a slow snail in the way of God, that hast been a swift dromedary in the way of sin!"

(5.) Consider *how you contradict your own prayers, your very Pater-noster, wherein you desire God's will should be so done by you on earth, as it is done by the angels in heaven.*—Now those winged Mercuries and messengers of heaven do speedily and spritely execute the commandments of God: "Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word." (Psalm ciii. 20.) These heavenly pursuivants stand listening to know their Prince's royal pleasure, and then they go to execute it. ||

(i.) *With all celerity and speed.*—They are said to have wings, which are the emblems of velocity: the seraphim came flying to Isaiah with a coal from the altar. (Isai. vi. 2, 6.) Gabriel is sent post from heaven, "being caused to fly swiftly," (Dan. ix. 21,) [with] extraordinary haste, that he seemed weary and tired; the angels' flying upon God's embassy is always very swift. The Schoolmen make a doubt whether they do *ab extremo ad extremum transire*; ¶ yet it seems they can mend their pace in their flight from heaven to earth, and so back again, which is, (as those wise astronomers,** who have been there to measure it,) backward and forward, above one hundred and sixty millions of miles.

(ii.) *With ardency and intensesness.*—They are called "seraphims." (Isai. vi. 2.) *Igniti*, "fiery," yea, "a flame of fire." (Heb. i. 7.) Elijah's chariot and horses of fire were angels appearing in those forms. (2 Kings ii. 11.) Of all the elements, fire is the most intense and active: the mouth of fire devours and destroys all that comes before it.

* *Potent cum ardore.* † *Humanum quiddam dico.*—ERASMUS. "I am now speaking that which is in accordance with every man's own experience."—EDIT. ‡ "*Sicut,*" *non qualitatis sed equalitatis.* § Cyprian was *πολυς εν ασεβεια, ωλειων εν ευσεβεια.*—GREG. NAZ. *Orat.* 18. "In his unregenerate state, Cyprian was remarkable for profaneness; but, when reclaimed, he became far more distinguished for piety."—EDIT. || *Angelos πορθημευοντας τα των θεων προς ανθρωπους, και τα ανθρωπων προς τους θεους, esse putat Plutarchus.* "Plutarch supposed angels to be employed in conveying to men those things which belonged to the gods, and to the gods those things which concerned mankind."—EDIT. ¶ "Whether they pass entirely through the path ethereal from one extremity to the other."—EDIT. ** CLAVIUS *in Sphæram.*

Many of the Heathens did worship fire for their god, because it devoured all their other gods. These fiery hosts of God are very devouring: one of them in one night destroyed a hundred fourscore and five thousand Assyrians. (2 Kings xix. 35.)

(iii.) *With alacrity and cheerfulness.*—It is a great part of their joy in heaven, that they do God's service with joy. As soon as ever they were created, they rejoiced that they should be employed in such honourable service: "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." (Job xxxviii. 7.) How cheerfully did the angels bring tidings of Christ's birth to the world! as appears by their praising God to the highest of their power: "Glory to God in the highest," &c. (Luke ii. 14.) Surely, if you consider angels' worship and doing God's will, it will make you leave off your sloth or your service; either cause you to pray better, or not to pray at all.

(6.) Consider *you lose the very soul and life of your duty, if you do not perform it as for your life and soul.*—You come to seek and see the face of God in the glass of ordinances; (Psalm xxvii. 8;) to have communion with him, to fetch comfort from him, to get some kisses of him; (Canticles i. 2;) to mortify some lust, to increase some grace, to strengthen your assurance, to testify your duty, to express your affection, &c. Now, spiritual sloth hinders you of all this: dull and drowsy eyes cannot see God; heavy and slothful hearts cannot receive those benefits and blessings from God.* "Sloth is a sluice-gate to the current of God's grace and favour."† Jupiter rained a shower of gold into Danaë's lap; but God will never rain a shower of grace, joy, and comfort, into a sluggard's heart. If you lose the blessed sight of God here in ordinances, you shall lose the beatifical sight of God hereafter in glory. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. iii. 18.) Then have we the kernel of a duty, (every thing else is but a shell,) when our employment is on earth, and our enjoyment in heaven; when we have so sought God's face that our face comes away shining; and we have so poured out our hearts to God that God hath poured out his heart to us; that we return home, like bees loaded with honey, filled with the comforts of the Holy Ghost.

(7.) Consider *the infinite and wonderful glory, greatness, majesty, of Him you appear before and approach unto in your duties.*—A God you are not able to conceive, nor I to express. See how the scripture shadows him out unto us (and indeed it is but a shadow in comparison of his substance): "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt-offering. All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and

* *Lambunt petram; mel non sugunt.*—CYPRIANUS *De Cædâ Domini*. "They lick the bare rock, whence they suck no honey."—EDIT. † *Torpor non sinit Deum esse beneficum.*

vanity." (Isai. xl. 12, 15—17.) *Ex pede Herculem.** By this glorious description we may guess (and that is all) at enough in God to scare us from coming to God in a dull and drowsy manner. The Heathens who worshipped the sun for their god, durst not offer up any thing but a flying horse to him in sacrifice : our God is more glorious, swift, seeing, than ten thousand suns ; therefore we should not dare to offer up any thing but a winged cherubim, or swift-flying eagle, to him in service.†

(8.) Consider *how industrious and indefatigable an adversary you have, that lies always in ambush to wrong you, yea, to ruin you.*—Satan is the unwearied peripatetic, who "walks up and down" for prey and spoil. (Job i. 7.) Now the dull soul is his prey : a slug ship is a purchase for the pirate, and a sluggish soul for the devil. It is holy and wholesome advice given by Peter : "Be sober, be vigilant ; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." (1 Peter v. 8.) "The devil," says pious and plain Latimer, "is the most diligent bishop in England : he is ever at his plough : no lording nor loitering may hinder him : his office is to hinder religion, to maintain superstition, to set up idolatry, to teach all kind of Popery : where his plough goes, there away with books, and up with candles ; away with Bibles, and up with beads ; away with the light of the gospel, and up with the light of candles, yea, at noon-days !" † How should this quicken us to be active for God and our soul, that have an enemy so active always against God and our soul ! You need not quicken a mariner to make out § all the cloth he can, that knows a pirate hath him in chase at stern ; *timor addidit alas*, "fear will spread the sails, which are the wings of the ship." The devil, the great pirate of souls, to make prize and pillage of us and our graces, hath us in daily pursuit : how careful should we be to fill the sails of our souls with the strong gales of the Spirit, that he may neither overtake us, nor take us. ||

(9.) Consider, *when you slothfully and sluggishly perform duties, you do but mock God.*—"God is not mocked ;" (Gal. vi. 7 ;) that is, "God will not have his nose played with." ¶

God is mocked three ways :—

(i.) DIRECTLY ; when men, by deriding speeches, mock the essentiality or personality of the Godhead : as,

[1.] *The essentiality* ; when a blasphemous Quaker shall say, "God is nothing else but the letters read backward," which is, *horresco referens,** * — Or,

* "From a sight of his huge foot, you may form a judgment of the immense size of Hercules."—EDIT. † *Quæ participatione nobis veneranda sunt, in comparatione ejus memoranda non sunt.*—GREGORII *Moral.* lib. xviii. c. 27. "Those things which we ought to venerate in consequence of common participation, are not worthy of mention when placed in comparison with the Deity."—EDIT. - ‡ MR. HUGH LATIMER's Sermon preached in the shrouds at Paul's church in London, Jan. 18, anno 1548 ; Of the Plough, page 21.

§ In the active sense of "spread out all his canvass ;" in opposition to the phrase, "Take or haul in all sail." See page 441.—EDIT. || *Prius conditionem, complexionem uniuscujusque perspicit, et tum tentationis laqueos apponit.*—GREGORII *Moral.* lib. 9.

"Satan first sifts out and accurately examines the conditions and connexions of every one ; and then he lays down the snares of his temptations with which he may catch them."—EDIT. ¶ *Μυκτηρίζω, cum naso ludere.*—CALVINUS. *Nasus derisioni dicatus.*—PLINIUS. "The nose is used to express derision and contempt."—EDIT. ** "A crime too horrible to be described."—EDIT.

[2.] *The personality*; as,

First. *God the Father*; when he shall be called "a cooper hooping his tubs," when it thundereth; or "an old man sitting in heaven," as your common and country people usually jeer.*

Secondly. *God the Son*; when Julian shall gibe him with, "The crucified God;" or Libanus, "The carpenter's Son;" or, as Pope Leo X. to cardinal Bembus, when he brought a piece out of the gospel to comfort him when sick, "Away with those forgeries and follies!" †

Thirdly. *God the Holy Ghost*; when Securtus [Servetus?] shall call him "the three-headed Cerberus, and ridiculous invention of human curiosity."

(ii.) REFLEXIVELY; when men gibe and jeer the faithful messengers of God: "But they mocked the messengers of God:" (2 Chron. xxxvi. 16:) to mock the messengers of God is, by reflexion, to mock the God of those messengers. *Cum multis aliis.*

(iii.) INTERPRETATIVELY: when men do such actions as plainly evidence a mockage of God. I have read of a fellow in want, that earnestly intreated Mercury to send him some relief, promising him that whatever he found he would sacrifice half to him. He found nuts: he ate the kernels, and offered the shells to Mercury; which he resented as a high affront. Activity in duty is the kernel, sloth is the shell, which we offering to God in service, is interpreted a high and horrid mocking. Augustus Cæsar, being invited to one of his subjects' houses, and being slothfully and negligently entertained, took it as a derision. ‡ Duty is an inviting God to our house: if we entertain him sluggishly and carelessly, he will call you to an account for your impudent familiarity with him, and make you hold up your hand at his bar for being guilty of taking his name in vain. (Exod. xx. 7.) §

(10.) Consider *how active Christ was in doing us service.*—He did *omnem movere lapidem.* || He was so enlarged about the thoughts of doing the work, that he was straitened until he was about it: "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke xii. 50.) That is, "I have a death of the cross to suffer for man's redemption, and I am pressed with an *antiperistasis* ¶ until I have finished it." Or else, as Grotius renders it, "I am with child of my passion; and how do I long for my delivery! I am in pain until I am in pain;" much like some women, who *breed* their children with more pain than they *do bring them forth*. When that day of his travail came, it was the day of his triumph: "Triumphing over them in it." (Col. ii. 15.) The

* PERKINS. † *Apage istas nugas de Christo.*—PAC. MED. Hist. Eccles. ‡ *Nescibam me tibi tam fuisse familiarem.*—ERASMI Adagia. "I was not previously aware that you deemed yourself to be on such terms of easy familiarity with me."—EDIT. § The whole of this ninth division, nearly an entire page, is omitted in the first edition; instead of which, the following short and appropriate paragraph occurs:—"Consider, when you slothfully perform duties, you do but mock God.—To act in the service of God slothfully is, interpretative, to act scornfully. 'Wine is a mocker;' (Prov. xx. 1;) that is, Wine immoderately taken makes men dull, dronish, sluggish. Sleepy actions in a serious business, are mocking actions. Drowsy service to God, is but a mockery of God. 'God is not mocked;' (Gal. vi. 7;) that is, God will not bear mockery."—EDIT. || "Christ left no stone unturned."—EDIT. ¶ "A being hemmed in; a greater exertion or intention of the active power of one quality, in consequence of the opposition of others."—EDIT.

Athenian Codrus, being informed by the Oracle, that the people whose king should be slain in the battle should be conquerors, disrobed himself, went into the enemies' quarters in the habit of a poor man, with a burden on his back, that he might steal a death to make his people conquerors.* Christ disrobed himself of the garments of glory, assumed the form of a servant, endured contradictions of sinners, held his peace when falsely charged; that he might steal a death for his people, that so they might be more than conquerors: "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame." (Heb. xii. 2.) Shall Christ give you such a copy of activity, and will you blot and blur it with sloth and sluggishness? † Shall Christ go swiftly to death, and we go sluggishly to duty?

10. *Beg the quickening Spirit.*—This is *instar omnium*, ["equal to all the rest,"] none like it, as David said of Goliath's sword. Sloth is the king's evil of the soul; and none but the King of heaven can cure it by his hand, which is his Spirit. "I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart." (Psalm cxix. 32.) Idleness is the soul's prison, sloth is her shackle; the Spirit of God only can knock off her fetters, and give gaol-delivery to her. "The Spirit helpeth our infirmities" of ignorance, dulness, deadness, sluggishness; and enables, yea, ennobles, us with gracious, copious, filial affections, even "groans and sighs that are unutterable;" expressions not to be expressed. (Rom. viii. 26.) "Draw me, we will run after thee:" (Canticles i. 4:) there is her prayer, and her promise, and there is no doubt of her performance: she will as certainly follow as the iron the load-stone, or the card the north pole. "Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out." (Canticles iv. 16.) "Awake and come;" there is the prayer; "O north and south wind;" there is the Spirit; the soul, that is "the garden;" gracious affections, they are the "spices" that "flow out."

QUESTION. But some precious soul whisperm in mine ears: "I bless God, I am not troubled with this lethargy; my sails are so filled that my mill goes and grinds nimbly; only I am afraid the wind blows not from the right quarter: pray, therefore, satisfy my conscience in this case, whether my activity in duty proceed from the Spirit of God?"

ANSWER. We may easily be deceived by our enlargements, because there are many winds and gales blowing from several quarters, which may set the soul in active going and doing; as popular applause, high opinions of the preacher, taking † expressions in prayer, flourishing novelties and notions in a sermon, satanical infusions, common and ordinary inspirations of the Holy Ghost, vouchsafed to reprobates: (Heb. vi. 4—6:) all which, or any of which, may so draw and delight the heart, that, as Orpheus's pipe, they or it may make the heart dance in a duty; and yet, for all this, it may be possible, yea, probable, the heart may dance after the devil's pipe. (Ezek. xxxiii. 32.) The resolution of this case would have been fitter for some ancient, experienced master of

* PLUTARCH. † The next clause was not in the first edition, which had, instead of it: "O look on your copy, and fairly write after it!"—EDIT. † Pleasing, engaging, popular.—EDIT.

assemblies, whose Bible is more in his heart than head, than for so weak and worthless a person as I am, who may truly say, with Agur, Ἀφρονεστατος γαρ εἰμι ἀπαντων ἀνθρωπων, "Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man." (Prov. xxx. 2.) Yet, seeing Providence hath laid the lot at my door, to use Peter's words a little altered, Though silver and golden experiences and expressions I have none, yet such as I have I shall willingly impart and communicate to you. (Acts iii. 6.) If you will lend me your *patience*, I will give you my *pains*, in resolving this weighty and worthy case of conscience, *How a Christian may know whether his activity in duty be from the Spirit of God.*

I shall commend to you these eight characteristic notes, as so many touchstones :—

1. *When we have beforehand earnestly prayed and prepared our souls for such activity.*—When you say and do to your soul, as Jehu did to the worshippers of Baal, (2 Kings x. 19,) "I have a great sacrifice to offer, O my soul!" warn and summon-in all the power and parts of soul and body; be sure that not one be wanting, and so, by reading, meditating, and prayer, get our souls into a holy frame and gracious posture; and humbly, yea, heartily also, beg and beseech of God to carry us on eagles' wings through the duty we are drawing near to. If we mount and soar aloft as *aquila in nubibus*, "eagles to heaven," in that duty, we may safely and surely conclude *that activity is from the Spirit.* When mariners buy a wind of the witches, (as they do in Lapland and other places,) and they have it at every place and point, according to the purchase of the one and the promise of the other, they may undoubtedly conclude that wind came from the spirit of the devil. When we beg a wind from God, and we enjoy it at the time according to our desire, we may upon good ground say, that wind came from the Spirit of God. This will appear very clear, if you please to lay together these four things :—

(1.) *It is God's prerogative to hear prayer.*—"O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come." (Psalm lxxv. 2.)

(2.) *It is God's promise to hear prayer.*—"Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it;" (Psalm lxxxi. 10;) spread thy sails by prayer, and I will fill them by my Spirit. He will "give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him." (Luke xi. 13.)

(3.) *It is God's usual course to perform his promise, κατὰ τὸ ῥητόν,* in that very kind.*—"Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear." (Psalm x. 17.) "I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain." (Isai. xlv. 19.)

(4.) *It hath been the constant practice of God's people to look after their prayers, to see what success they have had.*—Prayers come not out of the ark of their souls, as the raven did, never to return; but, as Noah's dove, to come back again with an olive-branch into the soul. "I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints." (Psalm lxxxv. 8.) Saints do not shoot

* "Literally, according to the specified terms."—EDIT.

the arrows of their prayers as children do,—shoot them away, and never mind them; but as archers that shoot their arrows up at a bird, and stand expecting their returns down again. If our activity come from the return of prayers, it must be from the Spirit. When Elias prays so fervently, that fire might come down from heaven, and consume the sacrifice, and it did so, the people might justly cry out, “The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God.” (1 Kings xviii. 37—39.) So when we pray for fire and fervour to come down from heaven on our service, and it comes, we may cry, “The Spirit of God! The Spirit of God!”

2. *When our activity carries us supra sphaeram activitatis,* above the reach of any creature.*—When dust is carried up on high, the wind does it; when dust and ashes are carried up on high in a duty, the wind of the Spirit does it. If a chymist dissolves a stone into drops of water, we may be sure some help higher than a creature hath helped him. If a heart of stone shall be dissolved into drops of water in a duty, it must be some help higher than a creature’s [that] must do it. If Ganymedes be carried up to heaven, it must be by the help of Jupiter. If the soul be carried up to heaven so in a duty that it is an ecstasy rather than an activity, it is by the help of the Spirit. If our spirit cries in a duty with sighs and groans that are unutterable, it was enabled by the Spirit of God. (Rom. viii. 26.) When we are carried through difficulties, doubts, duties, dangers, that seem impossible, impassable, by reason of the lions in the way, and the lions in the streets, that stand open-mouthed to devour us; (Prov. xxvi. 13;) then to venture through all, fire, fury, faggot,—this is of the Spirit of God. When Daniel shall continue active in prayer three times a day, with his windows open, that all might see him, when there were lions in the way indeed; (Dan. vi. 10;)—when Luther in outward straits shall have such inward enlargements, that he comes off from his knees with a *Vicimus, Vicimus*; †—when he shall go to Worms to own the truth of Christ, though all the tiles upon the houses were devils: ‡—of these prayers and practices, and such like, we may say, as Protogenes of a curious line, “None but Apelles could draw this:” “None but the Spirit of God could enlarge and enable to do this.”

3. *When we feel and find our hearts after duty filled and freighted with spiritual joys, and heavenly comforts.*—When our soul is like a merchant’s ship returned from the Indies, loaden as deep as it can swim, with all variety of spices, and precious commodities;—when we have such inward ravishings, that our heart is a little heaven, filled up to the brim with joy; as our Saviour prayed for us; (John xv. 11;) enjoying that “joy unspeakable and full of glory;” (1 Peter i. 8;) heaven antedated, or heaven before-hand;—when we have that joy which is the earnest of God’s love:—“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared,” in this life, “for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.” (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.) This joy is not only the fulfilling of Christ’s prayer, but also the fruit of the Spirit. (Gal. v. 22.)

* “Above the sphere of human activity.”—EDIT.

† “We have conquered! we have conquered!”—EDIT.

‡ SLEIDAN.

When the king had brought his spouse into his bridechamber after her prayer, he ravishes her heart with joy. (Canticles i. 4.) When David had been at prayer, "Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us," then comes that rapture, "Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased." (Psalm iv. 6, 7.) When we have greater joy after duty than worldlings have after harvest, which is their greatest joy: *gaudium messis* is *messis gaudii*; "the joy of their harvest is all the harvest of their joy," which this world's earth-worms are likely to enjoy: "Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things," says Abraham to Dives. (Luke xvi. 25.)

4. *When our activity in duty is constant, like the motion of the fire in its orb, which, philosophers tell us, is perpetual.*—"My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times." (Psalm cxix. 20.) The Spirit dwells in us as his temple. (1 Cor. vi. 19.) The body is the temple, the soul the lute, the affections the strings, the Holy Ghost the musician, who in all our duties makes melody in our hearts. (Eph. v. 19.) Where the ship is alway sailing, the wind is alway blowing; and we are sure that sailing comes from the wind. If the wind lies still, the ship lies still, is becalmed. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is *ελευθερια*, liberty." (2 Cor. iii. 17.) Freedom and liberty are opposed to three things:—(1.) Necessity; (2.) Co-action; (3.) Restraint. Now, the Spirit of God sets our heels, *ut aiunt*,* our hearts, at liberty, not only from necessity [and] co-action, but also [from] restraint. Setting at liberty is freeing us from imprisonment, and giving freedom to go whither we will. The Spirit admits us to that liberty which is, (1.) The purchase of Christ; (Gal. v. 1;) (2.) The privilege of our filiation: "The glorious liberty of the sons of God." (Rom. viii. 21.) The Spirit makes us act as itself: *Nescit tarda molimina Spiritus Sancti gratia*.† (AMBROSIUS.) "The Spirit quickeneth," *ζωοποιει*, "makes lively." (2 Cor. iii. 6.) As the "Spirit of life" frees us from "the law of sin and death," so from the law of sloth and deadness.‡ (Rom. viii. 2.)

OBJECTION.—But some poor soul cries out, "Woe is me, I am undone! I find none of this Spirit in me. I am none of those fixed stars about the equinoctial that move many millions in an hour; but a slow-paced planet, that finishes not his course in many years, whose motion is so dull, that [it is] not discernible. Sure, I am cast out of the firmament of God's favour, and shall be a wandering star, 'to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.'" (Jude 13.)

ANSWER.—It is the misery of ministers, that they cannot speak of the experimental sublimities of some, but others are presently desponding and despairing. I would not, for a world, quench the smoking flax, or break the bruised reed. (Matt. xii. 20.) Yea, I would, with all my soul,

* "As the phrase is."—EDIT. † "The grace of the Holy Spirit possesses nothing in common with the tardiness of human efforts."—EDIT. ‡ *Per nomen libertatis non tantum intelligo a peccati et carnis servitute manumissionem, sed etiam fiduciam quam concipimus ex adoptionis nostrae testimonio; convenit cum Rom. viii. 15.*—CALVINUS in 2 Cor. iii. 17. "By the word *liberty*, I understand not only a manumission from the slavery of sin and of the flesh, but also that trust (or assurance) which we conceive through the witness of our adoption; and this is agreeable to Rom. viii. 15."—EDIT.

put the lambs in my bosom which cannot go, or [which go] but slowly, and gently lead them that are with young. (Isai. xl. 11.) I speak this to them that are upon the staves of Jacob's ladder in their ascending to heaven, to be a loadstone to draw them up, not a mill-stone to drag them down. But, to answer more appositely :—

(1.) I intend it in opposition to them who live in a course of sin, yet now and then in a duty do feel a flash of joy, and thereupon presume of their good estate; and not to those who, with Zachary and Elizabeth, "walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless;" (Luke i. 6;) and yet do not obtain this constant favour.

(2.) I lay it down [as] a positive sign, and *inclusivè*, that those, and all those, that have constant activities, though differing for the altitudes and degrees, may be certain of the Spirit, as those that have trade-winds from port to port may be sure they sail by the wind; or as those that have the organ, medium, and object rightly disposed, may be sure they see. Bellarmine tells a story of an old man, that always arose from duty with these words: "Be you shut, O my eyes! be shut! for I shall never behold any fairer object than God's face, which I have now beheld."* But not a negative sign, *exclusivè*, as if those (that repent of sin, meditate on the promises, pour out prayers, walk with God, wait on ordinances) who have it not, were cast-aways. I am confident that many that lie wind-bound in the harbour shall in due time get to the haven.

(3.) There are four things [that] belong to a Christian: (i.) A habit; (ii.) An act; (iii.) Degrees of that act; (iv.) Sense of all these. He may have the three first, and yet want the sense of them. A ship may sail, and yet the mariner not [be] sensible of it.

(4.) There is no rule but hath some exception; no experience in one believer's heart but a contrary experience may be found in another's. Various are the workings of God's Spirit in the heart. He blows when, where, how he pleases.† (John iii. 8.) He is called "seven Spirits," (Rev. i. 4,) because of his various influences. He doth, *ἐπι το πωλυ*, ["generally,"] blow in a duty, if the ship be ready; but, to show he is *agens liberrimum*,‡ he will sometimes suspend his act, and leave the common road. To conclude this: take this counsel: Stay thyself upon thy God; (Isai. l. 10;) remembering, he will "send forth judgment unto victory." (Matt. xii. 20.) And take this for a cordial, which is a spiritual riddle: "It is a comfort to have no comfort." The *desires* of some are as acceptable to God as the *deeds* of others.

5. *When we are enlarged, and yet we are not elated, high in God's Spirit, low in our own spirit.*—True Christians are like canes, the fuller they are of sugar, the lower they bend. *Quantò sublimior, tantò submissior*; "The loftier, the lowlier:" every true saint's motto. True activity is not leaven to puff us up, but lead to pull us down. What Bede wished some to observe of Austine the monk, sent over a legate

* *Claudimini, oculi mei! claudimini: nihil enim pulchrius jam videbitis.* † I may truly say of it as Keckerman says of Mercury's motion, *Valde varius, et, magnè ex parte, incognitus.* ["Extremely various, and, for the most part, unknown."] ‡ "An agent supremely free."—EDIT.

from the pope to his brethren the prelates and bishops of England, I may advise you to observe, that *if he carried himself humbly, he came from the Lord*: high in duty, and humble after duty, comes from the Lord. When David and his people had been on the mount, in their offerings to the building of the temple, see [in] what a low valley they are, in the opinion of themselves: "Who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee." (1 Chron. xxix. 14.) Here is no haughty pharisee, "Who but I?" but an humble publican, "Who am I?"

6. *When activity in duty is expressed in activity in doing; when active prayers are turned into active practices.*—The emperor Sigismund,* having made fair promises, in a sore fit of sickness, of amendment of life, asked Theodoricus, archbishop of Cologne, how he might know whether his repentance were sincere; who replied, "If you are as careful to *perform* in your health, as you are forward to *promise* in your sickness." † "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." (1 Peter ii. 2.) When our being high in duty makes us grow high in grace and knowledge; (2 Peter iii. 18;) even as cedars of Lebanon, until *caput inter nubila*, "we lodge our heads in heaven;" (2 Peter i. 10, 11;) we may be sure it is from the Spirit, when enlargement in duty lays on us an engagement to duty.

7. *When we give God the glory of all our actings and activities.*—If it be returned to his praise, it was received from his Spirit. When rivers return to the sea, it argues they from thence proceeded. (Eccles. i. 7.) When David and his people had showed their activity in their present towards the erecting of the temple, they shut up all with a most gracious and grateful doxology: "Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name." (1 Chron. xxix. 13.) "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory." (Psalm cxv. 1.) He doubles *Non nobis*, ["Not unto us,"] to lay down man, to lift up God. When we unfeignedly give God the glory, God hath undoubtedly given us the grace.

8. *When we have the testimony of the Spirit witnessing with our spirit, that this activity is from himself.*—"God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." (Gal. iv. 6.) When we are so enlarged in a duty that we do cry, "Abba, Father;" this the Spirit witnesses is his work. The Spirit doth not witness by a clear and distinct, either outward or inward, voice, *totidem verbis*: ["just in so many words:"] "This I have wrought in thee." Thus to affirm, would be a Quaker's fancy, or rather folly. But the Spirit doth sweetly and secretly suggest to us, by having wrought those filial affections and child-like dispositions of love, joy, peace, hope, fear, grief, confidence, &c., in the heart, and by enabling us to act these gracious dispositions, as need shall require. This is the Spirit's *συμμαρτυρεῖν*, "witnessing with our spirits," thus fitted and filled with peace and purity, with melting and mourning. The Spirit doth by his impress and impulse ratify and seal the witness of our own spirit to make it authentic: "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption,

* ÆNÆÆ SYLVII lib. II. *Comment. de Gestis.* † *Promptiores sunt homines promittendo quàm exequendo.*—DION. lib. xxxviii. "Men display far greater promptitude in promising, than in the performance of that which they have promised."—EDIT.

whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits." (Rom. viii. 15, 16.) So that, having two witnesses, it may be established.

(1.) *The witness of conscience*; which is *mille testes*: ["a thousand witnesses in one:"] "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience." (2 Cor. i. 12.)

(2.) *The witness of the Spirit*; which is more than ten thousand witnesses,* because he is an infallible witness, that cannot err; therefore called "the Spirit of truth." (John xiv. 17; 1 John v. 6.) Now these two, putting their hands to the testimonial of our activity, breed and beget that *παρρησιαν προς τον Θεον*, "that confidence in God and evidence to God," as à Lapide interprets the word. (1 John iii. 21.) Now, as those two witnesses' testimony in prophesying against idolatrous and superstitious worship was sufficient to evidence [that] all their actions were from the spirit of antichrist; (Rev. xi. 3;) so these two witnesses, testifying to our souls that these activities are legitimate and laudable, are sufficient assurance that they came from the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

USES.

USE I. Makes an apology for those precious souls, whose wings are so besmeared with the bird-lime of sloth, that they are forced to put up their humble bills to ministers and congregations to beg of God in their behalf spiritual quickenings; that so their hearts being enlarged, by the breathings of the Spirit, they may bowsingly sail in the ways, and through the waves, of God's commandments.

USE II. Is an advocate to *plead justification to the action* in the behalf of those who, as they make it a case of conscience, so they make conscience of the case, to bring their activities to the touchstone, and to the trial. They know that all is not gold that glisters; and they would not, in a thing of that eternal concernment, be deceived with alchymy instead of gold, with blear-eyed Leah instead of beautiful Rachel, with a cloud instead of Juno, with a pebble instead of a pearl; and therefore they are industrious and illustrious to try whether their activity in duty be from the Spirit, by those spirits that are ingredients into their activity.

* *Cum Spiritus testatur, quæ tandem restat ambiguitas?*—CHRYSOSTOMUS in Rom. viii. 15. "When the Holy Spirit bears witness, what ambiguity or doubt can still remain?"—EDIT.

Beside those variations, in the text and illustrative notes, between the first and subsequent editions, which have been specifically noticed, some others occur of minor importance.—EDIT.

SERMON XXII.

BY THE REV. HENRY WILKINSON, SEN., D.D.,

MARGARET PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

WHEREIN ARE WE ENDANGERED BY THINGS LAWFUL ?

They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.
—Luke xvii. 27—29.

HERE is set down what the generality of people were doing in the world: they were brutish in the days of Noah, before the flood came and drowned them; and in the days of Lot, before the fire came down from heaven and destroyed them. In Matt. xxiv. 38, it is expressed by participles: "They were eating," &c., *τρωγοντες*, &c. This shows the vigour and activity of their spirits spent on those things in which they were engaged; and the word *τρωγοντες*, *proprie de brutis dici volunt grammatici; ut etiam videatur magna esse hujus verbi emphasis, quod significatur homines brutorum instar fore ventri deditos.** (BEZA.) This word signifieth a kind of "brutish feeding themselves without fear," as it is [in] Jude 12; but here in the text the words run, *Ἠσθιον, ἐκινον, ἐγαμουν*, &c. They are expressed by an *ασυνδετον*,† without a copulative. Camerarius observes: *Hæc ita ασυνδετως posita magis notant et arguunt hominum temporis illius securitatem; †* so that the vehemency, and eagerness, and intension of their spirits in the things they were employed in, is hereby noted. They were very busy; their hearts, and heads, and hands, all taken up in eating, drinking, buying, selling, &c., the actions named; and the comforts which they were enjoying, those natural and civil employments in which they were engaged, all good and lawful in themselves; but they were not well employed in them. The use of those things was lawful, but they did sinfully use them; for there is in all these actions a narrow way and a broad way: (Matt. vii. 13, 14:) the narrow way which is bounded and limited, and under a rule as to the end, namely, "the glory of God," (1 Cor. x. 31,) and also [as] to the circumstances; though there be but few that find it: but the broad way,

* "The Greek word which we translate *eating*, as the grammarians observe, is properly applicable to beasts; so that the use of this word may likewise appear to be very emphatic; since by it an intimation is conveyed, that men addicted to appetite would be degraded to as low a condition as that of the brutes."—EDIT. † Subjoined is Kersey's definition of this word: "*Asyndeton*, in Grammar, a defect or want of conjunctions in a sentence."—EDIT.

‡ "The words in this collocation, without the intervention of a single conjunction copulative, more forcibly describe and condemn the state of security into which the men of that age were lulled."—EDIT.

which is without bounds and limits,—this is the common road which most walk in. “Thus far, but no further,” saith God. The will of God is the boundary of the narrow way; but lust knoweth no bounds, and will not be prescribed to.

The very Heathens looked at their common actions as under bounds: they had their *Ανεχου και απεχου*, *sustine et abstine*, *ευποιητεον και ανεκτεον*.* (GELLII *Noctes Attice*, lib. xvii. c. 19: ANTON. (?) PIGHIUS, lib. iv. sec. 3.) But the difficulty lies in observing the just limits in the use of lawful things; and therefore one said well, *Licitis perimus omnes*, &c.: “Ruin usually ariseth from the use of lawful things;” there being most danger where it is least suspected. In all our comforts, there is a forbidden fruit, which seemeth fair, and tasteth sweet, but which must not be touched.

The observations may be these:—

1. *That all our actions, natural, in eating, &c., and civil, in buying and selling, &c., come under a rule.*—This is implied, else the Lord would not have brought those great judgments on them, barely for their eating, &c., had they not in those employments transgressed a rule.

2. *Such are usually the miscarriages of men in the use of lawful things, that they are the procuring causes of the most dreadful judgments.*—For we see that the Lord makes mention of these very things, lawful in themselves, as the causes of the flood on the world, and fire on Sodom.

3. *The Lord puts great weight and stress on those very things which we take but little or no notice of.*—The old world and Sodom little thought they should come to so severe a reckoning for their eating and drinking, &c.

To bring things to an issue as to the case, *concerning our danger of sin and miscarriage in lawful things*, I shall inquire,

I. When lawful things become sin to us?

II. How we may judge of our hearts and selves, and discern their miscarriage and sin in the pursuing, enjoyment, and use of lawful things?

III. What are the sins that attend the immoderate and inordinate use of lawful things?

I. As to the first, I answer, *When lawful comforts, which are given us for helps, become hinderances in our way to heaven, then they become sin to us.*—When we, by our abusive cleaving to the creature, by our inordinate affection to it, by our exorbitant, disorderly pursuing of it, do abuse our helps, they become hinderances to us; and, as it was said of Gideon’s ephod, he made an ephod, which, when it became an idol, “became a snare.” (Judges viii. 27.) When lawful comforts are immoderately and passionately desired, pursued, enjoyed, then they become an idol and a beloved; or at least they become beloved so far as to carry it from Christ, from duty. Now, when any thing becomes an idol in the heart, so as that the soul begins to bow before it, and yield obedience to it, then it becomes an idol; and what is an idol in the heart, is a stumbling-block of iniquity in our life; (Ezek. xiv. 4;) it is a stumbling-

* “Sustain and abstain, bear and forbear: it must be well done and firmly maintained.”—EDIT.

block, an hinderance in our way. Such idols in the heart usually prove great offences, and both *σκανδαλον και προσωκομμα*, “stumbling-blocks and occasions of falling:” (Rom. xiv. 13:) the first signifies “a stumbling-block to keep one off from duty:” such an offence Peter was to Christ. (Matt. xvi. 23.) He would have hindered him in that great work which he had to do. The second signifies a gall-trap, which will vex and trouble one in duty; so that when our comforts become idols, images of jealousy in our hearts, then they are stumbling-blocks, and so obstacles in our way to heaven.

Again: *When our lawful comforts by our dotage become beloveds, or greatly, passionately beloved, then they become hinderances.*—When your hearts inflame themselves with your comforts, as the Lord speaks of them in Isai. lvii. 5: they inflamed themselves with their idols. When the heart doth inordinately love creature-comforts, they are then turned into lusts, so that of lawful comforts they are made unlawful lusts. (1 John ii. 15, 16.) The things of the world, or the profits, pleasures, honours, which usually men’s hearts and thoughts are taken up withal, are good and lawful things in themselves; but, being abused, they are called, “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye,” &c. The Holy Ghost puts the lust that is within us, to express the profits, pleasures, and honours of the world which are without us: so that the good things of this life, by our inordinate love to them, being abused, the very nature and property of the things are altered; for, instead of proving good helps to us when lawfully loved and used, [they] become lusts that hinder us, (for they fight against our souls, 1 Peter ii. 11,) and members of the old man, and weapons in his hand to fight against God; they become one with old Adam in us, and therefore we are bid to mortify our earthly members. (Col. iii. 5.) He doth not say, “Mortify your lusts,” but “members;” they being all one, and make up together a body of sin, one “old man,” as it is called, Eph. iv. 22. Now, it is certain, that the old man in us, the body of sin, is an enemy and a hinderance to us in our way to heaven.

In this case those foul sins of idolatry and adultery are committed with the creature; in both which sins, the heart is stolen away from God, drawn away from the proper object. The apostle useth that expression, *υπο της επιθυμιας εξελκομενος*, “drawn away by lust,” (James i. 14,) or some object, in an unlawful conjunction with the heart: then the heart comes to be glued to it, as God speaks: they are “joined to idols,” (Hosea iv. 17,) fixed to them; so that as in idolatry the heart is joined to and fixed to the idol, so as that it will not easily part with it; (as it is, Jer. ii. 11: “Hath a nation changed their gods?” As if he had said, “No, they are fixed to their gods, and they will not change them;”) so it is in the sin of adultery, the heart is stolen from the proper object; as it is in Hosea iv. 11, speaking of wine and women, it is said, they “take away the heart,” and it is glued to that which it goes a-whoring after, so that it will not be taken off from it. (Prov. ii. 19.) When the creature becomes an idol in the heart, then there is idolatry committed; and when it is a beloved, there is adultery committed; the hope, and trust, and confidence of the soul are gone; the

love and care, the joy and delight of the soul are gone; and the soul, with every creature that it thus enjoys, "poureth out her fornications," as the Lord spake of them in Ezek. xvi. 15; and as they in Isai. xxiii. 17, are said to "commit fornication with all kingdoms," so a heart which inordinately loveth, and doteth on, and is glued to, creature-comforts, commits * fornication and abomination with them.

II. The second inquiry was, *How we may judge of our hearts, and know when they miscarry and offend in the pursuing, use, and enjoyment of lawful things.*

1. *When our desire of, and our endeavours after, worldly things grow strong and vehement, and very eager and impatient.*—As Rachel said, "Give me children, or else I die." (Gen. xxx. 1.) When we begin to say, "I must have such an accommodation, whatever it cost me; I must have such a comfort, or I am undone;" such a pursuit after worldly comforts argues a heart very carnal; and he that miscarries so much in seeking after the things of this world will not mend the matter much when he comes to enjoy them. When the heart groweth sick after worldly things in the desire of them, usually it surfeiteth when it gaineth it: as Amnon was sick for his sister, (2 Sam. xiii. 1, 2,) he had a surfeit after; and as Ahab,—he was sick with impatient, earnest longing for Naboth's vineyard. (1 Kings xxi. 4.) When your heart is very impatient till you do obtain your desires, you are never well with that thing which you do so obtain. When the affections grow strong and warm, that you can endure no opposition or contradiction in the pursuance of your desires, but you can bear any trouble or hardship that you may obtain the things desired: (as we see in Shechem, who could endure circumcision that he might have Dinah; Gen. xxxiv. 19; and in Jacob, who did endure very much that he might have Rachel: Gen. xxix. 18;) then there is a match towards,† then in such a case, when it is gained, the heart becomes glued to it, and commits fornication with it, and cannot endure to be touched or thwarted in the fruition of it; as Demetrius and the silversmiths, when they found their Diana began to be touched by Paul's doctrine, they made an uproar, they would not endure that. (Acts xix. 24, &c.) When ye look on any thing with a greedy and impatient, longing, lusting eye; THAT, if you do obtain it, (if God doth not otherwise order it,) will prove a snare to you, as the Psalmist speaks, an idol, an image of jealousy, a curse, and a cross. (Psalm lxix. 22.)

2. *When you have raised expectations and hopes of great contentment and satisfaction from your comforts.*—When you promise to yourselves greater matters from the creature than it can yield; then you miscarry when you look on the creature through the multiplying glass of your affections and lusts, and see them as they are so represented bigger and better than they are; and from thence you have high valuation of them, and raised expectations also of great things from them. When

* All the editions, except the first, have the word *re-commits* in this place.—EDIT.

† All the editions have *match towards*, which, as the language of that age, is susceptible of a good interpretation: "There is a match in great forwardness:" "A contemplated union is in hopeful progress."—EDIT.

we fancy an excellency in the creature that is not, we fancy a fulness in an empty thing, a satisfaction in an insufficient, unsatisfying comfort ; we fancy a stability in a vain, fleeting, vanishing thing. When we fancy a fountain-excellency in a broken cistern, as they did Jer. ii. 13 ; then upon this the heart is raised to great expectations of pleasure, profit, &c. ; then the heart shamefully miscarries ; and, as it is said there is a strange beast that turned the eyes of all the world after it, they looked with an eye of great expectation from this beast, and then they wondered and adored also ; so that they looked with an eye of admiration and adoration too. (Rev. xiii. 3, 4.)

3. *When the obedience and willing submission of the soul is brought off to any worldly comfort, and the soul stoops to its sceptre, and the faculties, like the centurion's servants, do as they are bid.*—Such comforts which are slavishly obeyed, are sinfully enjoyed. When we are afraid to displease them, the fear is at command ; when we are careful to please such a lust, then the care is under subjection ; when we are troubled if crossed, then our sorrow is at command ; if rejoiced when that is gratified, then the love and delight of the soul are at command : “His servants ye are to whom ye obey.” (Rom. vi. 16.) When the soul is even as the servant that looks to the hand of the master with an obedient eye, expecting a command, and ready to yield obedience, (Psalm cxxiii. 2,) such a comfort is a sin and a curse to you. Christ calls to us to deny ourselves. (Matt. xvi. 24.) Profits, pleasures, carnal advantages say, “Rather deny Christ's command.” Who is obeyed ? Christ saith, “Mortify your lusts ;” lust saith, “Gratify us.” Consider, who is obeyed ? If family duties, and personal private duties ; if praying, holy meditation, secret close communion with God, be neglected, because multitude of worldly business, and full and great trade in the world, command you another way, and require the love, and zeal, and strength, and care of the heart to another attendance, then you are under another sovereign than Christ. The obedience of the heart is carried to another law : other lords rule over you. Now, the soul that is under the command of the creature, as I have showed, that comfort becomes a sin which usurps the throne of the heart.

4. *When the soul groweth very tender and compassionate towards such a comfort, and begins to spare that above other things : then that becomes a lust, and lust is very tender and delicate, and must be tenderly used.*—Right eyes are very tender ; the least touch fetcheth tears. When thou canst not endure that either the word of God, or the rod of God, should come too near, or so much as touch upon such a carnal contentment, such a comfort, such a husband, such a wife or child ; thou canst not endure that the Lord should smite thee in any of these, but thou criest out, “O spare this,” as David concerning his Absalom, “O tender the young man, pray deal gently with him ;” (2 Sam. xviii. 4, 5 ;) and as old Jacob with his Benjamin,—he could more easily spare his other children than him ; he looked with a very tender, compassionate eye on him ! Whatever thou dost enjoy with such a tender, bleeding heart and eye, it hath ravished thy heart very far, and it is become thy idol and beloved very far, and thy sin.

5. *When the care, anxiety, and solicitude of the soul runs out after the comforts of this life: saying, "What shall I eat? what shall I drink? How shall I live and maintain my wife and children? what shall I do to get, to keep such or such a thing?"*—When the thoughts of the heart are taken up for protection, for provision, to get and hold the things of this life; such comforts as are so gotten, and so enjoyed, they are sinfully obtained and maintained; and this our Lord Christ doth clear to us. (Matt. vi. 25, 26.) And he warns his disciples in a special manner against all such cares: Προσσεχετε δε εαυτοις.* (Luke xxi. 34.)

6. *That comfort which thou art not dead unto, neither is that dead to thee, thou wilt hardly enjoy with safety to thyself, or thou wilt part withal but upon severe terms.*

If when God, by his providence, calls for such or such a comfort, husband, wife, child, yet thou canst not, you will not, resign and give up that comfort at God's call; but thou growest impatient and sullen, when he doth but attempt to bereave thee of it; God may perhaps let thee have thy lust, as he dealt with the Israelites; but thou shalt have that comfort without any comfort, it may be with a curse. (Psalm lxxviii. 18, 30, 31.)

When we cannot bear the thoughts of either absence or loss of such or such things, cannot endure the thought of parting; it is like the tearing off a limb from the body, when God takes away such a husband, or wife, or child, or estate, &c.; it argues that they were greatly abused while we had them. If there were an indifferency of spirit in us, as the apostle speaks, that they that were married, were as if they were not married, &c., (1 Cor. vii. 29, 30, &c.) they would part upon easier terms by far. When the life is bound up in a comfort, it is death to part; as it was with Jacob to his Benjamin. (Gen. xlv. 22, 30.) When the creature hath got too great an interest in thee, that thou canst by no means bring thy heart to think of leaving it, or its leaving thee, though God seems to call for it; the heart begins secretly to rise up against God, and to murmur and quarrel at providence; this argueth a very carnal heart. If the heart did hang loose from these things, thou mightest enjoy them with more comfort, and part with them with more ease.

7. *If after God hath been weaning us in a more special manner by his word and rod, and taking off our hearts from our worldly comforts, yet the strong bent of the soul is towards them, it argues much carnal love to them that we are not crucified to those comforts.*

When the soul hath its secret, sinful converse and fellowship with a creature-comfort, against its own conviction to the contrary; it may be, thou hast repented, or at least hast seemed to repent, of such a way and course; yet, for all this, thy heart continually hangs that way; and as it is [in] Prov. ix. 17, her "stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant." When a stolen glance of the eye, a stolen kiss from a lustful object, is still pleasant to the soul, there is much of a meretricious carriage in that heart, it is so far sinfully enjoyed.

When the heart hankers much after such a thing, it is stolen away; (Hosea iv. 11;) when it hangs after it, as it is in Jer. xxii. 17, their

* "And take heed to yourselves," lest at any time, &c.—EDIT.

hearts went after their covetousness ; when the heart hath its secret haunts and postern-doors to get out to such or such an object, and that object hath its secret passage to the soul. There be some secret correspondencies betwixt the heart and the object. When the lustful object hath its welcome, it no sooner knocks but it is admitted ; when it hath a free passage into the heart, and the heart hangs after it, nay, perhaps admits it when it is in duty ; if it comes even when we are with God in prayer, and is admitted ; it argues a sinful, whorish familiarity.

8. *If, after solemn and frequent warnings, invitations, and earnest beseechings, perhaps corrections too, God calls thee to a more strict and close walking with him in a severer way of self-denial, in a more free and full enjoyment of himself.*—If God would sequester thee from thy oxen, farm, married wife, that he might have thee more alone from the crowd, and dust, and tumult of the world ; if yet, after all this, thou then settest thy wits on work to frame excuses ; if Christ speak to thee as he did to his spouse : “ Come, let us go forth into the field ; let us lodge in the villages ; ” (Canticles vii. 11 ;) “ Come, let us go out of the city-crowd and multiplicity of worldly businesses, and let us retire alone, that we may more fully enjoy one another.” If he saith to thee as he speaks to his spouse, “ Let us get up early to the vineyards,” &c., (verse 12,) and calls thee off to a more early, earnest, diligent attendance on him ; and thou doest as the spouse, makest lazy excuses, (Canticles v. 2, 3,) for thy easy gainful trade and way of life thou ledest ; if so it be with thee, thou keepest thy comforts upon sinful terms.

When the arguments, and pleas, and excuses, and pretexts, are for lust ; when denials, equivocations, and thy reason, are all at work for lust ; when God calls to self-denial in some creature-comfort, and then the heart forms excuses for the enjoyment of it ; (as they in the gospel ; they all began to make excuses, when they were called to the wedding-supper ; their lawful comforts became a snare and sin to them ; Luke xiv. 17, 18 ;) if thy heart, in such a case, studies *colours* to adorn or set it out, or set it off, or *covers* to protect it, then it is sinful. The heart miscarries in the enjoyment of its comforts, when it studies how to hide itself in the enjoyment of it, as much as may be, even from the eye of God.

III. The third thing propounded was, *What are the sins that attend the immoderate sinful use or abuse of lawful comforts ?*

I will confine myself to the sins in the text.

1. The first sin in their eating and drinking, &c., was *sensuality* ; and that is expressed by the word *τρωγοντες*, which, as I have showed, is properly applied to brutes, an eating after a brutish manner ; and by the *ασυνдетον*, [“ asyndeton,”] which notes the vehemency and intension of their spirits, laid out in their sensual enjoyments. Men are apt (especially in abundance) to grow sensual and brutish, to use their comforts without fear, to indulge themselves very far, and so say to themselves, as the rich glutton, “ Soul, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry ; ” (Luke xii. 19 ;) a sensual, brutish speech, fitter for a swine than a man. Abundance of the things of this life hath a strange virtue to corrupt a man into a brute. “ Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked.”

(Deut. xxii. 15.) How is he degenerated to a fat heifer or horse, that kicks and winceth! The Lord complains, that "when he had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery," &c., and were like "fed horses," brutish and sensual. (Jer. v. 7, 8.) Such as gratify their lusts in eating, &c., are "strong bulls of Bashan." (Psalm xxii. 12.) The Psalmist says, he was compassed about with them, who were like bulls in a fat pasture, well-fed and strong, and ready to gore and push. The great, and rich, and potent ones are compared to these brutes. We are very apt in the midst of comforts to grow sensual, and before we are aware, as Noah and Lot, who both were overtaken. Our Lord Christ exhorts his disciples against these, and bids them to beware. (Luke xxi. 34.) The word notes a very diligent and intent study and intension of mind to what he said, "lest their heart should be overcharged." It seems strange that he should give the disciples an exhortation against sensuality and brutish sins, but that he knew their natures; and though they were most temperate persons, yet he bids them "beware of surfeiting," knowing that if the best did not watch, they might be overtaken with sensuality.

2. *Pride, ease, and idleness usually go together, the immoderate or inordinate use of the creature.*—This was it which God warned his people of: "When thou hast eaten and art full, beware lest then thine heart be lifted up." (Deut. viii. 11, 12, 14.) So, Psalm cxxiii. 4, there it is said, "Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud:" they are put together. When we fall to eating and drinking, the next thing is to take our ease. (Luke xii. 19.)

So the Lord speaks: "According to their pasture, so were they filled; they were filled, and their heart was exalted; therefore have they forgotten me." (Hosea xiii. 6.) Ease and idleness attend sensuality; these gratify a brutish disposition very much. Fulness of bread and abundance of idleness were Sodom's sins; (Ezek. xvi. 49;) and the rich glutton sang a requiem to his soul. Usually, when men abound in outward comforts, they are most apt to grow lethargic and slothful, or at least they will not take much pains; it may be, they will be doing something, but they will not be at much pains, especially as to their souls: "Ephraim is as an heifer that is taught, and loveth to tread out the corn," &c.; (Hosea x. 11;) but not to plough; he cares not for that. They were wont to use beasts in treading their corn, instead of threshing of it: now, it was God's command, that the ox that trod out the corn should not be muzzled, but that he might eat as he did work.

Then here is Ephraim at a good lazy work, that hath meat in the mouth of it, wages for work, and present pay; here is corn, he abounds in outward things; and though he treads out the corn, he will not plough, that is too hard labour; he will not go abroad in the wet and cold: and [this] seems to have reference to those of the tribes that would not go to Jerusalem to worship, they would not take so much pains. Ephraim considers his ease, he loves no hard work. Ephraim did abound, and grew rich. (Hosea xii. 7, 8.) He drove a great trade in the world, and took pains; but yet it was in a way that might gratify

his lust, and carry on his gains : but what saith God to this temper ? See Hosea x. 11 : the Lord saith, he will pass upon his fair neck : “ I will make Ephraim to ride.” He had a fair and a beautiful neck ; he led such a life, that though he trod out the corn, he lived in plenty, ease, and idleness ; no yoke came on his neck, he would not abide a yoke to be put on ; but by his lazy life and good trade he had a beautiful neck, he became tender and delicate : but, “ I will pass over his fair neck ;” as some take it, “ I will cause a heavy yoke to come over his neck, and will make him work, and set him to hard labour. I will make him a drudge. I will make him ride.” Some take it for their speedy captivity, that shall tame him : by his plenty and ease he is grown so lusty, like a restive jade, “ I will ride him, I will set some on his back [that] shall ride him off his legs.” And, “ Jacob shall break his clods ;” (verse 11 ;) the ten tribes. This is a base, drudging work, to break the clods ; but this servile work shall be his. We see, in Laodicea, their plenty and idleness went together ; and they were to be spued out. (Rev. iii. 16, 17.)

3. Then there is *security* follows this eating, &c. ; and usually where there is abundance of these, and that men are much taken up with these, there is a secure, sleepy, forgetful spirit goes with them : and, doubtless, this was the sin of the old world, that though Noah was a preacher of righteousness, and his making the ark was a public alarm to the world, yet they went on in their way, eating and drinking, &c., very securely, promising to themselves peace and safety. Such as are filled with what they eat and drink, are apt to drop asleep ; and then they are secure ; they apprehend themselves safe from danger ; they are compared to a drunken man, that doth not know in what condition he is. In 2 Tim. ii. 26, the word *ανανήψασιν* is “ to return to one’s self after drunkenness,” “ that they may awaken :” for it signifies one that is secure, and so goes on in his way ; when he returns and recovers himself, he is as a man that was drunk, and awakes and returns to himself. Whence it is that God did so often caution his people against a secure, sleepy, forgetful frame of spirit ; and when the Lord was to bring the children of Israel into Canaan, he still bids them [that] they should not forget him. (Deut. vi., viii. 14.) But this sin he complains of in them. (Hosea ii. 13.) When David was in the midst of his comforts he grew secure. (Psalm xxx. 6.) We find some brought-in, speaking in their thoughts that they had “ made a covenant with death and hell,” &c. (Isai. xxviii. 15.) They in their secure thoughts apprehended themselves free from danger : such thoughts ever carry impenitency and hardness of heart with them ; when they are “ settled on their lees,” they never consider or say, “ What have I done ?” (Zeph. i. 12 ; Jer. xlviii. 11 ; viii. 6.) Incogitancy and security go together. A secure person never considers his own estate, danger, nor duty. When once a man grows sleepy, promising to himself freedom from danger, and good days, then he falls into some sin or other, or some evil falls upon him. The evil servant said his master delayed his coming, and he began to beat his fellow-servant. (Matt. xxiv. 48—50.) (1.) He is secure, he promiseth to himself safety ; his master delays, &c. (2.) He falls to beat his

fellow-servant. Or else they fall into some sin. While they slept, their lamps went out : Matt. xxv. 5, 8. Or some evil befalls them ; (Lam. i. 9 ;) “ Sudden destruction,” &c. (1 Thess. v. 3.) When men grow secure as to their state, and of a supine, sleepy, careless spirit, such are ever in a most unsafe, sinful condition, nigh to cursing, and on the very brink of ruin and utter destruction.

SERMON XXIII.

BY THE REV. THOMAS WATSON, A.M.,
OF EMMANUEL COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

HOW MUST WE MAKE RELIGION OUR BUSINESS ?

Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business ?—Luke ii. 49.

THESE are the words of our Lord Jesus, whose lips dropped as an honey-comb. The occasion was this : Christ having the Spirit of wisdom and sanctity poured on him without measure, being but twelve years old, goes to the temple, and fell a-disputing with the doctors. (Verse 46.) Where should learning blossom but upon that tree which did bear several sorts of fruit ? Who could better interpret secrets than He who lay in his Father's bosom ? (Col. ii. 9.) “ All that heard him were astonished at his understanding.” (Luke ii. 47.) In the Greek it is ἐξίσταντο, “ they were out of themselves ” with admiration.* Well might they admire, that he who never had been at the university should be able to silence the great rabbies : “ How knoweth this man letters, having never learned ? ” (John vii. 15.) While they were wondering, his mother, who now was come to seek him, propounds this question, “ Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us ? ” (Luke ii. 48 ;) that is, “ Why hast thou put us to all this labour in seeking thee ? ” † In the words of the text Christ makes a rational and religious reply : “ Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business ? ” In the Greek it is, ἐν τοῖς τοῦ Πατρὸς μου, “ in the things of my Father.” As if Christ had said, “ I must be doing the work which my Father in heaven hath set me about : for this received I my mission and unction, that I might do the will of Him that sent me.” (John ix. 4.) What am I in the world for, but to promote his glory, propagate his truth, and be as a load-star to draw souls to heaven ? “ Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business ? ”

DOCTRINE.

From this example of our blessed Saviour, in making his Father's work his business, we learn this great truth :—

* *Usque ad stuporem percussit.*—BRUGENS. “ They were completely surprised, and overcome with stupor.”—EDIT. † *Minimè objurans, sed rem fidenter et modestè quærens.*—BRUGENSIS. “ His mother did not utter this in a chiding tone, but inquired into the matter with modesty, and in confidence ” that she would receive a satisfactory reply.—EDIT.

That it is the duty of every Christian to make religion his business.

Religion is not a *παρεργον*,* or “thing by the by,” proper only for spare hours; but it must be the grand business of our lives. St. Paul made it so: his great care was to know Christ, and to be found in Christ. (Phil. iii. 9, 10.) How abundantly did he lay out himself for God! *Περισσοτερον εκοπιασα*: “I laboured more abundantly than they all,” &c. (1 Cor. xv. 10.) St. Paul moved heavenward, not slowly as the sun on the dial, but as the sun in its hemisphere, with a winged swiftness. He made religion his business.

For the illustrating and unfolding of this, there are three questions to be resolved:—

I. What is meant by religion?

II. Why we must make religion our business?

III. What it is to make religion our business?

QUESTION I. *What is meant by religion?*

I answer, the Latin word *religio quasi religatio*,—it signifies “a knitting together.” Sin hath loosened us from God; but when religion comes into the heart, it doth *religare*, “fasten the heart to God again;” as the members are knit to the head by several nerves and ligaments.† Religion is the spiritual sinew and ligament that knits us to God. The Greek word for religion *ευσεβεια*,‡ signifies “a right worshipping.” This is religion, when we not only worship the true God, but in that manner which he hath prescribed; by a right rule, from a right principle, to a right end.

QUESTION II. The second question is, *Why we must make religion our business?*

I answer, because religion is a matter of the highest nature; while we are serving God, we are doing angels’ work. The business of religion doth infinitely out-balance all things besides. Pleasure, profit, honour, (the trinity which the world adores,) are all of an inferior alloy, and must give way to religion. The fear of God is said to be “the whole duty of man;” (Eccles. xii. 13;) or, as it is in the Hebrew, *ל-ך ה-ך ה-ך ה-ך* “the whole of man.” Other things may delight, religion doth satiate; other things may make us wise to admiration, religion makes us “wise to salvation.” (2 Tim. iii. 15.)

QUESTION III. The third question is, *What it is to make religion our business?*

I answer: it consists principally in these seven things:—

1. *We make religion our business, when we wholly devote ourselves to religion.*—“Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear;” (Psalm cxix. 38;) as a scholar who devotes himself to his studies makes learning his business. A godly man may sometimes run himself, through precipitancy and incogitancy, upon that which is evil. There is no man so bad but he may do some good actions; and there is no man so good but he may do some bad actions. But the course and tenor of a godly man’s life is religious; when he doth *deviate* to sin, yet he doth *devote* himself to God. It is with a Christian as it is with a company of

* “Something only secondary in importance.”—EDIT. † LACTANTIUS, *Div. Instit.* lib. iv. ‡ *Ab ev, et σεβουμαι.*

mariners at sea: they are bound for such a coast: now, while they are sailing, they may meet with such a cross-wind as may turn them back, and drive them a quite contrary way; but as soon as the storm is over, and the sea calm, they recover themselves again, and get into the right way where they sailed before. So it is with a Christian: heaven is the haven he is bound for, the scripture is the compass he sails by; yet, a contrary wind of temptation blowing, he may be driven back into a sinful action; but he recovers himself again by repentance, and sails on constantly to the heavenly port. (Isai. v. 20.?) This is to make religion our business, when, notwithstanding some excursions through human frailty, we are devoted to God's fear, and dedicate our *το ζῆν* ["entire existence"] to God.

2. *We make religion our business, when we intend * the business of religion chiefly.*—It doth *principatum obtinere* ["gain the pre-eminence"]. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God;" (Matt. vi. 33;) first in *time*, before all things, and first in *affection*, above all things. We must give religion the precedency, making all other things either subservient or subordinate to it. We are to provide for our families, but chiefly for our souls: this is to make religion our business. Jacob put the cattle before, and made his wives and children lag after. (Gen. xxxii. 16.) It is unworthy to make religion come behind in the rear: it must lead the van, and all other things must stoop and vail to it. He never had religion in his heart who saith to any worldly thing, "In the throne thou shalt be greater." †

3. *We make religion our business, when our thoughts are most busied about religion.*—While others are thinking how they shall do to get a living, our thoughts are, how we shall do to be saved. David did muse upon God: "While I was musing the fire burned." (Psalm xxxix. 3.) Thoughts are as passengers in the soul: when we travel every day to the city of God, and are contemplating glory and eternity, this is to make religion our business. Theophylact calls holy contemplation, "the gate and portal by which we enter into heaven;" ‡ a Christian, by divine soliloquies and ejaculations, is in heaven before his time; he is rapt-up into paradise, his thoughts are all packed-up and gone.

4. *We make religion our business, when our main end and scope is to serve God.*—He is said to make the world his business, whose great design is to get the world. St. Paul's ultimate end was, that Christ might be magnified, and the church edified. (Phil. i. 20; 2 Cor. xii. 19.) Our aims must be good, as well as our actions. Many make use of religion for sinister ends; like the eagle, while she flies aloft, her eye is upon her prey. Hypocrites serve God *propter aliud*; § they love the temple for the gold; (Matt. xxiii. 17;) they court the gospel, not for its beauty, but for its jewels: these do not make religion their business, but a politic trick and artifice to get money. || But then we make religion our busi-

* In the classical signification, well-known and much-used by our ancestors, to *pay great regard to, devote much attention to, to pursue any thing with intensesness.*—EDIT. † *Si Christus pro te de celesti sede descendit, tu propter ipsum fuge terrena.*—AUGUSTINUS. "If on thy account Christ descended from his heavenly throne, do thou, for his sake, avoid and flee from earthly entanglements."—EDIT. ‡ *Ἡ δὴρα τῶν οὐρανῶν, δι' αὐτῆς γὰρ προσάγομεθα τῷ Θεῷ.*—THEOPHYLACT. § "On account of other advantages."—EDIT.

|| *Μηδεν πραξῆς, αν μη κερδος εχη, το κατα Θεον.*—CHRYSOSTOMUS. "No good action wilt thou perform, unless thou canst derive some advantage to thyself" through the semblance of piety.—EDIT.

ness, when the glory of God is mainly in our eye, and the very purport and intent of our life is, to live to Him who hath died for us. (2 Cor. v. 15.) God is the centre, and all the lines of our actions must be drawn to this centre.

5. *We make religion our business, when we do trade with God every day.*—“Our conversation is in heaven.” (Phil. iii. 20.) The Greek word for “conversation,” *πολιτευμα*, signifies “commerce and traffic:” “our merchandise is in heaven.” A man may live in one place, and drive his trade in another: a saint, though he lives in the world, yet he trades above the moon; * he is a merchant for the pearl of price. This is to make religion our business: when we keep a holy intercourse with God, there is a trade driven between us and heaven: “Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” (1 John i. 3.) God comes down to us upon the wing of his Spirit, and we go up to him upon the wing of prayer.

6. *We make religion our business, when we redeem time from secular things for the service of God.*—A good Christian is the greatest monopolizer: he doth hoard up all the time he can for religion: “At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee.” (Psalm cxix. 62.) Those are the best hours which are spent with God; and David, having tasted how sweet the Lord was, would borrow some time from his sleep, that he might take a turn in heaven. It well becomes Christians to take time from worldly occasions, sinful dressings, idle visits, that they may be the more intent upon the matters of religion. I have read of a holy man, who being tempted by his former evil companions to sin, he made this answer: “I am so busy in reading in a little book with three leaves, that I have no leisure so much as to mind my other business;” and being asked afterward, whether he had read over the book, replied: “This book with three leaves is of three several colours, red, white, and black; which contain such deep mysteries, that I have resolved with myself to read therein all the days of my life. In the first leaf, which is *red*, I meditate on the precious blood of Christ, which was shed for my sins; in the *white* leaf, I meditate on the pure and delicious joys of heaven; in the *black* leaf, I contemplate the hideous and dreadful torments of hell, prepared for the wicked to all eternity.” This is to make religion our business, when we are so taken up with it, that we have scarce any leisure for other things. Christian, thou hast a God to serve, and a soul to save; and if thou hast any thing of religion in thee, thou wilt take heed of the thieves of time, and wilt engross all opportunities for the best things. How far are they from Christianity, who juggle out holy duties! instead of borrowing time from the world for prayer, they steal time from prayer, that they may follow the world.

7. *We make religion our business, when we serve God with all our might.*—Our strength and spirits are drawn forth about religion: we seek, sweat, strive, bestir ourselves, as in a matter of life and death, and put forth not only diligence, but violence. “David danced before the Lord with all his might.” (2 Sam. vi. 14.) This is to make religion our

* *Ut municipales calorum nos gerimus.* “We conduct ourselves as the burghesses of heaven.”—EDIT.

business, when we shake off sloth, and put on zeal as a garment. We must not only pray, but pray fervently: (James v. 16 :) we must not only repent, but "be zealous and repent:" (Rev. iii. 19 :) we must not only love, but be "sick of love." (Canticles ii. 5.)

Multa tulit, . . . sudavit, et alsit, &c.*

This is to be a Christian to purpose, when we put forth all our vigour and fervour in religion, and take the kingdom of God as it were by storm. (Matt. xi. 12.) It is not a faint velleity [that] will bring us to heaven: there must not only be wishing, but working; and we must so work, as being damned if we come short.

USES.

USE I. INFORMATION.

BRANCH I. Hence learn, that *there are but few good Christians.*—O how few make religion their business! Is he an artificer that never wrought in the trade? Is he a Christian that never wrought in the trade of godliness? How few make religion their business!

1. *Some make religion a complement,† but not their business.*—They court religion by a profession, and, if need be, religion shall have their letters of commendation; but they do not make religion their business. Many of Christ's disciples, who said, "Lord, evermore give us this bread," yet soon after basely deserted Christ, and would follow him no longer. "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." (John vi. 34, 66.)

2. *Others make the world their business.*—"Who mind earthly things." (Phil. iii. 19.) The earth puts out the fire; so the love of earthly things puts out the fire of heavenly affections. It was a judgment upon Korah and Dathan, "the earth swallowed them up." (Num. xvi. 32.) Thus it is with many: the world swallows up their time, thoughts, discourse; they are swallowed up alive in the earth. There is a lawful use of these things; but the sin is in the excess. The bee may suck a little honey from the leaf; but put it in a barrel of honey, and it is drowned. How many ingulf themselves in the creature, and drive such a trade in the shop, that they quite break in their trading for heaven! The farm and oxen have kept millions from Christ. These do not make religion their business, but make the world their business; and what will all be at death, but as a dream or fancy? ‡ "The people shall labour in the very fire, and shall weary themselves for very vanity." (Hab. ii. 13.)

BRANCH II. Hence see how hard it is to be saved.—It is not so easy as some apprehend: religion must be our business. It is not enough to have a smack of religion, a touch and away, *canis ad Nilum*; § but we must make it our *το εργον*, "our business." How many precepts have we to obey, how many temptations to resist, how many graces to treasure up! Religion is the work of our whole lives, and all little enough!

* HORATIUS *De Arte Poetica*, 413. For a translation of this passage see page 425.—EDIT.

† A good use of the old word, in the sense of "something to fill up a vacant moment."—EDIT.

‡ Σκια και οναρ, και τουτων ουδαινωτερα. "A shadow, and a dream, and the most worthless and contemptible of these things."—EDIT.

§ "Like the dog which drinks hastily of the waters of the Nile," moving cautiously along the banks of the river while trying to slake his thirst, through fear of becoming the prey of crocodiles.—EDIT.

Lord, then how hard is it to be saved! "Where will the sinner appear?" What will become of the gallants of our times, who make sin their business, whose whole employment is to indulge and pamper the flesh? Φιληδονοι μαλλον η φιλοπονοι.* "All their care is," as Jerome speaks, "to crisp their hair, to sparkle their diamonds; instead of steeping their souls in brinish tears, they bathe themselves in perfumed waters, and ride to hell upon the back of pleasure." †

USE II. TRIAL.

Let us deal impartially with our own souls, and put ourselves upon a strict trial before the Lord, whether we make religion our business. And for our better progress herein, I shall lay down ten signs and characters of a man that makes religion his business, and by these, as by a gospel-touchstone, we may try ourselves:—

CHARACTER I. *He who makes religion his business doth not place his religion only in externals.*—"He is not a Jew who is one outwardly," εν τω φανερω. (Rom. ii. 28.) Religion doth not stand only in forms and shadows; this is to give God *leaves* instead of *fruit*. It is often seen, that the pomp of worship destroys the purity, as the paint of the glass hinders the light; and it is no untruth to say, that formality may as well damn as profaneness. A superstitious Pharisee may as well be in hell as a drunken epicure. A Christian's main work lies with his heart. He that makes religion his business, gives God the vitals: he worships him "in spirit and in truth." (John iv. 24.) In stilling, *the spirits* are strongest. The good Christian distills out the spirits for God. Aaron must offer the fat upon the altar: "He shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord; the fat that covereth the inwards. All the fat is the Lord's." (Lev. iii. 3, 16.) If Aaron had offered the skin instead of the fat, it would not have been accepted. External devotion alone is offering the skin; and they that give God only the skin of duty, shall carry away only the shell of comfort.

CHAR. II. *He who makes religion his business avoids every thing that may be a remora and "hinderance" to him in his work.*—A wicked man cares not whether the matter of religion goes forward or backward; he stands in the way of temptation; and as if sin did not come fast enough, he "draws it as with a cart-rope." (Isai. v. 18.) But he who makes religion his business flies from temptation; and while he is running the heavenly race, "lays aside every weight of sin which doth so easily beset" him. (Heb. xii. 1.) A man may as well miss of heaven by loitering in the way, as by losing the way. "The king's business required haste;" (1 Sam. xxi. 8;) so the business of religion requires haste: therefore the good Christian is careful that he be not taken off the work, and so be taken tardy in it.

CHAR. III. *He who makes religion his business hath a care to preserve conscience inviolable, and had rather offend all the world than offend his conscience.*—"I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience." (2 Tim. i. 3.) Much of religion lies in conscience.

* "Lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of labour."—EDIT. † *Quilus cura est ut vestes bene oleant, ut digiti annulis radient, ut crines calamistro rotentur.*—HIERONYMUS.

Faith is a precious jewel ; but conscience is the cabinet where this jewel must be kept : " Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience." (1 Tim. iii. 9.) Love is a beautiful flower ; but this flower most grows in the garden of a pure conscience : " Charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience." (1 Tim. i. 5.) So sacred a thing is conscience, that without this all religion drops in pieces. He who makes religion his business, labours to get conscience regulated by scripture ; (as the watch is set by the dial ;) and, having done this, he keeps his conscience as his eye, that no dust of sin fall into it.*

CHAR. IV. *He who makes religion his business, religion hath an influence upon all his civil actions.*

1. *Religion hath an influence upon his eating and drinking.*—He holds the golden bridle of temperance ; he eats sparingly. " The godly man feeds not to please the sensual appetite, but that he may," as Chrysostom saith, " by the strength he receives from the creature," *μαλλον εν τη πνευματικων εργασια σπουδην επιδεικνυσθαι*, " be the more fit for the cheerful discharge of spiritual services : " he makes not his food fuel for lust, but help to duty. Epicures dig their own grave with their teeth ; they feed without fear. *Irregulares gulares*.† Sinners fear not lest their table should be a snare ; ‡ (Jude 12 ;) they fear not the process of justice : while the wine is in the cup, they fear not the hand-writing on the wall. But the godly man, being regulated by religion, puts a knife to his throat, that he may cut the throat of intemperance. (Prov. xxiii. 2.)

2. He that makes religion his business, *religion hath an influence upon his recreation.*—The strings of the viol must sometimes be slackened, lest they break ;

*Neque semper arcum
Tendit Apollo ; §*

God affords his people generous delights ; the scripture allows the use of the bow. (2 Sam. i. 18.) But we are apt to offend most in lawful things ; more are killed with wine than with poison. Religion sits [as] moderator in the soul. The man influenced by religion dares not make play an occupation ; it is oil to quicken him in God's service, not a sea to engulf him. He who is devoted to religion puts bounds to the Olympian sports ; he knows where to make his stops and periods ; he sets up an *Herculis columna*, || on which he writes, *Non ultra*, " No further than this."

* *O felix conscientie Paradisus, bonorum operum virgultis consita, variisque virtutum floribus purpurata.*—AUGUSTINUS *ad Fratres in Eremo*, tom. x. " O the blessed Paradise of a pure conscience, plauted around with pleasant shrubs of good works, and beautifully empurpled with variegated flowers of virtues and graces !" —EDIT. † " Lawless gluttons," who exercise no rule of moderation while in the act of gratifying their appetites. It is a witty play upon the two words, *irregulares gulares*, which cannot be tersely rendered into our language.—EDIT. ‡ *Ουκ ογατε απο της αμετρου αδηφαγιας τα μυρια επαγομενα νοσηματα.*—CHRYSOSTOMUS *in Psalmum lxi. 22*. " You have no conception of the myriads of maladies which are introduced by the indulgence of excess and intemperance." —EDIT. § HORATI *Carmin.* lib. ii. od. x. 19.

" Sometimes Apollo tunes his lyre,
And wakes the Muse to sing ;
Nor deals perpetual death around

With his unerring string."—DUNCOMBE'S Translation.

|| " A pillar or boundary as immovable as one of those which bear the name of Hercules ; " Calpe or Gibraltar in Europe, and Abyla in Africa.—EDIT.

3. He that makes religion his business, *religion hath an influence upon his buying and selling.*—The wicked get a livelihood often by cozening; sometimes they embase commodities: they “sell the refuse of the wheat.” (Amos viii. 6.) They would pick out the best grains of corn, and then sell the rest. Sometimes they falsify their weights: “He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand.” (Hosea xii. 7.) But he who makes religion his business is regulated by it in the shop: he is just in his dealings; he dares not hold the book of God in one hand, and false weights in the other; he is faithful to his neighbour, and makes as much reckoning of the Ten Commandments, as of his Creed.

4. *Religion hath an influence upon his marrying.*—He labours to graft upon a religious stock: he is not so ambitious of parentage as [of] piety; nor is his care so much to espouse dowry as virtue: * in a word, he seeks for “a meet help,” one that may help him up the hill to heaven: this is marrying “in the Lord.” That marriage indeed is “honourable,” (Heb. xiii. 4,) when the husband is joined to one who is the “temple of the Holy Ghost.” (1 Cor. vi. 19.) Here is the man that makes religion his business, who in all his civil transactions is steered and influenced by religion: religion is the universal ingredient.

CHAR. V. *He who makes religion his business, is good in his calling and relation.*—Relative grace doth much grace religion. I shall suspect his goodness who herein is eccentric. Some will pray and discourse well; but it appears they never made religion their business, but took it up rather for ostentation than as an occupation, because they are defective in relative duties: they are bad husbands, bad children, &c. If one should draw a picture, and leave out the eye, it would much eclipse and take from the beauty of the picture: to fail in a relation stains the honour of profession. He who makes religion his business is like a star shining in the proper orb and station wherein God hath set him.

CHAR. VI. *He who makes religion his business hath a care of his company.*—He dares not twist into a cord of friendship with sinners: “I have not sat with vain persons.” (Psalm xxvi. 4.) Diamonds will not cement with rubbish. It is dangerous to intermingle with the wicked, lest their breath prove infectious: sin is very catching. They “were mingled among the Heathen, and learned their works. And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them.” (Psalm cvi. 35, 36.) *Αναγκη η παθειν, η μαθειν, τι κακον.* † If you mingle bright and rusty armour together, the rusty will not be made bright, but the bright will be made rusty. He who makes religion his business, likes not to be near them whose nearness sets him further off from God, and whose embraces, like those of the spider, are to suck out the precious life. The godly man ingrafts ‡ into the “communion of saints,” and hereby, as the scions, he partakes of the sap and virtue of their grace: he who makes it

* *Καν γυναικα αγομεθα, μη χρηματων περιουσιαν, μηδε προγονων περιφανειαν* αλλα τροπον αρετης λαμβανωμεν και επικεικταιν.—CHRYSOSTOMUS. “Though each of us marries a wife, let us not receive (as our spouse) a superabundance of property, nor the splendour of ancestry, but rather a virtuous disposition and habits of discretion.”—EDIT. † EPICETUS. “They must have either endured, or learned, something that was evil.”—EDIT. ‡ This word is here employed as a reciprocal or reflexive verb, like the middle voice in Greek, and conveys the signification of *he ingrafts himself, or is ingrafted.*—EDIT.

his business to get to heaven, associates only with those who may make him better, or whom he may make better.

CHAR. VII. *He who makes religion his business keeps his spiritual watch always by him.**

1. He watcheth his *eye*: "I made a covenant with mine eyes." (Job xxxi. 1.) When Dinah was gadding, she was defiled. (Gen. xxxiv. 1, 2.) When the eye is gadding by impure glances, the heart is defiled.

2. He who makes religion his business watcheth his *thoughts*, lest they should turn to froth: "How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?" (Jer. iv. 14.) What a world of sin is minted in the fancy! A child of God sets a spy over his thoughts, he summons them in, and captivates them "to the obedience of Christ." (2 Cor. x. 5.)

