

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. II.

CONTAINING THE CONCLUSION OF THE SUPPLEMENT TO THE
MORNING EXERCISE AT CRIPPLEGATE.

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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 cursus eat, et propitius sibi sit, et sua lætus aspiciat; 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 toward 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.

(CONCLUSION.)

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A SUPPLEMENT
TO
THE MORNING EXERCISE.
(CONTINUED.)

SERMON V.

BY THE REV. EDWARD VEAL, B.D.,

SENIOR FELLOW OF TRINITY-COLLEGE, DUBLIN.

WHAT SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE THEY OUGHT TO SEEK FOR THAT
DESIRE TO BE SAVED, AND BY WHAT MEANS THEY MAY
ATTAIN IT.

*For it is a people of no understanding : therefore he that made them will
not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will show them no
favour.—Isaiah xxvii. 11.*

In this and the precedent verse we have a *dreadful denunciation of judgment* upon either the oppressors and enemies of God's people, or upon obstinate and incorrigible sinners among God's people ; together with *the reason of that denunciation*, or cause of that judgment threatened.

I. *The judgment denounced is,*

1. *Great desolation as to their outward state.* (Verse 10, and former part of verse 11.)

2. *Utter destruction, final ruin.*—"He that made them will not have mercy on them." (Verse 11.) It is the highest severity, where no Saviour is to be found, where "judgment" is executed "without mercy:" (James ii. 13 :) and this is amplified by the consideration,

(1.) *Partly of the inflicter of the judgment.*—It is God himself, "He that made them." They were not to fall into the hands merely of men like themselves, their fellow-creatures ; but "into the hands of the living God." (Heb. x. 31.)

(2.) *Partly of kindness formerly received from him.*—"He that made them ; He that formed them ;" that is, He that created them, gave them their being, (if we understand it of the enemies of God's people,) or He that not only made them as his creatures, but formed them to be his servants, formed them into a state and into a church, (if we understand

the words as spoken of God's people themselves,) and so had given them their being, not only a natural one, but a civil and ecclesiastical one: He that had formerly done so much for them, vouchsafed them such choice mercies, yet now would renounce all kindness to them, "have no mercy on them, show them no favour."

II. *The cause of the judgment to be inflicted.*—"It is a people of no understanding," לֹא עִם־בִּינָה, "It is not a people of understanding;" as much as to say, "It is not a people of any understanding;" or, as we read it, "It is a people of no understanding;" it is a sottish, ignorant people, such as take no notice of any thing, know not God, observe not his works, understand not their duty. Other sins, no doubt, they were chargeable with; but the Lord takes notice especially of their ignorance, and it is for that they are here threatened. Hence we take notice, that,

OBSERVATION I. *Ignorance of God, his truths or ways, is no security against his judgments.*—"Pour out thy fury upon the Heathen that know thee not," &c. (Jer. x. 25.)

OBSERV. II. *The knowledge of the will and ways of God is necessary for them that expect to find favour with God.*—They that desire God would save them, must labour to know him. That some knowledge of the will of God is needful to all those that expect to be saved, (for we set aside the case of infants,) I suppose is clear in itself. But when you hear this doctrine, you may be ready to ask, *What is that knowledge which they who would be saved should seek after?* And when that is answered, you may again inquire, *What means you are to use for the obtaining of it.* And so the case to be spoken to is this, *What spiritual knowledge, or knowledge of the things of God, (for other knowledge at present we take no notice of, however commendable in itself, or secondarily useful to higher ends,) they ought to seek for, who desire to be saved; and how such knowledge may be attained.*

THE CASE.

Of this case there be two parts. I shall speak distinctly to each: and so first show *what is that knowledge we are to seek after;* and then give *directions for the attaining of it.*

I. *What knowledge they are to labour after, who expect to be saved.*—In answer to which I must premise something by way of distinction, something by way of concession, and then add other things by way of proposition for the fuller determining the case in hand.

I. **DISTINCTION** (1.) We must distinguish between that knowledge which is simply and absolutely necessary to the salvation of all men; so that no man can be saved without it, but whosoever falls short of it must certainly perish for lack of it; such knowledge the want of which is always actually damning, and that even in them that have not the means of obtaining it, as Heathens who have no revealed light; for in them it is the occasion of their perishing: as a man's not knowing the only medicine in the world that could cure him when sick, would be the occasion of his death, and so would be his undoing, though not his fault.

DISTINC. (2.) And that knowledge, which, though it be not simply necessary to salvation, *necessitate medii*, ["through necessity of the

means,"] yet is secondarily necessary to be in those that would be saved, or necessary in some respects and upon some suppositions; as,—

(i.) On the account of the circumstances wherein men are, and the capacity they are in for the gaining of knowledge, whereby they are brought under the obligation of a command to labour after it; and so they have the necessity of duty to seek that knowledge, though that knowledge itself have not the necessity of a mean.

(ii.) Necessary, though not absolutely to the very *esse*, or "being," of a Christian and his salvation, yet to his *bene esse*, his "well-being" as a Christian, his better and more comfortable management of the affairs of his salvation. The want of this knowledge, if it be not always actually damning, as when God giveth men repentance; yet proceeding in those that are in condition to obtain it not from want of means or capacity, but from gross negligence, or contempt of the truth, it must needs be in itself damnable.

2. BY WAY OF CONCESSION. It is a difficult thing to determine just how much knowledge is absolutely necessary to salvation, to define the *minimum quod sic* * (so to speak) of divine knowledge, so as to say that whoever falls one degree short of it cannot be saved. That there be certain prime fundamental doctrines of religion, which are so necessary to salvation that men cannot in an ordinary way be saved without the knowledge of them, is, I think, confessed by the generality of those that pretend to Christian religion, or to any hopes of salvation. But which in particular those fundamentals are, and how many, is not alike clear. A controversy it is which I shall not need to touch upon, not only as being a tender point, but as not being concerned in my present design, as will further appear in the following propositions. It will little avail us in our present circumstances, amidst such plentiful means of knowledge, and so much truth as is revealed to us, to know just how much knowledge is absolutely needful to salvation; as suppose,—how much would have been sufficient for the salvation of a believing Jew before our Saviour's coming in the flesh;—or what knowledge might be sufficient for the salvation of, and consistent with truth of grace in, some poor Christian in the darker corners of the earth, as among the Indians, or Abyssinians. But our business is to see what knowledge we ourselves, considering our condition, (dismissing others in differing circumstances,) are to labour after in obedience to God's command, and for our more holy and comfortable walking with God, and carrying on the affairs of our salvation. And therefore, though my text lead me directly enough to the former, yet I shall confine myself to the latter, making it my business rather to press men to labour after much knowledge, than trouble myself or others with unedifying distinctions about or uncertain catalogues of fundamentals, or truths absolutely needful to be known; which I suppose few in the world be so magisterial as peremptorily to define. And, for my part, if I could certainly determine which those truths are, I should take heed to whom I told them, lest I should encourage men, slothful enough of themselves, to rest satisfied in a lesser measure of spiritual knowledge, when a greater might be gotten.

* "The smallest portion which is thus necessary."—EDIT.

3. These things premised, I come to answer the case in some PROPOSITIONS ; of which the first shall be this :—

PROPOSITION 1. That, supposing it were certainly defined, how much knowledge, and the knowledge of what truths, were sufficient to salvation ; yet *no man, that is in a capacity of getting more knowledge, ought to acquiesce in just so much.*—“ Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required.” (Luke xii. 48.) For the more full understanding of this proposition, take these following rules :—

RULE 1. *By how much the better means men have for the getting of knowledge, so much the more they ought to know.*—There is more knowledge required in them that have more means, than in them that have less. Every servant’s improvement is to be according to his talent ; and the gain of *one* is not sufficient for him that hath received *five*, nor the gain of *five* for him that hath received *ten*. According to the means [which] men have, so their duty is to be judged of, and their accounts will be expected. I suppose it can scarce be doubted but that,

(1.) *They that live under the gospel since Christ’s coming in the flesh, ought to abound more in spiritual knowledge than they that lived before his coming.*—And that for this very reason, because the means of knowledge have been greater since his coming than before it, not only as to the extensiveness of them in the publication of the truth in those places where it was not heard before, but as to the efficacy of the means themselves, and the more clear revelation of the will of God in some things, which were formerly, but less clearly, revealed. The pouring out of the Spirit was not only for the further spreading of the truth, but for the more plain and full manifestation of it. The great mysteries of religion, which under the Old-Testament dispensation were more obscure, (as being wrapped up in types and figures, which were, though a shadowing of them out, yet a kind of covering to them,) are now under the gospel more clearly set forth without those veils, in their native lustre and brightness. What was then future, is now come to pass. What then was prophecy, is now become history : so that there being, as to the means, more advantages for our knowledge than there was for theirs who lived in those ages, we are engaged to labour after more. And, excepting prophecies and immediate revelations, I see no reason why vulgar saints may not now know more than patriarchs did then ; and if they may, I dare say they should.

(2.) *They that live in the Reformed world, in this age of light, should abound more in knowledge, than they that lived before the Reformation in the darkness of popery.*—A little knowledge might have gone further then than a great deal more now. The means of knowledge are now much greater, than three or four hundred years ago they were. There is not only more human learning abroad in the world, than then there was ; but the original languages in which the Scriptures were written, are better known. The word is more soundly and powerfully preached, controversies in religion are more thoroughly discussed, more good books are written, more cases stated, more errors detected, and, in a word, many truths (which though always to be found in scripture, yet were almost lost in the world in the ignorance of those ages) are anew discovered.

(3.) *They who live under better means of instruction now, should ordi-*

narly be more knowing than such as have not the like means.—They that have the word preached to them more plainly, powerfully, frequently, should know more than they who sit under an idle, ignorant ministry; they that may hear a sermon every day, if they will, than they that can scarce hear one sermon in many months. And so should they likewise, who live in religious families, where God is daily worshipped, children and servants daily instructed, know more than they who live under profane or ignorant masters or parents.

RULE II. *They that have more time for the gaining of knowledge, are concerned to know more than they that have less time.*—Not only by how much the longer men enjoy such means, the more they should know; (and more than such as have lived a less season under them: upon which account the apostle blames the Hebrews, because, “when for the time they ought to be teachers, they had need that one should again teach them which were the first principles of the oracles of God;” Heb. v. 12; and, in 2 Tim. iii. 7, he speaks of some that were “ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth;”) but likewise, by how much more leisure men have for studying the scriptures, and attending on the means of grace, while they do enjoy them, so much the more proportionably they should know. They that have plentiful estates, easy employments, few avocations, may and therefore ought to seek after a greater measure of knowledge than they who, by reason of more burdensome callings, a lower condition in the world, and the necessity of providing for themselves and their families, are not in a capacity of spending so much time in attending on those means whereby a greater proportion of knowledge might be gained. They that have their time lying on their hands, and know not how to fill it up, but with inquiring after news and fashions, studying pleasures and diversions, how much knowledge might they arrive unto, if they spent but half that time in studying the truth, and inquiring after the things of God!

RULE III. *By how much the better capacities men have for the receiving of knowledge, so much the more, cæteris paribus, they are to know.*—They that have riper parts, quicker apprehensions, stronger memories, a deeper reach, should know more than they that are naturally more weak, and less capable of learning. Although I suppose there be none that have the use of their reason, but they are capable of understanding so much of the things of God as is absolutely needful to salvation, and may be sufficient for the salvation of them, in their circumstances; yet there is a vast difference between the abilities of several persons: and therefore men are not to take their measures for their inquiries after spiritual things merely by the necessariness of the things themselves, but likewise by the abilities [which] God hath given them. So that, upon the whole, the better means and advantages in any kind men have for the gaining of knowledge, so much the more knowledge is required to be in them.

RULE IV. *By how much the more use men have for their knowledge, and by how much the more good they may do with it, so much the more knowledge will be expected of them.*—That knowledge which might do well in a private Christian, yet is not ordinarily sufficient for a minister. That which would be much in the one, might be but little in the other. And that which might do well in a child, would not be sufficient in a parent

or master of a family. They that are to instruct others in the knowledge of God, ought themselves to be more abounding in it.

PROP. II. *Men should in their seeking knowledge first study those truths which are most confessedly necessary to salvation, and before those which are apparently less necessary.*—And so principles before controversies, things essential before such as are only circumstantial. And, indeed, by how much the nearer any truth is to the foundation, so much the more they should labour after the knowledge of it : as, for instance, men should acquaint themselves,

1. *With the being and attributes of God* :—As the foundation of all service yielded to him, and expectations of rewards from him. (Psalm xiv. 4.) He that knows not God to be holy, how can he know that God requires holiness ? (Heb. xi. 6.) And then how can he himself be holy ? How can a man trust God, if he know him not to be wise, powerful, faithful ? or love him, if he know him not to be good ? or fear him, if he know him not to be just ? And it will easily follow, that he who knows not God, as he can never worship him while he lives, so he can never expect that he should save him when he dies.

2. *With the doctrine of the Trinity*.—Three persons in the Godhead, the Father, Son, and Spirit ; each person having his proper part in the salvation of sinners : the Father as the original and fountain of it, (John vi. 57,) the Son as the manager, (John xiv. 16,) and the Holy Ghost as the applier. (John xv. 26.)

3. *With their own natural state and condition*.—Their being by nature in a state of sin and misery ; as having sinned against this holy, righteous, powerful God, and thereby exposed themselves to his wrath and curse. (Eph. ii. 1—3.) They that would be delivered from the curse, must know themselves to be obnoxious to it. They that would not perish, must know themselves to be in danger of it. Men are not likely to enjoy God's favour, unless they know that they have lost it. (John xvi. 8.)

4. *With the doctrine of a Redeemer*.—And that both,

(1.) *As to the person ; who he is*.—That the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, is the Redeemer of sinners, (Matt. xx. 28,) and the only one ; (Acts iv. 12 ;) that God hath not left all mankind to perish in their sin and misery, but hath, out of his abundant mercy and free grace, found out a ransom for them, a Saviour to deliver them ; and that the Lord Jesus Christ is he, and none beside him : so that it is in vain to seek for salvation in any else, seeing he alone hath the words of eternal life. (John vi. 68.) He that knows nothing of a Saviour, knows nothing savingly ; nor can any man partake of redemption without some knowledge of the Redeemer. They can never come to God that know not by whom to come.

(2.) *And as to the way of his working that redemption*.

(i.) That he did, in order to the salvation of sinners, take the nature of man upon him ; (John i. 14 ; iii. 13 ;) was both God and man in one person, and still continues so to be. He had those natures united in himself, which he was to reconcile to each other.

(ii.) That not only he was *able* as being God, *fit* as being man, to satisfy divine justice for the injury sin had done it ; (Rom. iii. 24—26 ;) but

that by his obedience and death he did it to the full. (Rom. v. 10.) He that knows God to be infinitely just, and himself to be a sinner, had need know something of a sacrifice for sin, or he can never have any well-grounded hopes of escaping the hands of such a God. (1 Tim. ii. 6.)

(iii.) That Christ, being raised from the dead, and ascended into heaven, sits at the Father's right hand, and, by his intercession there, is now making application of the redemption [which] he wrought on earth. (Rom. viii. 34; Mark xvi. 19.) "He ever liveth to make intercession." (Heb. vii. 25.) Men would be in an ill condition, if redemption were wrought, and there were none to apply it; if Christ had died for them, and left them to intercede for themselves.

5. *Men should acquaint themselves with the doctrine of justification by Christ.*—That sinners must be justified by the righteousness of the Lord Jesus imputed to them, if ever they be justified at all. He is "the Lord their righteousness." (Jer. xxiii. 6.) They are "accepted in the Beloved;" (Eph. i. 6;) "found in Christ, not having their own righteousness, &c., but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." (Phil. iii. 9.) All their own righteousness inherent in them, and wrought by them, even after regeneration, and by the help of the Spirit of grace, being finite, imperfect, short of the law, and due to it.

6. *With the way of their being made partakers of this righteousness.*—That it should be received by faith alone, as the means God hath appointed for their being interested in it. "God hath set forth Christ to be a propitiation through faith in his blood;" (Rom. iii. 25;) and therefore they that are justified, must be "justified by faith." (Rom. v. 1.) All the holiness any saint could ever arrive unto in this life, would never entitle him to Christ's righteousness, if faith were wanting.

7. *With the nature, properties, and fruit of that faith.*—That it must be an effectual, lively faith; (James ii. 17;) not only an assent of their minds to the truth of the scripture, but the consent of their hearts to the terms of the covenant; a receiving whole Christ, with an eye to all the good things he offers there, and for all those holy ends and purposes for which he is propounded to them. (John i. 12.) In a word: they are to look upon faith as the principle of their obedience and walking with God, according to that rule of righteousness [which] God hath given them.

8. *With the doctrine of sanctification.*—That God is wont to fit and frame men's hearts at first to the duties of obedience [which] he requires of them, by the work of the Spirit upon their hearts, changing them, regenerating them, and causing "old things" to pass away, and "all things" in them to "become new;" (2 Cor. v. 17;) and further to increase that fitness for and readiness to spiritual things, by his guiding, assisting, and quickening them in those holy ways into which he hath brought them, and by those ordinary means (the word and ordinances) which he hath appointed for the working and improving of their graces.

9. *With the reward God promiseth to their faith and obedience.*—In the blessedness of their souls at the end of this life, and of their whole man after the resurrection, in their being for "ever with the Lord;" (1 Thess. iv. 17;) when the unbelief and disobedience of others will be

punished with everlasting torments inflicted by him. In a word: whoever "cometh to God must believe," not only "that he is," but "that he is the rewarder of those that diligently seek him." (Heb. xi. 6.) Men ought in the beginning of religion to look to the end of it; have some sight of the goal, when they enter upon their race; know their wages, when they set about their work. The doctrine of rewards furnisheth men with the greatest incentives to holiness. Ignorance or unbelief of future recompence must needs make men negligent of present service. Take away the knowledge of heaven and hell, and ye take away all care and thoughts of religion.

These things I lay not down as an enumeration of fundamentals, or complete scheme of religion; it is sufficient for my purpose that they are some of the most necessary and substantial truths, wherein the generality of Christians are concerned; which they are therefore, especially and in the first place, to acquaint themselves with, and before those things which are less necessary to salvation, as being further from the foundation. And, indeed, this is the very method of nature: men usually seek those things first which are most necessary, and other things afterward; they first lay their foundation, and then set up their superstructures. Principles must be known before conclusions can be drawn from them. Those doctrines of religion must be first known from whence others are to be deduced, and without the knowledge of which others can be but confusedly and darkly known. This seems to have been the apostle's method, Heb. vi. 1; where he speaks of some truths, (which they are in particular, I stand not to dispute,) which were "principles," and first learned; others, as conducing to the "perfection" of the saints, unto the knowledge of which he would therefore have them go on. "He that knows not those things which must be known, knows nothing yet to any purpose."*

PROP. III. *Men should labour after such a knowledge of the truth, as that they may be able to give "a reason of the hope that is in them."* (1 Peter iii. 15.)—To show on what ground they stand, what is the foundation of their faith and hope; that the religion they profess is indeed the true religion; and that the doctrines they own are really founded upon the scripture of truth; (Dan. viii. 16; xii. 4;)+ and, in a word, they should be able to give a reason why they believe rather thus than otherwise, and hold such doctrines rather than the contrary. They should labour after such a grounded knowledge of the truths of the gospel, as that they may be able to say of them, as well as of the duties of it, that they are "fully persuaded in their own minds," (Rom. xiv. 5,) and do not take-up things upon trust, or believe the truth upon the credit of others. It is a shame for professors to be merely believers upon tradition, to see with other men's eyes, or be like the heathen idols, that "have eyes and see not." They are men, and have reasonable powers; and ought to make use of them even in the things of God, so far as they are revealed and subjected to their judgment. The spiritual man "judgeth all things, even the deep things of God." (1 Cor. ii. 10, 15.) Though they are to submit their understandings to God, yet they are not

* Ὁ μὴ εἰδὼς ἄπειρ εἰδέναι ἤσκη, οὐδὲν οἶδε.—CHRYSOSTOMUS.
here is Dan. xvi. 2; which is manifestly erroneous.—EDIT.

† The reference

to resign them to men. They that will judge for themselves in the things of this life, should no less do it in the things of the other. That man that will not trust another with his estate or purse, should much less do it with his conscience and salvation.

PROP. IV. *Men should especially give themselves to the study, and labour after the knowledge, of the present truths.* (2 Peter i. 12.)—I mean those truths which are the special truths of the times, and ages, and places in which men live. We shall find, if we observe it, that God who delivers his mind and will to men *πολυμερως*, “by several parts and degrees,” doth in some ages make more clear discoveries of some truths, in others of other truths; and though the whole will of God, and all those truths which we are any way concerned to know in order to our salvation, be sufficiently laid down in the scripture; yet there is sometimes more knowledge of one truth stirring in the world, sometimes of some other. Sometimes God calls his servants more especially to preach-up, and bear witness to, such or such a particular truth, which either was less known and understood before, or is more opposed at present. Immediately after Christ’s resurrection, the great truth of that time, the then “present truth,” was, that “Jesus was the Christ,” that very Messiah whom God had promised to the fathers, and [whom] the Jews themselves did expect. This the apostles did first of all preach, confirming it especially by his resurrection from the dead. Thus, “God hath made that same Jesus both Lord and Christ.” (Acts ii. 36.) “Him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour.” (Acts v. 31.) So Philip to the eunuch. (Acts viii. 35.) And Paul, so soon as he was converted, and sent to preach, presently declares that Jesus was the “very Christ;” (Acts ix. 22;) and Peter to Cornelius, (Acts x. 42, 43;) and Apollos in Achaia. (Acts xviii. 28.) And afterwards we find that the Jews and Judaizing Christians, pertinaciously adhering to the law of Moses, gave occasion to the more full preaching of the doctrine of free grace and justification by Christ alone, and the abolishing of the legal ceremonies, as we may see in the epistle to the Romans, Galatians, Colossians, and Hebrews. And after, toward the end of the apostles’ times, the heresy of Cerinthus gave occasion to the more full vindicating [of] the doctrine of Christ’s Godhead, as we see in the gospel of John. And, some hundreds of years after that, the Pelagian heresy gave occasion for the renewed publication of the doctrine of free grace by Austin, Prosper, and others.* And in the beginning of the Reformation of religion, in the last age, the first truths God called those worthies that then lived to the preaching of, were those especially which concern the Lord Jesus Christ in his prophetic and priestly offices, such as the authority, perfection, &c., of the scripture, and the sufficiency of Christ’s satisfaction and intercession. And, to come nearer to ourselves, one great truth which hath been more clearly known and published in our age is, the doctrine of Christ’s kingly office and legislative power in relation to his church, in opposition to the usurpations and impositions of men. Now then we say, that men are called, at such times, especially to study such truths; because God doth then give them the best means and advantages for the knowing of them; or they may then do him best service in maintaining them and bearing testimony to them, when the devil and his instruments do most

* HIERONYMUS in *Catalogo Scriptorum Ecclesiast.*

oppose them. It is a shame for professors not to see, when the world is so full of light; not to have the knowledge of those truths in the minds, the talk of which is in every man's mouth.

PROP. v. *Men should labour for such knowledge as may defend them from the errors of the times and places in which they live.*—This I add to second the former proposition, from whence it follows. Thus Paul labours to establish the saints, to whom he writes, chiefly the churches before-mentioned, against the then prevailing errors of those, whether Jews or false brethren among themselves, who endeavoured to bring-in the ceremonial law upon the professors of the gospel; and therefore bids the Galatians “stand fast in their liberty,” &c. (Gal. v. 1.) Doctrinal error tends to the corruption of worship. And the apostle John, in his epistles, gives caution against those seducing spirits and antichrists, that were even then among the churches. (1 John iv. 1—8.) We find by experience, that as there be some doctrines more especially known and published in their respective times and ages, so likewise several ages and many times places have their peculiar errors, either new ones first forged or old ones new burnished. The devil makes it his business, and even sets his wits upon the tenters, to furnish the world with variety of lies, suitable to the various humours and interests of men: and when one error is detected, begins to smell rank, and go out of date, through the power and prevalency of the truth, he carefully provides another to succeed it; and if a new one be not at hand, as if his invention failed him, he many times conjures up some old dead one, and makes it walk about in a new dress, and pass for some new or newly-revived truth, when, indeed, it is but the apparition of a long-since buried error. As merchants are wont to observe what commodities please most in such and such places, and at such and such times, and accordingly take care to supply the markets; so the devil looks what wares will vend best in such a country, at such a season, what will be most grateful to the lusts and interests of men, and then will be sure to supply them with those most which he sees take most. Diseases have their times and seasons, and are then most dangerous when they prevail most, and spread farthest. Errors have their times and seasons too, (there is an “hour” of these as well as other temptations, Rev. iii. 10,) when they are most infectious and dangerous; and therefore, as, when diseases are epidemical, every one almost will be taking antidotes, so, when errors are epidemical, it is the wisdom of every Christian to fence himself against them. And though we do not say, that every private believer is bound to be a school-divine, to be exact in all the niceties and controversies which may arise about matters of religion; (a man may be saved that never read Aquinas nor Scotus;) yet, sure, every one that is capable of it should labour so to understand the doctrine of religion, as to be able to know what is truth, and what is error; and to be so established in the belief of the truth, as that, though he cannot answer all the quirks and captions of a wrangling sophister, yet he may see a reason (as before) for what he believes, and for his firmly adhering to it. As if a subtle disputer should bring an argument to prove that the sun is not up at noon-day, though a man were not able presently to discover the fallacy, yet he would not lightly believe a thing so contrary to his very sense. It is good, I am sure, for Christians to

be so established against reigning errors, as that though an angel from heaven should labour to propagate them, yet to be pertinacious and graciously obstinate in rejecting them.

PROP. VI. *Men should seek especially for such knowledge, and study such truths, as have the greatest influence upon practice.*—And so may make them most useful in their places, and may further them most in the universal exercise of powerful godliness. Indeed the whole doctrine of the gospel is called “the truth which is according to godliness.” (1 Tim. vi. 3; Titus i. 1.) There is no one truth revealed by God to us, but may have its use in our conversations, and influence on our practice, but yet some truths more directly and immediately than others; and such as those we should especially study. We should labour to know not only what we must believe, but what we must do; not only what thoughts we are to have of God, but what affections towards him; that so not only our minds may be established, but our conversations rightly ordered.* We must not rest in the bare knowledge even of the greatest truths; nor labour to know, merely that we may know or that we may talk, but that we may act suitably to our knowledge. *Discamus non opinioni sed vitæ*: “We should learn, not merely that we may be able to maintain an opinion, but that we may know how to guide our lives and govern our actions.” The knowledge of the most excellent truths may be unprofitable to us, if we know not our duty too. It is best for us to know those things which may make us best; such as may further our graces rather than heighten our reputation, make us rather useful than famous, and serviceable to God rather than admired by men. It is a vain thing to know what to hold, and not know what to do; to understand controversy, and be ignorant of duties. *Ne quære, saith one, in scientiâ oblectamentum animæ, sed remedium*: “We should not labour to know these things merely which may delight our minds, but such as may heal our souls;” to know our distemper and our medicines, our wanderings and our way, our defects and our duties; and not only those things, neither, which concern us as Christians in the general, but in such ranks, orders, and relations as God hath set us in: and so that which is every man’s special duty, should be every man’s special study. As ministers should know how to behave themselves “in the house of God,” (1 Tim. iii. 15,) so should magistrates, how they are to behave themselves in the commonwealth, masters in their families, husbands toward their wives, wives toward their husbands, both toward their children, and they again toward their parents. In a word: men are to study those things which are most profitable; such as will better their condition, and not only improve their understanding. You know, a sick man had rather have a good medicine than fine clothes; he minds more the easing of his pain, than the dressing-up of his body. That which will make you spruce, will not always make you well. Fine trappings will not cure a lame horse, nor the painting of the face heal the diseases of the spleen or liver. That knowledge which adorns your mind, yet may not always mend your

* *Χρη δε ου μονον ειδεσθαι τι προσωκει περι του Θεου δοξαζειν, αλλα και κατα τους εκεινους πολετευεσθαι νομους.*—THEODORETUS. “It is necessary for us not only to know the sentiments which we ought to entertain concerning God, but also to conduct ourselves according to those laws which he has enjoined.”—EDIT.

heart. To conclude this: men must labour to know "the truth as it is in Jesus;" (Eph. iv. 21;) so to know as to feel it, and be under the influence of it; or to know the truth to that end for which Christ teacheth it; that is, that men may be better, as well as wiser, more ready to do their Master's will, as well as know it. Men know the truth as they should, and as Christ would have them, when their knowledge puts them upon the great duties of mortification and sanctification: "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and put on the new man." (Eph. iv. 22—24.)

PROP. VII. *Every man should labour to get as much spiritual knowledge as he can, by the means of the knowledge he hath [gotten], and as he can get without the neglect of other necessary duties.*—It is not for nothing that the apostle prays for the Colossians, "that they might be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;" (Col. i. 9;) and exhorts the Corinthians, though "in malice" they were "children," yet "in understanding to be men." (1 Cor. xiv. 20.) If Christians ought to grow in every grace, why not in knowledge, which is itself a grace, and helpful to all other graces? We are to be accountable for the means [which] we have of getting our knowledge increased, and therefore, sure, are to labour that we may get it increased. And though a less measure of knowledge might serve turn to bring a man to heaven, yet, 1. It is contrary to that spirit of ingenuity, that largeness of heart towards the things of God, which is supposed to be in believers, to stint themselves in the knowledge of the truth, and to be content to know only just so much as may carry them to heaven. That were to study spiritual truths, not so much because they love them, as because they cannot want them; and so not of choice but necessity. 2. Even where a less measure of knowledge might save a man, yet a greater should be endeavoured after; because it might be otherwise so useful: for,

(1.) *It might make his work more easy.*—Clearness of knowledge takes off much from the difficulty of duty. The better a man sees his work, the more easily he may do it. The most skilful artist may fumble when he works by a dim light. *That man is like to go on most readily in his way who not only knows the right one, but the wrong ones too, those turnings and by-paths which might mislead him; and, seeing the monuments of others' mistakes, may be warned by their wanderings.*

(2.) *More knowledge might make his way more pleasant.*—The more delectable objects a man hath to entertain his eyes, the more delight he may take in travelling; when night-journeys, as they have more of danger, so have less of pleasure. A clear sight of spiritual things may help a Christian in his way, not only as a direction, but as a delight.