3. He who makes religion his business watcheth his *passions*.—Passion is like gunpowder, which the devil setting on fire blows up the soul. Jonah in a passion quarrels with the Almighty. (Jonah iv. 1, 9.) He who is devoted to religion watcheth his passions, lest, the tide growing high, reason should be carried down the stream, and be drowned in it.

4. He who makes religion his business watcheth his *duties*.—"Watch and pray." (Matt. xxvi. 41.) First. He doth watch in prayer. The heart is subject to remissness; if it be not dead in sin, it will be dead in prayer; a Christian watcheth, lest he should abate his fervour in duty; he knows if the strings of his spiritual viol slacken, he cannot "make melody in his heart to the Lord." (Eph. v. 19; Col. iii. 16.) Secondly. He doth watch *after* prayer. As a man is most careful of himself when he comes out of a hot bath, the pores being then most open and subject to cold; so a Christian is most careful when he comes from an ordinance, lest his heart should decoy him into sin: therefore, when he hath prayed, he sets a watch. He deals with his heart as the Jews dealt with Christ's sepulchre; they "made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch." (Matt. xxvii. 66.) A good Christian having been at the word, and sacrament, (that sealing ordinance,) after the sealing he sets a watch.

5. He who makes religion his business watcheth his *temptations*.—Temptation is the scout [which] the devil sends out to discover our forces; it is the train he lays to blow up our grace. Satan ever lies at the catch; he hath his *βαθη*, "depths," (Rev. ii. 24,) his *μεθοδους*, "methods," (Eph. iv. 14,) his *νοηματα*, "devices." (2 Cor. ii. 11.) He is continually fishing for our souls; and if Satan be angling, we had need be watching. He who makes religion his business is full of holy excubation: he lies sentinel, and, with the prophet, stands upon his watchtower. (Hab. ii. 1.) Solomon saith of a virtuous woman, "Her candle goeth not out by night." (Prov. xxxi. 18.) The good Christian keeps his watch-candle always burning.

CHAR. VIII. *He who makes religion his business, every day casts up his accounts to see how things go in his soul.* (Lam. iii. 40.)†—Solomon saith, "Know the state of thy flocks." (Prov. xxvii. 23.) A man that makes religion his work is careful to know the state of his soul: before the Lord brings him to a trial, he brings himself to a trial: he had rather

* *Ὅσως ἕμιν ἀγρυπνείας χρεία.* "How needful is it for each of us to exercise watchfulness!"—EDIT.

† SENECA.

use the looking-glass of the word to see his own heart, than put on the broad spectacles of censure to see another's fault. He plays the critic upon himself, he searcheth what sin is in his heart unrepented of; and, having found it out, he labours by his tears, as by "the waters of jealousy," to make the thigh of sin to rot. (Num. v. 22.) He searcheth whether he have grace or no, and he tries whether it be genuine or spurious. He is as much afraid of painted holiness, as he is of going to a painted heaven. He traverseth things in his soul, and will never leave, till that question, "whether he be in the faith," be put out of question. (2 Cor. xiii. 5.) Here is the man making religion his business: he is loath to be a spiritual bankrupt; therefore is still calling himself to account; and wherein he comes short, he gets Christ to be his Surety.

CHAR. IX. *He who makes religion his business will be religious, whatever it cost him.*—He is a resolved man: "I have sworn, that I will keep thy righteous judgments." (Psalm cxix. 106.) There are some who *will be rich*; (1 Tim. vi. 9;) and there are some who *will be godly*. (2 Tim. iii. 12.) He that makes religion his business will not, as Luther saith, be put off with other things: he can want health, riches, friends; but he cannot want Christ or grace. He will be godly: let the times be what they will, they shall not take him off the work of religion; he will follow Christ upon the water; the floods of persecution cannot drown his zeal; he doth not say, "There is a lion in the way;" he will wrestle with difficulties, march in the face of death. The Christians of the primitive church cried out to the persecutor, "Hew us in pieces, burn us: we will never worship your idols:"* these were in good earnest for heaven. There is a great deal of difference between them who go to sea for pleasure, and those mariners who are to go a voyage to the East Indies: the first, upon the least storm, retreat back to shore; but they who are embarked for a voyage hold on their course, though the sea be rough and stormy, and will venture their lives in hope of the golden harvest at the Indies. Hypocrites seem religious when things are serene and calm; but they will not sail in a storm: those only who make religion their business will hold out their voyage to heaven in the midst of tempests and death-threatening dangers.

CHAR. X. *He that makes religion his business lives every day as his last day.*—He prays in the morning as if he were to die at night; he lives as if he were presently to be called to God's bar; he walks "soberly, righteously, and godly;" (Titus ii. 12;) he girds his loins, trims his lamp, sets his house in order, that when death comes for him with an *habeas corpus*, he may have nothing to do but to die. Behold here the man who makes religion his business.

USE III. EXHORTATION.

Let me persuade all you whose consciences may smite you for former neglects, *now* set upon the work, make religion your business; contend *tantumquam pro aris et focis*, bestir yourselves in this as in a matter of life and death.

QUESTION. "But how must we do to make religion our business?"

ANSWER. That you may be serious in this work, I shall lay down several rules for your help and direction herein.

* *Ure, tunde, divelle: idola tua non adorabimus.*—TERTULLIANUS.

RULES FOR MAKING RELIGION OUR BUSINESS.

RULE I. If you would make religion your business, *possess yourselves with this maxim, that religion is the end of your creation.*—God never sent men into the world only to eat and drink, and put on fine clothes; but the end of their creation is to honour him: “That God in all things may be glorified.” (1 Peter iv. 11.) Should the body only be tended and looked after, this were to trim the scabbard instead of the blade: it were to invert and frustrate the very end of our being.

RULE II. If you would make religion your business, *get a change of heart wrought.*—Breathe after a principle of holiness. He cannot make religion his business who hath no religion.* Can the body move without a principle of life? Christian, get thy heart spiritualized by grace: an earthly heart will no more trade in heaven than a mill-stone will ascend, or a serpent fly in the air; the heart must be divinely touched with the Spirit, as the needle with the loadstone, ere it can cleave to God, and follow him fully. (Num. xiv. 24.) Never expect the practice to be holy, till first there be a holy principle.

RULE III. If you would make religion your business, *set yourselves always under the eye of God.*—The master’s eye makes the servant work; God’s eye will quicken our devotion. “I have set the Lord always before me.” (Psalm xvi. 8.) If we leave off work, or loiter in our work, God sees: † He hath a casement [which] opens into our breasts; this *ὀφθαλμος ακοιμητος*, as Chrysostom calls it, “this eye of God that never sleeps,” would make us active in the sphere of duty. If, indeed, God’s eye were at any time off us, we might slacken our pace in religion: but He is ever looking on; if we “take the wings of the morning,” we cannot fly from his presence: (Psalm cxxxix. 9:) and He who is now the Spectator will be the Judge. O how would this consideration of God’s omniscience keep us from being truants in religion, how would it infuse a spirit of activity and gallantry into us, making us put forward with all our might in the race to heaven!

RULE IV. If you would make religion your business, *think often of the shortness of time.* ‡—This life is but “a vapour,” (James iv. 14,) a “shadow:” (1 Chron. xxix. 15:) it is *יֵשׁׁב* “as nothing:” (Psalm xxxix. 5:) *ὁ βίος τροχός*. § We are wheeling apace out of the world, and there is no work to be done for our souls in the grave: “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, in the grave, whither thou goest.” (Eccles. ix. 10.) Now is the time of life, now is the day of grace: you know not how soon these two suns may set. The shorter our life, the swifter should be our pace.

RULE V. If you would make religion your business, *get an understanding heart.*—Weigh things seriously in the balance of reason and judgment. Think of the infinite importance of this business; our eternal misery or happiness depends upon it. Other things are but for

* *Δει τι ερδον εωαι.* “There must be some inward principle.”—EDIT. † *Interest animis nostris, et cogitationibus mediis intervenit.*—SENECA. “God is present with our spirits, and is no stranger to our most secret cogitations.”—EDIT. ‡ *Cito pede præterit (labitur) ætas.*—OVIDII *Art. Amat.* lib. iii. 65. “With what a swift foot does life glide away!”—EDIT. § PHOENICIDES, 25. “Life is a wheel in motion.”—EDIT.

convenience, this is *of necessity*. If this work be not done, we are undone; if we do not the work which believers are doing, we must do the work which devils are doing; and if God give us a serious heart to lay out ourselves in the business of religion, our *income* will be greater than our *expense*. Religion is a good trade, if it be well followed; it will quit the cost; it is working in silver: "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." (1 Peter i. 9.) God will shortly take us from the working-house to the throne, and will set upon our head a fresh garland made of the flowers of Paradise.*

RULE VI. If you would make religion your business, *implore the help of God's Spirit*.—All we can do is but lost labour, unless the Spirit excite and accelerate. Beg a gale from heaven. "Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden," &c. (Canticles iv. 16.) If the Spirit join with our chariot, then we move to heaven swiftly, as "a roe upon the mountains," or as "the chariots of Ammi-nadib." (Canticles ii. 17; vi. 12.)

Now, having laid down the rules, let me, for a conclusion, press all Christians to this great duty of making religion their business; and I will use but two weighty considerations:—

MOTIVES.

MOTIVE I. *The sweetness that is in religion*.—All her paths are pleasantness. (Prov. iii. 17.) The way of religion is strewed with roses, in regard of that inward peace [which] God gives: "In keeping thy precepts there is great reward." (Psalm xix. 11.) This is such a labour as hath delight in it. As while the mother tends her child, and sometimes beyond her strength too, yet finds a secret delight in it; so while a Christian is serving God, there is that inward contentment and delight infused, and he meets with such transfigurations of soul, that he thinks himself half in heaven. It was Christ's "meat and drink" to do his Father's will. (John iv. 34.) Religion was St. Paul's recreation. (Rom. vii. 22.) Though I should not speak of *wages*, the *vales* [which] God gives us in this life are enough to make us in love with his service.

MOTIVE II. The second and last consideration is, *that millions of persons have miscarried to eternity, for want of making religion their business*.—They have done something in religion, but not to purpose: they have begun, but have made too many stops and pauses. They have been lukewarm and neutral in the business; they have served God as if they served him not; they have sinned fervently, but prayed faintly. Religion hath been a thing only by the by; they have served God by fits and starts, but have not made religion their business; therefore have miscarried to all eternity. If you could see a wicked man's tombstone in hell, you might read this inscription upon it: "Here lies one in hellish flames, for not making religion his business." How many ships have suffered shipwreck, notwithstanding all their glorious names of **THE HOPE**, **THE SAFE-GUARD**, **THE TRIUMPH**! So, how many souls, notwithstanding their glorious title of saintship, have suffered shipwreck in hell for ever, because they have not made religion their business!

* Μη φυγῆς τὸν καματον, ἵνα τυχῆς τὸν στεφανον.—CHRYSOSTOMUS. "Decline no labour, relax in no exertion, in prospect of thy obtaining the crown immortal."—EDIT.

SERMON XXIV.

BY THE REV. HENRY HURST, A.M.

FELLOW OF MERTON COLLEGE, OXFORD.

WHETHER WELL-COMPOSED RELIGIOUS VOWS DO NOT EXCEEDINGLY
PROMOTE RELIGION.

What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me? I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people.—Psalm cxvi. 12, 14.

DAVID was no Popish votary; nor were the vows [which] he is now about to pay like the vows of Popish and superstitious votaries, either in the matter of them or in the object of them, nor in the manner or end of them; and I hope you who read these lines are, as the greatest part of my auditors were, far enough from liking of such vows in others, and from lying under the ensnaring tie of any such vow yourselves. Since, then, there is such unlikeness hoped from you, justify the unlikeness and disparity between my discourse and theirs, whose business is either to state and maintain monkish vows, or to state and overthrow them; the one the work of Popish, the other the work of Protestant, writers. In the words which I have chosen, we have a fit occasion to state our own case by David's, who was mindful of his debt to the Lord, and the more careful to discharge it, because it was due by vow.

Two things noted will be a key to open the words, so far as we at present are concerned in them:—

1. *That the sum of all our religion is our rendering to the Lord.*—I might so define religion; and, with these qualifications, *that it be done in right and due manner, in right and proper matter*, it would amount to a definition of the true religion. All the religions which men have in the vanity and blindness of their minds superstitiously and idolatrously adhered to, have been nothing else but their rendering to their *supposed* gods, according to their apprehensions and erroneous thoughts; and the rendering to the true God, *in a true and right manner*, is the sum of true religion. This notion is consonant to the scriptures: thus: “Render unto God the things that are God's.” (Matt. xxii. 21.) As true loyalty is a giving to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, so true piety is the giving to God the things that are God's. And so, in that parable of the vineyard let out to husbandmen, all we owe to God is expressed by the *rendering the fruit of the vineyard*; (Matt. xxi. 41;) particular acts of religion are so expressed too in the scriptures. (Psalm lvi. 13; Hosea xiv. 2; 2Chron. xxxiv. 31.) Let this, then, be the import of David's קָה אֲשִׁיב לַיהוָה “What shall I render unto the Lord?” “In what things, and by what means, shall I promote religion in the exercise thereof? How shall I

show myself duly religious toward Him who hath been constantly and abundantly munificent in his benefits towards me?"

2. The second thing to be noted is this, *that David so ordered his vows that he could pay them; and in paying them did so render to the Lord, as that religion was promoted and furthered.*—He had so engaged himself by vow, that he could say, "I will pay;" and his vows were such as were a fit answer to that inquiry, "What shall I render to the Lord?" David had very well composed his vow; it lay within his compass; he *could* perform it; and, in performing, he paid tribute and did homage to the Lord; in keeping his vow, he gave unto the Lord.

Now put these two notes together, and they are resolved into this doctrinal position:—

DOCTRINE.

Vows, so made as we can say, "We will pay them," and so made that in paying them we render to the Lord, do much advance and promote religion. Or, in the words of that case of conscience now to be stated, *Well-composed vows do much promote religion.*

Whoso doth engage himself by a well-ordered vow, doth set his religion in the whole, or in some particular part of it, in very good forwardness. Religion is a gainer by this bargain well-made; the bond is to God, but religion receives the interest at least: well-composed vows are religion's engines, able to move the weightier burdens and loads, and fit to be only employed in them.

In handling farther this case, we must inquire,

I. What a vow is, that we may know of what we speak.

II. Whether a vow may lawfully be made by us.

III. When it is well composed for religion's advantage.

IV. How much it furthereth religion.

V. Whence this influence of a vow upon religious persons.

VI. What proper use to make of the position.

I. A vow is a voluntary and deliberate promise made unto God in an extraordinary case. "It is a religious promise made unto God in a holy manner:" so a modern writer defines it.* It is a "holy and religious promise, advisedly and freely made unto God, either to do or to omit somewhat which appeareth to be grateful and well-pleasing unto him:" so Bucanus.† I forbear Aquinas's definition of a vow. If these [which] I have given satisfy not, then view it in the words of Peter Martyr, a man of repute, and well known to our own nation in the days of Edward VI., of ever-blessed memory: "It is a holy promise, whereby we bind ourselves to offer somewhat unto God."‡ There is one more who defines it, and he is a man whose judgment, learning, and holiness hath perfumed his name: it is learned Perkins, in his "Cases of Conscience." "A vow," saith he, "is a promise made unto God of things lawful and possible."

Of these five descriptions of a vow, you may indifferently choose which you will; for when you have chosen either of them, and looked upon it,

* *Est promissio religiosa sanctè facta Deo.*—SZEGEDINI *Loci Communes.* † *Est sancta et religiosa promissio Deo consultò et sponte facta, ad aliquid faciendum vel omittendum quod illi gratum et acceptum fore constat.*—BUCANI *Loci Communes,* xlv. ‡ *Est sancta promissio quæ nos obstringimus Deo aliquid oblaturus esse.*—PETRI MARTYRIS *Loci Communes, de Votis.*

you will find it lays an obligation upon the person vowing, and binds him strictly and unalterably to perform his vows: for it is, 1. *A promise*; (Deut. xxiii. 23;) it is not a purpose, not a single resolution, much less is it the deliberation of the mind concerning a matter not yet determined, but determinable on either part. A vow is a promise which had its beginning in a serious, due, and thorough deliberation; which from deliberation passed into a rational, strong, and fixed purpose of doing what had been so deliberated and weighed: nay, further yet, a vow passeth into a formal and express promise, and so makes the votary a debtor. This part of a vow Solomon hath long since prepared to our hands: "Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error." (Eccles. v. 6.) Note what Solomon forbids, namely, "Offend not by rash vowing;" * nor seek excuse by saying, "It was an error;" that is, "Through mistake and imprudence thou hast vowed, not observing what thou didst when thou vowedst." † It must be a deliberate and advised act of a man, if he will duly vow to God. 2. It is said to be *voluntary*: the thing speaks itself; a vow must be free; it is injurious to extort a promise from a man: free choice should be the spring of every promise, much more of every vow. The old law empowered some persons to *disannul* the vow of another; but no law or reason can empower any one to *enforce* a vow upon another: each one may "forbear to vow." (Deut. xxiii. 22.) 3. As it must be voluntarily and deliberate, so it *must be to God alone*. We read still, "If thou wilt vow, thou shalt vow to the Lord:" not to angels, with such as worship them; not to saints, with superstitious Papists; not to any man: man may *promise* solemnly unto man, but he may *not vow*; man may be *the witness* of thy vow, but man may not be *the object*. For the dependence of man upon man is not great enough to warrant the one in vowing, or the other in expecting, such a vow. Beside that, we must not vow to one [whom] we must not pray to; nor can we expect help from man in cases that are just ground for and which do require a vow from us. 4. Which cases, I say, are *extraordinary*, and more than usual either from *received* mercy, or hoped and *expected* mercy. It is impossible he should well compose his vows, or duly pay them, who makes ordinary and daily cases ground of his vows: we cannot but forget many an ordinary mercy received; but we may not, must not, forget any vow made. We must pray for every mercy we want; but we may not bind ourselves in the bonds of a vow for every mercy we pray for: this would inevitably cast us upon the sin of falsehood and unfaithfulness in our vows.

II. But I proceed to the second thing to be inquired into; that is, *Whether it be lawful, in any case, for us now, under the New Testament, to make a vow.*—That it was lawful for the Jew, none have doubted; but some doubt is made whether a Christian may voluntarily bind himself to God by making a vow. The solution of this doubt is necessary to our clearer determination of this case; for if vows were now unlawful to us, they could neither be well-composed, nor could they advantage religion; and if it may appear they may lawfully be made, then we may go on in

Ne committas temerè vovendo.—MERCERUS *in loc.* † *Neque dixeris te per errorem et imprudentiam vovisse, nec advertisse quid faceres dum voveres.*—Idem, *ibid.*

the consideration of the remaining particulars. To this second, then, very briefly we answer, that a Christian may lawfully make a promise or vow unto God, binding himself more than ordinarily unto God for, and in expectation of, mercy, in some or other more than ordinary case or exigency. For a great mercy received already, a Christian may vow thankfulness; for a mercy not received, but expected, he may vow, upon the receipt, to render to the Lord more than usual duty. "Such vows at this day may be used by us, so often as the Lord hath delivered us from any destruction, or dangerous disease, or from any danger," saith Calvin, speaking of vows for mercy to be received.* And Mr. Perkins, in his "Cases of Conscience," both affirms what we now do, and answers the objections made to the contrary. But leave we men, and come to reason: *why* it is lawful for us to vow.

Vows, well-ordered, not sin in themselves, nor by accident.

1. *What is not evil in itself, nor evil by accident, unless made evil by the undue ordering of it through our fault, may lawfully be done by us.*—I know this, well considered, proves itself; yet I would confirm it with this observation: what is not evil, may lawfully be done by us. Now things are evil either *per se*, ["in themselves,"] or *per accidens*: if vows be either way evil, it is "by accident;" which accidental evil may be prevented, and indeed is, by due composing of vows, and by diligent performing of them when composed. So that, if a Christian may order the making and performing his vow, so as to prevent the evil which attends a vow ill-made; then such a Christian may surely make a vow very lawfully. But I presume no one will doubt, that he who makes vows seldom, consultedly, and sincerely, may duly keep them, and in so doing prevent any consequent evil.

Some vows once lawful on moral grounds, such lawful still.

2. Vows may be lawfully made now by us Christians, because *what was lawful to the Jew on moral considerations, and not on any ceremonial considerations, that is also lawful now unto us Christians.*—Let it be noted, I do not say what was once lawful to them is now lawful unto us; (for it was lawful for them to sacrifice; it is not now lawful unto us;) but I say, what was once, *on moral grounds*, lawful to them, is now lawful to us, because the morality of the thing (which is supposed the ground of this vow) is the same to them and us. It was lawful for Jacob, on moral motives, to engage himself more closely to God, if God would indeed be with him; it is as lawful for any of us, on the same occasion, and for the like motive, to vow unto God. Jacob was moved to it, lest he should be found less than ordinarily thankful, for a more than ordinary providence and mercy to him: so may you or I; "for it is not abhorrent to the duty of a pious man, at such time to consecrate (as a solemn testimony of his acknowledgment) an offering by vow, lest he should seem unthankful for his bounty."† If there were then *vota moralia*, "vows

* *Ejusmodi vota hodie quoque nobis in usu esse possunt, quoties nos Dominus vel a clade aliqua, vel a morbo difficili, vel ab alio quovis discrimine eripuit.*—CALVINI Institut. lib. iv. c. 13. † *Neque enim a pii hominis officio tunc abhorret, votivam oblationem, velut solenne recognitionis symbolum, consecrare, ne ingratus erga benignitatem ejus videatur.*—Idem, ibid.

that were moral in their matter, manner, motives, and ends ;” (and that such there were, Job’s covenant with his eyes, and David’s swearing to keep God’s commandments, prove to us ;) either we must say they did what was unlawful, or else we cannot make such moral vows, (which is not rational to suppose,) or else, yielding such vows so made to be lawful to them, they are so to us. But, thirdly,

Vows by general consent of nations approved.

3. Vows may lawfully be made by us Christians ; for *it is a kind of thankfulness and acknowledgment made to God, with the universal approbation and consent of men.*—It is such a chief rent, that no nation in the world, putting a value on God’s goodness, and putting a difference between great and little dangers, between great and little blessings, but did constantly approve this way of preventing great dangers, by great vows, and re-senting* great blessings, by like vowed praises ; thus addressing themselves in a more than ordinary manner to their gods, on more than ordinary exigences.† And if I must bring my witnesses to depose for the truth, one speaks in English thus : “ Vow was used frequently by all nations and people beset with danger.”‡ Another learned pen at once intimateth the universality of the custom, and censureth the vanity and blind folly of the Heathens, in their vows to their idol-gods. “ Hence the follies and monstrous absurdities of the Heathens in their vows, wherewith they did too insolently abuse their gods.”§ It were endless to attempt what testimonies might be gathered up in this point ; but by these it is apparent, that thankfulness is a debt which all nations apprehended might and ought to be insured to God by vow. So that hence I would collect, that as gratitude is not only lawful, but a duty imprinted on the soul of man ; so this high degree of gratitude is a copy or transcript of that original : it is lawful, doubtless, to us to be thankful in the highest degree. Now, the return of more than ordinary duty, for more than ordinary mercy, is the highest, and is the vow we speak of.

* *To resent*, from the Latin *sentio*, “ to feel,” and the intensive particle *re*, was, in all its forms, almost uniformly used by our old writers, down to the age of James II. in the signification of *feeling intensely* either in the mind, or through any one of the bodily senses. Our modern usage of the word *resentment*, in the bad sense of “ strong anger on account of some affront or injury received,” is but confining what was formerly a general term to a more restricted meaning. The reflex French verb *se ressentir*, from which it is derived, still retains this meaning of a reciprocation of feeling, either of kindness or unkindness, between the agent and patient. This interchange of good or bad *sentiment*, (a perverted word of the same origin,) is determined by the character of the feeling which is communicated by the agent, and which is to be accordingly *well* or *ill* taken and reciprocated by the patient. In this correct acceptation it is employed by an eminent religious poet, about the middle of the last century, in a hymn addressed to our Saviour :—

“ My inmost bowels shall *resent*
The yearnings of thy dying love.”—EDIT.

† *Quid enim nisi vota supersunt?*—OVIDII *Tristium* lib. i. eleg. ii. l.

“ To one of every hope bereft,
What else but vows and prayers are left ?”—EDIT.

‡ *Votum omnibus gentibus et populis in periculo constitutis usitatum.*—SZEGEDINI *Loci Communes*, De Votis.

§ *Hinc illæ votorum ineptiæ, imò prodigiöse absurditates apud Ethnicos, quibus nimis insolenter cum diis suis luserunt.*—CALVINI *Institut.* lib. iv. c. 13.

Vows the only gospel free-will-offering-extraordinary.

4. *Unless such vows may be accounted lawful to us, I cannot see how we have any way of making free, voluntary, and extraordinary acknowledgments unto God.*—For since all duty is commanded, and so determined as to matter and manner ordinarily, that the law prescribes and enjoins them, and we may not superadd any thing to the law; yet sometimes more than ordinary mercy gives us command to be more than ordinary in our acknowledgments; which, since it may not be by doing any thing not commanded, must be done by adding our own promise and word, to have more than our ordinary care was (or otherwise would have been) to do what is commanded; or else it must be left undone as unlawful, which is in the issue to leave us without any way of binding ourselves to acknowledgments, suited to extraordinary providences. In a word, seeing the law of God is the standing rule of our daily obedience, and is the same unchanged rule of our daily duties; but, withal, the mercies and varieties of providences are a law likewise to us Christians, and, when great, require great and suitable deportment in us; we must have some way, and that lawful, to measure out our re-sentments,* which can be no other but the laying bonds and voluntary obligations on ourselves unto God, which is the same with this vow. Either there must be some such lawful way, or else great providential mercies which call for greater returns, and are a real law to us, cannot be duly observed and obeyed. Now, I know, riches of grace in the gospel have not so intrenched on, or done injury to, providences. I know, that as grace is no enemy to the standing law, nor patronizeth licentiousness; so neither is grace an enemy to providence, nor warranteth any one to overlook the greatness and extraordinary mercy in any providences, or to be careless and slight in answering them with unsuitable returns of thankfulness.

Vows best insure duty, and ensnare not us.

5. *But that is lawful to us Christians, which doth most certainly insure our duty to God, yet doth not ensnare us in the insuring of it.*—That you or I may do lawfully [that] which will not ensnare us, but more strongly engage us to our duty, none will doubt this. In dealing with a man, you, or I, or any reasonable man, would be ready to give any security that we might give without ensnaring of ourselves. Now, vows well-composed do more insure the duty; (for we cannot go back, it is a vow;) yet do not ensnare, for we can perform them, they are vows well-composed. Jephthah's vow bound him fast, for it was the bond of a vow; but this bond ensnared him, for it was rash, and ill-composed; such was unlawful to him and is to us. (Judges xi. 35.) David's vow here was an insuring him to God, and his duty; it unalterably bound him: yet it was no snare to him; for he had so vowed, that he could say, "I will pay my vows." Such vows were lawful to him; such are lawful to us. Now, all well-composed vows will be such; they will very firmly bind us to our duty, and they will never ensnare us in their binding us; which thing will be more plainly seen, upon discovery of the next general; namely,

* See the note in the preceding page.—EDIT.

III. *When vows are well-composed, and so consequently for the advantage of religion.*

It must be in extraordinary cases.

1. Then, if you would duly and well compose your vows, *you must wait a fit season; not vow on every occasion.*—[He] who is ready to vow on every occasion, will break his vow on every occasion. It is a necessary rule, that “we be as sparing in making our vows as may be;” there being many great inconveniencies attending frequent and multiplied vows. It is very observable, that the scripture mentioneth very few examples of vows, compared with the many instances of very great and wonderful providences; as if it would give us some instances, that we might know what we have to do, and yet would give us but few, that we might know we are not to do it often. You read Jacob lived seven-score and seven years; (Gen. xlvii. 28;) but you read, I think, but of one vow that he made. Our extraordinary exigences are not many; and, I say, our vows should not be more. Let this, then, be the first necessary ingredient of a well-ordered vow. Let it be no oftener made than the pressing greatness of an evil to be removed, or the alluring excellency of a blessing extraordinary to be obtained, will well warrant. Jephthah’s vow was so far right; he had just occasion; there was a great and pressing danger to be removed; there was an excellent blessing to be obtained: the danger was, lest Israel should be enslaved; the blessing was victory over their enemies. This warranted his vow, though his rashness marred it. It was in David’s troubles that David sware, and vowed a vow to the Most High; (Psalm cxxxii. 1, 2;) and Jacob forbore to vow until his more than ordinary case bade him vow, and warranted him in so doing. (Gen. xxviii. 20.) Let us do as he did,—spare to vow, until such case puts us on it.

It must be deliberate.

2. When the extraordinary case warrants thee to this extraordinary obliging [of] thyself, then *be sure to proceed deliberately, and with advice.*—Consider what thou doest: every one condemns rash vows; and, I am sure, inconsiderate vows are rash ones. Here Jephthah failed; he did not consider, and ponder with himself, what he was about to do when he vowed. Aquinas reckons this among the three things necessary to a vow.* And since this was wanting in Jephthah, “the scripture makes a narration of his fact, but no where giveth commendation to it.” † This is one of the conditions Bucan prescribes, “that we thoroughly weigh.” ‡ But we have a greater than Aquinas, or the other two, here: “Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God:” which rule he doth in the context extend to this case of vows. (Eccles. v. 2, 4—6.) Be not hasty, but deliberate these four things in thy vow:—

* *Ad votum tria de necessitate requiruntur; scilicet, deliberatio, &c.*—AQUINAS, *Secunda Secundæ*, q. 88, art. 1. † *Scriptura hoc ejus factum narrat tantum, sed non laudat.*—PET. MARTYR’S *Loci Com.* cl. 3, c. 6. ‡ *Ut maturè deliberemus.*—BUCANI *Loci Communes, De Votis.*

Whether lawful.

(1.) *Whether that thou vowest to do be lawful.*—Sin can never be the matter of a justifiable and well-composed vow. If that thou vowest be not lawful, it is not so much a vow, as a contriving and designing of wickedness. It was a murderous conspiracy of those “more than forty,” not a vow, to take away Paul’s life. (Acts xxiii. 21.) Whatever God hath forbidden us in our ordinary course of life, (as he hath forbidden every sin,) that cannot be the matter of an extraordinary promise unto God. The Schoolmen tell us it is to be *de meliore bono*, “in an excellent good.” Now, what is not lawful, is not good.* They tell us, *Debet fieri Deo de iis quæ Dei sunt*: “It must be made to God, in the things that are of God:” and we are sure no unlawful thing is of God.

Whether acceptable to God.

(2.) As it must be considered whether the thing be lawful; so next we are to consider, *whether it will be acceptable unto the Lord.*—The vow is made to him, and the performance of it is to him: it is a debt, and payment is to be made to him. If it be a matter which thou findest, upon after-search, to be indeed lawful, yet in reason to be thought not acceptable for so great a mercy as thou hast received, thou wilt be enforced to confess thy mistake and error in vowing: and this is to provoke God. (Eccles. v. 6.) *Sit Deo acceptum*, [“That it be acceptable to God,”] is the second circumstance under deliberation:

Whether proportioned.

(3.) Which will be seen by a third particular, that is, *whether that thing [which] thou vowest bear a proportion to that thou didst expect and pray for when thou vowedst, or to that thou hadst received, for which thou dost now make thy vow.*—Bring it, with the providence which occasioned it; set them together; and hear what thy own reason, what other men’s judgment, what the very things themselves, what thy receipts and returns, say of thy vows, in the matter of them. As in ordinary, so in all extraordinary, mercies, God requires and accepteth only suitable and well-proportioned returns: if it be over proportioned, it will hazard thee; if it be under-proportioned, it will shame thee; and neither will be so well accepted. Though one meal’s meat, when thou art hungry, is more, and a greater mercy, than thou canst equal by thy obedience; yet to vow thyself, and all that is thine, for that one mercy, is more than is expected, and may be called a disproportioned vow. So, on the contrary, to pray for a prosperous voyage, and an ample return of thousands, and to vow thereupon a few pence or shillings, is disproportioned, will not be accepted. Thou must render to the Lord, according to thy receipts from the Lord.

Whether in thy power.

(4.) *In a well-composed vow, thy deliberation must be employed in considering thy power and ability; whether it be in thy power to do what thou vowest.*—No impossible thing can be the matter of a vow. God hath not made an impossibility the matter and primitive object of

* AQUINAS, *Secunda Secundæ*, q. 88, art. 1. c.

our duty; nor doth he expect we should; nor would he accept such a vow: for a vow of an impossible thing is, in effect, to bind ourselves to falsify our vow. Who engageth to do what he cannot do, engageth himself to be worse than his word. You must consider, then, whether the thing be possible in itself; and then, next, whether it be in your power, that you can say you will do it, that you may truly affirm you can absolutely do it; which thing being very uncertain, (for what is to-day in our power, to-morrow may be out of our power,) it is therefore good to limit it so far, as it shall be in your power, and so long as it continues in your power, to perform your vows. These two things are requisite to a well-composed vow; an occasion or exigency more than ordinary; and then a thing lawful, acceptable, proportioned to the mercy, and within our power.

Vows must be cheerfully made.

3. Now, when these concur, a third must be added; that is, *thou must vow cheerfully, and with a ready mind.*—There must be much of the will in it. Some tell us, the Latin word noting “a vow,” comes from the word which signifies “the will.” Indeed, all that is in a vow, so far as it is a vow, is and must be of our will; for it consisteth principally, if not solely, in the manner of our obliging ourselves; and this is voluntary. God hath left it much at our liberty to vow, or not to vow; only he requires us to do it cheerfully, if we vow: it is matter of our choice: “If thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee.” (Deut. xxiii. 22.) Yet, if we will vow, it is matter of duty to do it cheerfully; for so the Lord “loveth a cheerful giver;” (2 Cor. ix. 7;) and therefore expects a speedy performance. “Defer not to pay.” (Eccles. v. 4.) Hence the rabbinical proverb, “Speed suits the time of deliverance.”* As a vow suits the time of dangers and straits, so haste from a ready mind fits the time of deliverance and mercy.

Vow sincerely.

4. *But he that will compose his vow well, must vow sincerely and uprightly.*—That is, to the end he may most honour God,

(1.) *By the commemoration of his mercy and goodness.*—Vows are mercy’s monuments, on which are written the praise of the Lord.

(2.) *By the publishing the mercies of God.*—For the engaging others to admire the Lord, and to trust him, and to seek unto him.

(3.) *By the setting grace on work in the heart and soul of him that vows.*—It sets grace on work, both in that part which eyes God, to draw nearer and to keep closer to him; and in that part which keeps eye on sin, to prevent, mortify, and destroy it. So, then, when a Christian (having received, or being in expectation of, some extraordinary mercy from God) doth deliberately promise what is lawful in itself, acceptable to God, proportioned to the mercy, and within his power to perform; whoso doth this cheerfully and sincerely, that God may be honoured in the continued remembrance of it, in the public declaring it, and in the

* בשעת רוחא שיטקא. *Tempore respirationis festinatio.*

488 SERMON XXIV. WHETHER WELL-COMPOSED RELIGIOUS VOWS exciting of grace, in the person vowing; then hath a Christian well-composed his vow. And such a vow doth very much further religion: which will appear by handling the next thing.

HOW WELL-COMPOSED VOWS PROMOTE RELIGION.

IV. *How much, or in what things, it doth further and promote religion.*—Now there are three grand concerns of religion, than which it hath none greater; and all three are carried on and promoted by such vows as these.

The credit of religion.

1. *Religion hath its concernment in the credit and reputation which it hath in the world.*—Religion hath a name to look after, so well as you or I; and it loseth or gaineth, as it is either honoured or reproached by the professors of it. Now, when times of extraordinary danger drive us to our prayers and vows to the true God, and we resolve to have mercy from him, or to choose to fall into his hand, this sets the credit and honour of religion, that it can have recourse to God, who, we know, can deliver us. This is somewhat; but the making a vow doth not so much honour religion as the performing of it doth, when it is hereby declared to the world,—that religion is the thing [that] makes men the same in their mercies which they were in their distresses; that the God [whom] they worship is the true God, able to require their vows, if they should neglect to pay them. A Heathen who in distress makes a vow, and in his safety performs it carefully, putteth a very high honour upon his false god, upon his idol. What Christian soever makes and keeps his vows duly, doth likewise put an honour on the true God.

(1.) *It honours the power and providence of God, by acknowledging its sovereignty over all in the world, and its particular disposing and over-ruling of us and our concerns.*—When thou prayest and vowest in a strait, thou seemest to tell the world thou believest that thy God rules the world by his power and providence. But when thou payest thy vows, thou really testifiest to the world, that thou believest and ownest this power in thy particular case. So when Jephthah, when David, paid their vows, they did give real testimony that their God delivered them by his power and providence; and this is religion's honour,—that it is the worship of so mighty a God.

(2.) *It honours God in his readiness to hear, and in his faithfulness to answer, the prayers of his suppliants.*—Prayers conceived speak a belief that he is ready; *vows made* speak our confidence that he is faithful; but now *vows performed* speak thus much,—that we have found him so to us. When David said, “I will pay my vows,” it is that he may render to the Lord for the Lord's readiness and faithfulness to hear and deliver him. Now, it is religion's honour, that it is the worship of a God of truth and faithfulness.

(3.) *It honours God in his omniscience and all-seeing eye; it declares to the world that we worship and serve a God who takes notice of us in particular, and who observes whether we keep our word with him, or no.*—When thou hast made a vow, and canst perform it, yea, dost perform it,

because thou knowest and believest thy God remembers when thou didst make it, and observeth how thou wilt perform it; what is this but to give him the honour of his all-seeing and all-observing eye?

(4.) *It honours religion, in that it is a demonstration that religion teacheth men gratitude.*—It is a high charge which is laid on the Romans in their Heathenism, that they were unthankful. (Rom. i. 21.) It is a very great reproach to religion, to have its professors branded with this: it is, though but one single miscarriage, left on Hezekiah's name, like a spot in the moon, to endure while his name shall be in remembrance,—that he remembered not to return to the Lord “according to the benefit done unto him.” (2 Chron. xxxii. 25.) But now thy care to make thy vows well that they may be kept, and thy thankfulness in keeping them when so made, do clearly evidence, that thy religion engageth thee to aim and attempt at the highest gratitude. Now, according to the old rule, “If you say a man is *unthankful*, you say he is all naught;”* so, if you say, “He is *thankful*, and his religion teacheth him to be so,” you speak all good of the man and of his religion. Indeed, David doth often comprise all religion in this, “Be thankful unto him.”

So religion shineth forth in the lustre and brightness of a good name, when they who profess it dare neither be rash in making, nor remiss or false in keeping, their vows.

Next, vows well-composed, and faithfully performed, do much promote religion, and that frequently,

By spreading religion.

2. *By setting forward the growth of religion, in the midst of those who profess it.*—For I will only speak of this now, albeit I might speak of the spreading of religion amongst such, who before were strangers to it, by the faithfulness of some zealous, prudent, and industrious votaries. When Christians on great exigences are brought on their knees to pray, and plead, and confess, and promise, if they may be heard; and when they come to praise, acknowledge, and pay their vows to God in the presence of those [who] are called his people; it is very powerful to,

(By confirming.)

(1.) *Confirm them in the profession, and to establish them.*—For who would not hold fast, where he can observe such goodness, tenderness, and power in [the] God [whom] he worshippeth? Men, religious men, some at least, will praise the Lord, for such wonderful works to the children of men; (Psalm cvii. 8;) when they see such excellent loving-kindness showed to the distressed, the children of men will put their trust in God. (Psalm xxxvi. 7.) None will leave the shadow of that wing which so saveth.

By reforming.

(2.) *It is very like to make them inquire into the ways and doings which have been theirs, but have not been good, and to look forward to*

* *Si ingratum dixeris, omnia dicit.*

490 SERMON XXIV. WHETHER WELL-COMPOSED RELIGIOUS VOWS *the ways which must be theirs, and must be amended.*—When a stander-by shall observe the distress a good man is in, and how he re-sents* neglect of duty, prevalency of corruption, necessity of reforming, and binds himself to more diligent discharge of duty, to more vigorous opposition of sin, to constant care of reforming,—he is ready to reflect on himself; and, if he be what he professeth, will judge himself one who is as deep in the faults, as much needing to reform, and as near to the like or greater distress: he may, ere long, be put to it, and therefore it will be best to be on the amending hand.

Vows promote religion in the votary's heart and life.

3. But, however, thirdly, *vows well made, and kept well, very much improve and promote religion in the heart and life of him who so voweth and keepeth his vow.*—If none of those who are acquainted with thy religion making and keeping thy vows, should either honour it more, or set to the exercise of it more, yet certainly it will produce such effects in thy life as will very much conduce to the increase of godliness and righteousness: which will appear by some few particulars, which are undeniably the effects of a well-composed vow, and do as undeniably promote and set forward religion: as,

Vows increase circumspection.

(1.) *A well-composed vow will make thee more circumspect and wary in the general course of thy life.*—Such an influence it hath, as doth more directly work on one particular part, yet is not terminated to that particular only. It is here as with a debtor, who doubles his bond and security for his debt, upon some extraordinary favour which his creditor showed him. This double bond directly looks to that particular debt; but it works on the debtor's ingenuity and gratitude, to be the more careful in the discharge of all his debts: so thy vow looks on a particular, but engageth thee to better discharge of all thy debts to God. Thus it was with David: "Thy vows are upon me, O God." (Psalm lvi. 12.) Now these vows were made when he was in danger of his life, as it seemeth from verse 13. For when God heard him, he delivered his soul from death: for this he vowed praises in particular, and he will render them. But, withal, he takes himself to be hereby engaged to a more exact and circumspect walk before God in all duties; so he expresseth himself, in the latter part of verse 13. Vows are too broad and general, which are not fixed more especially to some one thing; and they are too narrow, which are so fixed to one that they exclude all other things which might conveniently be taken in. Jacob mentions tithes as the particular object of his vow; but Jacob withal intended a more exact and circumspect care over himself and family in matters of religion; as appeareth by those passages: "Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you." Here is the reforming of his household. And, observe, this was in consideration of God's answering his prayers, when he vowed unto God, who

* See note, page 483.—EDIT.

answered him in his distress, and was with him in the way which he went. (Gen. xxxv. 2, 3.) So, then, like a stream, it riseth from one spring-head, and runs in one main current; but it disperseth itself through many other smaller branches, and waters every part. But,

Vows discover former defects.

(2.) *Well-composed vows do very much promote grace and holiness in the heart of the vower, in that it doth bring the man to a serious view and survey of his former defects and neglects.*—When he comes to look over his straits, what likely brought them on him, and so put him on this extraordinary way of seeking God, and suing for mercy; when he reads over the bond he hath voluntarily entered into, and observes what put him thus in debt to God; when he views these, and such-like particulars, he comes to knowledge of his former aberrations and defects. Now, as a good and careful tradesman accounts he is in a good forwardness to a thriving way when he hath found out what did hinder and endamage his trade, for removal of which he hath set himself in a hopeful and likely way; so, when a Christian comes to cast up accounts, to make even, he finds an unconstant and starting heart hath in this or that particular endamaged him; and if there be any way of dealing with it to keep it constant and stable, it is by doubling its bonds; and this must be done by vow. This course is like to repair former defects; and reparation, I am sure, is a good and effectual means to keep up the house. Some interpreters tell us, that when Jacob came to reform his house, it was occasioned by his defective observance of his vow; and that God, in Gen. xxxv. 1, puts him in mind of it in such words: “Go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar.” If their conjecture fail not, it is a pertinent instance to our case: Jacob had made a good vow, and well-ordered, and doubtless had performed much of it; yet, thirty years after, he is minded of it by God, and then he comes to consider and perform what was yet wanting to make up his defects. Thus when care to perform vows well-made, discovers things ill-carried to the prejudice of religion, it makes way for future furtherance of religion.

DUBITATION. But, it is like, you will inquire, “May a Christian vow the repairing of such defects? Are they not more than can be discerned? more than can be prevented? Should he vow this, would he not ensnare himself and break his vows?”

SOLUTION. To this I answer briefly, that no man in the world may engage himself by vow, to live for future without any defects: such perfection is only in heaven; here it is not attainable. But a Christian may engage himself by vow to be careful, and to do his best diligence to prevent as many as he can. He may vow, that, so far as grace shall enable him, he will endeavour to live with fewer faults. But a vow of full perfection can never be a well-composed vow, nor ever be performed.

Vows engage against a particular sin.

(3.) *Well-composed vows do promote religion in the heart and life of a Christian, in that it strongly and unalterably engageth the Christian*

against some one or other particular sin, which would more easily prevail, if the reverence or care of so sacred an engagement did not set the Christian against that sin.—Sometimes we should sin by taking too little notice of great providences, or by setting them at too low rates, or by soon forgetting them, or by waxing proud and insolent under them. Now, such sins provoke God, weaken religion's interest in the heart, and diminish its fruit in the life. Now, when vows prevent such sins, they do as much promote religion as preventing physic promotes the health of the body. Of such a nature was Job's covenant with his eyes, which shut the windows of his soul, and kept out sin by preventing its entrance at the out-doors: "I made a covenant with mine eyes." (Job xxxi. 1.) "Away, then, with all alluring beauties; I cannot gaze on them, for I cannot be false to my vow and covenant!" Every vow is for more strict and exact approbation of ourselves, in either universal or particular, either in a perpetual or temporary, observance and serving the Lord. Now, that promotes religion which thus exactly and strictly binds the soul to approve itself to God. Sin and religion have two concernments as contrary to each other as the rebel and the law of his sovereign; and as *he* promotes the interest of his sovereign *who* doth strictly bind himself to oppose any rebel, so *he* promotes religion *who* by vow binds himself strictly to oppose any one sin whatever. If Noah vowed, after his miscarriage, against drinking any considerable quantity of wine, that he might prevent that sin, this vow strengthened the interest of his holy sobriety, and the interest of religion too, so far as sobriety promotes our fitness and greater aptness to religious works.

DUBITATION. But I shall be here asked: "May a man vow against any one particular sin, and bind himself by so a great a bond against the committing of it?" The ground of the doubt is, because none so stands but he may fall, and it is not in our power to keep ourselves from any sin.

SOLUTION. To this, then, I answer, that it would be rash and inconsiderate to vow absolutely and peremptorily, that thou wilt never act such or such a sin. But thus thou mayest justifiably vow,

(i.) *That thou wilt endeavour, and with thy best diligence labour, to prevent this or that sin.*—Thou mayest vow to set a guard upon thy soul; but thou mayest not vow the success of this guard. The endeavour is thy duty, and *that* thou mayest vow; the success is God's gift, and *that* thou must pray for. And let weak Christians take notice of this, lest they ensnare themselves by vowing what is not in their power.

(ii.) *If thou wilt vow so, thou must do it still with dependence on the Lord for power to perform.*—Through grace, thou wilt not sin thus or thus, may be thy vow.

(iii.) *If thou wilt so vow, then take my advice with thee:* First. Let it be only against great sins, and such as are committed with deliberation. These are seen before [they are] committed: and so are more easily resisted. Secondly. Let it reach no farther than sincere endeavour against them: And, Thirdly, Be sure to do your utmost; and then, though the sin may be too strong for you, yet are you not false to your vow. But, next,

Vows increase our care of particular duty.

(4.) *Well-composed vows do much promote religion in the heart and life of a Christian, inasmuch as they engage the Christian to a more intent care of some particular duty and grace to be more than ordinarily attended and exercised.*—A vow binds the votary to a more than ordinary care of duty, and to a more than ordinary diligence in the exercise of grace. Now, where such a vow is so well-composed that the duty may be more than ordinarily well performed, and the grace may be, more than usually hath been, exercised, there such a vow doth as much promote religion as its care doth exceed our ordinary care. Who bestows most on a duty, or on the constant exercise of a grace, doth do most to the promoting of religion; and, I am sure, whoso doth advisedly and duly vow, and doth punctually and duly perform his vow, is the man whose care is greatest in that duty and grace which his vow and the particular occasion of it did commend to his thoughts.

DUBITATION. “But may we vow to perform a duty, or exercise a grace? Can we say, it is in our power?”

SOLUTION. To this in one word: Vow so far as it is and shall be in your power, and you may warrantably and acceptably do it before God. The performance of duty, and exercise of grace, are debts we owe to God: and we may bind ourselves doubly to pay them so far as our stock will reach; and without this limitation every vow is rash and ill-composed.

Vows [promote religion] by observing and improving providences.

(5.) *Well-composed vows do much promote religion, in that they engage us to a more diligent observing of providences, and to a due improving them to the best advantage of grace.*—When thou hast vowed, thou hast sealed on thy part: if God do answer thy hope by his providence, he performs the condition on his part; and now it must be thy care to observe God's providence, and to improve it. So Jacob vowed, then observeth how God will perform with him, and afterwards makes the improvement. Now, [a] providence answering the expectation of one who voweth, hath in it,

(i.) *Remarkable power and faithfulness, to be the ground of faith.*—This was seen in that providence which gave Jephthah that victory which was his hope and expectation when he vowed.

(ii.) *Eminent goodness and tenderness, to be the loadstone and attractive of love.*—So in that providence which brought David to the possession of his hopes; and David thought so when he professed he would love God dearly, because he had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies. (Psalm xviii. 1.)

(iii.) *Eminent readiness to hear prayer.*—When God doth, as to Jephthah, speedily hear, or, as to Jacob, continue still to hear, for many years together.

(iv.) *More than ordinary obliging considerations to draw forth our obedience too.*—Such providences have tongues to call for our faith, our love, our prayers, our obedience, and our praises: “What shall I render to the Lord?” is the serious, well-advised votary's inquiry.

(v.) *A most undoubted evidence, appropriating this to the Lord.*—That the expecting Christian can truly say, “It was the Lord’s doing, and his only : none bore part in the work, none shall bear away share of his trust, love, prayer, or observant obedience due to him from me.”

Now, if these particulars be considered, it cannot, sure, be doubted longer whether well-composed vows do promote religion, when they do so engage and quicken those who vow to such acts of duty, to such exercise of grace, to such opposition of sin, to such improvement of providence, for the increase of grace. And what is religion, but all these in one word? and what is the promoting of religion, but the facilitating, continuing, and perfecting of all these, which is not a little furthered by such vows?

V. It yet remains to show, *Whence these well-composed vows have such influence on religion, what have they in them more than ordinary thus to promote it.*—To this I will answer as briefly as I may : There is in such vows a most notable awakening and quickening power, which sets all a man’s care, wisdom, truth, and strength on work, to do the things where-by religion is so much promoted.

1. *A deep-rooted, natural reverence and awe of a serious vow, which makes the man who hath so much sense of religion as to make a vow, to have as much care of performing it.*—Man is readier to cast off the reverence he owes to God’s law, than to cast off the regard he hath to his own vow ; so that, many times, it is very expedient to engage by vow to do what is our duty by the law of God. The bond of natural conscience is very strong ; and vows have much of their strength from it, and thereby become great supporters of religion.

2. *To this the Christian hath a superadded strict command and pre-script of the law of God, indispensably requiring the performance of that vow which is lawful and possible.*—“I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back.” (Judges xi. 35.) It is the unalterable law, if you vow, you must pay. (Psalm lxxvi. 11.) God did indulge the Jews so far as to redeem some of their vows ; but he allowed none to break them. Read that : “When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it : for the Lord thy God will surely require it of thee. That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt keep and perform.” (Deut. xxiii. 21, 23.) Now, when so much of religion lieth in and dependeth on such vows, and these vows are such inviolable ties that God will wink at none who break them, they cannot but have such influence and strong operation on persons to the advantage of religion.

3. *God’s severe judgments on contemners of their vows add much to their influence.*—I will not mention examples of vengeance on Heathens for breach of their vows, though the idol deserved not better ; yet God, who is the true God, would have men know such sacred bonds as vows should not be profaned by slight performing, or contemned by a total neglect of them. The Jewish rabbies tell us, that God punished Jacob, for neglecting his vow, by Dinah’s miscarriage. However, it is enough [that] God hath threatened the falsifier of his vows with no less than a destruction of the works of his hands, if not with the ruin of his person. God will not let such [an] one go unpunished, “lest his holy name should be scorned, lest the people should be accustomed to an impious contempt of him, if the falsifier of his vow should deny what he had promised to God, and go

unpunished.”* In one word, that which stands thus on the unchangeable law of nature and is written on the conscience, what is confirmed and ratified by the peremptory, positive law of God, what is yet further armed with the terrible threat of the God of heaven, must needs have a mighty binding strength in it, obliging men. But now all these concur in vows well-composed; and hence they have such influence on religious persons. You may add,

4. *The gracious acceptance that God gives to persons so vowing and performing their vows*; with,

5. *The signal blessings crowning religious persons in due performance of their vows.*—All which make them careful to vow, so that they may say they will pay their vows, and, in paying them, render to the Lord for all his benefits.

USES.

VI. I am come now to the last thing I intended, *the practical application of this practical case.*—And here, reader, I shall be briefer than I first purposed, because I was enforced by the undiscerned speed of the time outrunning me in preaching it, to contract much more than I was willing to have done.

USE I. INFORMS. The first use, then: If well-composed vows do indeed much promote religion, *it will teach us how careful we should be in making our vows to the greatest advantage of religion.*—If you look to the necessary requisites of such vows, it will appear to you that you need a great care and diligence in making them; if you look to religion’s loss in the breach of vows, or its gain in a faithful performance of them, the care will appear double; if you look to your obligation under which you are to perform them, it will appear yet further needful that you be very wary and circumspectly careful how you make them: the rash and inconsiderate person who cares not how he makes, will not care whether he perform, his vows. And what a reproach is this to his religion! What a provocation is this to his God, to destroy either him or the works of his hand! And all these bespeak your care, and advise you to circumspection in this case. Do you not find it hard enough to discern what is daily and ordinarily to be done under daily and ordinary occurrences? Are you not in great care to frame yourselves fitly and comely to every day’s business [which] you have to do among men, especially when you come within the tie of a promise to them? How solicitous are you, *what*, and *when*, and *on what terms*, you promise? how you shall perform, and so keep your word and credit? Any competent measure of honesty and regard to reputation will make a man consider what he promiseth to a man. How much more care should he use in promising unto God, where the promise is more than ordinary, where the tie is so indissoluble, where the demand is so punctually and peremptorily made, where the danger [is] so great in making default. Let me commend unto thy more than ordinary care these two things, if thou wilt make a vow so well-framed as to set up religion:—

* *Ne sacrum ejus nomen ludibrio exponeretur, neve populus assuesceret ad impium ejus contemptum, si fraudator impunè negaret quod Deo promiserat.*—BUCANUS, *Loci Communes*, 45, De Votis.

1. *Be careful that thy vow of obedience for, and in consideration of, a mercy hoped or received hold weight with that mercy.*—Keep a steady hand, and get an even balance, and weigh the mercy which commands thy obedience, and weigh thy vow which promiseth it. It will be thy reproach and religion's reproach to have thy vow found a *shekel* when thy mercy weighs a *talent*.* When God gives a full harvest, thou must not vow a handful, or one sheaf: this were to expose thy God to contempt, and it would be a practical denial of his bounty to thee. Jacob observed this proportion: God shall be his God, and then the tenth of all he hath shall be His. (Gen. xxviii. 20—22.) David's "for all his benefits," is as much as "according to all his benefits," and that speaks proportion and commensurateness. Take care to this; for others will observe and inquire into it. They will weigh these two, thy mercy, and thy gratitude: do thou do it first, lest thou be ashamed, lest God be provoked, and thou be punished; for as good a man, and as great, as thou, whoever thou art who readest this, met with all these,—with shame, with the anger of his God, and with a punishment too on him, for want of this. See Hezekiah's fault and punishment, 2 Chron. xxxii. 25. Do not fall short of Heathens, who knew this, and observed it as their rule, and have branded such who deviate from it.† Be careful thou put not off a mercy, that lives *many years* with thee, with a *day's* entertainment, or week's or month's lodging with thee.

2. *Be careful that thou make thy vow so, that they may be thy witnesses whom God makes.*—Be careful thou make *them* witnesses of thy performing *whom* God made witnesses of thy straits, and [whom] thou madest witnesses of thy vows. A man that would have his credit in his truth to his word kept up, would choose *them* witnesses of his performing *who* were witnesses of his promise. I think David took this heed in his rendering and paying his vows: "I will do it," saith he, "now in the presence of all his people." (Psalm cxvi. 14.) The people were witnesses to his straits, prayers, and vows; and he will honour religion by performing in their sight what he sealed, signed, and delivered, what he vowed to the Lord. Seek not more than providence makes conscious to thy vows, lest this be interpreted ostentation, and vain self-glorying: take so many, lest the good example be lost, or thou suspected of falsifying thy vow. Briefly and plainly: Dost thou on a sick bed make thy vow before thy family, before the neighbourhood? Be careful to perform it before them; let them see thou art what thou vowedst to be. This care in thy vow will be a means to make it most to the advantage of religion, whilst all that heard or knew thy vow bear thee testimony that thou art thankful; and more thou seekest not, lest thou be suspected to be proud: thus religion's gratitude and humility are set forth; thus thou givest others occasion to glorify thy Father who is in heaven.

* ככר. *Talentum Hebræorum continet pondere 3000 siclos.*—BREWERWOOD *De Ponderibus Hebr.* "The talent of the Hebrews contains in weight three thousand shekels."—EDIT.
 † Φασελιτων θυμα, &c. *Sordidum et tenuem sumptum hoc adagio significabant.*—ERASMI *Adagiorum* chil. ii. cent. 7. Ad. 33. "The sacrifices of the Phaselitæ, (a nation of Pamphylia,) consisting of salted fish, and being offered without blood, were accounted vile. By this proverb the ancients intended strongly to designate such an oblation as was mean and sordid, having been furnished at a slight expense."—EDIT.

USE II. Do well advised and composed vows so much promote religion, when well and faithfully kept? Are they also such sacred and inviolable bonds? *Then look what vows you are under, look how you have performed them.*—It is time to view what you fairly promised for advancing of religion, and what you have faithfully performed for its real advantage. Christian, consider with thyself, wast thou ever in more than ordinary distress? Didst thou not then vow largely? Tell me, what were thy vows? How hast thou paid them? Wast thou ever in a poor, needy condition? Didst thou not then vow to honour God with thy increase, to enrich the poor, to relieve thine indigent brethren, and God's poor children? Now, what hast thou done? Who are clothed out of thy flock? Who are fed at thy table? Who are lodged at thy charge? Where is thy paying thy vow? Was it ever thy lot to be tossed at sea? to be mounted up to the heavens? to be cast down again into the depths? to be at thy wits' end? Didst thou not then vow, if ever God should command, and make it a calm, and bring thee to thy desired haven, thou wouldest be more circum-spect in all manner of conversation, more vigilant to thy particular duty, more severe against thy particular sin? Didst thou not vow that an anniversary sermon, with an allowance to the poor, or a constant lecture, or an alms-house, or some such great standing monument, should commemorate God's goodness to thee, and persuade others to trust and seek unto that goodness? Or at least, if thy estate would not do so much, hast thou not vowed to do according to thy power? Where now is thy paying these vows? "But I was never poor, never at sea." May be so; yet art thou not under some vows for some other mercies? Wast thou never in danger of losing thy estate, thy relations, thy life? Didst thou never lie dangerously and (men thought) desperately sick? Hast thou no sick-bed vows upon thee? Stay here, whoever thou art that readest these lines; and read not a word more, until thou hast duly considered whether ever thou hast been dangerously sick, and what thou then vowedst, and how thou hast performed.

The proud contemner of religion learns by his dangerous sickness to promise to be religious: wast thou ever such? Didst thou ever so vow? And art thou now what thou didst then promise? The profane swearer and blasphemous is brought by a sickness to fear his oath; and to vow to learn to fear and abstain. O, then, if God will not destroy, and damn, but give life, he will (that he will!) repent, and amend; he will bless, but not blaspheme, his name; he will never more profanely swear and curse. Wast thou ever such an one? so sinful? so engaged? What performance now? The drunkard vows sobriety when he is sick; the adulterer vows chastity; the worldling vows to mind heaven; the tradesman, who hath so often sold his conscience at every price to gain six-pence by an untruth and lie, then if this plunge be out-lived, will keep a good conscience. In a word, a sick-bed makes a sinner sick of his sin, and seldom fails to make him vow against it. Now, reader, what thinkest thou? vows or no vows? Art thou under any, or no? I am persuaded now thou canst not deny it; methinks I could believe I heard thee say, "Such a fever, such an ague, the small-pox, a surfeit, the pestilence, or some such disease, made me vow to be another man, to

destroy sin, to exercise grace, to love God, to hate lust, to be holy and heavenly." Now, thou seest thy bond: where is thy payment of thy debt? O how few do well keep any, how much fewer do well keep their sick-bed, vows! as if these vows were as sickly as their makers, and doomed to as short a life as the sick votary thought he had been doomed to! Reader, thy conscience tells thee what thou canst answer, or what thou must confess in this matter; and, upon thy conscience's answer, I have advice for thee: if thou art conscious,

1. *Of total neglect, go speedily on thy knees, bless infinite patience, humble thyself before infinite grace, get out thy pardon.*—And whilst God saith by me, by these lines, "Defer not to pay," be thou honest to thy word, thankful to thy God, advantageous to religion, and an example of reformation, lest [the] next sickness be thy death, and thy vows be thy sin, which shut out thy hopes of praying and speeding. God delights not to answer such fools: thou mayest find motives enough to hasten thee to this duty, from Eccles. v. 2, 4—6, which I commend to thy thoughts with these queries:—(1.) Is not God in heaven, and thou on earth? (2.) And is not thy vow made to this great God? (3.) And is not this vow thy voluntary debt? And, (4.) Doth God require present payment? Or, indeed, (5.) Wilt thou worse thy condition by vowing? Or, (6.) Wilt thou provoke God's anger and displeasure? (7.) Darest thou venture on threatened destruction? These are Solomon's motives to a punctual and present payment of vows: I offer them, to awake thee from neglect of thy vows.

2. Or, secondly, *Hast thou vowed, and performed in part, but not fully?*—Hast thou done somewhat, but not all, of that thou hast promised and vowed? I advise,

(1.) *See what hindered: wast thou rash in promising more than thou couldest do?*—Is this the reason thou didst not all, because some of it was out of thy power? Thou must be humbled for thy rash vow; and if ever it come within thy power, do it.

(2.) *See whether thy sloth and negligence did not hinder, when thou mightest have performed.*—But now it is out of thy power, and thou canst not. This is a high breach of thy vows; and I know no way for thee, but due and seasonable repentance and confessing, that God may pardon thee; and be thou better in what thou canst, since thou canst not be so good in this* thou shouldst.

(3.) *See whether it continue yet in thy power to do, though as yet thou hast not done it.*—And if so, be affected with the sight of thy unthankfulness, but remove this sin by performing thy vows; for God will not release the promise, nor cancel the bond, until the debt be paid by him who hath power in his hand, and may do it.

DUBITATION. "But what, if it were in my power when I vowed, but since that time Providence hath put it out of my power? I was rich when I vowed to relieve the poor; but when I was recovered, God suffered me to be spoiled, as Job was: what shall I do then?"

SOLUTION 1. *Thy vow, well-composed, engaged thee so far as it was in*

* In all editions, except the first, the particle "as" is found between *this* and *thou*, to the manifest injury of the meaning.—EDIT.

thy power.—Remember, a well-advised vow hath this express condition, or this implied, “So far and so long as it is in my power to do, until I have done all.” “The tenth of all I have, of all that God shall give me,” saith Jacob, “I will give to God.” Now, if the Lord exercise his bounty to Jacob, Jacob is engaged; then he hath power, and can do it: if God make Jacob poor, the limitation [which] his vow implied in it doth quit him.

SOL. 2. *So far as God puts it out of thy power, so far he releaseth thee from the debt.*—When God, by his providence over-ruling all, doth disable thee to the payment, then he dischargeth thee from the bond: this is God’s real discharge and cancelling of the obligation.

USE III. Are well-composed vows such promoters of religion? and are they to be made so warily? and do they bind so strictly? *Then be sure to wait until God give you just and fit seasons for vowing.*—Be not over-hasty to vow: it is an inconsiderate and foolish haste of Christians to make more occasions of vowing than God doth make for them. Make your vows, and spare not, so often as God bids you; but do not do it oftener. You would wonder I should dissuade from vowing often, when you have such constant mercies; and wonder well you might, if God did expect your extraordinary bond and security for every ordinary mercy: but He requires it not; He is content with ordinary security of gratitude for ordinary mercies: when He calls for extraordinary security and acknowledgment, by giving extraordinary mercies, then give it, and do it,

1. *Cheerfully.*—Enter such bonds willingly.
2. *Pay the bond punctually at its time.*
3. *Pay it fully, in the whole of it.*—So do it, that you may say, “I will cheerfully, and of choice.” So do it, that you may call it a paying punctually and fully. And this will be accounted a rendering to the Lord, and a real promoting of religion, by setting forth our debt, and the Lord’s goodness, to which we are indebted. Fear not to give thy God double security when he requires it. Fail not to pay readily and fully, when pay-day comes; for the Lord doth expect and command thee so to do; and if thou do wilfully make default, he will lay folly to thy charge, and take the forfeiture of thy bond, and make thee know it too, some way or other, to thy grief and trouble. Keep out so long, or get out of such debts so soon, as thou canst. Pay the Lord thy vows.

SERMON XXV.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM WHITAKER, A.M.,

FELLOW OF EMMANUEL COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

HOW ARE WE COMPLETE IN CHRIST?

But Christ is all, and in all.—Colossians iii. 11.

THE great concernment of lost creatures is, above all things, to mind salvation. This is “the one thing needful;” this should be the great *inquiry*; (Luke x. 42; Acts xvi. 30;) and in the neglect of this, all our other endeavours are no better than laborious trifles. The great danger which even *they* are in *who* seriously mind salvation, is, lest they build upon some sandy foundation, seeking heaven in those ways which lead not thither. The great design of Satan is, either to detain poor undome creatures in a total neglect of salvation, or to deceive them in the way and means thereof. It is therefore the great care of the apostle, as in other scriptures, so in this, not only to undeceive the world as to those mistakes which prevailed then, but to point out the right, the proper, the only sure, way of salvation; namely, through Christ, whom he here declares to be so complete a Saviour, that, as we have “none other,” (Acts iv. 12,) so we need none other, because “Christ is all.”

In the former part of the verse, the apostle shows the insufficiency of all things on this side Christ, to commend us unto God, or stand us in stead in the matter of salvation; and this he does by removing four mistakes at that time common:—

1. *The mistake of the Jews*; who prided themselves in a genealogical kind of sanctity, as being the seed of Abraham. This they account so great a matter, that they cannot be persuaded it could go otherwise than well with them. Let the messengers of God tell them their sins, warn them of their dangers; yet they shelter themselves under this privilege, as that which would be a sufficient bulwark against all kind of threats and comminations; and though John the Baptist in his time, (Matt. iii. 9,) our Saviour in his time, (John viii. 39, 44,) and the apostles in theirs, do all concur in taking them off from leaning upon this broken reed; yet will they not be beaten out of these strong-holds. Time was, indeed, when “salvation was of the Jews;” but, that wall of partition being now taken down, and the pale of the church so far enlarged as to take in both Jew and Gentile, (Acts x. 34, 35,) no national privilege can now commend us unto God; nor can a succession of Abraham “according to the flesh” avail us, unless we succeed him in his faith.

2. *The mistake of the circumcised*, whether Jews or proselytes; who, because they had this badge of religion upon them, concluded themselves in a priority for heaven, before all the world besides. But however time

was when circumcision was an ordinance of that necessity, that the Lord threatens to punish the neglect thereof, by cutting off that soul from among his people; (Gen. xvii. 14;) yet was it not the *outward* but *spiritual* part God accounted of. The apostle, in excluding this, excludes all outward religious observations; (Rom. ii. 29;) as Davenant *in loc.**

3. *The mistake of the Grecians*; who were at that time the masters of all learning; and all other nations, in contradistinction unto them, were styled Barbarians; and of all Barbarians, the Scythians were esteemed the rudest. But whatever worth and excellency may be in human accomplishments; yet all these, in the business of salvation, are but poor matters. It is neither the having nor wanting of these that can considerably advantage or prejudice us in that high concernment.

4. *The common mistake of the world*; who from their rank and quality in the world are ready to promise themselves a more easy acceptance with God. (1 Cor. i. 26, 27.) But "God is no respecter of persons;" (Acts x. 34;) he looks upon the children of men with another kind of eye than man is used to do. (1 Sam. xvi. 7.) Whether our outward condition be high or mean, there is nothing of privilege or disadvantage from hence, in respect of salvation.

And as, in the former clause of the verse, the apostle shows the insufficiency of all things beside Christ; so in this clause he shows the single sufficiency of Christ alone. Whatever the Jews promised themselves from their stock and lineage, the proselytes from their circumcision, the Grecians from their wisdom and learning, the great ones of the world from their outward pre-eminencies;—all that, yea, and much more, is Christ to believers. "Christ is all."

This single sufficiency of Christ the apostle proves by a double argument:—

1. *The completeness and perfection of Christ as a Saviour*.—"He is all." Take salvation from first to last, in all the several parts of it, he is the Alpha and Omega, the beginner and perfecter, the author and finisher, of all. (Heb. xii. 2.)

2. *The way and means whereby Christ imparts and communicates this salvation*.—It is by being "in all." Some read the words as an amplification of the fulness and completeness of Christ: "Christ is all," and that in all things that concern either our present comfort or eternal happiness.† Others refer these words, "in all," to those divers sorts of persons spoke of in the former part of this verse; to whom, that Christ may be a Saviour, he disdains not to take up his dwelling in their souls, though lying under all the disadvantages which were then accounted prejudicial. And thus the apostle seems to explain himself, Gal. iii. 28; a parallel scripture unto this. And according to this exposition, as the benefit of Christ's sufficiency is extended to all believers by virtue of

* *Circumcisio erat in Judaicâ religione ritus præcipuus; adhibetur itaque ad designandam observationem omnium rituum legalium.*—DAVENANTIUS. "In the Jewish religion, circumcision was the principal rite; and is therefore used to designate the observance of all the rites of the law of Moses."—EDIT. † *Ἐν πᾶσι ἢ πραγμάτων, ἢ τοῖς τῆς ζωῆς ἡμῶν συνεκτικαῖς, ἢ ἐν πᾶσι ἡμῶν.*—CŒCUMENIUS *in loc.* "Either in all things, or in those intimately connected with our life, or in all of us."—EDIT.

their union unto him,* so is it restrained and locked up from all unbelievers.†

The case to be insisted on from this scripture is, *How Christians are complete in Christ.*—For the resolving hereof, take this natural deduction from the words :

DOCTRINE.

That Christ is a Christian's all.

By "Christian," I mean not them who have nothing more to declare them such than only their baptisms and outward professions ; as the church of Sardis. (Rev. iii. 1.) We account them monsters in nature, who have the faces of men, but, in their other limbs, the lineaments and proportions of brute beasts ; and how can we account them better than monsters in Christianity, who have the faces of Christians indeed, but withal the hearts and lives of Pagans ? That "all" which is in Christ, is nothing unto such, except to increase their guilt, and heighten their condemnation. But by the "Christian," I mean him who is *αληθως Ισραηλιτης*, "an Israelite indeed," as Christ speaks concerning Nathanael : (John i. 47 :) one who labours more to be than seem religious ; one whose great care is, that his heart may keep an even pace with his tongue, in all his outward professions. Now to such Christ is "all." In having an interest in him, they have enough for the supply of all wants, for the prevention of all dangers, for the procuring [of] all good ; and therefore, what the apostle speaks here in one word, "Christ is all," he speaks at large, in an enumeration of several weighty particulars : "Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." (1 Cor. i. 30.) We are *foolish* creatures ; Christ is "wisdom." We are *guilty* ; he is "righteousness." We are *polluted* ; he is "sanctification." We are *lost and undone* ; but in him is "redemption." We are empty of all good ; but he is a full fountain, from whom flow all those blessings which concern either our present comfort or future happiness. We are necessitous and indigent ; "in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Yea, "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him." (Col. ii. 3, 9, 10.) Or as you have it [in] Col. i. 19, *Παν το πληρωμα*, "In him dwells all fulness." The rich merchant

* *In omnibus, id est, fidelibus hunc in modum sanctificatis, et Christo copulatis.*—DAVENANTICUS in *loc.* "In all: that is, in all believers, who are thus sanctified, and joined to Christ."—EDIT. † *Quòd lex bona est, nostrum non est; quòd autem malè vivimus, nostrum est; et nihil utique prodest quòd lex est bona, si vita et conversatio nostra non est bona. Lex enim bona muneris est Christi; vita autem non bona criminis nostri; imò hoc magis culpabiles sumus, si legem bonam colimus, et mali cultores sumus. Quin potius non cultores si mali; quia cultor dici non potest malus cultor, &c.*—SALVIANUS *De Gubernatione Dei.* lib. iv. "That the law is good, is a result in which we have had no concern; but that we are wicked in our lives, is a matter in which we are personally concerned. And it will in no respect prove advantageous to us that the law is good, if our life and conversation be not also good. For the goodness of the law appertains to the office of Christ; but a wicked life has its origin in our own criminality. Nay, we render ourselves the more culpable by our professed attachment to a law which is good, while in our outward observance of it we are manifestly sinful. Indeed, if we be sinners, we are not followers of the law; because one who really observes the law cannot be called a wicked observer of it."—EDIT.

thought himself no loser by the bargain, in parting with all he had to purchase an interest in Christ. (Matt. xiii. 45, 46.) But when never so much is said, there cannot a greater word be used than what the apostle speaks here: "Christ is all." The Greeks were wont of old to account it an excellency to speak much in few words; to give their auditors *πελαγον πραγματα εν σταλαγματι ρηματων*, "an ocean of matter in a drop of words." Thus does the apostle here give us, as I may speak, gold in the wedge; which I shall endeavour to beat out into the leaf, by showing how much is comprised in this one word, "ALL." The two names by which the most ancient philosophers were wont to speak of God were, that he was, *Το Ον και Το Παν*, "the True Being and the Universal Good;" all the scattered excellencies which are dispersed among several ranks of creatures, meeting in him, as the lines of the circumference in the centre. This does the apostle speak here of Christ: he is "all." Physicians speak of an universal medicine suited to all diseases, and helpful in all maladies; but whether this can be found in nature or not, yet certainly Christ is a *Panacea*; in him we have a plaster for all sores, a remedy against all distempers. There are indeed thousands of cases wherein all other helps are but "miserable comforters," and physicians of no value; but not one case wherein Christ is not a full and proper help. When all that friends can do is only to pity us, he can help us; because "Christ is all."

For the further explaining and confirming of this great truth, three things shall be spoke to:—

I. *Wherein Christ is all.*

II. *How Christ is all.*

III. *What advantage it is to sincere Christians to have their all in Christ.*

I. *Wherein Christ is all.*

In general, he is "all" in all things; for so some of no small account render the following words, "and in all," as hath already been hinted. But, more particularly,

1. *Christ is ALL to sincere Christians, to free them from whatever might hinder their salvation.*—Salvation is not a mere negative thing, nor does it consist in a bare exemption from hell and wrath, but a translation into heaven and glory. But, alas! betwixt us and glory there is *μεγα χασμα*, "a great gulf," many bars and impediments. Aye, but Christ is ALL to deliver us from these; and though our deliverance in this world is not complete or perfect, yet is it so far complete as to render our salvation undoubtful, if we be in the number of them to whom Christ is here said to be "all."

The wrath of an offended God, which, like that flaming sword that kept our apostate parents from returning into Paradise, (out of which, because of their apostasy, they had been ejected,) would render our admission into heaven equally impossible. But Christ, by bearing the wrath of God in his own person, hath taken it off from ours; and therefore he is said to "deliver us from the wrath to come." (1 Thess. i. 10.) He who was the Son of God's love, became the subject of his displeasure; as appears by comparing Matt. iii. 17, with Isai. liii. 10; that we, who

were children of wrath, might become the objects of his favour: and, however Christ hath not delivered believers from the anger of God as a Father, yet from the anger of God as a Judge. There is an anger that proceeds from love, as the anger of a parent towards that child whose good he desires; and there is a vindictive anger: *the former*, believers are neither freed from, nor would it indeed be their privilege; (Heb. xii. 6—8, &c. ;) there is not a greater judgment can befall poor sinful creatures here on earth, than for God not to discover himself angry with them for their sins. (Isai. i. 5.)* God then deals with men as a skilful physician with an unruly patient, whom he gives up as desperate; or as a tender parent with a graceless child, whom he utterly rejects. In a word, whatever kind of anger might tend to the prejudice of believers, THAT they are delivered from; but what is for their advantage, THAT they are subject to. That "Christ is all" in delivering from the wrath of God, may further be evidenced by these considerations:—

(1.) *The adequate [cause] of God's wrath is sin.*—There is this difference betwixt wrath and mercy in God: that mercy flows, as I may so speak, naturally from God, and hath no other motive but only the gracious and merciful disposition of God. But wrath hath always its rise from us; and nothing in us but sin can draw down his wrath upon us. Our meanness cannot, our afflictions cannot: these may sometimes be *the effects* of God's wrath, but never *the causes*. No, it is "because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience." (Eph. v. 6.) *Because of these things*, that is, because of these sins, as appears from the verses foregoing. What is it that hath filled every age and place of the world with so many dreadful tokens of God's displeasure, but only sin? What was it that cast the angels out of heaven, and degraded them from their first station, but only sin? What was it that drove our first parents out of Paradise, and subjected them, and all their posterity, to so many miseries, but only sin? What was it that brought destruction upon the old world, upon Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zebaim? What was it that broke off the natural branches, and hath for so many hundreds of years continued them under a divorce from God, but only sin? In a word, look over all those miseries under which the whole creation groans; (Rom. viii. 22;) and though those miseries in several creatures are divers, yet do they all proceed from the same fountain, namely, sin.