(3.) *It might make himself more useful, more helpful to others.*—Though less knowledge might suffice us for ourselves as to our *general* duties, yet more will make us helpful to others, and enable us better for the performance of *relative* duties.* The more knowledge we have, the

* *Nec in hoc tantum te accerso ut proficias, sed ut prosis.*—SENECÆ *Epist.* "I send for you, not only that you make proficiency yourself, but that your knowledge may be profitable to others."—EDIT.

more we may communicate. Those that understand most themselves, may best instruct and direct others. They that are well skilled in their own duties, are most fit to teach others theirs: "Filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another." (Rom. xv. 14.)

And thus we see, in these propositions, what knowledge we are to labour after in order to salvation. Only I add two cautions against two ordinary vices, which men are very liable to in their inquiring after knowledge:—

CAUTION 1. *Take heed of curiosity, which is the itch of the mind.*—

It is not a kindly appetite, but a fond longing, or an ambitious, vain affectation of knowing those things which we are least concerned, or not at all concerned, to know, and which, if known, would do us little good. It is a lust; and therefore not to be indulged in ourselves, but mortified. It appears,

1. *In making inquiries into those things which God hath not revealed.*—

"The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed unto us and to our children," &c. (Deut. xxix. 29.) This curiosity our Saviour checks in his disciples: "Wilt thou," say they, "at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts i. 6.) Our Saviour replies: "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power." God hath revealed enough to us in his word for our use and furtherance in faith and holiness; and to desire to know more, is to desire to be wiser than God would have us. We must not pry into those things which it is only God's prerogative to know. The angels themselves know not some things, and we should be content, as well as they, not to be omniscient.* It is dangerous peeping into God's ark: you know who smarted for it. (1 Sam. vi. 19.) If knowing what God hath revealed do not save us, I am sure searching into what he hath not revealed will not. God hath told us so much of his mind in the word, as may take up our whole man in the study of it; and we cannot busy ourselves in inquiring into his secrets without neglecting the study of those things which are revealed, and are most useful for us.

2. *Curiosity appears in inquiring into the reason of God's will.*—If rulers in the world will not have their laws disputed; if *Volumus et jubemus* † be their style; and though they do not give the reason of their commands, yet they count their commands reason enough for their subjects' obedience; sure, we should allow God as much as we do his creatures. We should reckon God's will is never unreasonable. His commands are as wise as [they are] holy; and if He hath not revealed to us the reason of his will, it is because he would exercise our humility, and have us own his sovereignty in our obedience, and acknowledge him to be the Supreme Judge, as well as Author, of our duty.

3. *The same we may say of men's inquiring into those things which con-*

* *Nihil igitur certius est quàm alterum angelicæ cognitionis genus, quo post Deum, et quæ in Deo sunt, reliqua intelligunt, non ita perfectum esse, quin in hoc cognitionis genere quotidie proficere possint, novi semper aliquid discendo ac novo modo cognoscendo.*—ZANCHIUS *De Dei Operibus*. "Angels know God and his inherent perfections; but it is most certain, that, beyond this, their second kind of knowledge, by which they understand other things, is not so perfect as to preclude the possibility of their daily proficiency in it, by their continually learning something new, and knowing it after a new manner."—EDIT. † "It is our will and pleasure, and we hereby command."—EDIT.

cern others rather than themselves.—When men are learned in other men's duties, but ignorant of their own; can spy "motes" in other men's eyes, and not see "beams" in their own; (Matt. vii. 3;) can criticize upon little faults in their neighbours, and yet overlook much greater in themselves.

4. *Men are curious, when they study things rather difficult and nice, than useful and edifying; such as are more fine than substantial, new or rare, instead of great and weighty.*—Such seem to have been *κενοφωνιαί*, those "vain babblings,"* against which the apostle cautions Timothy, (1 Tim. vi. 20,) great words of little signification, a noise of something worth just nothing: and such those "questions and strifes of words" about which some doted. (Verse 4.) The vainest, emptiest persons amongst us are not more fantastical in their garb or diet, than some others are in their studies and inquiries. They are for that knowledge which is most fashionable. Their very minds must be in the mode. Their notions must be the neatest and newest. They disdain what is common, though never so profitable. What they like must have newness and variety, or else abstruseness and difficulty, to commend it; something, be sure, beside usefulness. They have sick, queasy stomachs, distempered palates; cannot eat their spiritual food unless it be minced, nor relish the most wholesome truths unless set off with a philosophical gust. In a word: they are rather for odd things than good; such as may gratify their wanton fancies, rather than bring any saving benefit to their souls.

CAUTION II. *Take heed of pride, which, we may say, is a worm very apt to breed out of the tree of knowledge.*—"Knowledge puffeth up." (1 Cor. viii. 1.) It is a hard thing for men to know much, and not know that they do so. Many that have great knowledge of other things, yet know too little of themselves, of their own infirmities, of their own follies, and those things in themselves which might keep them humble. This brings me to the second part of the case propounded; namely,

II. *What means we should use for the obtaining such knowledge as is needful for us.*

1. *Here the first thing we should direct to is humility.*—He that would be truly wise must labour to be humble. He that would ever arrive at any height of knowledge, let him get low thoughts of himself.† Pride, and a conceit of a man's own knowledge, is one of the greatest hindrances of his knowing: "If any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know." (1 Cor. viii. 2.) "There is more hope of a fool than a man" that is "wise in his own conceit." (Prov. xxvi. 12.) Humility makes men teachable; sense of ignorance makes them willing to learn; ‡ and God promiseth to teach them. "The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way." (Psalm xxv. 9.)

2. *We must deny ourselves in our carnal reasonings, subject our under-*

* *Ματαιολογίαί* apud Theophylactum. "Theophylact renders the word *frivolous verbiage, silly talk.*"—EDIT. † *Homo sapiens est quamdiu quærit sapientiam; ubi autem se putat ad ejus culmen pervenisse, desipit.* Sap. Arab. apud DRUSIUM. Drusius gives this

as an Arabian proverb: "A man is wise so long as he searches after wisdom; but when once he vainly imagines himself to have gained its summit, he is actually running down the declivity of folly."—EDIT. ‡ *Ἀρχὴ γνῶσεως τῆς ἀγνοίας ἢ γνῶσις.*—THEODORETUS *De curandis Græcorum Affectionibus.* "True wisdom has its commencement in the consciousness which a man feels of his own ignorance."—EDIT.

standings to the authority of God, leave something for faith to do,* and not think to be such absolute masters of all divine mysteries, as to receive no more of them than our own reason can comprehend, when it is the highest reason in the world to believe whatever God speaks, though our reason cannot reach it.—Our wisdom in spiritual things must begin in our being fools in the world's account. "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise." (1 Cor. iii. 18.) Though we must use our reason in the search of spiritual truths, yet not reason only: many things purely are the objects of our faith, and of them reason is no competent judge.†

3. *We must be diligent in the reading and studying of the scriptures, as the repository, the fountain of spiritual knowledge.*—"Search the scriptures," saith our Saviour Christ. (John v. 39.) "O how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day," saith David. (Psalm cxix. 97.) "Give attendance to reading," saith Paul. (1 Tim. iv. 13.) I have heard of a cardinal, that either acknowledged or boasted, that he never read the Bible but once in his life. Reading other books, sententiaries, and canonists, might make him wise enough to be a cardinal, but not wise enough to be a Christian. Where should we seek for knowledge but in the fountain of knowledge? How should we better understand God's law, than by receiving it at his mouth? (Job xxii. 22.)

4. *Yet we are not so confined to the scripture alone, as that we may not make use of other good books, the labours of such faithful servants of God as have best studied his word, and best understood his mind.*—How doth this age and place abound with good and sound and profitable books! And well it were, that it abounded with none else: however, we have our choice, and that too in our own tongue. Private Christians need not the learned languages to make them learned in the scriptures. Expositors we have, to help us to understand the meaning of the word; practical writers and casuists, to quicken our affections, and apply truths to our consciences; controversial ones, to discover errors, and arm us against them; and systematical and catechetical ones, to methodize our knowledge, and order what we know, and show the connexion of spiritual truths among themselves, and their dependence upon each other, that so we may have a map of the way to heaven before us, a full prospect of our whole religion at one view. And were it not well if some would spare a little time from their shop-books for such books as these? if when they cannot be getting money, they would get knowledge? when they cannot be dealing with good customers, they would deal with good authors, such as might make them more wise, when not more rich?

5. *We should be diligent and regular in attending on the word preached.*—As it is the duty of ministers to "be instant, and preach the word in season, out of season;" (2 Tim. iv. 2;) so it is the duty of people

* Ἡγεσθω ἡ πίστις, καὶ ἕτεραί ἡ γνώσις.—*Idem*. "Let faith but precede as the commander, and knowledge will submissively follow in its train."—EDIT. † Ὅταν δὲ καὶ σοὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα ζητοῦντι ἀπορία τις ἐκείν, ἀποφῆρε τοῖς ζητούμενοις ἰστομῆν λύσιν, πίστιν.—JUSTINUS MARTYR in *Exposit. Fidei*. "But, when you are likewise engaged in such inquiries as these, should any doubt arise within your breast, bring forth and allege this faith, as an expeditious and effectual solution of those things which are called in question."—EDIT. Τῷ *disputa, ego credo*. "You may dispute, while I believe."—EDIT.

to hear it. Reading the scriptures and good books is not sufficient for those that are in a capacity to hear. The preaching of the word is the great ordinance appointed by God, for the instruction, edification, and conversion of those that are to be saved; and it is that which God doth usually accompany with most life and power. As it is in other cases, so it is for the most part here: you are commonly more affected with what you hear men speak, than with what they write. Ministers may write or print their sermons, but not their affections; not that power and spirit of the word which themselves feel, and you perceive in them. You are most likely to be warmed by the word, when you hear it coming out of a hot heart. When you see your teachers affected with the truths they deliver, and speaking like those that feel what they speak, you are most likely to be affected too. Though, indeed, the great reason of hearing is, because it is God's ordinance; and He hath not only taken care that the word should be written, that so all may read it, but hath appointed officers, too, purposely to preach it, that so all may hear it.

But, withal, be sure to be regular in your hearing. "Take heed *how* you hear;" (Luke viii. 18;) and "take heed *what* you hear;" (Mark iv. 24;) and from both will follow, that you must take heed *whom* you hear too. Hear those that are most knowing, and best able to instruct you; those that are most sound, and least likely to mislead you. Do not choose to put your souls under the conduct of blind guides. Seek for the law at *their* mouths *whose* lips do best preserve knowledge. (Mal. ii. 7.) And when you have found such, keep close to them. Settle yourselves under the guidance of some faithful pastor, upon whose ministry you may ordinarily attend. That running to and from, which is usual among us, is quite another than what Daniel speaks of, and, I am sure, is not the way to increase knowledge. (Dan. xii. 4.) Rolling stones gather no moss. Such rovers seldom hit upon the right way. Such wandering stars may be soonest bemisted. They that thus run from one minister to another, may soon run from one opinion to another, and from one error to another. I dare safely say, you may get more sound knowledge of the things of God by constant attendance upon the ministry of *one* of less abilities, than by rambling up and down to hear *many*, though of the greatest gifts. It is a great advantage to your gaining knowledge to hear a minister's whole discourse, and be able to take up the full design of his work, and not merely to hear *in transitu*, ["in passing,"] by snatches, to pick up here a notion and there a notion, or hear one man's doctrine in the morning, and another's application in the afternoon. It is no wonder if men that run to and fro, be "tossed to and fro." They that are so light of hearing may easily be "carried about with every wind of doctrine;" (Eph. iv. 14;) the word of Christ seldom dwells in such vagabond hearers.

6. *Pray earnestly for knowledge.*—We are to cry after wisdom, and "lift up our voice for understanding." (Prov. ii. 3.) "Ask it of God." (James i. 5.) Especially address we ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ as "the Apostle and High Priest of our profession;" (Heb. iii. 1;) the great Prophet and Doctor of the church; "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;" (Col. ii. 3;) "who of God is made unto us wisdom;" (1 Cor. i. 30;) who liveth "in the bosom of

the Father," and declares him to us. (John i. 18.) He that was his Father's Counsellor in making his laws, and his Messenger in publishing them, is best able to make us understand them. As it is our duty to hear him, so it is his business to instruct us: only, beside the use of all other means, we must look to him for his teaching. He only can make all means effectual; and none learn as they should, but they that learn of him. There is no learning like that we get upon our knees: that is the only saving knowledge which we fetch from heaven. If you put your children to a trade, you will have them learn it of such as are most skilful in it. If you would yourselves understand any art well, you seek for the best artist you can to instruct you. Who can teach you all things like Him that knows all things? Who can enlighten you like Him who is "the true Light?" (John i. 9.) Men, when they teach their scholars, oftentimes complain of their dulness; they can but propound their notions to them, not beget an understanding in them.* And ministers complain of their hearers, as the apostle did of the Hebrews, that they are "dull of hearing." (Heb. v. 11.) They spend their strength upon them; but cannot work the truth into them. But the Lord Jesus Christ is such a Teacher as is beyond all teachers. He can give "the Spirit of wisdom and revelation," as it is called, (Eph. i. 17,) and promiseth to do it. (John xiv. 26.) He can give inward light as well as outward, eyes as well as objects, understandings to receive the truth, as well as truths to employ your understandings.

7. *Take fit time for the getting knowledge.*—You have a great deal to learn; you had need be early up, that you may have the most time and the best time. Begin young, before your minds be corrupted with errors, or possessed with prejudices; before you have learned too much of those things which must be unlearned, if ever you would learn the things of God. It is a great advantage in this case, when men are instructed in the scriptures from their childhood; when the first thing they learn is, to know God and Christ and themselves, their own condition, their duty, their hopes. (2 Tim. iii. 15.) The time of youth is the best time for getting knowledge: as of other things, so of spiritual things. There is then least within to keep knowledge out; and what is then received usually enters most deeply, and proves to be most durable.† The more pliable the wax is, the deeper the impression; and the deeper the impression is, the more likely it is to last. "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." (Prov. xxii. 6.) It is, I am sure, a preposterous

* *Culpa docentis*

*Scilicet arguitur, quod levē in parte mamillæ
Nil salit Arcadico juveni.*—JUVENALIS *Sat.* vii. 158—160.

"The pay, indeed! what learnt he since he came?"

The boy's an ass! the master bears the blame!

The hapless master has not done his part,

Because the blockhead wants a pulse at heart!"—OWEN'S Translation.

† *Qui legem dicit in pueritā similis est ei qui scribit in chartā novā; qui in senectute, similis est ei qui scribit in chartā veterē.*—R. ELEAZ. *apud* DRUSIUM. Drusius, in his Hebrew Proverbs, gives this as the saying of Rabbi Eleazer: "He who learns the law in his youth, resembles him that writes easily on new and pliable parchment; but he who begins to learn it in his old age, is like a man that tries to write on old and shrivelled parchment."—EDDT.

course, to learn other things before you learn what is most necessary ; to get a trade before you have a religion ; to learn to know the world before you know God.

8. If you say, this concerns your children, rather than yourselves, I add, *Be much in teaching others the things of God.*—That is the way to learn them more fully yourselves. The communicating your knowledge is the way to increase it. You will get more than you give ; and while you impart it, you will best retain it. While you instruct others, God will instruct you ; and you may come to see more in his truths when you teach them [to] others, than ever you did when you learned them first yourselves : not that every professor of the gospel is to be a public preacher of the gospel ; private persons are not to invade an office to which God never called them. But yet private Christians may be a kind of private teachers ; *they* may read the scriptures in their houses, *who* yet may not take upon them to explain it in the public ; *they* may catechise, and, as Abraham, teach their “children and their households” to know “the way of the Lord,” (Gen. xviii. 19,) *who* are not to instruct congregations ; *they* may exhort one another, and admonish one another, and teach one another, in godly discourse and conference, communicating each other’s experiences, and solving each other’s doubts, *who* yet are not to usurp a work into their hands, for which Christ hath appointed a particular office in his church.