(2.) *Christ is ALL, in making expiation for sin.*—He is that "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John i. 29.) He is our *ιλασμος* and *ιλαστηριον*.† (1 John ii. 2; Rom. iii. 25.) It was not "thousands of rams," nor "ten thousands of rivers of oil," could have borne any proportion in point of satisfaction for our sins. It was not all the legal sacrifices of old could do any thing, nor can all our duties now; but Christ is ALL in expiating for sin. (Heb. x. 5—7, 14.) And such is the fulness of Christ's satisfaction, that he hath not only freed

* *Magna ira est quando peccantibus non irascitur Deus.*—HIERONYMUS. "Great indeed is that wrath which God is treasuring up, while he manifests no tokens of his displeasure against sinners."—EDIT. † "A propitiation, atonement, or expiation for us."—EDIT.

such as are united unto him from condemnation, but purchased for them the adoption of children. (Rom. viii. 1, 14—16.) And thus Christ is ALL in removing this bar, and opening this door to salvation, which, had it not been for his mediation, would for ever have remained shut against all the children of men. The pollution and prevalency of corruption, how great an impediment this is to salvation and happiness, was typified by the lepers and unclean persons of old, who were not admitted within the camp. (Lev. xiii. 46.) Heaven is no common receptacle for all persons, as Noah's ark was for all sorts of creatures. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" (1 Cor. vi. 9.) *Know ye not?* If you know any thing in religion, you cannot but know thus much. In the church of God on earth, there is a mixture of corn with chaff, of wheat with tares, of good fish with bad, of sheep with goats; but there shall be a separation of the precious from the vile, and God will come with his "fan in his hand, and throughly purge his floor." (Luke iii. 17.) Do but consider, and pause a while upon that mischief which sin hath done poor creatures by its pollution. How hath it stained their glory, cast them down from their excellency, turned angels into devils, and debased man, who was once almost the top of the whole creation, in whom all the scattered excellencies in the book of nature were bound up together in one volume, and met together in a blessed union! How unlike hath sin made us to what God at first made us! Those souls of ours, which were once as so many pure beams of light, —how is the beauty of them now blotted and darkened! But Christ is that "Fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness;" (Zech. xiii. 1;) in his blood is virtue enough to fetch out "scarlet" spots, and "crimson" stains; (Isai. i. 18;) and if any of the children of men perish in their pollutions, it is not because he wants sufficiency, but because they want faith. (John iii. 16.) Christ is "all" in the business of cleansing and purifying. But, alas! beside the pollution of sin, there is the prevalency of it. This was to St. Paul so great an affliction, that he who could bear the greatest of outward afflictions patiently, (2 Cor. xi. 23, &c.,) cannot but express something of an holy impatience under this burden; (Rom. vii. 24;) he that could triumph over principalities, powers, life, death, &c., (Rom. viii. 38, 39,) is yet more than a little discouraged when he reflects upon the corruptions [which] he found lodging in his own heart. Corruption is the great tyrant that hath usurped over the whole world; the bounds of its dominion are almost as large as all mankind: there is not a man in all the world, (except the first man Adam, made after God's image, and the Second Adam, who was God as well as man,) but he is born a slave, a vassal to this usurper. The four great successive monarchies, Chaldean, Persian, Grecian, Roman, though the extent of them were great, and the circumference vast, yet were all these limited and bounded: some parts of the world there were which knew nothing of their yoke. But, alas! the empire of corruption reaches every corner of the earth, every person born into the world. We may therefore not unfitly compare it to Nebuchadnezzar's tree, the top whereof reaches heaven, from thence it threw the angels, and the boughs thereof spreading themselves to the ends of the earth; (Dan. iv. 11;)

yea, this vassalage unto corruption, as it is the largest and universalest, so also the miserablest and most dreadful. All other slaveries compared with this, are but like Rehoboam's government compared to his father Solomon's, the least finger of whose dominion, he threatens, should be heavier than his father's loins. (1 Kings xii. 10.) We read in Scripture of an Egyptian slavery; in history, of the Spartan slavery, and of the Turkish: all these sad and lamentable; but yet all these reached but the body, and that for a time only; whereas the slavery of corruption reaches the soul, and that for ever, unless Christ become our "Jesus" in saving us from our sins. (Matt. i. 21.) He hath purchased our freedom, and that with a great sum; as the centurion speaks of his Roman freedom. (Acts xxii. 28.) There are none [who] can say with St. Paul, they are born free, except they who are born again, and they are free indeed. (John viii. 36.) Christ is "all" in removing this impediment also, in setting our poor captive souls at liberty from the bonds and fetters of our corruption. (Rom. vi. 6, &c.; vii. 25.) It is he alone can conquer these great Goliaths, these untamed affections. But yet even this deliverance is also incomplete in this world; he delivers his people from corruption as to the reign and dominion of it, though not as to the presence and disturbance of it: *ut non regnet, sed nondum ut non sit.**

(3.) *The oppositions of Satan, his wiles and subtilties.*—These are another impediment, and that no small one neither: for if [in] our first parents, in whom there was nothing of ignorance, but a sufficiency of knowledge, there was indeed a nescience of many things, so is there also in the angels; (Matt. xxiv. 36;) but yet their knowledge was both full and clear in things necessary and pertinent. (Col. iii. 10.) This was no small advantage against the methods of Satan; because his usual way of mischieving poor creatures hath not been so much by force as fraud; not as a lion, but as a serpent; not so much by conquering, as cheating; acting all his enmity under a pretence of friendship, and tempting us to no evil, but under the pretence of some good. The advantage of our first parents was, in this respect, great in respect of their knowledge. Besides, in them was nothing of weakness, but a sufficiency of strength; in them was nothing of corruption, but an universal rectitude and uprightness. The ways by which Satan ordinarily prevails is, either by our ignorance or by our weakness, or else by making a party within us against ourselves. The advantages of our first parents were, in all these respects, far greater than any have against Satan now; yet Satan prevailed against them. What cause, therefore, have we to fear! (2 Cor. xi. 3.) But "Christ is all" to free us from these dangers, to carry us through these oppositions, who hath "led captivity captive," (Eph. iv. 8,) who hath "spoiled principalities and powers, triumphing over them." (Col. ii. 15.) But yet, even this deliverance is at present incomplete; for, though Christ hath delivered believers from Satan as a *destroyer*, yet not from Satan as a *tempter*: he may disquiet such, but he cannot ruin them.

(4.) *The disturbances and interruptions of a profane world, its allurements, discouragements, promises, threats, smiles, frowns.*—Our difficulties

* "That it may not reign; but not yet that it shall not exist."—EDIT.

and dangers from hence cannot be little, since the people of God in all ages have found them so great. The great advantage which all these outward things have against us, is their suitableness to our senses; for though believers are said to "live by faith," (Heb. x. 38,) yet the best of men have had something to witness they were but men of "like passions," *ὁμοιοπαθῆς*, as it was said of Elias; (James v. 17;) but "Christ is all" to free us from these dangers: "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (John xvi. 33.) He hath overcome it *for us*, and in some measure *in us*.

2. *Christ is ALL, to fill the souls of believers with all that good which may capacitate and qualify them for happiness.*—It is the decree of heaven, that none be admitted into glory but those on whom God hath wrought the truth of grace. Heaven must first be brought down into our souls, before our souls are capable of ascending up thither: we must first be "made meet," before we can partake of that "inheritance of the saints in light." (Col. i. 12; Eph. v. 5.) We are by nature unmeet, because we are carnal and earthly; and should God dispense with his own decree, and open so wide a door unto heaven and happiness as to let-in carnal and sensual persons, heaven would be no heaven unto such; carnal hearts can never relish the sweetness of spiritual enjoyments. (Rom. viii. 6, 7.) Philosophers observe, that all delight arises from a suitableness betwixt the person and the object. What is the reason of that diversity of delights which is among the children of men? That which is one man's joy is another man's grief; and that which is one man's pleasure is another man's pain! The only reason is, because of the diversity of tempers and dispositions. Some there be of such a brutish and swinish temper, that nothing is so pleasing unto them as wallowing in the mire of their sensualities; others, again, of so refined a temper, that they esteem these sensual pleasures very low, and much beneath them. But still every man's delight is according to his temper and disposition; and therefore heaven would be so far from being a heaven unto such, that it would be a kind of hell to them; for as delight arises from an harmony betwixt the person and the object, so all kind of torment, from an unsuitableness and contrariety. Hence is it, that although God vouchsafes us something of heaven here on earth, namely, in his ordinances, yet to unheavenly hearts, every thing of this nature is a *tædium*, "a burden." "When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat?" &c. (Amos viii. 5.) Ælian reports of one Nicostratus, who, being a skilful artificer, and finding a curious piece of art, was so much taken therewith, that a spectator, beholding him so intent in viewing the workmanship, asked him what pleasure he could take in gazing so long upon such an object; he answers, "Hadst thou my eyes, thou wouldest be as much ravished as I am." So may we say of carnal persons: had they the hearts and dispositions of believers, they would be as much delighted with all means of communion with God as *they are*, and account *that* their privilege *which* now they esteem their vexation. The Greeks tell us, that *καλον*, "good," is derived *απο του καλειν*, "from calling," because all good is of an attractive and magnetic nature, to

draw forth and call our affections after it. But yet it is not the intrinsic excellency of any object that renders it taking with us ; but our affections are accordingly exercised upon all kinds of objects, as representations are of those objects from the understanding ; for it is the understanding which sits at the stern of the soul, that is the *primum mobile*, “the master-wheel,” that puts the affections, as so many lesser wheels, upon motion : therefore, unless our judgments be both enlightened and sanctified, we can never “approve the things that are excellent.” Naturalists observe, that, though the loadstone hath an attractive virtue to draw iron to it, yet it cannot exercise that virtue upon iron that is rusty. Ignorance is the rust of the soul, that blunts the edge of our affections to whatsoever is spiritually good. There must be, therefore, some kind of suitableness and harmony betwixt our souls and heavenly mercies, before we are capable of tasting the sweetness of them. Now, “Christ is all” to believers in this respect also : it is from “his fulness they receive, and grace for grace.” (John i. 16.) That we have any thing of grace, it is from him ; and that we have such a degree or measure of grace, it is from him : “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” (John x. 10.) The essence and the abundance are both from him. All those miracles which Christ wrought in the days of his flesh upon the bodies of poor creatures, in restoring sight to the blind, speech to the dumb, life to the dead,—all these does Christ work over again upon the souls of them whom he prepares for heaven. (Eph. v. 8 ; ii. 5, 10.)

3. *Christ is ALL, to fill all ordinances with power and efficacy.*—These are the means of salvation ; and, through his concurrence, effectual means. As they are his institutions, we are under an obligation of using them ; and as they have the promise of his presence, we are warranted in our expectations of benefit from them. (Matt. xxviii. 20 ; xviii. 20.) But yet ordinances are but empty pipes, but dry breasts, unless Christ be pleased to fill them, who “fillet all in all.” (Eph. i. 23.) That there should be such a might and efficacy in things so weak, such miraculous and strange effects by means so inconsiderable ; that the foolishness of preaching should be powerful to salvation ; it is because it is not man, but God, that speaks : “The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God : and they that hear shall live.” (John v. 25.) Look upon ordinances in themselves, and so they are *τα μη οντα*, “things which are not ;” but as they are accompanied with the power of Christ, so they “bring to nought things that are.” (1 Cor. i. 28.) It is he who in baptism baptizes “with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.” (Matt. iii. 11.) It is he, in preaching the word, [who] speaks not only to the ear, but to the heart : “Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures ?” (Luke xxiv. 32.) In a word, “Christ is ALL” in every ordinance, in respect of efficacy : while the disciples fished alone, “they caught nothing ;” but when Christ is with them, the draught of fishes is so great they are scarce “able to draw it.” (John xxi. 3, 6.)

4. *Christ is ALL, to fill every condition with comfort.*—“The best of

conditions is not good without him, nor is the worst bad with him." * Alexander accounted himself to live so many days as he obtained victories; but David accounts himself to live more in one day's communion with God, than in a thousand days' enjoyment of all earthly comforts; (Psalm lxxxiv. 10;) yea, in the midst of all his earthly confluences, he looks upon all as nothing in comparison of communion with God: "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." † (Psalm lxxiii. 25.) Though he had a kingdom, he values not that. And well might David be of this mind; for, could we add kingdom to kingdom, and world to world, yet all these, in comparison of the least smile or love-token from God, are no better than nothing; for, "Thy loving-kindness is better than life." (Psalm lxxiii. 3.) The ancient philosophers distinguished betwixt *bona kata φυσιν*, and *bona kata τιμην*, "Some things good in their own nature:" thus only God: "There is none good but one, that is, God:" (Matt. xix. 17:) "Others good by way of opinion or estimation;" and thus all the comforts of this life: whence that maxim of the Stoics: Βίος ὑποληψίς, "Life is but opinion and fancy;" and whatever good is in these things is but like those pictures of most deformed and monstrous creatures, which, the poet tells us, had no other beauty than what they owed to the painter's courtesy, namely, the offspring of our own fancies: those who were virtuous were only, by the philosophers, accounted to live; others might *degere*, but not *vivere*; they might "be," but they could not "live." The only true comfort of life consists in living in communion with God. It is his presence [which] fills heaven with all its glory, and it is his presence that fills every condition with all its sweetness. But, alas! how "can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos iii. 3.) And what agreement can there be betwixt light and darkness, the glorious Majesty of heaven and sinful dust, but only through a Mediator? And the only Mediator is Jesus Christ. (1 Tim. ii. 5.) What was it that enabled the blessed martyrs to account the scorching flames to be beds of roses? What was it that enabled St. Paul to triumph over all kind of adversaries, but only the "love of God in Christ Jesus?" (Rom. viii. 38, 39.) Herein alone consists our comfort, our happiness. Now "Christ is ALL" in this respect also.

5. *Christ is ALL, in furnishing us with strength and assistance to persevere.*—The way to heaven is no smooth or easy way, but beset with many difficulties: Τεθλιμμενη ἡ ὁδος ‡ (Matt. vii. 14;) and "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." (Acts xiv. 22.) Yea, though the calmness of our passage through this world should be in a perfect serenity from all outward enemies, yet can we not expect a total freedom from the worst of enemies,—our own hearts, our corruptions. All the prejudices and mischiefs we either do or can suffer from others, are nothing to what we suffer from ourselves: it is not, *Homo homini lupus*, but, *Homo sibi lupus*, "Men are to none such

* *Ubi bene sine te, aut ubi male cum te.*—BERNARDUS. † *Non dicit, Nihil habeo, sed, Nihil concupisco.*—MUSCULUS *in loc.* "David does not say, 'There is none upon earth that I have beside thee, but, 'There is none that I desire,' &c."—EDIT. ‡ "Confined and difficult is the way."—EDIT.

wolves as to their own souls." Now, inasmuch as the crown of happiness is reserved for the head of perseverance; (Rev. ii. 10;) and inasmuch as perseverance in conflicting with such kind of adversaries, (as, though we conquer them yet they are in us, and though we vanquish them yet still we carry them about us,) must needs require a greater strength than our own; (Rom. vii. 24;) it cannot but be esteemed an eminent privilege to be under the continual supplies of Christ by his Spirit, that after we have put our hand to God's plough, we may not look back, (Luke ix. 62,) and after we have "begun in the Spirit," we may not end "in the flesh." (Gal. iii. 3.) I speak not this as doubting the perseverance of them who are sincere, but as declaring the true foundation on which their perseverance is bottomed, namely, not any inherent strength [which] they have in themselves, but those supplies of grace and strength [which] they continually derive from Christ. There is a vast difference betwixt the best of Christians, considered singly in themselves, and considered relatively in respect of their union unto Christ: in themselves, so weak and impotent that they "can do nothing,"* (John xv. 5,) "not sufficient of themselves to think any thing as of themselves," (2 Cor. iii. 5,) and yet what can be less than to think? but in Christ mighty and powerful, able to do and bear whatever God would have them: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Phil. iv. 13.) And thus is Christ the Christian's "all;" thus are they "complete in him." (Col. ii. 10.)

II. *How Christ is all?*

The resolution of this query is therefore necessary, because many there are who, instead of sucking milk from this doctrine, are ready to suck poison; but, for prevention of all dangerous and unsafe inferences from this great truth, consider,

1. *Negatively*, how Christ is not all.—Not so as to excuse us from all endeavours in the use of means for working out our own salvation. Christ's sufficiency does not excuse but engage our industry; for thus the apostle argues: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do." (Phil. ii. 12, 13.) As if he had said, "It is God [who] does all; therefore do you what you can."

2. *Positively or affirmatively*, and that in these two respects especially:—

(1.) *Christ is ALL by way of impetration*:—Inasmuch as our salvation was his purchase. We may say of our hopes, our helps, our advantages, as the chief priest said of the moneys which Judas had received for the hire of his perfidiousness: "It is the price of blood." (Matt. xxvii. 6.) Whence is it that they who have brought themselves under the deserts of hell, may have hopes of heaven, enjoy the means of heaven, taste the first-fruits of heaven? All are the price of Christ's blood. (Eph. v. 25—27; Acts xx. 28; John xv. 13.) It was by his own blood that he entered into heaven himself, and hath opened the door

* *Non dicit, Parum potestis facere; vel, Difficuller potestis facere; vel, Nihil potestis perficere; sed, Nihil facere.*—AUGUSTINUS in loc. "The Lord says not, 'Without me ye cannot do much;' neither, 'Ye will find great difficulty in doing any thing;' nor, 'Ye cannot perfect any thing;' but He declares, 'Without me ye can do nothing.'"—EDIT.

to heaven for all that are incorporated into him. (Heb. ix. 12; x. 19, 20.)

(2.) *Christ is ALL by way of application*:—Inasmuch as he brings home the blessings he hath purchased unto the souls of his. He hath not only purchased salvation for *them*, but them for *it*; not only the possibility of heaven, but a real propriety [proprietorship] in it; and certainly propriety is absolutely necessary unto the refreshment of every comfort. “What are all the treasures of either or both the Indies, to him who only hears of them?” But mere stories. “What all the glories of heaven, to him who is thrust from the enjoyment of them?” But mere torments. There must be a propriety in all spiritual blessings before they can be refreshing; and this alone from Christ. “I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish.” (John x. 28.) “I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” (John xiv. 2, 3.) And what is clearly asserted in these scriptures, is strongly intimated in those emblems by which Christ is described. What the root is to the tree, the vine to the branches, the head to the body, all this is Christ to believers; (Col. ii. 7; John xv. 1, 5; Eph. i. 22, 23;) namely, not only a treasury of all good, but a fountain continually streaming down all kind of spiritual blessings into their souls; and though faith be both the eye that discerns, and the hand that receives, all from Christ’s fulness, yet it is he that by his Spirit works this grace in us. Faith is our *act*, but it is his *gift*: it is we that believe, but it is Christ [that] enables us to believe; so that both in purchasing and applying salvation “Christ is all.” (Gal. v. 22; Eph. ii. 8; Phil. i. 29.)

III. *What advantage is it to believers to have their ALL in Christ?*

1. *Because our salvation could have been in no hand so safe, so sure, as in the hand of Christ.*—Had it been in our hand by any inherent righteousness, our sad experience [which] we have had of our own unfaithfulness, in sinning away that happiness wherein we were created, may cause us for ever to be jealous of ourselves; but to have it in the hand of Him who is mighty to save, even to the utmost, who is so faithful that in all our distresses he is touched with our infirmities; we cannot be so sensible of our own miseries, but Christ is much more; (Psalm lxxxix. 19; Isai. lxiii. 1; Heb. iv. 15; vii. 25;) and hence it is that as we have no other Saviour beside him, so is it impossible we should have any like unto him. (Acts iv. 12.)

2. *Because our salvation could have been in no way so comfortable.*—Because as God hath *the glory* of every attribute, so have Christians *the comfort* of every attribute in this way of salvation; for as God hath the glory of his justice from them (in their Head and Surety) to whom in this way he shows mercy, “mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.” (Psalm lxxxv. 10.) Justice itself, that dreadful attribute to guilty creatures, is in this way of salvation so far from being their enemy, that it becomes their friend, and speaks nothing but what is to their encouragement. And hence it is that sincere believers have, from the very justice of God, answered all

manner of discouragements arising from their sins. "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died;" (Rom. viii. 34;) that is, Since God hath already received satisfaction from Christ, he cannot in justice require it from the members of Christ, but is just in the "justifying him that believeth in Jesus;" (Rom. iii. 26;) and "if we confess" and forsake "our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (Prov. xxviii. 13; 1 John i. 9.) Thus hath the justice of God been their great support in the time of their outward dangers also: "Justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne." (Psalm lxxxix. 14.) In a word, this way of salvation (which was the contrivance of infinite wisdom, and is in itself so mysterious that the angels delight to look into it) does so fully correspond with the condition of poor, weak, sinful, mutable creatures, that it lays a double obligation of praise upon us, that salvation is possible, and that the way of salvation is so complete and full.

The doctrinal part of this observation being thus cleared, one word by way of application.

USES.

USE I. *If Christ be ALL, then is there no ground of despondency either from your own defectiveness, or the defectiveness of all creature-helps.*—Your duties are defective; your endeavours defective; your very righteousness unsafe to confide in. (Phil. iii. 9.) But though you have nothing in yourselves, yet if you have an interest in Christ, you need nothing more, because in Christ you have ALL.

1. *You have the sum of all.*—Though you have not estates, friends, worldly comforts; yet in Christ you have what does more than make up the want of all these. We may be as impatiently desirous of this and that earthly comfort, as Rachel was of children, whom we find quarrelling with Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die." (Gen. xxx. 1.) But what Elkanah said to Hannah in the like condition, "Am not I better to thee than ten sons?" (1 Sam. i. 8;) the same we may say much more to persons interested in Christ: "Is not Christ better to you than all?" The absence of the cistern may well be dispensed with by him who lives at the fountain; and the light of a candle, by him who enjoys the sun. All those seeming contradictions, which so frequently occur in scripture, can no other ways be reconciled but by the acknowledgment of this. For example: "A father of the fatherless:" (Psalm lxviii. 5;) how can they be fatherless who have a father? Thus we read of them who were rich in the midst of poverty, (James ii. 5,) who, "having nothing, possessed all things;" joyful in the midst of sorrows; (2 Cor. vi. 10;) that is, though they had not these comforts, yet they had an interest in Him who is infinitely more and better than all those comforts. Nay, as to inherent righteousness, though you cannot attain a perfection, yet in Christ is perfection. He is ALL.

2. *You have in him the pledge of all.*—According to the apostle's argumentation, "How shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. viii. 32.) The inference is strong. Had there been any one mercy that God had thought too great, too much for worthless crea-

tures, it would certainly have been this; but since God hath not stuck at giving his Son, this instance of God's bounty is so high that it removes all grounds of questioning his bounty in any thing else. The apostle from this mercy might very well infer a certain subsequence of all other mercies, that might be profitable or beneficial. No ground of despondency, therefore, unto such as are interested in Christ.

USE II. *What cause have we to be thankful for Christ!*—We have cause to be thankful for the meanest of mercies, inasmuch as we are less than the least of all; (Gen. xxxii. 10;) much more for this which is the highest of mercies. The mercies of our creation, preservation, &c., though never so many and great, are little in comparison of this. It is mentioned as an astonishing act of love, that God should “so love the world, as to give his only Son,” &c.; (John iii. 16;) so beyond all comparison, so beyond all expression. If God hath given you his Son, it is more than if he had given you a whole world; because it is in him that God hath “blessed you with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places.” (Eph. i. 3.)

USE III. *How great is their folly and misery who keep at a distance from Christ!*—Our Saviour mentions it as the highest folly in the Jews, “Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.” (John v. 40.) There is in Christ the life of justification, to free us from that eternal death to which the law sentences us; the life of sanctification, to free us from that spiritual death under which our apostasy hath brought us. There is in him an all-sufficient fulness, for the repairing of all our losses. And are these mercies not worthy the coming for? The apostle puts the very emphasis of the Heathens' misery in this, that they are “without Christ,” and therefore without hope. (Eph. ii. 12.) And what is *their misery* shall any of us make *our choice*?

USES OF EXHORTATION.

USE I. *Let it be your care that Christ may be ALL to you.*—It is no small, nor is it any common, privilege. Many there are who live “without Christ;” (Eph. ii. 12;) others, to whom all that is in Christ is so far from being to their salvation, that it only aggravates their destruction. He that is to some the “chief corner-stone,” is to others no better than “a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence.” (1 Peter ii. 6, 8.) This was prophesied of Christ: “This child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel.” (Luke ii. 34.) There is no mercy so eminently good, but through our corruptions it may become an occasion of evil. Christ himself, the greatest of mercies that ever God vouchsafed to creatures, is yet so far from saving some from their sins, that he only increases their sin. “If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin.” (John xv. 22.) Those who enjoyed the ministry of Christ in his own person, and were not wrought upon thereby, all their sins would comparatively have been a kind of innocence, had they not discovered such an height of obstinacy. It is therefore no common privilege. “But what should we do that it may be ours?” Take these few directions:—

1. *Labour to get your judgments settled in the belief of this great truth, that all things in the world are a very nothing without Christ.*—

That you are poor in the midst of worldly riches, and miserable in the midst of all earthly happiness, while you remain in your estrangements from Christ; and that, of all kind of poverty and misery, this is the worst, because it is in those spiritual blessings wherein consists both our present and future happiness. It is but little those persons understand of their great concernments, that can, with that Gospel "fool," think themselves sufficiently provided for in the things of this world, and say to their souls, as he to his, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." (Luke xii. 19.) Dost thou know thou livest in this world upon the very brink of eternity? And dost thou know whether there be more than "one step between" thee and another world? (1 Sam. xx. 3.) And canst thou take up with any thing on this side Christ? It is an argument [that] you know but little of your own concernments. Some of the grosser Platonists thought the world to be a great animal, and the soul which acted it was God. Now, if the soul be departed from the body, what is it but a mere carcass without life? Christ is the very life and soul of all our comforts; and without him all our creature-enjoyments are but as so many ciphers without a figure, which have no significancy in them, but are so many nothings; nothing in respect of true comfort here, nothing in respect of your preparations for another world. Labour, therefore, through the glass both of scripture and experience, to behold all the excellences of this world as so many bladders filled with wind, and, at best, to be like Hagar's bottle, which was soon empty, (Gen. xxi. 15,) or as broken cisterns. *Cisterns*, and therefore cannot hold much; *broken cisterns*, and therefore cannot hold what they have long. (Jer. ii. 13.) And withal, let it be your wisdom to look upon Christ as that everlasting Fountain of all good which can never be drawn dry; as that never-failing Spring of all those blessings which will not only sweeten every condition here, but go with us beyond death and the grave. Such fixed apprehensions of these things will be singularly useful to engage our souls in an earnest pursuit after Christ; or, in the Psalmist's words, to "follow hard after him;" (Psalm lxiii. 8;) and it is his promise, that they that come to him, he will in no wise cast out. (John vi. 37.)

2. *Be speedy in casting out those inmates which, because they are unmeet companions for Christ, may hinder his taking possession of your souls.*—The ark and Dagon could not stand together in the same room; but if the ark stands, Dagon falls. (1 Sam. v. 4.) "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos iii. 3.) Christ and our corruptions are at no agreement: these two cannot dwell together under the same roof. If you would have Christ to take up his abode in your hearts, you must prepare a place for him. It was said of David, "He would neither give sleep to his eyes, nor slumber to his eye-lids, till he had found out an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob." (Psalm cxxxii. 4, 5.) The souls of most men are so crowded with other guests, that the best entertainment they can afford Christ is but such as he found in his first entrance into the world,—an out-room, a stable, a manger. But let it be your care to renounce communion with all things that might hinder your communion with him, to "forget thine own people, and thy Father's

house ; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty ;" (Psalm xlv. 10, 11 ;) *so*, not otherwise ; he will have no rivals, no competitors ; not a part of our heart, but all.

3. *Be willing to accept of Christ upon his own terms.*—There can be no terms hard on which we may gain an interest in him. The great and main condition is self-denial, together with a full resignation of ourselves to him ; (Matt. xvi. 24 ;) and self-denial, if duly considered, is the greatest self-advantage. (1.) Because he calls us not to deny ourselves in any thing that is truly for our spiritual good, or at least so far as it is for our good. (2.) Though he calls us to deny ourselves in many outward good things, yet it is not so much to part with them, as to exchange them for what is better. (3.) The main objects of self-denial are those things which it is our privilege to be freed from ; no reason, therefore, to be offended at such terms as these, to resign up our mistaken judgments to the guidance of Infinite Wisdom, our corrupt wills to his most holy and gracious will, to be in all things at the command of Him whose commands are in nothing grievous, but in all things truth and righteousness. (1 John v. 3 ; Psalm cxix. 151, 172.) Be therefore as willing to be his, as you are desirous he should be yours : the consent must be mutual, or else the match can never be made up betwixt Christ and your souls.

4. *Measure all things by their reference unto Christ.*—Of all good things, account them the best which may promote your endeavours after that good which is the highest ; as ordinances, the means of grace, which at how high a rate they are valued by David, may appear from his pathetical and most affectionate desires of waiting upon God in them. (Psalm xxvii. 4 ; xlii. 1, 2 ; lxiii. 1, 2.) Of all evil things, account them the worst which estrange you from Christ, the truest good ; and therefore let your only impatience be of sin, as that which only "separates between you and your God." (Isai. lix. 2.) The observation of this rule will very much secure you from all diversions, and quicken you in your endeavours after an interest in Christ.

USE II. *Be serious in resolving this great question,—whether Christ, who is ALL to sincere Christians, be ALL to you.*—It is a question of that importance, that all your comfort depends upon the resolution of it, yea, all your hopes. Take these two characters :—

1. *Are you conformable unto Christ.*—Is the same mind in you that was in him ? (Rom. viii. 9 ; Phil. ii. 5.) Are you holy, and humble, and self-denying, and in all things followers of that pattern which he hath set before you in his own example ? "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." (1 Cor. vi. 17.) "Old things are passed away ; behold, all things are become new." (2 Cor. v. 17.) Causes are best known by their effects, trees by their fruits, fountains by their streams ; so is our interest in Christ by this effect thereof, our conformity unto Christ.

2. *Are you ALL to him ?*—It is but a just retaliation in Christians to be so, and it is withal an evidence that "Christ is all" to them.

(1.) Are you ALL to him in your *affections*, in prizing him above all ? Can you, with the spouse, esteem the love of Christ "better than wine ;"

(Canticles i. 2 ;) with David, "better than life?" (Psalm lxxiii. 3.) Can you, in the midst of all your creature-comforts, account all as nothing in comparison of him? and say, with Asaph, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." (Psalm lxxiii. 25.) So high were Moses's affections, that he esteems "the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." (Heb. xi. 26.) And, indeed, if Christ be but an underling in our affections, it is an argument we have no part in him. "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." (Matt. x. 37.) The affections are the truest pulse of the soul, the most genuine and natural symptoms of its frame and temper. It is these that speak the proper idiom and language of the heart. Make use of this rule therefore,—Is Christ uppermost in thy heart? Thy affection to him is an evidence of his to thee.

(2.) Are you ALL to him in your *acknowledgments*, in ascribing all to him? Thus St. Paul: "By the grace of God I am what I am." (1 Cor. xv. 10.) That my condition is not better, it is from myself; that it is so good, it is from him. (Eph. v. 20.)

(3.) Are you ALL to him in your *contentment and satisfaction*, accounting you have all in him, though you have nothing beside him? "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." (Hab. iii. 17, 18.)

(4.) Are you ALL to him in your *dependences and expectations*, in seeking all from him? The highest condition of grace needs further grace; but in Christ are all supplies. It is an argument of our interest in him, when in all distresses we make him our refuge, in all weaknesses our strength.

(5.) Are you ALL to him in your *designs and aims*, in seeking his glory, beyond your private advantages? This was St. Paul's design in life and death, that Christ might be magnified; (Phil. i. 20;) and if you be thus all to Christ, it is an evidence "Christ is all" to you. And how well are they provided for, who have Him who is all for their portion!

SERMON XXVI.

BY THE REV. JOHN JACKSON, A.M.,

OF QUEEN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

HOW SHALL THOSE MERCHANTS KEEP UP THE LIFE OF RELIGION, WHO, WHILE AT HOME, ENJOYED ALL GOSPEL-ORDINANCES, AND, WHEN ABROAD, ARE NOT ONLY DESTITUTE OF THEM, BUT EXPOSED TO PERSECUTION ?

Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar !
—Psalm cxx. 5.

THIS Psalm is the first of those fifteen which are called "Songs of Degrees," concerning which the conjectures of interpreters are various and uncertain; either because they were sung by the Jews at their several stages, in their return from the Babylonish captivity, or by the Levites on the fifteen steps or stairs, whereby they went up to the house of the Lord; or because they raised up their voices to a high strain in singing them; or because they are psalms of greatest use and excellency.

The psalm is generally thought to be composed upon occasion of David's flying from Saul, and Doeg's false accusation of him; (1 Sam. xxii. 23;) and it consists of three general parts:—

1. David's carriage towards God in the time of his distress: "In my distress I cried unto the Lord, and he heard me. Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue." (Psalm cxx. 1, 2.)

2. David's denouncing of judgment against his slanderous, false-tongued enemy: "What shall be given?" intimating that he expected some great reward for his malice against David; but, saith the Psalmist, he shall have "sharp arrows of the Almighty, with coals of juniper;" (verses 3, 4;) as if he had said, "Whatever reward he have from men, this shall be his reward from God."

3. David's bewailing his present condition. (Verses 5—7.) The words of the text are a branch of the third general part of the psalm; wherein we have David sadly breathing forth the sorrow of his heart for his absence from the tabernacle and the company of good men, and his dwelling among, and converse with, evil and wicked men: "Woe is me," &c.

By "sojourning," I suppose, is implied his absence from some desired habitation, namely, Jerusalem, and the tabernacle; for no man is said to sojourn at home, and when he is where he would be. (Psalm xxxix. 12; cv. 23; Heb. xi. 9.)

The word "Mesech" is taken by expositors, either, 1. For a place, as our translation carries it from the Chaldee paraphrase, which is the first of the ancient versions that so understand it; or, 2. For an expression of the prolonging of his sojourning; for so the word מֵשֶׁךְ signifies "to

draw forth or to prolong ;” * and thus the Septuagint render this place, Ἡ παροικία μου ἐμακρυνθή† whom the Arabic, Syriac, and Vulgar Latin versions follow, with some others ; and the next verse seems to favour this sense : “ My soul hath long dwelt,” &c. (Psalm cxx. 6.) But either way gives us the same ground of complaint ; only the first sense doubles the ground of the Psalmist’s trouble, and the other suggests the circumstance of the long continuance of his sojourning.

By “ Kedar” is understood part of Arabia ; the inhabitants whereof are called σκηνίται, or, “ dwellers in tents,” because they had no fixed and settled habitation, but were robbers, and lived upon the prey.‡

Now, we are not to suppose that David did really sojourn and dwell among these barbarous people ; but he speaks this of his wandering about from place to place without any settled habitation ; and to set forth the cruelty and inhumanity of those among whom he dwelt, he doth express it thus : “ Woe is me, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar !” as if one living among professed Christians, who deal with him more like savages than Christians, should say, “ Woe is me, that I sojourn among Turks and Saracens !” And thus you see David’s present condition which he bewails, is his absence from Jerusalem and the tabernacle, or place of God’s solemn worship, and his converse with wicked and ungodly men : and then these two truths lie plain before us in the words :—

DOCTRINES.

I. *It is oftentimes the lot and portion of good men to be deprived of the society of the godly, and of opportunities of public serving God, and to dwell among, and converse with, wicked and ungodly persons.*

II. *It is a real ground of trouble and sorrow to a good man to be thus deprived, &c.*

It was that which here made David proclaim himself in a state of woe and misery ; it was that which the apostle tells us did vex the righteous soul of Lot, (2 Peter ii. 7, 8,) and which made the holy prophet Elijah even weary of his life. (1 Kings xix. 4.) You may easily imagine what a sad heart a poor lamb might well have, if it be driven from the green pastures and still waters, and forced to lodge among wolves and foxes, where it must feed upon carrion or starve, and be continually in danger of being lodged in the bellies of its cruel and bloody companions, unless some secret over-ruling hand do restrain their rage, and feed it with wholesome food. And truly such is the condition of those that follow the Lamb of God in holy, lamb-like qualities, when deprived of green pastures and still waters of gospel-ordinances, and forced to converse with wicked and ungodly men.

In handling of this point I shall *first* lay before you the grounds of it, and *then* adjoin such practical application as may be useful and profitable.

* מְשַׁכֵּחַ *est trahere*, Isai. xiii. 22. לֹא יִמְשָׁכֶנּוּ לַיָּמִיָּה *Dies ejus non trahentur ; that is, non prorogabuntur.*—BOCHARTI *Geographia Sacra*, pars i. lib. iii. c. xii. p. 209. “ *Meshek* signifies ‘ to draw out, to prolong ;’ and it is thus rendered in Isai. xiii. 22 : ‘ And her days shall not be prolonged ;’ that is, shall not be deferred or protracted.”—EDIT. † “ Alas for me, that my sojourning has been prolonged !”—EDIT.

‡ BOCHARTUS, *ut supra*.

The GROUNDS of this truth do partly refer to God, partly to wicked men, and partly to the godly themselves; if in such a condition a believing soul either look upwards, or outwards, or inwards, he will see much cause of grief and trouble.

1. *With reference unto God*; and that upon a double account:—

(1.) *It is a real ground of sorrow to a believing soul to be deprived of occasions of solemn blessing and praising God.*—The soul that is full of the sense of the goodness of God, that knows how many thousand ways the Lord is continually obliging it to love and bless him, cannot but be afflicted in spirit to be kept from making its public acknowledgments of divine goodness. The Psalmist tells us, that “praise waiteth for God in Sion;” (Psalm lxxv. 1;) that is, in the public assemblies of the church; and truly it is a grief to a believing soul, not to wait there with his thank-offerings, not to pay his “vows unto the Lord in the presence of all his people, in the courts of the Lord’s house,” &c.; (Psalm cxvi. 18, 19;) not to declare to all that fear God what he hath done for their souls. (Psalm lxxvi. 16.)

(2.) *It is a real ground of sorrow to live among those that are continually reproaching and blaspheming the name of God.*—To see sinners despise the goodness of God, and trample upon his grace and mercy, and scorn his love and kindness, and kick at his bowels, and spit in his face, and stab at his heart, who is our God, our Father, our Friend, our good and gracious Lord and King;—this must needs make the believing soul cry out, “Woe is me, that I live among such!”

Let us suppose a person that hath been hugely obliged by a prince to love him, and that indeed loves him as his life; if this prince should be driven from his throne, and an usurper get into his place, would it not be a great affliction, and saddening to the spirit of such a person, to live among those who every day revile, reproach, scorn, and abuse his gracious prince? Why, sirs, if you and I be true believers, we know that the Lord is our sovereign King and Prince; such a one who hath infinitely more obliged us to love him, than it is possible for any prince to oblige a subject; and we do love the Lord as our lives, nay, better than our lives, or else we love him not at all; and must it not then be matter of grief to hear ungodly sinners, who have driven God away from their hearts and souls, where his throne should be set up, and who have let that grand usurper the devil set up his throne within them, and among them, and who daily say unto God, as those wicked ones, “Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways;” (Job xxi. 14;) to hear such curse and swear and blaspheme God, and in their lives by wicked, ungodly courses do him all the despite and dishonour that they can; bring his name to the tavern, to the stews, upon the stage, and there soot and defile the great and glorious name of God with the worst of pollutions? Certainly, sirs, he cannot account God his Friend, his Father, his good and gracious Prince, whose eye doth not run down with rivers of tears to see men so far from keeping God’s law.

2. *It is a trouble to good men to sojourn, &c., with reference to those wicked, ungodly persons among whom they live.*—It grieves their souls to

see sinners "run into all excess of riot," eagerly pursuing hell and damnation, greedily guzzling down full draughts of the venom of asps, and the poison of dragons. It pities them to see sinners stab themselves to the heart, and laughing at their own plague-sores, jesting away God, and heaven, and eternal happiness. If any of us should see a company of men so far besotted and distracted, as that one should reud and burn the evidences of a great inheritance, which others labour to deprive him of, another should cast inestimable pearls and jewels into the sea, another eagerly drinking down that which you knew to be the juice of toads and spiders, or hugging a viper and scorpion in his bosom, another stabbing himself in the breast, another laughing at and licking his own plague-sores; and all of them reviling, cursing, striking, spitting in the face, and stabbing at the heart, of those that any ways endeavour to hinder them from destroying themselves, or that will not do as they do, and be as mad as themselves; should we not pity them, and with grief of heart say, "Woe is me, that I live among such?"

Why, sirs, he that hath had any serious thoughts of eternity, that hath soberly considered the worth of an immortal soul, that believes the holiness, justice, and power of God, that understands the evil of sin, what a plague, what a venom, what a dagger at the sinner's own heart sin is,—he cannot but see and know that every ungodly, profane sinner is much more an object of highest compassion than any I have now mentioned, and therefore cannot but cry out, "Woe is me," &c.

3. *It is a trouble to good men to sojourn, &c., with reference to themselves, and their own concernments.*—Because they are sensible that such a condition lays them open to a great deal of danger; and that,

(1.) *In regard of their graces.*—For, the want of the society of good men, and the ordinances of the gospel, is like the want of dew and rain to the grass, or food to the body; and therefore those who have tasted of the sweetness and fatness, and know what a blessedness it is to be satisfied with the goodness of God's house, (Psalm xxxvi. 8; lxx. 4,) cannot but mourn over the want of gospel-ordinances; as the presence of the sun-beams makes the flowers to be fresh and beautiful, and yield a fragrant smell; whereas the want thereof makes them look pale and wan, and hang the head; even so the enjoyment of good society and gospel-ordinances makes the graces of a believer amiable and lovely, and give forth their pleasant smell; the want of which makes them very much to droop and languish.

And then, on the other side, the society of wicked men, the venom and poison of an evil example, the alluring flatteries of the world on one hand, and its frowns and threatenings on the other hand, are of great force to nip and blast, to dead and dull, the graces of good men.

And therefore he who knows the worth and value of true grace, that accounts it his riches, his treasure, his jewel, his life, (Luke xii. 21,) and is sensible how much depends upon the life and vigour of grace and religion in his soul, and understands how destructive the want of gospel-ordinances and the company of evil men are to his graces, may well cry out, "Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech," &c.

(2.) *In regard of their persons, and the concernments of this life.*—The enmity that is in the seed of the serpent against the seed of the woman, doth not only put forth itself in endeavours to ruin or weaken their graces, but also to destroy their persons. Wicked men's malice against that spiritual life of grace in good men which themselves do not partake of, doth soon improve into malice also against that natural, human life which themselves are also partakers of. Their desires to suck the blood, as I may so say, of good men's souls and graces makes them delight to suck the blood of their bodies. Witness Cain, the first that learnt this bloody trade by killing his brother, for no other cause but "because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous." (1 John iii. 12.) Witness also Ahab and Jezebel, Manasseh, &c. But the foul-mouthed witness to this black and sad truth is the scarlet, bloody whore of Babylon, who is "drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus;" (Rev. xvii. 6;) and therefore, in God's due time, she shall have blood to drink. Those, therefore, who understand what a hellish fire of rage is in the hearts of wicked men, how great their malice is against goodness and good men, and what combustible matter our life and the comforts of this life be, so far as they value these mercies, have reason, with David, to cry out, "Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech," &c.

And now the woful condition of those that are deprived of gospel-ordinances, and sojourn where heavenly manna doth not fall, and who dwell among and converse with wicked and ungodly men, as it calls upon us to bless God when it is not so with us, and to pity and pray for those who have reason to take up such a complaint, as David here doth; so also to bethink ourselves what we ought to do if the case were ours: for, you know, the life of a Christian is very oft, and very fitly, in scripture compared to a warfare; and surely he is but a mean soldier, and never like to come off with victory and triumph, who doth not prepare himself for all kind of assaults, and doth not labour to fortify every passage whereat he may be stormed; and therefore it is good for us to make the condition of others our own; so that this question, or practical case of conscience, will offer itself to our consideration:—

How shall those merchants and others keep up the life of religion, who, while they were at home, enjoyed all gospel-ordinances, but, being abroad, are not only deprived of them, but liable to the Inquisition, and other ways of persecution for their religion?

Before I answer the case, I shall a little open it, and lay down some preparatory propositions for the right understanding of it, and then direct our practice.

By *religion* we do not understand any outward way or form, any pomp and gaieties in worshipping God; but such a due sense of our dependence upon a good and gracious, almighty, holy God for our being and well-being, both in time and to eternity, as doth powerfully engage the soul heartily to love God, and sincerely to serve him, in obeying his good and holy commands made known to us.

By *the life of religion* we may understand, either, 1. The truth and reality of it in the soul, in opposition to a soul dead in sin; or, 2. The

vigour, activity, and liveliness of religion, in opposition to a dead, dull, languid principle; and both may be well included in the question; for as we are all concerned to endeavour, by all fit and lawful means, not only to have our bodies kept from rotting and putrefying by "the salt of a living soul,"* but to have them active and vigorous, fit for the employments of a natural life, and not stupified with lethargies and benumbing palsies; even so we ought to endeavour, not only that our souls may be quickened with a true principle of religion, but that we may have such a lively, vigorous, and influencing sense of divine goodness upon them, that our religion may not be a dull, languid, lethargic principle, but may render us fit and prompt for all the actions of a spiritual life. And now, this life of religion the case supposeth the person to have who needs advice; and then you will quickly perceive that there be two things in danger:—

1. The life of religion in a religious person.

2. The life of a religious person; and so the case doth resolve itself into these two queries:—

I. *What should believing Christians do to support the life and vigour of religion in their souls, when they want the ordinary means of public ordinances, and are endangered by the leavening society of wicked men?*

II. *How should they preserve their lives among persecuting enemies without hazarding the life of their religion?*

For the clearing of and directing in this case, I shall now premise some propositions fit to be taken notice of.

PROPOSITION 1. *It cannot be expected, that any rule should be given, according to scripture, whereby both the one and the other life may be certainly secured.*—For many times God's providence brings us into such circumstances, that, if we are resolved that, come what will, we will keep our religion, we must lose our lives; and if we are resolved to keep our lives, though with the hazard or shipwreck of our religion, we must then part with our religion, and perhaps our lives too.

PROP. II. *There can be no certain and infallible course propounded whereby the life of the body may be secured with the loss of religion.*—Though [the] devil and [the] world bid fair, and promise we shall live and do well if we will part with our religion; yet they are not able, if willing, to make good their promise, so long as there be so many thousand ways to death beside martyrdom; and this is the purport of that threatening expression: "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it," (Matt. xvi. 25,) not only that eternal life which is the only true life, but even this temporal life: as many relations tell us.

PROP. III. *The life of religion in the soul is that which, by God's blessing and our spiritual care and industry, may be infallibly secured in any place, among any persons, in any condition.*—I do not say, *the outward exercise of religion*, but that which is *the life and principle of religion in the soul*, may be preserved. Force and violence may deprive those that are religious of opportunities to meet together, and pour forth their common prayers and supplications to God, and publicly sing forth the praises of God, and hear the great truths of the gospel preached

* *Salillum animæ.*—PLAUTI *Trinummus*, actus ii. scen. iv. 91.

unto them; nay, they may be hindered from speaking with their mouths, either to God or for God; as many of the martyrs have been gagged. But all the force and violence in the world cannot take away that which is the principle and life of religion, (unless we ourselves betray and cast it from us,) nor can they hinder the prime and principal acts and exercises of religion. All the world cannot hinder you or me from having good thoughts of God; from sanctifying the Lord God in our hearts; from trusting in, hoping in, rejoicing in, the goodness and mercy of God through Jesus Christ; from making holy melody in our hearts, and such music as shall be heard beyond the spheres, though he that stands at our elbow knows not a word we speak: so that true religion, both in the principle and prime exercises of it, may be infallibly secured; insomuch that he who can rend the heart out of the body cannot tear religion out of the soul.

PROP. IV. *His soul cannot be quickened with the life of the religion of the Gospel, who is not in heart persuaded, that the securing of the life of religion in his soul is hugely more his concernment than the preserving of the life of the body.*—Yea, his religion is built on a sandy foundation, who hath not seriously considered, that, for aught he knows, his religion may cost him his life; and hath not brought his soul to an humble resolution to lay down his life, rather than let go his religion: thus much is clearly imported in that passage: “Which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost?” &c. (Luke xiv. 28, &c.)

PROP. V. *The society of good men, and enjoyment of gospel-ordinances, are of special use to preserve, quicken, and enliven the principle of religion in the soul.*—They are to religion in the soul, what food is to the natural life of the body; and therefore the ordinances in the church are compared to “breasts of consolation.” (Isai. lxvi. 11.) The great design of God in appointing gospel-ordinances is, that, by the help and assistance of those gifts and graces which he bestows upon his ministers, the souls of those who are estranged from him should be brought home to the owning and acknowledging of the truth; and that those who have returned to the Lord should be more and more affected with a sense of divine goodness, and their dependence on the Lord for all they have and hope for; and, indeed, if preaching, and reading, and praying, and every other ordinance, both in public and in private, do not aim at and intend this great end,—the begetting or actuating and stirring up the life of religion in our souls, then are they, what some would fain persuade us, vain, useless, troublesome things. If thy coming to church to hear a prayer, or a sermon, be not by thee designed, and do not in the event tend, to make thee better, to love God more, loath sin more, and value the world less, and resolve more heartily to obey the gospel, thou hadst as good have been in thy bed or shop as in the church; and if, in preaching and praying, we that are God’s mouth to you, and your mouth to God, have any other design than to stir up in your souls good thoughts of God, affectionate workings of heart towards a loving, tender-hearted Father, zealous and hungering desires to do the will of God, and express our love by obeying his commandments, I seriously profess I should think myself much better employed to be working in a cobbler’s stall, or raking in the

kennel, or filling a dung-cart, than preaching or praying in a pulpit. And let those who do not intend these great ends know, that, ere long, they will find they had better have been employed in the most debasing drudgery, than in the outward work of God with sinister and unworthy ends.

These things premised, the case resolves itself into these particular questions:—

I. *What should believing Christians do to support the life of religion in their souls, when they want the ordinary food of public gospel-ordinances?*

II. *What should such do to preserve their outward concernments among persecuting enemies, without hazarding their religion?*

QUESTION I.

In answer to the first question take these directions:—

1. *Let such humbly reflect upon their former slighting, despising, and abusing the means of grace which now they want.*—It is the usual method of God to teach us the worth of mercies, either temporal or spiritual, by the want of them, and to bring us to want those mercies which we abuse. If the child play with or throw about his meat, he may well think a wise and loving father will make him feel the want of it, and thereby know the worth of it; and certainly we have as much reason to fear the fulfilling of those threatenings which the ministers of the gospel have for many years sounded in our ears, for our abuse of the means of grace; and certainly, if God's providence should call the most of us into Spain, or some other Popish country, where we should have "a famine of hearing the word of the Lord," might we not sadly reflect upon our despising, yea, and loathing, the heavenly manna of God's word? I speak not of the profane, ungodly wretches, who scarce ever had any serious thoughts of eternity, nor ever soberly considered whether they were at all beholden unto God or no, that never knew how to value a Bible above a play-book, or the sacrament above a drunken meeting; whose religion is to scoff and mock at godliness and godly men, and who scarce ever knew any other end in coming to church but to mock or carp at the preacher; who may with trembling read their doom, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16. But I speak of the professors of religion; how have they, either by reason of new-fangled opinions, slighted and despised gospel-ordinances!—or else, by reason of fulness of spiritual food, have loathed and trampled upon the means of grace! to whom the Lord seems to speak, as to those, Ezek. xxxiv. 18, 19: "Seemeth it a small thing unto you to have eaten up the good pasture, but ye must tread down with your feet the residue of your pastures? and to have drunk of the deep waters, but ye must foul the residue with your feet? And as for my flock, they eat that which ye have trodden with your feet; and they drink that which ye have fouled with your feet?"—or else, having enjoyed them, and made use of them, have been little the better by them; have not lived and practised the sermons they have heard, and the prayers they have made! O let such be sure, in the first place, to give glory to God, when he deprives them of such means, by acknowledging his justice in taking away what hath been

so much abused, or at best so little improved; then let them, with broken and bleeding hearts, reflect upon those full banquets of spiritual dainties, the fragments of which in a time of want they would be glad of.

2. *Heartily resolve, if ever the Lord bring you again to enjoy gospel-ordinances, you will more value, prize, and improve them.*—And, indeed, that alone which can make our repentings and sad reflections upon former miscarriages not to be mockings of God, and cozening ourselves, must be a hearty resolution against what we profess to be sorry for; and, therefore, that our resolution in such a case may be the more fixed, it would be good to record it in our note-books, that so it may be a continual monitor on all occasions, minding us of our duty, and checking us, if afterwards we prove like the Israelites, who soon forgot the Lord. (Psalm cvi. 13.) And the truth is, a Christian's note-book is usually a more faithful register than his heart; and it is easier for the devil to blot a good resolution out of our minds than out of our books.

3. *Labour to know, and understand well, and often remember, wherein consists the life of true and real religion.*—There be so many things in the world that pretend to be religion, and less deserve that name than the picture of a man deserves the name of a man, that it is an easy mistake to nourish an enemy to religion instead of religion, unless we be serious and wary, and more apt to regard the characters which the scriptures give of real religion, than hasty to take up the forms and fancies of men instead of religion. I have read of a young French lady, who, observing the glorious pomp and splendour of a Popish procession, cried out, "How fine a religion is ours in comparison of the Huguenots!" a speech suiting her age and quality; but, indeed, if religion did consist in such things, the question I have in hand would fall to the ground; for there could then be no exercise of religion among those who would not admit of such pompous solemnities. Let us therefore be often remembering, that the religion of the gospel consists in "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;" (Rom. xiv. 17;) in "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts," and living "soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world," and so "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;" (Titus ii. 12, 13;) in "visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and keeping ourselves unspotted from the world." (James i. 27.) He that hath a precious jewel which he would secure, must be able to distinguish it well from a counterfeit stone; lest he neglect his jewel, and spend his care and pains upon a glittering glass foisted into the room of it.

4. *In all your actions, be often fixing your eye upon your great end.*—Be often asking yourselves, "What is the work and business for which God sent me into the world?" which lies in three words: (1.) Honour God. (2.) Save your souls. (3.) Do good to others. Be often minding yourselves, that you have a better trade to drive than for the corruptible riches of this world, even for the "pearl of great price," the eternal happiness of your souls. Religion is the way to heaven; and he that doth not often eye his journey's end, and consider whether the way he takes do lead unto his end, is never like to keep long in the right way. But now he that often with seriousness considers with himself, that the

God who made him expects to be honoured by him ; that the securing his soul's welfare is his grand concernment ; and that to save the soul of one sinner is a greater good than to save a country from drowning, or a city from burning ; and therefore on all occasions asks himself, "How may I manage such a business so as to honour God, and promote the good of mine own and other men's souls? How may I prosecute such an affair without prejudicing the grand design of my life?" this man is like to secure religion in his soul.

5. *Live up to the professed principles of your religion.*—And believe it to be a greater glory to God, honour to your religion, and security to your own souls, to live according to, than to argue and dispute for, your religion ; for most certain it is that self-love, worldly interest, pride, passion, &c., may urge men to argue eagerly for the Christian or Protestant religion ; whereas nothing but love to God, and care of our own souls, and charity to the souls of others, can make a man live according to the principles of that religion. And as it is with the principle of natural life, it is not made more lively, active, and vigorous by arguing and disputing wherein it doth consist, and what are the proper acts of it, but by putting it forth in the due acts and exercises of that life ; even so the principle of spiritual life in the soul gets no strength by zealous and hot disputing, *what and which is the true religion? and which be true and proper acts of religion?* but by humble practice of what we know to be religion : not but that it is both lawful and commendable to be able to understand and defend the grounds and principles of our religion, and all the holy exercises of it ; but I only caution against letting that sap run out in unfruitful suckers, which should nourish the fruit-bearing branches.

6. *Be the more careful to observe and close with the inward stirrings of God's Spirit in your hearts, moving you to prayer, meditation, &c.*—When you are in "a valley of vision," you will have many calls and motions from without to hear the word, and pray, and receive the sacrament ; but when you are abroad in "a land of darkness," God must not only be your best, but your only, Friend, by his Spirit, to jog and stir you up to holy duties ; and therefore it doth more than ordinarily concern us, at such a time, not to send away God's Spirit grieved with our backwardness to that which is our own concernment.

7. *Observe and keep a register or diary of God's mercies and your own sins.*—That you may be often minded what God hath been to you, and what you have been to him ; with how many thousand kindnesses he hath obliged you, and with how many thousand sins you have disobliged him. When we enjoy public ordinances, we may there be often minded both of God's goodness to us and our sinfulness against him ; and so may have our hearts stirred up to have very good thoughts of God, and very low thoughts of ourselves. But when we want public ordinances, we should labour to supply that want by a more strict observation and recording both [of] the one and the other, that, by reviewing our register, we may be enabled to affect our souls suitably, either to praise the Lord, or abase ourselves.

8. *Lay a charge upon yourselves to sleep and awake with the thoughts*

of God and eternity upon your souls.—And indeed though this is exceeding useful for all men, yet most of all for those who are deprived of ordinances. It is sure that the same truths which at first work upon the soul to the begetting [of] grace, are of force afterwards to quicken grace, and make it lively and vigorous in the soul. And certainly the belief of what God is in himself and to us, and the thoughts of eternity, have a great force to persuade careless sinners to sober and serious consideration, the necessary instrument by which grace and a spirit of true and real religion are begotten in the soul; and therefore when we want those public ordinances which might be often presenting these great truths to our souls, it will be of great use to charge ourselves more severely with the daily serious thoughts of them.

9. *Take heed (as for your life) of indulging any secret sin.*—For that will keep down the life of religion in the midst of all ordinances, and therefore much more in the want of them. A secret disease in the body which spends upon the stock of the radical moisture, will keep a man from being lively and vigorous, though he have plenty of very good nourishing food; much more will it endanger one in a famine: even so a secret sin lodged within, and indulged, will weaken and enervate the principle of religion in the soul amidst the fullest provision of gospel-ordinances, much more when there is a famine or scarcity of the bread of life. A tradesman that hath some secret vent, where his estate runs waste, may prove a beggar in the midst of daily incomes by a good trade; much more if he spends upon a dead stock: and so a man who spends the strength of his soul in some close and secret sin, may prove a spiritual beggar in the fullest trade of gospel-ordinances, and though he have daily incomes of convictions, informations, reproofs, counsels, solicitations, &c., from public ordinances, much more in the want of them; and therefore they who value the life of religion, or the life of their souls, must take heed of indulging secret sins.

10. *Be the more careful often to feel the pulse of thine own soul.*—We use to say, “Every man at a competent age is either a fool or a physician;” and though he be a fool indeed who, when he needs and may have wiser physicians, will trust to himself; yet when he cannot have others, a man should the more study himself, and the oftener try his own pulse: and truly he is but a babe in spiritual things that is not something of a physician to himself; and though we should not trust our own skill or experience, where we need and may have the help of others, yet when we are deprived of them, we should the more diligently converse with our own souls, and be the oftener trying how our pulse beats towards God, and heaven, and the things of another life.

11. *Be so much the more in private secret prayer, reading, and meditation.*—When we want the showers of public ordinances, we should the more diligently use the watering pot, and water our souls “with our foot,” as the phrase is concerning Egypt. (Deut. xi. 10.) If our lot should be cast where there be no public markets where corn might be bought, every one would plough and sow, reap and thrash, in his own grounds: even so, if we should live where there be no public gospel-ordinances, where the truths of the gospel are not publicly to be had, where we cannot partake of the

labours of the gospel-ministry, then it would concern us to be the more diligent in ploughing and sowing, in reaping and thrashing, by our own private endeavours; and I think it would be fit for us in such a condition to spend that time at least in private duties, which others spend in superstitious or idolatrous services: let not us think much to give God and our souls that time which others give to their own superstitious fancies.

12. *In the use of all private helps, act faith in God, as being able to supply the want of outward means by the gracious influence of his good and Holy Spirit.*—When there was no rain from heaven, God could cause a mist to arise and water the earth; (Gen. ii. 6;) even so, if the Lord should bring us where there be no showers of public ordinances, he can stir up in our souls those holy and heavenly meditations, which shall again drop down like a heavenly dew upon the face of our souls, and keep up a holy verdure and freshness upon the face of our souls. Egypt is said to have no rain;* but God makes it fruitful by the overflowing of its own river Nilus. And truly if God bring any true believer into a spiritual Egypt, where the rain of public-ordinances doth not fall, he can cause such a flow of holy and heavenly thoughts and meditations as shall make the soul very fruitful in a good and a holy life; and therefore we should oft, in such a condition, believably remember, that if we do our endeavour, by private prayer, meditation, reading, and such like, God is able, and will, in the want of public ordinances, preserve the life of religion in our souls, by private helps.

QUESTION II.

We proceed now to the question contained in the general case; namely,—

II. *What should believing Christians do to preserve their outward concernments among persecuting enemies, without hazarding their religion?*

Now, this question will resolve itself into two particular queries:—

(I.) *What should such do to secure themselves from suffering?*

(II.) *What should they do to encourage themselves against and support in suffering?*

(I.) The sum of what may be said to the first query, I suppose to be comprised in that counsel of our Lord Jesus, who was Wisdom itself, and Innocency itself: “Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.” (Matt. x. 16.) The serpent’s wisdom joined with the dove’s innocency is the true Christian’s best security: to each of which I shall speak something.

1. *Get spiritual prudence and wisdom to secure from suffering, where we have not a clear and sufficient call.*—The Heathens hinted wisdom as well as strength to be needful for a soldier, when they appointed the warlike goddess Pallas to be the patroness of wisdom. A soldier may and ought to guard himself, and, by winding and turning his body, avoid the enemies’ blow, so long as he doth not turn his back, forsake the field, or betray his trust. In like manner may a good soldier of Jesus Christ, by any lawful means, guard himself from suffering; and by any just compliance, or stepping aside, or giving back, avoid a blow or make a fair retreat,

* *Terra non indiga Jovis.* “A country which never requires rain.”—EDIT.

so long as he keeps the field, and doth not turn his back upon nor give up a good and a just cause for fear of suffering. Hence the apostle adviseth: "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without;" (Col. iv. 5;) that is, walk as those that have wisely fixed upon a good end, and do use the most proper and likely means to attain that end. Now, this general direction will branch itself forth into these particulars:—

(1.) *Do not rashly and unnecessarily provoke those that have power to do you a mischief.*—It is not wisdom to stir in a wasp's nest, nor by bloody colours to provoke a wild bull; and certainly our life, and the comforts and relations in this world, are such real and great blessings, that they are not to be sacrificed to a humour, nor cast away, but upon the most serious consideration and real necessity; and certainly, when our Lord Jesus directed his disciples, if persecuted in one city, to flee to another, he never intended they should throw themselves into the jaws of roaring lions, nor provoke bears and tigers to tear them in pieces, nor leave the quiet habitation of Sion to seek persecution, and court a martyrdom among Pagans and Infidels. The holy apostle Paul, who was as willing to die for the name of Christ as any, and was therefore by his love and zeal urged to go into the theatre at Ephesus; yet he took the prudent counsel and advice of his friends, not to venture himself, nor by his presence provoke the enraged multitude; and afterward he made use of his kinsman's help to secure his life from those who had bound themselves with an oath to kill him; and at last appeals to Cæsar, to avoid the mischief designed against him by the Jews. (Acts xxi. 13; xix. 31; xxiii. 16; xxv. 10.) This piece of spiritual prudence caused the primitive Christians to abstain from profaning the temples of the Heathen, and reviling their gods; and therefore they chose to discover to them the vanity of their idolatries from the writings and records of their own prophets, and with the greatest love and sweetness that could be. Yea, this was so evident in Paul himself, that the town clerk of Ephesus was able to be his and his fellow-Christians' compurgator in this matter: "Ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches," (or, as the original, *ιεροσυλους*, "sacrilegious persons,") "nor yet blasphemers of your goddess;" (Acts xix. 37;) and therefore, that which Josephus accounts one of Moses's laws, "that none should blaspheme the religion of another," though it be not a general duty, as appears by Elijah's mocking and scoffing at the God and religion of Baal's priests, (1 Kings xviii. 27,) yet it holds good here as a rule of prudence, to avoid needless provoking of those that are without. And in this case I take this to be a sure rule:—"Whatever act of ours hath rationally a greater likelihood to provoke, harden, and enrage the hearts of men, rather than to convince and convert, is a fruit of indiscretion, not of Christian prudence; a piece of folly, not a part of our duty." It was certainly a favour from God when he inclined the heart of Trajan to order his proconsul Plinius Secundus, desiring to know his pleasure in the case, that "when any were brought before him, and accused to be Christians, he should punish them according to law, but should not industriously search them out."* If

* *Conquirendi non sunt: si deferantur et arguantur, puniendi sunt.*—PLINIUS SECUNDUS, lib. x. epist. 98.

now any should have rushed into the judge's presence, and taken the devil's work out of his hand, (who is the "accuser of the brethren,") it would surely have been a sinful undervaluing the favour of God in that relaxation of their persecution. But now this advice must be bounded with a word of caution; for as we should take heed lest our zeal degenerate into ambition, and foolish vain-glory in suffering; so, on the other side, lest our prudence and Christian wisdom turn to sinful craft and policy, while, to avoid the stroke of persecution, we take up the devil's buckler of unlawful practices. The apostle Peter was not bound to go into the high priest's hall, and proclaim himself a disciple of Jesus; but he was obliged not to deny and forswear it when challenged with it: and so, though I am not always bound to proclaim my faith and religion, yet am I engaged never to disown it; and therefore we must take heed of that which Elihu charged Job with, the choosing iniquity rather than affliction; (Job xxxvi. 21;) and therefore, when fear or covetousness would urge us to sin, rather than suffer, let us remember, against our fears, that it is a more fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, than dying men; (Isai. li. 12;) and, against our earthly desires, let us remember, that if we gain the whole world, and lose our own souls, we shall be incomparable losers by the bargain. (Matt. xvi. 26.) On the other side, when ambition, vain-glory, or humour would urge us to unnecessary sufferings, let us remember, that God, who is Wisdom itself, "hath no pleasure in fools," (Eccles. v. 4,) nor delights in those sacrifices which are not presented to him by prudent consideration and sober resolution, but by the folly of a precipitate zeal; and however, where the heart is right and full of love, God may accept of the love, and pardon the weakness, yet he no way delights in the sufferings which men bring upon themselves unnecessarily, by [a] rash, imprudent carriage, whereby they betray their lives and liberties to the lusts and rage of men, and draw on their enemies to blood and cruelty, and upbraid the wisdom of those who are not so rash, as being less real to God and Christ, and make others have hard thoughts of that religion which cannot consist with prudence and wisdom.

(2.) *Be much in the exercise of those acts of true religion which are beautiful in the eyes of all, even the worst of men.*—The apostle Peter intimates the security of an evidently good and holy life: "And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" (1 Peter iii. 13.) The chief pieces of Christian religion are such as Papists, Turks, and Infidels must needs acknowledge to be good: "To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction;" to "wrong no man;" to "do to others whatever we would that others should do to us." Now, when we cannot without danger exercise some other, perhaps more questionable, parts of Christian religion, then it is good to be so much the more in the practice of these undoubted pieces of a Christian life; and zeal in these things will force those without to approve: whereas zeal in arguing for or in practising other things may cause them to hate and persecute us: zeal in arguing and disputing brings on evil words and evil actions; but zeal in the practice of unquestionable duties produceth good deeds in ourselves, and forceth good thoughts and good words, if not good deeds, from others. In a word, hot disputing and

cold living, or zeal in *smaller* and lukewarmness in *greater* matters, is the ruin of grace in ourselves, the confirming of sin in others, and the needless hazarding our outward concerns, and betraying them rashly to the violence of wicked and ungodly men.

(3.) *In your converse with those who are without, choose mostly to insist upon common and acknowledged principles, rather than controverted points.*—If I were to live among, and converse with, Papists, I would choose much rather to urge them to abstain from lying, drunkenness, malice, &c., and to have good thoughts of God, to have a continual sense of their dependence upon him, and therefore continually to recommend themselves unto him by holy prayer, to be meek and patient, and charitable; rather than to dispute how many sacraments there be, or how the bread and the wine are the body and blood of Christ: for good counsel and sober exhortations speak love to men's souls; whereas disputes and arguings are usually thought to proceed only from love to our own notions, and a desire to oppose others; and, indeed, if men did not place too much of their religion in opposing others, they might much more safely, and much more profitably, converse with those of different opinions, yea, of different religions.

(4.) *When you do touch upon controverted points, rather inquire and propound, than positively assert and violently oppose.*—Though I judge the mass of Rome, as by them used, to be a piece of as gross idolatry as the world can show, yet were I to converse among Papists, I would not fall foul upon them as the grossest idolaters; but, as more desiring truth should be honoured than they reproached, I would calmly and meekly propound my reasons as grounds of doubting, rather than clear demonstrations: for, sure it is, that a sudden and violent assault will cause an adversary to gather up his strength, as violently to oppose; whereas a calm propounding of reasons or doubts may work him to a serious consideration, which is the first step to the discovery of error and acknowledging of truth; for the one kindles a desire of knowing, the other a desire of opposing, yea, of persecuting.

(5.) *When you think yourselves bound to reprove the sins of others, let it be done with a due consideration of the circumstances of time, place, and persons.*—And, indeed, there is scarce any part of a Christian's converse with others that more requires prudence and wisdom than that of reproofing others; and great care is to be had that a reproof may at the least be well taken, if not hearkened to, and that it may do the reprover no hurt, if it do the reprovèd no good.

(6.) *On all occasions express a willingness to do for the best; to believe as others believe, and to do as others do, if you could see sufficient ground and reason for it.*—And, indeed, this may be a great help and security; for obstinacy is usually made one essential part of a heretic; and then he that is heartily willing to close with every revealed truth may be in an error, but cannot be an heretic; and therefore every expression of a mind not obstinately bent upon its taken-up notions, nor doting upon its own conceptions, but enriched with an ingenuous freedom to acknowledge its mistakes, and own truth when once clearly discovered, though formerly disowned, is like so much water upon the fire of rage kindled in the

hearts of persecuting enemies, to quench or abate it. For to the reason of any that will but consider, it cannot but appear most unreasonable to urge a person to believe what he cannot see any ground for, or to do what we would be willing to do if it were not sin, that is, a provoking [of] God, and hazarding his own eternal welfare.

(7.) *Be sure to use no means to secure from persecution or procure the enjoyment of public ordinances, but such as are well-pleasing to a good and a holy God.*—It is not long since it was the peculiar honour of the popish faction to depose or murder kings, blow up parliaments, subvert states and kingdoms, to procure their liberty, or secure themselves from suffering; and if any others have ventured upon such practices, I hope God hath taught them by his providence, what they would not learn from his word, that affliction is rather to be chosen than sin, and that it is better to wait upon Him in the way of his judgments, (that is, in a way of duty,) than to out-run God, and think to secure ourselves by sinful and unjustifiable courses. Let those, therefore, who profess to believe that their God is a God hearing prayer, and that bottles up the tears of his people, and is able to do what he pleaseth,—let them account prayers and tears their best arms, seeing they call-in that God whose power extends as far as his will.

(8.) *Arm yourselves with a severe patience and a steady resolution to bear lesser affronts and injuries.*—Those Christians were in such a condition as we are now speaking of, whom the apostle minds that they had “need of patience.” (Heb. x. 36.) Let it be our wisdom, therefore, to get a stock of that which will be so needful for us. Patience is always a part of our duty; but in this case it is also an instance of our prudence; for he is a fool that will hazard the beating out of his brains, rather than bear a fillip.

(9.) *Be much in prayer to that God who alone can secure from suffering, fit for suffering, strengthen under [it], and infinitely reward after we have suffered.*

2. *Let the serpent's wisdom be seconded with the dove's harmlessness and innocency.*—Walk so honestly and inoffensively, that wicked men may be put hard to it to find an occasion to quarrel or wrong you. This was remarkable in Daniel, as you may see, Dan. vi. 4. This was the apostle's direction: “Walk honestly toward them that are without;” (1 Thes. iv. 12;) and it was according to his practice: “And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.” (Acts xxiv. 16.) Now, this Christian innocency or simplicity ought to be like a thread, to run through the whole course of our converse with others: we should neither injure the person, good name, estate, friend, nor any thing which another may call his: if the lamb among wolves and foxes begin to butt and contend, no wonder if these soon bite and devour. We should be so honest and plain-hearted in our promises, contracts, covenants, and dealings with others, that they may reverence our religion as teaching us to do the best things, and suffer the worst; and not hate our religion, as being only a design to make us the better able to deceive and injure others. It would be no small part of our security, if our carriage towards others might speak for us, that which the poet makes Achilles speak concerning himself and his

tutor Chiron: "Jesus Christ is my teacher; and he hath learned me to use simplicity and honesty in all my manners." But now, if neither of these two will secure us from suffering, but God's providence doth call us to a public owning of Him, and the religion of the gospel, we must then join the lion's courage to the wisdom of the serpent and the innocency of the dove, that we may be emboldened to look the greatest danger in the face, rather than turn our back upon God and Christ, and the religion of the gospel. And this brings me to the second branch of the latter part of the case:—

(II.) *How should believers encourage themselves against sufferings?*

In answer to which take these brief directions:—

1. *Be often remembering how infinitely more worth the soul is than the body.*—Be often weighing in the scales of sober and serious consideration a *precious* "soul" against a *vile* body;" (Matt. xvi. 26; Phil. iii. 21;) and then mind thyself, that the worst which persecuting enemies can do is to destroy a corruptible body; but the worst which God can do is to destroy thine immortal soul. Christ arms his disciples against fear of suffering by this consideration: "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matt. x. 28.)

2. *Think, how inconsiderable time is, compared with eternity.*—Spend your thoughts upon the difference, vast and inconceivable, between those two. The apostle tells us, that "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." (Rom. viii. 18.) The apostle compares himself to one that hath been casting-up an account, where on one side he meets with nothing but ciphers, or small petty sums, but on the other side finds thousands and millions; and then cries out, "Alas! the one is not to be compared with the other." Thus the apostle finds "light and momentary afflictions" on the one side, and "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" on the other side; as we find him expressing himself, 2 Cor. iv. 17.

3. *Remember, that the welfare of the body doth depend upon the welfare of the soul.*—Not; indeed, in this world; for here *his* body may be well, and in good plight, fat and flourishing, well-fed and clothed, *whose* soul is poor and naked, sick and wounded, in a sad and deplorable condition; and, on the other side, a poor, beggarly, sick Lazarus may have a soul fed with royal and heavenly dainties, and clothed with better robes than purple and ermine. But then the eternal welfare of the body depends upon the eternal welfare of the soul; it is bound up in the life and welfare of the soul, as Jacob's life is said to be bound up in Benjamin's; (Gen. xlv. 30;) and therefore you cannot secure the welfare of the outward man by betraying and casting away that which is the life and welfare of the inward man.

4. *Remember, that you can suffer nothing in this world, but Jesus Christ hath suffered the same, or worse.*—The Lord Jesus arms his disciples against sufferings by this consideration; (John xv. 20;) and the apostle Paul, having experienced it himself, adviseth the believing Hebrews to it: "Looking unto Jesus," &c. (Heb. xii. 1—3.) Now this consideration will suggest to us,

(1.) *That the worst sufferings are no dishonour to us, seeing Christ Jesus, the King of kings, hath borne them.*

(2.) *That the greatest sufferings do not speak us the greatest sinners.*—Christ's sufferings assure us that the purest and whitest innocency may be dyed red in its own blood.

(3.) *That the greatest sufferings make us never the less amiable in the eyes of God.*—For then Christ Jesus, the only-begotten Son of God, in whom he was always well pleased, would not have suffered.

(4.) *We can suffer nothing but what our God, our Friend, our Father, knows we suffer, and knows that a suffering condition is the best for us.*—When poor Christians are kept by the bloody Inquisition in dark holes and caves from the eyes of all the world, they cannot be kept from the eye of God. "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is." (Rev. ii. 13.) This was the encouragement which Christ gave his persecuted church of Pergamos: thy condition is known to that God whose heart is as tender as his eye [is] piercing, and whose arm can reach as far as his eye, and whose wisdom knows how to direct the sufferings of every believer for his own, his church's, and that believer's real good.

(5.) *Be often comparing God and creatures together; that great God who suffers in and with his suffering people, and those little, small things called devils and men, that bring sufferings upon them.*—Make thy soul to know and understand the difference between the little, trifling bubble-promises of the world, and the great, precious, solid, and massy promises of God; and let faith tell thee, that the threatenings of a raging devil, a storming Nebuchadnezzar, or a furious multitude, are but the noise of a pot-gun, if compared with the thunder of God's dreadful threatenings. Remember what God saith to his afflicted church: "Who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass; and forgettest the Lord thy Maker?" &c. (Isai. li. 12, 13.) In a word, think thus with thyself: "Man cannot do all that he seems able to do, nor all that he resolves and boasts that he will do; but God can do all that he hath said he will do, and he will do for his suffering servants more than they can hope or think." Let us heartily believe that God can easily recompense us for whatever we may lose for him; but all the creatures in the world are not able to make amends for that which apostasy from God will deprive us of. O, sirs! could we but heartily believe this, what a sorry temptation would persecution be! If this faith were strong, persecution would be exceeding weak; if faith could see men and devils able to do nothing, and God able to do all things, then persecution would be able to do nothing; and such a faith would be able to do and to suffer all things.

And thus I have spoken to both the parts of this practical case of conscience; and shall now close up all with a word of exhortation,—

That if it be such a real ground of trouble, &c., then let us make it our earnest prayer to God, that our land may still be a "Goshen," and a "valley of vision," and not an "Egypt," or the "valley of the shadow of death;" that we may still enjoy the ordinances of the gospel, and the company and society of good men; that our lot may never fall among Ezekiel's

scorpions, or pricking briars, and grieving thorns. (Ezek. ii. 6 ; xxviii. 24.) Let us heartily pray for that blessedness mentioned Psalm lxxv. 4 : " That the Lord may choose us, and cause us to approach unto him, that we may dwell in his courts, and be satisfied with the goodness of his house."

SERMON XXVII.

BY THE REV. ANDREW BROMHALL.

HOW IS HYPOCRISY DISCOVERABLE AND CURABLE ?

First of all, beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.
—Luke xii. 1.

WHEN our Lord and Saviour had finished his heavenly, soul-searching sermon in the chapter foregoing, he came so close in the application to the scribes and Pharisees, a proud, hypocritical people, that they, not able to endure their pride and hypocrisy should be so soundly convinced and openly detected, combined and contrived, by urging, and watching, and catching words, to accuse him, and stop his mouth at least, if not his breath. (Luke xi. 53, 54.) These contrivances and practices of theirs were not unknown to Him that knew all things ; (John xxi. 17 ;) and what effect it wrought in Christ, you find in this verse of the text : he preacheth the same things, and in the same manner and sharpness of style at the next opportunity.

In the mean time, εν οϊς, saith the Greek : in those, or in which times that they were thus plotting and contriving, Christ is boldly preaching the same doctrine that they were persecuting, was as bold for the truth as they were politic against it.

And in those very days, and in the midst of these contrivements against his preaching, the people as much loved the doctrine that the Pharisees persecuted : an innumerable multitude were gathered together to see and to hear him. A myriad (too many thousands to be easily numbered !) flocked and thronged so to him, that they even " trod one upon another ; " and then he began to say to his disciples, (they were nearest to him, but so as the people heard it,) and he taught them ; and that was his intent, as you may see, Luke xii. 40, 42.

First of all, beware of.—For the adverb is not to be joined to the verb " taught," but to the word " beware," that is, *πρωτον*, " first of all " is not used distributively, but eminently ; as much as to say, " chiefly, especially, beware," &c. So it is used by the apostle : " First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all," (that is, chiefly,) " that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world." (Rom. i. 8.)

Beware and avoid this *leaven* of hypocrisy wherewith the Pharisees' doctrine and conversation is so leavened ; take heed, beware especially, chiefly, of *hypocrisy*.

In the text is represented a precious sermon in its preaching, with the circumstances of it.

Wherein is observable,

1. *The time*.—It was in that juncture of time when they had counseled and determined, but had not yet executed their counsels.

2. *The Preacher*.—Christ himself, the great Prophet of the church, in the exercise of his prophetic office.

3. *The auditors*.—His disciples and innumerable multitude of people.

4. *His first doctrine* is, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees.” And this doctrine is confirmed by reason, and improved by inference. (Luke xii. 2, 3.)

Many useful lessons might be commended from the other particulars; but my meditations are confined to the last, the doctrine, the caution, “Beware of the leaven,” &c.; and [I shall] only spend as much time in opening the text and doctrine, as will let me in to give direction, *how to discern, and how to be delivered from, this dangerous leaven of hypocrisy*; which is according to your desires unto me for your instruction in this particular.

DOCTRINE.

The words naturally yield you this doctrine:—

Hypocrisy is a dangerous leaven, which ministers and people are chiefly and especially to beware of, and acquit themselves from.

Hence you have a chapter of woes against it. (Matt. xxiii.)

And it is represented as that which renders odious to the Lord, and defiles, his choicest ordinances, and our best duties, if it cleave to them; (Isai. i. 11, 12; lvi. 3;) and puts God to sad complaints and exprobrations of such a people: “O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud;” (Hosea vi. 4;) all show, no truth, no showers; and [it] hath been the ruin of many forward and glorious professors, as Balaam, Jehu, Saul, and many other persons of great parts and many great performances, and, one would conceive, of great hopes too; but they, and their works, and their hopes, are all perished. “The hypocrite’s hope shall perish.” (Job viii. 13.)

The explication of this doctrine would lie in the speaking to these particulars:—

I. What hypocrisy is.

II. How is it resembled by “leaven?”

III. Why called “the leaven of the Pharisees?”

IV. Wherein is it so dangerous?

I. *What hypocrisy is*.—Much of the nature of a thing is many times discovered in its name; the name is a brief description.

The word “hypocrite” properly signifies *an actor or stage-player, a personator of other men in their speech, habit, and action*. The Hebrew word signifieth both “a wicked man” and “a deceiver.” And it is observed, that those whom David, the devoutest man, called “wicked,” Solomon, the wisest man, calls “fools,” and Job, the most upright man, calls “hypocrites:” all is but one and the same thing under divers names.

Hypocrisy, then, is but a feigning [of] virtue and piety [which] it

seems to put on, and vice and impiety [which] it conceals and would seem to put off. It is indeed vice in a vizard; the face is vice, but virtue is the vizard. The form and nature of it is imitation: the ends are vain-glory, to be seen of men, or some gain or carnal respects.

There is a gross hypocrisy whereby men pretend to the good [which] they know they have not; and there is a formal close hypocrisy, whereby men deceive others and themselves too; are hypocrites and do not know it. In this case it is probable the Pharisee was, and those signified by "the five foolish virgins," (Luke xviii. 11; Matt. xxv. 2,) and all formal Christians that are not regenerated by the Spirit, nor put into Christ by faith.

This is a subtle evil, a secret poison, a close contagion; and here it is infinite mercy and grace that we do not all split and perish: and if we can escape this, if we are indeed sincere, we are out of the greatest danger of all, the leaven of hypocrisy. To direct you to find out and to purge out this, shall be my especial endeavour at this time.

II. *How is hypocrisy resembled by leaven?*—Briefly thus:—

1. *Leaven is hardly discerned from good dough by the sight.*—And as hardly is hypocrisy distinguished from piety: "Ye outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." (Matt. xxiii. 28.)

2. *Leaven is very spreading.*—"A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump:" (1 Cor. v. 6:) and so it is a great deal of mischief [which] hypocrisy doeth: it spreads over all the man, and all his duties, parts, performances; leavens all, as we may observe, Isai. i. 12—15; lxvi. 3.

3. *Leaven is of a sour taste and ungrateful smell.*—So is hypocrisy to God and man: "I will spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts." (Mal. ii. 3.) All were leavened with hypocrisy, and were accounted and savoured but as dung in the nostrils of the Lord. How odious and loathsome was that service of Ananias and Sapphira, both to the Holy Ghost and to the church, because it was leavened with hypocrisy. (Acts v. 1—10.)

4. *Leaven is of a swelling nature.*—It extends and puffs up the dough: and so doth hypocrisy; it is all for the "praise of men." The scribes and Pharisees were all for pre-eminence, chief places, chief seats, chief appellations, to be called "Rabbi, Rabbi;" (Matt. xxiii. 6, 7;) and if others will not admire and overvalue them, they will admire and advance themselves: "I am not as this publican." (Luke xviii. 11.) "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." (Luke xvi. 14, 15.) They highly esteemed of themselves, they justified themselves: they derided Christ for not having the same thoughts of them. Pride and vain-glory is the inseparable companion, if not the mother, of hypocrisy.

III. *Why is it called "the leaven of the Pharisees?"*—Because they were leavened with it to purpose; they were exact and super-eminent in this devilish art of personating and counterfeiting to the life. The devil, indeed, is the arch-hypocrite of the world, "transforming himself into an angel of light:" his first-born in this generation are the scribes and

Pharisees ; his next-born, the Jesuits, so like their predecessors the Pharisees, that a man may believe that Christ looked so far as to them in Matt. xxiii., and struck at them through the Pharisees' sides ; that they were indeed the types, but the pope, cardinals, prelates, and Jesuits, the antitype. Their doctrines are alike leavened : they both set up traditions, superstitious customs and forms, against and above the word of God, when once they come in competition : they both would ordinarily suspend and dispense with God's commands, but most rigorously impose their own, and that under severe penalties, and both upon the account of extraordinary holiness, and high actings of devotion. And so for their conversation, there was gross hypocrisy in all to be seen : [they] prayed in corners of the streets, gave alms openly, disfigured themselves, that they might appear to fast. (Matt. vi. 4—6.) So the Jesuits, if we may believe some of themselves being converted, and many of the Seculars, that know them well enough, affect the name, but hate the reality, of true piety and devotion. They would be accounted as Henry IV. of France said of them, "Timothies at home in the college, Chrysostoms in the pulpit, and Augustines in disputation : " this they would be accounted ; though it be *nomen inane et crimen immane*,* they would have the name though not the thing ; for that is the nature of " the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy."

IV. *Wherein is this leaven of hypocrisy so dangerous, that ministers and people ought firstly, chiefly, to beware of it?*—A very little and briefly of that :—

There is great danger of it, and great danger by it.

1. *There is great danger of it :*

(1.) *For we have the ground of the matter in ourselves.*—"Hearts deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked ; who can know thy wickedness ? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins," &c. (Jer. xvii. 9, 10.) As if none beside the Lord knew the bottomless depths and deceits of the heart ! In the heart are those lusts and affections, that feed and foment all the hypocrisy in the world,—pride, vain-glory, concupiscence, carnal wisdom : were it not for these, there would not be an hypocrite living.

(2.) *The devil watcheth night and day to set fire to this tow.*—He is fitted to the purpose, and filled with raging desire to comply with a filthy heart, and to engender this spurious offspring of hypocrisy. He hath in readiness his wiles and his depths, his baits and his snares ; and for a false heart hath false ways, false doctrines, false faiths, false seasons, false ends and aims. *Vix caret effectu* : when two such be agreed to such a purpose, "hardly will they be frustrated."

(3.) *And that we may not be secure, there are before our eyes and in our view dreadful examples.*—Balaam, a great prophet ; Judas, an apostle familiar with Christ ; Saul, Jehu, Herod, and Agrippa, famous kings ; five virgins, conspicuous and most confident ; Ananias and Sapphira, eminent converts ; Alexander and Demas, confessors, and in some degree martyrs : it may grieve and make a tender heart tremble, to think what they became, and what is become of them ! to teach him that standeth to

* "An empty name, but an egregious crime."—EDIT.

take heed lest he fall, and all of us, to our dying day, to "beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy."

2. *And there is great danger by it :*

(1.) *The loss of all that is done.*—Christ will say, as to that young man, "Yet lackest thou one thing," (Luke xviii. 22,) sincerity: wouldest thou have heaven too? why then didst thou all things for the "praise of men? Thou hast thy reward," and art overpaid. "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matt. vii. 23.)

(2.) *Frustrating of hopes, great hopes, hopes of glory and heaven, and escaping eternal misery.*—All these hopes must "perish" to the "hypocrite;" (Job viii. 13;) perish like a ship at the very mouth of the haven; perish while they are crying, "Lord, Lord;" perish into everlasting horror, and eternal despair.

(3.) *Full detection and manifesting of them in the sight and face of all the world.*—"For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known." (Luke xii. 2.) The vizard will be then taken off, which was feigned sanctity; and the face will appear, which was indeed double iniquity; and for going about to cozen God, and the world, and his own soul, the miserable hypocrite will be left to eternal, intolerable confusion; to be detested and derided by God, angels, and saints; to be insulted on by the devils and damned to all eternity.

(4.) *And in hell the hypocrite "shall be beaten with many stripes."*—For he "knew his Master's will," and pretended he was doing of it, and yet "did it not." (Luke xii. 47.) Shall he that judged others to hell lie lower in hell, and have more of hell, than those condemned by him? Shall it be worse with a proud Pharisee than with a publican; nay, a damned publican? Is hell the portion of hypocrites? (Matt. xxiv. 51.) Are they the freeholders, and all others but tenants and inmates with them? Or else, if there be a worse place in hell, must it be theirs? It must be so; for the nearer heaven, the more of hell; and that will be the hell of hell to all eternity. Surely, then, hypocrisy is a dangerous thing; there is exceeding danger of, and danger by, this "leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy."

USE.

I shall commend but one use to be made of this doctrine at this time, and it is the "beware" in the text: to stir and provoke you to put forth your utmost care, diligence, and circumspection, to "beware of this leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy."

Here I could show you how much you are concerned to beware of the Pharisees' leaven in doctrinals; to beware of doctrines advancing any thing in man or of man; doctrines that are derived from any other fountain than the pure word of God, as traditions, enthusiasms, impulses, beside or against the word; doctrines of will-worship, superstition, voluntary humility, &c.; doctrines ascribing too much to, and laying too much stress on, externals in worship not instituted by Christ; doctrines of rigid imposition of things indifferent; doctrines that have a tendency to blind obedience and implicit faith. Whoever reads the New Testament may soon discern, such were their doctrines; and this is the leaven of

the Pharisees in doctrinals ; and truly you had need to take care of this ; for doctrines and principles have no small influence on conversation and practice.

But I shall choose rather to prosecute this use, by endeavouring to give an answer and resolution to two questions, which together constitute a great and weighty case of conscience.

QUESTION. How may we discover and find out this subtle, close evil of hypocrisy, and convince our own and others' souls that we are guilty of it, and under the danger of it ?

I must here first premise some general cautions, and then produce some particular evidences and discoveries of it. I shall not meddle at all with gross hypocrisy, which is usually known both to the hypocrite himself, and frequently apparent to others too. "Some men's sins are open before-hand, going before to judgment ; and some men they follow after." (1 Tim. v. 24.) But I shall labour to trace out and unkennel that latent, close, and deep hypocrisy, formally self-deceiving hypocrisy, whereby the hypocrite may cozen others and himself too.

CAUTIONS.

I. Here, first, *I must premise these cautions and negations :—*

CAUTION I. *That hic labor, hoc opus, "my task is very hard, my work difficult," nice, and curious :—*That it is very difficult to find out the hypocrisy of one's own heart, much more to convince others of the hypocrisy in theirs ; for the heart of man "is deceitful above all things." (Jer. xvii. 9.) And hence the most serious, inquisitive, jealous, and heart-searching Christians have used to call God in to their help in this work : "Search me, O God, and know my heart : try me, and know my thoughts," &c. Search my heart and try my reins : mine whether there be any way of wickedness in me. (Psalm cxxxix. 23, 24.)

CAUTION II. *That as difficult as it is, yet it is possible and feasible.*—For we are not commanded impossibilities, when we are required to "search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord ;" (Lam. iii. 40 ;) to examine our hearts, and to "prove ourselves, whether we be in the faith ;" (2 Cor. xiii. 5 ;) whether "our own hearts condemn us not." (1 John iii. 20.) David, Hezekiah, Job, and Paul,—these all examined their own hearts, and attained thereby to a knowledge and sense of their own sincerity. (2 Cor. i. 12.) And we are not directed to absurdities, when we are cautioned to "beware of men," to take heed of those "that come in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves." And we are not herein bid to make brick without straw ; for "the spirit of a man which is in him knoweth the things of a man ;" (1 Cor. ii. 11 ;) and "as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." (Prov. xxvii. 19.) Nay, we have a far greater help, namely, the Spirit of God, which "searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." (1 Cor. ii. 10.) One of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit in the primitive church, and very necessary for those times, in which Satan was very busy, and the canon of scripture not completed, was the gift of "discerning of spirits." (1 Cor. xii. 10.) Some think that, by virtue of this gift, Peter discerned Ananias and Sapphira's hypocrisy ; (Acts v. 3, 9 ;)

and afterwards Simon Magus's too, which Philip could not do, as not having that gift, or such a measure of it. But indeed there was no need of any extraordinary gift to discern Simon Magus by: to any man that had reason and but common illumination, Simon Magus's hypocrisy might easily and clearly appear in that motion of his, "Sell me this gift." Who but a hypocrite could have thought it had been to be sold? And who but a hypocrite would have offered money for it? It was easy to conclude him "in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." (Acts viii. 9—24.)

And the ministers of the gospel have authority, calling, and commission, and therefore gifts, to detect and bewray the guiles and wiles, the depths, and deceits, and snares of Satan, much more the workings and turnings of men's deceitful hearts. And the word of God, which is the main and principal weapon of their warfare, "is quick, and powerful, a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart;" (Heb. iv. 12;) and it "casts down imaginations, and brings into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." (2 Cor. x. 5.) Therefore, while we have this word and Spirit, it is possible, though difficult, to discover the hypocrisy of our own spirits, and to direct others to find out theirs.

CAUTION III. *It is not a poor soul's fearing and doubting his hypocrisy, accusing and charging himself with it, crying out of himself as a wretched man by reason of it, that concludes and determines he is such.*—See David, in Psalm li. 10—12, charging himself so; and the church accusing herself of "erring from God's ways, and having their hearts hardened from his fear;" (Isai. lxiii. 17;) and yet their own expressions in the verses before, (verses 15, 16,) manifest the frame of their spirits to be exceeding tender and humble. Holy Mr. Bradford would many times subscribe himself in his letters, "John the hypocrite," and "a very painted sepulchre." Agur, one of the wisest men living, condemns himself for being "more brutish than any man, and not having the understanding of a man." (Prov. xxx. 2.) And David, one of the holiest and devoutest men living, upon an ordinary temptation, namely, the prosperity of the wicked, was very apt to charge the ways of God with unprofitableness: "Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency;" but afterward, seeing his error, he chargeth it so upon himself, that he upbraids and condemns himself for "foolish and ignorant," and a very "beast before God." (Psalm lxxiii. 13, 22.) It is usual with the best men to have the worst thoughts of themselves:

1. Partly, because as God will give most grace to the humble; so there is great need of giving more humility to those that have most grace.

2. Partly, because where there is true grace, there is an insatiable desire of more.—The children of God have never enough of communion with God, nor of conformity to him. They seldom look back and say, "This thou hast; but still press forward to this [which] thou hast not; and this thou mayest, and this thou must, have." (Phil. iii. 12, 13.)

3. And partly, because as there is much difference between faith in its direct and its reflected act, between knowing God and knowing that we know him, between believing and knowing that we believe; so there is

• Fox's "Acts and Monuments."

between having sincerity and finding a feeling of it constantly, between not being hypocrites and a constant confidence of it ; which would amount to no less than full assurance.—This is not granted to all, and seldom to any at all times, that so there may be a season for the exercise of other graces, humility, fear and trembling, fear of solicitude, and diligence in making our calling and election sure. (Phil. ii. 12 ; 2 Peter i. 10.) And this is to be remembered and observed, namely, that God likes us never the worse that Satan is so much our enemy ; but much the better, that by humility, lowliness of mind, and self-denial, we seem to be our own enemies.

CAUTION IV. *Nor are they foul failings, nor dangerous fallings into gross sins, (if a man die not impenitently in them,) that do constitute a hypocrite.*—Indeed, reigning sin doth. The falls of God's people may be *horrendæ tempestates et flenda naufragia*.* The grievous falls of God's people do evidence there is hypocrisy in them ; but not that they are hypocrites. David was guilty of adultery and murder, and puffed up with exceeding pride and vain-glory, in the multitude of his subjects, and strength of his kingdom ; but David's repenting and rising again cleared him from being a hypocrite, so that the Spirit of God testifies from his own mouth, that "he was upright, and kept himself from his iniquity ;" (Psalm xviii. 23 ;) that is, from the reign and continuance of it ; and after his fall he was called "a man after God's own heart : " "Thou hast not been as my servant David, who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, to do that only which was right in mine eyes." (1 Kings xiv. 8.) The Lord overlooked his adultery and murder ; for, indeed, he had "put away" his sin, (or made it "pass over," as it is in the original,) that is, to Christ. Hezekiah's "heart was lifted up," and he "rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him ;" but Hezekiah was humbled, and the wrath of God came not upon him all his days : he was not a hypocrite ; no, "he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that David his father had done." (2 Chron. xxxii. 25, 26 ; xxix. 2.) So Peter denied and forswore his Master, after many warnings and many promises to the contrary ; † yet he repented and "wept bitterly : " his fall showed him to be a weak, frail man, but proved him not a hypocrite. Job confessed himself a sinner, and that many were his iniquities and transgressions ; but Job would never confess himself a hypocrite ; no, he would keep his integrity till he died ; (Job xiii. 23 ; xxvii. 5, 6 ;) for it is not the falling into sin, or the being guilty of it, but "regarding iniquity in the heart," (Psalm lxi. 18,) that denominates "a hypocrite ;" otherwise, all men were hypocrites ; for certainly all men are sinners, all shut up under sin. (Rom. iii. 19, 23.)

CAUTION V. *Nor is it backsliding into the same sins that makes a man a hypocrite.*—David had got into a way of lying to save his life ; namely, in the second verse [of] 1 Sam xxi. he told one lie, in the end of the verse another, and in the eighth verse another. He prays that God

* "Dreadful tempests and deplorable shipwrecks."—EDIT.

† The fourth edition gives this variation of the clause : "Though he had many warnings, and made many promises to the contrary."—EDIT.

would take from him "the way of lying." [Psalm cxix. 29.] And the promise of mercy and pardon is not only to sins, but backslidings: "I will heal their backslidings." (Hosea xiv. 4.) And such are invited to return to God: "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the Lord our God." (Jer. iii. 22.) Indeed, to be "bent to backsliding" is a dangerous sign of prevailing hypocrisy; and yet some in this case shall turn and "walk after the Lord." (Hosea xi. 2, 8—10.) We do not read of the people of God, that they did revolt and backslide into the same gross sins after repentance; nor David into adultery, nor Peter to faint-heartedness, nor Paul to persecution. But yet this may be so; and provision is made, in that case, by the promise of healing backslidings. Though it cost them dear to recover their peace, after revolting into gross sins, after pardon and peace spoken, and it will lie upon their consciences as an heavy aggravation of their sin and folly; (Psalm lxxxv. 8;) but yet it doth not conclude that all was done in hypocrisy before, and that they were but mere hypocrites; no more than Solomon's falling and idolatry, (1 Kings xi. 9,) which he repented of, (witness the book of Ecclesiastes,) doth conclude him a hypocrite when he built the temple, and was the Jedidiah, "the beloved of the Lord."

CAUTION VI. *Nor is it every degree of tendency to hypocrisy that denominates a man a hypocrite, and brings him under the condemnation to hate his portion with hypocrites.*—For there is the seed of this, as well as of all other sins, in the heart; and the holy prophet Jeremy cries out, "The heart is deceitful," &c. (Jer. xvii. 9.) He meant his own heart, as well as others; and Solomon, the wisest man, gives this advice: "Keep thy heart." Proverbs were experiments, his own; and David the devoutest saith, "All men are liars," all deceitful; and there are the *remains* of hypocrisy in the best, the *reign* of it is only in hypocrites. Hypocrisy may have its *presence*, but not *predominance*, in the sincerest children of God. Thus you see what doth not conclude a hypocrite, though it come very near.

II. *Now I shall show what cannot clear and acquit a man from a hypocrite, though it proceed very fairly, and very far, which makes it so difficult to discover this "leaven of the Pharisees, hypocrisy."*

1. *It doth not acquit and discharge a man from this charge of hypocrisy, that they hear the word with some delight:*—that they believe with some faith; so did the stony ground. (Matt. xiii. 20:)—that they take some pains for it; so did they, John vi. :—that they perform some duties in obedience to it; so did Herod: (Mark vi. 20:)—that they are moral and without blame in some things outwardly; so was the young man: (Matt. xix. 20:)—that they are zealous against some public corruptions; so was Jehu:—that they have illumination and excellent knowledge, by a common work of the Spirit; so have the devils, Judas, and those apostates, Heb. vi. 4—6:—that they had some sweet tastes and relishes from the word embraced; so had they in Heb. vi. 4, 5:—and no doubt Ananias and Sapphira had. Nor doth this acquit them, and set them out of danger,—that they have some serious cares and fears about their salvation: so had Felix, so had "the sinners in Zion;" they were "afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites." They were

afraid of dwelling with "devouring fire," and "everlasting burnings." (Isai. xxxiii. 14.) Judas and Spira had fears to purpose: and the spirit of bondage is but a common work of the Spirit, if it rest there. (Rom. viii. 15.) In Pharaoh there was fear, but no sincerity; in the devils, fear, but no penitency. Nor is it some reluctancy against sin by an awakened conscience; Herod had so, and Pilate had so, and Balaam so. Nor many desires of good; Balaam desired to "die the death of the righteous;" the five virgins desired oil; there be the desires of the slothful, that even kill them; desires like the turning of a door upon hinges, never the farther off; (Prov. xxvi. 14;) desires of the wavering man, the "double-minded man," (James i. 6, 8,) when a man hath some mind to grace, but more to lust: as Augustine that prayed for grace and chastity, but his heart secretly prayed the while, "Not yet, Lord!" * There may be pouring out of prayers, as the Ninevites; they "cried mightily;" (Jonah iii. 8;) "they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them;" (Isai. xxvi. 16;) and yet they brought forth but wind: "When he slew them, then they sought him: and they returned and inquired early after God. Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues," &c. (Psalm lxxviii. 34, 36.) Nor is it some hopes. (Matt. xxv.; Job viii. 13; Luke xviii.) If all this cannot save a man from the guilt of hypocrisy, and portion of hypocrites, what shall? If these come short of heaven, where shall they appear that come far short of them? O then, who can be saved? "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." (Matt. vii. 14.) Salvation-work is to be wrought out "with fear and trembling." (Phil. ii. 12.) Beware, then, of "the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy."

2. *How, then, may we know how it is with our souls?*—Whether we are in the number of hypocrites, and tending to their portion? whether this deluding, destroying, predominating, damning leaven of hypocrisy be in us?

SIGN I. *A loving of the world, and the things of the world.*—"The lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life;" (1 John ii. 15, 16;) this is a fearful evidence of hypocrisy; for it is inconsistent with, and destructive of, the love of God; and the loving God above all things is the very essence, the *summa totalis*, of sincerity; (Matt. xxii. 37;) and whatsoever contraries this, is the very essence of hypocrisy. I know there be many subterfuges and evasions, and it is a hard matter to convince men that they love the world in St. John's sense. But if a man make these lusts of the eye, of the flesh, and pride of life,—honours, riches, carnal and sensual pleasures,—his aim, his interest, his chief delight; if the heart and affections be let out to these things immoderately; if the sweetest, freest thoughts of the soul be let out to them, either about the getting, enjoying, or desiring, or admiring, or advancing them; if the activity and endeavours of the soul bend and are employed chiefly this way; though there may be many excellent performances, expressions, affections; yet the leaven of the Pharisee is there, and sours all, and all the rest is but in hypocrisy. This leavened all Balaam's pretences, divinations, all his goodly expressions, and professions, both to

* AUGUSTINUS, in *Libro Confession.*

God, the angel, and men,—that he would do nothing, speak nothing, but what God would have him; (as much as to say, he would be upright and sincere;) yet he still looked after the “reward,” Balak’s promotion: this was the “error of Balaam,” (Jude 11,) “he followed the wages of unrighteousness:” and this leavened all Judas’s hearing and conversing with Christ, his over-officiousness. Some conceive, from Judas’s kissing Christ in the garden, &c., that he was more than ordinarily familiar and officious about him, and made more pretences of love and service to him; but he appeared “a painted sepulchre,” a hypocrite; he “loved the wages of iniquity:” it was the world and hypocrisy [that] were predominant in him; and now he is gone “to his own place,” the place and portion of hypocrites: he was, as it were, out of his place, or in another’s place, all the while before. And this leavened all the Pharisees’ alms, fastings, prayers, professions, and pretences; they were “covetous,” saith one evangelist; (Luke xvi. 14;) and they “loved the praise of men more than the praise of God,” saith another; (John xii. 43;) and that is, in effect, they loved the favour of men more than the favour of God: in short, they “loved the world,” and “the love of the Father was not in them.” (1 John ii. 15.) There can be no serving God and mammon: (Matt. vi. 24:) if we cannot moderate and temperate affections, both in the desires, in the affections, in the use, in the enjoyments, and moderate our cares and griefs in the loss and want of worldly things; to have them as if we had them not, to rejoice in and for them as if we rejoiced not; to grieve for the want of them as if we grieved not; seeing they are to us as if they were not; they are “a scheme,” a representation that “passeth away.” (1 Cor. vii. 27—31.) Nay, if the world be not “crucified to us, and we to the world,” (Gal. vi. 14,) we are still in danger of this gall of bitterness, this leaven of hypocrisy. This is exemplified in the Jews in Babylon: they would come to the prophet, “and sit before him as God’s people,” (with much seeming reverence, and appearance of devotion and affection,) “and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.” (Ezek. xxxiii. 31.) Therefore, as you love your souls, beware of the love of the world; and set not your affections on things below, but on things above; else you will not be able to avoid the guilt and danger of hypocrisy.

SIGN II. *A not loving the word of God, a not receiving it as the word of God, when it comes as the word of God in power.* (1 Thess. i. 5.)—It is the property of the word of God to be “quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart;” (Heb. iv. 12;) to cast down “imagination, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” (2 Cor. x. 5.) This is the word of God; and this it doeth as the word of God; these are the properties of it. Such a word of God a hypocrite cannot love, because he loves this carnal, sinful self; he loves his lusts, which this word opposeth. “He flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful.” (Psalm xxxvi. 2.) The word in power

will show him that all is ill, when he flattereth himself that all is very well. "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" saith Ahab. (1 Kings xxi. 20.) A hypocrite thinks he hath no greater enemy than a faithful minister, because hypocrisy hath no greater enemy than the word of truth, which will detect and make it odious. So Ahab hated Micaiah and his ministry, because he prophesied evil to him in his evil ways; he spake the word of God, the truth to him, which Ahab's corrupt life and hypocritical heart could not bear. (1 Kings xxii. 8.) Herod heard John Baptist gladly in other things; but when he preached against his having his brother's wife, when he came home to his conscience, to his very darling sin, then Herod stopped his mouth, shut him up in prison. (Mark vi. 17, 18, 20.) Felix trembles; and dismisseth Paul when he came so close: (Acts xxiv. 25 :) a hypocrite may love to hear the same minister on another subject. The very notion of religion is amiable and acceptable to ingenuous persons; nay, he may love that the word may come to others; but to himself, during the predominancy of hypocrisy, the powerful word neither read nor preached can be welcome, because it applies itself to the cutting-off of his right hand, and plucking-out his right eye. (Matt. v. 29, 30.)

SIGN III. *A long and continual unprofitableness under the powerful word of God is a fearful sign of hypocrisy.*—What warnings and instructions had Judas! What convictions and reprehensions had Ahab and Herod! And yet, as to those things which the word opposed, they were still the same men. If men that hear much, mind nothing; if there be no change, no alteration, but they are still where and what they were; where they are still as carnal, as earthly, as they were ten, twenty years ago, though they hear much, and are as "the earth which drinketh in the rain," nay, though they "have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come," if yet they bring not forth meet fruit for him that dresseth it, that ground is rejected, that heart is near to cursing and burning; (Heb. vi. 5—8;) there is some guile and hypocrisy there, there would be some growing else. (1 Peter ii. 2.) When the word is "precept upon precept, line upon line," (that is, very plentiful,) and yet no amendment, there is hypocrisy; they will "fall backward, be broken, and snared and taken." (Isai. xxviii. 10, 13; Hosea vi. 4, 5.) O it is no small matter to be dead, unprofitable, unaltered hearers! It is a fearful sign of hypocrisy, and that there are many hypocrites in the bosom of the church.

SIGN IV. *The principles and ends of men's actions and performances are a great discovery of the sincerity or insincerity of men's hearts.*—If men's principles be no higher than good education, and being conversant with good or strict men;—which seems to be Paul's case; (Acts xxvi. 5; Phil. iii. 5, 6;)—or no higher than good-nature and moral qualifications;—this seems to be the young man's case; (Mark x. 20;)—they are no farther than those were at that time, in an ignorant and insincere condition. He that is really and sincerely a good Christian doeth all as from God and Christ: He "is all, and in all." (Col. iii. 11.) Christ is "wisdom and sanctification" to him. (1 Cor. i. 30.) He acts and performs duties not only from strength of parts, and

acquired qualifications, but from strength of grace, and infused habits, from God, and for God, from "a new heart," from the "law written in the heart," from the "love of God shed abroad in the heart," and "constraining" to love, from the "divine nature" communicated to the heart, from Christ by his Spirit "dwelling in the heart," from the fear of God possessing and establishing the heart. (Ezek. xxxvi. 26; Rom. xi. 24; Jer. xxxi. 33; Rom. v. 5; 2 Cor. v. 14; 2 Peter i. 4; Eph. iii. 17; 2 Cor. xiii. 5; Jer. xxxii. 40.) These be the springs and principles of a sincere Christian's spiritual life and actions; and where they act and bear rule, it is no wonder if such motions and performances be produced as the world may admire, but not imitate. Saul's life, after his conversion, was a kind of constant miracle; so much he did, and so much he suffered, and so much denied himself, that if he lived in these days, his life would be a miracle. But yet, if we consider the principles that he was acted by, the great wonder will be, not that he did so much, but that he did no more; for, saith he, "Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God," &c. (Gal. ii. 20.) And so the ends of a man's actions are a great discovery of sincerity or hypocrisy. If a man's ends be lower than God himself, and obeying, glorifying, walking with, and enjoying God; if either praise, gain, reputation, nay, acceptance with good people; nay, if a man's end be to stop the mouth of natural conscience only, or only to avoid danger and wrath to come; these may be the works of a saint, but yet the ends of a hypocrite. And *omnis actio nisi modificata a fine suas quas averteret amittit laudes*.* Balaam spake religiously, multiplied altars and sacrifices; but his end was not God, but "the wages of iniquity." Jehu destroyed Ahab's house, executed vengeance, God's judgments, against that wicked family, resolutely and thoroughly destroyed Baal, &c.; but his ends were carnal, the establishment of the kingdom to him and his family. Ahab and the Ninevites fasted in sackcloth; but it was merely to avoid the judgment threatened. The Israelites cried and prayed; but they did but "howl for corn and wine." (Hosea vii. 14.) The Jews in captivity fasted; but "did ye at all fast unto me, even to me?" saith the Lord. (Zech. vii. 5.) It seems men may pray, and yet not cry to the Lord; fast, and yet not to the Lord. It is the end [which] dignifies or debaseth the action, rectifies or adulterates it. Look to your ends, if you would not be hypocrites. If your end be less than God, his glory and pleasing of him, you are but "empty vines, and bring forth fruit to yourselves." (Hosea x. 1.) Simplicity in one's ends accompanies sincerity in the actions; when not "fleshly wisdom, but the grace of God," carries and governs the action, then we may have "rejoicing;" else all may be in hypocrisy. (2 Cor. i. 12.)

SIGN V. *If thou canst not bring thy heart to suffer for the name of Christ, when thou hast a good cause, and a good call, and amongst the good people of God, though thou "hear the word, and receivest it with*

* "Unless every action be methodically performed in accordance with the end proposed, it loses all the praise to which it would have been entitled, had it not been thus turned aside or perverted."—EDIT.

joy for a time, yet when persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by thou art offended ;” (Matt. xiii. 21;) *if there be no more deep rooting of it in thee, but “in temptation thou fall away ;”* (Luke viii. 13;) *it is apparent thy heart is but stony ground, and thou art leavened with hypocrisy.*—If your faith cannot bear the trial, if it be not furnace faith, tried faith, it is not precious faith, it is but common faith, counterfeit faith ; it will not “be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearance of Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter i. 7.) Nay, if thou canst not, in some cases, choose “rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season ; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt ;” it is apparent thy faith and thy heart are not right, thou hast not a thorough “respect unto the recompense of the reward,” thou dost not “see Him who is invisible.” (Heb. xi. 25—27.) That man that cannot, will not “deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Christ,” he is not a true disciple of Christ ; and in the end will find, that in “saving his life he hath lost it.” (Matt. xvi. 24, 25.) Satan and antichrist must be “overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of the testimony, and by not loving our lives unto the death,” &c. ; (Rev. xii. 11;) and he that will not “suffer” with Christ, shall not “reign” with Christ ; (Rom. viii. 17;) and if tribulation occasion men to go “out from us,” it is because “they were not of us ; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us.” (1 John ii. 19.) Tribulation is the touchstone ; it will distinguish sincerity from hypocrisy ; and though it is true a hypocrite may sometimes suffer, (1 Cor. xiii. 3,) yet he that will never suffer must be a hypocrite : if we “suffer” not with Him, we shall not “reign with Him.” (Rom. viii. 17.)

SIGN VI. *If thou embracest and favourest any “iniquity in thy heart ;”* (Psalm lxxvi. 18;) *if there be any corrupt lust or ungodly way that thou art so wedded to, that thou canst not, wilt not, be divorced from, but huggest it in thy bosom, hidest it, pleadest for it, though it seem never so harmless and tolerable, yet if it be against God’s law, though thou makest “many prayers,” with the Jews, and performest many services, (Isai. i. 11—15,) and doest “many things,” with Herod, (Mark vi. 20,) and hast many glorious and gracious expressions, with Balaam ; yet “thou art in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity.”*—Thy “heart” is a “divided” heart ; (Hosea x. 2;) thou art a “double, unstable” person ; (James i. 8;) thy prayers will not be regarded, and all thy services will be rejected by the all-seeing, jealous God, before whom “all things are naked and opened, and with whom thou hast to do ;” (Heb. iv. 13;) because, “if thou regardest iniquity in thy heart,” the rise and root of all thy duties and performances is but the “leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.” Methinks, beloved, this should startle us ; and I wish it may. If any of you should be “pricked at the heart,” and “tremble at this word” of God, and ask me, “What shall we do, that we may acquit ourselves from this leaven of hypocrisy, and be saved from the wrath it exposeth us to ?” I should answer,

1. “*Strive to enter in at the strait gate : for many will seek to enter*

in, and shall not be able." (Luke xiii. 24.)—That is, be very serious, and thoroughly resolved and industrious in a case of this weight and concernment. "Be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace." (2 Peter iii. 14.) Set your hearts to these things; "for it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life," &c. (Deut. xxxii. 46, 47.) It is so weighty a business, that it is work enough for all your life; and it will be your life of consolation from which will flow peace, and joy, and assurance. Make but this out clearly, that thou art no hypocrite, that hypocrisy is not predominant in thee; but that "in simplicity and godly sincerity of heart thou hast thy conversation, not with fleshly wisdom;" (2 Cor. i. 12;) thou hast then occasion of much rejoicing; but if thou art negligent in this, thy doubts and fears will hang upon and keep thee low to thy dying day. Nay, it were well if that were all; for *to be negligent* in this business is as good as *to do nothing*; for it is to do nothing to purpose, and that is to have all thy work undone, and to be undone thyself for ever. Most hypocrites did *seek* to enter in: Balaam, Herod, the five foolish virgins,—had they *striven*, they had entered in at the "strait gate." Wishings, and wouldings, and slothful desires to heaven, will not place you out of danger of hypocrisy; for very hypocrites have done as much. But striving indeed, setting your whole heart to it, being very diligent to purge out this leaven, "working out your own salvation with fear and trembling," (Phil. ii. 12,) "giving diligence to make your calling and election sure,"—this will place you out of danger, and give you "an abundant entrance into the kingdom of our Lord." (2 Peter i. 10, 11.) If ever that of the English proverb be true, it is here: "As good never a whit, as never the better." Indeed, there is so much work on our hands, such commands, such promises to believe, such corruptions to subdue, such temptations to resist, (the carelessness of carnal failing in any of which will charge us with hypocrisy,) so many such subtle and powerful adversaries to conflict withal,—such a world, such a flesh, such principalities, and powers, and spiritual wickednesses in high places, such deceitful hearts, deceitful above all things, to search, and sift, and purge from this leaven, that it is impossible to be free of it without mighty striving, contending, and giving much diligence.

2. *If you would take heed of hypocrisy, take heed of security.*—There are no greater flatterers, and no greater deceivers of themselves and others, than hypocrites; they "flatter themselves in their own eyes." (Psalm xxxvi. 2.) All flattery is dangerous; but self-flattery of all other most dangerous, and, of all others, in the business of salvation most pernicious. It is the advice of the devil, and thy own hypocrisy, to favour thyself, flatter thyself, hope well, &c. The advice of God is, "Search and try your ways;" "Examine yourselves;" "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." (Lam. iii. 40; 2 Cor. xiii. 5; Phil. ii. 12.) Yea, call upon God to search you. (Psalm cxxxix. 23.) It is a fear of carefulness and solicitude, a trembling of jealousy and suspicion as to our own hearts, not of diffidence or despair as to God, that we are directed to. Had the foolish virgins had but this care, this fear, they had had oil in their vessels, as well as lamps. Had

those glorious professors in Matt. vii. 22, had but this jealousy and suspicion, they might have escaped that dismal sentence: "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Perhaps your faith may be but a fancy, your hopes but presumptions, "a spider's web;" (Job viii. 14;) perhaps your fruit may be but that of "an empty vine," to yourself; (Hosea x. 1;) perhaps your prayers may be but "howlings for corn and wine;" (Hosea vii. 14;) perhaps your fasting may not be to God. (Zech. vii. 5.) "Commune much with your own heart," and let your "spirit make diligent search." (Psalm lxxvii. 6.) "Keep your heart with all keeping," be jealous of every thing your heart hath to do with; your affairs, friends, comforts, recreations, thoughts, solitudes, graces. O blessed, or "happy, is the man that" thus "feareth alway;" (Prov. xxviii. 14;) he shall never do amiss; this is to be "in the fear of the Lord all the day long;" (Prov. xxiii. 17;) and this "fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge," the end of wisdom, and wisdom itself; (Prov. i. 7; Eccles. xii. 13; Job xxviii. 28;) for this will make a man wise to escape the wiles of Satan, and the hypocrisy of his own heart, and so make him wise to salvation.

3. *Keep God always in your mind.*—If we have all *from* him, we should be all *to* him. (Rom. xi. 36.) If we live and move in him, our hearts and minds should be always on him. This is the cause of all the wickedness and hypocrisy in the world,—men "will not seek after God: God is not in all their thoughts." (Psalm x. 4.) And this is the ground of all the glorious performances of the saints,—they "saw Him that was invisible;" as Micahiah "saw the Lord on his throne;" and therefore feared not to deal plainly and sincerely with Ahab, though on his throne. (Heb. xi. 26, 27; 1 Kings xxii. 19.) When the Psalmist had convinced and reprov'd the wickedness and formal hypocrisy of ungodly, presumptuous men, he concludes: "Now consider this, ye that forget God," &c.: (Psalm l. 22;) intimating this to be the reason of all ungodly, hypocritical conversation, a forgetting [of] God. The remedy must be contrary to the disease: if we would be no hypocrites, we must much remember, think of, and observe, and eye God by faith. "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee." (Job xxii. 21.) If men were acquainted with God, and did not forget him,—acquainted with his omniscieny; (Psalm cxxxix. 1, 2;) with his all-sufficiency; (Gen. xvii. 1;) with the power of his anger; (Psalm xc. 11;) the infiniteness of his goodness; (Isai. lv. 7, 8; Micah vii. 18, 19;) they would conclude, and live under the awe and power of such conclusions:—"O, then, He is too *great* to be tempted and provoked, too *excellent* to be slighted and undervalued, too *good* to be lost, too *wise* to be deceived!" and this would suppress and supplant the leaven of the Pharisees' hypocrisy.

4. *Be much and daily in the renewing [of] faith and repentance.*—If there be such danger of hypocrisy, there is necessity of renewing faith and repentance, for fear hypocrisy may be in them. Rise and return, as soon as thou art convinced of thy sin: so did Paul; (Gal. i. 16;) so did Peter, as soon as the Lord turned and looked upon him. (Luke xxii. 61.) If repentance were hastened after sin, and thou wouldest take

care and pains to break thy heart constantly *for* sin, this would break it *from* sin. A man should find that it were "an evil thing and bitter to forsake the Lord, and that his fear was not in thee;" (Jer. ii. 19;) and "a broken heart God would not despise," (Psal. li. 17,) because it is apparent that is no hypocritical heart. And though former faith and repentance may be counterfeit and hypocritical, yet ensuing and renewed faith may be sound and sincere; and we have much ground to renew those acts, whose soundness and validity we have much ground to suspect: if all have been false, or feigned, or partial, formerly, we have the more cause in a new act to give up and bind our souls sincerely to it; and this will free you from hypocrisy.

5. *Put forth your greatest strength and care to mortify those lusts and corruptions that are the fuel to hypocrisy, pride, vain-glory, worldly-mindedness, self-love.*—These are the fuel of hypocrisy; they beget it, and they nourish it. If the love of the world and worldly favour did not prevail much over men, there would be no hypocrisy in the world. And cherish and strengthen the graces which cannot consist with it, but will be always fighting against and opposing it, as love to God, humility, self-denial, heavenly-mindedness, mortifying the flesh, much communion with God: "if these be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful," but shall "make your calling and election sure," and so be out of *the peril*, yea, and much out of *the fear*, of hypocrisy.

6. *Press the Lord much, and urge him close, with the promises of a "new heart," of "circumcising your hearts," and causing you "to love the Lord with all your heart," of "putting his fear into your heart."* (Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26; Deut. xxx. 6; Jer. xxxvii. 40.)—If he urge and press you in his word, with his precepts, and your duty, do you urge and press him as much in your prayers, with his promises; spread his own hand-writing and seals before him, as Augustine relates his mother did in her prayers for his conversion.* Say, "Lord, these promises were made to be made good to some; and why not to me? I hunger, I need, I thirst, I wait; here is thy hand-writing in thy word; and, in the last sacrament, I had thy seal affixed to it. I am resolved to be as importunate till I have obtained, and as thankful afterwards, as by grace I shall be enabled. Being convinced I am utterly lost and undone, if thou hearest not 'the desire of the humble' in this particular; (Psalm x. 17;) and if thou dost hear and grant, I am so well acquainted with myself, and mine own heart, that I have nothing to glory in, but I shall wholly 'glory in the Lord,' and I do resolve and believe I shall, to eternity, celebrate and magnify the riches of the glory of thy grace. Thy promises are the discovery of thy purposes, and vouchsafed as materials for our prayers; and in my supplications I am resolved every day to present and tender them back to thee every day; and if thou wilt have regard to them there, and appear to be a God of truth to my soul, a poor creature that hath long feared to burn in hell for hypocrisy will be made, secured, and made happy for ever. I am resolved to wait upon thee, and to cast my soul upon thee in this way, and thou

* *Chirographa tua ingerebat tibi.*—AUGUSTINI *Confessiones*, lib. v. cap. 9.

hast assured me thou art a 'God of judgment;' thou didst promise in judgment, thou knewest what thou didst in making such promises; and thou wilt be 'a God of judgment,' thou knowest when and where to make them good; and thou hast pronounced, 'Blessed are all they that wait for thee;' (Isai. xxx. 18;) and on thee I will wait, and for this blessing I will hope and look." O, beloved, if there be but such an heart in us, and such wrestlings, as Ambrose told Monica, a soul of such prayers and tears should not perish.*

I could have added much more: but if these characters and directions be carefully observed, you will beware of and shall escape the leaven of hypocrisy. And that you may be careful to observe them, consider,

1. *That the purging out this leaven is the great care and business of a Christian's life.*—This will afford him fear and trembling work to his dying day; this, till it be done, makes the gate so strait, and the way so narrow to life, that few find it; (Matt. vii. 13;) and if it be done, renders all the service of Christ ever after an easy yoke and a light burden. (Matt. xi. 30.)

2. *This, if it be done, gives us actual possession of the "kingdom of God" in grace, which consists of "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost,"* (Rom. xiv. 17,) and administers an assured and "abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ" in glory. (2 Peter i. 11.)

3. *This will prevent the devil's everlasting insulting over us.*—"Is this the end of all thy praying and hearing, &c., and defying me?" Nay, upbraiding Christ, as a learned and holy man feared: † "'I have him, I have gotten him from thee, for all thy blood, thy miracles, thy gospel, thy wooings, thy beseechings, thy knockings, and strivings of thy Spirit; for all thy illuminating [of] them, and making them taste of the powers of the world to come: I have cozened thee of them at thy very gates of heaven, and by my devices shipwrecked them in the very mouth of the haven.' O I would not give the devil occasion to upbraid and insult thus against Christ at the last day for the world." ‡ And this would prevent conscience's gnawing and galling to eternity: "What are all my desires, my seekings and knockings, prayers, fasts, sacraments, hearing in season, and out of season, waiting at the posts of God's house early and late? Have I forsaken so many sins, denied myself so many contents and pleasures, subdued so many lusts, borne so many scoffs, suffered so much in my body and estate, and all for hell at last?" This would be the hell of hell; and all this may be prevented, if we would "beware of the leaven of hypocrisy," and seriously observe those Characters, and carefully practise those Directions.

4. *Consider the means you have long had, and yet do enjoy.*—God's admirable forbearance and patience, a powerful ministry's incessant labours and pains, an awakened conscience's clamours and warnings; a danger and evils (if you be negligent) intolerable; a reward (if you observe the "BEWARE" in the text) eternal and inconceivable; your life short and uncertain, your death appointed most certain, and you know

* *Ficri enim non potest, ut filius istarum lachrymarum pereat.*—AUGUSTINI *Confessiones*, lib. iii. cap. 12. † BASIL. ‡ Idem.

not how near; the world and the lusts thereof (even those that feed and foment hypocrisy) passing away, (1 John ii. 17,) and that "now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation:" (2 Cor. vi. 2:) and, if you were ever serious in your lives, now be so; and if ever God spake to your hearts and consciences, the Lord in mercy speak this!—"Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy."

SERMON XXVIII.

BY THE REV. DAVID CLARKSON, B. D.,

FELLOW OF CLARE-HALL, CAMBRIDGE.

WHAT MUST CHRISTIANS DO, THAT THE INFLUENCE OF THE
ORDINANCES MAY ABIDE UPON THEM?

O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee.—1 Chronicles xxix. 18.

IN the preceding chapter we have David's oration, or, if you will, his sermon; the design of which was, to excite the people to a contribution for the erecting of a temple, and promoting the public worship of God. It begins verse 2 of that chapter, and is continued to verse 6 of this chapter.

This sermon was effectual upon the auditory. David had the happiness (which the best orators and most powerful preachers often want) not only *πιθανα λεγειν*, but *πειθειν*; "he not only spoke what was in itself persuasive, but did actually persuade" his hearers to comply with his design. The effect thereof is expressed verses 6—8: "They offered," and, which was the marrow and fatness of their offering, "they offered *willingly*." Though will-worship be the worst service of all other, yet those that serve God willingly are the best worshippers; and therefore David in this sermon commends such service to his son: "And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind." (1 Chron. xxviii. 9.) None serve God with a perfect heart, but those who serve him with a willing mind. To such a temper were the people wrought by this powerful exhortation, "with perfect heart they offered willingly to the Lord." (1 Chron. xxix. 9.) Hereupon David, much affected with his success in this affair, ("David the king also rejoiced with great joy,") his soul being now upon the wing, he flies to God by prayer, and there-with concludes his sermon. The prayer consists of petition and thanksgiving; both of them, not conformed to any common model, but suiting the particular occasion now before him. He blesseth God for making

such an impression upon the hearts of the people, as moved them to offer, and “after this sort” to offer, so cheerfully, so generously; (verses 10—18;) and beseecheth God still to keep their hearts in such a temper, to make this holy impression durable and abiding: “O Lord God of Abraham,” &c., “keep this for ever in the imaginations,” &c.: (verse 18:) where we have the enforcement of the petition, and the matter of it. It is enforced from the covenant of God, by virtue of which he was “the God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel,” and had laid an obligation on himself to have a gracious respect to their posterity; hence this expression is frequently used, being no small encouragement to the faithful, to pray for covenant-mercies, and to pray in faith.

The matter of the petition, that which he prays for, is, that the effect which his words had upon the people might be durable and continuing; that the efficacy thereof might abide upon their souls, and every part thereof; that it might sink into the depths of their hearts, and stick fast there; that it might pierce through their fancies and “imaginations” into their mind and “thoughts,” and through their “thoughts” into their “hearts” and affections; that the Lord would continue it there, and continue it long there, even “for ever.”

David was apprehensive what a slippery and inconstant thing the heart of man is, how like a deceitful bow, to which he elsewhere compares it, how apt to slacken on a sudden, when it hath been bended to any good inclinations or resolutions, by the power of the word, or any other ordinance. What an unhappy womb it is! how ordinarily holy motions miscarry before the heart hath gone out its full time with them! What danger there was, lest their righteousness, which now made such a flourishing appearance, might prove like the morning cloud, or the early dew! And therefore having raised their hearts to so good a posture, he takes the best course to fix them there. His words having had a powerful influence upon their souls, he useth the best means to render it durable and abiding. Hence observe,

DOCTRINE.

The people of God should endeavour to keep the influence of the ordinances abiding upon their souls.

I must not prosecute this doctrine in the usual method, but mention it only, as leading us to the practical case at this time to be resolved. A conscientious hearer, observing what his duty is, will be presently inquisitive how he may perform it; *the duty* is made known in the observation, *the inquiry* is in the case before us:—

What must be done, that the influences of the ordinances may abide upon us?

By “the ordinances” we understand those principally which are public, the word, sacraments, and prayer. The text and this exercise lead us to have a more special respect to the word, which we shall a little observe, but so as not to exclude the rest. By the “influence of the ordinances,” is meant the effect they have upon us, while we are employed in them; their gracious or comforting efficacy, that which tends to make our hearts and lives more holy or more comfortable; that whereby our souls are

quickened, strengthened, restored, or refreshed. By its "abiding on us," understand the continuance of this effect after the duty is done, that so the ordinances of God be not like those human ordinances the apostle speaks of, which "perish with the using." (Col. ii. 20, 22.) If you would have it stated clearly and more at large, take it thus: *What course must we take, that the gracious and comforting efficacy of public ordinances may not only reach us while we are employed in them, but may continue on us afterwards; so as we may walk under the sense and power thereof all along?*

To resolve this without further preamble: the course you must take for this purpose lies in the practice of some things, and the avoiding of others. The things to be practised take notice of in these severals:—

1. *Get new hearts, and get them daily more and more renewed.*—An old heart is a heart of stone; (Ezek. xi. 19;) and the hardness of it is not removed but by degrees. Now that which will sink deep into a tender heart, "a heart of flesh," (Ezek. xxxvi. 26,) will glide off from an old heart as water from a stone, without leaving any impression; and where none is left, none can continue. The good seed which fell on stony ground,—it sprang up indeed, but it continued not, as soon as it sprang up it withered away; (Luke viii. 6;) but they who with an honest and good heart heard the word, they "kept it," and brought forth fruit with patience, that is, with perseverance; (verse 15;) the fruitful influences of the word abode upon them. "A good and honest heart" not only hears the word, but keeps it; not only brings forth fruit, but persists [in] so doing. The more tender, humble, and spiritual the heart is, the more spiritual fruit and advantage doth it reap from the ordinances, and the longer doth it continue in possession of those advantages; the less the soul is renewed, the more resistance doth it offer to the ordinances; and the more they are resisted, the weaker is their efficacy; and the less their efficacy is, the less while doth it continue. A heart thoroughly sanctified is to the ordinances like tinder, which soon takes fire, and is apt to keep it till it be forced out; whereas a carnal, unmortified heart is like green wood, whose moistness, giving check to the activity of the fire, is not soon kindled, and will soon go out, if it be not well looked to. Naturalists observe, that transmutation is easy in symbolical elements, such as agree in some prime qualities; water is more easily turned into air than into fire. A holy and spiritual heart will be easily wrought-on by holy and spiritual ordinances, for here is an agreement in qualities; and the more agreement, the less opposition; and the less the opposition is, the more easily will it be mastered: the power of the ordinances will more easily both take place and keep possession. Holiness makes the soul both receptive and retentive of holy impressions. Make it but your great business to grow every day more holy, and it will not be so hard a matter to have the ordinances work effectually on you, or to have their efficacy continue with you.

2. *Labour to be much affected with the ordinances while you are employed in them.*—Slight impressions will be soon worn out; and weak influences will quickly spend themselves, and vanish. If the ordinances have but little effect upon you while you are under them, it is not like

to last long ; for that which is little is near to nothing, and that which is so near to it may soon come to nothing. It is not enough that your hearts be a little warmed, but they must burn within you, while Christ is speaking to you, or you are speaking to him, (Luke xxiv. 32,) if you would have that heavenly heat to be lasting. The good seed miscarried upon one sort of ground in the parable, because it had no "deepness of earth;" it quickly withered, because it took no deep root. (Matt. xiii. 5, 6.) If the ordinances pierce no further than the surface of the soul, if the work of them be but superficial, if they do not penetrate into the depths of the heart, the efficacy of them is not like to continue. Therefore, prepare your hearts before you draw near to God, get them so disposed as they may be capable of lasting influences. The text directs us to this : "O Lord, keep this for ever in the imagination," &c., "and prepare their heart unto thee." Then is the heart prepared to the Lord when it is made tender, and sensible, and open.

Bring *tender* hearts to the ordinances, get them broken up beforehand : "Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns." (Jer. iv. 3 ; Hosea x. 12.) A tender heart drinks-in divine influences ; they insinuate themselves more easily into the intimate recesses of it. That which can make no impression at all upon a flint, will sink deep into softened wax.

Come with *sensible* hearts, apprehensive of your spiritual wants and necessities, burdened with your lusts and corruptions, pained with your inward distempers and soul-grievances. I cannot commend to you any thing more effectual, to make you capable of great and lasting advantages.

Such a quick sense of your spiritual condition will *open* your hearts, and make them ready to receive so much from the ordinances as will not be soon spent. "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." (Psalm lxxxi. 10.) Now it is desire that opens the heart ; and the stronger the desire is, the wider is it opened : then is the soul wide open, when it pants and breathes after God ; when it hungers and thirsts after holiness, as appears by equivalent promises : "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness : for they shall be filled." (Matt. v. 6 ; Psalm cvii. 9.) That which we get by holy duties, is soon spent because it is so little ; and we get so little, because we desire no more. We come to the ordinances *tanquam canis ad Nilum*, too like the Egyptian dog, which laps a little as he runs by the side of Nilus, but stays not to drink ; we take but a taste of them as *in transitu*, too little and too cursorily ; whereas Christ invites us to eat and drink abundantly. (Canticles v. 1.) Such cursory tastes may cheer you a little ; but they will not furnish you with strength for continual service : you must feed, and feed hungrily, and come with a strong appetite, that you may be capacious of much : a little will not serve you long.

3. *Mind the ordinances after your use of them.*—Be much in meditation if you would have the efficacy of ordinances to continue long. Be often considering what you have heard, what you have prayed for, what you have received and are obliged to by the sacraments. Much of heaven and holiness is engraved on these ordinances ; and the seal is, as it were, set upon the heart, while you are under them ; but after-consideration lays

more weight on it, and impresseth it deeper, and so makes the characters both more plain and more durable; for the deeper they are, the longer will it be ere they be defaced.

Most men lose their souls, and the best men lose great advantages for their souls, for want of consideration. There is a quickening, a healing, a comforting, a strengthening, virtue in the ordinances; and this virtue may fall upon your souls, while you are employed in them; but you cannot expect it will stay with you, unless you fix it there; and no better way to fix it than consideration. This will rouse it up, when it lies dormant and unactive; this will put spirits into it, when it grows weak and languid; this will both diffuse and fasten it, yea, it will heighten and improve it. "My heart was hot within me," saith David: "while I was musing the fire burned." (Psalm xxxix. 3.) The heart takes fire at the mind; and it is "musing," or consideration, that kindles it, and keeps it in, and blows it up: those sparks which fall from heaven upon your hearts, while you are hearing, or praying, &c,—they will die, they will go out, and come to nothing, unless you do *αναζωοπυρειν* unless "you blow them up" by meditation. (2 Tim. i. 6.) "He sent his word, and healed them." (Psalm cvii. 20.) The word hath a salve for every soul-distemper; but that it may be effectual, the plaster must be laid on, and kept on too, till the cure be wrought: the preacher may apply it, and lay it upon the distempered part; but it will not be kept on without meditation. "How sweet are thy words unto my taste!" saith David. (Psalm cxix. 103.) How came they to be still so sweet? Why, they were his "meditation day and night;" the delicious relish of them still continued, because he kept them still upon his palate, by ruminating and musing on them.

The word of God in the scripture is as honey in the comb; there is that which is incomparably sweeter: now, by meditation you squeeze out this sweetness, and it will be still dropping comfort and sweet refreshment upon your souls, while you are pressing it by consideration. "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you." (1 John ii. 14.) If you would be strong, and continue so, the word of God must "abide" in you: now how can it abide in you, if it have not leave to stay in that which is but the portal of the soul,—if it abide not in your minds? You lose all for want of consideration: both the gracious and comforting influences of the ordinances slide from you through this neglect. And no wonder it is so great a damage to you, since it is so great a sin: you cast the word behind your backs, and throw the ordinances at your heels, when you do not mind them after you have done with them; and will the Lord encourage any with a durable blessing under such guilt? Will not this provoke him rather to curse your blessings, and blast them in the bud? Meditation is a known duty, and commonly insisted on, and therefore you may be tempted to slight it; whereas, indeed, upon this account, you should the more regard it; for since it is a known duty, the neglect of it is a known sin: now to say nothing how inconsistent it is either with grace or comfort to live in a known sin, how can you expect the efficacy of ordinances should be continued, while you neglect the means which the Lord hath appointed and commended to you, as most effectual for the continuance thereof? The

blessing of the ordinances will not abide upon him who continues in sin, especially when his sin is the neglect of that medium which should fix the blessing upon him.

4. *Let the efficacy of the ordinances be pursued presently into act.*—If they convince you of any neglected duty, fall immediately upon the practice of it. If they make you more resolute against any carnal or worldly lust, betake yourselves presently to the mortifying of it. If they kindle any holy affection to Christ or his people, give some real expression thereof without delay. If they revive any languishing grace, let it be forthwith exercised. This was David's practice. (Psalm cxix. 60.) You will find this one of the best expedients for the fixing and securing of those good motions which are raised in your minds and hearts by the ordinances. When the blossoms of a fruit-tree are once knit, though the flourish thereof be gone, and you see nothing but the bare rudiment of the expected fruit; yet you think it more secured from the injury of frosts and winds than if it were still in the flower. Good motions, when they are once reduced into act, are thereby, as it were, knit, and brought to more consistency. They are then well past one of their critical periods, where most miscarry, and so are more like to live and continue with you. Besides, the act strengthens that good motion and disposition which leads to it, and so makes you more ready for another act; and that disposeth to more acts, and those to better; and repeated acts beget a habit; and this, as the philosopher tells us, is *μονιματερον τι*, "something that will stay by you." The hearts of the people being raised by Hezekiah's zealous speech, they were kept up in that posture, till the work designed by him was finished, till religion was restored and reformed: and how came this to pass? Why, "the thing was done suddenly:" he pursued the people's good inclinations, and brought them into act suddenly; he struck while the iron was hot. (2 Chron. xxix. 3—10, 36.) When your hearts are heated by the ordinances, set immediately upon your work: the *primus impetus* ["first impulse"] affords a great advantage if it be improved; possibly in the vigour of it, you may overcome those great difficulties and oppositions which have been too hard for you formerly, and may otherwise give you impediment hereafter; and, this being mastered, your progress will be easier, you may go on towards heaven under the power of the ordinances, with less interruption and fewer intermissions of these divine influences: "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer," that is, if he do it not presently, as appears by what follows, "he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was." (James i. 22—24.) The glass discovers what spots and sullages are in his face, that he may wash them off; or what is disordered about him, that he may correct and compose it; but if he do not this presently, if he put it off till some occurrence divert him from the thoughts and remembrance of it, his looking in the mirror will prove but a loss of time, a vain curiosity. Your use of the ordinances is like to prove no better, if you practise not what they lead you to without delay: it is

like to be no other than such a viewing of yourselves in a glass, a mere fruitless speculation.

5. *You must take much pains with your hearts, if you would have them retain the virtue and efficacy of the ordinances.*—The effect of them should be as a nail fastened in a sure place : but the heart is so hard and knotty a piece, that you cannot drive it in without many blows ; it will require all your strength to force it in far enough, and all your care and watchfulness to keep it in when it is there. *They* grossly mistake Christianity *who* take it to be consistent with our carnal ease and slothfulness ; who place it in notions or opinions ; in fair shows, and a specious profession ; in forms, gestures, or external observances ; in conforming to this or that mode of worship or discipline. It were well for the world if one could be a Christian at such an easy rate ; but they that please themselves with such conceits, “they err, not knowing the scriptures.” The action of a Christian is, all along in the New Testament, expressed by “striving, wrestling, running, and combating, exercises ;” wherein he that will not be worsted, must intend all his spirits, stretch all his sinews, put forth all his strength ; he that is a Christian indeed, —he must *παλαίειν*, (Eph. vi. 12,) *διωκεῖν*, (Phil. iii. 12—14 ; Heb. xii. 14,) *αγωνιζέσθαι* : (Luke xiii. 24 :) his daily course must be “a combating” as for victory, “a running” as for a crown, “a striving” as for life. The power and life of holiness can neither be attained nor upheld without an effectual use of the ordinances ; the ordinances will never be effectual to purpose, unless the virtue of them abide upon the heart. Now, it meets with such reluctancy and opposition from the heart, so far as it is unrenewed, that it can never be fastened there, without striving, and struggling, and earnest contending : it must be done in despite of our own ease, and carnal humours, and natural inclination, and all the resistance of the body of death. If you think this too much, you think much to be Christians indeed, however you pretend to the name. Those that are acquainted with their own hearts find it very hard to get them raised to a spiritual and heavenly temper, very difficult to get them pulled up, though they have the advantage of the most powerful ordinances, to any good posture ; and, when with much ado they are got up, exceeding difficult to keep them there. Alas ! we seem to be forcing a weighty stone up a steep hill ; when, with much toil we have got it near the top, take but our hands off a little, leave it but to itself, and down it runs further in a moment than we can get it up again in some hours. Our way to heaven lies up the hill ; that which is spiritual and heavenly is above us ; the natural bent and tendency of our hearts is downwards : as there is no getting them up without toil and pains, so, when we have raised them a little, leave them but to themselves, grow but a little remiss and negligent, and down they run on a sudden ; we shall quickly find them at the bottom of the hill, in a carnal, lukewarm, earthly temper. When our hearts are effectually touched, and raised, and moved in the use of ordinances, there is no keeping them in a quick and lively motion, without striving and struggling, and, as it were, forcing them on with might and main. The influence of the ordinances falling upon a slothful soul is quite lost, and

merely thrown away upon it: "The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting." (Prov. xii. 27.) So he loseth all his former labour, because he will not take a little more pains; a slothful soul loseth all the advantages he gets by following the ordinances, for want of care and industry to retain and improve what he hath gotten.

6. *Comply with the Spirit of God.*—These influences, both as to the rise and continuance of them, are from him. When you comply not with him, you grieve the Spirit, and provoke him to withdraw; and when he withdraws, these influences will be discontinued. If you detain the truth in unrighteousness, if you confine it to your minds, so as the power thereof descends not upon your hearts and affections, comes not forth in your lives and actions, you do *κατεχευειν*, "imprison" the truth; and that is a great affront to the Spirit of truth. If, when the Spirit of God calls you to take up the cross, to leave all to follow Christ contentedly and cheerfully in a low, reproached, afflicted condition; or if, when he calls you up to a higher degree of self-denial, mortification, and holiness, you hang back, or turn aside, and refuse to follow his conduct, this grieves the Spirit of holiness. If you decline his institution for other devices, shrink back from the work you are engaged to when it grows hazardous, strain your consciences to secure your outward enjoyments, will not be influenced by Him further than is consistent with your ease, credit, safety, and worldly interest, you dishonour the Spirit of wisdom. This provokes the blessed Spirit to withdraw; and when the fire is gone out, the heat will not long continue. If you refuse to continue under the influences of the Spirit in some things, it is righteous with him not to continue them upon you in others. If you fear the displeasure of man more than the grieving of Him; if you lean more to the hopes of this life than his supports, and consult with flesh and blood, instead of being directed by the wisdom which is from above; it will be no wonder if he give you over to your own conduct, and, intermitting his own, leave you under the influences of your carnal fears and worldly hopes.

7. *Be frequent in the use of ordinances.*—Good impressions do most usually wear off in the intervals of holy duties; and the longer these are, the more danger there is; therefore make these interims as short as may be by quick returns to the ordinances. It is observed that places under the line are not so hot as some climates at a further distance from it; and this reason is given for it:—Those under the equinoctial, though they have the sun more vertical, and the beams, falling perpendicularly, cause a more intense heat; yet the nights being of equal length with the days, the coolness of those long nights doth more allay the heat than where the nights are shorter. Long intermissions of holy duties are like long nights; you may find them by experience to be great coolers; if you live under more powerful ordinances than some others, yet if they be more frequent and diligent in the use of what they have, they are like to have more spiritual warmth than you, and that with less allay and intermission. Besides, when the advantage you have got by one ordinance is declining and wearing off, the use of the same, or of some other, may revive and recover it, if you take it speedily before it be too far gone. Further: a slight impression, such as is not like to last long, may be re-inforced for

a longer continuance, if you lay yourselves quickly under the instrument that first made it. When Elijah had once tasted of the provision the Lord made for him in the wilderness, he "laid him down," saith the text, as having enough; but the angel calls him to it again; for, saith he, "The journey is too great for thee." Hereupon he arose once more, "and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights." (1 Kings xix. 6—8.) Once tasting will not serve your turn; a little will not be enough; so long a journey as yours is will spend much; nothing but a frequent and often-repeated use of the ordinances will furnish you with such strength as will last you many days.

8. Finally: *Look up to God for the continuance of this influence.*—Pray, and pray in faith. Seek him, and depend on him for it. He will be found of those that seek him. (Matt. vii. 7.) You have his promise for it; and dependence on him obligeth him, too: "The expectation of the poor shall not perish." (Psalm ix. 18.) It is not for his honour to fail those whom he hath encouraged to rely on him: an ingenuous man will not do it, much less the faithful God. This course David takes in the text; he prays, and encourageth his faith while he is praying, by that interest which the faithful have in the Lord by virtue of the covenant: "O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel our fathers, keep this for ever." Yea, the Lord himself leads us to this, in Deut. v. 24, 27, 29: the people were much affected, in that they had heard the Lord's voice; (verse 24;) this brought them up to a noble resolution: "Speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it, and do it." (Verse 27.) Hereupon the Lord thus expresseth himself: "O that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always," &c. (Verse 29.) What greater encouragement can we have to desire this of God, than that he expresseth himself desirous we should have it? Faith is the main strength of prayer; and the great supports of faith are these two,—that *he is able*, and that *he is willing*. These are to faith like the two pillars of the temple, 1 Kings vii. 21; and the names of them there expressed are very apposite: "He set up the right pillar, and called the name thereof *Jachin*;" that is, "he will establish," he is willing: "and he set up the left pillar, and called the name thereof *Boaz*;" that is, "in him is strength," he is able. Now, faith hath both these pillars to support it in this business. That the Lord *is able* to continue his influences, you will not question, I hope: he "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us;" (Eph. iii. 20;) and that he *is willing*, he puts it out of question, when he useth such an expression as, amongst men, signifies a passionate desire, "O that there were such a heart in them," &c. Now, saith the philosopher, *Εαν τις θελη και δυναται*, &c., "That which one is both able and willing to do shall be done." Both reason and faith see ground enough to conclude this. Pray then, and pray believing; for as the Lord is able to do it, so it is according to his will; and whatsoever you ask according to his will, believing, it shall be done. (Matt. xxi. 22.)

Thus much for what you are to practise: there are some things to be

avoided, if you would have the influence of the ordinances to be lasting : these we shall comprise in four particulars :—

1. *Take heed you perform not holy duties negligently.*—A heartless, formal, negligent attendance on the ordinances will be so far from procuring a durable blessing, that it will fix a curse upon you : “Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord negligently,” [or “deceitfully”]. (Jer. xlviii. 10 : see Mal. i. 8, 14.) If you invert the apostle’s advice, and deal with the things of God, as you should do with those of the world ; (1 Cor. vii. ;) if you pray as though you prayed not, and hear as though you heard not, and use the ordinances as though you did not use them ; they will be no otherwise effectual than if there were no efficacy in them ; it will continue on you as though it continued not ; like that of the sun in a winter day, which thaws the earth a little at noon, but so as it is harder frozen up the next night. Therefore let your hearts be engaged in every holy duty : “Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me ?” (Jer. xxx. 21.) You must hear as for life : “Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day. For it is not a vain thing for you ; because it is your life,” &c. (Deut. xxxii. 46, 47.) You must wrestle in prayer ; your hearts in this duty should be, as it were, in a conflict, in an agony ; *συναγωνισασθαι* is the apostle’s word : “Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for the love of the Spirit, *that ye strive together with me* in your prayers to God for me.” (Rom. xv. 30.) Your prayers should be such as the other apostle describes : “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” (James v. 16.) The word rendered “effectual fervent,” is *ενεργουμενη*. Now *ενεργουμενος* is “one possessed with a spirit,” and acted by it. If the word here used look that way, then, suitable to the matter to which it is applied, it imports a possession in a good sense. And *δουσης ενεργουμενη* will be a prayer full of the Holy Ghost, wherein that blessed Spirit is operative, exerting its force and *energy* ; such a prayer as shows the soul to be possessed of the Holy Spirit and acted by it, so as all the powers of that soul are set a-work and put upon motion towards God “effectually.” Such a prayer “avails much,” procures great advantages, and of long continuance.

Generally, in all holy ordinances your souls should stretch out themselves to reach the Lord ; they should spring up to him in acts of love and desire, and clasp about him with delight and complacence, and lay hold on him with a humble and filial confidence, and stir up themselves to lay hold on him. “We do all fade as a leaf,” saith the church ; (both their persons and their righteousness did so ;) and the reason thereof follows : “There is none that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee.” (Isai. lxiv. 6, 7.)

2. *Beware of the world.*—Meddle not with it more than needs must ; and when it is needful, engage not therein but with fear, caution, and vigilance. Carry yourselves amongst worldly objects and employments, as though you were amongst cheats and thieves : they have the art to pick your hearts slyly, and to rob them of that which is more precious than gold, when you little think of it.

Let not your minds and hearts plunge themselves in the world :

nothing sooner, nothing oftener, extinguisheth divine influences than this puddle. The cares, and delights, and employments of the world, when they are immoderate or unseasonable,—they “choke the word,” (Matt. xiii. 22,) they stifle the issue of holy ordinances, so as it becomes like the untimely birth of a woman.

When your hearts are warmed in holy duties, you should be as cautious and wary how you venture into the world, as you are of going into the frosty air when you are all in a sweat. What is kindled by the word or prayer, &c., how quickly is it puffed out by the world, when you rush into it unwarily! It requires as much care to keep it in, as to keep a candle in, when you would carry it through the open air in a rainy, blustering night. The further you are above the world, the longer may you retain any spiritual impressions. Geographers write of some mountains whose tops are above the middle region of the air; and there lines and figures being drawn in the dust, have been found, say they, in the same form and order, untouched, undefaced, a long time after; and the reason is, because they are above those winds, and showers, and storms, which soon wear out and efface any such draughts in this lower region. The lower your minds and hearts and conversations are, the more in the hurry of this boisterous world, the less will any thing that is heavenly and spiritual abide upon them. Let the soul be brought into never so good order by the help of holy duties, yet a little unwary engaging in earthly business will ruffle, disturb, and quite discompose it.

When your souls are, by power of the ordinance, set on motion towards Christ and heaven, if you would hold on in a continued course, you must beware of worldliness, and keep free as much as may be from earthly incumbrances and entanglements: “Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.” (Heb. xii. 1.) Let us persevere and hold out in that gracious and heavenly course which the gospel hath put us on: but that this may be done, one great impediment must be removed; “the sin which doth so easily beset us” must be shaken off. Now, that sin, as some expositors conceive, is worldliness; and it is probable: for *περιστασις*, being “a circumstance,” *αμαρτιαν ευπεριστατον*, if we render it literally, is “the sin that hath goodly circumstances.” And no sin sets off itself with more goodly circumstances than worldliness; no sin hath more specious pleas and pretences to excuse, vindicate, and justify itself. No sin hath more fig-leaves to cover its nakedness, and to shroud it from discovery and conviction, than worldliness. This must be shaken off: it is the great defacer of heavenly impressions, the chief interrupter of holy motions: if you would hold on when the impetus which is impressed on you by any ordinance hath set you a-going, beware of the world, beware of worldliness.

3. *Take heed of any inordinacy in affection, inclination, or design.*—Such inordinacies give the heart a strong bias; holy duties check it but a little, give it but as it were a small rub: when this is once passed over, it will hold on in that course to which it is most swayed. The ministry of John Baptist had some influence upon Herod: “He heard John

gladly, and did many things :” (Mark vi. 20 :) but, sensuality being predominant, those better inclinations were quite overpowered. The word had some effect upon Simon Magus : “ He believed,” and being taken for a believer, “ was baptized,” and afterwards “ continued with Philip,” &c. ; (Acts viii. 13 ;) but a strong affectation of vain-glory suppressed those better motions, and the worst got upmost. Take heed of any inordinacy as to lawful things ; your relations, studies, ordinary callings, &c. : this will not suffer you to come so often to holy duties, to stay so long in them, or to be so intent upon them, as is requisite for the deep impressing of their efficacy ; and, after they are done, this will hurry your souls from under those thoughts and exercises which should fix and settle their virtue and influence upon your minds and hearts. Natural bodies follow the tendency of that element which is predominant in them : a stone moves downwards, it would be at the centre ; that which stops it, offers it violence, and when the force is removed, down it falls freely. Just thus doth the heart follow the tendency of these inordinacies : if it meet with a stop in an ordinance, that is but an ungrateful violence to it ; it will struggle to break through it, will be restless till the force be removed, till the power of the ordinance be shaken off, which checks an inclination natural and acceptable to it : and what hopes in this case that the efficacy of any holy duty will long continue ?