9. *Be sure to practise what you know, and live up to what you have learned.*—Doing duty is the way to gain knowledge. Ordinarily, the more holy you are, the more really wise you are, or are likely to be. The better your hearts are, the clearer your heads will be, as to the knowledge of those spiritual things you are most concerned to know. You will most easily learn to know what you love most to do. Though the receiving [of] the truths of God be the immediate office of the understanding, yet the affections, where they are right, will help the understanding in its work. The purifying of the heart will rid it of those lusts which are wont to steam and vapour up into the head, and darken the eyes of the mind, and hinder it from a right receiving of spiritual truths.* Where sanctification is promoted in heart and life, knowledge will certainly be increased too. They that exercise themselves unto godliness, and thereby show their love to God’s law, shall not want for the knowledge of it. They that love his ways shall not want for a guide. “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him ; and he will show them his covenant.” (Psalm xxv. 14.) “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God,” &c. (John vii. 17.)

USES.

USE 1. This doctrine INFORMS us, 1. *How miserable they are that are without knowledge.*—Poor, ignorant, blind sinners, that know nothing of God and Christ, and the mysteries of the gospel, and the way of duty ! but especially they that enjoy the means of knowledge, and are in a capacity of obtaining it ! Woe be to them that are ignorant in an age of knowledge, blind in a land of light, see so little even in “a valley of

* *Cupiditas hostis intelligentiæ.* “Lust and cupidity are enemies to the understanding.”
—EDIT.

vision ;" that are ignorant in England, ignorant in London ; that are ignorant because they will be ignorant, are in the dark because they love darkness ! We may even wonder at many, what shift they make to maintain their ignorance when so much knowledge is abroad ; but that they draw the curtains and close their eyes, and wink away the light, and, instead of looking for saving knowledge, they hope to be excused by their ignorance ! What, though such as are under an invincible ignorance of revealed truths may not be damned for not believing what they have not heard, or for not doing what they have not known ? they are miserable enough in not knowing what might save them, as well as in their not practising the little they do know ; which, though it be not sufficient to make them happy, yet is sufficient to make them inexcusable. And what is this to those that are so deeply ignorant under the means of knowledge ? Who is there among us, but might come to know so much as is needful to his salvation ? Who is there but might hear good ministers, or hath some good relations, or might converse with some good people, or read some good book ? Who is there but hath, or may have, a Bible, and a Catechism ? And so long as men have the Bible in their hands, they can never be excused if they perish in their ignorance. So long as Christ is the Prophet of his church, and promiseth his Spirit to them that ask him, and offereth so freely to instruct them ; the case of those that are among and converse with God's people, and yet remain ignorant, must needs be desperate. Is it so great a matter to hear the word, to read the scriptures, and to pray to God for an understanding of them ? Who will pity a man that perisheth for thirst, and yet sits by a fountain ? or that starves for hunger, and yet may come every day to a full granary ?

2. *How foolish are they that cry down knowledge, and consequently cry up ignorance !*—Make that the mother of devotion, which is indeed the parent of irreligion ! as if *they* were like to do most *who* know least, as if *they* were the best servants *who* were least acquainted with their master's will ; or might be "wise to salvation," and yet ignorant of the truth ! Others there are too, who, under the name of "head-knowledge," do upon the matter cry down all knowledge, at least which themselves have not reached, and care not for seeking after. Because some men have only a notional knowledge, floating in their heads, these persons are ready to condemn all knowledge under that notion. They have got a fine word by the end, and are resolved to make much of it. A form of speech they have taken up, as a way of excusing their own sloth and ignorance, by declaiming against those that are better taught. Heart-knowledge without head-knowledge is nonsense in divinity as well as reason : it is but fire without light, and so at the best but that which the apostle ascribes to the Jews,—“a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.” (Rom. x. 2.)

3. *How wicked are they, how great is their sin, that keep others from knowledge !*—Some there be that would persuade men from labouring after it ; tell them, “Private persons need not be so knowing ; they may be saved with less learning, and less teaching ; a little knowledge will carry them to heaven, if they do but live honestly and do their duty.” And is it possible for a man to live honestly without knowledge, or do his duty

without understanding his duty? or, I add, to believe as he should, without knowing what to believe? Can you be religious by instinct? or do the will of God by guess, though you never inquire after it? Why do they not as well tell men, that they may be rich enough, if they do but keep to their shops, and sell their goods, though they do not understand their trade? or that they may maintain their health, if they do but eat and drink, though they cannot distinguish between meat and poison? Others there be, who, if they cannot persuade men against knowledge, will do their best to hinder them from the means of obtaining it. Such are the popish clergy, that keep the people from reading the scriptures; would have God's revealed will kept secret, or known to none but *themselves, who* never intend to do it; at least, no more of it known than pleaseth holy church; that is, no more than is for the interest of the Pope's pride, and the priests' paunches. Knowledge hath already done them no small mischief; and how can *that* choose but be too much light *which* endangers the ruin of their kingdom of darkness? Thus, those scribes, or Jewish lawyers, "took away the key of knowledge: they entered not in themselves" into the kingdom of heaven, "and them that were entering-in they hindered:" (Luke xi. 52:) and the Jews forbade the apostles to preach "to the Gentiles, that they might be saved." (1 Thess. ii. 16.) And how great a sin is it to grudge others the grace of Christ, and the kingdom of God! to drive a design for the damnation of souls! It is a wretched thing for men to build their greatness upon the ruin of others, and rather to let thousands of souls be damned, than their stakes should not be saved. Doubtless, if they considered how little comfort they are like to have in hell, in the society of those [whom] they have brought thither, they would at least be content to perish alone.

USE II. *What a REPROOF is here for ignorant souls!*—They that are ignorant, not because they want the means of knowledge; but either because they hate it, or because they are too busy, or too lazy, or too proud to learn! I would bespeak such but even in their own language: "Why should you be wiser than your forefathers, and wiser than your teachers?" They that lived before you or I were born, were fond of the truth, studied the scriptures, inquired into God's will, made his law their "meditation," their "delight," their "counsellor:" so did David; (Psalm cxix. 24, 97;) such an one was Daniel; (ix. 2;) and such were other prophets; (1 Peter i. 11, 12;) and such were the apostles: it was their glory to have the mind of Christ; (1 Cor. ii. 16;) and such were the primitive Christians: the Bereans were commended for searching the scriptures; (Acts xvii. 11;) and such [were] the martyrs: they would have made much of any single leaf of the Bible. And why then should you be wiser than they? Why should you think to be saved without knowledge, when they could not? Have you found out any newer, or nearer, or better way to heaven, than they knew of? Will God be more favourable to you than to them? Will he dispense with your ignorance, and would not with theirs? And so, "Why must you needs be wiser than your teachers?" They are fain to study the scriptures, and labour to know the will of God, and spend their time and strength in the search of truth, and count it their wisdom so to do, both that they may "save themselves and them that hear them;" and what need they go so far

about, if there were a shorter cut to heaven? What need they seek so much knowledge, if less would serve their turn? What need they weaken their bodies, and waste their spirits, and shorten their days, that they may teach you the good knowledge of the Lord, and instruct you in the things that concern your peace, if you may be saved without knowing them? If ignorance were so innocent a thing as many think it, ministers might save their breath and strength for better purposes, than the teaching of those that have no need of it. Is it not a great shame, that there is so much ignorance among those that profess to be enlightened? Alas! how few be there that can give any tolerable account of the principles they own! How few have any faith but an implicit one! any religion but a traditional one! How many are themselves guilty of what they blame in Papists! Papists believe as the church (suppose a council or Pope) believes; and how Protestants believe as their parents, or as their ministers, believe! and so "their faith stands not in the power of God," but "in the wisdom," or gifts, or parts, or authority, "of men." (1 Cor. ii. 5.)

USE III. FOR EXHORTATION. *Let every one that desires to be saved, labour after such knowledge in spiritual things as is most conducing to so high an end.*—Labour for the knowledge of the best things, and for as much of it as you can get. Do not be afraid of too much wisdom, of being overcharged with spiritual knowledge. There is no danger that this learning should make you mad. To enforce the duty, consider,

1. *How useful this knowledge is.*—"That the soul be without knowledge is not good." (Prov. xix. 2.) Knowledge in the mind is as necessary and useful as eyes in a guide. What a leader is to his followers, or a driver to a chariot, that the mind is to the man.* He had need of eyes that is to be an inspector or leader of others. As the eye is the overseer of the body, so the understanding is of the whole; and therefore knowledge is as useful in the one, as light in the other. And as the knowledge of natural things is useful to a man as a man, so is the knowledge of spiritual things most useful to him as a Christian; and that,

(1.) *In the exercise of holiness, the guidance of his will and affections, and ordering of his actions in relation to his highest end.*—The will is of itself *cæca facultas*, "a blind faculty;" and the affections are no better. The will can command, but cannot judge. It hath authority over the inferior powers; but such as must be regulated by the discretion of the understanding. And the affections are, as it were, the legs of the soul. They can go this way and that way; but they must have the eye of the mind to superintend their motion; like a blind man carrying a lame one on his shoulder, "who lends his own legs, and borrows the other's eyes."† So that, though the understanding's work be only to discern, consider, judge; yet without its performing that work the will and affections can never rightly do theirs. You can never love or hate, choose or refuse, as you should, such objects as are presented to you,

* The mind is commonly called *το ἡγεμονικόν, το ἡνιοχόν*. ["the governing and directing principle."] So HIEROCLES: *Το μὲν κριτικόν, ὡς ἡνιοχόν το δε ἔπομενον, ὡς ἡνιοχόν μόνον.*—*In Carmina Pythagor.*, vers. 67, p. 293. "The one of these is the faculty of judging, which acts as charioteer; the other follows as it may be guided, like a horse which obeys him who holds the bridle."—EDIT. † Πόδας χρῆσας ὀμμάτια χρῆσαμενος.—*Anthologia Græca.*

unless you first pass a right judgment upon those objects, and the understanding determine of their being good or evil; and the understanding cannot judge aright, if it be not informed aright. It cannot lead you, if it be not itself enlightened. You can never love God supremely, if your understandings do not judge him to be supremely lovely. If ever you would duly prosecute your true interest, you must be first acquainted with it, and have it rightly stated. If you would do your duty, you must first know it. You must of necessity either neglect or mis-perform it, if you know not the rule of your doing it. Where holiness is your work, knowledge must be your director. And the more knowledge you have, the more fit you will be for the practice of holiness. The clearer your light and the better your eyes, the more circumspectly you will walk. The more you see the nature, the beauty, the benefit of holiness, the more holy you may be.

(2.) *Knowledge will be most useful for the avoiding of sin.*—The more knowledge you have of the nature of sin, the abundance of it in yourselves, its offensiveness to God; the more knowledge you have of the rule, the exactness, the purity, the spirituality, and extent of the law; and so the better able you are to judge what sin is, and what its consequences are; the better you may escape it. The clearer your knowledge, and the stronger your convictions are of the evil of sin, the more arguments you are furnished with to persuade your hearts against it. A good treasure of spiritual knowledge will best help you to maintain your spiritual warfare. When you know not only your Leader and your weapons and your reward, but your enemies too, and their stratagems and way of fighting, you are likely then to be most courageous in your combat.

(3.) *Knowledge will be greatly useful to you for your profiting by ordinances.*—The better you understand the nature and use and ends of them, the more good you are likely to get by them. The more you know of the word, the more you will still learn by it. If the foundation of spiritual knowledge be well laid, ordinances will more easily build you up. Not only the work of ministers would be more easy, if their hearers were better catechised; there would not be such danger of missing the mark by shooting over people's heads, they would not lose so much labour nor spend so much strength in vain, they should not need so much to study plainness, and be inculcating principles, and lispng out the first rudiments of religion as to those that are but babes in knowledge:—but hearers likewise would receive the word with more profit; they would more easily be brought down under convictions, feel the power of exhortations, be quickened to duties, yield to reproofs, entertain admonitions, and taste the sweetness of God's consolations, and so more easily obtain the end of their hearing. To conclude: if your understandings were more enlightened, your affections would either be sooner warmed, or their heat be more regular; if more truth were known, more duty would be done; if our doctrine were better understood, our application would be more effectual.

2. *Spiritual knowledge is most delightful.*—“The knowledge of wisdom” is said to be “to the soul, as the honey and the honey-comb” to the taste. (Prov. xxiv. 13, 14.) The knowledge of truth, which is the proper object of the understanding, doth usually carry something of

pleasure in it; and the more excellency there appears in any truth, the more delectable a thing it is to know it. But there be no truths so excellent as spiritual ones, such as concern God and Christ and the mysteries of salvation; and therefore the knowledge of none is so delightful. What high and refined delights doth the contemplation of God in all his holy attributes and excellences afford to glorious angels, and "the spirits of just men made perfect!" How do those heavenly creatures despise the gross and feculent pleasures of the sensual world! And though saints here upon earth cannot rise so high in their delights, because not so high in their knowledge, yet they may find incomparably more pleasure in knowing the things of God, even according to their present capacity, than the greatest voluptuaries can in the enjoyment of the creature. If a philosopher can take more pleasure in the study of nature, or a mathematician in his demonstrations, than a sensualist can in his feasts and treatments; if lines and angles can do more for the mind of the one, than meats and drinks for the palate of the other; how far then do the delights a gracious soul finds in the study and search of divine truths transcend both! And this pleasure is yet more heightened by the interest [which] saints have in the truths they know; when they are not only excellent in themselves, but of the greatest consequence to them. To know God, and that as their God; to know Christ, and that he is a Christ for them; to know the saints' privileges, and that they belong to them; to know the promises, and that they have a share in them; to know there is a heaven, a state of future glory and blessedness, and that themselves are concerned in it:—this must needs be a delightful knowledge. You can take some pleasure in seeing a rich country, and pleasant seat, and fine houses; but much more if you see them as they that are to inherit them. If a natural man may take some pleasure in the mere notion of divine truths, how much more may he do it that is concerned in them!

3. *This knowledge doth greatly adorn and beautify the soul.*—It is a considerable part of the soul's perfection. The image of God is said to consist, as "in righteousness and true holiness," so likewise "in knowledge." (Col. iii. 10.) How full of it was Adam in Paradise! And how full of it are angels in heaven! The more men know of God, the more like they are to him; and the more they resemble him, the more beautiful and perfect they are. You count a clear eye not only useful to the body, but a piece of beauty in it. Light in the mind is an ornament to the soul, as well as a help. Saints in heaven that are most perfect, are most knowing; and the fulness of their knowledge is a great part of their perfection.

4. *It is a most becoming thing.*—Most suitable to you as Christians, suitable to your new nature, your new state, your spiritual relations and spiritual privileges. It ill becomes them who are "called into God's marvellous light," (1 Peter ii. 9,) who are the "children of light," (Eph. v. 8,) and the children of him who is "the Father of lights," (James i. 17,) they that are said to be "in the light," (1 John ii. 9,) nay, to be "light," (Eph. v. 8,) yet to be without light. An ignorant saint is as great a solecism in Christianity, as a graceless saint, and that is such a saint as is no saint.