4. *Rest not in the best performance of any duty, nor in any assistances you find therein, though they be special and more than ordinary.*— If this satisfy and exalt you, you will be apt to grow secure and careless, not looking to the improvement of ordinances when once they are over ; and that is the way to lose all. We are apt to take the most dangerous colds, when we are in the greatest heats. And it is observed that some professors have had the foulest falls, after they have been most elevated in holy employments. The resting upon the *opus operatum*, “ the mere outward performance of a duty,” when the heart is not engaged therein, is an open pit which none fall into save those that are blind ; but the resting upon the *opus operantis*, “ a duty affectionately performed,” is a more secret, and so a more dangerous, snare. He that makes account he hath done enough, because he hath done well, may be apt to think he is not obliged to look further after it ; and so the continued influence of the duty upon his heart and life, which is indeed the principal advantage of it, may be neglected and, consequently, lost for want of looking to.

5. To conclude : *Make not the ordinances your end, but use them as the means to attain it.*— They are not enjoined us for themselves, but in order to something more desirable ; their end is something further than their use. Take heed your place not all your religion in hearing, praying, communicating, &c. ; neither count yourselves religious enough, because you are much and often in these duties. This is to make them your end ; and then you will rest therein, without proceeding further ; for the motion of the agent is terminated in his end : and so you will stay short of that for which they were principally intended, namely, the keeping of your hearts and minds in a settled posture of holiness and righteousness ; and neglect that by which this main end of the ordinances is only to be attained, namely, the continuing of their influence upon you.

So much for the case propounded, which I have endeavoured to resolve, as the nature of it requires, practically; and therefore as there is no time for, so there will be less need of, application. But that I may not dismiss you without something of this nature, having laid your duty before you in the observation, and showed you how it may be performed in satisfying the case; let me now press you to the performance of it by one consideration, which will have the force of a motive, where there is any sense of soul-concernments:—

If the efficacy of the ordinances abide not on you, you cannot be fruitful under them, at least you cannot “bring forth fruit to perfection,” as the expression is. (Luke viii. 14.)—You may bring forth buds, or leaves, or blossoms, &c.; but if their influence continue not, that which you bring forth will never come to ripeness and perfection; it will be crude and sour at best: and sour grapes are as bad as no fruit, in the Lord’s account; and unfruitfulness will provoke the Lord to deprive you of the gospel and ordinances: “He looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof. I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.” (Isai. v. 2, 5, 6.) The meaning of this parable, so far as concerns our purpose, is expressed by another threatening denounced for the same sin: “The kingdom of God,” that is, the gospel of the kingdom, “shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.” (Matt. xxi. 43.) And Christ’s threatening of Ephesus amounts to as much: “Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.” The first impressions of the gospel were worn off and vanished. And what follows? “I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent.” (Rev. ii. 4, 5.) So that this sin will pull up your hedge, and break down your wall, level all your securities, and so lay you open to the boar of the wood, and the wild beasts of the field: such as, instead of digging and pruning you, will devour and lay you waste, and Sharon will become a desert. This sin will provoke Christ to let the stars fall out of his right hand; so as you will be left to perish for want of vision. This sin will provoke the Lord to take the gospel of the kingdom from you, and leave you under the hellish influences of the prince of darkness. This sin will overturn your candlesticks, and extinguish your lights, and leave you nothing but the snuffs. This sin will deliver your strength into captivity, and your glory into the enemies’ hand. This sin will smite the shepherds, and scatter the flocks, and lay the heritage of God desolate. This sin will cause your sun to set at noon, and turn the day of your gracious visitation into a sad and dismal night. This sin will turn the place which hath been “a valley of vision” into a seat of darkness, and a “valley of the shadow of death.”

If, then, you would avoid a judgment which strikes not only at your estates and lives, but at your souls; if you would prevent that dreadful stroke which may not only reach yourselves, but your posterity, your children and children’s children; if you would not have them and your-

selves, and thousands and millions with you, bereaved of the gospel, and the means of grace and life ; take all care and pains, that the influences of the ordinances do not slide from you, that they be not as water spilt upon the ground. Be faithful and diligent in the use of the forementioned directions, and all other means which may be effectual to fix them. And if hereby your hearts are wrought up to such a resolution, the “Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of your hearts.”

A SUPPLEMENT
TO
THE MORNING EXERCISE
AT CRIPPLEGATE :

OR,

SEVERAL MORE CASES OF CONSCIENCE

PRACTICALLY RESOLVED,

BY SUNDRY MINISTERS.

Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.—2 Corinthians i. 12.

Conscientia — est nescio quid divinum, et nunquam perit, officium nostrum nobis semper ad memoriam revocat.—DOROTHEUS, *Biblioth. Patrum* tom. iv.

“Conscience is an inexpressible and divine something, which never dies, but which is constantly employed in recalling our duty to our recollection.”—EDIT.

Querimus, quomodo animus semper æqualis, secundoque cursu eat, et propitius sibi sit, et sua lætus adspiciat : et hoc gaudium non interrumpat, sed placido statu maneat, nec attollens se unquam, nec deprimens.—SENECA *De Tranquillitate Animæ*, p. 678.

“This, then, is the subject of our inquiry : How the mind of man may be always calm and equable, proceed onward in a prosperous course, may not be vindictive but benignant towards itself, and may contemplate its endowments and possessions with a joy of complacency ; how it may avoid the interruption of this joy, and may itself continue in a state of placid tranquillity, being at no time unduly elated or depressed.”—EDIT.

TO THAT PART OF CHRIST'S FLOCK TO WHICH
I AM MORE SPECIALLY RELATED,

*Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus
Christ our Saviour.*

BELOVED CHRISTIANS,

As I called-in a contribution of help for the composing of a legacy for others, before my civil death: so I now tender you a Supplement to that Exercise, for your better liveliness of spiritual life. I shall say nothing to commend these Sermons to you; my brethren are all herein unanimous, to seek the church's profit, not their own applause; only this I must say, to prevent mistake, namely, if any curious reader shall find matter of exception, (beside the errors of printing, which I confess are too many,) the blame must be personal, because this joint-work is no otherwise social, than as single pearls strung together make one neck-lace. I easily grant, here is not yet a stating of all important cases; yet be this known to you, whosoever shall follow these directions shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the work of the Lord, nor miss of an abundant entrance into his everlasting kingdom. Live up to what you have attained, and you may be confident that what is further wanting, God will, as you want it, supply it. Be assured of this, that you will get more skill and strength for all necessary graces and duties by an humble, serious, constant course of godliness, than you possibly can do by captious criticisms, and wrangling contentions about lesser things, in which too many spend their lives. I herein appeal to your consciences, should not these Sermons answer expectation, but, according to your judgment, either the cases are ill chosen, or not well stated, in that the matter is either defective or redundant, the language too curious or too careless, the directions too common or too singular: I appeal from your passions to your consciences, and down-right charge you in the name of my Master, who must be your Judge, that you read with other spectacles. These are not calculated to humour you, but to better you. These are not duties to be cavilled at, but to be practised. O that you may be effectually persuaded, (SERMON I.) That your love to God must be predominant, and growing, or you degrade yourselves below the beasts; (II.) That your love to man must be universal and spi-

ritual, or you cannot evidence your love to God; (III.) That your love to the world must truckle under both, be subservient to both, and never be otherwise; for if the world master you, it will ruin you. O that your awakened consciences may now alarm you, (IV.) To catch at salvation while it is offered, lest you perish for ever. Though it is a vexed problem, (V.) What knowledge is necessary to salvation; yet can you satisfy your consciences without diligent endeavours to proportion your knowledge to the means you enjoy? and to bring forth fruits every day, as those that in some measure feel, (VI.) What it is to be in the spirit on the Lord's day; and that the word (VII.) Preached, and (VIII.) Read, may be so impressed upon heart and life, that it may be an infallible evidence you are taught of God? And when through weakness of the flesh your duties may prove wearisome, (IX.) Learn to refresh yourselves with the songs of Zion. But would you have more particular directions? They are before you. Here you may learn true Christianity, (X.) In the daily improvement of your baptism. Here you may learn, (XI.) How to propagate religion to posterity, by riveting truth upon your own hearts, and teaching it to others. But while you are giving milk to babes, (XII.) Excuse not yourselves upon any account whatsoever from frequent and hungry feeding upon stronger meat. Be you as willing to seal to the conditions of the covenant, as you are desirous God should seal to the promises of it. But who is sufficient for these things? Pour out your hearts therefore, and lift up your souls to God in all manner of prayer. (XIII.) Let extraordinary prayer answer that title, (XIV.) Your secret prayer speak secret communion with God. (XV.) Let your family prayer bring down blessings upon your family, that you be neither holy nor happy alone, but that when your family relations shall cease, they may bless God to eternity that ever there were such relations between you. Now therefore, (XVI.) Let husbands and wives be the liveliest emblems in the world of Christ and his church. (XVII.) Let parents and children be the evidences and pledges of God's special presence with this and the next generation. (XVIII.) Let masters and servants adorn the Gospel by their exemplary faithfulness to their heavenly Master. Thus doing, (XIX.) Your thoughts will be cured, and in them you will enjoy God: (XX.) Your tongues will in some sense be God's glory as well as yours. But then, (XXI.) You must cautiously avoid the catching canker of detraction: (XXII.) So you shall by your conversations convince the world there is an excellency in Christianity. And that all this

may be as well acceptable to God as approved of men, (XXIII.) Do all in the name of Christ; and while you thus embark with Christ, (XXIV.) He will steer you safe between presumption and despair, those rocks upon one of which most perish. Hereby also, (XXV.) You will make your port with the cheering joys of an heroic faith; (XXVI.) And keep above all vexing discontents with your worldly condition. (XXVII.) And what afflictions God's wise love shall inflict, you will be able to bear them with more than a *Roman* courage. (XXVIII.) And though reproachful reproofs may bear hard upon you, you will not fret, but welcome them as a precious balm. But when you have done your best, yet, through the remainders of corruption, guilt will be contracted; (XXIX.) You cannot but be restless till it be removed. (XXX.) Then you may rather hope for than fear death; and (XXXI.) Grace, thus in exercise, is but one degree from glory. Now, Christians, though there are many particular cases wherein you will need direction, yet let me close with this request: Try your utmost, what the practical transcript of these directions into your hearts and lives will produce, ere you complain for more. That these may be useful to you (whoever else censures them as useless) shall be the hearty prayer of

Your worthless servant,

SAMUEL ANNESLEY.

June 19th, 1674.

SUPPLEMENT
TO
THE MORNING EXERCISE.

SERMON I.

BY THE REV. SAMUEL ANNESLEY, LL.D.

HOW MAY WE ATTAIN TO LOVE GOD WITH ALL OUR HEARTS,
SOULS, AND MINDS?

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.—Matthew xxii. 37, 38.

It is fit this Exercise should begin with a general introduction, that may indifferently serve every sermon that shall be preached. I should be much mistaken, and so would you too, should we think this text unsuitable: let us therefore, not only in the fear, but also in the love, of God, address ourselves to the management of it.

This command you have in Deut. vi. 5: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." This command is not found in Exodus, nor in Leviticus, but only in Deuteronomy; that is, "the second law of Moses," which, as some express it, bore a type of the second law, namely, the evangelical, to which this command is proper: for the old law was a law of *fear* tending to bondage, and therefore Moses mentions the incussion of terror in the giving of it; which when he hath dispatched, he begins the following chapter with *love*, noting that the Holy Ghost will cause the law of love to succeed the law of fear. And it is observable that the Jews read this place with the highest observation; and their scribes write the first and last words of the preface to it with greater letters than ordinary, to amplify the sense, and to note that this is the beginning and the end of the divine law; and they read this scripture morning and evening with great religion.*

THE OCCASION.

The occasion of Christ's pressing this command upon them at this time was this: When the Pharisees heard how he had baffled the Sadducees, and stopped their mouths with so proper and fit an answer that they had no more to say, they consult how they may show their acumen

* JANSENII *Harmonia*.

and sharpness of wit, to diminish Christ's credit concerning his doctrine and skill in scripture; and therefore they choose out one of their most accomplished interpreters of the law, captiously to propose an excellent question. They call him "Master," whose disciples they will not be; *they* inquire after the "great" commandment *who* will not duly observe the "least;" they thought Christ could not return such an answer but that they might very plausibly except against it.* If Christ should have named any one command to be the greatest, their exception was ready: "Why not another as great as that?" But Christ's wisdom shames their subtilty; Christ doth not call any command great, with the lessening of the rest; but he repeats the sum of the whole law, and distinguisheth it into two great commands, according to the subordination of their objects. "Thou shalt love," † &c.

Though the excellency of the subject calls for the enlargement of your hearts, yet the copiousness of it requires the contracting of my discourse. To save time, therefore, let me open my text and case both together. The case is this:—

CASE.

What is it to love God with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the mind; and how may we be able to do it?

In short, *we must love God*, as near as it is possible, *infinitely*.

For directions in this case, I shall follow this method:—

I. Show you, what it is to love God with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the mind.

II. I shall endeavour to demonstrate, that it is our unquestionable and indispensable duty *so* to love God.

III. I shall acquaint you what abilities are requisite for the well-discharging of this duty, and how to attain them.

IV. I shall give you directions how to improve and augment all the abilities we can get, that we may have a growing love to God.

V. I shall close with the best persuasives I can think of, that you would be graciously ambitious of such qualifications, and vigorously diligent in such duties.

I. *What is it to love God with all the heart, soul, and mind?*

We must not be too curious in distinguishing these words: the same thing is meant, when the words are used *singly*; as David is said to follow God "with all his heart:" (1 Kings xiv. 8:) and *doubly*; Josiah made his people, as well as himself, to covenant "to walk after the Lord with all their heart and all their soul:" (2 Kings xxiii. 3:) and where *three words* are used; as, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might:" (Deut. vi. 5:) and when *four words* are used; as, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." (Mark xii. 30.)

Love to God must go through and possess our whole nature, and all the powers of it. The mind must think of God; the will must delight in God; in short, our whole strength must be employed to please him. We must love nothing more than God, nothing equal with God; we

* CARTWRIGHT'S "Harmony."

† AUTHOR *imperfecti operis*.

must love God above all, and that for himself; but all other things in God, and for God.* We must be willing to lose all, yea, life itself, rather than to admit any thing contrary to the love of God. All these expressions denote the intenseness of our affections, the unexpressibleness of our obligation, and the contemptibleness of every thing that shall challenge a share in our love. All these expressions admonish us of our infirmity, provoke us to humility, and set us a-longing after a better life.† It is a notable expression of one:‡ “The love of the heart is not understood, but felt; the love of the soul is not felt, but understood; because the love of the soul is its judgment. He that loves God as he is here commanded, believes that all good is in God, and that God is all that is good; and that without God there is no good. He believes that God is all power and wisdom; and that without God there is neither power nor wisdom,” &c.

But notwithstanding all that hath been spoken, no doubt but there is a singular emphasis in the words; and the Holy Ghost intends a more full declaration of the manner of our love by these several expressions. Though to be over-critical in the distinguishing of these words will rather intricate than explicate this great command; yet to follow a plain scriptural interpretation will give light into the duty.

Let us inquire therefore, 1. What it is to love. 2. What it is to love God. 3. What it is to love God in that manner here expressed.

WHAT LOVE IS.

1. *What is love?*—“Love is an affection of union, whereby we desire or enjoy perpetual union with the thing loved.” §

It is not a *carnal* love I am now to speak of. The philosopher could observe, that there can be no true love among wicked men.

It is not a *natural* love; for that may as well be brutish as rational; and divine love is transcendently rational.

It is not a merely *moral* love; for that consists *in a mean*; but divine love is always *in an extreme*.

Divine love is a compound of all the former; but it adds infinitely more to them than it borrows of them. Divine love is supernaturally natural; it turns moral virtues into spiritual graces. It engageth men to attempt as much for the glorifying of God as all the creatures besides, from the highest angel to the most insensible stone.

WHAT IT IS TO LOVE GOD.

2. *What is love to God?*—Methinks a lax description best suits my design. This divine love,—it is the unspeakable enlargement of the heart towards God; it is the ecstasy and ravishment of the heart in God; it is the soul’s losing itself in God; it is the continual working of the heart towards God. Every faculty of the soul is actually engaged; the mind is musing and plodding how to please God, and enjoy him; the will is graciously obstinate, the policy of hell cannot charm it off its object; the affections are all passions in their eager motions towards God; the conscience is a busy-body, necessitating the whole man to a

* BUCERUS. † GERHARDI *Harmonia*. ‡ AUTHOR *imperfecti operis*. § MARTIN LUTHER.

jealous watch. I said, this love—it is the enlargement of the heart towards God: when the “love of God is shed abroad in the heart,” it is as the breaking of a ball of lightning, it sets all on a flame immediately. It is the unspeakable enlargement of the heart towards God; the highest rhetoric is too flat to express it, as is obvious in that Song of Songs, that Song of Loves. I have no way to set this out unto you but by words: the plainest and most intelligible expressions I can give you shall be by several similitudes, which I shall pursue till they leave me to admiration. I shall borrow metaphors from things without life, from plants, from sensitive creatures, from man.

METAPHORS TO ILLUSTRATE WHAT IT IS TO LOVE GOD.

(1.) *The soul's love to God may be a little shadowed forth, by the love of the iron to the loadstone*,—Which ariseth from a hidden quality; though to say so, is but the hiding of our ignorance. The motion of the iron toward the loadstone is slow while at a distance, but quick when near: and when it but touches it, it clings so fast, that, unless forced, it will never part; and when it is parted, it will, to the farthest part of the world, retain the virtue of its touch. So the soul: while at a distance from God,—it moves slowly; but as the Father draws, it runs; and when once it comes to be graciously united, the apostle asks, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” (Rom. viii. 35;) not only, “Who shall hinder us from partaking of God's love?” but, “Who can take us off from our loving of God?” Christ gives the answer, their union with God, their enjoyment of God, is inseparable; (John x. 28, 29;) and though they may (as sometimes they will in their imperfect state) have some warping on their parts, and some withdrawing on God's, yet their love to God, in the lowest ebb, tremblingly hankers after him; the soul cannot forget its alone resting-place. (Psalm cxvi. 7.)

(2.) *Our love to God is like the love of the flower of the sun to the sun*.—It springs of a very little seed. It is not only our faith, but our love, that is at first like a “grain of mustard-seed;” it grows the fastest of any flower whatsoever. It is not only faith, but love, that “groweth exceedingly.” (2 Thess. i. 3.) It always turns and bows itself towards the sun. Our love to God is always bowing and admiring; always turning to and following after God. It opens and shuts with the sun's rising and setting. Our love, when it is what it should be, opens itself to God, and closes itself against all other objects. It brings forth seed enough for abundance of other flowers: love to God is the most fruitful grace, that when it “blossoms and buds, it fills the face of the world with fruit.” (Isai. xxvii. 6.)

(3.) *Our love to God is like the love of the turtle to her mate*.—God's people are his turtle. (Psalm lxxiv. 19.) I grant, they most properly resemble brotherly love; but why not our love to God? They never associate with other birds: the loving soul keeps fellowship with God, and, out of choice, with him only, and those that bear his image. The turtle never sings and flies abroad for recreation, as other birds; but they have a peculiar note for each other: the soul that loves God flutters not about for worldly vanities; no recreation so sweet as communion with God; the soul's converse with God is peculiar. When one dies, the

other droops till it dies, so that they do, as it were, live and die in the embraces of each other : so the soul that loves God,—his “loving-kindness is better than life ;” (Psalm lxi. 3 ;) and there is nothing makes a saint more impatient of living, than that he cannot while he lives have a full enjoyment of God.

(4.) *Our love to God should be like, though exceed, Jacob's love to Benjamin.* (Gen. xlii. 38.)—He will starve rather than part with Benjamin ; and when hunger forced him from him, and he was like to be by a wife kept from him, Judah offers to purchase his liberty with his own, because his father's “life was bound up in the lad's life :” (Gen. xlv. 30 :) so the soul that loves God is not able to bear the thoughts of parting with him ; his life is bound up in enjoying the presence of God. I have been too long ; but O that I could affect your hearts as well as inform your judgments, what it is to love God !

WHAT IT IS TO LOVE GOD WITH THE HEART.

3. (1.) Now then let us re-assume the inquiry, *What it is to love the Lord our God “with all our heart.”*—Some refer this to the thoughts,* some to the vegetative soul,† some to the understanding, that it may be free from error,‡ others, as if he had said, “Lay up all these things in your hearts.”§ But the other words will take-in most of these ; and therefore, according to scripture, we must understand the will and affections ; and so the word is taken, Joshua xxii. 5 : “Moses the servant of the Lord charged you, to love the Lord your God with all your heart.” As out of the heart proceeds life, so from the will proceed all operations ; the will ought to be carried towards God with its whole force ; all the affections of a pure and holy heart are directed to the only love of God.|| Love riseth from the will. Now there is a two-fold act of the will : ¶ “that which is immediately drawn forth of the will itself,” the will's own act ; and such an act the will exerts in loving God ; and then there is “the commanded act of the will,” which is the act of some other power moved to that act by the will. Where the will is filled with the love of God, it moves the understanding to meditate of God whom we love, and to inquire after the excellency of the object loved.

WHAT IT IS TO LOVE GOD WITH THE WHOLE HEART.

We must not love God only with the heart, but with the *whole* heart. Pray mark this : perfect hatred and perfect love know no such thing as the world *calls* ** prudence. If you perfectly hate any one, all things about him displease you ; whatever he says or does, though it be never so good, it seems to you to be evil : so if you perfectly love any one, all things about him please you. Some expound this totality by this distinction : We are to love God with the whole heart positively and negatively : *positively*, where all powers of the will are set to love God ; and this we cannot perfectly do while we are travellers, till we come to our heavenly country : but, *negatively*, thou shalt so love God, that nothing

* AUGUSTINE. † GREGORY NYSSEN. ‡ ANSELM. § ORIGEN. || GERHARDI Harm. c. 156. ¶ *Elicitus et imperatus.* ** *Judicium rerum non cognoscit.*—AUTHOR *imperfecti operis.* “It does not call into exercise that faculty by which we attempt to form a right judgment of things.”—EDIT.

contrary to the love of God shall be entertained in thy heart ; and this we may attain to a pretty tolerable perfection of in this life.*

The *whole heart* is opposed either to a divided and dispersed heart, or to a remiss and a sluggish heart : God doth as much abominate a partnership in our love, as a husband or wife abhors any such thing in their conjugal relation. We must love nothing but God, or that which may please God. He that loves God with his heart, and not with his whole heart, loves something else, and not God.

As the *whole heart* is opposed to a remiss and sluggish heart, the meaning is this,—the care of our heart should be set upon nothing so much as upon the loving and pleasing of God ; we must prefer God alone before all other objects of our love, and there must be an ardency of affection : whatever we do, it must be for his sake, and according to his will.†

(2.) “*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul.*”—I forbear to mention the different conjectures of those that try the acuteness of their parts to produce some peculiar interpretation which others have not. By comparing scripture with scripture, the sensitive life, or the sensitive appetite, is here meant. Thus : “His soul clave unto Dinah, and he loved the damsel.” (Gen. xxxiv. 3.) Again : “Thy soul” (thy sensual affections) “longeth to eat flesh.” (Deut. xii. 20.) And because “the soul” is in many places taken for “life,” as Exod. iv. 19 : “All the men are dead that sought thy life ;” (Heb. “thy soul ;”) so Exod. xxi. 23 : “Thou shalt give life for life ;” (Heb. “soul for soul ;”) and so we may take it here *intensively* for the sensitive appetite, and *extensively* for the life. The soul is here taken for the animal life, which comprehends both the vegetative and sensitive part. To love God with the soul is to subject all those works that pertain to an animal life unto the love of God. Plainly, and in short : it is not enough to love God in our will, but we must not admit any thing contrary to the love of God in our sensual delights. Whatsoever sensualists do for the gratifying of their lusts and desires, let those things be drained from the dregs of sin, and consecrate them all unto God. Whatever use wicked men make of their souls in a way of hatred of God, we must make the contrary use in a way of loving of God. And then,

WHAT IT IS TO LOVE GOD WITH ALL THE SOUL.

Thou must love God “with all thy soul.”—We must be ready to lay down our lives for God.‡ If any one should be asked what in all the world was most dear unto him, he would answer, his life ; for life-sake tender mothers have cast-off the sense of nature, and fed upon their own children. It is life that affords us being, sense, motion, understanding, riches, dominions. If a man had the empire of the world, he could enjoy it no longer than he hath his soul in his body : when that is gone, he presently becomes a horrid carcass, or rather a loathsome dunghill. Now then, if a man love his life so much, why should he not love God more, by whom he lives, and from whom he expects greater things than this life ? God is the soul of our soul, and the life of our life ; he is

* CAJETAN.

† CHEMNITH *Harmonia*, cap. cv. &c.

‡ ORIGEN.

nearer to us than our very souls : “ In him we live, and move, and have our being.” (Acts xvii. 28.) He that doth but indifferently weigh these things, will acknowledge that it is no rashness to call that man a monster that loves not God : how, then, can we think of it without grief, that the whole world is full of these monsters ? Almost all men prefer their money, or pleasures, or their honours, or their lusts, before God. So oft as you willingly break any law of God to raise your credit or estate, you prefer the dirt and dust of the world before God. Alas ! what use does a wicked man make of his soul, but to serve his body ? Whereas both soul and body should be wholly taken up with, not only the service, but the love, of God. Then may you be said to love God with all your souls, when your whole life is filled with the love of God, when your worldly business truckles under the love of God : the love of the dearest relations should be but hatred when compared with your love to God. When you eat and drink to the glory of God, sleep no more than may make you serviceable unto God ; when your solitary musings are about the engaging your souls to God ; when your social conference is about the things of God ; when all acts of worship endear God to you ; when all your duties bring you nearer to God ; when the love of God is the sweetness of your mercies, and your cordial under afflictions ; when you can love God under amazing providences, as well as under refreshing deliverances ; then you may be said to love God with all your souls.

WHAT IT IS TO LOVE GOD WITH THE MIND.

(3.) “ *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy mind.*”— Though Anselm take this for the memory, that we should remember nothing whereby we are hindered in our thinking of God ; yet generally this is taken for the understanding ; * and so the evangelist Mark expressly interprets it, when he renders this command in these words : *Εξ όλης της συνεσεως*, “ With all the understanding.” (Mark xii. 33.) To love God with our minds, is to have the understanding moved and commanded by the love of God, to assent unto those things that are to be believed, and to admit nothing into the understanding which is contrary to the love of God. † The mind should let nothing go in or out but what pays tribute of love to God. There is one [who] interprets the word by the etymology of the word “ mind,” from “ measuring.” ‡ The mind must be so full of love to God, that love must measure all our works. When we eat, we should think how hateful it is to God that we should indulge our palate, and thence shun gluttony ; when we drink, we should think how abominable drunkenness is in the sight of God, and thence drink temperately ; (1 Cor. x. 31 ;) so that “ whether we live, we live unto the Lord ; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord : whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s.” (Rom. xiv. 8.) Our life and our death must be measured by our love to God.

* MUSCULUS. † CAJETAN. ORIGEN. *Nihil cogitantes, vel proferentes nisi ea que Dei sunt.* “ Thinking and speaking of nothing but of the things of God.”—EDIT. ‡ *Mens dicitur a metiendo, &c.*—AVENDANUS.

WHAT IT IS TO LOVE GOD WITH ALL OUR MIND.

We must love God "with all our mind."—We must always converse with God in our minds and thoughts; our thoughts must kindle our affections of love. Love to God makes the hardest commands easy; while our thoughts are immersed in love to God, love to enemies will be an easy command; the keeping under of our bodies by mortification will be an easy work; persecution for righteousness will be a welcome trial. Love will change death itself into life.

There is another word added by Mark, which, indeed, is in Deut. vi. 5; whence this is taken: "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy strength.*"—Now, because this word doth not express any other species or power of the soul, but only notes the highest and most intense degree of love that flows from all the faculties of the soul, I will close this inquiry with a word of this. We are to love God with all the powers of our soul, with all the members of our bodies. Our understandings, wills, inward and outward senses, appetite, speech, whatever we have, whatever we are, must be all directed into the love of God, and into obedience flowing from love. You commonly hear that of Bernard, "The cause of loving God is God himself, and the only measure is to love him without measure." We must love God strongly, because with all our strength. Our love to God must get above interruptions; no threatenings, calamities, or discommodities whatsoever, must pull us away from God, but that all the powers of soul and body must be taken up into his service; that our eyes, beholding the wonderful works of God, the sun, moon, and stars, the clear evidences of his Divinity, we may be in love with him; that our ears, piously hearkening to his instructions, may be in love with him; that our mouth may love to praise him, our hands to act for him; that our feet may be swift to run the way of his commandments; that our affections may be withdrawn from earthly things, and delivered over to the love of God; that whatever is within us, "it may be bound over to the service of God." * He that thus loves God, need not trouble himself how to order and dispose the several words here used,—his heart, soul, mind, will; whatever he is, hath, knows, understands, obtains, is, all due to God; neither is there any thing in the whole world to be valued before God. And thus I have given you a lame account, what it is to love God, &c.

IT IS OUR INDISPENSABLE DUTY THUS TO LOVE GOD.

II. The second thing I undertook was, demonstratively to prove, that *it is our indispensable duty thus to love God.*—To love God is our great natural duty. Man would more naturally love God than himself, were it not for sin. Neither angels nor men were at first commanded to love God; nature wanted no spur to this duty. The law of love was implanted in nature. "Thou hast made me, O Lord," saith Augustine; "and my heart is unquiet till it come to thee." "O my heart," saith he, "every creature expels thee from them, and that not without shame,

* *Id omne Deo obsequio mancipetur, &c.*—CHEMNITIUS.

that thou mayest go to God. They do, as it were, say, 'O miserable wretch! why dost thou adhere to me? I am not the good which thou requirest.' O my soul, why dost thou go thirsting among the creatures to beg some drops that will rather provoke than quench thy thirst? Why dost thou leave that everlasting Fountain, where thou mayest be perfectly satisfied? What canst thou desire that is not fully and perfectly to be had in God?" *

THIS IS THE GREAT COMMAND.

I shall at present urge no other demonstration than Christ's reason in the following verse: "*This is the first and the great commandment.*"—Not that any command of God is small. The commands in scripture are like the stars in the firmament; which, though to ignorant persons they are but like twinkling candles, yet are greater than the whole earth: so these commands, that careless persons overlook as inconsiderable, are such as without respect unto them there is no salvation. I grant there is a difference in the commands; for example: the command about "paring the nails" is of lesser moment than that of having "no other God;" (Deut. xxi. 12; v. 7;) nay, in the same kind Christ threatens the scribes and Pharisees for their hypocrisy, that they were so exact in tything their gardens, and so remiss in looking to their hearts. (Matt. xxiii. 23.) But among the commands and the diversity of them, Christ tells us this is the greatest. The Jews (some of them) counted the command about sacrifice to be the greatest, as is hinted in the scribe's saying, This command of loving God is "more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices." (Mark xii. 33.) Others counted that of circumcision to be the greatest; others, that of the sabbath.† Origen observes: "It is well that Christ decides the controversy; though the truth is, he that willingly breaks the least commandment will not stick to break the greatest." While only one sin makes us to forbear another, (for men's lusts cross one another,) when occasion serves, *that* sin will be ventured upon that is now forborne. But this, upon a manifold account, is "the great command."

1. *Ratione objecti*, "In respect of the object."—It is God, the Chiefest Being, the First and Chiefest Good: "What am I, Lord," saith Augustine, "that thou commandest me to love thee, and threatenest me with misery if I do not love thee?" This is no small aggravation of the devil's torments,—that he cannot love God. God may require many things of us; but he requires nothing like this of our love, because this is the only thing wherein we can answer God; "in other things we cannot, or we may not, render God like for like." † God created us, and gave us our being; but we can do nothing like this for God. God preserves us in safety, and daily confers innumerable benefits upon us: God delivers from innumerable dangers both of soul and body. There is none of all this to be done for God; God is infinitely above all such returns; and there are other things wherein we may not render God like

* *STELLA De Amore Dei.*
ex æquo reddere.

† "English Annotations."

‡ *Et vicem licet non*

for like. If God be angry with us, we may not be angry with him; if he reprove us, we must not quarrel with him; if God judge us, we must not censure him. But now God loves us, and through grace we are able to love him again; and he loves us, and God commands us to love him again. It is true, there is no equality between God's loving of us, and our loving of God. God's love does infinitely overcome ours; * but yet our love to God speaks interest and union; the thing loved gives the name to the love. Love is but an indifferent passion, till it be united to the thing loved, and then it gets a denomination. For example: If the object be earthly, it is an earthly love; if sensual, it is a brutish love; if it be man, it is a human love; if God, it is a divine love: so that by our love we are changed and transformed into a thing more noble, or more vile. We therefore debase ourselves in loving any thing but God: there is nothing else worthy of our love. Whatsoever we love, we give it a kind of dominion over us, so that the will loseth its dignity and excellency when it loves inferior things; we are, as it were, married to that we love. "Suppose," saith Raymundus, "a poor man, of mean stock and no reputation, have six daughters: they are all equal by birth as to reputation and esteem, but they are all differenced by their marriage. The eldest marries a farmer, the next a citizen, the third a knight, the fourth a duke, the fifth a king, the sixth an emperor: by these marriages there is a very great inequality. So here, by the object of your love you are dignified or debased." But there is more yet in God's being the object of our love: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God;" **THY GOD**, and therefore thou must love him.

Give me leave to enlarge a little on this, and I will be the briefer in the other considerations, How this is the great command: "Thou shalt love the Lord *thy God*." Those things that are ours, though they are not always lovely, yet we love them; our own children, whether of our bodies or our minds, our own estates. We are more troubled at the loss of any thing wherein our own propriety [property] is concerned, than in all the world besides. A small thing of our own is a thousand times more to us than a thousand times as much of another's. We are more concerned for the cutting off our own finger, than the cutting off another man's head. Propriety [proprietorship] doth exceedingly heighten love. But then, when there is a speciality upon the propriety, that it is impossible to have the want repaired: for example, "my child, and mine only child." Whatever you say of God, you may put an *only* to it. God so loves every gracious soul, as if he had no other person to bestow his love upon; therefore thou must so love God, as if there were nothing else in the world to bestow thy love upon. Alas! what is thine to-day, as to outward things, may be none of thine to-morrow: thou canst not say so of God: God once thine, and for ever thine.

But perhaps you will say, "Were God mine, you should need to say no more to inflame my heart to love him. Propriety in God! could I attain this, I had enough. This is it I wait for, I pray for. I think nothing too much for it. I only fear I shall never attain it. The very comforts of my life are embittered for want of it."

• RAYMUNDUS.

To this I answer : We cannot shake off God's sovereignty over us, nor propriety in us : this you will grant. God is, and will be, thy God, thy Lord, thy Sovereign, thy Commander, let thy carriage be what it will. The vilest wretches in the world cannot sin themselves from under God's dominion. "But there is no comfort in this." Well, then, I will therefore add : Thou that mournest after propriety in God, God is thy God ; thy gracious God, and Father ; thy God in covenant ; thy God in mercy and loving-kindness. Dost thou unfeignedly desire to love God ? Then thou mayest be sure God loves thee ; for God loves first. (1 John iv. 19.) Dost thou not out of choice prefer the service of God before all other service ? Then you shall abide in the love of God. (John xv. 10.) Brethren, love God as if he were peculiarly yours, and you will thereby have an evidence that he is peculiarly yours. It is reported of one that [he] continued a whole night in prayer, and said nothing but this : "My God, and my all," or, "God is mine, and all is mine ;" repeating this a thousand times over.* Let this be the constant breathing of thy soul to God : "My God, my all."

2. This is the "first and great command," *ratione ordinis et dignitatis*, "in respect of order and dignity."—This is the great command, because we must place this before all others in the very yelk [yolk] of the heart,† as the only foundation of piety. Whatsoever is taught in the law and in the prophets flows from this, as from a fountain ; grows upon this, as upon a root.‡ If I forget not, this is somewhere Augustine's metaphor : "This is to the other commands as the needle to the thread,—it draws all after it."

3. This is the "first and great command," *ratione debiti*, "in respect of obligation."—To love God is so indispensable, that, let me with reverence say, God cannot dispense with it. As God first bestows his love upon us before any other gift, and then, whatever he gives afterwards, he gives it in love ; so God requires that we first give him our hearts, our love, and then do all we do out of love to God. Sometimes God will have mercy, and not sacrifice ; divine duties shall give place to human ; nay, sometimes duties to God must give way to duties to a beast. (Luke xiv. 5.) But, however duties to God and men may be justled to and fro, yet there is not any duty can warrant the intermitting of any love to God so much as one moment.

4. This is the "first and great command," *ratione materiæ*, "in respect of the matter of it."—Love to God is the most excellent of all graces. (1 Cor. xiii. 13.) Love among the graces is like the sun among the stars, which not only enlightens the lower world, but communicates light to all the stars in the firmament : so love to God does not only its own office, but the offices of all other graces. The apostle names four graces that are necessary to government,§ which love doth all their offices :—for example : "Beareth all things ;" that is, love parteth with something of its right, beareth the weaknesses of friends to preserve con-

* *Deus meus, et omnia mea.*—AVENDANUS, p. 382.

† *In intimo cordis.*—ANSEL-

MUS. † MUSCULUS.

§ *Ἐπιεικεία, candor, lenitas, patientia.*—MELANCTHON in loc.

"Equity or moderation, unsuspecting candour, mild amenity, and patient meekness."

—EDIT.

cord :—"Believeth all things ;" that is, candidly makes the best interpretation of all things ; is not distrustful or suspicious upon light and frivolous occasions :—"Hopeth all things ;" that is, gently waits for the amendment of that which is faulty :—"Endureth all things ;" that is, patiently bears injuries, &c. (1 Cor. xiii. 7.) If you except, "This is spoken of love to men," I readily answer, that surely love to God, for whose image in men, and command concerning men, we love them, will do greater things.

5. This is "the first and great command," *ratione amplitudinis*, "in respect of the largeness of it."—This requires the whole man, the whole heart, the whole soul, the whole mind, the whole strength. Whatever else we entertain, some other room may be good enough for it : let *the heart* be kept for God's peculiar presence-chamber. God requires the whole *soul* : all the inferior powers of the soul, our whole life, must be spent in the love of God. This command reaches the whole *mind* ; God expects that we should in judgment reason down every thing into contempt that should pretend a loveliness to jostle out God.

6. This is the "first and great command," *ratione capacitatis*, "in respect of its capacity," because it contains all commands.—No man can love his neighbour, unless he love God ; and no man can love God, but he must observe all his commandments. Origen makes inquiry, how the commands about legal purification may be reduced to the love of God. Every command of God hath its peculiar obligation ; but this law of love hath a super-engagement over them all. For instance : men may accept and commend several duties to them that have not one drop of love in them. For example : if I give bread to one that is ready to famish, or physic to one that is dangerously sick, these things do good according to their own natures, and not according to the good-will of the giver. Alas ! man needs relief, and catcheth at it ; and never examines the heart, or end, whence it comes. But now God is infinitely above needing any thing from us ; it is his gracious condescension to receive any thing from us ; and therefore God never accepts of any thing we do but what is done out of love to him.

7. This is the "first and great command," *ratione difficultatis*, "in respect of the difficulties" of it, because through our infirmities (not to mention worse) we cannot presently love God.—The prime difficulty is, the spirituality of it. This "wisdom is too high for foolish sinners." (Prov. xxiv. 7.) Though it is most rational, yet it is the most spiritual, and, consequently, the most difficult, part of religion. Some commands may be observed without special grace ; as all the outside of religion. Yea, some commands may be observed without so much as common grace ; as duties merely moral. But this must have a great measure of the Spirit. It speaks much acquaintance with God through experience of his ways ; and much conformity to Christ in a well-composed conversation : in short, it includes the highest perfection possibly attainable in this life. Yet let not this difficulty fright you ; for through Christ our sincere love, though weak, is accepted ; and our imperfect love, because growing, shall not be despised.

8. This is the "first and great command," *ratione finis*, "in respect

of the *end*.”—All the commands of God are referred to this as their end and last scope, which was first in the mind of the Lawgiver.

9. This is the “first and great command,” *ratione perpetuitatis*, “in respect of the *lastingness*” of it.—“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God:” it is not only spoken after the Hebrew way of commanding,* but it notes singular perseverance. Most of the other commands expire with the world, as all or most of the commands of the second table; but this remains and flourishes more than ever. When *repentance* and *mortification*, which now take up half our life; when *faith*, which is now, as it were, mother and nurse to most of our graces; when *hope*, which now upholds weak faith in its languors; when all these shall, as it were, die in travail, perfection of grace being then in the birth; *love to God* shall then be more lively than ever. That love which, as it were, passed between God and the soul in letters and tokens, shall then be perfected in a full enjoyment. Our love was divided among several objects, that cut the banks, and weakened the stream; henceforth it shall have but one current. Our love is now mixed with fear, fear of missing or losing what we love; but that fear shall be banished. There shall never be any distance, never any thing to provoke jealousy, never any thing to procure cloying, never any thing more to be desired than is actually enjoyed. Is not this, then, the “first and great commandment?” Is it not our privilege and happiness to be swallowed up in it? This may suffice to evidence it to be our duty; but then,

WHAT ABILITIES ARE REQUISITE FOR THE WELL-PERFORMANCE OF THIS DUTY, AND HOW WE MAY OBTAIN THOSE ABILITIES.

III. *What abilities are requisite to the performance of this duty, and how may we attain those abilities?*—This we must be experimentally acquainted with, or all I can say will at best seem babbling; and therefore let me at first tell you plainly, nothing on this side regeneration can capacitate you to love God; and it is God alone that giveth, worketh, infuseth, impresseth the gracious habit of divine love in the souls of his people. Our love to God is nothing else but the echo of God’s love to us. Through the corruption of our nature, we hate God. God implanted in our nature an inclination to love God above all things amiable; but by the fall we have an headlong inclination to depart from God, and run away from him; and there is in every one of us a natural impotency and inability of turning unto God. The grace of love is no flower of nature’s garden, but a foreign plant.† We may possibly do something for the merely rational inflaming of our hearts with love to God. For instance: God may be represented as most amiable, we may be convinced of the unsatisfyingness of the creature, we may understand something of the worth of our souls, and what a folly it is to expect that any thing but God can fill them: and yet this will be at the utmost but like a solid proof of the truth of the Christian religion, which may nonplus our cavils, but not make us Christians. This may make love to

* *Futurum pro imperativo*. “The future tense instead of the imperative mood.”—EDIT.

† *Non secundum bona naturalia, sed secundum donu gratuita*. “It is not according to the goods of nature, but according to the gifts of grace.”—EDIT.

God appear a rational duty, but it will not of itself beget in us this spiritual grace. It is the immediate work of God to make us love him ; I do not mean immediate in opposition to the use of means, but immediate in regard of the necessary efficacy of his Spirit, beyond what all means in the world, without his powerful influence, can amount unto. It is the Lord alone that can "direct our hearts into the love of God." * (2 Thess. iii. 5.) God is pleased in a wonderful and unexpressible manner to draw up the heart in love to him. God makes use of exhortations, and counsels, and reproofs ; but though he works by them and with them, he works above them and beyond them : "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." And again : "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing : therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live : that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him : for he is thy life, and the length of thy days." (Deut. xxx. 6, 19, 20.) "He is thy life ;" that is, effectively, and that by love, saith Aquinas. It is reported, that "it often happens among partridges, that one steals away another's eggs ; but the young one that is hatched under the wing of a stranger, at her true mother's first call, who laid the egg whence she was hatched, she renders herself to her true mother, and puts herself into her covey." † It is thus with our hearts : though we are born and bred up among terrene and base things, under the wing of corrupted nature ; yet at, and not before, God's first quickening call, we receive an inclination to love him ; and upon his drawing, "we run after him." (Canticles i. 4.) God works a principle of love in us, and we love God by that habit of love he hath implanted ; hence the act of love is formally and properly attributed to man as the particular cause : ‡ "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength ;" and, "I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice." (Psalm xviii. 1 ; cxvi. 1.) The soul works together with God in his powerful working ; the will, being acted of God, acteth. It is a known saying of Augustine, "The wheel doth not run that it may be round, but because it is round." § The Spirit of God enables us to love God ; but it is we that love God with a created love ; it is we that acquiesce in God in a gracious manner. What God doeth in the soul doth not hurt the liberty of the will, but strengthens it, in sweetly and powerfully drawing it into conformity with the will of God, which is the highest liberty : "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." (2 Cor. iii. 17.) It is a poor liberty that consists in an indifferency. Do not the saints in heaven love God freely ? Yet they cannot but love him.

As the only *efficient* cause of our loving God is God himself, so the only *procuring* cause of our loving God is Jesus Christ, that Son of the Father's love who by his Spirit implants and actuates this grace of love,

* *Exoptat a Deo quod non ambigit posse præstari.*—AMBROSIUS. "He asks of God that concerning which he entertains no doubt in reference to God's ability to perform."—EDIT.
 † SALES "Of the Love of God," page 63. ‡ VOETIUS. § *Non idcirco bene currit rota ut rotunda sit, sed quia rotunda est.*

which he hath merited for us. Christ hath "made peace through the blood of his cross." (Col. i. 20.) Christ hath as well merited this grace of love for us, as he hath merited the reward of glory for us. Plead therefore, dear Christians, the merit of Christ for the inflaming your hearts with the love of God, that when I shall direct to rules and means how you may come to love God, you may as well address yourselves to Christ for the grace of love, as for the pardon of your want of love hitherto. Bespeak Christ in some such, but far more, pressing language: "Lord, thou hast purchased the grace of love for those that want and crave it: my love to God is chill, do thou warm it! My love is divided, Lord, do thou unite it! I cannot love God as he deserves, O that thou wouldest help me to love him more than I can desire! Lord, make me sick of love, and then cure me! Lord, make me in this as conformable to thyself, as it is possible for an adopted son to be like the natural, that I may be a son of God's love, both actively and passively, and both, as near as it is possible, infinitely!"

Let us, therefore, address ourselves to the use of all those means and helps whereby love to God "is nourished, increased, excited, and exerted."* I will begin with removing the impediments; we must clear away the rubbish, before we can so much as lay the foundation.

IMPEDIMENTS OF OUR LOVE TO GOD.

IMPED. I. *Self-love.*—This the apostle names as captain-general of the devil's army, whereby titular Christians manage their enmity against God. In the dregs of the "last days," this will make the times dangerous: "Men shall be lovers of their own selves." (2 Tim. iii. 1, 2.) When men over-estimate themselves, their own endowments of either body or mind; when they have a secret reserve for self in all they do, self-applause, or self-profit; this is like an error in the first concoction. Get your hearts discharged of it, or you can never be spiritually healthful. The best of you are too prone to this; I would therefore commend it to you to be jealous of yourselves in this particular: for as conjugal jealousy is the bane of conjugal love, so self-jealousy will be the bane of self-love. Be suspicious of every thing that may steal away or divert your love from God.

IMPED. II. *Love of the world.*—This is so great an obstruction, that the most loving and best-beloved disciple that Christ had, said, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him;" (1 John ii. 15;) and the apostle James makes use of a metaphor, calling them "adulterers and adulteresses" that keep not their conjugal love to God tight from leaking out toward the world. He chargeth them, as if they knew nothing in religion, if they knew not this, that "the friendship of the world is enmity with God;" and it is an universal truth, without so much as one exception, that "whosoever will be a friend of the world," must needs upon that very account be God's "enemy." (James iv. 4.) The apostle Paul adds more weight to those that are even pressed to hell already: "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and

* *Foveatur, augetur, excitatur, et exercitur.*

into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things," &c. (1 Tim. vi. 9—11.) When men will be somebody in the world, they will have estates, and they will have honours, and they will have pleasures! What variety of vexatious distractions do unavoidably hinder our love to God! When our hearts are hurried with hopes and fears about worldly things, and the world hath not wherewithal to satisfy us; how doth the heart fret under its disappointments! And how can it do otherwise? We would have happiness here. Sirs, I will offer you fair: name me but one man that ever found a complete happiness in the world, and I dare promise you shall be the second; but if you will flatter yourself with dreams of impossibilities, "this your way will be your folly," though, it is like, "your posterity will approve your sayings," (Psalm xlix. 13,) and try experiments while they live, as you have done. But where is your love to God all this while? It is excluded; by what law? By the law of sin and death; by the love of the world and destruction; for Christ tells us, all that "hate him love death." (Prov. viii. 36.)

IMPED. III. *Spiritual sloth, and carelessness of spirit.*—When men do not trouble themselves about religion, nor any thing that is serious. Love is a busy passion, a busy grace. Love among the passions is like fire among the elements. Love among the graces is like the heart among the members. Now that which is most contrary to the nature of love must needs most obstruct the highest actings of it. The truth is, a careless frame of spirit is fit for nothing; a sluggish, lazy, slothful, careless person never attains to any excellency in any kind. What is it you would intrust a lazy person about? Let me say this, (and pray think on it twice, ere you censure it once,) Spiritual sloth doeth Christians more mischief than scandalous relapses, I grant, their grosser falls may be worse *as to others*: the grieving of the godly, and the hardening of the wicked, and the reproach to religion, must needs be so great as may make a gracious heart tremble at the thought of falling. But yet, *as to themselves*, a slothful temper is far more prejudicial. For example: those gracious persons that fall into any open sin, it is but once or seldom in their whole life; and their repentance is ordinarily as notorious as their sin, and they walk more humbly and more watchfully ever after: whereas spiritual sloth runs through the whole course of our life, to the marring of every duty, to the strengthening of every sin, and to the weakening of every grace. Sloth (I may rather call it unspiritual sloth) is a soft moth in our spiritual wardrobe, a corroding rust in our spiritual armoury, an enfeebling consumption in the very vitals of religion. Sloth and carelessness without an epithet, bare sloth without any thing to aggravate it, ordinarily doeth the soul more hurt than all the devils in hell, yea, than all its other sins. Shake off this, and then you will be more than conquerors over all other difficulties. Shake off this, and there is but one sin that I can think of at present, that you will be in danger of, and that is spiritual pride. You will thrive so fast in all grace, you will grow up into so much communion with God, that

unless God sometimes withdraw to keep you humble, you will have a very heaven upon earth.

IMPED. IV. *The love of any sin whatsoever.*—The love of God, and the love of any sin, can no more mix together than iron and clay. “Every sin strikes at the being of God.”* The very best of saints may possibly fall into the very worst of pardonable sins; but the least of saints get above the love of the least of sins. We are ready to question God’s love unto us, as Delilah did Samson’s love to her, if he do not gratify us in all we have a mind to; but how could Delilah pretend love to Samson, while she complied with his mortal enemy against him? How can you pretend to love God, while you hide sin, his enemy, in your hearts? As it was with the grand-child of Athaliah, stolen from among those that were slain, and hidden; though unable at present to disturb her, ere long [he] procures her ruin: (2 Kings xi. 1, 2, &c. :) so any sin, as it were, stolen from the other sins to be preserved from mortification, will certainly procure the ruin of that soul that hides it. Can you hide your sin from the search of the word, and forbear your sin while under the smart of affliction, and seem to fall out with sin when under gripes of conscience; and return to sin as soon as the storm is over? Never pretend to love God: God sees through your pretences, and abhors your hypocrisy: “His eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings. There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.” (Job xxxiv. 21, 22.) Come, sirs, let me deal plainly with you: you are shameful strangers to your own heart, if you do not know which is your darling sin or sins; and you are traitors to your own souls, if you do not endeavour a thorough mortification; and you are wilful rebels against God, if you do in the least indulge it. Never boggle at the Psalmist’s counsel: “Ye that love the Lord, hate evil.” (Psalm xcvi. 10.)

IMPED. V. *Inordinate love of things lawful.*—And in some respect here is our greatest danger. Here persons have scripture to plead for their love to several persons and things; that it is a duty to bestow some love upon them, and the mere†-stones are not so plainly set as easily to discern the utmost bounds of what is lawful, and the first step into what is sinful; and here, having some plausible pretences for the parcelling out of their love, they plead “Not guilty,” though they love not God with all their hearts, souls, and minds: whereas they should consider that the best of the world is not for enjoyment, but use; not our end, but means conducing to our chief end. Here is our sin, and our misery, our foolish transplacing of end and means. Men make it their end to eat, and drink, and get estates, and enjoy their delights; and what respect they have to God,—I know not whether to call [it] love or service,—they show it but as means to flatter God to gratify them in their pitiful ends.

Having warned you of some of the chief impediments, I shall propose some means to engage your hearts in love to God, which you may confidently expect to be effectual through the operation of the Holy Ghost,

* *Deicidium.* † In the old meaning of boundary-stones; *mere*, according to Kersey, being “a line or boundary, dividing ploughed lands in a common.”—EDIT.

and you may likewise expect the operation of the Spirit in the use of such means.

MEANS TO ATTAIN LOVE TO GOD.

The means are either directing, promoting, or conserving.

1. *Directing*.—And that is spiritual knowledge: this is beyond what can be spoken in its commendation: a clear and distinct knowledge of the love and loveliness of God in the amazing, yet ravishing, methods of its manifestations, and the clear understanding of the heavenly privilege of having our hearts inflamed with love to God, this will do,—I would fain persuade you to try,—I am not able to say how much, to direct you in this case. Plainly, get and exercise this twofold knowledge:—

(1.) *The knowledge of spiritual things*.—Did we but perfectly know the nature of the most contemptible insect; nay, did we but know the nature of atoms; this would lead us to admire and love God. But, then, to know those things that no graceless person in the world cares for the knowledge of;—for instance, the inward workings of original sin, and how to undermine it; the powerful workings of the Spirit of grace, and how to improve it; what are the joys of the Holy Ghost, and how to obtain them;—would not such things insinuate the love of God into you? Add then,

(2.) *The knowledge of ordinary things in a spiritual manner, so as to make the knowledge of natural things serve heavenly designs*.—Thus Christ in all the metaphors, in all the parables, he used. To value no knowledge any further than it is reducible to such an use,—this would lead us into the loving of God. Thus I name but one *directing* means.

2. *Promoting means are various*.—Not but that spiritual knowledge doth singularly promote the love of God, but its proper work lies in directing. The several things I shall name for *inward* means, your way of managing must make them so.

(1.) *Self-denial*.—This is so necessary that no other grace can supply the want of it. It is among the graces of the soul, as among the members of the body,—one member may supply the want of another; the defect of the lungs may be supplied by other parts. The want of prudence may be supplied with gospel-simplicity, which looks like quite another thing; but nothing can supply our want of love to God; nor can any thing supply our want of self-denial in order to our loving of God. We can never have too low thoughts of ourselves,* provided we do not neglect our duty and let go our hold of Christ. Those very things that not only we *may* love but we *must* love, it is our duty to love them, and our sin not to love them: yet all these must be denied when they dare to stand in competition with our love to God. “If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.” (Luke xiv. 26.) Christ would have us count what religion will cost us before we meddle with it.

* *Ego fatidissimus sum, ego horribilissimum stercus, et vermis nequissimus*.—BONAVENTURÆ *Stimul. Amor*. p. 153. “I am a most disgusting object, nothing better than a filthy dunghill, a vile and wretched worm.”—EDIT.

(2.) *Contempt of the world.*—As love of the world is a great impediment, so contempt of the world is a great promoter, of our love to God: may not our contempt of the world be best expressed by our worldly diffidence? We have no confidence in it, no expectation of happiness from it. I take both the understanding and will to be the seat of faith: now, to have both these against the world, is to have our understanding satisfied that the world cannot satisfy us; to look upon the world as an empty drum, that makes a great noise, but hath nothing in it; and therefore the will doth not hanker after it, hath no kindness for it. That person is a good proficient in divine love that can make the world serviceable to devotion; by drawing arguments from his worldly condition, be it what it will, to promote piety. For example: “Have I any thing considerable in the world? I will manage it as a steward; blessed be God [that] he hath intrusted me with any thing whereby I may show my love to him, in my love to his! Have I nothing in the world? Blessed be God for my freedom from worldly snares! God knows I need food and raiment; and I am of Jacob’s mind, if God will give me no more, he shall be my God; (Gen. xxviii. 20, 21;) and I will be content, whatever my condition be in the world: it is better than Christ’s was; and O that I could love God as Christ did!”

(3.) *Observation of God’s benefits to us.*—It is goodness and beneficence that draws out love.* God is our infinite Benefactor. The very brutes love their benefactors: “The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib; but my people doth not consider.” (Isai. i. 3.) Who can reckon-up the benefits he receives from God? The comest of our mercies deserves a return of love; how much more our spiritual mercies? Those very mercies that are troublesome to us, deserve our love. For example: Trouble for sin, though to a degree of horror; hungering after Christ, though unto languishing; disappointments in the world, though without satisfaction any where else; lamenting after God, though with fear [that] we shall never enjoy him:—such-like throes of anguish make way for spiritual joy and comfort; and the soul that goes through such exercises grows in love to God every day. As for other kinds of benefits, I will say but this: God doth more for us every hour of our lives, than all our dearest friends or relations on earth, than all the saints and angels in heaven, can do, so much ~~as~~ once, should they do their utmost: and can you do less than love him?

(4.) *Watchfulness over our own hearts.*—When we love God, we are to remember that we love a jealous God. This will restrain the straggling of our affections. We should keep as careful a watch over our own hearts, as we should over a rich heiress, committed to our guardianship: we reckon she is undone, and we shall never be able to look God or man in the face, if she be unworthily matched through our default. Christians, your hearts, through the condescension of God, and blood and Spirit of Christ, are a match for the King of glory; several inferior objects not worth the naming are earnest suitors. We are undone, if any but God have our supreme love. If you be not severely watchful,

* *Qui beneficia invenit, compedes invenit.*—SENÆCA. “He who finds himself to be in the receipt of additional benefits, discovers that he is bound with fresh fetters of gratitude.”—EDIT.

this heart of yours will be stolen away. Be persuaded, therefore, to examine every thing that you have cause to suspect; call yourselves often to an account. Be jealous of your hearts, and of every thing whereby you may be endangered.

(5.) *Prayer*.—All manner of prayer is singularly useful to inflame the heart with love to God. Those that pray best, love God best. Mistake me not: I do not say, Those that can pray with the most florid expressions, or, Those that can pray with the most general applause; but, They that most feel every word they speak, and every thought they think, in prayer; they whose apprehensions of God are most overwhelming; whose affections to God are most spiritually-passionate; whose prayers are most wrestling, and graciously impudent; this is the man that prays best, and loves God best. I grant these are the prayers of a great proficient in the love of God; but you may pray *for* this frame, when you cannot pray *with* it. The soul never falls sick of divine love in prayer, but Christ presently gives it an extraordinary visit: so soon as ever Christ's spouse says she is "sick of love," the next words she speaks are, that "his left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me." (Canticles ii. 5, 6.) Compare that with those words: "Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me." (Canticles vi. 5.) Christ speaks as of being overcome and conquered. Rouse up yourselves, therefore; give yourselves unto prayer. Pray for a more spiritual discovery of God's amiableness. Did you know God better, you could not but love him more; and none can discover God to us, as he discovers himself, so spiritually, so powerfully. Take no denial; God will never be angry with your being importunate for hearts to love him.

"O my God, it is thyself I love above all things; it is for thyself; in thee my desires are terminated; and, therefore, what wilt thou give me? If thou wilt not give me thyself, thou wilt give me nothing. If I find thee not, I find nothing; thou dost not at all reward me, but vehemently torment me. Heretofore, when I sought thee finally, for thyself, I hoped that I should quickly find thee, and keep thee; and with this sweet hope I comforted myself in all my labours. But now, if thou deny me thyself, what wilt thou give me? Shall I be for ever disappointed of so great a hope? Shall I always languish in my love? Shall I mourn in my languishment? Shall I grieve in my mourning? Shall I weep and wail in my grief? Shall I always be empty? Shall I always disconsolately sorrow, incessantly complain, and be endlessly tormented? O my most good, most powerful, most merciful, and most loving God, thou dost not use, so unfriendly and like an enemy, to-despise, refuse, wound, and torment those that love thee with all their heart, soul, and strength; that hope for full happiness in thee! Thou art the God of truth, the beginning and end of those that love thee; thou dost at last give thyself to those that love thee, to be their perfect and complete happiness. Therefore, O my most good God, grant that I may in this present life love thee for thyself above all things, seek thee in all things, and in the life to come find thee, and hold thee to eternity."*

(6.) *Meditation*.—A duty as much talked of, and as little practised,

* BRADWARDINUS *De Causâ Dei*, lib. i. pp. 118, 119.

as any duty of Christianity. Did you but once a day (in that time of the day which, upon experience, you find to be fittest for such a work) solemnly place yourselves in God's presence; beg of him the fixing and the flowing of your thoughts, that your thoughts might be graciously fixed, yet as graciously enlarged; let the subject-matter of them be something spiritual; endeavour to fill your heads and affect your hearts with holy musings, till you come to some resolution, which resolution close with prayer, and follow with endeavours; O how would this, even ere you are aware, engage your souls to love God! Though you cannot methodize your meditations to your mind, yet inure yourselves to a holy thoughtfulness about things above. Endeavour, as you are able, to tie your thoughts together, and so fasten them that they may not be lost, that your musing-time may not be reckoned among your lost time. I distinguish between meditation and study. Study is for knowledge; meditation is for grace. Study leaves every thing as we find it; meditation leaves a spiritual impress upon every thing it meddles with. Though I will not assert, I may inquire, whether meditation be not one of those duties of which the very constant performance speaks the soul to be gracious; that is, though I dare not say, they are not gracious that do not every day solemnly meditate, yet whether may I not say, they are gracious that do. Try, therefore, whether you may not say, with the Psalmist, "Whilst I was musing, the fire burned;" (Psalm xxxix. 3;) whether while you are musing, your heart may not be inflamed with love to God.

(7.) *Choice of friends.*—I dare appeal to all experienced Christians, whether ever they met with lively Christians, that carried it like Christians, without some warming of their hearts with love to God and godliness. The truth is, Christian conference hath the most speedy and effectual efficacy of any ordinance of God whatsoever. Do, therefore, in religion as you do in other things. For example: If you meet with a physician, all your discourse shall be something about your health. If you meet with a traveller, you are presently inquisitive about the places he hath seen. Why should not Christians, when they meet, converse like Christians, and presently fall into a heavenly dialogue? Christians, this you know,—there must be a forsaking of all wicked company, ere you can pretend the least love to Christ. Mistake me not: I do not mean that the bonds of family-relations must presently be broken; that husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and covenant-servants, must presently separate if one of them be ungodly. No, where the relation is such as cannot be dissolved without sin, then those that are godly must converse with the ungodly, as physicians with their sick patients. But this is it I say, You must not willingly and out of choice make God's enemies your familiar friends. Those that are always speaking well of God insensibly draw out our hearts in love to him. When Christ's spouse had told the daughters of Jerusalem what Christ was more than others, they presently offer themselves to seek him with her. (Canticles v. 9; vi. 1.) As "evil communications corrupt good manners," (1 Cor. xv. 33,) so good communication corrects evil manners. In short, you cannot but observe, that none is able to hear any one spoken against whom they love; and that every one delights to speak and hear of whom they love;

so that here you have a means to inflame, an employ to exercise, and a touchstone to try, your love to God.

(8.) *Thanksgiving*.—That person that makes conscience of thanksgiving will thereby grow in love to God. That person that takes every thing kindly and thankfully from God, cannot but love him; and, Christians, if we be not basely wanting to ourselves, we may by thankfulness make every thing a help to promote divine love. For example: I hear a man swear, and curse, and blaspheme God. "O what cause have I to love God, that he hath not left me to do so!" I am under the rebukes of God, I feel his anger in such a providence. "O what cause have I to love God, that he will take any pains with me, and give me medicinal correction, not giving me up to my own heart's lusts till I perish!" "Alas! I am not so spiritual as to make such inferences; yet, blessed be God, I really value it as a privilege to be able to put a good interpretation on all God's dealings. O that I could love God for the very means, and helps, and encouragements to love him!" I shall name no more (though I might many) promoting means. But,

3. *Sustaining and conserving means*.—Here several graces are singularly useful. I shall name only three.

(1.) *Faith, whereby we are persuaded that what God hath spoken is true and good*.—"If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." (Mark ix. 23.) Now, then, take some particular promise,—why not that which hath already affected thy heart? You cannot press a promise as you squeeze an orange, to extract all that is in it; no; it is called drawing water out of a fountain: (Isai. xii. 3:) though you draw-out never so much, there is no less behind. Well, then, take that promise: "I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me." (Prov. viii. 17.) I may here, by my love to God, make out God's love to me, and so, by these clasplings of love, have my love inflamed and preserved. But, Christians, be sure to remember this: Whenever you lay one hand on a promise, lay the other on Christ: you will thereby get your objections answered, and your fears removed. For instance: "I am unworthy of Divine Love:" but so is not Christ. "I know not how to come to God:" our access is by Christ. "Though I come, I know not how to believe:" thy coming is believing. (John vi. 37.) O for more acquaintance with the life of faith! it is mostly with us in spirituals according to our faith.

(2.) *Hope, whereby we expect a future good*.—Hope is the daughter of faith. Many a time the weak mother leans upon the daughter. Hope (at least to our apprehensions) hath not so many obstructions and hinderances as faith. I dare say, "I hope" what I dare not say, "I believe." Though I must tell you, that which the over-modest Christian calls a *weak hope*, God often calls a *strong faith*: "Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope." (Psalm cxix. 49.) There is a prayer of hope; and here is a promise-answer to faith: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee," &c. (Isai. xxvi. 3.) So that, in a word, as to the present case, though I yet cannot love God as I would, I hope God will help me, that my love shall be always growing.

(3.) *Patience*.—"Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." (James i. 4.) And do but with patience go on with your work, and no necessary grace shall be wanting unto you. Look that you be patient in waiting, and patient in bearing. Do not misinterpret God's dealings with you. There are two passages I would have you take special notice of: that ground that brought such fruit as answered expectation, was "an honest and good heart, which kept the word, and brought forth fruit with patience." (Luke viii. 15.) The other is: "In your patience possess ye your souls." [Luke xxi. 19.] Patience contributes much to both fruitfulness and comfort. Let us make an essay:—Thou wouldest have God manifest his love to thee in a more ravishing manner: stay a while, thou wantest another kind of dispensation first and most, namely, to feel more of the evil of sin, that thou mayest be more watchful and more holy.—So soon as a trial comes, thou wouldest have it removed: stay a while; it hath not done the work for which God sent it. God in kindness binds-on the plaster, till he hath effected the cure.—Thou art at a loss; thou knowest not what God will do with thee: be it so, it is not fit thou shouldest; God doth not use to tell his children beforehand what he will do with them; God expects we should gather-up our duty from the precepts of his word, and from the hints of his providence. We read that when the prophet Elisha had given king Joash a promise, and a sign of deliverance from Syria, God expected that his own reason and faith should prompt him so to improve a second sign, as to pursue the victory to a conquest; but he understood it not, and so miscarried. (2 Kings xiii. 17—19.) Do you learn to hold-on in the use of all means for the engaging of your hearts more to God. "We desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises;" (Heb. vi. 11, 12;) not expecting to obtain the promise till you have patiently endured. And the same apostle, in the same epistle, tells us that "ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." (Heb. x. 36.) Thus much for the *inward* means of loving God. *Outward* means for engaging our hearts to love God, are either *directing* or *exemplary*.

1. *Directing*.—The only directing means is the word of God; but seeing you shall in the following sermons have particular directions about both hearing and reading of the word, I shall only hint these few things:—

(1.) *Prize the word*.—Though our estimation of it will be exceedingly heightened by a further acquaintance with it, yet you will find it singularly advantageous to the inflaming of your hearts to get your hearts, as it were, graciously forestalled with the valuation of the word. When we can count the word sweeter than honey to the taste; better than gold for a treasure; more necessary than food for our sustenance; (Job xxiii. 12;) how can the soul choose but love God, whose love indited it? Shall filthy books provoke carnal love, and shall not the book of God provoke divine love? Endeavour to get but as spiritual a sense and

relish of divine truths, answerable to men's carnal gusts and feeling of other things: do but dwell upon truths till they affect you. Only here observe this necessary caution: Dwell not so upon difficulties as to hinder your further inquiry into things more easily understood, but wait in a course of diligence, and you will be able to master those difficulties which it is next to impossible suddenly to fathom. Do but steer an even course between a careless neglect, and an anxious perplexity, about what you read or hear; and you will certainly attain a deep knowledge of the things of God, and a high measure of love to God.

(2.) *Set immediately upon the practice of those things which you shall be convinced to be your duty.*—Let not your affections cool upon any duty pressed upon you. Do something like that of Nebuchadnezzar. God revealed to him something of moment; he had lost the matter, and understood not the meaning; but was, as others thought, unreasonably importunate to recover both, and that presently, before the impression wore off, and the heat went over. (Dan. ii. 8, &c.) So, my brethren, fix the word by speedy practice. Though the seed of the word is long in growing to perfection, yet it presently takes root in order to growth. Were I, therefore, now exhorting you to repentance, and could bring you to no nearer a resolution than to repent *to-morrow*, my exhortation were lost: so *now*, while I press you to love God, and demonstrate from scripture that it is your duty, offer you scripture-helps that may be effectual, provoke you with scripture-encouragements that may be overcoming, if you *now* put off all this till a fitter time, it is a thousand to one you put it off for ever. Read this over again; and then think, "Why should not I *now* believe this? And how can I say, I *now* believe it, if I do not *now* put it in practice? And how can I say, I practise it, if I omit any one direction?"

2. *Exemplary means.*—And here I shall give you as short a touch as may be of men, angels, and Christ himself. We are much drawn by examples. Examples,—they are not only arguments, but wings. They give us a demonstration that precepts are practicable.

(1.) *Men.*—Why should not we love God as well as ever Abraham did? God gives the word: "Abraham, take *now* thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest; and offer him for a burnt-offering. And Abraham rose up early in the morning," &c. (Gen. xxii. 1—3.) Had he not loved God, so far as the creature can love God, infinitely, every word would have been as a dagger to his heart. As if he had said:

Abraham—I gave thee that name, from thy being "a father of many people;" but now be thou the death of that seed which I intended to multiply. God seemed to change his name to Abraham, as Solomon named his son Rehoboam, "an enlarger of the people," who *enlarged* them from twelve tribes to two!

Take now—No time to demur upon it.

Thy son—So many years prayed for, and waited for.

Thine only son—All the rest of thy children are not worth thy owning.

Isaac—The son of thy laughter, now the son of thy sorrow.

Whom thou lovest—More than ever father loved a child, and that upon several justifiable accounts.

And get thee into the land of Moriah—Though no time to deliberate before thou resolvest, yet time enough for repentance before thou executest thy resolutions.

And offer him there for a burnt-offering—It is not enough to give him up to be sacrificed by another, but thou thyself must be the priest to kill thy lovely child, and then to burn him to ashes.

And Abraham rose up early, &c.—He quarrels not with God : “What doth God mean to give me such a command, as never to any one else in this world ?” He consults not his wife : “O what will Sarah say ?” He sticks not at what might expose religion : “What will the Heathen say ?” You may well suppose great strugglings between nature and grace ; but God seemed to press upon him with this question : “Whether dost thou love me or thy child most ?” Abraham doth, as it were, answer, “Nay, Lord, if that be the question, it shall soon be decided, how and where thou pleasest.”

Another instance we have in Moses, if you will compare two or three scriptures : Moses,—at first he inquires of God, as we do of a stranger, “What is his name ?” Upon God’s further discovery, he begs more of his special presence ; and upon God’s granting of that, his love grows bold, and he said, “I beseech thee, show me thy glory.” Upon his finding God propitious, he begs that God would remove the cloud, and show him as much of his glory as he was possibly able to bear the sight of. (Exod. iii. 13 ; xxxiii. 15, 18.)

Take one instance more ; and that is of Paul, who, thinking God might have more glory by saving of many than by saving of him, was willing to quit the happiness of salvation ; for not the least grace, much less grace in the height of it, could possibly choose a necessity of hating and blaspheming God, which is the venom of damnation ; but his love to God is greater than his love to himself ; and so he will reckon himself happy without glory, provided God may be more glorified.

And thus I have produced three examples,—of one before the law, one under the law, and one under the gospel. How will you receive it, if I shall venture to say ?—“We have in some respect more cause to love God than any, than all these persons put together.” What singular gleams of warm love from God they had more than we, are in some respects exceeded by the noon-day light and heat of gospel-love that we have more than they. What love-visits God was pleased to give them, are excelled by Christ’s (as to them) extraordinary presence among us. What was to them a banquet, is to us our daily bread. God opens the windows of heaven to us. God opens his very heart to us. We may read more of the love of God to us in one day, than they could in their whole life.

(2.) *Angels, that unweariedly behold the face of God.* (Matt. xviii. 10.)—They refuse nothing that may evidence their love to God. It is ordinarily the devil’s work to be the executioners of God’s wrath. It is said, “He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels among them ;” (Psalm lxxviii. 49 ;) but the good angels will not stick at it when God requires it : “The angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assy-

rians an hundred fourscore and five thousand." (2 Kings xix. 35.) But now we have more cause to love God than the angels. God hath expressed greater love to us in Christ than he hath to them. "He took not hold of angels," &c.; (Heb. ii. 16;) not any one of them received so much as the pardon of any one sin. God would not bear with them in so much as the least tittle. So soon as they ceased to love God with a perfect love, God hated them with a perfect hatred. And, for the blessed angels, "are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. i. 14.) But none of the saints are to minister to the angels in any thing. How should we love such a Master! But I have a pattern to commend to you above the angels.

(3.) *Christ.*—And O that the mention of Christ's love to his Father might transport us! Though Christ did nothing but what pleased his Father, (John viii. 29,) Christ suffered every thing that might please him. (Phil. ii. 8.) Christ obeyed every command, endured every threatening, that it was possible to endure, and that to the intensive extent of them; yet God dealt more hardly with Christ than ever he doth with any of us: "It pleased the Lord to bruise him, and to put him to grief:" (Isai. liii. 10;) whereas the church in the midst of her lamentations must acknowledge, "He doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men," (Lam. iii. 33,) yet Christ prayed "that the world may know that thou hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." (John xvii. 23.) Should not we then pray, and strive to love God, as near as it is possible, as Christ loved him? Christ had not one hard thought of God's severe justice; no, not when he endured what was equivalent to the eternal torments of the damned: and shall our love shrink at God's fatherly chastisements? Christ's love to God did not abate, while God poured out his wrath: and shall ours abate under medicinal providences? Whatever our outward condition is in this world, it is better than Christ's.

Thus I have endeavoured to acquaint you what abilities are requisite, and how to attain them, that you may love God, &c.

HOW TO IMPROVE AND AUGMENT OUR LOVE TO GOD.

IV. *How to improve and augment all our possible abilities to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.*—And for this I shall give you one general, yet singular, direction, though I must inform, direct, and press several things under it; and that is, *set yourselves to love God.* Set upon it as you are able. Do for the engaging of your love to God, as you would do for engaging your hearts in love to a person commended to you for marriage. Here is a person commended to you whom you never saw nor before heard of. All the report you can hear speaks a great suitableness in the person, and consequently happiness in the match: you thereupon entertain the motion, and a treaty, to see whether reports be true and affections feasible; though at first you find no affection on either side, yet, if you meet with no discouragements, you continue converse, till, by a more intimate acquaintance, there ariseth a more endearedness of affection: at length a non-such love becomes mutual. Do something like this in spirituals. I now solemnly bespeak your highest love for God. Perhaps God and thy soul are yet strangers;

thou hast not yet met with him in his ordinances, nor savingly heard of him by his Spirit. Do not slight the overture ; for from thy first entertainment of it, thou wilt be infinitely happy. Every thing of religion is at first uncouth ; the work of mortification is harsh, and the work of holiness difficult ; but practice will facilitate them, and make thee in love with them ; so the more thou acquaintest thyself with God, the more thou canst not but love him, especially considering that God is as importunate with thee for thy love, as if his own happiness was concerned ; whereas he is infinitely above receiving benefit from us : but seeing he is so earnest with thee for thy love, beg it *of him for him* ; God is more willing to give every grace than thou canst be to receive it. " Acquaint thyself," therefore, with God, " and then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God. Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee." (Job xxii. 21, 26, 27.) What, though thou beginnest at the lowest step of divine love ; thou mayest, through grace, mount up to the highest pinnacle ! I willingly wave so much as mentioning the several methods proposed ; and shall, from a modern author, commend to you these five steps or degrees of love to God :—

DEGREES OF LOVE TO GOD.

1. The first degree, *is to love God for those good things which we do or hope to receive from him.*—To love God as our Benefactor. " O love the Lord, all ye his saints : for the Lord preserveth the faithful." (Psalm xxxi. 23.) Though I name this as the lowest degree of our loving of God, yet the highest degree of our loving God is never separated from the loving of God as our Benefactor. It is mentioned in Moses's commendation, that he esteemed " the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt : for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward." (Heb. xi. 26.) To love God for hopes of heaven, is not a mercenary kind of love ; it is not only lawful that *we may*, but it is our duty that *we must*, love God for the glory that is laid up for us. Where is the man that will own the name of Christian, who dare charge Christ with any defect of love to God ? while the scripture saith expressly, that " for the joy set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb. xii. 2.) Is it not (no question but it is) an infinite kindness of God to make promises ? And is it not grossly absurd to say, It is a sin to believe them ? When our love shall be perfected in heaven, shall we then love God ? And shall not we then love God, as well for our perfect freedom from sin, for our perfection of grace, for the society of saints and angels, as for himself ? If you question this, surely you will startle more at what I shall farther assert ; namely, to love God for temporal benefits does infallibly evidence us eminently spiritual ; nay, further yet, I shall commend to the consideration of the most considerate Christian, Whether our loving of God for the good things of this life doth not evidence a greater measure of love to God than to love God only for the gracious communication of himself unto the soul ? I speak of truly loving God, not of bare saying you love him. Now I evidence it thus : God's gracious communications of himself

naturally tend to the engaging of the soul to love him ; but the things of the world do not so. God's gracious communications of himself speak special love on God's part, and that draws out love again ; but, alas ! common mercies speak no such thing. Now, then, that soul that is so graciously ingenuous as to love God for those lower kinds of mercies, that do not of themselves speak any love from God to us, that love of God looks something like,—though it is infinitely short of it, (for it is impossible to prevent* God in his loving of us,)—but it looks somewhat like our being beforehand with God in the way of special love. To love God spiritually for temporal mercies,—how excellent is this love ! Though to love a benefactor may be but the love of a brute ; yet to love God thus, as our Benefactor, cannot but be the love of a saint. You see, therefore, that though you begin your love to God at below what is rational, it may insensibly grow up to what is little less than angelical.

2. The second step of our love to God, is *to love God for himself, because he is the most excellent good.*—You may abstract the consideration of his beneficence to us from his excellency in himself ; and then, when the soul can rise thus : “ Lord, though I should never have a smile from thee while I live, and should be cast off by thee when I die, yet I love thee.” Alas ! why is this named as the second step ? Surely there are but few can rise so high. Pray, Christians, mind this : there is many a gracious soul loves God for himself, who dare scarce own it, that he loves God at all : for instance, when the soul is in perplexing darkness, and cannot discern any covenant-interest in God ; but, as the church bemoans herself, “ God hath filled me with bitterness, he hath made me drunken with wormwood. My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord. When I cry and shout, he shutteth out my prayers,” &c. (Lam. iii. 8, 15, 18, &c.) In short, it is the case of every soul that is under sore temptations or long desertions. Yet, mark you, while they thus “ walk in darkness, and see no light,” yet then a discerning Christian may see their love to God, like Moses's face, shine to others' observation, though not [to] their own ; as may be particularly thus evidenced : When God smites them, they love him ; for they are still searching what sin it is that he contends for, that they may get rid of it, not hide it, nor excuse it. When they fear God will damn them, then they love him ; for they then keep in the way of holiness, which is the way of salvation ; yea, they will not be drawn out of it, though carnal friends, like Job's wife, bid them “ curse God, and die ;” though Satan tell them they strive in vain ; though their discouragements are multiplied, and their diligence is disappointed ; yet they are resolved, like Job, who said, “ Though God hath taken away my judgment, and the Almighty hath vexed my soul ; I will not remove mine integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go : my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.” (Job xxvii. 2, 5, 6.) As if he had said : “ I will delight in the Almighty, or nothing ; I will always call upon God, though he should never regard me.” Or, though the soul under trouble will not own so much goodness in itself as to say thus, yet the conversation of such Christians speaks it plainly ; and can

* In its old signification, “ to be beforehand,” “ to precede.”—EDIT.

such a frame proceed from any thing but love to God? Doth not grace work in the soul like physic in the body? The mother gives her child physic; the physic in its working makes the child sick; the child, when sick, instead of being angry with the mother for the physic, makes all its moan to the mother, hangs about her, lays its head in her bosom: is not this love to the mother, though she gave this sick-physic? So, my brethren, God deals with his children. What, though some of his dealings make them heart-sick? yet they cling to him, fearing nothing but sin, and can bear any thing but his displeasure. Is not here love? And do not these love God for himself? It is true, God's love to them all this while is great; but they perceive it not.

3. The third step is, *to love nothing but for God's sake, in him, and for him, and to him.*—It is said to be Teresia's maxim, "All that is not God is nothing." Indeed, the very word that Solomon uses for "vanity," which he endorseth upon the best of creature-happiness in the very notion of it, proclaims it: "It is not God, therefore it is vanity." * It is a noble employment to try experiments upon every lovely object, to reduce our love to them to the love of God, to be still musing upon spiritual cases, still supplying of spiritual wants, still longing for spiritual enjoyments, that I may not only love other things in subordination to God, but to love nothing but for God.

For example: *In all outward enjoyments.*—"Have I an estate? I will honour God with my substance, because I love him. *Have I any thing pleasant or delightful in this world?* I will run it up to the fountain." O how pure and satisfying are the loving soul's delights in God! "*Have I any esteem in the world?* I am no way fond of it; but so far as it may make my attempts for the honour of God more successful, I will improve it, and upon all other accounts decline it. Nearer yet: *My relations are dear unto me.* I truly love them; but yet my love to God shall animate my love to them. For instance: I truly love my friend; but this shall be my love's exercise, to persuade him to love God. I dearly love my parents; but O, no father like God! My soul is overcome with that expression of Christ's, 'Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.' (Matt. xii. 50.) My conjugal relation is dearest to me; but my heart is passionately set upon this, that we may both be infallibly espoused unto Christ. My heart yearns towards my children; but I had rather have them God's children than mine."

Nearer yet: *as to inward qualifications.*—For instance: *for natural parts:* "I bless God that I am not an idiot, that I have any capacity of understanding; but I am resolved, to the utmost of my capacity, to endeavour the convincing of all I converse with, that to love and enjoy God is most highly rational, and most eminently our interest. *Have I any acquired endowments of learning or wisdom?* I bless God for them; but I count all wisdom folly, and all learning dotage, without the knowledge of God in Christ:" "If any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any man

• 𐤅𐤓𐤕 vanitus, quasi 𐤅𐤓𐤕 non Deus.—MERCERUS et PAGNINUS.

love God, the same is known of him." (1 Cor. viii. 2, 3.) Higher yet : *for gracious qualifications that capacitate me for glory* : "I love grace the best of any creature, wherever I see it ; but it is for the sake of the God of all grace, without whom my grace is inconsiderable."

Once more, higher yet, and higher than this I think we cannot go : *To love those things that are not lovely, merely for God's sake, or out of love to God.*—For example : how many have you heard complain for want of afflictions, for fear God does not love them !—though, by the way, those betray their weakness who thus complain ; for did they but observe their want of evidence of divine love, and did they more sympathize with the church of Christ under the cross, they would find they need not complain for want of afflictions :—but, be it so : complain they do, and that for want of afflictions. Afflictions are no way lovely, we are no where bid to pray for them : but it is our duty to pray for preventing and removing them ; and yet the gracious soul is, through love to God, in some respect in love with them. Here is a notable degree of divine love, that the soul would upon any terms experiment the love of God ; and engage the heart in love to God again, and to love nothing but for God.

4. The fourth step of our love to God is, *for our highest love of every thing to be hatred in comparison of our love to God.*—The truth is, we can never so plainly know to what a degree we love God, as by weighing it against whatever stands in competition with it. Why should I so far debase my love to God as to weigh it in the same balance with love to sin ? But, alas ! why do besotted sinners so dote upon sin, as if love to God were not worthy to be compared with it ? Methinks, I may a little more than allude to that passage of Isaiah : "They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, and hire a goldsmith ; and he maketh it a god," &c. (Isai. xlvi. 6.) They give out their gold by handfuls, without weighing, for matter of their idols ; but they will be good husbands in their expenses about the workmanship of them. Man cares not at what rate he loves his idols, those lusts upon which they bestow their affections, due to God alone ; though in all other things they are wary enough. But why should I waste time in speaking to these ? They have not yet gone one step towards the love of God ; and, therefore, are so far behind, that they are not within learning of what is spoken to good proficients in the love of God. Let me only leave with them this parting word : From a person's first sincere and ardent love to God, he can neither speak nor think of sin without abhorrency. From the first infusion of grace, there is a graciously-natural antipathy against sin. Sin receives its death's wound : it is too true, it may struggle for life, and seem to be upon recovery ; but grace will wear it out, and will never leave the conflict till it has obtained the conquest. But this is not the thing I intended to speak to in this particular : it is otherguess* things than sin that the soul that loves God is afraid to spill his love upon. He prizeth those ordinances wherein he meets with communion with God, but is afraid his love should terminate there ; he values them but as windows to let-in the light : though something excellent may be

* Or *otherguise*, that is, "other kinds of things."—EDIT.

written there, as with the point of a diamond, yet it is neither writing nor window [which] is prized, but the light; when that is gone, shut up the window as if it were a dead wall that is no more regarded till the light returns. It is the light of God's countenance that is better than life itself. Perhaps you will say, this comes not up to what I asserted, *that our highest love to every thing is to be hated in comparison of our love to God.* Well, let this be warily considered: One whose love to God is at this height, is exactly curious in the management of his graces; and while he is so, he is as curiously jealous lest grace should warp, to rob God of his glory. He loves inherent grace heartily. "O," saith he, "that my soul were more enriched with it!" But yet while he is breathing after perfection in grace, he admiringly prefers God's wise love in saving him by Christ, before salvation by inherent grace: he utterly renounceth the best of his graces, when pride would have them justle with Christ for the procuring of acceptance. In short, a soul that is overcome with God's method of salvation, is unable to bear any thing that darkens it. "Would God have me to be as watchful against sin, as if there were no Christ to pardon it?" "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not." (1 John ii. 1.) Our first care must be *not to sin.* "O that I could perfectly comply with God in this! But, alas! I cannot! Would God have me to rest as entirely upon Christ after my utmost attainments, as that wretch who pretends to venture his soul with him out of an ill-spent life? O Lord, I trust no more to my good works than he can to his bad ones, for his meriting of salvation!* As I would not ungratefully overlook any thing the Spirit hath done in me, so I would not have any thing which I have almost marred in the Spirit's doing of it, to draw a curtain whereby Christ should be less looked on."

5. The most eminent degree of our love to God, is *ecstasy and rapture*.—We need not go down to the legends of the Philistines to sharpen our incentives to the love of God. I could over-match what can be said, with truth, of Ignatius [Loyola] and Xaverius, with several, whom many of you knew, whose unparalleled humility hid them from observation, whose communion with God was often overwhelming: but I forbear. Take a scripture-instance of this kind of love; compare but these three passages in the Song of Songs: "I am sick of love." (Canticles ii. 5.) This is upon Christ's first overcoming discovery of himself. "I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my Beloved, that ye tell him, that I am sick of love." (Canticles v. 8.) This charge is from her spiritual languishment, through earnest desire of reconciliation, after some negligence and carelessness in duty. Canticles viii. 6: This is when she hath had the highest communion with God that an imperfect state affords; when she was, as it were, upon the threshold of glory; and then she saith, *Love is strong as death.* As if she had said, "I shall die

* Let not this be mistaken, as if I made no difference between good works and evil. The apostle hath taught me better: "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men." And: "Let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful." (Titus iii. 8, 14.) Good works—they are genuine fruits, though not meritorious causes of justification.

unless thou grant my desire ;” or, “ Let me die, that my desire may be granted.” *Jealousy is cruel as the grave* : “ That as the grave is never satisfied, so neither will my love without the utmost enjoyments of thyself.” *The coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame* : “ My love burns up my corruptions, shines in holiness, and mounts upwards in heavenly-mindedness.” *Many waters cannot quench it* : “ The waters of afflictions are but as oil to the fire. *If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.* (Canticles viii. 6, 7.) She scorns all things that would force or flatter her out of her love to Christ. Now, if you except against this as spoken of love to Christ, and not of love to God essentially, to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; I readily answer, We cannot see God lovely but in Christ. If any will be so curious as to assert they look upon Christ himself as but a means to bring them to God ; it is God essentially, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, when Christ shall have given up his mediatory kingdom, (1 Cor. xv. 28,) that must be their complete happiness : the means is not to be rested in, in comparison of the end : this may well be compared to “ a sea of glass,” (Rev. xv. 2, 3,) slippery standing. O that I could but discover what my soul should long for ; namely, how to look beyond Christ to God, in whom alone is my complete happiness, and then to look in some respect beyond God to Christ, to give the Lamb his peculiar honour, when I shall be with the Almighty, and with the Lamb as in a temple ; when the glory of God and of the Lamb shall be the light, (Rev. xxi. 22, 23,) whereby I shall see that God, who dwelleth in such light, as no mortal eye can behold. (1 Tim. vi. 16.) That will be a blessed vision indeed. “ When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.” (1 Cor. xiii. 10, &c.) We have yet but childish apprehensions of these things, to what we shall have when we come to “ a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” (Eph. iv. 13.) Now we see “ darkly, through the glass ” of ordinances ; but then “ we shall see face to face.” Now we “ know but in part ; ” but then “ we shall know God,” according to our measure, as God knows us ; and then the greatest grace will be love, perfect love, that will cast out all fear ; fear of not attaining, and fear of losing, that joy of our Lord into which we are taken. But, alas ! all I can say in this matter is rather the restless fluttering of the soul towards God, than the quiet resting of the soul in God. Let me close the paragraph with that [which] I call a rapture of profound Bradwardine : “ O Lord my God ! thou art the good of every good ; good above all good things, a good most infinitely infinite. How, therefore, should I love thee ! How shall I proportionably love thee infinitely ? O that I could ! But how can I, that am so very little and finite, love thee infinitely ? And how otherwise will there be any proportion between thy loveliness and my loves ? My God, thou art super-amiable ; thou infinitely exceedest all other things that are lovely. Perhaps, Lord, I should love thee infinitely as to the manner, when I cannot as to the act. It pertains to the manner of loving, to love thee finally for thyself ; and no other good finally for itself, but for thee, who art the Chiefest Good, and the Beginning and End of all good things. But perhaps I may, in some sort, love

thee infinitely, as to the act both intensively and extensively; *intensively*, in loving thee more intensely, more firmly, more strongly, than any finite good, and when I love nothing but for thy sake; *extensively*, when I compare thee, Lord, with all other great and good things, and had rather they, and myself also, had no being, than once to offend my good God. But yet, most loving Lord! when I consider a proportion of love, I am greatly troubled. If love should be according to the worth of the object; by how much thou art better than I am, and more profitable to me than I am to myself, I should love thee more than thou lovest me; but that I never can. O Lord, I beseech thee, how much dost thou love me? Is it weakly and remissly, according to *my* goodness? That be far from thee, Lord! Thou lovest thine incomparably more than thou art loved of them; as thou art incomparably greater and better than they. But, O great and good God! that fillest heaven and earth, yea, the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; why dost thou not fill my poor little soul? O my soul, why dost thou not open all thy little doors? Why dost not thou extend thy utmost capacity, that thou mayest be wholly possessed, wholly satiated, wholly de-ebriated with the sweetness of so great love? especially when, though thou art so little, yet thou canst not be satisfied with the love of any lesser good. Many questions might be proposed to expostulate my soul into a flame of love. But I see, Lord, it is easy to speak and write these things; but it is hard to do and perfect them in effect. Thou, therefore, most good and Almighty Lord, to whom nothing is difficult, grant, I pray thee, that I may more easily do these things with my heart, than profess them with my mouth," &c.*

And thus, having, after my poor manner, put you upon practice, and pointed you the way from the lowest to the highest step of divine love, I am sensible that both good and bad have their exceptions ready against what I have delivered. The humble, trembling Christian,—he fears that if the lowest degree of love to God hath such heights in it, he shall never be able to reach it; and *he* is grieved *whom* God would not have made sad. On the other hand, those that *call themselves* Christians, though there is no reason for their usurping that title, without any consideration of either the duty or themselves, will bear you down, that they love God with all their hearts, souls, and minds, and that they have always done so, and [that] they are unworthy to live that do not love God; and if you inquire into any particulars whatsoever about their love to God, they will rather quarrel with you than give you any satisfying answer. If I could, therefore, propose any thing that would apply itself, that is, by its own evidence work itself into the conscience, I might hope to dissolve their self-flatteries. I cannot at present think of a more compendious way of undeceiving both these, and of further persuasively urging the love of God, than by plainly naming the infallible **PROPERTIES** and constant **EFFECTS** of this love: hereby those that despondingly fear they want it will find they have it; and those that groundlessly boast of it will find they want it; and both be instructed what must be done to evidence and exert it.

* BRADWARDINUS *De Causâ Dei*, lib. ii. cap. xxxiv. pp. 627—629, *sparsim*.

PROPERTIES OF LOVE TO GOD.

(1.) I shall begin with the PROPERTIES of our love to God.

And here, as in all the rest, I must study contraction; and therefore dare not particularly mention Gerson's fifty properties of Divine Love. I shall rather follow Voetius's method, who ranks the properties of Divine Love thus: They are, 1. Partly negative and privative; 2. Partly positive and absolute; 3. Partly comparative and transcendent. I shall speak briefly of each of these: your consciences may manage it as if it were a use of examination.

1. *Negative properties or adjuncts* are such as these; and these may prevent the mistakes of drooping Christians; and, alas! a great part of Christ's family are such upon one account or other.

(1.) *This divine love is not at all in the unregenerate, unless only in show and imitation.*—That soul that is solicitous about loving of God,—that soul loves him. This is proper and peculiar to all those, and only those, that are born of God, that are the adopted children of God. Let it be considered, whether the devil can counterfeit love to God, as he can other graces. Their faith works by fear, not by love: "The devils believe, and tremble." (James ii. 19.) It is true, he doth not only suffer, but promote, an hypocritical divine love in some,* and he may appear in a "love-mask" † to others, as to Adam in Paradise: "God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods." (Gen. iii. 5.) He pretends he hath more kindness for them than God himself, and the like to Christ; (Matt. iv. 3;) but did he himself ever pretend so much as to love God? I grant, wicked men pretend to love God; but the ridiculousness of their discourse plainly evidences, they neither understand what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

And whereas thou complainest that thou fearest thy love is not sincere, because it is selfish; be not discouraged: while thou studiest to please God, fearest to offend him, prizest his presence, mournest for his absence, thy love to God is infallibly sincere, though there be an ingredient of self in it; nay, let me say more, it could not be sincere, if thou didst not mind thyself. As in the very quintessence of conjugal love, it is impossible to abstract it from self-love; so the more we love God, the more we cannot but love ourselves, yea, even then when we most deny ourselves out of love to God.

(2.) *This divine love is far from perfection.*—It is subject to more sensible languishments and infirmities than any other grace, though it can never be totally and finally extinguished. What, though sometimes, to thy own apprehension, thou canst not tell whether thou lovest God at all? And what, though at all times thou complainest of fickleness and inconstancy? What, though the time of thy fear be longer than the time of thy love? Yet while thine heart can say, it is unquiet in this temper, and it is thy restless desire to love God more perfectly, these very complaints speak love: we never complain of want of love to those persons whom we do not already love. This, as well as other graces, is

* *Μορφοσιν* ["a form or appearance"].

† *Larva amoris.*

here but in part ; (1 Cor. xiii. 10 ;) while we are in this lower world, our very graces will have their neap- as well as their spring-tides. We cannot yet be so wise as to foresee all our hinderances, nor so watchful as to avoid all Satan's ambushes, nor so perfect as to maintain a spiritual frame of heart. Though this grace is always in motion, yet it doth not always nor equally go forward.

(3.) *Our love to God shall never be abolished.*—"Love never faileth ;" * the same kind of love, the same numerical love that was in gracious persons on earth, shall be continued in heaven, and receive its perfection presently after its delivery from the body of death. There will be a greater change in all our graces than in our love. A great part of our life is taken up in the exercise of those graces, that, I may in some respect say, die with us. The one-half of our life is, or should be, spent in mortification. The whole of our time needs the exercise of our patience. Our life, at best, is but a life of faith. Much of our sweet communion with God is fetched-in by secret prayer. But now, in heaven, there shall be no sin to be mortified, nothing grievous to be endured. Faith shall be swallowed up in enjoyment, and your petitions shall be all answered. So that now, Christians, set yourselves to love God, and you shall no way lose your labour. Other graces are but as physic to the soul,—desirable for something else, which when obtained, they are useless ; but love to God is the healthful constitution of the soul,—there is never any thing of it in any sense useless. Most of the graces of the Spirit do by our souls as our friends by our bodies, who accompany them to the grave, and there leave them ; but now love to God is the alone grace, that is to our souls the same that a good conscience [is],—our best friend in both worlds.

(4.) *This divine love is so unknown to the world, that when they behold the effects and flames of it, in those that love God in an extraordinary manner, they are ready to explode it as mere vanity, folly, madness, ostentation, and hypocrisy.*—When Paul managed his audience more like a sermon than a defence, Festus cries out upon him as mad. (Acts xxvi. 24.) Yea, when Christ himself, in love to God and souls, is more hungry after converts than food, his nearest relations think him crazed. "And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. And when his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him : for they said, He is beside himself." But were they any other but his carnal and graceless relations that did this ? See : "Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee." (Mark iii. 20, 21, 32.) No marvel, then, that enemies reproach you, friends forsake you, relations slight you, and the world hate you. (1 John iii. 13.) Christ tells us, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you." (John xv. 18, 23.) But how can the world hate Christ, who in love to it came to die for it ? Christ tells his hearers the true reason : "I know you," (this is no groundless surmise, nor censorious rashness, but *I know you*,) "that ye have not the love of God in you."

* 1 Cor. xiii. 8. *Non quoad formam, nec quoad modum tendendi in objectum.*—VOETIUS, *ibid.* "Love never faileth either with respect to its form, or to its mode of tending toward its object."—EDIT.

(John v. 42.) Let what will appear at the top, this lies at the bottom. And therefore judge, I pray you, who more fanatic,—those that hate God when they pretend to love him, or those that are counted frantic for their serious love to God? I shall neither name more, nor enlarge further, on this first rank of characters, but be brief also in the second.

2. The *absolute properties* of love to God are, among many, some of them such as these:—

(1.) *It is the most ingenious of all graces.*—In poor, inconsiderable loves, not worth the mentioning, how do persons contrive ways for the expressing and exciting of love! And there is no way to prevent it. O how much more, when the soul loves God? There is nothing meliorates the parts like grace. Divine love makes the best improvement of wit, parts, time. When a person loves to pray, though he can scarce speak sense to men, he can strenuously plead with God. A person that loves to meditate,—though he knows not how to make his thoughts hang together in other things, they multiply on his hand with a spiritual and profitable consistency. In short, to do any thing that may engage the heart to God, what gracious stratagems doth love abound with! That as he that beholds his face in a glass makes the face which he sees;—his very look is the pencil, the colour, the art;—so he that loves God sees such a reflexion of God's love to him, that a proud person doth not more please herself in her own fancied beauty, than this gracious soul is graciously delighted in the mutual dartings of Divine Love.* Keep from will-worship and human inventions in the things of God, especially from imposing upon others your prudentials of devotion; and then I will commend it to you, to try all the experiments which the scripture will warrant, to increase the flame of your Divine Love.

(2.) *Love to God is the most bold, strong, constant, and during grace, of all the graces of the Spirit of God.*—"Love is strong as death:" (Canticles viii. 6:) every one knows what work death makes in the world. It is not the power of potentates, nor the reverence of age, nor the usefulness of grace, can prevent its stroke: it conquers all. So doth love to God. Nothing can stand before it. What dare not love to God attempt? It designs impossibilities, namely, perfection; and is restless for the want of it. I may in some sense say, It would fain have contradictions true; namely, to be without the body, while in it; the body's being a clog is so wearisome. Love to God not only baffles Satan, but, through God's gracious condescension, it even prevails with God himself, that God will deny nothing to the soul that loves him.

(3.) *Love to God is the only self-emptying and satisfying grace.*†—Love,—it is self's egress; it is a kind of pilgrimage from self: he that loves is absent from himself, thinks not of himself, provides not for himself. But, O how great is the gain of renouncing ourselves, and thereby receiving God and ourselves! We are, as it were, dead to ourselves, and live to God; nay, more, by love we live in God: "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." (1 John

* JOHAN. EUSEB. NIEREMBERGIUS *De Arte Volendi*, p. 114.

† Idem, p. 322,

sec., *sparsim*.

iv. 16.) By faith we live *upon* God; by obedience we live *to* God; but by love we live *in* God. It is herein alone that we can give something like a carnal (though it is indeed a highly spiritual) answer to Nicodemus's question, "How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" (John iii. 4.) We have our souls immediately from the Father of spirits; by regeneration we return to God again, from whom by sin we are estranged; and by love we live in him, in some little resemblance to the child's living in the mother's womb. What the mother loves, the child loves; what the mother longs for, the child longs for; in the mother's health the child is well. The child lives there in a far different manner from how it lives in the world: though it cannot stir out of its enclosure, yet it never cries nor complains of its imprisonment. So the soul that entirely loves God hates what God hates, and loves what God loves; its life is far above the life of others, and it desires no greater liberty than to be, as it were, imprisoned in God, to have no will of its own, no one motion but what God graciously concurs in: yet it is so far from esteeming this a restraint, that it counts it the highest happiness of its imperfect state. He feels a sweetness in that beyond what the Heathen that spake it ever thought of, "In God we live, move, and have our being."

(4.) *The love of God makes us anxiously weary of life itself.*—In this love there is one death and two resurrections: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. ii. 20.) Christ lives, and the soul lives; and both by love. I must acknowledge, all manner of love is apt to be extravagant and irregular; our very love to God is, in this, blind, when it comes to any considerable height: it is apt to overlook (not in a way of neglect, but ecstasy) what is to be done and suffered, and would fain be at the enjoyment of God in heaven. By the way, let not doubting Christians be discouraged, because it is not thus with them. Though these properties be but in the bud, they may in time be full blown; therefore believe and wait: heights of grace are ordinarily as well the work of time, as of the Spirit of God. Besides, you know, there is nothing more common than for lovers to dissemble their love; so here, it is too common for gracious persons rather to belie the Spirit of God, than thankfully to own their love to God, because they are afraid of being mistaken, and they are afraid of boasting of a false gift; and here, though love, when it is perfect, it casteth out fear, yet while it is imperfect, fear proveth our love.

3. Thus much of the positive properties: I will be very brief in the *transcendent properties* of our love to God.

(1.) *Love to God is the great general directing grace, containing all other particular graces in it, and most intimately goes through the acts of all of them.** (1 Cor. xiii.)—Love in the soul is as the pilot in the ship, who steers the ship and all its passengers. Love steers the soul, and all its operations. Love is the needle in the compass, that is still trembling towards its divine loadstone. J. Eusebius Nierembergicus compares other graces to bullion uncoined; which, though it have an

* VOETIUS, *ibid.*

intrinsic value, yet it is not that money that answers all things. What shall I say? Find out a thousand transcendent metaphors, love will answer them all.

(2.) *It is in a singular manner infinite.*—Among all the faculties of the soul, there is none but the will that can, in any sound sense, be said to be infinite: all the other faculties are more bounded than the will. Now love is the natural act of the will; and love to God is the supernaturally-natural act of the renewed will. Its desires, which is the love of desires, are to be united unto God, the Fountain of all blessedness. And here, those that love God least, so it be sincerely,—their desires are infinite. For example: desires are the feet of the soul: their love will creep when it cannot go. Desires are the wings of the soul: love will flutter when it cannot fly. Desires are the breathings of the soul: love will pant, and groan, and gasp, where it can do no more. Again: the contentment and satisfaction of the will, which is *the love of complacency*, is infinite, in as large a sense as that word can be ascribed to creatures. *Desires* are the motion and exercise of love; *delight* is the quiet and repose of it. My beloved, to have the heart to delight in God, or to ache and tingle with the discourse of the love of God, through reflection upon the want of it, as unable to stand under his own thoughts,—this infallibly shows great love; and this soul's satisfaction in God is in some sort infinite.

EFFECTS OF LOVE TO GOD.

(II.) EFFECTS of love to God,—they relate either *to God himself*, or *to ourselves*, or they are *mutual*. I will speak briefly of each.

1. *Effects that relate to God* are such as these; I do not only say *these*, but *these*, and *such as these*:—

(1.) *Hatred of and flight from all that is evil.*—Joseph may be our instance. His mistress would have inveigled him into sin; but though “she spake to him day by day,” yet he “hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her.” (Gen. xxxix. 10.) He that fears sin will get as far as he can out of the reach of a temptation. Hatred of sin always holds proportion with our love to God; our inward hatred of sin, with our inward love of God; our return to sin, with the decay of our love to God. The renewing of our repentance answers the reviving of our love to God. Every one that doth not love God, loves sin, plain, down-right sin, sin without any excuse; for instance, either some moral wickedness, or a resting in their own righteousness.

(2.) *The fear of God.*—A reverential tenderness of conscience, lest we sin against God. It is not only fear of hell, but fear of God's goodness. “They shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days.” (Hosea iii. 5.) The soul that loves God is troubled that he either does or omits any thing for fear of hell, and that he is no more affected with love-arguments. Though, pray take notice, by the way, that all fear of hell doth not presently argue a spirit of bondage: hopes and fears poise the soul while in this world. I would therefore leave this charge upon you; namely, be sure that you love God better than the blessed apostle loved him, before you censure any for want of love who are diligent in duty

upon this motive, lest they be at last cast-aways. (1 Cor. ix. 27.) But, to return: though God's gracious condescension be so great as to allow those that love him a non-such familiarity, yet that never breeds the least contempt. Sense of distance between God and the soul, between the holy God and a sinful soul, between the faithful God and the fickle soul,—O this causeth holy tremblings, and humble apologies in our most familiar pleadings with God. The father of the faithful, whom God honoured with the title of his "friend," (of whose love to God you have already heard,)—when he pleaded with Christ face to face in so familiar a way, (never any like him!) see how he then prefaced his prayer: "Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes." Again: "O let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak." (Gen. xviii. 27, 30.) "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him." (Psalm lxxxix. 7.) Methinks that passage of Christ to his disciples, with the circumstance of time when he spake it, just upon the most servile action of his life, may for ever keep an awe upon our hearts: "Know ye what I have done to you? ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am." (John xiii. 12, 13.) When God deals most familiarly with us as with friends, let us carry it reverently as becomes servants.

(3.) *Obedience to the commands of God, and to those commands which would never be obeyed but out of love to God.*—"For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous;" (1 John v. 3;) that is, to obey those commands that are displeasing and troublesome, those commands that thwart our carnal reason, and so part with things present for the hopes of that we never saw, nor any man living that told us of them. "Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in him." (1 John ii. 5.) Once more: hear what Christ saith: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." And again: "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." (John xiv. 21, 23.)

(4.) *Resignation of ourselves to God.*—Whereby we devote ourselves wholly to God, to be wholly his,* to be every way disposed of as he pleaseth. "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them," &c. (2 Cor. v. 14, 15.) This resignation is like that in the conjugal relation: it debars so much as treating with any other; it, as it were, proclaims an irreconcilable hatred to any that would partake of any such love. God doth not deal with us as with slaves, but takes us into that relation which speaks most delight and happiness; and we are never more our own than when we are most absolutely his.

(5.) *Adhesion and cleaving unto God, in every case, and in every con-*

* *Quoad κτησιω et quoad χρησηω.* "Both as to possession and enjoyment."—EDIT.

dition.—"In the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice. My soul followeth hard after thee." (Psalm lxi. 7, 8.) Methinks we may say of the law concerning *birds*, (Deut. xxii. 6,) what the apostle saith of the law concerning oxen: "Doth God take care for birds? For our sakes, no doubt, it is written," to instruct us against cruelty; but may we not learn a further lesson? The bird was safe while on her nest: our only safety is with God. Now, to cleave to God in all conditions, not only when we fly to him as our only refuge in our pressures, but, in our highest prosperity and outward happiness, when we have many things to take-to whence the world expects happiness; this is a fruit of great and humble love, this demonstrates an undervaluing of the world, and a voluntary choosing of God; this is somewhat like heavenly love.

(6.) *Tears and sighs through desires and joys*.—When the spiritual, love-sick soul would, in some such, but an unexpressible, manner, breathe out its sorrows and joys into the bosom of God: "Lord, why thus loving to me, and why is my heart no more overcome with Divine Love? Those that never received so much from thee love thee more. O I am weary of my want of love! O I am weary of my distance from God! O I am weary of my unspiritual frame!" "We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." (2 Cor. v. 4.) Here, when the heart is ready to die away through excess of love, it is passionately complaining of defects: "Dear Lord! what shall I say? What shall I do? What shall I render? O for more endearing communications of Divine Love! O for more answerable returns of love to God!" Thus much of effects as to God.

2. The only *effect* I shall name as to us, is, a *seeking of heaven and things above, with contempt of the world, and all worldly excellencies*.—One that loves God thinks he can never do enough in heavenly employments. A person that abounds in love to God is too apt to neglect secondary duties, which are in their places necessary: they are apt to jumble out one duty with another. For example: those duties wherein they have most sensible communion with God bear down lesser duties before them; whereas, could we keep within scripture-bounds, and mind every duty according to its moment, then this is an excellent effect of Divine Love: for instance, to be afraid of worldly enjoyments, lest they should steal the heart from God; yet, at the same time, not to dare to omit any worldly duty, lest I should prove partial in the work of Christianity: to make conscience of the least duties, because no sin is little; but to be proportionably careful of the greatest duties, lest I should prove an hypocrite: such a carriage is an excellent effect of Divine Love: this is fruit that none who are not planted near the tree of life can bear.

3. *Mutual effects* are these, and such like as these:—

(1.) *Union with God*.—Union is the foundation of communion, and communion is the exercise of union. *The Spirit of God* is the immediate efficient cause of this union, and *faith* is the internal instrument on our part; but *love* is the internal instrument both on God's part and ours. Christ "dwells in our hearts by faith, we being rooted and grounded in love." (Eph. iii. 17.) This union is most immediately

with Christ, and, through him, with the Father and Holy Ghost. It is an amazing and comfortable truth, that our union with Christ does much resemble the personal union of the two natures in Christ. I grant it is unlike it in more considerations, because of the transcendency of the mystery; but yet there is some resemblance. For example: the human nature in Christ is destitute of its subsistence and personality, by its union with and its assumption to the divine; so the gracious soul hath no kind of denomination but what it hath from its union with Christ: its gracious being is bound up in its union with Christ. Other men can live without Christ; but so cannot the gracious soul. Again: in Christ there is a communication of properties, that is, that which is proper to the Divine Nature is attributed to the human; and, contrarily, that which is proper to the human nature is attributed to the Divine: so here, in the soul's union with Christ, Christ is made sin for us, and dealt with as if he were a sinner; we are made the righteousness of God in him, and privileged as righteous persons. Christ's riches are ours, and our poverty his; yea, more, the offices of Christ are attributed to believers; they are "an holy and a royal priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ;" (1 Peter ii. 5, 9;) and Christ "hath made us kings and priests unto his Father." (Rev. i. 6.) Christ hath a stock of created grace: it was for us: "Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." (John i. 16.) The apostle bids us "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. ii. 1.) What shall I say? Is Christ *the natural* Son of God? They are *the adopted*. Is Christ the beloved Son of God? Believers, in their measure, are so too. They are dead with Christ, buried with Christ, risen with Christ, sit together in heavenly places with Christ, fellow-heirs with Christ. In short, as there never was such another union in the world as the union of the two natures in Christ, so there never was, nor ever can be, such another union in the world as between Christ and the believer. It is beyond what any metaphors from art or nature can fully express. That of a foundation and building, of a vine and branches, of head and members, of soul and body, are but dark shadows of this union. But I must not enlarge.

(2.) *Communion with God.*—Communion consists in communication; * when there is a kind of community of propriety [property]. I might run over the former particulars, and enlarge them; but the subject is not so barren, that I need name one thing twice. Christians, I beg of you that you would be careful of receiving, because I can be but brief in delivering, a few hints of the communication of divine love between God and us. For example: God communicates "the divine nature" to us through his fulfilling "exceeding great and precious promises." (2 Peter i. 4.) We make returns as those that are born of God, in obeying his commands. Because God loves us, he communicates unto us his communicable properties of holiness, wisdom, goodness. Seeing we have nothing to return, we prostrate ourselves at his feet, [and] ingenuously acknowledge our unholiness, folly, and badness. God and

* *Cum res unius sit alterius.* "When that which belongs to one person becomes, by participation with another, joint property."—EDIT.

the soul hold communication in all gracious actions : God communicates strength to the doing of those things which he cannot do, but [which] we must : * to repent, believe, obey God,—these are our actions through his strength. Again : we exercise our graces upon God for those his actions which we cannot do, but [which] we may, through his covenant-engagement, with humble thankfulness say he must. For example : for the pardon of sin, speaking peace to the conscience, giving-out of gracious influences, &c. ; for these we admire God, we praise him, rejoice in him. Once more : in those things wherein we can make no return to God, but may to others for God's sake ; our love to God necessitates us to do it. For instance : God pities us, is merciful and kind to us ; God is infinitely above all such returns. Ay, but so are not the members of Christ, who are the best visible image of God in the world : I will give them not only my alms, but my very bowels, &c. In short, in this communication, God and the gracious soul have the same interest, drive on the same design, (the advancement of Christ and the gospel,) have the same friends, and the same enemies. They communicate secrets to each other : none but the loving soul knows the secrets of Divine Love ; and none but God hears all the secrets of the soul without a reserve. Among the dearest friends in the world, there is some reserve. Some things we will rather speak to a stranger than to our dearest bosom-friend ; we think them not fit to mention, or we are loath to trouble them : but there is none of this between God and the soul : God tells us all that may benefit, not overcharge, us : we tell God all the very worst of our own hearts, which we are ashamed to mention to those that most love us. God deals with us according to our capacities ; our bottles would break should God over-fill them ; but we deal with God according to the utmost of our active graces : God is both compassionate to pity and pardon what is no way acceptable, and even incredibly condescending, to accept of what none but his infinite grace would accept.

(3.) *Familiar love-visits.*—When God makes sad visits to the disquieting of conscience, and the breaking of our peace ; yet even then the soul, under trouble of conscience, would not change its spiritual trouble for the best of the world's peace, no, not for its former peace, with which it was so well pleased before conversion. The soul that loves God cannot construe that to be a visit which others count so. The soul never goes to God as we go to visit those we care not for, that we are glad at their being from home ; so the visit be but paid, we care not. Pray compare some passages in that Song of Loves : one while you have the spouse inquiring of Christ, "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon : for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?" (Canticles i. 7.) As if he had said : "Tell me, O Lord, my love and life, where I may have both instruction and protection in an hour of trouble ; lest through thy absence I be seduced by those that only pretend to love thee." Christ gives a present answer, and quickly after returns an invitation : "O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me

* Through his perfection, not defect.

hear thy voice ; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely." (Canticles ii. 14.) As if he had said : "O my mourning dove, that darest not stir out of thy secret place, stir up thy faith, hold up thy face with comfort, let me hear thy prayers and praises : though others censure them, I esteem them ; though others count thee deformed, thou art in my eyes beautiful." Here is something of affection ; but see more : "Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits." (Canticles iv. 16.) As if he had said : "O my Lord, what I have from thee, I return to thee : accept, I beseech thee, the fruits of obedience and praise." Christ presently accepts the invitation : "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse : I have gathered my myrrh with my spice ; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey ; I have drunk my wine with my milk : eat, O friends ; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." (Canticles v. 1.) As if he had said, "Thou shalt no sooner ask, than be answered ; I accept thy graces and duties, thy bitter repentance and thy fragrant holiness : they are most sweet to me, notwithstanding their imperfections. And ye, O my friends, whether blessed angels, or gracious souls, do you cheer yourselves with the same spiritual dainties wherewith I am refreshed." This is much ; but there is more in the next expression I shall name : "Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me : " (Canticles vi. 5 :) as if he had said, "I am ravished and vanquished by thy fixed eye of faith." In short, see the spouse's closing request : "Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices." (Canticles viii. 14.) As if he had said, "As I began this song, my dearest Saviour, with passionate desires of thy first coming by the preaching of the gospel ; so, though I thankfully praise thee for all the communion I have had with thee, yet I cannot, my Lord, but more passionately long for thy glorious coming, to take me with thee from these bottoms of death and valleys of tears, to those eternal heights where nothing springs but life and glory ; that, instead of this song, I may sing a new one to the Lamb, and to Him that sits upon the throne unto all eternity." Thus, but in a far more seraphic manner than I am able to express, the soul-loving God, as the God-loving soul, are rejoicing in each other with joy, till they rest in each other's love. (Zeph. iii. 17.) In short, the soul that loves God is never so well as when most immediately with him ; and while there is any distance, many a love-glance passeth between God and the soul, even in the greatest crowd of business and diversions.

(4.) *A putting a love-interpretation upon all things.*—God looks upon the very miscarriages of those whom he loves as their infirmities, and puts a better interpretation upon them, than they dare do themselves. The disciples slept when Christ bade them watch : they wist not what to answer him : Christ himself excuseth it better than they could, in saying, "The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak." (Mark xiv. 37, 38, 40.) And the loving soul is as loath to take any thing ill at the hands of God : when it is never so bad with the soul, he blesseth God that it is no worse. God and the loving soul do those things towards each other, which nothing but love can put a good interpretation upon : the truth is, without love it were intolerable. For example : God requires that service of the gracious soul that he requires of no other ; namely, to

bless God when persecuted, to rejoice in tribulations, to hope against hope, &c. God puts the soul that loves him upon those trials that he puts upon no other; namely, those chastisements from himself, those reproaches from men, those buffetings from Satan, which are peculiar to saints. But the soul heartily loveth God under all these. Again: the soul grows upon God in prayer; and the more it receives from God, the more insatiable it is, and God loves the soul the better for it. When afflictions are extreme, those that love God put the affliction upon the account of God's faithfulness: on the other hand, when the poor soul is foiled, and Satan runs with the tidings of it to set God against him, God pities the soul, and rates the accuser: "And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee. Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments: Take away the filthy garments from him," &c. (Zech. iii. 1—4.) Here is Joshua the high priest: while executing his office in offering sacrifices and prayers for the people, Satan arraigns him as a prisoner at the bar, and the accusation being true and vehement, Satan takes the upper hand; but now, Jesus Christ, as well the Patron as the Judge of saints, cuts him short with a vehement reproof, and tells him those sins could not make void that choice, which they could not at first hinder; and, farther, Christ, as it were, tells him they had been severely punished, half burnt and wasted by the heat of God's displeasure; and would he now re-kindle that fire? No, Satan, thy charge is, as it were, thrown out of the court: his sins shall be pardoned, his graces multiplied, and upon the well-discharging of his office he shall have "places to walk among them that stand by;" alluding to the walks and galleries about the temple. As if he had said, "Thou shalt walk with these glorious angels: they shall be thy companions and guardians, where Satan hath no place." So that Christ loves a soul the more, not the less, for Satan's accusations.

CONCOMITANTS.

To all these effects add these concomitants, or those things that have agreement with, or are near of kin to, Divine Love; which do not really differ from it, only express some part or manner of it. In short, it is love under some other form or notion. I shall only mention two concomitants:—

1. *Devotion, which is an absolute delivering up of ourselves to God's worship and service, so as by no flatteries or dangers to be diverted.*— "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all." (1 Tim. iv. 15.) Herein lies the strength of religion, and the spiritual pleasure of it: herein the soul can say, with some kind of triumph, "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." (Isai. xii. 2, 3.) Christians, we must not only be barely frequent in religious actions; but we must act as those that are given up to God, we must mind the fervour of religion. We must be exceeding watchful over our thoughts, to keep them from vanity; and

over our affections, to keep them from entanglement. I would therefore commend it to you, to single out, every morning, some short passages of scripture, or some encouraging promise that hath affected you, to roll in your minds, or to lie upon your hearts all day, to maintain this holy fervour: nothing works and keeps such an impression upon the heart as scripture.

2. *The other concomitant is zeal, which is the most intense degree of desire and endeavour to please and honour God.*—It is the boiling-up of the affections to the greatest heat: this must be the companion of every grace. Now, zeal is expressed *against sin, or in duty.*

(1.) In the exercise of *zeal against sin*, I beg of you to observe this rule; namely, *Whatever act of zeal you express toward others, double it first upon yourselves.* Whatever evil you reprove, or would reform in others, be doubly strict against it in yourselves. This is Christ's counsel: "Cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." (Matt. vii. 5.) Mine eye is not capable of having a beam in it; but a mote in mine own eye should be to me as a beam, in comparison of what it is in another's. Take a few scripture instances; for this had need to be inculcated in the present age. In case of dishonour done to God and yourselves, compare Moses's carriage. "Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses. And they said, Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And the Lord heard it;" but Moses was as if he heard it not; for he was "very meek, above all the men that were upon the face of the earth." (Num. xii. 1—3.) He was so indeed; but it was only in his own cause: when the glory of God is concerned, you will find him of another temper: "As soon as he saw the calf, and the dancing, Moses's anger waxed hot. And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it. Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me. And he said, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour," &c. (Exod. xxxii. 19, 20, 26, 27.) Here is one ice-cold in his own cause, fire-hot in God's. Take another instance, of Paul: "Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all." (Gal. iv. 12.) As if he had said, "The wrong you have done me, I count as nothing." But to Elymas, that would hinder the entertainment of the gospel, he saith, "Thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness," &c.; (Acts xiii. 10;) and he strikes him blind. I instance in these now, because I mentioned them before, as singularly eminent for their love to God.

(2.) For *zeal about duties* I commend unto you this rule: *In every duty you take in hand, endeavour to do it above your strength; not only to the uttermost of your strength, but above it.* I bottom this rule upon the commendation given to the churches of Macedonia: "For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves." (2 Cor. viii. 3.) My brethren, it becomes us in every thing of piety to pant after the utmost perfection attainable: "Not as

though I were already perfect : but I labour after, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before," &c. (Phil. iii. 12—14.) And David saith, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." (Psalm lxi. 9.) In a word, we must not only be sometimes zealous under pangs of conscience, but always in the whole frame of our conversation : "It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing ;" (Gal. iv. 18 ;) and not only when a minister or some other is present who may commend you.

V. The last thing I first proposed was, *to urge some persuasives to be graciously ambitious of such qualifications, and as graciously diligent in such exercises.*—And here I must pass-by more arguments than I can so much as mention. For the truth is, you can name nothing in the world, but it may be an argument to promote our love to God.

1. Consider, *God is our great Benefactor.*—I mention this twice, that it may be often in your thoughts. Who can reckon up the benefits we receive from God ? If love be to be recompensed with love, greater love was never shown than this, that God hath given his Son to die for his enemies. If love be to be purchased at any rate, who can give more for it than eternal life ? If love be to be bestowed gratis, who more worthy of it than God ? And canst thou, then, do less than love him ? It is commended as an expedient to overcome the worst of our enemies : "If thine enemy hunger, feed him ; if he thirst, give him drink : for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." (Rom. xii. 20.) O what hearts have we, that mercies will not melt them ! Reflect a little upon yourselves : we use to indent [bargain] with little children for their love : if we give them but an apple, or a plum, we presently ask, "Will you love me ?" And if they promise to love us, we then inquire, "Where will you love me ?" O dear Christians, turn-in upon your own hearts a little ! O how many, how great mercies do you receive from God ! Solomon tells us, that "a gift whithersoever it turneth, it prospereth ;" (Prov. xvii. 8 ;) shall God's gifts be the only exception to that proverbial maxim ? For shame, Christians ! let us strive who shall be first in crying, "O come, let us worship and bow down : let us kneel before the Lord our Maker." (Psalm xcv. 6.) "Know ye that the Lord he is God : it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves ; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture." (Psalm c. 3.) "O love the Lord, all ye his saints : for the Lord preserveth the faithful." (Psalm xxxi. 23.) God is pleased to give us in actual possession what his wise love thinks fittest for us ; and God is pleased to give us promises suitable to every condition we can be in in this world. For instance : in case of want, "Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat ? or, What shall we drink ? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed ?" Surely, if we may be solicitous about any worldly concern, it is about food and raiment ; but Christ chargeth us, upon our Christianity, not to be thoughtful about them : "For after all these things do the Gentiles seek." *But if we do not take care for food and raiment, we must starve.* Christ doth, as it were, say, "Nay ; there is no danger of that ; 'for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.'" (Matt. vi. 31—33.) *Were this believed, men would lay aside their callings.* No warrant for that :

Christ layeth down *a rule* for our practice, as *the condition* of the promise: "Seek ye first," not only, but first, "the kingdom of God and his righteousness," and then, in a way of diligence, not negligence, "all these things shall be added unto you." This in respect of want. Take another in case of danger: "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." (Prov. xviii. 10.) O how safe is that person that is, as it were, garrisoned in the divine attributes! In case of suffering: "Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred fold now in this time;" (Mark x. 29, 30;) an hundred fold more comfort in parting with all for Christ, than he could have had in keeping all, and denying of him. But why should I name particulars? There is enough in one scripture whence to form many incentives to love God: "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Rom. viii. 28.) . Pray mark this place.

We—It is not only the apostle, but all believers.

Know—It is not, "We only think or hope," but, we know.

That all things—All those afflicting providences which are most grievous to be borne; all those dark providences which we know not what to make of.

Work together—Though we cannot presently anatomize every particular providence, yet in their contexture we cannot but say they are gracious, and *for good*—for the spiritual and eternal good of all *them that love God*. "O, but here I stick, I cannot say I love God." Read on: the next clause is the best interpreter of this.

To them who are the called according to his purpose—That is plainly, to those that obey Christ's call in his word, to all that are converted, to all that are willing to be taught and ruled by Jesus Christ. And though thou darrest not own thy conversion, yet thou darrest not deny this evidence of it; namely, that thou wouldest fain comply with Christ in every thing.

2. *Love to God ennobles all other graces*.—I will not meddle with the controversy about faith's being informed by love, or love being, as it were, the soul of faith. The scripture tells that "faith worketh by love;" (Gal. v. 6;) and it is by loving nothing so much as God. Love is the most ingenuous grace, the most heavenly grace, the most god-like grace: all other graces are more or less excellent, as they are enlivened with love to God. Sales illustrates it thus: "The general of an army having gained some renowned victory, will have all the glory of it; for he ordered the battle, and led them on: we name the services of the several parts of the army, both the vanguard, the body, the wings, the rear. So here, some Christians are singular for faith, others for alms-deeds; some for prayer, others for humility; but love to God commands all these; love commands patience to bear, and hope to wait, and faith to believe."* Elsewhere he compares love to scarlet, which is a royal cloth not for *the wool*, but for *the dye*; so a soul, as it were, double-dipped in love to God, is the most excellent Christian.

* SALES "Of the Love of God," p. 670, &c. *sparsim*.

3. *Love to God rectifieth all other loves, and keeps them in due bounds.*

—The same author hath this other illustration; namely, “I may love my servant; but if I do not love my child better than I love my servant, I am defective in my love. Well, then, I must love my child; but if I do not love my wife better than I love my child, I am defective in my love. Well, then, I must love my wife; but if I do not love God infinitely more than I love my wife, I am defective in my love. You shall see,” saith he, “a mother so busy about her child, as if she had no love for any one else, as if her eyes were for nothing else but to look upon it, and her mouth for nothing else but to kiss it. But now, if she must lose her child or her husband, her love to her husband is so great as if she had no love for her child at all. So when God and those we most dearly love stand in competition, you may soon see the subordination of our love.” Though, let me add this for your encouragement: God never calls for the hating of other things for love to himself, but he doth most singularly make up in himself whatever any one parts with for him. When God requires the banishment of other objects, it is to communicate himself more fully, more clearly, more sweetly. Look over what Martyrology you please, I think you will scarce find so much as one dying for Christ any other way than triumphing; whereas many, of as eminent graces as they, die in their beds, little less than despairing. What encouragement may this be for the worst of times!

4. *Our love to God doth more sensibly quiet our hearts, than God's love to us.*—For though God's love to us be infinitely greater than our love to God; yet, till his love to us have drawn out our love to him, we do more abuse his kindness than other persons do whom he doth not so love. This is most evident in a person just upon the borders of conversion, but yet unconverted: God is abundant in his love of benevolence; he is now engaged upon the making of means effectual for his thorough regeneration. But now in this work there are several things to be done, which, though they speak greater love on God's part than ever he before showed him, yet while God is at work, the person quarrels with God more than about any former providences of his life. God, to tame him, brings him under great afflictions; upon which he either flies in his face, or lies sullen at his feet, and thinks he may well do so. Well, but God will not thus leave him: God follows him with terrors of conscience; “the arrows of God stick fast in him, and the poison thereof drinketh up his spirits.” But he will not yet yield; he holds fast his iniquity, which he is as loath to part with as his life, and rather hates than loves God for all this kindness: so that till he is brought to love God, God's love to him doth no way quiet him. By which you may plainly see, that, let God's love to us be never so great, we misinterpret all till we love God again; and then, let God do what he will, he is quiet; let his sufferings be next to hell-torments,* he will not allow one hard thought of God. Therefore, be persuaded to get, increase, and exercise this love to God with all your hearts, souls, and minds.

* *Da mihi, Domine, sanctum amorem tuum; et mitte me, si vis, in ignem inferni, &c.*—*STELLA De Amore Dei*, p. 314, &c. “Bestow on me, O Lord, thy holy love; and then, if that be thy will, cast me into the fire of hell.”—*EDIT.*

I have been too long already, and therefore will be as brief as may be in answering these two complaints :—

COMPLAINT I. “All that hath been said makes me fear, I have no true love to God at all : I cannot say, I love God more than the creature. I feel my heart more sensibly warping towards the world in the service of God, than springing towards God in my worldly affairs.”

To this I answer by these distinctions :—

DISTINCTION I. *We must distinguish between the estimation of our love and the commotion of it.*—The commotion may be greater, where the estimation is less. One whose love is fixed upon God, though he is so far from forsaking God, that he will forsake all things for God ; yet he may, till he recollect himself, be more moved with some petty loss. In short, he may have some violent gust of affection after other things ; but the constant breathings of his soul are after God.

DIS. II. *We must distinguish between the solidity of our love, and the flashiness of it.*—Between a superficial and a lasting joy. For instance : a covetous man may laugh more when he is tickled than when you give him a thousand pounds ; but he is a thousand times more joyful of his thousand pounds than of his being tickled. The soul's love to God is well-rooted. (Eph. iii. 17.) As a sick man is pleased with one that will sit with him, and alleviate his pains by diversion ; but he is more pleased with that man that shall cure him. While our souls are in a sickly frame, we are pleased a little with variety of diversions ; but we soon see their emptiness, and charge our souls to return unto God for a perfect cure.

DIS. III. *We must distinguish between our spiritual love and our sensible love.*—While we live in this world, such is our weakness through the remainders of sin and imperfection of grace, that our animal and vital spirits are more affected with sensible things than with spiritual. The things of the world are near to us, and we cannot live without them ; but yet he that loves God never says, upon the enjoyment of them, “Soul, take thine ease.” (Luke xii. 19.) O no ; he is angry, and grieved that he is at all pleased about such things.

COMPLAINT II. “I hope I am not wholly destitute of this excellent grace ; yet I am afraid to own that I have it. Is it impossible to get my heart above this uncomfortable uncertainty ? O that my heart were more raised and fixed above this anxious temper !”

I will close all with an essay to answer this complaint ; only premise, let not any thing that shall or can be spoken be wrested to give the least encouragement imaginable to any thing of sin. Take heed you do not, upon any account, gratify your sloth or indifferency of spirit, or any sins of omission. Keep off this rock, and then thy solicitude about thy fickleness gives thee grounds of hope to get above it. Take, therefore, these short directions, how to get and keep the most certain, constant, comfortable, spiritual frame of divine love that is to be had upon earth :—

1. *Keep a severe watch against all sins.*—Yet give not way to drooping fears, because of unavoidable infirmities. “If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand ? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.” (Psalm cxxx. 3, 4.)

2. *Observe your own temper.*—What it is that most draws out your love to any person or thing in this world, and improve that very inducement to love God: “He is altogether lovely;” (Canticles v. 16;) that is, imagine or name any thing that is most desirable, most worthy to be loved and admired; and that is he.

3. *Endeavour to love God out of duty, when, to your own apprehension, you cannot love him out of grace.*—I would commend this to you for all your gracious carriage towards God, and for all the kindness you would receive from God. For instance: repent, as it is *a duty*, even while you fear you want *the grace* of repentance. Believe, as it is *a duty*, while you think you cannot act faith as *a grace*. So justify God, (that is, acknowledge God to be righteous, though he condemn you,) when you fear God will not justify you. Sanctify God, (that is, celebrate God’s holiness,) when you fear he will not sanctify you; that is, not make you holy. So set yourselves to love God; that is, take heed you do not offend him; do all you can to please him; take up with nothing on this side himself. In short, let God find you in a way of *duty*, and you will find God in a way of *grace*.

4. *Study Christ.*—What divine love we either receive or return, it is through Christ. You may look for encouragement from Christ for every thing but sin. In every thing have recourse to Christ, for the performance of every duty, for the attaining of every grace; when you fear grace is withering, Christ will revive it. In a word: pray and strive that you may feel what it is for “Christ to be all in all.” (Col. iii. 11.)

Christians, practically mind these four directions, and they will be as the wheels of Christ’s chariot that is “paved with love,” to bring his beloved to glory. (Canticles iii. 10.)

SERMON II.

BY THE REV. JOHN MILWARD, A.M.,

FELLOW OF CORPUS-CHRISTI COLLEGE, OXFORD.

HOW OUGHT WE TO LOVE OUR NEIGHBOURS AS OURSELVES?

Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.—Matthew xxii. 39.

THE apostle bids us consider Christ, “who endured *SUCH*” (that is, *so great* *) “contradiction of sinners against himself.” (Heb. xii. 3.) It was from a great spirit of this kind, that his adversaries used to propose so many captious questions to him. We find him no less than three times opposed in this one chapter: First by the disciples of the Pharisees,

* *Τοιαυτην emphatikos posuit, declarans magnitudinem αντιλογias.*—ARETIUS. “He has given an emphasis to the epithet *such*; thus declaring the magnitude of that ‘contradiction’ which Christ endured.”—EDIT.

and the Herodians,* about the lawfulness of giving tribute unto Cæsar: Again, the same day, by the Sadducees, with a question about the resurrection, which they denied. When he had so well acquitted himself of both these, that the first marvelled and left him, and the last were put to silence; behold, he is again set upon by the Pharisees, who seem to have chosen out one of their number to oppose him with a question: "Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him." (Matt. xxii. 35.) The same person is by another evangelist called "a scribe:" "One of the scribes came," &c. (Mark xii. 28.)

There were two sorts of scribes among the Jews; namely, *scribes of the people*, who were actuaries in and about matters of public concernment; and *scribes of the law*, whose business was to read and interpret the law of God unto them: † such an one was Ezra, who is said to be "a ready scribe in the law of Moses:" (Ezra vii. 6 :) and upon this account they are said to "sit in Moses's seat." (Matt. xxiii. 2.) Of this last sort was the person in the text, as plainly appears by joining both evangelists together: Mark says, he was *εἰς τῶν γραμματέων*, "one of the scribes:" Matthew says, he was *νομικός*, "a lawyer." If we put them both together, they say, he was a scribe of the law. And the question that he tempted Christ with, is concerning the law: "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" (Matt. xxii. 36.) He who was able at twelve years of age to dispute with the doctors, in such a manner as that all that heard him "marvelled at his understanding, and answers," (Luke ii. 46, 47,) was not like, at this time, to go far to seek for an answer to such a question. We have him therefore speaking roundly and directly to it: Jesus said unto him, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (Matt. xxii. 37—39.) The latter part of this answer falls under our present consideration: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." This is said to be "like unto the first," that is, a "great commandment;" because as that comprehends all the duty we owe to God immediately, so this includes all that duty we owe to man.

The Jewish doctors ‡ were wont to call it, "the universal great precept:" sometimes again, "the head," sometimes, "the foot, of the law;" alluding possibly to the total sum in accounts. For as in adding many particulars together, if you begin below, and go upward, the total sum is set above, and called "*the head of the account*:" if above, and proceed downward, it is set below, and called "*the foot of the account*," containing in it as much as all the rest: so if you begin at Moses, and go down to the prophets; or at the prophets, and go up to Moses; of all that is

* *Forsitan in populo tunc qui dicebant oportere dare tributum Cæsari, vocabantur Herodiani, ab his qui hoc facere recusabant.—Vide DRUSII Comment. ad Voces Novi Testamenti.* "Perhaps among the populace, the men who refused to pay tribute to Cæsar called the opposing partisans, who maintained the duty and propriety of submitting to taxation, *Herodians*."—EDIT. † L. DE DIEU. ‡ HILLEL Sener: *Lex nostra uno pede continetur: "Diliges proximum tuum tanquam teipsum." Uno pede, hoc est, uno capite, quod vocant universale magnum.—DRUSII Apophthegmata Ebræ. lib. i.* "Hillel the elder says, 'Our law is contained in one foot: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' *In one foot; that is, in one head, which they call the great universal.*"—EDIT.

spoken by any or all of them, about our duty to man, this is the sum: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

When Christ commanded his disciples to love one another, he charged them with many things in that one thing: "*These things* I command you, that ye love one another:" (John xv. 17:) and who can tell how many things are required of us in *this one thing*? "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report." (Phil. iv. 8.) All these **WHATSOEVER**s are required in it; yea, whatsoever else that is good and virtuous, "if there be any virtue, any praise," it is comprehended in this one command, "Love one another," and also in this saying, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."*

It cannot be expected, that, in so short a time as is allotted to this exercise, we should speak of all things contained in these words: we can but take up a few drops out of the ocean, or a handful of sand from the shore. It is only He that "measures the waters in the hollow of his hand, and comprehendeth the dust of the earth in a measure," (Isai. xl. 12,) that is able to give us the true dimensions of them. As there is height and depth, a length and a breadth, in the *love*, so also in the *law*, of God, which passeth knowledge. (Eph. iii. 18, 19.) This David acknowledged when he said, "I have seen an end of all perfection: but thy commandment is exceeding broad." (Psalm cxiix. 96.)

Neither is it our scope to speak of the words in the way of a treatise. We shall therefore give you the doctrine, and proceed with as much speed as well we may to the query, the resolution of which is our main business at this time.

DOCTRINE.

It is the duty of every man to love his neighbour as himself.

When God says, "*Thou shalt*," he intends thee and me, and every man else of what rank, state, or condition soever he be.

Before we propound the query it will be requisite,

I. That we show who is our neighbour.

II. That we speak something of the lawfulness of a man's loving himself.

III. That we lay down some conclusions, which are to be taken along with us, as a thread that must run through the whole contexture of our ensuing discourse.

I. *Who is our neighbour?*—Our neighbour is, not only he who lives near to our habitation, in the same street, or city; nor he only that is of the same country or nation that we are of; but every man, of what place or nation soever he be; whether he be one of our acquaintance or a stranger, a friend or an enemy. You find this question put somewhere to Christ himself, by a certain lawyer, (whether he were the same we have here in this chapter, it matters not,) and there you have Christ answering him by a parable, to this effect: A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him, and wounded him,

* *Decalogus continet doctrinam tam copiosam et sublimem, ut nunquam satis perspicui, nunquam exhaustiri possit.*—MELANCTHONUS. "The decalogue contains doctrine of such boundless amplitude and sublimity as can neither be adequately grasped by the human mind, nor ever be exhausted."—EDIT.

and left him half dead. There came a priest that way, and saw him, and passed by on the other side. After him, a Levite in like manner. But a Samaritan, seeing him, had compassion on him, bound up his wounds, and brought him to his inn, &c. "Now which of these three was *neighbour* to him?" He answers: "He that showed mercy on him." What says Christ? "Go and do thou likewise." (Luke x. 29—37.) As if he should have said, "Thou art a Jew, and, as such, hast little or no dealing with a Samaritan, or indeed with any man of another nation. There is a partition-wall between you and them; so that you look on them as strangers, if not enemies, and none of your neighbours;* but I tell thee, a Samaritan, or a man of any other nation, whatever he be, is one of thy neighbours; and therefore, if he be in misery, and come within thy reach, be sure thou show mercy to him."

This God required of the Jewish nation of old: "If a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself." (Lev. xix. 33, 34.) Yea, although he be an enemy, the case is the same; for so Christ resolves it: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies." (Matt. v. 43, 44.) *Ye have heard*—The scribes and Pharisees might have taught them thus, blotting the text with their false interpretation; but Christ better informs them, and, wiping away their blots with his sponge, restores the law to its primitive beauty and perfection: "I say unto you, Love your enemies." And doth not the law say the same also? We find a very fair text in the law to this purpose: "If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him." (Exod. xxiii. 4, 5.) Doth God take care for oxen? For man's sake doubtless this is written; and so it appears plainly in the text: "Thou shalt surely help with him: thou shalt bring it back again to him." It was to be done, not only in mercy to the beast, but in love to the man.

Besides, how can we think that God would require us to bring back a straying ox, and to relieve an ass oppressed with his burden, and lay no duty on us to a man in such a condition? Doubtless if we are bound to bring back an ox that goeth astray, we are much more obliged to bring back a man, when we find him going astray from God; and if we are to help an ass that lieth under his burden, much more a man, when we see him oppressed with his.

We see then whom we are to account our neighbour: it is any man whomsoever, friend or enemy, that lives nigh to us, or at a greater distance from us.

II. We come now to speak of the second thing propounded; and that is, *the lawfulness of a man's loving himself*.—Every man may; yea, it is a duty lying on every man to love himself.

* *Ipse enim est proximus, quem non solum conformis natura conjunserit, sed etiam misericordia copulaverit.*—AMBROSIUS *De Penit.* lib i. cap. 5. "For that man is my neighbour with whom I am not only conjoined by conformity of nature, but who is also united to me by the ties of mercy."—EDIT.

This may seem strange, when we see self-love every where branded in the scripture; so that there is hardly any sin described in so black a character as this. It is a sin indeed, that includes many others in the bowels of it. We may say of it, as the apostle James doth of the tongue, it "is a fire, a world of iniquity. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison." (James iii. 6, 8.)

Unbelief and self-love are the immediate parents of all the mischiefs and abominations that are in the world; and therefore we have this set in the front of all the evils that make the last times perilous: "In the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God," &c. (2 Tim. iii. 1—4.) And if you can find a larger catalogue of abominations than you have here set down to your hand, self-love is the mother of them all. It is this that makes all the stir that is in the world. It is this that disturbs families, churches, cities, kingdoms. In a word, this is the grand idol that is set up to be worshipped all the world over; greater by far than Diana of the Ephesians, whom yet "all Asia and the world" were said to worship. (Acts xix. 27.) It is that idol which every man must endeavour to take down; for until that be done, we shall find little peace within ourselves, or quietness among men.

Notwithstanding this, we must say, that it is lawful, and a duty incumbent on every man, to love himself.

There is a two-fold self: 1. A natural self; 2. A sinful self. This is to be hated, the other loved. We cannot hate *sinful* self too much, though it be to the destruction of it; this is that which we are bound to kill, mortify, and utterly destroy. Christ came into the world, purposely to help and assist us in the destruction of it: "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." (1 John iii. 8.) But we may lawfully love *natural* self, soul and body; because these are the works of God, and therefore good.

He that came to destroy "the works of the devil," came to save the soul and body, *the works of God*: "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke xix. 10.)

1. *A man may love his own body, and is bound to preserve the life of it.*—"No man ever yet hated his own flesh." (Eph. v. 29.) We read indeed of one out of the tombs, who "was night and day in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones;" (Mark v. 5;) and of the idolatrous Baalites, (who sacrificed to the devil, and not to God,) that "they cut themselves, after their manner, with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them." (1 Kings xviii. 28.) But who in his right wits ever did such a thing? Or where did God require it at any man's hands? The Lord forbids the Israelites to make such barbarous cuttings and manglings of their flesh, after the manner of the Heathen, because they were his servants. (Lev. xix. 28.) A man may sin against his own body many ways; as, by excessive labour, neglecting to take necessary food or physic, intemperance, and

the like: "He that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body." (1 Cor. vi. 18.)

2. *A man may and ought chiefly to love his own soul.*—Every man's care should be that it may be well with his better part, both here and hereafter. And to this purpose it is every one's great concern, (1.) To get into Christ, who is that ark in which only souls can be safe. They who, after all the calls, invitations, and beseechings of God in the gospel, will persist and go on in impenitency and unbelief, are murderers of their own souls, and their blood will be upon their own heads: "He that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death." (Prov. viii. 36.) (2.) He that hath closed with Christ must endeavour to abide in him, by putting forth fresh and renewed acts of faith. (John xv. 4.) He must feed daily on the promises, which are the food of his soul; and look to it, that he keep alive the grace which is wrought in his heart. (Prov. xix. 8.)

The new nature, or spiritual self, is the best self we have; and should be most of all loved by us. They that have the charge of others' souls, are a part of their own charge: "Take heed *unto yourselves*, and to all the flock." (Acts xx. 28.) They who are under the inspection of others, must look to themselves also. So John chargeth that elect lady and her children, to whom he wrote his second epistle: "Look to yourselves." (Verse 8.) As pastors must give an account of their flock, so every sheep of the flock must give an account of himself: "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God." (Rom. xiv. 12.)

QUESTION. "If love to ourselves be not only lawful, but a duty, why is there no direct and express command for it in the scripture?"

ANSWER I. There is no such need of an express command for this. Though the law of nature since the fall be very much defaced and obscured, that much of that which is our duty is hardly discerned by us; yet there is no man whom the light of nature doth not move to love himself.* We find a law of self-preservation stamped upon the whole creation of God: it is plainly to be seen in all the creatures, whether animate or inanimate; and in man in a special manner. To this end God hath placed affections in man's soul, that he might use them as feet, to carry him forth readily to that which is good, and from that which is evil or hurtful to him. Hence it is that when any thing is represented as good, there is not only an inclination to it, but *διωξίς*, "a pursuing of it;" when evil and destructive, there is not only an aversion, but *φυγή*, "a flight from it." It is said of the "prudent man," that he "foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself;" (Prov. xxii. 3;) and of Noah, that, being "moved with fear, he prepared an ark." (Heb. xi. 7.) And even Christ himself, who was altogether void of sin, when they sought to destroy him, "withdrew himself;"

* *Nunquid est ullus hominum, qui non omnia quæ facit, vel salutis suæ, vel certè utilitatis gratiâ faciat? Omnes enim ad affectum atque appetitum utilitatis suæ, naturæ ipsius magisterio atque impulsione ducuntur.*—SALVIANUS *Contra Avaritiam*, lib. ii. "Is there any man in the world who, in the variety of his acts, does not perform every thing with a due regard to his own welfare, or undoubtedly to his own benefit? For, through the dictation and impulse of nature herself, all men are led to manifest desires and longings after those things which are useful and advantageous to themselves."—EDIT.

(Mark iii. 6, 7;) as he did hide himself at another time, when "they took up stones to cast at him." (John viii. 59.) Thus he did till the hour was come when he was to lay down his life, according to a command that he had received from the Father. (John x. 18.)

ANSWER II. Although there be no direct and express command, saying, "Thou shalt love thyself;" yet all the commands of God do virtually and implicitly enjoin it. No man can comply with that first and great command, of loving God with all his heart, but in so doing he loves himself; because in the fruition of God is a man's greatest happiness.* The like may be said of every other commandment in proportion; for as it is good in itself, so it will be found to be good for us. David had experience of it when he said, that "in the keeping of them there is great reward;" (Psalm xix. 11;) and when he prayed, that as God was good, and did good, he would teach him his statutes. (Psalm cxix. 68.)

Yea, all the promises and threatenings in the book of God do suppose, that a man may and should love himself. In *the promises* God showeth us something that is good for us, and so draweth us to himself, by "the cords of a man." When he threatens, he showeth us something that is evil, and bids us fly from present wrath, or wrath to come. Whether he threatens or promiseth, it is that we choose the good, and refuse the evil: "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life." (Deut. xxx. 19.) It is the will of God, that every man should make the best choice for himself; † and every man doth so, when he is regulated in it by the will of God; the sum of which is this,—that we love him above all, and our neighbour as ourselves.

III. We come now, in the third place, to *lay down four short conclusions about our love to God, our neighbour, and ourselves.*

CONCLUSION I. The first is this: *That as God is to be loved above all things else, so he is to be loved for himself.*—"There is none good but one, that is, God;" (Luke xviii. 19;) none originally, independently, essentially, and immutably good but He; and therefore He only is to be loved for himself. It was well said by one of the ancients, ‡ *Causa diligendi Deum Deus est: modus, sine modo diligere*: "The cause of loving God, is God himself: the measure is, to love him without measure."

CONCLUS. II. *That creatures may be loved according to that degree of goodness which God hath communicated to them, not for themselves, but for God, who "made all things for himself."* (Prov. xvi. 4.)—As all waters come from the sea, and go through many places and countries,

* *Diligere Deum est diligere se; ergo cum præcipitur ut Deum diligamus, præcipitur eadem operâ ut nosmetipsos diligamus.*—DAVENANTIUS. "To love God is to love ourselves; when therefore the precept is delivered for us to love God, we are at the same time commanded to love ourselves."—EDIT. † *Non tam lex tibi, O homo, quàm tu legi adversaris; imò illa pro te est, tu contra illam; nec contra illam tantùm, sed etiam contra te.*—SALVIANUS *De Gubernatione Dei*, lib. iv. "For the law is not so much opposed to thee, O man, as thou art opposed to the law. Nay, the law is favourable to thee, yet thou placest thyself in opposition to it; and thus thou art not only adverse to it, but inimical to thyself."—EDIT. ‡ BERNARDUS.

not resting any where till they return to the sea again ; so our love, if it be right, hath its rise in God, acts towards several creatures in due manner and measure, but rests in God at last, bringing into him all the glory of that goodness which he hath derived to the creatures. "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Cor. x. 31.) We may neither love ourselves, nor our neighbours, for our- or them-selves, but for God ;* "that God in all things may be glorified." (1 Peter iv. 11.) I do not say, that, in every act of love we put forth, it is necessary that we actually mind the glory of God ; but that our hearts be habitually disposed and framed to glorify God in all.

CONCLUS. III. No man can love himself or his neighbour aright while he remains in a state of sin. Until a man come to himself, he cannot love *himself* or *any other man* as he ought : the reason is manifest from what was said before ; † he doth not, he cannot, love *either*, in God and for God. When the prodigal came to himself, and not till then, he said, "I will return to my father."

Love is a "fruit of the Spirit ;" (Gal. v. 22 ;) and therefore is never found in any who are destitute of the Spirit. The grace of love flows from faith ; and therefore the apostle prayed for the Ephesians, that they might have "love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." (Eph. vi. 23.)

CONCLUS. IV. The most gracious souls on earth, though they may and do love God themselves, and their neighbours truly and sincerely ; yet, by reason of the relics of corruption in their hearts, there are many defects in their love to God, and much inordinacy in their love to themselves and to their neighbour. ‡ As there is always something "lacking in our faith," (1 Thess. iii. 10,) so also in our love.

QUERY.

We now come to the question :—*How ought we to love our neighbour as ourselves ?*

For the resolution of this question, we shall, FIRST, lay down these two general propositions :—

I. *In the same things* wherein we show love to ourselves, we ought to show love to our neighbour.

II. *After the same manner* that we love ourselves, we ought to love our neighbour.

I. *In and by the things that we do and may show love to ourselves, we ought to show love to others.*—It is not possible to enumerate all the particular instances wherein we show love to ourselves : it shall suffice therefore that we speak of such things as are inductive§ of many more. We shall reduce them to these four heads :—

* *Amor fructu quibuscumque creaturis, sine amore Creatoris, non est a Deo.*—AUGUSTINUS *Contra Julianum*, lib. iv. † *Amor Dei quo pervenitur ad Deum, non est nisi a Deo Patre, per Jesum Christum, cum Spiritu Sancto.*—Idem, *ibid.* "The love of God by which we approach to him, has no other source than God the Father, through Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit."—EDIT.

‡ *Qualis est fidei habitus, talis est et charitatis ; si fidei habitus esset perfectus, charitatis habitus esset etiam perfectus.*—CAMERO. "Such as is the habit of faith, such also is that of charity ; for if the habit of our faith were perfect, that of our love would likewise be perfect."—EDIT.

§ In the first impression the word in this place is *inclusive*, perhaps with greater propriety.—EDIT.

1. *Our thoughts of, and the judgment we pass upon, ourselves.*
2. *Our speeches concerning ourselves.*
3. *Our desires after that which is good for ourselves.*
4. *Our actual endeavours, that it may be well with us.*

1. Let us consider *what thoughts we have of, and what judgments we pass upon, ourselves.*—We do not ordinarily nor ought we at any time to censure ourselves with too much rigour and severity: we are indeed required, again and again, to judge ourselves; (1 Cor. xi. 31;) and it is our duty to do it strictly and severely. (Luke vi. 41, 42.) Yet we ought not, *without cause*, to judge or condemn ourselves for any thing; nor are we very forward so to do. Our love to our neighbour should be exercised in this matter: if he doeth or speaketh any thing that is capable of a double sense and interpretation, let us take it as done or spoken in the best sense it is capable of, unless the contrary doth manifestly appear by some very convincing circumstances;* for it is the property of charity to think no evil. (1 Cor. xiii. 5.) We may be much more bold to judge ourselves than others. We are privy to our own principles, from whence our words and actions flow, and to our own intentions in all we speak or do. But the case is otherwise when we take upon us to judge others: their principles and intentions are known only to themselves, until they, some way or other, declare them. The heart, being the hidden man, is known only to God, before whom “all things are naked and opened,” (Heb. iv. 13,) and to a man’s self: “What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?” (1 Cor. ii. 11.) Moreover, inordinate self-love hath often too great an influence on the judgment we pass upon ourselves; and the corruption of our wills and affections, on the judgment we pass upon other men,[so] that we seldom judge aright. As he that hath the jaundice, be the object never so white, judgeth it yellow, his eye being ill-disposed; so the eye of the mind, being affected with the corruption of the heart, puts another colour upon that which is most candidly spoken or done. Were our hearts principled with true love to others, we should be as cautious about the judgment which we pass on them, as about that we pass upon ourselves; and there is great reason we should be more, from the fore-mentioned considerations.

2. *We show our love to ourselves, in and by our speeches concerning ourselves.*—And it is our duty so to do. As we ought not to pass too severe a judgment on ourselves, in our own minds; so we may not speak that which is false of ourselves: and it is seldom known, that any man’s tongue falls foul upon himself. Yea, our love to ourselves is, and ought to be, such as not to suffer our tongue to blab and send abroad all the evil we certainly know by ourselves. It is our duty then in the same matter to show our love to others. Our tongue, which is apt to speak the best of ourselves, should not frame itself to speak the worst we can of our brethren. The apostle chargeth Titus to put Christians

* *De factis mediis, quæ possunt bono vel malo animo fieri, temerarium est judicare, maxime ut condemnemus.*—AUGUSTINUS. “Concerning middle actions, which are capable of having been done either in a good or bad spirit, it is rash in us to form a judgment, especially for the purpose of censuring them.”—EDIT.

in mind of this, among other duties, "to speak evil of no man." (Titus iii. 2.)