5. Consider the mischief and danger of ignorance.

(1.) *It exposeth you to errors and delusions.* (Matt. xxii. 29.)—Who so apt to be misled as he that hath no eyes? He that knows not which is the right way, may easily be drawn into a wrong one. “He that walks in darkness knows not whither he goes.” (John xii. 35.) Affection is a good follower, but a bad leader. It is too blind to be a guide. It embraces its object, and yet knows it not. It must be beholden to the eye of the mind, light in the understanding, or else all its motions will be but wanderings. It will be sure to rove, where it is not led. It is an egregious paralogism of them that argue against the translation of the scriptures into vulgar languages, that “that is the way to increase errors and divisions among Christians:” for that multitude of errors which is among us is not the effect of too much knowledge, but too little; as men’s losing their way by day-light is not the effect of their having eyes, but either of their not having them, or not using them. Men do not run into errors because they know the truth, but because they do not know it, or are not established in it, or are not able to prove it. Not only pride and obstinacy, but ignorance too, hath a hand in heresies. That which is heresy at last, may be but a simple error at the first; and that, too, men may embrace, not so much, or not only, because they hate the truth, but because they do not know it. “Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds” proceed from them as being “destitute of the truth.” (1 Tim. vi. 5.) In other places we see by experience, that where men have ordinarily more knowledge, they have fewer errors; where they are better catechised, they are less unsound. It is scarce to be imagined, that so many absurd and ridiculous opinions should pass current among us for great truths, were it not for ignorance, as well as interest. And I doubt not but many of the greatest patrons of errors, if thoroughly examined, would be found guilty of the deepest ignorance; and while they pretend to know more than others, they know much less than is needful for themselves. When men walk the rounds in religion, it is a sign that it is night with them. It is darkness that fills them with so many fancies and whimsies. Men’s heads are most apt to be giddy, when their eyes are closed.

(2.) *It exposeth them to wickedness too.*—When the mind is dark, no wonder if the mind be impure. When there is no light coming in at the window, the house may well be dirty. He that cannot judge what is good and what is evil, may easily refuse the good and choose the evil. He that is ignorant of duty, may soon come to be prejudiced against it, and then disaffected to it, and then to embrace the contrary. Crooked steps are but the ordinary consequents of blind eyes; and none more ready to walk after the course of this world, than he that is unacquainted with the ways of God’s commandments; or, (to invert the apostle’s words, 1 Cor. xiv. 20,) none are more likely to be “men” *in malice* and wickedness, than they that are “children” *in understanding*. That the Heathen were “alienated from the life of God,” it was because of “the ignorance that was in them.” (Eph. iv. 18.) I shall never wonder to see a conscience not informed, to be debauched; to see him that knows not God, to neglect God; him that knows not duty, neglect duty; or him that is ignorant of sin, live in sin. And though the beginning of

sin be out of ignorance, yet men's progress in it may be out of affection. If at first they commit it, because they know not the evil and bitterness of it; yet they may afterward love it, when they have tasted sweetness in it. They that "have no knowledge to do good," may the sooner learn to be "wise in doing evil." (Jer. iv. 22.) Men's lusts do then especially rule over them, when they are themselves under the power of ignorance. "Not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance." (1 Peter i. 14.)

(3.) *It exposeth them to apostasy even from what good they professed to have.*—How soon are their leaves shaken off from them by the storms of temptation! How soon are they withered by the hot sun of persecution, who are not well rooted in spiritual knowledge! Men will never heartily love the truth, if they see not its beauty; and never adhere to it, if they do not love it. An unsettled judgment will make unconstant affections. I have heard of a martyr that could not dispute for Christ, and yet could burn for Christ; but I never heard of any that could burn for him, and yet did not know him. They that do not know the truth,—the excellency, and power, and preciousness of it,—cannot see reason enough for their laying-down their lives for it. They that know not the riches and glory of the other world, those great things which may deserve their perseverance, and encourage their resolution and constancy, will hardly be induced to secure the hope of *they know not what*, by the loss of what they see and enjoy. We may certainly say, that ignorance of God's truths and ways is one main root of apostasy from them; and had many of them who in these declining times have forsaken either, seen as much in them as others see, they might have found as good reason for their adhering to them, as others have found; so that (to conclude this) ignorance is a sin which exposeth men to temptations of all kinds: the devil can scarce desire fitter matter to work upon, than ignorant persons. To whom should he put-off his wares but to those that are so dim-sighted, that they cannot perceive the falseness of them? (Eph. vi. 12.) Where should "the ruler of the darkness of this world" set up his throne, erect his kingdom of darkness, but in dark souls? Where should the devil reign, but where ignorance reigns? None more obedient vassals to him, than they that know not the laws of their true Sovereign.

(4.) Lastly. *Ignorance exposeth men to God's judgments, as well as any other sin doth.*—And those not only temporal, (Isai. v. 12, 13,) but eternal too: Christ, when he comes to judgment, will execute "vengeance on them that know not God." (2 Thess. i. 8.) Those that God will love, he will have them "come unto the knowledge of the truth." (1 Tim. ii. 4.) And even the servant that knows not his master's will, shall have his share of "stripes." (Luke xii. 48.) Men may perish not only for lack of that knowledge which is absolutely necessary to salvation, but for lack of that which they were bound, according to their opportunities, to have gained. I have heard it as the saying of a learned man, that "a Papist might be saved, but a Recusant * could not;" as

* Blount says, "*Recusant is*, by statute-law, any person that refuseth to come to church, and hear the Common-Prayer read. But the word is now almost wholly appropriated to the Roman Catholics; and is commonly employed to designate one who refuses to take the oath of the King's supremacy in matters of religion."—EDIT.

having sufficient means for conviction and information. I am not concerned to dispute the truth of the former, but see no reason to question the certainty of the latter. And might it not be said of many Protestants, that they might be saved in another country, but cannot be saved here, and that for the same reason,—because here they have means of getting more knowledge? Alas! how many ignorant souls are in hell already, and how many more are posting after them! When they die, there goes not only “dust to dust,” but “darkness to darkness;” the darkness of ignorance to the darkness of hell! *They will at last find themselves greatly deceived that think they shall be saved because they are poor ignorant creatures, and know no better; that is, that they shall be saved because they know not the way to salvation; they shall be healed because they know not what will cure them.* And, however they may for a time flatter themselves, upon the account of any external privileges, that they are Christians, Protestants, professors, yet they may read their doom in the text, which will one day be made good upon them; and if they will not know what else they should, yet let them know this, that “because they are a people of no understanding, therefore He that made them will not have mercy on them, and He that formed them will show them no favour.”

SERMON VI.

BY THE REV. THOMAS CASE, A.M.

OF SABBATH SANCTIFICATION.

If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.—Isaiah lviii. 13, 14.

THESE two verses contain a model of sabbath-sanctification.

The thirteenth verse contains *the duties enjoined.*

The fourteenth verse contains *the privileges annexed.*

The *duties* are set forth unto us, I. *Negatively*; II. *Affirmatively.*

I. The negative duties are expressed, 1. *Generally and comprehensively*; 2. *More particularly and distinctly.*

First. *The general* in these words: “If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day.” Wherein there are three things:

1. *The thing forbidden.*—That is, the doing of our pleasures on the sabbath. God never appointed a sabbath for the satisfaction of corrupt nature.

2. *The manner of doing or forbearing it.*—And that is, by turning a way our foot from the sabbath. The meaning of which phrase may be,

(1.) Either a turning away of our mind and affections from each object to which corrupt will does strongly incline us. The affections are the feet of our souls.

(2.) Or an awful fear of trespassing upon the sabbath, for the satisfying of our carnal desires. As men that are afraid of trespassing upon some great man's freehold, withdraw their foot and turn another way, &c. The sabbath is God's freehold, of which God saith, as once to Moses, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." [Exod. iii. 5.] When we are tempted to any thing unworthy of the sabbath, we should make a stop and turn away, that we may not transgress.

3. The third thing in the general is *the reason why we should be so afraid of encroaching upon sabbath-time*, implied in this clause, "on my holy day."

Wherein are two considerations: 1. It is holy time. 2. It is God's time.

To take *holy time*, and bestow it upon our own lusts,—it is profaneness.

To take *God's time*, and bestow it upon the uses of the flesh,—it is sacrilege.

It is not fit to make sacred time to serve any but sacred uses. This is the general inhibition.

Secondly. *The more particular and distinct inhibition* followeth in the end of the verse. Wherein [are] three things forbidden in the particular:—

1. *We are forbidden the doing of our own ways.*—It is an Hebraism, as much as in our English, "going our own ways;" that is, following our carnal and sinful courses, pursuing our own corrupt and sensual inclination.

2. *We are forbidden the finding of our own pleasure.*—Which is the same forbidden in the general *ut supra*, only with this difference, that there, as I conceive, "pleasure" is taken more largely. So, whatsoever is pleasing to unregenerate nature and inclinations, whether they be bodily labour or carnal recreations, profit or pleasures, sports or the works of our callings, we must not find them; that is, we must be so far from making provision for the satisfying of the sensual appetite, that we must not so much as own them, when we meet them; we must not suffer ourselves to be tempted, or ensnared by them; we must be to them, when we meet them, as if we had neither eyes, nor ears, nor hands, nor feet; we must not desire them, or have any thing to do with them.

3. *We are forbidden the speaking of our own words.*—That is, our own impertinent discourses, worldly contrivances, or, in the apostle's language, all "filthiness, and foolish talking, and jesting," or *τα ουκ αρμογια*, "any thing that is not convenient." (Eph. v. 4.) Christians should not only consult what is lawful, but what is decent and ornamental to the sabbath. None of these things must be so much as named on our days, much less on God's days.

Christians, look to it: you may profane the sabbath by your words as well as your works, and by *rain* words as well as by *vile* words.

But there is one thing further observable, that is, the note of appropriation, namely, "thine own," "thine own ways," "thine own pleasure," "thine own words."

"Thine own? What is that?"

ANSWER. In opposition to God's ways, God's pleasures, God's words; thereby utterly excluding, not only wicked ways, and sinful pleasures, and profane words whatsoever, which are unlawful at all times, but even all such ways, pleasures, words, and thoughts also, (which are the words of the mind,) which relate to our own private concerns, whether personal or domestic, of a worldly and secular nature; which, though they may be lawful upon other days, duly circumstantiated, yet [are] by no means to be allowed of on God's day, unless they fall under the general exception of God's own indulgence, namely, necessity and charity; of which I shall speak more largely hereafter.

In a word: Nothing may be done or spoken, but what is of a divine or sabbath nature and tendency, upon pain of forfeiting our part in the blessed privileges following, verse 14. And so much for *the negative part of sabbath sanctification*.

II. I come to the *affirmative*: "And shall call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him." In these words also there be four branches or duties:—

(I.) *We must call the sabbath "a delight."*

(II.) *We must call it "holy," or "the holy of the Lord."*

(III.) *We must call it "honourable" or glorious.*

(IV.) *We must not only call it "honourable," but must actually and really honour it or Him by a suitable deportment.*

(I.) *If we would sanctify the sabbath acceptably, we must call the sabbath "a delight."*—Call—That is, account it so. *Calling*—It is an act of the judgment, or appreciative faculty. *A delight*—Or, as some render it, "thy delights." We must reckon the sabbath *inter delicias*, as is said of Jerusalem: she "remembered all her pleasant things." (Lam. i. 7.) Surely, her sabbaths were some of those "pleasant things." It is said, "Her enemies did mock at her sabbaths." Ay; but she did mourn. They were her "delightful things," whereupon her heart was: and so they must be to us. But we must also remember to take-in, with the day, all the ordinances and religious services and duties of the day. They must not only be done spiritually, holily, and universally, but they must be done with delight and complacency, we must prefer them to our chiefest joy; yea, the very approach of the sabbath should be our delight. So have all the saints and servants of God in all ages of the church done; they have been to them the very joy and life of their souls. "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem." (Psalm cxxii. 1.) I was never more affected with joy and gladness in all my life, than when I was wont to hear the people encouraging one another to assemble themselves to the public worship of God, in the house of God, on God's day. O! it did my heart good to hear with what alacrity and rejoicing they did provoke one another: "Come, let us go to the house of the Lord;" notably prophesied of in words at length: "Many people shall go and say, 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, and we will walk in his paths : for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." (Isai. ii. 3.) In the loss of ordinances and sabbaths they have been dead in the nest, like "Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not." [Matt. ii. 18.] And in the recovery and enjoyment of them they have rejoiced as men rejoice that divide the spoil. (See Psalm iii., xlii., xliii., and xlvi., *per totum*.) Christians, we must write after this copy, and count the sabbath, not our duty only, but our delight and privilege.

(II.) The second affirmative duty : "*The holy of the Lord*."—We must "call it," that is, (*ut supra*,) count it, keep it, as קִדְּשׁוּ יְהוָה לִיחְדוֹשׁ *Lichdosh Jehovah, Sanctum Domini* ; one of the titles of Jesus Christ, "The Holy One of God." We must observe the sabbath as holy time ; holy, yet not by constitution, *not essentially* holy, as Christ is holy ; *nor inherently*, as the saints are holy ; but holy by institution, by sanction, *relatively* holy. "The Lord blessed the sabbath-day, and hallowed it;" [Exod. xx. 11.] that is, he set it apart for holy uses : "Keep the sabbath-day to sanctify it." (Deut. v. 12.) Nothing but holy things must be done in this holy time,—praying, reading, hearing, singing of psalms, &c., (as Psalm xcii., which is both a precept and platform for sabbath sanctification,) meditation, rejoicing in God, and thanksgiving, as you may read at large.

(III.) *We must call it* (that is, count it) *honourable, or the glorious day of God*.—Glorious upon several accounts.

1. *For God's glorious resting upon that day*.—God's rest ; that is, a glorious rest, rest of God. As "things of God" in scripture are great and glorious things.

2. *Glorious or honourable by a glorious sanction*.—Coin, with the king's stamp upon it, is counted royal, not for the metal so much, though it be of silver or gold, but for the image, superscription, and impression it beareth. Every day in the week is honourable, because it is God's creation ; but the sabbath is glorious for the inscription,—Jehovah hath set his image upon it. He did sanctify it. It hath God's sanction upon it, and that is glorious.

3. *It is honourable for those glorious ends for which it was set apart*.—And they are three :—

(1.) *That God might sanctify his people*.—"Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be for a sign between me and them : " not a ceremonial sign, as some would dwindle it, that have no more religion in them than an old rotten ceremony cometh to ; but a moral sign, that is, a testimony, pledge, or covenant, whereby it might appear that they were God's people, sanctified to his service and honour. So it follows : "That they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them." (Ezek. xx. 12.) The sabbath is God's medium to raise up to himself an holy people.

(2.) *That God's people might sanctify him*.—So, Ezek. xx. 41 : "I will be sanctified in you." So, Lev. x. 3 : "I will be sanctified in them that draw nigh me." God sanctifieth us, when he makes us holy ; we sanctify God, when we acknowledge him to be holy. God sanctifieth us, when he makes us what we are not ; we sanctify him when we acknowledge him to be what he is. These be glorious ends : but,

(3.) Another glorious end for which God made the sabbath, was, *that the sabbath on earth might be a type and figure of the sabbath in heaven.*—That in this initial and imperfect sabbath on earth, we might see (though “in a glass darkly”) what the saints and angels are doing in heaven without ceasing; that we might peep into heaven before we come thither, and long and wait for that eternal sabbath. A day wherein God bows the heaven and comes down, and offers himself in ways of sweet and friendly communion with his people. (Exod. xx. 22.)