There are several ways and degrees of evil-speaking :—

(1.) The first and most notorious is, *when men are spoken against as evil-doers, for doing that which [it] is their duty to do; when they are condemned for that for which they ought to be commended.*—Thus was Jeremiah dealt with in his time, when he faithfully declared the mind of God to the people: "Come," say they, "and let us smite him with the tongue." (Jer. xviii. 18.) The same lot had John from Diotrephes, who prated against him "with malicious words," because he had written to have the brethren received,—a work of Christian love and charity which he had no heart unto. (3 John 10.) To speak evil of others for that which is their duty, is a common thing among men; and too ordinary among some professors. If they be told of a truth, or exhorted to a duty, that doth not agree with their private opinion, and comport with their carnal interest, how do their hearts rise, and their mouths begin to open, against such as declare it to them! We may well conceive, that the apostle Paul observed some such thing in his days, when we find him beseeching Christians to "suffer the word of exhortation;" (Heb. xiii. 22;) and the apostle Peter also, by his charging them (in hearing) "to lay aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil-speaking." (1 Peter ii. 1.)

(2.) A second way of evil-speaking, and a great sin against love and charity, is, *when men raise-up false reports of others, or set them forward when others have maliciously raised them.*—To offend in this kind is a great breach of a Christian's good behaviour; as the apostle intimates, when he saith, "That they be in behaviour as becometh holiness," *μη διαβολους*, "not false accusers." (Titus ii. 3.) It doth not at all become the profession of a Christian, whose Master is the God of truth, to speak that which is false of any man whatsoever: and therefore these "false accusers" are called *διαβολοι*, by a name which is usually given to the father of lies. (John viii. 44.)

(3.) There may be evil-speaking *in speaking of such evils as others are really guilty of; as,*

(i.) First. *When a man doth industriously search-out such things as are evil in others* for this very purpose, that he may have something to say against them.*—Of this David complains: "They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search." (Psalm lxiv. 6.) It is a sign that malice boils up to a great height in men's hearts, when they are so active to find matter against their neighbours. Love would rather not see or hear of others' failings;† or if it doth and must, busieth itself in healing and reforming them to its power.

(ii.) *They also are guilty, and more guilty, of evil-speaking than the former, who endeavour to bring others into sin, rather than they will*

* *Facilius est uni-quoque nostrum, aliena curiosè inquirere, quam propria nostra inspicere.* "It is far more easy for every one of us to institute curious inquiries into other men's matters, than strictly to investigate those which relate to ourselves."—EDIT. † *Qui bene vult vitam peragere, neque videre multa, neque audire, studeat.*—JUSTINUS MARTYR *De Vita Christi ad Zenam Epist.* "He who is desirous of passing his life in comfort, should try to avoid seeing and hearing much about common occurrences."—EDIT.

want matter against them.—Thus the malicious Pharisees did their utmost to cause Christ himself (had it been possible) to offend, “urging him vehemently, and provoking him to speak of many things, seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.” (Luke xi. 53.)

(iii.) A man may be guilty of evil-speaking, and offend against the law of love, when he makes a fault greater than it is; when he represents a mole-hill as big as a mountain, thinking that he can never aggravate another's fault too much.*—You may have seen how boys, by continual blowing with a reed in their nut-shells, have raised a little bubble to the bigness of a small globe, which yet was but a drop of water stuffed with a vapour; even so do some men blow up others' faults, till they seem very great; but if you examine them, you will find, that that which made them so was only this,—that they were filled up with the others' malice. Some may think themselves excusable in this, as if they showed thereby their zeal against sin.† But let them look more narrowly into themselves, and possibly they may find more malice than true zeal, lying in the bottom.

(iv.) We may offend in speaking of the faults of others, if we be not duly affected in speaking of them.—It is too common a thing to speak of others' sins in mirth, and with some kind of rejoicing, as if we were tickled with it: ‡ “all such rejoicing is evil.” (James iv. 16.) If Christ should step into your company, as he did into the disciples', while they were walking sadly one with another, and say unto you, while you are speaking of other men's sins to make yourselves merry, “What manner of communication have you here?” (Luke xxiv. 17;) could you approve yourselves to him in this matter? It was a fault among some of the Corinthians, that when they heard of the great sin of the incestuous person, they were “puffed up,” when they should have “rather mourned.” (1 Cor. v. 2.)

(v.) A man may be guilty of evil-speaking when he speaks of others' faults, if his end be not good.—As when he doeth it to please another's humour, or satisfy his own, or to lay the person spoken of open to contempt, or the like.§ Our end in speaking of others' faults, if it be not the reforming of the persons themselves, nor the securing and safe-

* *Vix centesimus reperietur, qui aliorum famæ ita clementer parcat, ut sibi cupiat, etiam in manifestis vitiis, ignosci.*—CALVINUS in Deut. v. 10. “Scarcely will one man in a hundred be found, who, in the exercise of his clemency, will be so sparing of the reputation of others, as to wish them to be forgiven, even when their vicious conduct has been open and manifest.”—EDIT.

† *Obtreclatio, zeli ac severitatis prætextu, sæpe laudatur. Hinc fit ut sanctis quoque se insinuet hoc vitium atque obrupat virtutis nomine.*—CALVINUS. “Detraction or slander is often applauded when it displays itself in the garb of zeal and severity. Hence, in the same manner, this vice insinuates itself also into holy people, and creeps upon them unawares, under the name of some virtue.”—EDIT.

‡ *Equidem permultos novi, qui propter conscientia et animorum impuritatem proximorum delictis gaudent.*—JUSTINUS MARTYR *De Vita Christi*. “Indeed I have known many men who, through the impurity of their minds and consciences, have evinced much joy and exultation on beholding the crimes into which their neighbours have fallen.”—EDIT.

§ *Observamus proximorum peccata, non ut lugeamus, sed ut exprobremus: non ut curemus, sed ut percutiamus.*—GREGOR. NAZIANZ. “We are observant of the sins of our neighbours, not for the purpose of lamenting over them, but of venting our reproaches; not that we may heal them, but that we may smite them.”—EDIT.

guarding [of] others from being hurt by them, or ensnared in them, is not like to be good.

3. The third thing, by which we show our love to ourselves, is, *by our desires, which are always after something that is good, or conceived to be good, for us.*—Every man wisheth himself well. Should we go through the congregation, and ask every man severally what he would have; every one's desire would be after something that is good, or thought to be so. Then, this is that by which we should manifest our love to others, even by desiring their good in all things as our own;* that all things temporal and spiritual may prosper and succeed well with them, as with ourselves, to the glory of God, and their eternal happiness; that they may thrive in their estates, bodies, souls, as well as we in ours. Thus it ought to be with us, even in reference to such as do not bear the same good-will to us. It is our Lord's command, that we should "pray for them that despitefully use us, and persecute us;" † (Matt. v. 44;) and herein he has left us an excellent example: When his enemies were about that black piece of work, busying themselves in taking away his life, some piercing him, others blaspheming him, he breathes out this request for them: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke xxiii. 34.) The like copy is set before us in Stephen, the proto-martyr: while his adversaries were throwing stones thick about his ears, he kneeled down and prayed for them: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." (Acts vii. 60.)

How contrary is the spirit of many that profess Christianity, to the spirit that appeared in Christ and the primitive Christians; who, upon every provocation, can be ready to desire the utmost evil to such as do offend them! ‡ Were not the Jews Paul's greatest enemies wherever he came? Who so cruel to him as his own countrymen? Yet see what desires were in his heart for them: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." (Rom. x. 1.) So when he stood at the bar, before a heathen judge, surrounded with many enemies; what are his wishes for them? He desires that they might all participate in the good he enjoyed, but not in the evil he endured: "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds." (Acts xxvi. 29.)

4. *Our love to ourselves doth appear by our endeavours.*—We do not

* ΦΙΛΕΩ ΕΣΤΙ ΤΟ ΒΟΥΛΕΣΘΑΙ ΤΙΝΙ ἂ ΟΙΕΤΑΙ ΑΓΑΘΑ, ΕΚΕΙΝΟΥ ἘΝΕΚΑ, ΑΛΛΑ ΜΗ ΑΥΤΟΥ.—ARISTOTELES. "To love is for us to wish another possessed of that which he deems to be good, and to desire it only for his sake, without any personal consideration in reference to ourselves."—EDIT.

† *Quis pro inimicis suis ista quæ Deus jussit, non dico votis, sed verbis saltem, agere dignetur? Aut etiam siquis se cogit ut faciat, facit tamen ore, non mente.*—SALVIANUS *De Gub. Dei*, lib. iii. "What man is there who deigns—I will not say in his inward desires, but at least in his words—to perform those kind offices toward his enemies which God has enjoined? If, however, any one offers violence to himself, and proceeds thus far, he does it only in word, not in mind and intention."—EDIT.

‡ *In omni animorum indignantium motu votis malis pro armis utimur; unde unusquisque evidentissime probat, quicquid fieri adversariis suis optat, totum se facere velle, si possit.*—Idem, *ibid.* "In the ruffled emotions of our indignant spirits we always employ evil wishes as our weapons of attack; by which every one gives most demonstrative proof, that, whatever may be his passionate imprecations against those who have offended him, he would gladly devote himself to have them fulfilled, were it at all within his power."—EDIT.

content ourselves with wishings and wouldings; but we do actually and industriously endeavour that it may be well with us. If a man be hungry, and his stomach calls for meat; or if he be pinched with cold, and his back calls for clothing; his hand is ready in all good ways to procure it; and so it is in all things else. By this, therefore, ought we to manifest our love to others, even by our endeavours, in our capacity, and according to our ability, to do them good, supplying their wants, spiritual and bodily.* God hath disposed men into several ranks. He hath set some to move in a higher, some in a lower, orb. He hath dispensed his talents, to some more, to some fewer. They that are in a higher place, and have more talents, may and ought to do more than others. They that stand in a lower place, and have fewer talents, may and ought to do something for the good of others. "Every man as he hath received the gift," (in what kind or degree soever it be,) so he must "minister the same" to the souls and bodies of others. (1 Peter iv. 10.) "If a brother or a sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, *Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled*; notwithstanding ye give them not those things that are needful to the body; what doth it profit?" (James ii. 15, 16.) A man would find little profit in it himself, if he should feed himself only with good words and wishes. True love is "not in word and tongue" only, "but in deed and in truth." (1 John iii. 18.) Contrary to this endeavouring others' good, is to stand up in the way, and stop the passage wherein good should flow-in upon them, and to be envious at the prosperity of others, if they be able, without our help, to attain it.† Many men think themselves not well, unless it be ill with others: it is not enough for them to be happy, unless they see their brethren miserable.‡

II. We have seen now in what things we do and may show love to ourselves: we come now to speak of *the manner of loving ourselves*, and to show that after the same manner we ought to love others also.

1. *We do or should love ourselves holily, that is, in and for God.*—We may not have a divided interest from God. Though God allows us to love ourselves, it must be in order to him and to his glory. Our love to ourselves, as it must be regulated by the will of God, and extended or restrained according to that; so God must be our utmost end in it, whether it be exercised about the obtaining things temporal or spiritual, for body or soul. Salvation itself, although it be our end, must not be our last or utmost end; but that God by it, as by all things else, may be glorified. Therefore in this manner we must love others, as God hath an

* *Habuit Christus in corde charitatem, quam nobis opere exhibuit, ut exhibitionis formâ nos ad diligendum instrueret.*—LOMBARDUS, lib. iii. dist. 17. "Love had its residence in the heart of Christ; and He exhibited it to us in beneficent operation, that we might be instructed in the proper exercise of love by the form of his divine exhibition."—EDIT.

† *Invidentia est aegritudo, suscepta propter alterius res secundas, quæ nihil nocent invidenti.*—CICERONIS *Tusculan. Quæst.* lib. iv. c. 8. "Envy is a grief arising from the prosperous circumstances of another, which are in no way detrimental to the person that envies."—EDIT.

‡ *Novum ac inestimabile nunc in plurimis malum est: purum alicui est, si ipse sit felix, nisi alter fuerit infelix.*—SALVIANUS *De Gubernatione Dei.* "In our days a new and incalculable vice has infested many minds. It is now viewed as a matter of small importance for any one to be in a felicitous condition, unless he can gratify himself by the sight of the unhappiness of some other person."—EDIT.

interest in them, and is or may be glorified by them : and there is no man in the world but God is or may be glorified by him. Every man is a creature upon whose soul there is, in a sort, the image of God, and doeth him some service in the place wherein he stands. God calleth Cyrus, a Heathen, his "shepherd," and his "anoointed;" (Isai. xlv. 28 ; xlv. 1 ;) and he did him eminent service in his generation. The same may be said of every other man, in some degree and proportion : God hath given him some gifts, whereby he is and may be serviceable to him, at least in the affairs of his providential kingdom. Besides, all men, having immortal souls within them, are capable of blessedness with God for ever in the kingdom of glory. They who are at present enemies to God, may be reconciled and made friends. What was the most glorious saint now in heaven, but an enemy to God once, when here on earth ? "We ourselves also," saith the apostle, "were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." (Titus iii. 3, 4.)

OBJECTION. "How could David then say, 'Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with a perfect hatred.' (Psalm cxxxix. 21, 22.) He says, that he hated them perfectly, and approves himself to God in the thing : 'Do not I hate them, O Lord?'"

ANSWER. There is a twofold hatred, *odium simplex, et odium redundans in personam*, as the Schools speak : "a simple hatred, and a hatred redounding to the person." A simple hatred which is of the sin of any man, is our duty : "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil." (Psalm xcvi. 10.) But to hate the person of the sinner would be our sin : as we are to "abhor that which is evil," so we must "cleave to that which is good." (Rom. xii. 9.) David, who was a man after God's own heart, knew how to distinguish between the sin and the person. See how he expresseth himself elsewhere : "I hate the work of them that turn aside;" not *them*, but *the work* of them ; he hated their sin, saying, "It shall not cleave to me." (Psalm ci. 3.)

Hear him again : "I hate every false way." (Psalm cxix. 104.) This shows us plainly, that he hated sin perfectly : he hated sin so, as that it should not cleave to him : he hated it wherever he found it ; "every false way." For what is perfect hatred ? Austin describes it very well : *Hoc est perfecto odio odisse, ut nec homines propter vitia oderis, nec vitia propter homines diligas* : "This is to hate with perfect hatred, not to hate men for their sin's sake, nor to love the sin for the men's sake."

This is one manner how we ought to love our neighbour as ourselves : it must be holily.

2. *Our love to ourselves is or should be orderly : we must first and chiefly love our souls, and then our bodies.*—The soul is of far greater worth than the body. A world of things for the body will stand a man in no stead if his soul be lost ; and where the soul goes, either to a place

of bliss or torment, the body must follow after: and therefore when we are charged to take heed to ourselves, we are charged to keep our souls diligently: "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently." (Deut. iv. 9.) If the soul be safe, all is safe; if the soul be lost, all is lost. In like manner we ought to love our neighbour: we must desire and endeavour that it may be well with him in every respect, both as to his body and outward estate, but chiefly that his soul may prosper; and his outward concerns, as they may be consistent with that third epistle of John: "I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." (Verse 2.)

(1.) *We must seek the conversion of those that are unconverted, lest their souls be lost for ever.*—If we can be instrumental in this, we show the greatest love imaginable. To give a man bread when he is hungry, or clothing when he is naked, is something; but to convert a soul to God, is a greater kindness by much. "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death." (James v. 19, 20.) He speaks of it as a great thing, when he says, "Let him know, that he shall save a soul from death."

(2.) *We should show our love to the souls of others, by seeking and endeavouring the increase of their faith, holiness, and comfort.*—As we should not be content to go to heaven alone, but carry along with us as many as we can, so we should not satisfy ourselves to see them creep lamely thither; but gird up the loins of their minds for them, that they may more strenuously, and with the more cheerfulness and comfort, walk thither. Thus John endeavoured to bring the saints to higher degrees of fellowship with God: "That which we have seen," said he, "and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." (1 John i. 3.) They had this fellowship before, in measure and degree; but he would bring them to higher degrees of it, as doth appear by what follows: "These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full." (Verse 4.)

3. *Our love to ourselves goes out freely.*—What we have at hand we are ready to take, when we stand in need of it. The wise man observed it to be a gift which God ordinarily gives the children of men, "to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the fruit of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life." (Eccles. iii. 13; v. 18, 19.) In the like manner, we should go forth to others: if our neighbour stands in need of forgiveness, we should forgive freely, as we expect that God or man should forgive us.* If he need a gift from us, we should give freely, and open our hearts readily to supply his wants according to the ability [which] God hath given us, as we expect that God or man should give to us, if we were in the like necessity. The apostle commends the

* *Quomodo in quotidianâ prece unquam diximus? Dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris: animo discrepante cum verbis, oratione dissidente cum factis?*—HIERONYMUS *ad Castorinam*. "How is it that in our daily prayers we continue to utter these words? 'Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors;' our minds being in utter discrepancy with our expressions, and our prayer dissenting from our practice!"

—EDIT.

Macedonians for this, that when their brethren stood in need of their charity, "to their power, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves." (2 Cor. viii. 3.) To give freely and readily, adds much to the goodness of a good work.* The way to be "rich in good works," is to "be ready to distribute, willing to communicate." (1 Tim. vi. 18.)

4. *We love ourselves unfeignedly.*—No man useth to dissemble with himself, or endeavours to feed himself with good words only; but is very real and cordial to himself in all things. And thus it is required we should be to others. God desireth "truth in the inward parts;" (Psalm li. 6;) he would have us true to him, and true to one another. "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." (1 John iii. 18.) "Let love be without dissimulation." (Rom. xii. 9.) Outward and dissembled love is little better than inward and real hatred. If blessing be only in the mouth, cursing is not like to be far from the heart. "They bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly." (Psalm lxxii. 4.) Such a blessing with the mouth had Christ from the Pharisees in this chapter: "Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men:" very well said! "But Jesus perceived their wickedness." (Matt. xxii. 16, 18.) They came with words of love and respect to cover the wickedness of their hearts, and wanted that "inward affection" that Titus is commended for toward the Corinthians. (2 Cor. vii. 15.)

5. *We do not only love ourselves truly and sincerely, but with some fervency.*—There is always some heat, as well as heart, in love to ourselves. You may observe it ordinarily, that when self is concerned in any thing, that affection which is moved about it hath some heat in it; if it be anger, there is heat in anger; if it be love, there is heat in love. Indeed, all men are very apt to exceed, and go much beyond their bounds, when self is concerned; as if they were to love themselves with all their hearts, with all their soul, and with all their mind. However, it is allowable that a man be warm in love to himself, especially to his soul, which is the best part of himself. Well then, our love to others must not be cold; (1 Sam. xviii. 1;) when the matter of love is good, it is good to be zealously affected in it. (Gal. iv. 18.) When Paul understood the "fervent mind" of the Corinthians towards him, as he was a servant of Christ for the good of their souls, it did affect him with great joy. (2 Cor. vii. 7.) Let our love to others be first pure, and then it is not like to be too fervent. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." (1 Peter i. 22.)

6. *We love ourselves very tenderly.*—"No man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth it and cherisheth it." (Eph. v. 29.) If the body be wounded or pained, how tender are we of it? The eye will look to it

* *Multum detrahit beneficio, qui nolentem tribuisse se ipsâ cunctatione testatus est; ac non tam dedisse quàm non retinuisse.*—SENECA *De Beneficiis*, lib. ii. c. 1. "From the commendation attached to a prompt benefaction he detracts greatly who, by his dilatory manner, proves that he has been unwilling to bestow the expected benefit; and, when at length the ungracious act is completed, it proves not so much that he has conferred a favour, as that he has not detained it any longer."—EDIT.

very carefully, and, it may be, weep over it. The hand will diligently keep off any thing that might hurt or offend it, and is ready to apply any thing to it for the cure of it, with the greatest tenderness that may be. After the same manner we ought to express our love to others: it is required of us, that we "be kind one to another, tender-hearted." (Eph. iv. 32.)

(1.) *When others are under sufferings, we should be so tender as to have a quick sense of them in ourselves.*—Others' sufferings should work compassion, and cause a fellow-feeling in us, so as to make us "weep with them that weep," and to be "bound with them that are in bonds." (Rom. xii. 15; Heb. xiii. 3.) When Nehemiah heard of the affliction of his people, though he himself was in a better condition, he "sat down and wept, and mourned certain days." (Neh. i. 4.) We see that beasts themselves are touched with the sufferings of any of their kind: if one of the herd make an outcry, or declare his sufferings by his moaning, how sensible are the rest of it! How do they come about him, and show their readiness to yield him help if it were in their power! How much more should humanity cause men to show what a tender regard they have of the sufferings and afflictions of other men!

(2.) *We should be tenderly affected towards others when they are overtaken in a fault, and not be too rigid and severe in dealing with them.**—And the more tender we ought to be, the more afflicted they are with it themselves. We should consider how we would desire to be dealt with ourselves, if we should be found in the same or the like fault, and accordingly behave ourselves towards them: "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one† in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself." (Gal. vi. 1.)

(3.) *We should show ourselves tenderly affected towards others in their wants and necessities, and yield them relief with a feeling of their wants ourselves.*—Job, when he was in a full and plentiful condition and estate himself, was deeply affected with the necessitous condition of other men: "Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? Was not my soul grieved for the poor?" (Job xxx. 25.) The way to get this tenderness towards others is, to put ourselves in this or that man's case, (hungry, thirsty, naked,) until we find our hearts to grow soft and tender towards them, and we are able to "draw out" our own "souls" to them,‡ in giving them bread, or what else they need. (Isai. lviii. 10.) But the greatest tenderness is to be exercised toward such persons as labour under soul-troubles and necessities; because the soul is of a quick sense, and more capable of feeling than the body. Christ's greatest sufferings were in his soul; so all men spiritually distressed, as under some temptation or soul-affliction, are deeply distressed. Therefore as they stand in need

* *Solemus propriorum clementes esse iudices, alienorum verò stricti inquisitores.*—GREG. NAZIANZ. "We are usually inclined to be very favourable judges in the causes in which we are personally concerned, and at the same time strict inquisitors into those matters which relate to other people."—EDIT.

† *Καταρτιζετε τον τοιουτον id est, Nitimini eum quasi luxatum membrum suo loco reponere.*—BEZA. "Restore such an one—That is, strenuously strive to re-instate him in his former station, as you would restore a luxated joint into its proper socket."—EDIT.

‡ *Δωσ ωειρωρτι τον αρτον εκ ψυχης σου.*—Septuagint. "Give to the hungry man bread from thy very soul."—EDIT.

of counsel or comfort, our souls should go forth in administering it to them; as Paul was ready "to have imparted, not the gospel of God only, but his own soul," to them who were dear unto him. (1 Thess. ii. 8.)

DEGREES OF LOVE.

You have seen *in what things*, and *after what manner*, we may and ought to love ourselves; and that it is our duty to show our love to others *in the same things*, and *in like manner*. It may be requisite that we speak something also about *the degrees of love*; which we shall do in answering two questions.

QUESTION I. "Whether it be our duty to love our neighbour as much as ourselves?"

ANSWER. The command to love our neighbour as ourselves doth not require that our love should be every way as much to our neighbour as ourselves. The word "*as*," in the commandment, doth not denote a parity, but a similitude: it is not *as much as*, but *like as*. It is indeed our duty to desire and endeavour that others may be blessed in the full enjoyment of God to all eternity, which is as much as we can desire for ourselves; but every man more intensely desireth this happiness to himself than to another.* If that grace which any man hath received of God would save another man, and he could communicate it to him, he were not bound to part with it to that end and purpose. When the foolish virgins said to the wise, "Give us of your oil;" they answered: "Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves." (Matt. xxv. 9.) So it is in reference to temporal things. We are charged with this as a duty, to communicate to others in need. But if our own necessities be (really and not in pretence) so great, that we should not have enough for our own subsistence if we did impart to them, we are not bound, in that case, to yield it to them.† When the multitude asked John the Baptist what they should do, he answered: "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise." (Luke iii. 11.) By which he gave them to understand, that it was their duty to impart to others in extreme necessity, if they had any more than was necessary for themselves.

Notwithstanding what hath been said, there are several cases in which a man is bound to exercise his love to another, more than to himself.

1. *A man is bound to hazard his own life, to save the life of another who would certainly perish, if he did not hazard himself in his behalf.* (1 Sam. xix. 1, 2; xx. 30, 33.)

* *Prius et intensius unusquisque Dei fruitionem sibi optat quam alteri; ita ut si non possit pluribus dari, malit unusquisque sibi, quam cuilibet alii, illam a Deo communicari.*—DAVENANTIIUS. "Every man desires the fruition of God for himself principally, and with greater intenseness than for another, so that if it were impossible for that high enjoyment to be granted but to one person, each would prefer the communication of it to be made to him, rather than to any other, as the favoured individual."—EDIT. † *Ordo charitatis postulat ut primum necessitati propriæ, deinde, de non necessariis, etiam necessitati provideatur aliene.*—ESTIUS, lib. iii. dist. 29, sect. ii. "The order of Christian charity enjoins us, first, to make provision for our own necessities, and then, out of what is not absolutely required for ourselves, to provide a supply for the wants of others."—EDIT.

2. Upon the same reason that a man is bound to prefer the public advantage of a community before his own private,* *he is bound to seek the safety of a public person, in whom the welfare of the community is bound-up, more than his own safety.*—One man of public capacity may be of more value than thousands of other men. So said the people of David, “Thou art worth ten thousand of us.” (2 Sam. xviii. 3.) Priscilla and Aquila thought the life of such an apostle as Paul was, upon whom lay “the care of all the churches,” (2 Cor. xi. 28,) to be of greater concernment than theirs; and therefore “for his life they laid down their own necks;” (Rom. xvi. 4;) for which they had the thanks of all the Gentile churches. A man also that is of a public spirit, and lays-out himself in doing much good in the place and country where he lives, although he be of a private capacity, is worth many other men. “For a good man some would even dare to die.” (Rom. v. 7.) We might instance in many other cases; but let it suffice that we say in general, that when the glory of God is more concerned in another than ourselves, we ought to show a greater love to him than ourselves, upon the principle laid down above, that we ought to love ourselves, and our neighbour, in and for God. And when there is a competition between an incomparably greater good to our neighbour, (especially if many be concerned in it,) and a less to ourselves, it is evident that our love to ourselves must yield to the love of our neighbour.

QUESTION II. “Whether ought we to love every other man with the same degree of love?”

ANSWER I. All men, good and bad, should thus far be loved equally by us, in that we should desire, that both the one and the other might come to perfect blessedness in the enjoyment of God for ever:—the first, by persevering in faith and holiness to the end; the last, by being brought through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and repentance from dead works, to the same blessed communion.†

ANSWER II. Goodness, which is the object of love, being more or less in this or that subject, we may and ought to love, more or less, according to the degrees wherein every one excels another.‡ God is the giver of “every good and perfect gift.” (James i. 17.) As there are divers kinds of good gifts, so divers degrees of them.

(1.) *There are natural gifts and abilities.*—As wisdom and understanding in several matters, which are very beneficial to mankind; and therefore God threatens it as a judgment, that he will “take away the honourable man, and the counsellor, and the cunning artificer, and the

* *Consulet autem prae se quisque utilitati communiter omnium.*—JUSTINUS MARTYR *De Vita Christ.* “But every one will be careful for the common advantage of all, in preference to himself.”—EDIT. *Omnis praesidentiae ille debet esse finis, ubique prae aliorum utilitate commodum suum despiciere.*—GREGORIUS. “This ought to be the end and aim of all government. Every ruler, ought, on all occasions, to disregard his personal convenience, and to prefer the general good of others.”—EDIT. † *Diligit Christianus inimicum, ut hoc ei velit pervenire quod sibi; hoc est, ut ad regnum caelorum correctus renovatusque perveniat.*—AUGUSTINUS, *De Serm. Dom. in Monte*, lib. I. “A Christian loves his enemy, so as to wish him to obtain that great benefit which has been conferred on himself; that is, after the correction of his faults and the renewal of his nature, he wishes his enemy to attain unto the kingdom of heaven.”—EDIT. ‡ *Ille justè et sanctè vivit qui idoneus rerum aestimator est.*—AUGUSTINUS. “He lives righteously and piously who forms a candid and equitable estimate of human affairs.”—EDIT.

eloquent orator." (Isai. iii. 3.) Such persons as are qualified with gifts of this kind are to be loved according to the degree in which they excel.

(2.) *There are also moral endowments, by which men do become more fit for human society, and nigher to the kingdom of God, than other men.*—These virtuous dispositions are very lovely things in any man; and the more he excels in them, the more we are to love him. Christ himself, who never misplaced his affections, looking on such a person, is said to have "loved him." (Mark x. 21.)

(3.) *There are gracious and holy qualifications of the soul, from a more than common work of the Spirit upon the hearts of men.*—These are the best gifts; and for these we ought more especially to love men; and that, according to the degree wherein they excel: as David was wont to let-out his love "to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent." (Psalm xvi. 3.) Although a man be not so like us, in this or that point of opinion or practice, yet if he be more like God than such as are, we should give him the pre-eminence in our love.*

ANSWER III. As to the signs and effects of our love in bestowing temporal good things, although the general rule must be observed by us † to "do good unto all;" yet there are some specialties in the case, which must also be observed by us:—

(1.) *They that are oppressed with the greatest and extremest necessity, are to be considered by us before such as are not so deeply distressed.*—If one man be so poor that he cannot subsist unless he be relieved by us, we ought to extend our charity to him before another, who, although he be poor, is not in that degree of poverty.

(2.) *Though we ought to do good to all, yet the poor members of Jesus Christ ought in a special manner to be regarded by us.* (Gal. vi. 10.)—As Christ expects this at the hands of all that bear his name; so he takes particular notice of what is done to them, as done to himself; and will greatly reward the kindness that is shown to the least of his brethren, with a "Come, ye blessed," another day. (Matt. xxv. 34—36.)

(3.) *They of our own house, and such as are near to us in blood, are, cæteris paribus, to taste the effects of our love in this kind before others.* (1 Tim. v. 8.) ‡—And in proportion to these, they that are our near neighbours, and our own countrymen.

(4.) *Although they who are enemies to God and us, cannot well expect that we should, and though we be not bound to show our love to*

* *Ego dico me neque esse Zuinglianum, neque Lutheranum, neque Calvinianum, neque Bucertianum; sed Christianum: Lutherum quidem atque Zuinglium, Bucerum et Calvinum, Bullingerum et Martyrem, tanquam egregia Spiritus sancti organa veneror, atque suspicio, &c.*—ZANCHI Opera, tom. vii. p. (mihi) 262. "I avow myself to be neither a Zuinglian nor a Lutheran, neither a Calvinist nor one of Bucer's adherents, but a CHRISTIAN. With deep veneration indeed and respect I look up to Luther and Zuinglius, Bucer and Calvin, Bullinger and Peter Martyr, and regard them all as most eminent instruments of the Holy Spirit.—EDIT. † *In omnibus communiter naturam diligamus, quam Deus fecit.*—

LOMBARDUS. "In every man let us love that nature which is common to all of us, and which God Almighty has formed."—EDIT. ‡ *Vult cognatos viduarum admonendos officii, ut illas ad Ecclesiam non amandent.*—BEZA. "In this passage the apostle is desirous of admonishing the near kindred of widows of their duty, and of showing that they should not consign them over to the care of the church for maintenance."—EDIT.

them, in doing good to them equally with others who are God's friends and servants; yet there is more due to them, by the will of God, than we are ordinarily willing to allow, or some think we are bound to bestow upon them.—For I cannot assent to them who would restrain the duty of doing good to our enemies to “cases of extreme necessity;” * as if we were bound only to keep them from perishing. Christ proposeth God's example to us, who “is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil:” (Luke vi. 35 :) so kind as not only to give them “rain,” but “fruitful seasons,” thereby “filling their hearts with food and gladness;” (Acts xiv. 17;) and therefore his goodness to them is called “the riches of his goodness.” (Rom. ii. 4.) And we may be well assured, that when the apostle charged the Romans, “not to be overcome of evil, but to overcome evil with good;” † (Rom. xii. 20, 21;) he intended that they spend greater store of that kind of ammunition in order thereunto, than some of them [were] then (I fear, than most of us now are) willing to allow. (Prov. xxv. 21, 22.)

We have now seen a little, and but a little, of the duty that is required of us in this great commandment; yet enough to convince us, that “in many things we offend all.” (James iii. 2.) Let us humble ourselves that we have been so little in observing of it, and endeavour to come up to a more full and exact performance of the duties therein required. This will be a good evidence of our love to God; (1 John ii. 3;) which we cannot so well make-out to ourselves or others to be sincere, by any other way or means, as by this. (1 John iii. 14.) “If we love not our brethren whom we have seen,” how shall we think we can “love God whom we have not seen?” (1 John iv. 20.) Without this, all our external performances in religion will signify nothing with God. All our hearing, praying, fasting, and whatever else it be, will be of little or no account with him. (Isai. lviii. 3—5; Mark xii. 33.)

The apostle calls the way of love, an “excellent way:” (1 Cor. xii. 31 :) it is an excellent way to overcome enemies, and make them friends. This was the way God took to overcome us; he drew us “with cords of a man, with bands of love;” (Hosea xi. 4;) and he prescribes the same way to us. O let us try and see, whether more may not be done in this than any other way! ‡ This hath been an approved way: the primitive Christians tried it, and found it a good way. What made way for the gospel through the world? How came Christians to make such large conquests in the first times? Look, and you will find, that it was *faciendo bonum, et patiundo malum*; “by doing well, and suffering evil.” What made for the restoring of the gospel to England, but the patience of the saints of God under their sufferings, and their fervent

* *In articulo necessitatis.*—AQUINAS, *Secunda Secunda*, Quest. xxv. art. 8. † *Per panem et aquam intellige omne victus genus, ut aliud in scriptura, et omne beneficii genus quo eum juvare poteris.*—MERCERUS *in locum*. “Here by the words *bread and water* understand all kinds of victuals, as in other passages of scripture, and benefits of every description by which you are able to assist your enemy.”—EDIT. ‡ *Vincit malos pertinax bonitas, nec quisquam tam duri infestique adversus diligenda animi est, ut etiam vi tractus bonos non amet.*—SENECA *De Beneficiis*, lib. vii. c. 31. “Bad men are conquered by acts of untrifling kindness; and no one possesses a disposition so morose and obstinate, and so hostile to all that is lovely, as not to be almost irresistibly attracted to manifest his love for good men.”—EDIT.

charity, whereby they prayed ardently for their enemies, in the midst of the fire? This convinced many, and turned them to the profession of the truth. The way of love is an excellent way to edify the church, which edifies itself in love. (Eph. iv. 16; Col. ii. 2.) There is nothing to be done without it: this is the cement and mortar that holds the stones of the building together.*

To conclude: it is an excellent way, to unite all that is good in the world, to promote the interest of God in the world. If we did but observe what good is to be found in any sort of men, and not only acknowledge it, but make use of it for God as we ought; we should quickly see another face of things in the world. "Love," saith one, "is that which reconciles the jarring principles of the world, and makes them all chime together." How pleasing would this be to God! and how delightful to all good men! I shall say no more; but desire that God would "make us to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men." (1 Thess. iii. 12.)

SERMON III.

BY THE REV. THEOPHILUS GALE, A.M.,

FELLOW OF MAGDALEN COLLEGE, OXFORD.

WHEREIN THE LOVE OF THE WORLD IS INCONSISTENT WITH THE
LOVE OF GOD.

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.—1 John ii. 15.

SECTION I. THE EXPLICATION OF THE TEXT.

NOT to detain you with the connexion of these words, which are in themselves complete and entire; the better to understand their theological sense, it will be necessary that we a little inquire into their grammatic and logic sense. As for the grammatic sense of the words, we may take notice in the general, that John the Divine, who is generally reputed to be the author of this Epistle, has a peculiar phrasology, idiom, or manner of writing, as it will appear to any that diligently considers his writings, and particularly this text. The first term that occurs, and ought to be more diligently inquired into, is the affection and act prohibited, "Love not." The Greek *αγαπατε* admits of a double sense: 1. It is taken in a more large and general notion, for a simple act of love, without regard to the measure or degree thereof; and so it is of the same import with *φιλειν*. 2. It is taken in a more strict

* *Συμβιβάζειν est res arte compingere ut nexu indissolubili cohæreant.*—ARETIUS. "The signification of this Greek word in Col. ii. 2, is to fasten with exquisite art separate things to each other, that they may cohere together by a juncture or tie which is indissoluble."—EDIT.

and confined sense, for such an act of love as proceedeth from a plentitude of will, or full bent of heart, and so carries the whole soul with it, either in *the prosecution* of some chief good when absent, or in *the fruition* of and satisfaction in the same when present. For love, in this strict notion, has two main acts: 1. An active vigorous prosecution of its chiefest good, when absent. In which regard *αγαπη* (and so *αγαπην*) is derived, by the Greek etymologist, and Phavorinus out of him, from *αγειν το παν, οτ αγαν ποιοτητα εχειν*, which implies the force and activity of love, in the pursuit after its chiefest good. 2. Love in this strict notion implies also an acquiescence, repose, and satisfaction in its chiefest good, when present and enjoyed. In which regard *αγαπην* is made to be the same with *αγαν παυεσθαι*, “greatly to acquiesce or rest satisfied” in its best beloved, when enjoyed; which they explicate by *αρχεισθαι τινι, και μηδεν ωλεον επιζητειν*, “to rest contented and satisfied in any object, so as not to seek out for any thing more,” in point of happiness. In this strict and peculiar notion, considered as to both its branches, we must understand “love” here both as to “the world” and “the Father.” And so “the love of the world” and “the love of the Father” are perfectly opposite, and therefore inconsistent each with other, in this strict notion wherein John takes them.

This is farther evident from that great aphorism of our Lord: “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other,” &c. (Matt. vi. 24.) Where we find *αγαπησει* used in the same strict notion, and confined either to God or the world, so as both cannot share therein. Thence our Lord instructs us, that love, in this proper limited sense, belongs to God alone: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart,” &c. (Matt. xxii. 37.) Where *Αγαπησεις*, “Thou shalt love,” is taken by our Lord in this strict notion, and explicated by what follows, “with all thine heart,” &c.; that is, with the plentitude or bent of thy will, which in moral estimation passeth for the whole heart. So that when John saith, “Love not the world,” it must be understood in this proper notion of love, as it includes a predominant and prevalent degree; and carries with it the bent and force of the will, either in a way of active prosecution of the world if absent, or delightful complacential acquiescence therein if enjoyed. Such a love to the world is no other than concupiscence or lust, and so altogether inconsistent with “the love of the Father,” as John argueth. All this will be more evident, when we come to explicate the things contained under these terms, namely, love to God and the world.

The next thing to be explicated by us, is the object of this prohibition; which is “the world” and “the things” therein. The Greek name *κοσμος* was, as it is said, first given to the world by Pythagoras, from *κοσμων*, “to adorn;” it being, as it were, a house, hung with all manner of rich and beautiful ornaments, of divine wisdom, power, and goodness; (Rom. i. 20;) and in this regard the world is, in its kind and measure, amiable and love-worthy. But John seems to take “the world” here in a more limited and narrow sense, as it is the fuel of lust, and repugnant to and incoherent with “the Father.” For, as I before premised, it is usual with John to make use of notions which are of a lax and general

import, in a more strict and confined sense. Thus: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin." (1 John iii. 9.) Which must be understood in a strict, confined sense, that is, with a plenitude of will, as wicked men do. So in our text, "Love not," that is, in a strict sense, with a plenitude and bent of heart. "The world," that is, for itself, as the fuel of lust, and contrary to God. There is a regular and lawful love of the world, when it is in an inferior degree, and in subordination to God; but that which John here prohibits is an irregular and inordinate love to the world for itself, in competition with or opposition to the love of the Father, as verse 16.

Hence it follows: "Neither the things that are in the world." 1. Here we are again to take notice of another peculiar idiom frequent with John, both in his Gospel and Epistles, namely, to reiterate the same thing under different expressions, partly by way of exegesis, and partly to give an emphatic plenitude. It might have sufficed that he had said, "Love not the world:" but the more fully to explicate his mind, as also to give an emphase* and accent to what he had said, he adds: "Neither the things that are in the world." He contents not himself with generals, but descends to particulars; which he more fully specifies, verse 16. 2. By "things that are in the world," we may, in a more strict and confined notion, understand those things which worldly men do most magnify and idolize: mundane grandeur, pomp, glory, riches, pleasures, honours, friends, whatever else may captivate the hearts of degenerate men. In sum: by "the world, and the things that are in the world," must be understood all sensible, natural, civil, yea, mental goods, or whatever is inferior to God, so far as it may stand in opposition to or competition with him, and so prove matter of abuse and fuel for lust, as verse 16.

It follows: "If any man love the world." *Εαν*, "if," here is causal and rational, signifying as much as "for," or "because if:" and so it points-out and ushers-in the main cause or reason, why we are not to love the world, namely, because he that loves the world hath not the love of the Father in him. As if he had said: "Alas! are not the world and the Father perfectly opposite? Do they not both require the whole heart, yea, the whole man, as Matt. vi. 24? Is it possible then, that he who loves the world at such a rate, can love the Father?" Or we may take the words thus: "If any man love the world," &c., that is, so far as any man loves the world, "the love of the Father is not in him." And in this sense it will reach all, both saints and sinners; though I take the words chiefly to be understood of predominant love to the world, which is altogether inconsistent with love to God.

Lastly. There lies something peculiar in that phrase: "The love of the Father is, not in him." 1. Here we find another idiom or manner of speech proper to John, who frequently makes use of antitheses, and that both of things, words, and sentences, for illustration and confirmation; whereof many instances might be given, as John i. 5, 13, 17, 20, &c. So here he opposeth the Father to the world; and then "the love of the Father," to "the love of the world;" which gives great illustration and

* Our old writers used both *emphase* and *emphasy* instead of *emphasis*.—EDIT.

demonstration to his discourse : for opposites illustrate and demonstrate each other. 2. Another thing to be considered herein is the object, *του Πατρος*, "of the Father;" where the article "the," deserves a peculiar regard : and so indeed do the various articles in this text, *the world, the things, &c.* For albeit these articles sometimes, in other parts of scripture, are not significative or emphatic, yet here they seem to give some emphase. So that "the Father" is here mentioned to specify both the proper object and formal reason of evangelic love, as distinct from that natural love which Adam in Paradise had towards God as Creator. First. By "the Father" here is specified the proper object of evangelic love ; namely, that it must terminate on God, as a gracious Father in and through Christ ; whereas Adam's natural love in innocence terminated on God only as Creator. Secondly. By "the Father" also the formal reason of evangelic love is specified ; namely, that God's love towards us in Christ ought to be the formal reason or proper motive of our love to him. 3. As for the act, "the love," it may be taken either passively and objectively, for the Father's love shed abroad in the heart, as Rom. v. 5 ; or else subjectively and actively, for our love to the Father. This latter I take to be primarily intended.

The words thus explicated admit this logic division. We find in them first a *prohibition* ; and then *the reason thereof* annexed. In the prohibition we have, 1. *The act*, "Love not." 2. *The object* ; and this, (1.) In the general : "The world." (2.) In its particularities : "Neither the things that are in the world." The chief whereof are specified, verse 16.

As for *the reason of the prohibition*, it is wrapped up in an hypothetic proposition, which is easily reduced to a categoric syllogism thus : Two loves perfectly opposite cannot consist together in one and the same heart : But *love to the world* and *love to the Father* are perfectly opposite : Therefore he that loves the world hath not the love of the Father in him.

SECTION II. A GENERAL CHARACTER OF LOVE.

What love in its general idea imports.

The words thus explicated contain in them this great truth, that a prevalent predominant love to the world is altogether inconsistent with the love of God. Hence also there is offered to us this practic case of conscience, Wherein the love of the world is inconsistent with the love of God.

The resolution of this so weighty a case depends much on the explication of its parts ; which we shall endeavour to examine and open under these three questions :—1. What love in its general idea or nature doth import ? 2. What it is to love the world ? 3. What it is to love God ? These questions being explicated, the resolution of our case will be facile and obvious.

QUESTION I. *What love in its general idea or nature doth import ?*—This question being more philosophic than theologic, we shall not much insist thereon. But to clear-up our way to the following questions, we may take-up this concise character or idea of love, as abstracted from

this or that subject : Love is the most vigorous, potent, imperious, and sovereign affection of the human soul ; which has its royal seat in the will, or rather in the soul as willing what is good. For albeit I cannot conceive how the will and understanding may be really distinguished, more than by their formal objects and acts ; yet I can easily grant the soul, as willing what is good, to be the proper subject and seat of love. Not but that there is also passion of love, or something analogous to love, in the sensitive soul, or animal part. But this is more passionate, that in the human soul more rational ; this more rash, that more deliberate ; this more superficial and transient, that more rooted and fixed ; this more confused and difform, that more uniform and equal ; this more carnal, that more spiritual, in its objects and motions ; this more brutish and servile, that more human and voluntary, specially if regular.

Now love thus seated in the will, or soul as willing, governs the whole soul, with all the faculties, or rather acts, thereof. As the will governs all inferior faculties, so is she governed by her love ; which renders her what she is, as to good or evil. What the love is, that the man is : and where the love is, there the man is. If thy love be in heaven, there thou art ; and if thy love be in hell, thou art there. For where the treasure is, there the love, heart, and man is. (Matt. vi. 21.) And as love governs the whole soul in general, so has she a more particular influence on the affections, both rational and passionate. Love indeed is not only the prime but also the original source and spring of all human affections ; which owe their being, life, and motion thereto. What are all affections but the several forms and shapes of love ? Whence have they their tincture and colour but from it ? For, look, as the object beloved is affected with this or that circumstance, so is love proportionably invested with this or that form. If the object beloved be absent, love goes forth to meet it by desire ; if present, love solaceth itself therein by fruition and delight ; if it be under hazards, love waxeth pale with fear ; if the enjoyment thereof be impeded or obstructed by others, love grows angry ; if it be lost, love clotheth herself with black sorrow ; if there be a probability or but possibility sometimes of enjoying it, love moves towards it by hope. Thus love puts-on sundry forms and aspects, which we call affections, according to the sundry postures of its beloved. In short : look, as the wife changeth her condition into that of her husband, and becomes noble or ignoble according to his condition, so love changeth her condition according to that of the object she doth espouse : if love espouse God for her husband, then doth she become spiritual, noble, and divine, according to the quality of God ; but if she elect and adhere to the world, then doth she become carnal, base, and worldly. So much for the general idea of love, of which more in what follows.

SECTION III. WHAT IT IS TO LOVE THE WORLD.

QUEST. II. *What it is to love the world ?*

Love to the world may be considered as predominant, and so altogether inconsistent with the very being and existence of love to God ; or else as infirm and in part subdued. We shall here treat of it in the

former respect only, which seems chiefly intended by John. And so love to the world may be described, "a certain habitual *pondus* or 'weight' of concupiscence and lust, whereby the soul is strongly impelled and inclined towards the fruition of and satisfaction in the world, as its last end, and chiefest good." In this description of love to the world, we find its OBJECT, SUBJECT, END, PRINCIPLE, ACT, and MEASURE; which will all fall under a more particular consideration in the following propositions.

THE OBJECT OF PREDOMINANT LOVE TO THE WORLD.

PROP. 1. *To love the world is to affect some private, particular, inferior good, for itself, as the chiefest good and last end.*—This proposition states and specifies the proper formal object of worldly love; which is some private, particular, inferior good, loved for itself, as the chiefest supreme good and last end. Now the world may be constituted the chiefest good and last end two ways: 1. *Positively*; when it is loved for itself as a total supreme good, unto which all things are referred. 2. *Negatively*; when, though it be loved only as a partial good, yet it is loved for itself, and not referred to God, either actually or habitually, as the Supreme Good. Such is the cursed love of many worldly professors, who love the world only as a partial good, yet so as they refer it not to God the Supreme Good; and therefore may be said to love it for itself, as their last end and chiefest good, negatively, though not positively. This love to the world for itself, as the last end and chiefest good, is fully described by John in the verse following our text: "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." (1 John ii. 16.) These words give much light and evidence to our text and present subject; wherefore we shall a little insist on the explication of them.

And, 1. We are to consider their rational connexion with the words precedent, included in the particle "for;" which gives us the genuine reason and cause, why the love of the world is inconsistent with the love of God, namely, because all that is in the world, whether sensible, civil, or mental goods, so far as they are the fuel of lusts, are "not of the Father, but of the world." 2. We are to observe here, that John, discoursing of worldly goods as the fuel of our lust, expresseth the things themselves by the lust in us. He saith not, "pleasures, riches, honours," though these be the things he means; but *the lust* of these things; because the poison and evil of these things comes not from the things themselves, but from our lusts, that run into and live upon them, as our last end and choicest good. And in this sense, saith John, they are "not of the Father, but of the world;" that is, God never made or appointed these inferior goods to be our last end, chiefest good, or matter of fruition and satisfaction. No: it is the lusts of worldly men that have put this crown upon the heads of pleasures, profits, preferments, &c. Hence it naturally follows, that all love to these lower goods, for themselves, as our last end and chiefest good, is but concupiscence or inordinate lust. For, indeed, what is lust, but desire to or fruition of the creature for itself? 3. We are to consider likewise the distribution,

which John here makes, of all that is in the world, into "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." This, as they say, is the worldly man's trinity which he doth so much idolize and adore. Philo the Jew, who was greatly versed as well in the Grecian as Judaic learning, makes all evil to consist "in the lust of pleasures, riches, or glory;"* which seems to answer to John's distribution here. For by "the lust of the flesh" is usually understood *pleasures*; by "the lust of the eyes," *riches*; and by "the pride of life," *vain-glory, or honours*. We shall treat concisely of each, as the fuel of worldly love.

(1.) *To love the world, is to lust after the pleasures of the flesh, as our last end or sovereign good, and so amiable for themselves.*—And O what a brutish piece of lust is this! And yet, lo! how common, even among those who would be accounted generous and noble! Yea, how many great professors come under this condemnation! For by "the lusts of the flesh" we must understand all inordinate love to and delight in sensual pleasures of any kind, be it in eating, drinking, recreations, or unclean objects. What Empedocles said of the Agragantines, holds too true of many now-a-days: "They give themselves to luxury, as though they would die to-morrow; and yet they build houses, as if they were to live for ever."† O how happy would it be for England, if those sumptuary laws, commended by Plato in his "Commonwealth,"‡ were established among us, for regulating our excesses in feasts, habits, houses, and other sensual pleasures! O what seeds and causes of sorrow are there in sensual pleasures! How is the love of sensual sinners inveigled with the world's golden pleasures! Such there were in the apostles' times, even in the churches. So, James v. 5: "Ye have lived in pleasure;" that is, as the fish liveth in the water. Pleasures have been your element, the food of your sensual life: your hearts have been steeped, immersed, drowned in them, as the spring of your life and happiness. Thence it follows: "Ye have nourished your hearts, as in the day of slaughter." Or we may by a metonymy read it, "as in the day of feasting." So the Syriac, ܕܢܟܨܬܗ, which answers to the Hebrew זבח, may be rendered. And so it alludes to the solemn feasts after sacrifices, so common among the Gentiles § as well as Jews; their great days both of slaughter and feasting: for when the sacrifice was slain and offered, they feasted on part, thereby to denote their communion with the god they sacrificed unto. And so the sense is this: "You nourish your sensual appetites daily with feasting, as those that feast on part of the sacrifice, in the day of slaughter." O how much doth this pampering of the flesh tend to the starving of the soul! And what is this but to make pleasures our god? So, Phil. iii. 19: "Whose belly is their god;" and, 2 Tim. iii. 4: "Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God." Which refers to sensual professors in these last perilous days. Unto which also our Lord seems to refer, Matt. xxiv. 38, 39.

(2.) *To love the world is to lust after riches for themselves, as our last end and choicest good.*—This John includes under "the lust of the eyes,"

* Εξ επιθυμίας η χρημάτων, η δοξης, η ηδονης.—PHILO in Decalog. † LAERTIUS in Empedocle. ‡ PLATO *Repub.* lib. iii. § See "Court of the Gentiles," part i. book ii. c. 9, sect. 10.

which is well interpreted by that character which Solomon gives of the avaricious man: "Neither is his eye satisfied with riches." (Eccles. iv. 8.) O how greedy is the covetous man's eye after gold and silver and other riches! and what complacence doth he take in the view thereof! It is true, riches do not immediately affect or pamper the flesh, yet are they the caterers of the flesh; they lay-in provision for it. "For money is the measure of all things." And albeit riches are remote as to the flesh, yet are they the proper object of the eye's lusting, which takes-in things remote.

(3.) *To love the world, is to lust after or pride ourselves in any worldly grandeur, or finite excellence, as our last end and best good.*—So much "the pride of life" denotes. For *αλαζονεία* primarily signifies "a vain gloriation or boasting of having or doing great things,"* from *αλαζων*, "a boaster;" which grammarians derive from *αλη*, "a wandering," and *ζων*, "liver;" such as your mountebanks and vagabonds are, who go from place to place, boasting what great things they can do. It here signifies a vain-glorious affecting or assuming to ourselves [of] some created excellence, as the chief matter of our happiness. This is the great lust of more elevated, refined, generous spirits; who, peradventure, scorn to defile themselves with sensual pleasures or riches, yet are not without violent and impetuous lustings after some worldly grandeur or human excellence. Under this "pride of life" we may comprehend also the mind's lusting after knowledge, or any other mental perfection, for itself as our last end; which is the grand lust of philosophers, schoolmen, and other great wits of the world. This Jansenius rangeth under the former particular, "the lust of the eye."†

PROP. II. *Predominant love to the world, in regard of its subject, consists in an habitual pondus, 'weight,' or violent bent of heart toward some inferior good, for itself.*—Look, as in nature there is a centre of gravity unto which all ponderous, weighty bodies, by their gravity and weight, naturally tend; so, in corrupt nature, love to the world or concupiscence is that lustful *pondus* or 'weight' whereby the heart is violently impelled and inclined towards the world, as its centre of gravity. This seems lively expressed, Heb. xii. 1: "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us." This verse, with [and] the three following, are wholly agonistic, alluding to the Grecian games, as it appears by the several terms. They who ran in the race, were to lay aside every thing that might burden or hinder them therein. Thence, saith the apostle, "Let us lay aside every weight:" *ογκος* properly signifies "a ponderous, weighty, gross, heavy body;" and it is here applied, as the learned conceive,‡ to the love of the world; which, as a great *pondus*, or "weight," presseth down the heart towards the earth, as its centre of gravity; and so hinders its Christian race heaven-ward. O what an infinite weight is love to this dirty world! With what an impetuous and violent force doth it press the heart

* ARISTOTELES, *Rhet.* lib. ii. describeth *αλαζονεία*: "When any boast what they have, and rashly promise great things of themselves, arrogating to themselves the deeds of others."

† JANSENIUS *Augustinus*, tom. ii. lib. ii. cap. 8, fol. 132.

‡ GROTIUS, and Hammond

out of him.

downward, even unto hell! This also is well expressed by a *bent*: "And my people are bent to backsliding from me." (Hosea xi. 7.) That is, their heart stands strongly bent towards their beloved idols, and worldly allies. Their hearts were in suspense as to God, (so the word signifies,) but strongly bent towards the world. How doth the voluptuous man's heart stand bent towards his pleasures; the avaricious man's heart towards his riches; the ambitious man's heart towards his honours, as his god! This bent of the heart towards the world discovers itself in an insatiable, infinite thirst after worldly good, for itself. This we find greatly exemplified in profane Esau: "Or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birth-right." (Heb. xii. 16.) What birth-right was it that Esau sold? Why, it was his birth-right to the promised land, Canaan in the type, but heaven in the antitype. And for what did he sell Canaan and heaven? "For a morsel of meat;" for a poor, sensible pleasure, which his greedy lust thirsted after. You find the story at large, Gen. xxv. 30—34: "And Esau said unto Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage." (Verse 30.) It is in the original, *בן האדם האדום*, "of that red, that red," namely, pottage: note here, that the repetition of the adjective signifies Esau's insatiable and greedy appetite after Jacob's red pottage. The like also is implied in his omitting the word "pottage;" which notes the haste and greediness of his lust, increased by the red colour; whence he was called Edom. And what was it that Esau's insatiable lust thus longs for? That follows, verse 34: "pottage of lentiles;" which were a kind of pulse, much like to vetches, or small peas, very coarse food, such as men in their sorrow and mourning were wont to eat. O what a vile profane wretch was Esau, to part with his celestial birth-right and dignity, for a mess of such coarse pottage! Well might Moses conclude: "Thus Esau despised his birth-right." (Gen. xxv. 34.) An insatiable greedy thirst after any inferior good argues a predominant love to the world.

PROP. III. *To love the world is to have the heart bound-up in and made one with the world.*—All love tends to union; and to have the heart planted in and incorporated with the world, argues a predominant love thereto. Thus in our text, *Μη αγαπατε*, "Love not the world;" that is, let not your hearts be implanted, glued, or nailed to the world: let not your thoughts and affections run so deep into the world, as to become one with it. The more any love the world, the more their hearts are united to and incorporated with it. The alligation and adherence of the heart to the creature is the natural effect of predominant love thereto. Love to the world is the nail or glue, whereby the heart is fastened to it. Thus: "Ephraim is joined to idols." (Hosea iv. 17.) *חבור* "is fastened or glued," so as to become one therewith. Whereby the prophet teacheth us, that Israel's heart was bound fast by indissoluble bonds to his idols, so that it could not be plucked thence.

PROP. IV. *To have the heart under the dominion of the world argues predominant love thereto.*—Such is the nature of love, that it subjects the lover to the thing beloved; specially if it be loved for itself. It is true, love to God gives us a dominion over all things beneath us; but

love to the world brings the heart into subjection to it. O what an imperious, tyrannic sovereignty has the world over those that love it! What slaves are worldlings to the world, through love to it! Whatever the heart inordinately cleaves unto, it is under the dominion of: so Hosea iv. 11: "Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart." There is a great emphase in the Hebrew וַיִּקַּח, "will take away;" which notes first a contest or conflict, and then the conquest which these sensual objects make over the heart that adheres to them.

PROP. V. *To spend the best of our time, thoughts, studies, care, and endeavours for the procuring or conserving [of] worldly goods, denotes predominant love to the world.*—This seems to be the case of some carnal Jews, after the return from Babylon: "Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste?" (Haggai i. 4.) *In your cieled houses*—Or houses curiously wainscoted, and adorned, not only for use, but luxury and pleasure. Whence it is aptly rendered, by the LXX. *κοιλοσταθμοις*. As if he had said: "Is this time a time for you, O ye sensualists, to spend so much time, study, care, cost, and other expenses, in trimming and adorning your stately houses, not only for use, but delight and luxury, while the house of the Lord lies waste?" This piece of love to the world our Lord cautions professors of these last days against: "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares." (Luke xxi. 34.) *βαρυνειν*, "to overcharge," answers to *הַכְבִּיר*, "to harden," as it appears by the LXX. on Exod. viii. 15, 32; which is also rendered by *σκληρυνειν*, Exod. x. 1. So that *βαρυνεσθαι* here signifies such an overcharging of the heart, with complacential thoughts and amusements about worldly things, as takes away all sense of divine concerns: thence it follows, "with surfeiting and drunkenness." These two denote all sensual pleasures. Then follows, "and cares of this life:" hereby are signified all distracting, distrustful, anxious cares about provision for this life; which are elsewhere styled "the cares of this world," as Matt. xiii. 22. This part of predominant love to the world is termed, "minding the things of the flesh." (Rom. viii. 5.) *φρονειν*, "to mind," according to Paul's phrasology, doth not so much regard the simple act of the mind, as the complacential thoughts, studious contrivements, and solicitous cares of the heart; such as naturally follow a carnal constitution or frame of heart, and bespeak the man to be under the dominion of predominant love to the world. For when all a man's thoughts, inclinations, affections, studies, and cares pay tribute to the flesh, what is he but a slave to the flesh? Thence it follows: *Το γαρ φρονημα της σαρκος* (verse 6:)* the complacential amusement, contrivement, study, and care of the flesh. *Φρονημα* here is the same with *רִצְיָ*, Gen. vi. 5; "the figment" or contrivement of the heart. These carnal world-minders are well described by Paul: "Who mind earthly things:" (Phil. iii. 19:) *φρονουντες*, that is, they amuse themselves in the complacential thoughts and study of terrene things: they have no gust, savour, or relish, but of such; they are under the serpent's curse,—to lick the dust.

* The marginal rendering is, "For the minding of the flesh" is death.—*ΕΔΙΤ*.

PROP. VI. *Another branch of predominant love to the world is, to make the creature the object or matter, not only of our use, but also of our supreme fruition, complacence, and satisfaction.*—So much is implied in our text, *Μη αγαπατε*, Make not the world the object of your entire contentment, acquiescence, and satisfaction; draw not your choicest comforts and delights from terrene goods. There is some kind of contentment and complacence in worldly goods, which may consist with the love of God; but when the heart makes any worldly good the entire or main object of its fruition and satisfaction, this denotes predominant love to the world. For Divine Wisdom hath put this law or order into things,—that all creatures are to be the object of our *use*, but God himself the supreme object of our *fruition and satisfaction*: whence, to make any creature the chief matter of our fruition and satisfaction, what is it but to violate and pervert the order of the creation, and set up the creature in the place of the Creator? And doth not this bespeak predominant love to the creatures? This our Lord elegantly describes in that parable of the rich glutton, Luke xii. 15—19. You have the scope of the parable in verse 15: “Beware of covetousness.” *Πλεονεξια* here, as elsewhere, signifies an avaricious greedy humour or desire of having abundance, not only for use, but to pamper lust, the metaphor being taken from the plethora or excess of any humour in the body. And our Lord adds the reason of this caution: “For a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.” The sense seems this: All these lower things, which man’s covetous heart doth so much lust after, are not the matter of our *fruition and satisfaction*, but *use* only; therefore our life doth not consist in the abundance of them, but in an ordinate love to and moderate use of them; to use them in that measure, and with that mediocrity, as becomes them: whence they who make them the chief matter of their fruition and satisfaction, are possessed with a predominant love unto them. This is exemplified in the following parable of the rich man, specially in verse 18: “All my fruits and my goods.” He calls them his “goods,” as they were the main object of his complacence and delight. So, verse 19: “I will say to my soul,” that is, I will then recreate and satiate mine heart with mine acquired goods: whence it follows: “Take thine ease;” *Αναπαυου*, Recreate, refresh thine heart, acquiesce in them. Poor man! he had felt sufficient anxiety, solicitude, and vexation in the acquirement of his goods, but now he hopes the fruition will crown all with sweet repose, rest, and satisfaction. Thence he adds: “Eat, drink, and be merry.” The last term, *ευφραινου*, “be merry,” seems to refer to all manner of sensual pleasures, in which voluptuous, luxurious persons take so much complacence and delight. This fruition of and complacence in worldly goods, our Lord doth express in plain, naked terms, in the reddition of the parable in verse 21: “So is he that layeth up treasure for himself;” that is, in worldly goods, which he makes the main object of his satisfaction; “and is not rich toward God;” that is, and doth not make God his treasure, and chief matter of fruition, complacence, and satisfaction. And what is this but rank, predominant love to the world?

PROP. VII. *To be afflicted and troubled for the loss of any creature-*

comfort, more than for the loss of God and things spiritual, denotes predominant love to the world.—As our love is, such is our sorrow for the loss of what we love. Immoderate affliction for the loss of any worldly thing argues inordinate affection to it when enjoyed: and if the heart be more afflicted and troubled for the loss of the creature than for the loss of God, it is a sure sign that the enjoyment of it did more affect and please the heart, than the enjoyment of God. This was Israel's case, Isaiah xvii. 10, 11; where the prophet compares the state of Israel, in her apostasy, to a curious lady, that delighteth in beautiful flowers, choice fruits, and pleasant plants. But he concludeth: "The harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow." Now this "desperate sorrow," or "deadly pain," (as *כאב אנוש* importeth,) for the loss of her pleasant idols, argues predominant love to them. This also was the case of the young man in Luke xviii. 23: "And when he heard this," that is, verse 22, that he must part with all his riches for a treasure in heaven, "he was very sorrowful." *Περίλυπος*, "He was sorrowful in a superlative degree;" for so *περι* here in composition signifies, which is not (as some conceive) a preposition, but adverb intending * the sense. And what filled him with this extreme desperate sorrow? Why, surely, thoughts of parting with his goodly treasure, which he valued and loved, more than treasures in heaven. They that cannot support themselves under the privation of any temporal good [which] God calls for, but choose rather to part with heaven than with their beloved idol, are under predominant love to the world.

But here, to obviate mistakes, we must distinguish, 1. Between a *predominant principle* or habit, and a *prevalent act* of love to the world; as, 2. Between a rational and passionate love or sorrow. 1. One that loves God may, under a fit of temptation, be under a *prevalent act*, though not under a *predominant principle* or habit of love to the world. 2. Hence his passionate love to, and sorrow for the loss of, some temporal good may be greater, under some distemper of heart, when his rational love to, and sorrow for the loss of, God and things spiritual is greater, at least in the root and *habit*, if not in the *act*.

SECTION IV. WHAT IT IS TO LOVE GOD?

QUEST. III. *What it is to love God?*

This question receives much evidence and light from what precedes, touching love to the world. For contraries illustrate each other; and love to God moves in the same manner as love to the world moves. So that to love God, is to transfer the actions and passions of our love from the world to God, as our last end and chiefest good. In short, the love of God implies a superlative preference of God above all lower goods; (Luke xiv. 26;) a divine weight or bent of heart towards God, as our centre. (Deut. vi. 5.) Its proper acts are chiefly two: 1. An amorous, vehement direct motion towards God: 2. A complacential fruition of and repose in God as its best Beloved. (Psalm cxvi. 7.) As for the adjuncts of this divine love, it must be, 1. Sincere and cordial: (Eph. vi. 24:) 2. Judicious and rational: (Psalm xvi. 7:) 3. Intimate and

* That is, *giving intensity to the meaning*. See the note in p. 300.—EDIT.

passionate: 4. Pure and virgin: (Canticles v. 3:) 5. Regular and uniform: 6. Generous and noble: 7. Permanent and abiding; 8. Vigorous and active: 9. Infinite and boundless. Divine love thus qualified brings the soul into, 1. An inviolable adherence unto and amorous union with God. (Eph. v. 31, 32.) 2. It works the heart to an amorous resignation of all concerns unto God. 3. It commands the whole soul into the obedience of God. (John xiv. 21, 23.) 4. It is exceeding submissive unto God's providential afflictive will. (Lev. x. 3.) 5. It is extremely vigilant, cheerful, and diligent in the service of God. 'O how officious is love to God! (Luke vii. 37.) 6. It useth all things in subordination to God. (Matt. vi. 33, 34.) 7. It winds up the soul to a divine life: it transforms the lover into the image and imitation of God, whom he loves. (Eph. v. 1.) These particulars I intended to have handled more fully; but, understanding that this case touching *the love of God* is the proper task of another,* I shall refer thee to the resolution of that reverend divine's case.

SECTION V. WHEREIN THE LOVE OF THE WORLD IS INCONSISTENT WITH THE LOVE OF GOD.

QUEST. IV. *Wherein the love of the world is inconsistent with the love of God?*

Having explicated the sundry parts of our case, we now come to the connexion of the whole; namely, to demonstrate the inconsistency of love to the world with the love of God. What love it is that is inconsistent with the love of God, we have already fully opened, in the second question, touching predominant love to the world. Wherefore the only thing at present incumbent on us is, to show wherein predominant love to the world is inconsistent with the love of God.

PROP. I. *Predominant love to the world is contrary to and therefore inconsistent with the love of God.*—This seems evidently implied in our text: "If any man love the world," &c. John brings this as a reason of his prohibition; namely, that predominant love to the world, and love to God, are perfectly opposite, and therefore, by the rule of contraries, incoherent and inconsistent. The like [does] Matthew vi. 24: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." These words are a good comment on our text, and clearly demonstrate the inconsistency of *love to the world with the love of God*. I shall therefore a little insist on them. The design of our Lord here is the same with that of John in our text; namely, to take-off professors from inordinate, predominant love to the world, and bring them to a divine affection unto and living on God, as their portion and treasure; as Matt. vi. 19—23. And in verse 24, he shows the inconsistency of love to the world with love to God, in that the world and God are contrary lords, who require each the whole heart and man. This will more fully appear if we examine the particulars. He saith, *No man can serve*—It is not *εχειν*, "have," but *δουλευσειν*, "serve." Now to serve another, according to the laws and customs of those times and nations, was to have no power or right to dispose of

* See the first sermon in this "Supplement," by Dr. Annesley, pp. 572—621.—EDIT.

himself, or any thing that belonged to him; but to live and depend merely on the pleasure of his master. Such a service could not be given to God and the world. Why? 1. Because they are two masters; that is, *in solidum*, each of which require the whole heart and man.* 2. Because they are two contrary masters: [one of] which commands us to esteem, love, and endeavour after worldly treasures, more than heavenly: God commands us to esteem, love, and endeavour after heavenly treasures, more than earthly.† The world commands you to engage no farther in matters of religion than may consist with its interest: but Christ commands you to part with all worldly interest for himself. The world commands you to take your fill of the creature; to suck-out the sweets thereof, and feed your hearts therewith: but Christ commands you to use this world as if you used it not; (1 Cor. vii. 31;) to affect an universal privation of these lower goods, even whilst you enjoy them; to give [to] perishing things perishing thoughts, esteem, and desires; to bid farewell to all things, so far as they are a snare to you, or a sacrifice that God calls for. Again: the world commands you to endeavour the greatening of your names and reputation: but Christ commands you to glory in nothing but his cross, to account abasement for Christ your greatest honour. Lastly: the world commandeth you not to be scrupulous about small sins, but to take your liberty and latitude: but Christ commandeth you to dread the least sin, more than the greatest suffering. Now, how contrary and inconsistent are these masters in their commands! Is it possible, then, that we should be masters of such contrary loves? O how doth love to the world eat-out love to God!

PROP. II. *Predominant love to the world is inconsistent with the love of God, in that it robs God of that love and honour which is due to him as the Sovereign Chiefest Good.*—According to what measure the heart turns to the world and its concerns, in the same measure it turns from God and his concerns. When the heart is full of the world, how soon is all sense of and love to God choked! how is the mind bemisted, and will charmed, with the painted, heart-bewitching shadows of the world! This was Israel's case: "Israel is an empty vine," גפן בייקק. (Hosea x. 1.) Expositors have variety of conceptions on these words; but the most simple sense seems this: Israel is "an evacuant, luxuriant vine," † which seems to bring forth such abundance of fruit, as if she would empty herself of all her juice and fruits at once; so richly laden with fruit doth she seem to be. Ay, but what fruit is it? Surely "fruit unto herself," rotten, corrupt fruit. Her heart and love is not bestowed on God, but on her idols. So it follows in verse 2: "Their heart is

* *Intelligendum est hoc proverbium de dominis in solidum; quomodo et jurisconsulti dicunt non posse duos esse dominos ejusdem rei.*—GROTIUS. "This proverb must be understood concerning those masters who hold the full and entire property in any thing or person: in which manner, the professors of law declare, two men cannot be complete lords over the same thing."—EDIT. † Ουδεις δυναται δυσι κυριοις δουλευειν εναντια γαρ επιταττουσιν. 'Ο Χριστος λεγει, Κενωσον απερ εχεις. 'Ο Μαρμωνας λεγει, Λαβε και απερ ουκ εχεις.—CHRYSOSTOMUS. "No man can serve two masters; for their commands are opposite and conflicting. Christ says to his servant, 'Part with all thy possessions.' Mammon says to his, 'Grasp even those things which thou dost not yet possess.'"—EDIT.

† *Vitis evacans.*

divided ;" that is, this beloved idol hath one part, that another ; and thus God is robbed of that esteem and love which is due to him.

PROP. III. *Love to the world breeds confidence in the world, whereby the heart is turned-off from its dependence on God, as its first Cause.*—And O, how inconsistent is this with the love of God ! God, as he is our Last End in point of fruition, so also our First Principle or Cause in point of dependence. Now love to the world turns the heart from God to the world, not only as the last end, but also as the first cause. They that love the world cast the weight of their souls and chiefest concerns on the world ; and so bid adieu to God. This confidence in worldly things is inconsistent with salvation, and so with the love of God ; as : "How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God !" (Mark x. 24.) This *rhetoric* interrogation implies a *logic* negation ; namely, that it is impossible for one that in a prevalent degree trusteth in his riches, to enter into the kingdom of God. So : "Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength ; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened," or fortified, "himself in his wickedness," or substance. (Psalm lii. 7.) The like [see in] Prov. xi. 28 ; Ezek. xvi. 15 ; 1 Tim. vi. 17.

PROP. IV. *Love to the world is flat idolatry, and herein also inconsistent with the love of God.*—So Eph. v. 5 : "Nor covetous man, who is an idolater." The same [in] Col. iii. 5 : "And covetousness, which is idolatry." Covetousness is, in a peculiar manner, branded with this black mark of idolatry, in that it doth expressly proclaim a love to the world as its last end, and confidence in it as its first cause. So Paul saith of voluptuous persons, that they make "their belly their god," (Phil. iii. 19,) because they love pleasures more than God. (2 Tim. iii. 4.) And indeed every lover of the world is a god-maker : so many lusts as men have, so many gods. The lust of the flesh makes pleasures its god ; the lust of the eye worships riches as its god ; and the lust of pride exalts some created excellence in the place of God. O how do worldlings lose the true God in the crowd of false gods !

PROP. V. *Love to the world is spiritual adultery, and thence incoherent with the love of God.*—The jealousy of God will not admit of any corrival in the bent of the heart. But O, how doth love to this world run a-whoring after other lovers ! So Ezek. xvi. 18, 38 ; xxiii. 5, 11 : "And Aholah played the harlot when she was mine," &c. The like, James iv. 4 : "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God ?" Which implies, that love to and friendship with this whorish world is spiritual adultery, and so hatred against God. O how soon are those that love the world killed by its adulterous embraces ! Hence,

PROP. VI. *Love to the world is a deliberate, contrived lust, and so habitual enmity and rebellion against God.*—Acts of lust, which arise from sudden passions, though violent, may consist with the love of God ; but a deliberate bent of heart towards the world, as our supreme interest, cannot. The single act of a gross sin, arising from some prevalent temptation, speaketh not such an inveterate bitter root of enmity against God, as predominant love to the world. "Whosoever therefore will be the friend of

the world is the enemy of God." (James iv. 4.) O how much of contempt, rebellion, and enmity against God, is there in friendship and love to the world!

PROP. VII. *Love to the world forms our profession into a subservience unto our worldly interest, and so makes religion to stoop unto, yea, truckle under, lust.*—Now, what can be more inconsistent with the love of God than this? This was the case of the carnal Jews: "With their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness." (Ezek. xxxiii. 31.) They show much love in profession; but, O how little have they of sincere affection! And why? Because their avaricious hearts made the whole of their profession to conform to their worldly interest. Thus also it was with unbelieving Jews in our Lord's time: "But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you." (John v. 42.) *I know you.*—There lies a great emphase in that *you*: You who profess so much, and yet have so little love in you. They had much love to God in their mouth, but none in their heart: this appeareth by verses 43, 44, where our Lord tells them in plain terms, that their worldly honour and interest was the only measure of their profession. This also was the measure of Judas's religion, (John xii. 5, 6,) where he pretends much love to the poor, but really intends nothing but the gratifying his avaricious humour. The like, Hosea x. 11: "Ephraim loveth to tread out the corn," &c., because there was profit, liberty, and pleasure in that. But Ephraim loved not ploughing work, because that brought her under a yoke, and brought-in no advantage to her. Love to the world brings us under subjection to it, and so takes us off from the service of God. What we inordinately love and cleave unto, we are soon overcome by. Now subjection to the world, and subjection to God, are inconsistent. (Matt. vi. 24.)

PROP. VIII. *Love to the world is the root of all sin; and therefore what more inconsistent with the love of God?*—To love God is to hate evil; (Psalm xcvi. 10;) therefore to love evil, either in the cause or effect, is to hate God.

Now love to the world has not only a love for, but also a causal influence on, all sin. And that, 1. *As it exposeth men to the violent incursion and assaults of every temptation.*—So, 1 Tim. vi. 9: "But they that will be rich," Οἱ δε βουλομενοι, they that have their wills biased with a violent bent or vehement weight of carnal love towards riches. This Solomon expresseth, (Prov. xxviii. 22,) by *hasting to be rich*. What befalls such? Why, saith Paul, such "fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition:" and then he gives the reason and cause of it: "For the love of money is the root of all evil," &c.; (1 Tim. vi. 10;) that is, there is no sin but may call the love of money "father:" whence Philo calls it *κακιας μητροπολις*, "the metropolis of evil."

2. *Love to the world is the cause of all sin, in that it blinds and darkens the mind, which opens the door to all sin.*—It is an observation of the prudent moralist, "that every lover is blind about that he loves;"* which he himself interprets of love to lower goods. And O how true is this

* Τυφλοῦνται γὰρ τὸ φιλῶν περὶ τὸ φιλοῦμενον.—PLUTARCHUS.

of those that love the world! What a black veil of darkness is there on their minds, as to what they love! Hence Paul calls such men's love "foolish lusts." (1 Tim. vi. 9.) They are indeed foolish, not only eventually, but causally, as they make men fools and sots.

3. *Love to the world stifles all convictions, breaks all chains and bars of restraining grace, and so opens a more effectual door to all sin.*—We find a prodigious example hereof in Balaam, Num. xxii. 22—40: where you see at large, how his predominant love to "the wages of unrighteousness" (2 Peter ii. 15) stifled all those powerful convictions of and resolutions against sin [which] he lay under.

4. *Love to the world is the disease and death of the soul, and therefore the life of sin.*—"She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." (1 Tim. v. 6.)