(IV.) The fourth duty is: as we must call and count it glorious, so *we must actually honour it or Him*: it may be rendered both.—And, indeed, when we honour this day, we glorify God; and we glorify God, when we make him our end in honouring his day. Without both these we do take God’s name in vain, and do but mock God rather, in pretending to keep a sabbath, than glorify him. We must set-up God in his own day and in his own institution. And thus I have done with the opening of this blessed model in *the duties of it*. I should come now to *the privileges annexed*; but sufficient to the day is the travel thereof.

For the improvement of this doctrinal exposition, I shall do these two things:—

First. I shall endeavour the stating of some *cases of conscience* concerning the sabbath.

Secondly. I shall raise some *observations*, instead of more distinct uses and application.

CASE. If it be inquired what sabbath it is that is here spoken of, we shall not need to stick long upon the solution.

Some indeed of the anti-sabbatical doctors, who love neither the name nor thing, will needs expound it of the yearly sabbath, the day of the strictest rest among the Jews in their solemn convention for humiliation and atonement, of which we read, Lev. xvi. 31, and xxiii. 27—31. But surely it is an unreasonable straitening of the text to confine it to this, especially since the prophet had sufficiently insisted upon that subject, both by way of reproof and exhortation, in the former part of the chapter. Here, therefore, I conceive, we are to understand the weekly sabbath; not only the seventh-day sabbath, which was yet in being, but the first-day sabbath also, which was to succeed: the prophet, being an evangelical prophet, (as one calls him “the evangelist Isaiah,”) speaks of the evangelical sabbath, which was to continue to the end of the world.

RULES DRAWN FROM THE NEGATIVE PART OF THIS MODEL.

RULE I.

Note, in the first place, that, *from the creation of the world to this day, God never suffered his church to be without a sabbath.*—As soon as ever there was a church, though it was but in its infancy, and confined within the narrow limits of a single family, and few souls therein, God did immediately institute a sabbath for it. “And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.” (Gen. ii. 2, 3.) This some learned divines suppose to

have been by way of anticipation only ; to be a sabbath in deck,* as it were, until the church should have need of it. Others, as eminent and learned as they, do assert it to have been by way of institution ; a notion of a far more easy understanding than the former, and more useful. This sabbath rested, it seems, sometimes in silence : save only that we may possibly spell it out in some imperfect characters in their offerings and sacrifices before ever the law was given, which were originally proper sabbath-work ; until at length we may read of it in words at length : And Moses spake to the people, "This is that which the Lord hath said, To-morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath." (Exod. xvi. 22, 23.) And this some conceive to be a second and renewed institution ; but with little probability. Moses rather speaks of it as a thing notoriously known to the Israelites in the wilderness, it being of a more ancient original than the miracle of the manna : yet it may serve as a testimony unto the sabbath, and of use unto our purpose.

From thence therefore we must step on as far as Mount Sinai, for a new institution ; and there we may find it standing in the midst of the ten moral precepts, the fourth whereof it makes in number : "Remember that thou keep holy the sabbath day," &c. (Exod. xx. 8—11.) Then was that command, which before was given by word of mouth, and continued by tradition, now written in words at length, engraven in stone by the immediate finger of God ; and there it stands during all the time of Moses and the prophets on its own basis, until the Messiah came, who put upon it his own sanction. (Matt. v. 17—48.) And under that sanction did the seventh-day sabbath continue, until upon the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, that Sun of Righteousness, and by his command to his apostles, (Acts i. 2,) the sabbath was translated to the first day of the week, and that continued by apostolical practice, and by the practice of succeeding ages of the evangelical church, the gospel-sabbath, or Lord's day, even to this present generation.

Such, I say, hath been the care and love of God to his church to this day, that it never was without a sabbath, unless it were when the want of a sabbath was the punishment of sinful neglect and obstinate violation of the sabbath. (Lam. ii. 6.) And this care God used upon a two-fold account :—

1. *Upon the account of his own sovereignty.*—That is, that by reserving one day in seven for his own immediate worship, he might be actually acknowledged as the great Sovereign Lord of ourselves and of our time. The sabbath is as the first-fruits among the Jews ; whereby we do not only entitle God to the whole harvest, but whereby the whole lump and mass is sanctified to us.

2. A second account is *God's pity and compassion to his creatures.*—God saw the heart of man since the fall so fixed to the world, (Eccles. iii. 11,) and immersed in the pleasures and profits thereof, that had he left man to himself, he would not have spared for divine worship one day in seven weeks, not, possibly, in seven months, or in the whole year ; but he would have even drudged himself and the irrational creature to death in the pursuit of worldly fruitions. And therefore God hath enjoined him the severe observation of one day in seven, that he might lay upon him

* A pile or heap in reserve, from which supplies may be taken as wants arise.—EDIT.

the necessity of minding and seeking the things of eternity, and whilst the rational creature did enjoy a spiritual rest for the soul, the irrational creature might have natural rest for self-preservation. Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift!

RULE II.

Observe, *this day God was pleased to honour with the title of a "sabbath," as both here, and in the fourth commandment.*—Which signifies "rest:" because on this day both God the Father and God the Son, respectively, did rest from their own proper work, and by their precept and pattern command it and commend it for a stated rest to the church of God for ever. (Gen. ii. 2.) What the reason, therefore, is, why some learned men of our generation should be so exceedingly offended at that name "sabbath," that they cannot so much as hear it with patience, is to me a wonder even to astonishment. And while they are so much offended at the name, the vulgar sort of Christians are thereby, I am afraid, as much offended at the thing.

As to the first of these, I have heard some say, *they like it not, because it is Jewish.* But to that we reply,

1. Not the Jews, but the God of the Jews, gave it that name here and elsewhere; and,

2. The notion of a sabbath signifies no more but "rest;" and is rest Jewish? O that men would look into their hearts to see whether the reason of this disgust is not more latent there!

3. And were it a Jewish name indeed, is not the Jewish name "sabbath" better than the heathenish name "Sunday," the name which heathenish idolaters gave it in their dedication of that day to the created sun? Notwithstanding, consult their calendars, writings, and languages, and you can meet with no other name or notion, but Sunday all over. At this we have more cause to be offended, than they have at the notion of a Sabbath.

As for the vulgar sort of people, it is the thing which offends them more than the name; not the rest so much as the nature of the rest, is that which they dislike. Were it a carding rest, a gaming rest, a dancing rest, such an one as the Israelites once celebrated in the wilderness, wherein they did eat and drink, "and rose up to play;" [Exod. xxxii. 6;] such an one for all the world as the Popish devotion celebrates,—after mass and even-song, as they call it,—pipe and dance, and then to the ale-house or tavern; such a rest would gratify the sensual world of carnal Christians. But for an holy "rest," a rest to be spent in public, domestic, and secret duties of religion, reading the scriptures, praying, singing of psalms, hearing the word preached, repeating at home what they heard in public, catechising their families, meditation, &c.; these things do not please the unregenerate part, but men are ready to murmur, as they did of old, "What a weariness is it!" and, "When will the sabbath be over?" &c. (Mal. i. 13; Amos viii. 5.) "This is a lamentation," &c.

RULE III.

From these words, "my holy day," take a third rule:—*We must look upon the sabbath as a day of divine institution; not of a human*

ordination.—The sabbath hath a *jus divinum* [“a divine right”] written upon it, more authentic than theirs that deery it: “My holy day,” and “the holy of the Lord,” twice in this thirteenth verse; and this, not in reference only to the seventh day, but in reference to the first day of the week, which this evangelical prophet had then, by divine revelation, in his eye. How much more doth it concern us, who are reserved to this glorious administration under the gospel, to own the divine right of the evangelical sabbath! Surely it is the voice of the glorious Trinity that calls it “my holy day;” God the Father by creation, God the Son by redemption, and God the Holy Ghost by sanctification, sending down a rich and plentiful effusion of gifts and graces upon the apostles, for the enabling them to go forth and convert the Gentiles, by the preaching of the gospel. To deny God his own right is sacrilege and atheism.

RULE IV.

We learn from hence that *we must give God the whole entire day.*—“My day,” saith God: a few hours, or the forenoon, will not serve God’s turn: but he challengeth the whole time, as his own peculiar.

There is a great dispute amongst divines, when the sabbath begins, and when it ends. The text determineth the controversy: saith God, “All is mine.” The whole twenty-four hours is sabbath. Look, how many hours we reckon to our days, so many hours we must reckon to God’s days also, if we will be ingenuous.

RULE V.

OBJECTION. *But who is able to spend the whole twenty-four hours in religious duties without any intermission?*

ANSWER. None; neither is it required: for neither do we ourselves on our days spend the whole twenty-four hours in the employments of our particular places and callings; but we allow ourselves a sleeping time, and a time for preparing our food, and a time for eating and drinking, and other refreshments of nature, both for ourselves and our relations. And so doth God also, provided always,

1. That we be not over-lavish and prodigal in our indulgences to the flesh, and the concernments of the outward man, that we exceed not our limits of Christian sobriety and moderation.

2. Provided that we do not those things with common spirits. We must eat, and drink, and sleep, as part of the sabbath-work, with heavenly minds, and sabbath-affections.

The occasional sabbaths amongst the Jews gave them a greater latitude: no more time of those days being counted holy, than was spent in the public service of the day; which continued but from nine of the clock in the morning, when the morning sacrifice was to be offered, and ended at three of the clock in the afternoon, at evening sacrifice. But the weekly sabbath was holy in the whole extent of it: not indeed by constitution, but by institution and consecration: “God blessed the sabbath-day, and hallowed it;” that is, set it apart for divine and holy uses, of which more *infra*.

RULE VI.

In our sanctifying of the sabbath, we must have an equal respect to the negative prohibition, as to the affirmative injunction.—That is, to what is

forbidden, as well as what is commanded, *et e contra*. And this is a rule which holds in the exposition of all the commandments of the law, and of the gospel: "Cease to do evil, and learn to do good." (Isai. i. 16, 17.) The negative and affirmative precept have such a mutual relation one to another, that one doth infer the other; and take away one, and you destroy the other. It is impossible to do what is commanded without due care of avoiding what is prohibited; neither can that man rationally pretend to keep the sabbath, that lieth a-bed all day, because he doth not work; nor he that followeth his servile labour, because possibly he may perform some religious duties. "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."

Carnal sports and pleasures are as great a profanation of the sabbath, as the most servile labour and drudgery in the world. Dicing and carding do as much violate the law of the sabbath, as digging and carting; playing, as much as ploughing; dancing and morrice-games, as much as working in the smith's forge; bowling and shooting, as well as hewing of wood and drawing of water.

The reasons are clear: for,

1. *Sports and pleasures are as expressly forbidden as bodily labour in our ordinary vocation.*—For he that said, "Thou shalt do no manner of work," said also, "Thou shalt not find thine own pleasure," &c.

2. *Sports and pleasures are as inconsistent with a sabbath-frame of spirit, as the grossest labour in our calling.*—Yea, I will undertake that a man in his particular calling may more easily get good thoughts of God and of eternal life, &c., than a person that is drenched and immersed in vain delights and sports. In such cases, men are usually so intent upon their sports and pastimes, that it is not easy to edge-in a good serious thought in the midst of sensual delights. A man in his carnal pleasures is like the soul in the body; "all in all, and all in every part" of their pleasing vanities.* Pleasures do fox † and intoxicate the brain; whereas labour is apt to make them serious and considerate.

3. *Pleasures are as great diversions from the duty of a sabbath, as labours.*—It is conceived, Adam should have had a sabbath in Paradise, had he persisted in innocence. "Why?" Not because his dressing of the garden would have wearied him, (for weariness is the fruit of sin,) but his dressing of the garden would have been a diversion from attending his Creator in the ordinances of a sabbath.

4. *Carnal pleasures leave a defilement on the spirits, and so do totally unfit the soul for communion with God.*—That character, "Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God," how fully doth it agree to such kind of profaners of the sabbath! Pleasures draw off the mind from God, and justly cause God to withdraw from the soul; how totally doth this indispose to sabbath-work! In heaven they "cease not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy," &c. O! Christians, never think of reconciling carnal pleasures and communion with God together: it is impossible.

RULE VII.

"Not speaking thine own words." *The sabbath is polluted by words as well as by works.*—Christ will judge men in the great day for their

* *Tota in toto, et tota in quolibet parte.*

† In the old meaning of, "to stupify."

words ; and by them will he either justify thee for sanctifying the sabbath, or condemn thee for profaning of it. I am afraid, it is the great controversy God hath with this nation : not only profane, but even professors, are all guilty of not sanctifying the name and day of God in their talk and discourses upon the sabbath-day. If Jesus Christ should join himself to our tables, or lesser companies, as he did with the two disciples going to Emmaus, and ask us, “What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another?” (Luke xxiv. 15—17 ;) how might the question fill our faces with paleness and strike us speechless ! Alas ! who can tell what day it is by men’s discourses and conferences one with another ? How vain, foolish, unprofitable, and unsavoury is most men’s speech all the day ! No jest so idle, no story so common and fruitless, but will pass at our tables and in our private conference. Many spend the *best* of their time no better than the idolatrous Athenians did their *worst*, “in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing.” (Acts xvii. 21.) “What news?” is the most innocent question wherewith (I would I could not say) most men fill up the vacancies of a sabbath. “And is that sinful ? will you say ? Was it not in Nehemiah’s question ?—‘Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah ; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem,’ &c. (Neh. i. 2.) Presently, ‘What news ?’ And why may not Christians ask the same question ?”—Yes ; they may, when they ask it in Nehemiah’s spirit, to Nehemiah’s end ; that is, that we may get our hearts suitably affected with the miseries or prosperity of the church of God, abroad or at home. See what a gracious use he makes of his news in that and in the following chapter, at your leisure : go ye, and do likewise, and it shall be your honour. But, to tell news, and to inquire after news, merely for novelty-sake, and to fill up time for want of better discourse, is a miserable idling-out of precious time, which might be spent to mutual edification ; whereas, by ordinary and unsavoury discourses, which are usually heard amongst us, people do edify one another indeed, but it is *ad gehennam*,—they edify one another “to hell.”

You that pretend to be the Lord’s people, be more jealous for the Lord’s day and honour. “The Lord taketh pleasure in his people. Let the saints be joyful in glory.” (Psalm cxlix. 4, 5.) Let your speech be always seasoned with salt, especially on God’s day, that you may season your children and servants, who otherwise will be corrupted by such rotten communication. O let your prayer be all times, but especially on the sabbath day, that of holy David : “Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth ; and keep the door of my lips.” (Psalm cxli. 3.) The sabbath is God’s glory : let your tongues be so too.

RULE VIII.

The like caution we ought to use about our thoughts.—By the rule of proportion ; they being the language of our hearts, and as audible in the ears of God as our words are to men’s ; yea, whereas men understand our hearts by our words, God understands our words by our hearts. Moses did set bounds about the mount, that neither man nor beast might break-in ; whatsoever touched the mountain must die : (Exod. xix. 12, 13 :)

so must we set bounds about our heart, that neither human nor brutish distractions may break-in. There is death or life in it, and, therefore, "of all keepings, keep thy heart; for out of it are the issues of life." (Prov. iv. 23.) The heart indeed is not so fencible as the mountain; but the more open it lieth, the stronger guard had we need to set upon it, and to pray for a guard from heaven; as David: "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer." (Psalm xix. 14.) If vain or vile thoughts break in upon thee, do as the ravished virgin was to do, in the law,—“cry out” to God, and thou shalt not be held guilty. (Deut. xxii. 27.)

Christians, this caution is of a special concern to you: "O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?" (Jer. iv. 14.) Resolve the text into its integrals, and it will afford you some such observables: 1. Thoughts will defile the heart, as well as deeds. "Wash thy heart." 2. This defilement will damn the soul. "Wash, that thou mayest be saved." 3. The reason is implied: they are wickedness. "Wash thine heart from wickedness." 4. All this evil is even in *vain* thoughts as well as in *vile* thoughts. "How long shall thy vain thoughts," &c. 5. Therefore we must wash our hearts from vain thoughts, as well as from wicked and blasphemous thoughts. Hence I infer, 6. If this should be the work of a Christian every day, how much more on God's day! The purer the paper, the fouler the stain and blot. Christians, look to your hearts.

RULE IX.

Further, *take notice of the appropriation*.—"Thy own ways;" "Thy own pleasures;" "Thy own words."

OBJECTION. "And are not holy ways, and holy pleasures, and holy words our own, as well as such as are carnal and sensual?"

ANSWER. Yes, they are: but God speaks here according to our sense and apprehension; from whence, note how brutish and sensual lapsed man is in his notions and apprehensions of things, that he can call nothing his own, but what relateth to the flesh. "I have written to him," saith God, "the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing:" (Hosea viii. 12:) *alienum*, "foreign," and of no concernment to himself at all.

RULE X.

And let this also serve for a tenth rule: *In our sanctifying of the sabbath, we must be specially careful to distinguish, what is God's, and what is our own*.—Indeed we must distinguish between what is Satan's, our own, and God's.

1. There be sinful, wicked pleasures, ways, words, thoughts; I say, *wicked and sinful* in themselves, and these are properly the devil's pleasures, the devil's ways, the devil's words and thoughts; and these are lawful at no time, much less on God's time. God's day and the devil's employment do not well agree.

2. And there are our own pleasures, ways, words, and thoughts; such as concern the present life, relating to the body and outward man. These

may be lawful on our days : " Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work ;" but are not lawful on the sabbath-day : " In it thou shalt do no manner of work," &c., save what is of necessity or charity.

3. And then there are God's pleasures, ways, words, and thoughts ; that is, of God's command, and such as lie in a direct tendency to the worship and service of God in public, private, or secret ; and these only we may and must do and mind upon the sabbath. If we mix any of the devil's or our own pleasures and profits with God's, we pollute the holy things of God, and profane his sabbath.

This is the sum of what time will give me leave to say upon the negative part of this model. Only, before I dismiss it, let me add this short note of observation, that if what hath been spoken even on this negative part be the mind and will of God concerning the sanctifying of the sabbath, then may the generality of Christians lie down in the dust, and, smiting upon their thigh, with brinish tears upon their cheeks, confess, with a pious, honourable lady upon her dying bed, " O ! I never kept a sabbath in all my life." The Lord teach us so to lay this sin to heart, that God may never lay it to our charge.

RULES DRAWN FROM THE AFFIRMATIVE PART OF THIS MODEL.

Having thus briefly dispatched the negative part of sabbath-sanctification contained in this model, I come now to the positive and affirmative part. *There* we saw what we are forbidden, as that whereby the sabbath is polluted. *Here* we are informed what we are commanded, as that whereby the sabbath is sanctified, that is, kept holy to the Lord ; as we are enjoined, " Keep the sabbath-day to sanctify it," &c., in these words following : " And shalt call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable ; and shalt honour him," &c.

In this positive model are contained four great comprehensive branches or duties, wherein the sanctification of the sabbath doth consist ; namely,

- (I.) *We must call it our "delight."*
- (II.) *We must call it "holy," or "the holy of the Lord."*
- (III.) *We must call it "honourable," or glorious.*
- (IV.) *We must not only call the day an "honourable" day, but we must really and actually "honour" God, or "honour" the day.*

The heads are few ; but they are very comprehensive, and such as will afford us, in the opening of them, much matter for our use and direction in the sanctification of the sabbath ; although I intend in this exercise but briefly to touch upon some few particular heads or rules, reserving the more full and ample enlargement thereof to some other opportunity.

(I.) The first is : *We must "call the sabbath a delight," or, the pronoun supplied, "thy delight."*

Call it so—We are not to account the sabbath as an ordinary and common thing, but to put a very high and precious valuation upon it, as delightful, "the holy of the Lord," and of honourable renown.

A delight, thy delight—We must call it so, account it so, or make it so. The sabbath must be a delectable thing to us, a nest of sweetnesses, the delight of our eyes, the joy and rejoicing of our hearts, a day wherein all our comforts and pleasures do concentre ; all our fresh

springs must be in it. And this I humbly conceive the Holy Ghost doth most significantly oppose unto the pleasures forbidden before in this same verse.

If thou turn away thy foot from doing thy pleasure, &c.—As if it had been said, “Must we be excluded and shut out from all pleasures and delights upon the sabbath?” “No,” saith the Holy Ghost; “sanctify the sabbath of Jehovah, and thou shalt not need to fear the want of pleasure, neither shalt thou need to be beholden to the flesh or the world for delights. The sabbath itself will be incomparably more sweet and delectable to thee, than all the sensual and luscious contentments and satisfactions which this whole sublunary world can afford. Make the sabbath thy delight, and thou shalt need to knock at no other door for pleasurable entertainments. If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, ‘Call my sabbath thy delight,’ he would make his day unto thee a spring of sweetness, that shall always be flowing out to eternal life.” A day well-spent with God will fill the soul with “joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

QUESTION. “But what shall we do, that we may make the sabbath our delight?” or, “When may we be said to call it so, or make it so?”

RULES OR SIGNS OF MAKING THE SABBATH A DELIGHT.

ANSWER 1. We then call the sabbath our “delight,” *when we can rejoice in the approach of the sabbath.*—See how holy David doth solace his soul in the joyful expectation of communion with God, when his banishment from the ordinances did approach: “Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy;” Hebrew, “the gladness of my joy.” (Psalm xliii. 4.)

2. *Our early stirring-up of ourselves to bid the sabbath welcome to our hearts and habitations.*—So, the holy prophet: “O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee.” (Psalm lxiii. 1.) The earliness of his devotions shows the delight that he took in them. Truly the great indulgence that most Christians allow themselves in their bed on the Lord’s day, is an infallible argument how little delight they take in God’s day, or in the ordinances thereof.

3. Then we may be said to call the sabbath our “delight,” *when we are universally careful to sanctify God in all the institutions of the day, both public, private, and secret.*—And are solicitous so to methodize and time them, that they may not jumble out or interfere with one another; that is to say, to be so early in our closet devotion, that the closet may not exclude or straiten the duties of the family, and so to perform the domestic duties, that they may not trespass upon our attendance on the more solemn public worship of God. An universal respect to all the institutions of a sabbath is an evident demonstration, that we call the sabbath our “delight:” as David evidenceth to his own soul the sincerity of his obedience: “Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments.” (Psalm cxix. 6.)

4. *When we are angry with, or impatient of, any diversions from or disturbance in any duty or services of the day.*—To be glad of a diversion argueth little love to or delight in the sabbath. “I have esteemed,”

saith Job, "the words of his mouth more than my necessary food;" Hebrew, "appointed food." (Job xxiii. 12.)

5. And, lastly, then we "call the sabbath a delight," *when the bare having of a sabbath, without the presence of God in the sabbath, and the ordinances thereof, will not satisfy us.*—Delight springs principally from the presence of God: "In thy presence is fulness of joy." (Psalm xvi. 11.) This delight is promised as a reward in the verse following: "Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord." There is a delight of duty, and there is a delight of dispensation, and *this* is the reward of *that*; *that* is our work, *this* is God's work. When a gracious heart sets itself to delight in a sabbath and in the ordinances thereof, then often God is pleased graciously to come in, and to fill the ordinances, and by it the soul, with his own presence; his *convincing* presence; his *enlightening* presence; his *converting* presence; his *quicken*ing presence; his *strengthening* presence; his *comforting* presence. And when the soul cannot be satisfied unless it be in some measure sensible of God's presence in some of these blessed respects or other, then doth it really "call the sabbath a delight." Thus doth the holy Psalmist: "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee." Why, what would he have? It follows: "To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in thy sanctuary." (Psalm lxiii. 1, 2.) It is not the sanctuary of God only, but communion with God in the sanctuary, which David's soul thirsted after.

This is to "call the sabbath a delight."

(II.) I come to the second duty:

We must call the sabbath, "the holy of Jehovah." לְקֹדֶשׁ יְהוָה (Lichdosh Jehovah,) *sanctum Domini.*—This title is very significant. We must not only count the sabbath "holy," but "the holy of the Lord." It is, as it were, one of the titles ascribed to the Son of God; for so he is called: "Thou wilt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption," &c. "Ye denied the Holy One," &c. (Acts ii. 27; iii. 14.) And well it may; for it is the holy day of the holy Son of God. Yea, God the Father and God the Son have put-off their own holiness upon it; not *essentially*, for that is incommunicable. Nor is it *an inherent holiness* which they have communicated to it, as the saints of God have, who are made holy by a supernatural change of their natures. (2 Peter i. 4.) But the sabbath is holy *by divine institution, by special dedication and consecration*; God having hallowed this day above all other days in the week, by separating it from common and civil uses, and consecrating it to holy and religious ends and purposes, namely, to be a sabbath of holy rest.

QUESTION. But now the question is: "How may we thus call the sabbath holy?" or, "When may we be said truly to make it holy?"

ANSWER 1. *When we make God's hallowing and sanctifying this day our motive and argument to sanctify it, by a holy observation of it.*—When that which God hath called "holy" by his divine sanction, we dare not call it "common and profane" by prostituting of it to unsuitable actions, words, or thoughts. There is a *real* calling it "unholy," as well as *vocal*. He or she that spends the day or any part of it in doing evil, or in doing nothing, or in doing nothing to the purpose, he proclaimeeth to the world what he calleth the day, although he speak not a

word. He speaks his heart by interpretation ; and when all is done, our works are more credible interpreters of our hearts, than our words or profession. "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" [Luke vi. 46.] Then we *believe* it holy, when we *keep* it holy.

2. Then we call the sabbath "holy," *when we sanctify ourselves for the sabbath, and for the ordinances of the sabbath.*—If we have no care what frame of spirit we bring with us into the day, nor with what frame we drive through it, we are far from calling the sabbath, "the holy of the Lord." "For their sakes," saith our Lord, "I sanctify myself." (John xvii. 19.) *I sanctify myself*, that is, "I separate myself wholly for the work of a Redeemer." If the Lord Jesus separated himself for our sakes, should not we much more separate ourselves for his? Then we believe Christ to be our holy Redeemer, when we labour to be an holy people, "holy as he is holy;" and then we have high, venerable thoughts of the holiness of the sabbath, when we labour to be holy as the day is holy. An unsuitable spirit is a profanation of the sabbath. The day holy, but we unholy,—what a reproach is this! "Holiness becometh thine house for ever." (Psalm xciii. 5.) As if he had said, that ceremonies were to continue but for a time, but "holiness is the standing qualification of thy day and of thy worshippers for ever."

3. *When we make holiness in the beginning and increase of it, our design in our sanctifying of the day, and of our attendance upon the ordinances.*—When we make holiness our business. It is the great end for which God hath ordained a sabbath. "Verily, my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you." (Exod. xxxi. 13; Ezek. xx. 12.) Not a ceremonial sign, but a moral sign, a covenant sign, a kind of a sacramental sign, a medium to effect what is promised in the covenant, as water in baptism, and bread and wine in the Lord's supper. (1 Cor. xi. 23—26.) O when God's design and man's design meet; when God makes a sabbath for a medium to make his people holy, and they keep a sabbath that they may be holy; this is excellent, this is to call the sabbath "the holy of the Lord." When we labour to bring as much holiness as we can into a sabbath, and to bring more holiness out of a sabbath, to come out of God's day more holy than we came into it; this is to sanctify a sabbath indeed.

4. Then we call it "holy," *when the more pure and holy the sabbath is kept, and the more purely and holily the ordinances are dispensed, the more our souls do love them, the more beauty and glory we do see in them.*—As David expresseth his affection to the word: "Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it." [Psalm cxix. 140.] It is very sad, when, the more purely and the more holily the word is dispensed, the more people dislike it, and pick quarrels with it; as that vile people did, who cried to their prophets, "*Prophecy not*; or, if you will be prophesying, prophecy *smooth things*, sermons that will go down pleasantly, discourses of peace, that will not trouble our consciences, nor cross our corruptions; but *cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.*" (Isai. xxx. 10, 11.) It was "the *Holy One of Israel*," &c., the title which the prophets used in their sermons; but their ears were so tender they could not bear it. If the prophets would prophesy of the *Merciful*

One of Israel, and of the *Bountiful* One, the *Omnipotent* One, &c., let them go on. But they cared not so much for holiness and strictness, as they pressed upon them from day to day: this did not please their palate. So when it is with a people in reference to other ordinances, prayer and the sacraments, the more corrupted they be with the mixtures of men, and of human inventions, the more acceptance and applause they find; this argues that men seek not *Jesus propter Jesus*, "Christ for Christ's sake," nor ordinances for their purity, nor sabbaths because they be holy days of an holy God.

When to get holiness, and to grow in holiness, is our design in sanctifying sabbaths; when we sanctify sabbaths that God may "sanctify" us by his sabbaths and "by his truth," as our Lord prayeth; (John xvii. 17;) then we do call and account the sabbath indeed *sanctum Domini*, "the holy of the Lord."

5. We do truly count the sabbath "the holy of the Lord," *when we come out of sabbaths, as Moses came down from the mount, with our faces shining*.—When we bring with us the savour of Christ, his sweet ointments upon our garments; (Psalm xlv. 8;) when they with whom we converse may take notice that we "have been with Jesus." (Acts iv. 13.) It is sad when men come out of a sabbath just such as they came in, as vain and loose, as proud, worldly, wanton, "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;" in a word, as fit for sin as they were before.

They sanctify the sabbath indeed, who can in truth say with the apostle, "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass," or mirror, "the glory of the Lord, are changed," or metamorphosed, "into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. iii. 18.) When the sabbath leaves its image and impress upon us, in some measure, then we do count it and keep it holy. Surely, the sabbath is the very spring upon which the holy conversation of the whole week is turned and moved. And therefore it is observable that the sabbath stands as it were betwixt the two tables,—the last precept of the first table, and the preface to the second,—to show us, that it is the bond of union between both tables; that without a severe sanctification of the sabbath, the duties of both tables will fall to the ground. Whence, in the primitive times of Christianity, the strict observation of the sabbath was accounted the principal character of a true saint. And so it is even at this day: there are no such Christians, for exemplary holiness, as those who are taken notice of to make most conscience of sanctifying the sabbath.

But, so much for the second duty.