5. *Love to the world pollutes our whole being.**—Animal passions defile the soul: inordinate lustings after things lawful pollute the most of professors, more or less.

6. *Love to the world puts the whole soul, yea, world, into wars, confusion, and disorders.*—So, James iv. 1: "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" *Ἐκ τῶν ἡδονῶν*, "of your pleasures," that is, by a metonymy, from your lusts after pleasures and superfluous things. *That war in your members.*—Hence note, that all extern wars and confusions come from the wars and confusions of intern lust in the heart. Now all intern wars and disorders are inconsistent with the love of God, which is peaceable and orderly. In these regards, love to the world impedes and hinders the love of God.

PROP. IX. *Love to the world is inconsistent with the love of God, in that it causeth apostasy from God.*—The conversion of the heart to the creature always implies its aversion from God. He that cannot part with the world, will soon part with God. The world draws men from God at pleasure; because it doth engross your best time, thoughts, affections, and strength in its service. How many professors, by being bewitched with love to the world, have lost many hopeful blossoms and beginnings of love to God! How little do spiritual suavities savour with carnal hearts! Yea, do not the flesh-pleasing sweets of this world make all the delices of heaven seem bitter to a sensual worldling? What makes the heart poorer, as to things divine, than the love of worldly riches? How is the honour of Christ and religion degraded in that heart which affects worldly honours! What more powerfully stains the glory of a Christian profession, than an ambitious affectation of mundane glory? Where is that professor, who has his heart engaged in the world without being defiled by it, if not drowned in it? The world is filled with such a contagious air, as that our love is soon poisoned and infected by it. Love to the world is the devil's throne, where he lords it; the helm of the ship, where he sits and steers the soul hell-wards. This was the bitter root of Lot's wife [in] her apostasy from God. So, Gen. xix. 26: "But his wife looked back from

* *Amor est quidam ingressus animi in rem amatam, quæ, si fuerit ipso amante ignobilior, polluit dignitatem ejus.*—JANSENI Augustinus. "Love is a kind of entrance of the soul into something which is the object beloved, and which, if of a less noble nature than the lover himself, pollutes his worthiness and dignity."—EDIT.

behind him." She had left her heart in Sodom; and thence she looks back after it, contrary to God's command in verse 17. And what was the issue of her apostasy? "She became a pillar of salt;" that is, she partook of Sodom's plague, which was "brimstone, and salt, and burning." (Deut. xxix. 23.) The storm which fell on Sodom overtook her, and turned her into "a pillar of salt," as a standing monument of God's justice on apostates, who love the world more than God. Whence saith our Lord, "Remember Lot's wife." (Luke xvii. 32.) What made Judas and Demas apostatize, but love to the world? As man at first fell from God by loving the world more than God, so he is more and more engaged in this apostasy by love to the world.

PROP. X. *Love to the world transforms a man into the spirit and humour of the world, which is inconsistent with the love of God.*—Love makes us like to, and so one with, what we love. For all love aims at unity; and if it comes short thereof, yet it leaves similitude, which is imperfect unity: whence, by love to the world, men become like to and one with it. "He that loves the earth is earthly."* (Rom. viii. 8, 9.) A worldly man is called a fleshly man; because his very soul becomes fleshly. His heart is drowned in and incorporated with the world; his spirit becomes incarnate with the flesh.

PROP. XI. *Yea, love to the world transforms a man into a beast, and so makes him altogether incapable of love to God.*—So, Psalm xlix. 20: "Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish." This verse is an epiphonema to the psalm, with which he concludes, that a man, though never so great in the world, yet, if his heart cleave unto it, he is no better than a beast. Albeit he be a man by nature, yet he is a beast by affection and operation. Yea, what shall I say? Love to the world transforms a man into worse than a beast. For it is better to be a beast, than like to a beast. As love to God, the Best Good, makes us better than the best of other men; so love to the world, which is the worst evil, makes men worse than the worst of beasts. Love to the world is ecstatic as well as love to God: and the more the heart cleaves to the world, the less power has it to return to God, or itself.

SECTION VI. THE APPLICATION OF THE SUBJECT.

Having stated and explicated the case before us, we now descend to the several improvements that may be made thereof, both by *doctrinal corollaries*, and *practic uses*.

I. DOCTRINAL COROLLARIES.

As for the *doctrinal corollaries* or *inferences* that may be deduced from the precedent discourse, they are various and weighty. I shall only mention such as more immediately and naturally flow therefrom.

1. By comparing the love of God with the love of the world in their universal ideas and characters, we learn *how much the love of God doth excel and transcend the love of the world.*—Our love is by so much the more perfect, by how much the more noble and spiritual its object is; and by how much the more eminent degree it obtains in the subject.

* *Si terram amas, terra es.*—AUGUSTINUS.

The greatness of the object intendeth * the affection; and O how much doth this raise the value of love to God above worldly love!

Is not God the most absolutely necessary simple Being, very Being, yea, Being itself, and therefore most perfect? Whence, is he not also our Last End, our Choicest Good, every way desirable for himself? Then, O what an excellent thing is love to God, who is so amiable! But as for this world, what a dirty whore, what an heart-ensnaring thing, is it! And thence, how much is our love abased by terminating thereon! The love of God is pure and unspotted. But, O how filthy and polluted is love to the world! What more cordial and sincere than love to God? But, alas! how artificial, painted, and hypocritic is love to this deceitful world! O how judicious, wise, and discreet is love to God! What abundance of solid, deep, and spiritual reason has it in its bowels! But, O what a brutish, sottish passion is love to the world! How foolish are all its lusts! (1 Tim. vi. 9.) What a generous and noble affection is love to God! But what more sordid and base than love to this vile world? Love to God is regular and uniform. But, O what irregularities and confusions attend love to the world! How masculine, puissant, and potent is love to God! But, alas! how effeminate, impotent, and feeble is love to the world! What more sordid and substantial than love to God? and what more vain and empty than love to the world? It deserves not the name of "love," but "lust." Worldly-minded men have a world of lusts; but what have they to fill them, save a bag of empty wind, and vexatious vanities? Love to God is most temperate, natural, and so beautiful. But, ah! what preternatural, excessive, and prodigious heats are there in love to the world! How is the mind clarified and brightened by love to God! But, O how is it bemisted and darkened by love to the world! Divine love is the best philosopher, and master of wisdom. The love of God amplifies and widens the heart. But the love of the world doth confine and narrow it. By love to God we become lords over all things beneath ourselves. But love to the world brings us into subjection to the most base of persons and things. Worldly-minded men can neither obey nor command their lusts: they cannot *obey* them, because they are infinite and oft contrary: they cannot *command* them by reason of their own feebleness. Love to God is tranquil and serene; but love to the world, tempestuous and turbulent. Love to God gives repose and quiet to the soul; but love to the world fills it with perpetual agitations, inquietude, and restless motions, without end. Worldly love is a læsive † passion, but divine love perfective of him that loves. In sum, love to God is of the same nature with God, and therefore the most express character of the image of God; the first-born of faith, the soul of other graces; the rule of our actions, a summary of the law; an angelic life; a prelibation of heaven; a lively mark of a child of God; for we may read God's love to us in our love to him. But, O how opposite and black are the characters of love to the world! Nothing deserves the name of love, but that to God.

2. Hence also infer, *that love to God, and love to the world, divide*

* "Gives intensity to." the affection.—EDIT. † In the signification of *hurtful*, or *prejudicial*. This old word is too good and expressive to come into neglect and desuetude; the only surviving branch of the family with us being the legal term *lesion*, an "injury."—EDIT.

all mankind.—There is no middle state between these two opposites ; neither can they ever consist together in their perfect degrees. If thou art a lover of the world, in John's sense, thou art a hater of God ; and if thou lovest God, thou art a hater of the world. Hereby, then, thou mayest make a judgment of thy state, whether thou art a saint or a sinner, a godly or worldly man. And remember this, that to love any worldly good more than God, is, in the scripture's sense, to hate God. (Matt. vi. 24.)

3. This also instructs us, *that all natural, irregenerate men's love is but concupiscence or lust.*—Do not all men in their natural state prefer the creature before the Creator ? Are not the pleasures, profits, and honours of this world the worldly man's trinity, which he adoreth, and sacrificeth unto ? Have not all men, by nature, a violent, impetuous bent of heart towards some one or other worldly idol ? Are not their souls bound up in something below God ? Do not all men naturally esteem, love, use, and enjoy the creature for itself, without referring it to God ? And what is this but lust ?

4. We are hence likewise taught, *that a regular and ordinate love to and use of this world's goods is very difficult and rare.*—Alas ! how soon doth our love to creatures grow inordinate, either as to its substance, quantity, quality, or mode ! Yea, how oft and how soon doth our love to things lawful grow irregular and unlawful ! What an excess are most men guilty of in their love to and use of things indifferent ! How few are there who, in using this world, do not abuse it, as 1 Cor. vii. 31 ! Where is that person that can say, with Paul ?—“ Every where and in all things I am instructed both to abound and to suffer want.” (Phil. iv. 12.)

5. This also informs us, *that where predominant love to the world is notorious, visible, and manifest, we cannot, by any rule of judicious charity, count such a godly man.*—It was a canon common among the Jews, mentioned by Rabbi Salome, that “ the people of the earth are not called godly ; ”* that is, “ The lovers of the world may not be called saints.” And, O how many worldly professors are cut off from the number of visible saints hereby ! It is to me a dismal contemplation, to consider how many follow Christ in profession, and yet have the black mark of worldlings on their foreheads. O how much love to the world lies hid under the mask and vizard of professed love to God ! It is not the having or possessing of the world's goods, but the over-loving of them, that bespeaks you worldlings. It is true, a saint may fall under many preternatural heats, yea, fevers, of love to the world ; yet, in time, love to God, as a stronger fire, expels such violent heats and noxious humours.

6. Hence in like manner we may collect, *that worldly-minded professors are composed of a world of contradictions and inconsistencies.*—Such love God in profession ; but hate him in truth and affection. Their tongues are tipped with heaven ; but their hearts are drenched in the earth. They pretend to serve God ; but they intend nothing but to serve their lusts. They make a show of confidence in God ; but place their real confidence in the world. They make mention of God in

* *Populus terræ non vocatur הַסִּיד, hasid.*

name; but exalt the world in heart. They conform to the laws of God in outward show; but conform to, yea, are transformed into, the world in spirit. Finally: they hate sin, and love God, in appearance; but they hate God, and love sin, in reality. (Ezek. xxxiii. 31.)

7. This also instructs thus, *that for professors of love to God to be deeply engaged in the love of this world, is a sin of deep aggravation.*—O what a peculiar malignity is there in this sin! How much light and love do such sin against! What a reproach and disparagement is cast on God hereby! Are not profane worldlings justified in their earthly-mindedness by the worldly love of professors? Yea, do they not hereby take occasion to blaspheme the holy name of God? “Lo!” say they, “these are your professors, who are as covetous, as over-reaching in their dealings, as much buried in the earth, as any other.” And is not God hereby greatly dishonoured? Do not such worldly professors live below their principles, profession, convictions, covenant-obligations, and the practice of former professors?

8. This gives us the genuine reason and cause *why the word of God, and all the good things contained therein, find so little room in the hearts of many great professors.*—It is to me a prodigious thing to consider, among the crowd of notional professors and hearers of God’s word, how few entertain the same in a honest heart. And where lies the main bitter root of this cursed infidelity, but in love to the world? So, Mark iv. 18, 19: “And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.” It deserves a particular remark, that the thorny-ground hearers, here characterized, are ranked in the highest form of notional hearers, as much surpassing the highway-ground or stony-ground hearers. For in these thorny-ground hearers the word takes some root, yea, with some depth; and so springs up into a blade, and green ears; and so endures a cold winter, yea, a scorching summer’s heat: and yet, after all, it is choked. How so? Why, by “the cares of this world,” *μεριμναι*, the amorous, distracting, anxious cares. “And the deceitfulness of riches.” O what deceitful things are riches! How soon do they choke the word! “And the lusts of other things,” namely, pleasures which deserve not to be named: “For so the Hebrews were wont to express vile, abominable things, by ‘other things.’” * Thence they termed swine, *אחרים* “other things.”

9. Hence also conclude, *that such as love the world hate God and their own souls.*—That predominant love to the world, in its proper notion, includes the hatred of God, is evident from the whole of our discourse. That it implies also hatred of ourselves, is manifest, because the hatred of God includes love to death, and so, by consequence, the hatred of our own souls. As, Prov. viii. 36: “All they that hate me love death;” that is, in its causes. O how cursed are such as cry up the world, and cry down Christ!

10. Lastly: this case, as before stated, *is a good key to open some dark and hard sayings in scripture.*—As that, Matt. xix. 24: “It is

* *Solenne fuit Hebræis uti voce אחרים “alios” quotiescunque rem abominandam tacite innumunt.*—HOTTINGERI *Thesaurus Philologicus*, p. 51.

easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Which is a proverbial speech, denoting how difficult a thing it is for any rich man, but how impossible it is for him that has a predominant love to his riches, and so confidence in them, to enter into the kingdom of God ; as Mark x. 24.

II. PRACTIC USES.

But to close up this discourse with a few *practic improvements and uses*.

1. This case, as before stated, serves for *the conviction and condemnation of such who profess love to God, and yet love the world more than God.*—Our apostle saith, "Love not the world ;" and yet what do these love but the world ? Where is the love which these owe to God ? And what hopes can such have of God's love to them ? Alas ! how poor and narrow is the love of most professors to God ! If they have some good liking to him, yet how far short do they come of fervent love to him ! Perhaps their light and profession are broad ; but, O how narrow is their love to Christ ! And do not such as want love for Christ fall under the most dreadful curse that ever was ? even an *Anathema Maranatha*, (1 Cor. xvi. 22,) which was the *formule* of the highest excommunication among the Jews, mentioned in Enoch's prophecy, (Jude 14,) and imports a binding-over to the great day of judgment at the coming of our Lord. And, O how soon will Christ meet such in a way of judgment, who will not now meet him in a way of love ! Alas ! what an hungry Paradise have they whose love feeds not on Christ, but the things of time ! Is there not a sting in every creature our love dotes on ? O what abundance of ingratitude and injustice lies wrapped up in this love to the world ! Can there be greater ingratitude than this, to spend our choicest love on love-tokens, conferred on us by God to wind up our hearts to the love of himself ? Is it not also the greatest injustice to give that measure of affection to the creature which is due to none but the Creator ?

Having so fair an opportunity, I cannot but enter this solemn profestation against all such as, under a profession of love to God, conceal an adulterous affection to this world. O think how soon this world will hug you to death in its arms, if your hearts attend to its bewitching charms. Alas ! why should sick dreams run away with your hearts ? What are all those things your hearts lust after, but the scum, froth, dross, and refuse of the creation ? Ah, poor fools ! why are your hearts so much bewitched with the night-visions, whorish idols, or cursed nothings of time ? Remember how dear you pay for your beloved idols, how much they are salted with the curse of God.

2. *Here is matter of doleful lamentation, that, in days of so much light, and profession of love to God, men should so much abuse themselves and the world, by over-loving of it.*—O that painted shadows and dirty clay should run away with our love ! Is it not a deplorable case, that the golden pleasures of this idol-world should find so much room in our hearts ? Yea, what matter of humiliation is this, that professors of love to God should lavish away so much time, study, care, and affection on

this perishing world! Would it not make any serious heart to bleed, when it considers how much the professors of this age are conformable to the fashions, humours, and lusts of this world? O what an abominable thing is it, that professors should fall down and worship this great idol, the world! that the sons of God should commit folly with this old whore, which the sons of men have lusted after so many thousand years! Alas! what chains and fetters are there in the world's blandishments! what real miseries in all her seeming felicities! What do all her allurements serve for, but to hide Satan's baits? Who are they that are most in love with the world, but those that least know it? Alas! how little can this world add to or take from our happiness? What hath this world to feed our love, but smoke and wind?

3. *Here is also a word of caution for professors, to take heed how they make religion and the concerns thereof subservient to worldly interest.*—O what a curse and plague is this, to make the highest excellence subserve the vilest lusts! And yet how common is it! I tremble to think how far many professors will be found guilty hereof at the last day.

4. But that which I mostly design as the close of this discourse, is some few words of exhortation and direction unto Christians.

(1.) *To labour after a holy contempt of this dirty, soul-polluting world.*—O what an essential obligation do we all lie under, to contemn the grandeur and sun-burnt glory of this fading world! What is there in this world you can call yours? Can you be content to have your heaven made of such base metal as mire and clay? O what a transient thing is all the glory of this perishing world! Consider the argument which our apostle useth in the words following our text: (1 John ii. 17 :) *And the world*—That is, all the splendour, pomp, beauty, pleasures, and grandeur of the world. *Passeth away, παρ᾿ ἑαυτῆς*—As a scene, whereon men acted their parts, and then passed away, as 1 Cor. vii. 31. Alas! were the world guilty of no other defect but this, that *it passeth away*, what a strong argument is this for the contempt thereof! Again: remember, this world is but your prison, and place of pilgrimage. And, O how scornful and disdainful is the pilgrim's eye! With how much scorn doth he behold other countries! And ought not Christians, with a more generous disdain, [to] cry out?—"Fie, fie! This dirty world is not like my celestial Canaan!" Alas! what have we here to rejoice in but fetters and chains? How soon doth "the fashion of this world pass away!" (1 Cor. vii. 31;) that is, the pageant or scene of worldly glory!

(2.) As for you who are rich in this world, consider seriously the exhortation of Paul, 1 Tim. vi. 17—19; where having closed his epistle, he has this divine inspiration injected by the Spirit: "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works," &c. There were many rich merchants at Ephesus, where Timothy was, who needed this exhortation; as, I think, many among us.

(3.) Here is a more particular word for merchants, tradesmen, and all such as are much engaged in the affairs of this world, *that they would*

take diligent heed that the world do not insinuate and wind itself into their hearts.—O, I beseech you, keep your hearts far from the walls of this pest-house, this love-polluting world. Keep your love in heaven while your persons are engaged in the world. Let not your hearts smell of the smoke of this lower house, but of heaven. Beware that your love do not make its nest in this world, but let it take wing, and rest nowhere short of heaven, where its treasure is. Follow not the guises of this soul-polluting world. Let this idol-world be nothing to you; but God be all in all. Take heed that the multiplicity of worldly affairs choke not the sense of God. Remember, your best riches consist in the poverty of your desires. Make use of prosperity to prepare you for afflictions. Know, the dearest things must be parted with when God calls for them; and therefore keep your hearts loose from them. Bring your natural desires into a narrow compass; but let your hearts be enlarged towards God. Amuse not your hearts, as children, at the glistening outside of things; but fear a snare in every comfort. Feed much on spiritual delights, and that will kill carnal pleasures.

Let your hearts be as the mother-pearl; which, they say, receives no water but what comes from heaven: let your hearts be open towards heaven, but shut against the world; let not this great idol enter into God's temple.

(4.) Lastly: let us all be exhorted, *to be in nothing more curious than about the right placing of our love; that it be fixed on its right object, and in a right manner.*—Let us get a stamp of grace on all our love, and then it will become divine. Let us love nothing greatly, but what we shall love for ever. It was the saying of a serious Jansenist: "I would never begin to love that which, one day, I must cease to love." Let us labour after the highest strain of love to God, which is, *to love God for himself, and to love ourselves in God.* Our best being lies in God; and therefore our best love is to love ourselves in God. As one extreme heat burns-out another; so let our love to God burn-out our love to the world.

SERMON IV.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM JENKIN, A.M.

NOW IS THE TIME: OR, INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PRESENT
IMPROVING THE SEASON OF GRACE.

We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.—2 Corinthians vi. 1, 2.

SECTION I.

PAUL's epistles excel both in matter and in method. Their matter is principally reconciliation through Christ. What subject so sweet, so profitable? Their method is by way of doctrine and use: a method,

which if it be despised, Paul's writings cannot be duly valued. In the foregoing verse, the last words of it, he positively asserted the great doctrine of reconciliation through Christ, and doctrinally propounded it in these words: "He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." This was his doctrine. In these two verses immediately following he applieth the doctrine: "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted," &c. In which two verses, there are contained these three parts:—

I. The first is AN EXHORTATION, that they would not "receive the grace of God in vain," or a caution against their "receiving it in vain."

II. Secondly, THE REASONS that the apostle produceth to back the exhortation. Those reasons are two:—

The first is the reason of *his propounding this exhortation*; that is, because "he was a worker together with God."

The second is the reason of *their embracing this exhortation*; and that is in verse 2: "For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee," as it is in Isaiah xlix. 8.

III. Thirdly, you have here THE ACCOMMODATION, OF THE APPLICATION of this second reason unto the present state of the Corinthians: "Behold, *now*," saith the apostle, "is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation," that God of old promised unto Christ. Ye enjoy it, ye live under it; and therefore you must now improve it to the best advantage of your souls. Now we shall go over these three parts in the way of explication, that so we may the more profitably handle that part which I principally design to insist upon.

I. We shall explain THE EXHORTATION, or the caution that he layeth down, which is, *Not to receive the grace of God in vain*. Here we shall explain two things:—

1. We shall show you, *what is meant by the grace of God*.
2. *What is meant by receiving, or not receiving, the grace of God in vain*.

SECTION II.

1. First. *What is meant by the grace of God*.

You are here to understand by "grace" the doctrine of the gospel, frequently and fitly in the scripture called "grace;" as in Eph. iii. 2; Col. i. 6; Acts xx. 32; Titus ii. 11; and in sundry other scriptures the doctrine of the gospel is called "grace." And it is called by that name, for these three reasons:—

(1.) *Because it is graciously, and out of the free favour of God, bestowed*.—Why it is bestowed at all, it is from "grace:" why it is bestowed upon one age or place rather than other, it is only from God's free grace and favour. (Rom. xvi. 25, 26.) It is there said to be a "mystery kept secret since the world began, but now made manifest." And that in Isai. lxxv. 1: "I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name." To these God was pleased by the gospel to say, "Behold me." He was "found of those that sought him

not." God's argument to bestow the gospel of life upon a person, or a family, or a place, is merely from his own free good-will.

(2.) *The gospel is called "grace," because the subject-matter of the gospel is grace.*—Whatever it is [which] the gospel promiseth, whatever privilege or saving benefit is contained in the gospel, is all from grace: we are "justified freely by his grace." (Rom. iii. 24.) *Forgiveness of sin.*—It is said to be from "his rich grace." (Eph. i. 7.) *Eternal life.*—It is the free gift of God. *Effectual vocation.*—Saving conversion is merely from grace. We are "called according to his own purpose and grace; not according to our works." (2 Tim. i. 9.) "Unto you it is given to believe." (Phil. i. 29.) God giveth repentance. (2 Tim. ii. 25.) He "called me by his grace." (Gal. i. 15.) The saints are "heirs of grace." (1 Peter iii. 7.) Christ himself, that obtained all the privileges of the gospel for us, was sent as a token of free grace, free favour: "through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us." (Luke i. 78.) "So God loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." (John iii. 16.) Christ's whole work was to love, and his whole love was free. We purchase nothing without leaving of our money behind us. All his saved ones have nothing of their own but impotency and antipathy, nothing of their own to move God to save them. The law discovers God's will, and the gospel discovers his good-will.

(3.) *The gospel is called "grace," because it is the instrument, under the Spirit of God, of bestowing the benefits of free grace upon us.*—It is an invitation to the benefits of free grace: and it is our warrant of receiving those benefits, and of applying them. The gospel is not only a *story* to tell us what is done and what is obtained for believers; but it is a *testament*, to cause and to show unto us our interest in them by faith. We shall lay hold upon it, when He who ordained the gospel doth accompany it. The gospel brings salvation; (Titus ii. 11;) therefore the gospel is called "the ministration of righteousness," and "the ministration of the Spirit;" (2 Cor. iii. 8, 9;) the instrument made use of by the Spirit of God for enabling us to apply the righteousness of Christ, and all the benefits of free grace contained in it. And so I have opened the first thing in the exhortation, and shown what we are to understand by "the grace of God," even the doctrine of the gospel.

SECTION III.

2. The second particular in the exhortation to be opened is, *the receiving thereof in vain.*

How is the doctrine of the gospel said to be received in vain? In the Greek it is *εις κενον*. The word signifies to receive it "emptyly, unfruitfully, unprofitably;" and, indeed, so it is too often received. It is true, the Gospel is to be received, and it cannot save us unless it be received; and therefore you read several times in the scripture of "receiving" it: the receiving of the "seed into good ground." (Matt. xiii. 23.) "They received the word" of God "gladly." (Acts ii. 41.) And, in Acts xi. 1: "The Gentiles received the word." And in Acts xvii. 11: "They received the word with all readiness of mind," with all cheerfulness. So, in 1 Thess. i. 6: they "received the word in much affliction."

But as the gospel must be received, so it may be received unprofitably, ineffectually, and in vain. And for the opening of this, the gospel may be said to be received in vain in two respects :

First. *In regard of the manner of receiving.*

Secondly. *In regard of the event or the issue of receiving it.*

First. *It is received in vain in regard of the manner of receiving it.*

1. And that is, *when we receive the gospel, but not with an empty hand.*—When the grace of the gospel is not so received, as to be empty of the opinion of our own works and righteousness. This is a vain, empty reception; for “the rich” are “sent empty away.” (Luke i. 53.)

2. *It is received in vain when it is not received with the highest estimation and valuation.*—When it is not looked upon to be “worthy of all acceptation,” as the apostle expresseth it, 1 Tim. i. 15; when it is not received as a pearl, as a jewel of greatest price. If all be not sold for it, soon will it be left for any thing.*

3. *When it is not received with the greatest ardency of desire, with hungering and thirsting after the benefits contained in it.*—All the inclinations of our souls towards all earthly objects we owe to the benefits of the gospel; which, if we pursue not ardently, we shall never procure successfully.†

4. *When we do not receive it with a particular fiducial application of Jesus Christ upon the warrant of the infallible gospel, but only by a general assent.*—When we receive it into our heads by light, but do not receive it into our hearts by faith. When we do not believe with the heart, but only assent with the head. When we receive it only into our ears, and into our lips, and into our professions; but do not receive it as the good seed, which is to be laid-up in the furrows and the soil of the soul.

Thus the gospel is received in vain in regard of the manner of receiving it.

Secondly. *It is received in vain in regard of the issue, the event, of receiving it; and that several ways:—*

1. *When it is not received so as to purify the heart, as to kill corruption.*—When this grace of God doth not teach us effectually to “deny ungodliness and worldly lusts;” when men will have an *angelical* gospel, but will live *diabolical* lives; when they are not thrown into the mould of the gospel, and have not hearts and practices suitable to it.

2. *When it doth not quicken us to new obedience.*—When there is a receiving without returning, without any activity for God in holy walking; where there is no “delight in the law of God;” when “his commandments are grievous;” when the law doth only compel, but the spirit of the gospel doth not incline, our wills to the obedience of the gospel; when, by the receiving of the gospel, we are not made a “willing people,” to give up ourselves to God in the ways of duty; “when faith is not made incarnate,” as Luther speaks, “by maintaining good works.” (Titus iii. 8.)

* This sentence, the concluding clause in the next paragraph, and the quotation from Luther at the bottom of the page, formed no part of the first impression.—EDIT.

† The sentiment which the author wished to convey, seems to have been this: “The same appetency or inclination of the soul which we naturally manifest toward all earthly objects, is due by us, with greater reason, to the benefits of the gospel,” &c.—EDIT.

3. *When we so receive grace as that it doth not sustain us in our troubles, nor bear us up in our sufferings.*—When it is not a “word of patience,” as it is called, Rev. iii. 10: “Thou hast kept the word of my patience.” The gospel duly received as to the issue of its reception, maketh us patient to bear whatever is displeasing and ungrateful unto sense. When we see that the justice of God is satisfied, we can easily bear the injustice of men. When we see that God’s wrath is appeased towards us, we shall look upon the wrath of man, yea, all outward troubles, to be cold and feeble.

4. *When we so receive grace as not to impart it and communicate it unto others.*—If we be *living* we shall be *lively* Christians; if we have the life of grace in us, we shall warm others. If we *do* no good, it is a sign we have *got* no good. If there be a spiritual life bestowed upon us by the gospel, there is always a seminal virtue, an inclination to disseminate and to scatter grace among others.

5. And, lastly: *Grace is received in vain as to the issue of our receiving of it, when it is so received, as that thereby we do not obtain salvation.*—It is “the gospel of salvation:” but a mere visible owning of the gospel saveth none. The receiving of it into your houses, into your heads, into your mouths, brings not any to heaven. ‘Christ will profess to those that are empty professors, and only have externally,’ and as to the outward privileges of grace, received the gospel: “I never knew you: depart from me.” (Matt. vii. 23.) We are not only to receive the privileges of grace, but grace by the privilege, if we expect glory.

Thus I have shown what is meant by the grace of God, and what by the receiving of it in vain. And this shall serve for explaining the exhortation, (the first part,) “Receive not the grace of God in vain.”

SECTION IV.

II. The second part to be opened, is that which contains **THE REASONS** of this exhortation: and they are these two:

1. The **FIRST** is the reason of the apostle’s giving this exhortation or caution against the receiving of the grace of God in vain; namely, because we are, saith he, “workers together.” We read it, “workers together with him.” But in the Greek it is only “workers together,” not *with him*. And there are several expositions given of this expression, “workers together.” Calvin thinks that this “working together” doth intend the working together with the doctrine delivered by the apostle: as if the apostle intended, that it was his duty, not only to deliver the truths and the doctrines of the gospel, but to work together with those truths and doctrines, by way of urging and exhorting, or by urging those doctrines with exhortations to make them effectual; and therefore, saith he, *Non satis est docere nisi urgeas*: “It is not enough doctrinally to inform people what is the truth; but we must urge it upon them with motives, inducements, and persuasions,” that may make the doctrine embraced. And the Syriac seems to favour this exposition, which renders the word *συνεργουντες*, “working together,” *promoventes hoc negotium*; as if “the work” of doctrinal information “were to be promoted” by arguments and incitements to the embracing of the truth. Others conceive

that this "working together" is to be referred to the common mutual endeavours of ministers, who are to be "fellow-helpers" one with another : as if the apostle had said, "All we ministers, working together to further our Master's work in the conversion and salvation of your souls, beseech you," &c. Chrysostom refers this "working together" to the mutual endeavours of ministers and people : as if Paul had said, "We apostles work together with you, to whom we preach, in this work of your receiving the grace of God, by our exhortations to incite you to comply with the duties propounded in the gospel." Our English interpreters, by putting-in these words "with him," understand the apostle to intend a working together with God ; and indeed ministers are called "labourers with God." (1 Cor. iii. 9.) I see no reason why we should reject this exposition, if we take it with these two cautions :—

(1.) First. Ministers in this working with God must be looked upon so to use their abilities, as not implanted in them by nature, but bestowed on them by grace, that so they may be made apt and fit instruments by the grace of God to work. Therefore the apostle saith, "Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament." (2 Cor. iii. 6.) And so in 1 Cor. xv. 10 : "By the grace of God," saith he, "I am what I am ; but I laboured more abundantly than they all : yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." His power and ability to work he attributes merely to the grace of God. And all "our sufficiency is of God." (2 Cor. iii. 5.)

(2.) Secondly. If you take this to be the meaning of it, that *we are fellow-workers with God* ; you must understand, that what is the main and principal in this work, which is *the bestowing of spiritual life and growth*, must be looked upon as *only the work of God*, and to come from him ; and that therein man had no share at all, nor is a co-worker with God in it. And, as Beza well notes on 1 Cor. iii. 9, we must always observe carefully a difference between causes subordinate, and causes co-ordinate. Ministers are to be considered as purely in subordination to God, and as those whom God is pleased to make use of in the way of his appointment ; not in the way of effectual concurrence with God, as if they could communicate any power or strength to the working of grace by the preaching of the word. Subordinate causes ministers are *to*, not co-ordinate causes *with*, God in the great work of producing of our salvation, which God only hath in his own hand, both as to the internal working of grace in the soul, and the eternal bestowing of glory upon us in the life to come. There is the first reason opened ; that is, the reason why the apostle doth here give them his exhortation, namely, "We are workers together with God."

SECTION V.

2. The **SECOND** is, the reason why the apostle doth put them upon this great duty of "not receiving the grace of God in vain." And that is taken from that text in Isai. xlix. 8, where there is this promise made unto Christ : "I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in a day of salvation have I succoured thee." These are the words of the promise that God the Father maketh unto Christ as Mediator ; which is, that, in

his discharging of the great work of saving his church, God the Father will answer and succour him, as the Head of the church, and show it by granting him *a day and a time* for the bestowing of efficacious grace upon his members, by making the means of grace effectual for their salvation; which time is here called “an accepted time,” and “a day of salvation:” because this time, and this day, is the time and the day of God’s free favour, in which he will so accept of sinners, as to show his gracious good-will unto them in accepting of them to life, and in working by his Son Jesus Christ salvation and deliverance for them. Now this is a very forcible argument and reason against the receiving of the grace of God in vain; namely, because there was such a rich treasure and measure of saving and efficacious grace in the time of the gospel to be dispensed to the church; therefore they should labour to have their share in it, and not to receive the gospel of grace vainly and unprofitably, as they would approve themselves to be the members of Christ, and those for whom Christ hath prayed unto the Father that they might have saving grace bestowed upon them. And this shall serve for opening the second part of this text; namely, the reason of the apostle’s laying down this exhortation, both in regard of himself, because he was a worker with God; and in regard of the Corinthians, it was because God the Father had made a promise to Christ the Head of the church, that grace should be bestowed, saving, effectual grace; not grace in vain, but grace bringing forth salvation should be afforded, “in an accepted time and in a day of salvation,” by the administration of the gospel.

SECTION VI.

III. The third part, which is that which I intend to insist upon, is the apostle’s ACCOMMODATION, or his APPLICATION of the foregoing reason, taken out of Isai. xlix. 8, unto the present state and time of the Corinthians, by giving them this quickening counsel; that, since the present season of grace which they enjoyed now was “the accepted time” and “the day of salvation” promised unto Christ for his people, they should therefore now regard, and for the present improve, it profitably. The sum of the apostle’s application is this: Since God hath in the foregoing reason assigned a certain time and day for the exhibition and the bestowment of his grace, it followeth, that all times and all days are not fitted for that purpose, but only the time and the day foretold by the prophet, in which God would freely accept of sinners and bring them to salvation; and therefore Paul putteth the Corinthians upon the present improvement of the season of grace, because God had now bestowed upon them that accepted time and the day of salvation foretold in the foregoing reason, which they could not neglect without hazarding the loss of divine acceptation, and their own eternal salvation.

All that I have further to do is to handle this third part, which is the apostle’s *accommodation*, or *application* of the former reason, taken out of the prophet Isaiah, unto the present state of the Corinthians, by giving them this quickening counsel; namely, to improve this present season of grace, which the prophet foretold of old should be bestowed upon the church in the days of the gospel: “Behold, now is the accepted time;

behold, now is the day of salvation." Now this quickening counsel hath two parts:—

1. *An awakening incitement to improve the present season of grace.*—This *awakening incitement* is contained in the repeated note thereof, "Behold!" "Behold!" *The present season of grace* is intended in the repeated note thereof, "Now," "now."

2. *A double argument to convince us of the fitness and necessity of this duty, NOW, FOR THE PRESENT, to improve the season of grace.*—The first argument is taken from *the fitness of the season for working in it*, and so it is called "the time," "the day." The second argument is taken from *the advantageousness of the present season to the worker*, and so it is called the "time accepted" and the "day of salvation."

Now all that I shall further do shall be to handle these two arguments: and in the handling of them I shall only endeavour these two things:—

I. *To open the sense and meaning of these two arguments.*

II. *To show the force and strength of both these arguments to engage us to improve the present season of grace.*

OPENING OF THE FIRST ARGUMENT.

I shall explain the sense of these first two arguments in their order. And,

FIRST. The sense of the first argument taken from *the fitness of the season for working*, as it is called "the time" and "the day." And, herein, first, I shall explain the word "time," secondly, the word "day."

SECTION VII.

1. First. By "time" is not here meant the flux, succession, or continuation of time by minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, years, which we call "the space" of time; but by "time," according to the signification of the word in the Greek, I understand the tempestivity or opportunity of time. For in the Greek it is *καιρος*, which signifies "season or opportunity, a time accommodated and fitted to employment;" in which we may undertake our heavenly business with hope of success. When time and means meet together in conjunction, then they produce opportunity. This seasonableness or tempestivity of time is therefore, not unfitly, called by some "the grace of time," "the flower of time," and "that to time which the flower is to the stalk," *καιρος ανθος χρονου*, which cream is to the milk, which lustre is to the metal. In civil undertakings, as trading, ploughing, and sowing, "opportunity is," as one saith, "the grace of time;" but in spiritual undertakings, opportunity is *the time of grace*, the time fitted and suited by God for the benefiting of our souls by the means of grace. It is as the angel's stirring in the water, into which he that stepped first was healed. It is as the day of a prince's audience for the answering of petitions. It is as the opening of heaven-gates unto them that strive for entrance. It is as the spiritual market-day for the procuring of saving provisions for our souls, upon which we are to live for ever.

SECTION VIII.

2. Secondly. The season of grace is called "a day." For the opening of this: the word "day" in scripture is sometimes taken for the natural day, consisting of twenty-four hours, including also the night; and so it is taken in Christ's directory for prayer, which we commonly call "the Lord's Prayer:"—*Directory*, I say; for I conceive, with learned Grotius, Christ doth not command *verba recitari*, "the words thereof to be repeated;" but "he commands us only to draw all the matter of our prayers out of it," *materiam precum hinc promi præcipit*:—wherein, when we pray for our daily bread day by day, doubtless we pray for what is needful for the night too as well as the day; for sleep is the bread of the night. Therefore by "day" *there*, must be meant the whole natural day, consisting of twenty-four hours. Sometimes the word "day" is taken for an artificial day distinguished from the night: "In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night." (Gen. xxxi. 40.) Sometimes the word "day" is taken improperly and figuratively in the scriptures; and so sometimes it is taken for an age, and for a year; sometimes for a fit occasion or season of doing any thing; as in John ix. 4: "I must do the work of him that sent me, while it is day." And so the season of receiving good, as well as doing good, is called a day: "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that concern thy peace:" (Luke xix. 41, 42:) that is, in the season wherein they have been manifested unto thee by me. So here by "day" I understand the fit season of procuring salvation by improving the means for obtaining thereof.

This briefly for the opening of the first argument, which is the fitness of the present season of grace for our working: it is called "the time," "the day."

SECTION IX. OPENING OF THE SECOND ARGUMENT.

SECONDLY. To open the second argument, and that is *the advantage-ousness of the present season to the worker*.—And it is called "the accepted time" first, and, secondly, "the day of salvation." I shall open both these in their order; and,

1. First. *This time is called accepted*.—The word for "accepted," in the Greek *ευπροσδεκτος*, in this its composition imports "a well-pleasing," yea, "a very much accepted time." The Hebrew word *רצף* *ratson*, from whence it is taken, signifies "the time of free-grace, free-favour, or free good-will." It is taken out of Isaiah xlix. 8; and the Seventy Interpreters, they render it, in Psalm lxix. 13, *καιρος ευδοκίας*, "a time of free favour, free good-will;" and Symmachus renders it *καιρος αλλαγης*, "a time of reconciliation;" a time wherein God will graciously accept sinners out of free-grace to be reconciled unto them. For when time is said here to "be accepted," and "an accepted time," it is to be understood figuratively, as intending the time wherein God will by free grace accept of man, or wherein God is pleased, out of his free good will, to show himself *benevolentem hominibus*, as Grotius expresseth it,

“gracious and favourable to man,” in that way of accepting him through Christ.

SECTION X.

2. *The season of grace is called “the day of salvation,” further to show the advantageousness of this season unto the improvers thereof.*—We must not take “salvation” here so largely as for “deliverance from any evil or danger,” or “the preservation from any trouble or distress.” Nor must we take “salvation” here so strictly and narrowly as to import only “eternal salvation in heaven;” as it is taken in Rom. xiii. 11: “Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed;” and “heirs of salvation.” (Heb. i. 14.) Nor must you take it so strictly as to import only “the means of salvation,” as it doth often in the scripture: “The salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles.” (Acts xxviii. 28.) But “salvation” in this place comprehends both that happiness which is perfect and complete in heaven, and also the entrance into it, and the beginning of it in this life; fitness for salvation here, and the fulness of salvation hereafter. In which sense the Gospel is called the “gospel of salvation,” in Eph. i. 13; and “the word of salvation,” in Acts xiii. 26; and the “long-suffering of our Lord” is to be accounted “salvation,” in 2 Peter iii. 15: by “salvation” in these places being meant a fitness for eternal salvation by receiving the gospel and improving the long-suffering of God and the means of grace, and our being brought to the full fruition of it in glory. So, in this place, “the day of salvation” is that season wherein God bestows an entrance into salvation here, followed with a full perfection of it hereafter.

And so I have opened the sense of these two arguments, whereby the apostle urgeth us to the present improvement of the season of grace, both as this is a season of fitness for working, and so called *a time, a day*; and as it is a season of advantageousness to the worker, and so called *an accepted time*, wherein God accepts of sinners to be reconciled to them, and *a day of salvation*, by the improving whereof God will certainly bring his people to the fruition and the perfect participation of life and salvation in heaven.

THE FORCE OF THE TWO ARGUMENTS.

Now having thus explained and opened the sense of these two arguments, I shall only, **IN THE SECOND PLACE,**

Show you the force and strength of them both distinctly, to engage us to a present improvement of the season of grace.

SECTION XI. FORCE OF THE FIRST ARGUMENT.

(I.) And, **FIRST,** I shall show you the force of the first argument; and that is *the fitness of this present season of grace for our working and employment.*—It is, saith the apostle, 1. The time, 2. The day.

1. *It is the time.*—I showed you, in the explaining of the sense of the first argument, the meaning of the word “time.” I told you it did clearly import *tempestivity, opportunity*, the flower, the cream, the lustre, the beauty, of time. But how doth this consideration, that the present

season of grace is the time of opportunity, urge and enforce the duty of a present improving of the season of grace? In answer whereunto I offer these following considerations:—

The first is this: *The time of opportunity is that which we may easily let slip.*—It is *tempus labile*, “a time that may easily slip between our fingers,” especially in spiritual concerns. It is needful therefore *now*, instantly, to lay hold upon it. Opportunity is hardly embraced. The learned Pharisees could not discern their opportunity by discerning the signs of Christ’s coming, as you have it in Matt. xvi. 3, and the beginning. Nor could the Jews know their opportunity; it was “hidden from their eyes.” (Luke xix. 42.) “Who is as the wise man?” saith Solomon, in Eccles. viii. 1; that is, how rarely is the wise man to be found! Where is he to be found? But why so? “The wise man’s heart,” saith he, “discerneth both time and judgment;” (Eccles. viii. 5;) that is, he is able to judge when things are to be done; and therefore it is rare to find such a wise man. Embracing of opportunity is a wisdom that God alone must teach us, by considering the shortness of our time, to be so wise as to improve it. (Psalm xc. 12.) And God concealeth the season, the nick, the juncture of time, wherein he will bestow grace upon us; because he would have us always watchful, and dependent upon him, humble and serious in regarding every season. It is easy to know seasons for civil affairs; easy to know the season of a trade, to sow, to reap, to buy, to sell. But, in those affairs that concern our souls, it is hard to find out when they are to be performed. Opportunity is so very short and sudden, and men are so blinded with avocations, pleasures, prejudices, and vain hopes, that sometimes these make the season of regarding their souls appear *too soon*. Sometimes they are so blinded with fear and discouragements, by dangers and difficulties, and seeming impossibilities, that they think it *too late*. So that, indeed, between sinful hope and fear, it is hard to pitch upon the right season and nick of time for the saving of our souls. In every business, but especially saving business, the most difficult part of the work is the due limiting of it. In our voyage to heaven it is hard to save our tide: not one of a thousand but lets it slip.

Secondly. *Opportunity must be presently embraced and improved, because the improving of it is a man’s greatest wisdom.*—They are called wise, who so consider their latter end, as that they pursue the present season of duty. (Deut. xxxii. 29.) They are the wise that “discern both time and judgment;” (Eccles. viii. 5;) that is, that discern the opportunity so as to have judgment for the embracing of it. Therefore, in Eccles. x. 2, the “wise man’s heart is” said to be “at his right hand;” that is, the wisdom of his heart teacheth him to dispatch his affairs judiciously and dexterously both for manner and season. The want of this wisdom in discerning the season, maketh a man like unto a beast. (Psalm xlix. 20.) It is worse to be *like a beast* than to be *a beast*. To be *a beast* is no sin, and comparatively no punishment; but to be *like a beast* is both, in a high degree. Yea, the very brute creatures,—they are far wiser than is he that neglects his opportunity of grace. “The stork, the turtle, the crane, and the swallow observe” their seasons of

“coming” into several countries. (Jer. viii. 7.) They know their appointed season; “but my people know not the judgment of the Lord;” [do] not discern the course or manner of God’s dealings, so as to embrace duty and avoid danger. It is called a fool’s property to want a heart, when he hath a price, that is, an opportunity, put into his “hand to get wisdom.” (Prov. xvii. 16.) And therefore the five virgins, even for this piece of folly, are called “foolish” even to a proverb; because they were not so wise as to know their opportunity. And let a man be never so prudent for the world, if he knoweth not the season of grace, he is a mere scripture-fool, and will appear so to himself, and others too, to all eternity. And when he comes to die he shall be compelled to say, “Never was I wise, who was wise for every thing but to save my soul!”

Thirdly. *Opportunity urgeth us to the present improvement of it, because it facilitates and maketh easy every action and employment, making a work come off sweetly, smoothly, and with facility.*—It is as the laying of the knife upon the joint, when we would divide the bone. It is wind and tide to the oars of industry. It is as when blowing and rowing go together. God in an opportunity offereth to work with us. That which is done with another’s help is easily done when both parties join in the doing of it. Two men lifting at a burden make the lifting more easy. The less of opportunity in our transactions, always the more of difficulty. The top of time is flour; but the deeper you go, the further you depart from opportunity, there is the more of bran, the more of dregs. It was observed by Seneca in this very case, *Non tantum minimum in imo, sed pessimum*: “There is not only the least, but the worst, in the bottom of opportunity; and the best of opportunity is at the top.”

Fourthly. *Opportunity must presently be embraced, because it maketh every action look beautiful.*—It makes all our performances look with a lovely aspect, and with a grace. “God hath made every thing beautiful in its time,” or “in his time.” (Eccles. iii. 11.) “Fruit brought forth in season” is the pleasantest fruit. The wine of grapes gathered in their vintage and season,—how grateful and generous is it to the taste! But if the grapes be rotten, and hang *beyond their season*, their liquor loseth its gratefulness and delightfulness. Esau’s tears, after the season of giving the blessing was past, were nothing worth: they were as the juice of grapes that were rotten. “A word spoken in season” is a “word upon the wheel;” it cometh readily and acceptably unto the ear. To seek after God and the good of our souls in the season of grace,—O how lovely is it! When season is gone, our endeavours are unpleasant to God, as well as unprofitable unto us.

Fifthly. *Opportunity must be presently improved, because we are deeply accountable for every opportunity.*—Not only for the actions we do are we countable, but for the time which he had to do them in. Jezebel was plagued for her neglecting the time of repenting, in Rev. ii. 21: “I gave her space to repent; and she repented not.” For the neglecting youthful seasons the young man must “be brought into judgment.” (Eccles. xi. 9.) If you must give account for every idle word, surely for every idle sermon, for every idle sabbath, for every idle ordinance; I mean,

under which you have been idle. If for every idle word you speak, much more for every unprofitable sermon you make the minister preach.

Sixthly. *Opportunity must be presently improved : for the neglecting of opportunity destroys the most.*—All our salvation dependeth upon Christ, as to the *meriting* of it ; but it dependeth upon opportunity as to the *obtaining* of it. The neglecting of opportunity is the greatest destroyer in the world. It is not so much the being bad, as the delaying to be good, that undoeth the most. It was not riotousness, but sleepiness, that excluded the foolish virgins. “The misery of man is” therefore “great” upon the earth ; because he doth not understand judiciously his “time” required “to every purpose.” (Eccles. viii. 6.) It is not flat denial, but foolish delayings, that ruin Christians. All that the devil pretends to desire is your *now*, your present opportunity ; he will offer God thy *tomorrow*. He seemeth to be mannerly and modest in bringing men to damnation : *Da mihi quod nunc, et Deo futurum* : “Let me have but the present time, and give God all the future.” We miss of heaven by saying to God, as Felix did to Paul, “Go thy way for this time.” (Acts xxiv. 25.) Few deny, but most delay, to be saved ; and hereby Satan doeth his work both plausibly and effectually. Delays put the likeliest and the handsomest cheat in the world upon a sinner. Most are damned by delaying to be saved. And because every age hopes to live *that which is to come*, it liveth not *that which is now present*.

Seventhly. *Opportunity must be presently improved for the soul, because it is embraced, by all, in lowest concerns for the body.*—The husbandman, the merchant, the lawyer, the seaman,—they all mind their opportunity, their season. Yea, for the very cutting of trees we observe our times. Yea, the fittest seasons are embraced for sinful undertakings : the thief observeth the removal of the watch, the sleepiness of the inhabitant ; the harlot, like the owl, flieth abroad in the twilight ; yea, the devil makes use of the shortness of his time to increase his rage. And shall opportunities for our salvation be only neglected ? What, Christians, only fools for our souls ? I have read a story in an old author concerning a devout man, who, after the sun was some hours up, went to the chamber-door of an old bishop, and the bishop being asleep in his bed, the good man knocked at his door, using these words, “The sparrows are awaked and a-chirping ; and is it fit for bishops to be sleeping ?” And may not I rather say, The men of the world, persons of all employments and trades, yea, the sons of violence,—they embrace their season, they are up betimes ; and shall the people of God, shall professors then be asleep when these are awake and active ?

SECTION XII.

2. The season of grace is called “a day ;” and as it is here so called it eminently engageth us to the present improving of the season of grace, and that in two regards :—

(1.) *In regard of the nature of the season, it is here called “a day.”*

(2.) *In regard of those who are or should be workers in that day.*

(1.) **FIRST.** *In the regard of the nature of the season, it is called a day.*—And this urgeth us to the present improving of it : for,

First. It is a day, and it is but a day ; and that is but a short time.—

It is not called "a year, a month." It doth not last long. It is but for a while. Had Jonah prophesied to the Ninevites, that within forty years Nineveh should be destroyed; if the Ninevites had not derided him, yet it is very probable they would have delayed their repentance. But when he told them "yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown," this startled and quickened them unto a present repentance. Our season is here expressed by the term of "a day," one day. Yea, our day is but a short one. We have indeed a summer's day for clearness; but it is a winter's day for shortness. "While it is called to-day," saith the apostle, "exhort one another." (Heb. iii. 13.) We have not so much time that you should be prodigal of it. He that is profuse of a minute in this day, (poor prodigal!) spendeth above his estate. Time, in the whole compass of it, is but short; (1 Cor. vii. 29;) the time of particular persons is shorter; and the time of season and present opportunity is the shortest of all. Our precious season, our day,—it is but like the few sands in the little middle hole of the hour-glass. The sand in the upper glass is uncertain whether ever to run one sand more, or no; that is *the time to come*. That in the lower glass is as *the time spent and past*. But the few sands in the narrow middle hole are as the present season, and only ours. *Non tam liberale nobis dedit tempus natura, ut aliquid ex eo liceat perdere*, saith Seneca: "Nature hath not dealt so liberally with us, as that it doth allow us to mis-spend any of the little time it hath given us." We are prodigal of time, though covetous of a penny. We are more profuse of our time, *cujus unius honesta est avaritia*, "of which alone there is an honest covetousness." You may have many pieces of gold together in your hand; but you can have but one day of grace at once: it is but one day.

Secondly. *It is a day; and therefore that which cannot be recalled when it is spent and done.*—The loss of a day is an irrecoverable loss. Who can restore the loss of a day? *Nec cursum supprimit, nec revocat, tempus*: "Time doth neither suppress its course, nor recall it; neither doth it slack it, nor revoke it." As time stops not, so time returns not. If thy house be burnt, or thy goods stolen, or thy lands forfeited, friends can make a supply of those losses. But if all thy friends, nay, creatures in heaven and in earth, should conspire to make thee happy, they cannot, with all their combined industry and united forces, restore to thee one of those good hours in the day of grace that thou hast foolishly mis-spent. Esau lost his day, and he could not recall it with tears. The knocking of the foolish virgins could not break open the shut door of heaven. When thy sun is set, and thy day completely ended, thy sun will never rise more. I have heard of one that wantonly threw a jewel into the sea; and they say the jewel was brought to him in the belly of a fish that was served up to his table. I know not how true this is: but who or what shall ever bring back to thee the jewel of thy lost day? None shall ever bring back this jewel to thy table, if thou wilt throw it away by wantonness and negligence. God will not turn thy glass when it is once out. What the fall was to angels, that is death to man.

Thirdly. *It is a day; and this should put us upon the present improving of it; for it is a clear day, a lightsome day.*—"The Sun of righteousness" is risen. "The day-spring from on high hath visited" our

horizon with the light of the gospel. Now a lightsome, a sun-shiny day is to be regarded, improved, for the present. It is a dark day indeed, compared with heaven; but it is light, compared with the shadows of Judaism, or the fogs of Popery. Work, work! work apace, you that have the sun-shine of the gospel! I wish I could not say, "I see a cloud far bigger than a man's hand, and I hear a noise of much rain." Now you have sun-shine: cock your hay; shock your corn apace; wanton not away your summer, lest you beg in winter. God, by giving of you so fair a day, showeth not that your sun will always shine, but that now thou shouldest work. Slumber not away a sun-shiny day in harvest. The day, and such a day, is surely intended for working. "Man goeth forth to his work till the evening:" the night is for sleep; but the day, especially a sun-shiny day, a clear day, for working.

Fourthly. *It is a day; and therefore puts us upon the present improving of it; because it is a wasting day, a day that passeth and runneth apace.*—We usually say, "The day is far spent." The day goeth, whether you sit still or no. The sun runs, yea, like a giant, like a strong man, though thou creepest like a cripple. Though the passenger sleeps in the ship, the ship carrieth him apace towards his haven. Thou art idle; but time hurrieth thee to the grave. Time is winged: thy hour-glass needs no jogging: there is no stopping the stream of time. It was a notable speech of one once to a person that was in a fit of anger: "Sir," saith he, *Domine, sol ad occasum*: "The sun is going down." This is my caution to every lazy Christian: if the sun must not go down upon *your wrath*, surely it must much less go down upon *your loitering*. If the sun in the heavens must not go down upon your wrath, the sun of your life should not be suffered to go down upon your laziness. *Cum celeritate temporis utendi velocitate certandum est*, saith Seneca: "Our swiftness in work must contend with the swiftness of the time in which we work." Thou dost not see thy time *going*; but shortly thou wilt see it *gone*; like the insensible moving hand of a dial, which, though thou dost not see it moving, yet thou seest it hath moved.

Fifthly. *It is a day; and therefore puts us upon the present improving of it.*—For it is possible yet, that *in this thy day*, thy work may be done, before sun-set, if thou beest speedy. Despair not; for then industry will be frozen. The bridge of mercy is not yet drawn: there is yet a possibility for thee to get over to a blessed eternity. It is bad to say, "It is too soon," though most have said so too often; but it is worse to say, "It is too late." I confess, thy morning was thy golden hour, and had been far the fittest for thy employment; but the evening time is better than no time. I dare not write **DESPAIR** upon any man's forehead. If God will help us, much work may be done in a little time; but yet God must step-in with a miracle almost, if thou shouldest run back the mis-spent age of forty or fifty years in an hour or two: surely, you must fly rather than run.

Sixthly. *It is a day, and, for aught you know, it may be your last day; and therefore improve that present day.*—You have no assurance of another: from the upper glass of the hour-glass, thou canst not be assured of one sand more. Often say thou, therefore, to the day wherein thou livest, "Art thou my last, or may I look for another?" Though thou

art young, it may prove thy last day : death taketh us not by seniority. The new pitcher may be as easily broken as the old. And, which is a more severe consideration, the Spirit of God possibly may never knock at the door of thy heart again, never strive *in* thee, never strive *with* thee ! Death may knock next ; and, remember, he will easily break into thy body, though thy minister could not get into thy soul. Death never cometh *without a warrant* ; yet it often comes *without a warning*. We do not live *by patent*, but we live *at pleasure*. How knowest thou that the candle of the ministry shall shine one sabbath longer ? The message shall always live, but the messenger is always dying. The clods of the earth may soon stop that mouth that so frequently and unfruitfully hath given thee the word of life. He, the light now of his place and of his people, may be blown out by violence, as well as burnt out by death. Thou canst not say but God may soon make that ear of thine deaf that now thou stoppest : God may soon blind those eyes which now thou shuttest. It is a *peradventure* whether God will ever give repentance or no. God hath made many promises *to* repentance ; but he hath made none *of* repentance. If to-day thou sayest *thou wilt not*, to-morrow thou mayest say *thou canst not*, pray. It is just with God, that he who while he liveth forgets God, when he dies should forget himself. I have heard of a profane miscreant, that being put upon speedy repentance and turning to God, scoffingly answered : “ If I do but say three words when I come to die,” (*Miserere mei, Domine* : “ Lord, have mercy upon me !”) “ I am sure to be happy.” This miserable wretch shortly after, falling from his horse, and receiving thereby a deadly wound, had indeed time to speak three words, as the relation informed me ; but those three words were these : *Diabolus capiat omnia*, “ Let the devil take all.” Thou dost not know what thy last words shall be : the very motions of thy tongue and of thy heart are all in the hands of that God whose grace thou hast despised.

Seventhly. *It is a day : that requireth present improvement ; because it is followed with a night, a night that is dark as pitch.*—“ The night cometh wherein no man can work.” So saith our Lord, John ix. 4. There is neither work nor invention in the grave. In the dark thou mayest see to bewail thy not working in the light ; but in the dark there is no working. Sorrow then will not help thee, couldest thou make hell to swim with thy tears. Thy tears are only of worth in time. Put not off your working, till the time wherein you must leave work. It is perfect madness, not to think of beginning to work till the time of working is at an end. *Nemo, fuitis vundinis, exercet mercaturam* : “ What man, after the fair, will go then to buy and sell ? There is no negotiation, but in the time of the fair,” the season of grace. The spiritual manna of grace is only to be gathered in the six days of thy life. The time after this is a time of rest, wherein there is no more work to be done to procure salvation. If this be the day of thy death, to-morrow cannot be the day of thy repentance. It is miserable to have that to do for lack of time, which is to do for loss of time.

Thus I have shown you, how we are put upon present improving the season of grace, as it is here termed a day, or in respect of the nature of the season.

SECTION XIII.

(2.) SECONDLY. *In regard of the workers in this day, we are urged from hence to a present improving of the season of grace.*

First. *How little have we wrought in this day of grace!*—What a pitiful account (and yet an account must be given) of this day can we give unto God, of thousands of sabbaths, and repetitions of ordinances, and opportunities of life, that we have enjoyed! You have been perhaps long in the world and under the means of grace; but can you say, you have lived long? It is one thing for passengers in a ship to be a great while tossed in the sea, and another thing for them to sail a great way. You have been long in the world, tossed up and down with many temptations, and impetuous corruptions, and violent affections; but which of you have sailed much, or gone forward in your course to heaven with any considerable progress? Little is to be seen in the copies of your lives beside blots and empty spaces. Much paper hath been spent with wide lines. Had you not need now, toward the end of the side, to write the closer, to “redeem the time,” as the apostle expresseth it? (Eph. v. 16.) We should redeem our time out of the hands of those that have taken it captive, out of the clutches of those vain employments that have so often taken it captive. Now, in all redemptions there is the laying down a price for the party that is redeemed. But what is that price you are to lay down for your time, when it is to be redeemed? I will tell you: *Id quod perdis pretium est*, saith Augustine: “That which you lose” in your worldly employments, in your idle recreations, in your vain visits, in your exorbitant eatings and drinkings, that time that you take from these to give to God and your souls, “that is the price that you lay down” for the redeeming of seasons for your souls. It is miserable for our work to be undone for want of time when we are dying, when it is undone for the loss of time while we are living.

Secondly. *How great is the woe of those whose day is done, and yet their work is not done, but still to do!*—You have seen their end upon earth; but you have not heard their cries and their self-bewailings in hell. How many have been cut off before your eyes, who ceased to be before they began to live! Improve examples, lest you become examples. Your schooling is cheap, when it is at the cost of another. Let the lashes of divine severity that have fallen upon others, quicken thee in thy spiritual pace and travelling towards heaven. Why should God stay for you rather than for them? Thou canst not mis-spend thy time at so cheap a rate, as they did by whom God hath warned thee. Hell is not so full of souls as it is of delayed purposes. What would not lost souls give for a crumb of that time of which now in this world they make orts? * If the foresight of their tears for neglecting the day of grace fetched tears from Christ, (Luke xix. 41, 42,) how great shall the feeling be of the eternal effects of their inexcusable folly! How exuberant, but unfruitful, shall be the flood of their own tears for their former slothfulness, never enough to be bewailed, because never at all to be repaired! Surely a small loss could not draw tears from so great a person as the Son of God!

* R: fuse, or fragments.—EDIT.

Thirdly. *Many, by beginning betimes in the morning of their day, have done more work than thou, a delayer, canst now accomplish.*—They should provoke thee to a holy jealousy. They, setting forth for heaven in the morning, have travelled further in that morning than thou hast done in that long summer's day wherein thou hast been slothful. What a shame is it that some should be green-headed saints, and thou a grey-headed sinner? Julius Cæsar, as Suetonius reports, reading that Alexander had conquered the world in his youthful age, professed his shame that he, who was so much older than Alexander, should come so far behind him in obtaining victorious glory: this fired Cæsar with noble emulation to exceed him. Envy is ever bad; but emulation may be holy. Envy is a trouble for another's eminency; but emulation is a troubling of ourselves for not arriving to another's commendable excellency.

Fourthly. *In this thy day of working, and in thy working, thou art but a slow worker.*—Thou hast a great journey, and art a slow, sluggish passenger. Thou hast a load of corruption that presseth thee down. Thou sailest against the tide of corrupt nature. Thou hast an encumbering body of death, that will hinder thee from doing even what thou art a-doing; a long garment that hindereth and hampereth thee, when thou endeavourest to be speediest in thy course for heaven. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit; so that thou canst not do the things that thou wouldest." (Gal. v. 17.) There are many thieves in thy candle of time, which daily waste it; sleeping, eating, drinking, visiting, being visited, and a great many other worldly avocations, employments, enjoyments, that must be regarded together with thy soul. These are as so many places, at which we must call-in, as we are in our journey; and the dispatching of every errand in every one of these places will take us up much time. Hard it is for our hearts to be preserved from too deep an engagement in them; the world more frequently bewitching from God, than admonishing us of God; too often proving as bird-lime to the wings of our affections to hinder their flight heavenward. And many also are the retarding discouragements that all the people of God must meet withal in their course to heaven: as they have the tide of nature against them, so they have the wind of opposition from men and devils against them. Earliness and eagerness in the ways of God are the two things principally opposed by *the god* and *men of this world*. It is the galloping passenger at whom the dogs of the town most bark, and whom they most pursue. All that travel heavenward have the wind in their faces, though the happiness of their journey's end infinitely more than countervails for the greatest both industry and opposition.

Fifthly. *The longer thou delayest thy working in this day, the harder it will be for thee to begin.*—Sin is as deceitful to detain, as it is to draw. Every moment thou delayest to leave it, it tieth a knot on the cord wherewith it holdeth thee, making thereby thy freedom from it the more difficult. Lust and delay know no measure: and delay knows no measure, because lust knows none. The further you go on, the harder it is, and the more unwilling will you be to go back. The deeper the engagement, the more difficult is the retreat. By delay sin is the more

strengthened, the devil the more emboldened, and God the more provoked. That which in thee to-day is regardlessness, to-morrow may be unwillingness, and the next day obstinateness. *Dum consuetudini non resistitur, fit necessitas*: "Custom in sin will at length turn into necessity of sinning." *Venenata non patiuntur inducias*: "Antidotes against poisons must not be delayed." The longer a bad tenant forbears payment of his rent, the harder it will be for him to get it up. A nail driven into wood is with more difficulty drawn out when it is driven up to the head, than when with a few blows it is weakly fastened. The longer the wood lieth soaking in the water, with the greater difficulty doth it burn. The longer Satan's possession hath been, the more difficult will his ejection be. Every delay makes thy return to God look more like to an impossibility. Goliath must be smitten in the forehead, and Satan opposed betimes. Old age is *ætas indisciplinabilis*, "an indisciplinable age." Childhood is the age of learning. Old age is the time wherein men desire more to teach than be taught.

Sixthly. *As to thy working in this day; the sooner thou beginnest and the faster thou workest in this day of grace, the sweeter will thy sleep be in the evening, when thy day is consummate.*—After thou viewest thy early and thy earnest working for God, in the end of thy life, thou wilt have a sabbath in thy thoughts. None ever repented them either of early beginnings, or constant proceedings, in the ways of holiness. It was a humbling to Paul, that Christ appeared last of all to him; (1 Cor. xv. 8;) and that "Andronicus and Junia were in Christ before him;" that they were his seniors in the faith. (Rom. xvi. 7.) How sweet is it in age to feed upon the comforts of a well-spent youth and manhood! Never put that off to the last that cannot be done too soon. Early beginnings in godliness make an easy death-bed; and acquaintance with God betimes makes thee the more confident to go to him. God will never forget thee in *the end*, who rememberest him in *the beginning*, of thy life. Should you at length look heavenward, yet how will it grieve you that you did not make a more early beginning! The better thou art when thou diest, the more it will trouble thee thou wert holy so late. Early holiness spareth abundance of death-bed trouble. That man who puts off his repentance to his end, dies at the best with little comfort. *Incertus moritur, qui in fine pœnitet*: "If he should repent at last, yet he dies uncertainly," as to future happiness. He rarely knows whither he is going. It is comfortable for a man to be able to say to God when he dies, as one did, *Pœnitentiam egi quando peccare potui*: "Lord, thou knowest, I then repented of sin, when I had strength, and time, and ability, and opportunities to sin."

Thus I have shown you the strength and the force of the first argument, whereby the apostle engageth us to a present improvement of the season of grace; as it is, for its fitness for working, the time, the day.

SECTION XIV. FORCE OF THE SECOND ARGUMENT.

(II.) Briefly now, in the SECOND place, to show you the force of the second argument, taken from *the advantageousness of improving the present season of grace to the worker and improver of it*; it being here called,

1. *The time of acceptance :*

2. *The day of salvation.* The first shows the freeness ; the second the fulness. The first shows how cheap the commodity is, that we get by working, and the second how rich it is. The first shows how costless it is, the second how costly it is ; both contained in this golden expression, "The accepted time," and then "the day of salvation."

1. *It is "the accepted time."*—That is, the time of God's free grace and good-will in accepting of sinners ; not so much the accepting of time, as the accepting of sinners in such a time. This expression of God's free good-will in accepting sinners in the season of grace doth notably instruct us to a present improvement of it ; and that especially for these two reasons,

(1.) Because, it being "the accepted time," or time of free grace and good-will, we must for the present improve it *upon the account of gratitude and ingenuity.*

(2.) Because, it being "the accepted time," and the day of God's free grace in accepting of sinners, we must presently improve it *upon the account of real self-interest.*

(1.) *Upon the account of ingenuous gratitude.*—The terms upon which reconciliation is bestowed are all free ; it is free not only in respect of the persons upon whom it is bestowed, who are weak, and unworthy, and polluted, and opposite to God ; but in respect of the terms on which it is bestowed. The terms are free terms. The old friendship between God and man was kept up *by doing* ; but restoring to friendship, or reconciliation, is bestowed *in the way of believing.* We do not buy the favour of God. It is not afforded *secundum pretium*, but *secundum pactum* : "It is not by laying down any valuable consideration for the meriting and purchasing of it ; but it is in the way of doing that which God appoints," and by his free grace is pleased to condescend unto, and that is humble and thankful acceptance. If we buy it, it is with another's purse. Jesus Christ only bought it. We part with nothing for the favour of God, but what is our bane if we keep it. We may keep all but what will kill and damn us. Nor doth our obedience to God, when we accept of reconciliation with him through Christ, make our reconciliation less free ; for the pardon of a traitor may be free, though it be under the condition of future loyalty. Now, then, what is more suitable to ingenuous gratitude, than to embrace the season of God's bestowing so free a favour ? Surely, the least we can do is, to accept of that God that accepteth of us, to accept of him that is so full of loveliness and rewards, we having nothing to bring him but deformity and beggary ! Not to accept his favour presently, argues the height of proud ingratitude ; concerning which God may say, "Have I this for my good-will, for my free grace ? What, not so much as accept of my favour that shall cost thee nothing ? Surely, the least spark of holy ingenuity [ingenuousness] would prompt us to say, with him in a case of infinitely lower concernment, "Lord, 'we accept it always, with all thankfulness ;' what thou offerest freely I accept it readily." What beggar doth not accept of a free alms without delay or dispute ?

SECTION XV.

(2.) As the season of grace is the accepted time, or the time of God's free acceptance of sinners, *it engageth us to a present improvement of this season of grace upon the account of self-interest*: for the neglecting of free grace makes the divine vengeance,

First, *unavoidable*; and, Secondly, *insupportable*.

First. *Neglecting of free grace makes vengeance unavoidable*.—If grace be neglected, what shall save you? If grace shall not save thee, works cannot save thee. The neglecter of grace concludes himself under a necessity of damnation; he rendeth the book of mercy; he throweth away the remedy, the cordial that serveth for his reviving. He that accepts not of life and salvation by free gift, must have it by earning, must have it by working; and earn it we cannot. Thou canst not obtain reconciliation with God upon easier terms for thyself, than Christ obtained it for believers: and what terms were those, but even perfect, and to thee impossible, obedience? You cannot dig; perfect doing is impossible: you are lost, if ashamed to beg at the door of free grace for the dole of mercy.*

Secondly. *The neglecting of free grace makes divine vengeance insupportable*.—It discovereth the malignity of the heart against that which by free grace is bestowed; for if we cannot dislike the price, which is to bring "neither money nor price," you must then dislike the wares, which are heaven with holiness. And how great a scorn do we then put upon the Lord Jesus, the purchaser of free grace! It was Christ's payment that made all free to us. Who can excuse the contempt of such both love and cost at once? There is no liquor that scalds so tormentingly in hell, as the oil of mercy. Grace turned into fury is the most killing enemy. Freeness invites all worldly customers. Who loveth not costly things that cost him nothing? Who shunneth an interest in a thousand pounds a year, to be had for taking up at the court? And why alone, my brethren, should Jesus Christ want customers? Are there any commodities so rich as his? Are there any commodities to us so cheap as his? Why should they alone be slow that go to take the favour and love of God through him? especially considering, that they have paid so dear for "that which is not bread," yea, for that which is their bane. Free grace tendered and neglected is condemnation heightened. You cannot have the favour of God by doing; what, will you not have it for receiving neither? You will not then have it at all. It is that hell of hells, that free grace is despised, hath been neglected!

Thus much for the first branch of the second argument: the season of grace is a time of acceptance, and therefore in respect of that advantage it requires our present improving thereof.

SECTION XVI.

2. For the second branch of this second argument: *The season of grace is also called the day of salvation*.—But why doth this second

* In the first edition, the sentence is: "You cannot dig: by doing you are lost, if you are ashamed to beg at the door, or rather for the dole, of free grace in this thy day."—EDIT.

branch put us upon the present improving of the season of grace? For answer, take these considerations:—

(1.) *It is a day of salvation; and salvation is a work that must be regarded: it is a matter of absolute necessity.*—Other things are *may-be's*, at the best, matters of mere conveniency; but salvation is a business of peremptory and indispensable necessity. A fair day is convenient to ride in; but the journey itself being of life and death is absolutely necessary. You may be excused at the day of judgment for leaving any thing in the world undone beside the getting of salvation. You may be excused, if you never had time to get the riches or honours of the world, or great endowments or employments. But what shall excuse you, if you have not looked after eternal life? Can you say, “We had another employment more, or as, necessary?” Can you say, “We were taken up about something more needful, more useful?” No, you cannot. Now remember, that which must be done should be most done and first done. First attend [to] necessities, and then look after circumstantials: “first seek the kingdom of God.” Here it is no measuring cast whether you should obtain salvation: it is a *must be*. *Tempus perdimus dum aternitatem non quærimus*: “You lose all that time that is not spent in looking after a happy eternity.” First get bread for thy starving children; and then, if thou hast time, look after rattles for them. A work of necessity must not be put off to a time of uncertainty. If thou delayest, delay in looking after riches and honour, and the vanities of the world: O, but *now, now, now* pursue salvation! It is a *must-be*; and if the present time be gone, you may be undone for ever.

(2.) *Salvation is that which imports rest and satisfaction.*—Salvation! it is the soul's quietation and ease. Heaven is that centre of the soul: you are never at rest till you come there. Now the object of rest is speedily to be pursued. How doth every thing hasten to its rest, its centre! How doth the stone with eagerness hasten to the earth, when thrown from the top of a high steeple! How swiftly doth the fire fly upwards to its rest, to its centre! With what a rapid motion, with what a fierce career, do the rivers run into the sea! They are going to their place, the place of waters. Is heaven thy rest? Is heaven thy centre? Why is thy tendency to it so sluggish? You owe unto life eternal all those propensions and all those inclinations, wherewith all the things of the world are carried to the centres. The speed that the wicked make in getting to hell, proclaims that hell is their proper place and centre, though not for rest, but restlessness. Shall every thing hasten to rest, but thy soul? It was the speech of Naomi to her daughter: “My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee?” (Ruth iii. 1.) O that every one would say unto his soul, “My soul, shall I not look after rest for thee in the bosom of God, and the eternal fruition of himself?” The little infant that cries for sleep will rise up in judgment against a sinner that doth not look after the rest of his soul. That little infant that cries for sleep out-goeth thee in wisdom.

(3.) *It is a day of salvation; and the pursuing of salvation is opus grande, “a great work,” a vast employment.*—Many things are required

to accomplish it; many lusts to be subdued, many duties to be discharged, many temptations to be resisted, many relations to be filled. Now a great work must be begun betimes. If you had but a little to do in the day, you might lie in bed a great while in the morning. But you have a vast work to do; and therefore get up early. Some poor creatures will rise up early to washing; a pitiful work to the cleansing of thy soul; a far greater work surely than to wash clothes! If you had a thousand souls, they might all be employed for the obtaining of salvation. If every finger were a hand, they might all be employed in getting of salvation. He that hath many children to look after and a small estate, many to feed and clothe,—he saith, “I must rise early and sit up late.” None have so much business as a Christian. The work of Christianity is never at an end. The art of religion is never learned. There is still an *et cetera*; still something remaining to be done. Blessed Paul thought himself far from perfection: “I do not look upon myself as having attained.” The best have much more to be done, than they have already done. I have read of a famous limner, who when he had wrought his picture in the best and most curious manner, would never write at the bottom, *Feci*, but, *Faciebam*; “I did it,” not, “I have done it;” because he judged he had never wrought any picture so well, but he might work it better, and add something more of art to it. A Christian’s art is never complete while he liveth in this world, nor ever did a saint think himself a complete artist. How exceeding large are the commands of God! How little is our most, and how bad is our best, compared with the rule!

(4.) *This delaying in the pursuit of salvation is a delaying to be freed from the greatest evil.*—What is that? The wrath of God, guilt, damnation, hell. Delaying to be freed from extreme miseries is con-
futed by constant experience. What condemned malefactor will delay to get free from his chains, from his dungeon, from the sentence of death? What tormented person upon the rack will say, “I must consider before I accept of ease?” And when ease and riddance from the rack are offered, if instantly he will accept thereof, will say, “I will consider of it, I will give answer of it hereafter?” If a dust fly into the eye, thou hastest to get it out: and wilt thou not haste to ease thy soul? Who ever deliberated, whether he would come out of the fire or no? It is more mad to deliberate whether thou wilt be saved or no, and get out of the state of damnation. Here is no place for deliberation; it is no measuring cast.

(5.) *Salvation,—it is our own concern; it is opus proprium, “our own business,” it is not another’s.*—It may be, a slothful apprentice will be backward to rise in the morning, when he is to do his master’s business; but when he sets-up for himself, and is to gather an estate for himself, he will go about his business speedily. Salvation is a work for yourselves; the gain thereof is your own gain. Whatever you get here goes into your own purse. Here, “if you are wise, you are wise for yourselves.” (Prov. ix. 12.) O that we had more true self-love! The common self-love in the world is employed about our bodily self, the shell, the sheath of the true self, which is the body. Few men truly love their true self:

it is a common proverb, "Interest will not lie;" yet the soul that delays salvation,—his interest lies; he walks contrary to it, and neglects that wherein all his blessedness doth consist, makes orts* of his own salvation.

(6.) *It is a day of salvation; and salvation recompenses for all earliness and earnestness.*—Salvation maketh amends for all the sufferings and services of time. How poor, how short and slight, is our work, compared with our wages! If there could be any trouble in heaven, it would be this,—that we have laboured for it no more and no sooner upon earth. Thou hast no more to live-on to eternity, than what thou layest up here. As our obedience is small, compared with our *rule prescribed*; so it is very small compared with our *recompence promised*. Though nothing can recompense for the neglect of salvation; yet salvation can recompense for the neglecting of all other things. Nor only doth it recompense for our neglecting of all things, but for our being neglected of all persons, and for all our reproaches for our early pursuing it: all which will easily be confuted with this answer: It is better to be reproached and derided for being too speedy, than damned for being too slow, in entering into heaven's way. It is more easy to bear the scorns of the world, than the scourges of conscience. I conclude: We can never regard salvation too soon; for we can never either enjoy it, or think we can enjoy it, too long.

* See note in page 681.—EDIT.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