(III.) I come now to the third branch, or duty of duties: *Wherein sabbath-sanctification consists; namely, "honourable."*

If thou call it, or make it, or keep it as an honourable day, Hebrew, מַעֲבָד *Mecubbad*, which signifieth "honourable or glorious." The duty implied is, *we must keep the sabbath, as the honourable, glorious day of Jehovah*.—Truly glorious things are spoken of this honourable day. The Jews were wont to call it "the queen of days." The week-days they called "profane days," but the sabbath, after God's example here, they called "holy." "*My holy day,*" saith God; it is God's peculiar. One of ours, now translated into his glorious rest, honours it thus, calling it, "The map of heaven, the golden spot of the week, the market-day of the

soul, the day-break of eternal brightness, the queen of days, the blessed amongst days, the cream of time, the epitome of eternity, heaven in a glass, the first-fruits of an everlasting and blessed harvest ;” and much more to that purpose.* The week-days are (as it were) the back parts of the week, made to carry burdens, a mere servant or slave, made to do the drudgery of the human life. The sabbath is the face, the seat of majesty, which God hath made to look upward, and to contemplate the glory of the heavens and of the Maker thereof. The week-days are like the terrestrial globe, wherein are painted to us the earth with the inferior and more ignoble creatures. The sabbath is the celestial globe, wherein we have the prospect of “Mount Sion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and of an innumerable company of angels, of the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and of God the Judge of all, and of the spirits of just men made perfect, and of Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant,” &c. (Heb. xii. 22—24.) The beholding of these glorious visions, truly beatifical, are the work of a sabbath.

Moreover, to discover to you the glory of a sabbath, consider we another excellent passage in our quoted author (*ut supra*) speaking of the sabbath : “All the graces triumph in thee ; all the ordinances conspire to enrich thee. The Father ruleth thee : the Son rose upon thee : the Spirit hath overshadowed thee. Thus it is done to the day which the Lord delighteth to honour. On thee light was created ; the Holy Ghost descended ; life hath been restored ; Satan subdued ; the grave, death, and hell conquered,” &c. Much more might be added, but rather the question is,

QUESTION. *When do we make the sabbath, or how may we make it to us an “honourable,” glorious day?*

ANSWER I. Then we call the sabbath “honourable,” *when we make honourable preparation for it.*—To which purpose it is useful to mind seriously that word which stands as a watchman at the door of the fourth commandment, “Remember the sabbath to keep it holy.” *Remember*—It is like the Baptist, “The voice of one crying, Prepare ye the way of the Lord :” or that, Eccles. v. 1 : “Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God,” &c. It calls for solemn preparation for a sabbath and the ordinances of a sabbath,—a duty wofully neglected amongst Christians ! Some little preparation people make for a sacrament ; and it is to be feared there is more of superstition in it than evangelical affection to the day, consisting rather in a ceremonial abstinence from meat and drinks, than a serious separation of the heart and affections for communion with God. But as to the sabbath, there is rarely any thing to separate between the drudgery of the week and the solemnities of the sabbath, but a little sleep ; and that usually less than any other night is allowed ; people loading the Saturday night with so many worldly affairs, that the Lord’s-day morning is too little to satisfy their sluggish indulgences of the flesh ; and there is not time either for closet or domestic devotion. They cannot force themselves out of their bed time enough to join with the congregation, until half the public worship be finished. The Jews shall rise up against this generation, and shall condemn them ; of whom it

* Vide MR. GEO. SWINNOCK in his “Good Wish to the Lord’s Day.”

is reported, they were so severe in their paraseves, or "preparations," for the sabbath, which were precisely to begin at three of the clock in the afternoon, that if the servants in the family were cast behind in dispatching the servile labour of the family, the master of the house, though he were a nobleman, would not refuse to set his hand to the lowest drudgery, that they might observe the punctual time of preparation.* This argued an honourable estimation of the sabbath.

2. Then we call it "honourable," *when we give it honourable entertainment.*—When we awaken ourselves in such good time (yet so as we may not indispose nature for the service of the day) as David did: "Awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake right early." (Psalm cviii. 2.) I say, to get up early in the morning, to meet our blessed Lord and Bridegroom coming from his sepulchre to visit us. (Matt. xxviii. 1.) That which is but fancied of the natural sun, its dancing upon Easter-day in the morning for joy of the Lord's resurrection, I have known realized by some excellent Christians, whose hearts have not only leaped in them, but themselves have hasted out of their beds, and have leaped and skipped up and down in their chamber, when the morning light of the sabbath hath shined on them, in remembrance of "the Sun of Righteousness arising" from the grave "with healing under his wings."

Such extraordinary impulses and ravishments are not every Christian's attainment, and must not be imitated to the prejudice of the body. "The spirit" may be "willing, but the flesh is weak." But certainly every Christian that hath the love of Christ shed abroad in his heart, will be careful to abate himself somewhat of his wonted indulgences on that morning which was his Redeemer's birth-day, (Psalm ii. 7,) that he may have time to get on his wedding garment by meditation, reading, and prayer, that he may go forth to meet Him whom his soul loveth, in the public solemnities of the sabbath, and bring him home with him "into the chamber of her that conceived" him. (Canticles iii. 1—4.)

This is to call the day "honourable."

3. Then we call it "honourable," *when we have a precious esteem of every moment of sabbath-time, and [are] jealous lest any drop of it should run waste.*—Even the filings of gold and the dust of diamonds are precious. No man can call the sabbath "glorious," that sets light by an hour, or minute, or moment of so divine a creation. Time is a ring of gold; but the sabbath is the rich sparkling diamond in it. David's heart smote him for cutting off but a lap of Saul's royal coat. So should ours for profaning, or unprofitably wasting, any part of Christ's day. It is like his seamless coat, and cannot be divided without sacrilege.

4. The day is honourable *when we have a singular esteem of all the institutions and ordinances of the day.*—When prayer is precious, and the word read, preached, is precious; when singing of psalms is precious, the sacraments precious; when every one in its time and order is observed with such due regard that none do jostle out or exclude the other, but one doth catch in the other, as the links in a chain of gold.

5. *When it is the grief of our souls that we can keep sabbaths no better, and [we] strive cordially and conscientiously to keep the next better than we did the last.*

6. And lastly, *when we are careful that all ours as well as ourselves keep sabbaths.*—This is a main clause in our obedience to the fourth commandment:—"Thou, thy son, and thy daughter, thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant," &c. (Deut. v. 14.) Every one in their several capacities must keep the sabbath. To be strict ourselves in the duties of a sabbath, and careless what the rest of our families do; whether our children or servants sleep, or be idle, dance, or play at cards, sing idle songs, or take God's name in vain, &c; this is not to call the sabbath "honourable." "I know Abraham, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord." (Gen. xviii. 19.)

(IV.) "And shalt honour him, or glorify him." The verb in the Hebrew, וְכִבְדָתוֹ *Vecibbadto*,* may be rendered "it" or "him;" but the sense seems to incline to the latter, "him," rather than "it." The day having had its title of veneration put upon it before, "honourable," this may more properly belong to God, even to the whole blessed and glorious Trinity, requiring at the hands of every one that enjoyeth this blessed privilege of a sabbath, that they ascribe the honour and glory of it unto God. And that is done,

1. *When we make divine authority the sole ground of our separating and sanctifying the whole day to his peculiar service and worship, without alienating any part or parcel of that holy time to our own carnal uses and purposes.*—"Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it:" there is the duty: "as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee:" there is the authority. [Deut. v. 12.]

2. *When, as we make God's command our ground, so we make God's glory our end.*—When we make it our design to set up God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in all his glorious and infinite perfections, in our adorations and admirations upon that his holy day. And that is done in a special manner, when we make it the great business of a sabbath to ascribe to each glorious Person in the Trinity the glory of his proper work and operation, whereby he challengeth a title to and interest in the sabbath. For example:—

(1.) *When we ascribe to God the Father the glory of the stupendous work of creation.*—And that is done by a due contemplation of all his glorious attributes, shining forth in this beautiful structure of heaven and earth, celebrated by the royal Psalmist in Psalm xix. 1: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handywork." The transcendent excellencies of the glorious Jehovah are conspicuous and illustrious in this admirable theatre of the world, that is to say,

First. *His power.*—(i.) In creating all things out of nothing. (ii.) And that by a word of his mouth.

Secondly. *His wisdom.*—In making all things in such a beautiful and exact manner and order. As the great Physician said of the body of man, "No man can come after God and say, *This might have been better;*" † so in the fabric of heaven and earth, neither man nor angels can say, "Here is a defect, and there is a redundancy: it had been better there had been more suns and fewer stars, more land, and less sea," &c. No; when the divine prophet had stood, and in his most

* From כָּבַד *Cabad*, honorare.

† GALENI *Liber de Usu Partium.*

serious contemplation looked through the creation, he could spy out nothing that could have been otherwise, but breaks out in admiration: "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all." [Psalms civ. 24.] He could see nothing from one end of the universe to another, but what speaks infinite perfection: "In wisdom hast thou made them all!" And as the omnipotency and wisdom of God is magnified in the creation, so also,

Thirdly. *His bounty*.—In bestowing all this visible creation upon man for his use and benefit: as one saith, "God made man *last*, that he might bring him, as a father brings his son, into an house ready furnished." This is one branch of our honouring God, when we ascribe to God the Father the glory of the work of creation.

(2.) *When we ascribe to God the Son the glory of his most glorious work of redemption*.—Wherein these particulars are wonderful:—

(i.) *His ineffable incarnation*.—"Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh," (1 Tim. iii. 16,) that is, the invisible God made visible in a body of flesh. This was a mystery indeed: a Son *in heaven* without a *mother*; and a Son *on earth* without a *father*.

(ii.) *Christ's stupendous being "made under the law"* (Gal. iv. 4.)—Behold, He that made the law, was made under the law! *Under the ceremonial law*, that he might abolish it. *Under the moral law*, the preceptive power of it, that he might fulfil it, that so every believer might have a "righteousness" which he may call his own; (Rom. x. 4;) the *maledictive* power of it, that he might take it away. (Gal. iii. 13.)

(iii.) *Christ's work of redemption was principally transacted by his death and passion*.—For therein he laid down *pretium redemptionis*, "the price of redemption," which was "his own precious blood." (Acts xx. 28; 1 Peter i. 18, 19.)

(iv.) *This great work and mystery of our redemption was perfectly consummated in Christ's glorious resurrection*.—Wherein he "spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them" *εν αυτω*. (Col. ii. 15.) Some render it, "in it," and would refer it to his cross: but *εν αυτω* is to be understood here in the masculine gender, not in the neuter; and so to be translated, "in himself." Christ, rising from the dead like a conqueror, led death, and the grave, and hell, and the devil in chains after him; as conquerors in war were wont to lead their vanquished enemies, whom they had taken prisoners, in chains of captivity after them, exposing them to the public scorn of all spectators.

Thus we are to ascribe the glory of the work of redemption to Jesus Christ the Son of God; and thereby do honour God in our sanctifying of his holy sabbath.

(3.) *We likewise glorify the Holy Ghost, when we ascribe to him the honour of the work of sanctification*.—Whether we look upon it in that first miraculous effusion of the Spirit which our Lord Jesus, as the King and Head of his church, did first purchase by the blood of his cross; and afterward ascended into heaven and obtained of his Father when he took possession of his kingdom; and, lastly, did abundantly pour down

upon the apostles, and other officers and members of his evangelical church, in the day of pentecost, (Acts ii. 1—4,) which was (as it were) the sanctification of the whole gospel-church at once in the first-fruits; or whether we understand that work of sanctification, which successively is wrought by the Holy Ghost in every individual elect child of God; happily begun in their first conversion, and mightily upheld and carried on in the soul to the dying day. This is a glorious work, consisting in these two glorious branches of it, mortification of corruption, which, before the Holy Ghost hath done, shall end in the total annihilation of the body of sin; (that blessed privilege groaned for so much by the blessed apostle, Rom. vii. 24;) and the erecting of a beautiful fabric of grace, holiness in the soul, which is the very "image" of God, (an erection of more transcendent wonder and glory than the six-days' workmanship,) which the Holy Ghost doth "uphold" and will perfect unto the day of Christ. (Heb. i. 3.) And this is the great end and design of the sabbath and of the ordinances of the gospel, according to the word which the great Maker and Appointer of sabbaths speaketh: "I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them." [Ezek. xx. 12.]

Here then is the third branch of our sanctifying the sabbath, namely, the ascribing to God the Holy Ghost the glory of the work of sanctification.

And this is proper work for Christians, in the intervals and void spaces between the public ordinances,—to sit down, and first seriously and impartially to examine the work of grace in our souls, 1. For the truth of it. 2. For the growth of it: and then, if we can give God and our own consciences some scriptural account concerning this matter, humbly to fall down, and to put the crown of praise upon the head of free grace, which hath made a difference where it found none. And so much for this text at this time.

SERMON VII.

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HOW WE MAY HEAR THE WORD WITH PROFIT.

Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.—James i. 21.

THESE Jews to whom the apostle writes were guilty of many foul and scandalous sins; but their master-sin was the love of this world: “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.” (James iv. 4.) And from this sin arose many other evils wherewith they are charged in this epistle, as,

1. *Their tickling joy in hopes to get gain*: “Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain.” (iv. 13.)

2. *Their hoarding-up of riches*: “Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.” (v. 3.)

3. *Withholding the pay of the labouring man*: “Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.” (v. 4.)

4. *Their fightings and contentions one with the other; yea, their killing one the other to get their estates*: “From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not even from your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain.” (iv. 1, 2.) Their desiring to have, made them kill one the other, as Ahab did Naboth.

5. *Their admiring the rich and vilifying the poor*: “If there come into your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing.” (ii. 2, 3.)

6. And lastly, to name no more, hence arose *their unprofitable hearing of the word*: “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.” (i. 22.) They heard, they had the best places at meetings; but they were *hearers* only, they *did* nothing: for riches, as Christ tells us, choked the word: “And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life.” (Luke viii. 14.)

And as they were guilty of these moral vices, so [they were] erroneous in the doctrine of faith, especially in that main article of justification, holding an empty and inefficacious faith sufficient to interest a man in Christ:

“What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?” (James ii. 14.) Can *such* a faith save him? *Μη δυναται ἡ πιστις σωσαι αυτον*; “Can *that* faith save him? Can *such* faith save him?” That faith that saves is always fruitful; and that faith which is not fruitful is no true faith. The apostle doth not deny that we are justified by faith, by faith only; but he denies that faith without works is a true faith, it is only an empty and airy notion; and such a faith cannot justify nor save a man.

Well then, this being the case and condition of the people, it was impossible they should be quiet and patient hearers of the word, but must needs fret and fume against it as that which contradicts their lusts, errors, and delusions. The apostle, therefore, to take them off from this bitter and untoward spirit in hearing the word, gives them this wholesome counsel and advice from God: “Wherefore, laying apart all filthiness,” &c.

All filthiness, ῥυπαριαν—I will not restrain it to covetousness, nor to scurrilous and reproachful speeches, but take it in its utmost latitude, as denoting sin in the general. *Ῥυπος*, from whence comes *ῥυπαρια*, sometimes signifies “the filth of the flesh.” *Ου σαρκος αποθεις ρυπου*. “Not the putting away the filth of the flesh.” (1 Peter iii. 21.) And *ῥυπαρος* is applied to filthy garments: “And Joshua was clothed,” *ιματια ῥυπαρα*, “with filthy garments.” (Zech. iii. 3.) And so it may be taken in James ii. 2: “A poor man,” *εν ῥυπαρα εσθητι*, “in vile raiment.” Hence we learn that sin is a filthy thing. Sin is called filthiness in Prov. xxx. 12: “There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.” And therefore, when God calls us from sin, he bids us wash ourselves: “Wash you, make you clean.” (Isai. i. 16.) “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit.” (2 Cor. vii. 1.) And we read of this, as that they are ashamed of their sins, and loathe themselves for them, and abhor themselves because of sin, and cast them away as a polluted and menstruous cloth. All these expositions denote the filthiness of sin.

And superfluity of naughtiness, περισσειαν κακιας—*Κακια* is often taken in the scripture for “malice:” “Therefore let us keep the truth, not with old leaven, not with leaven,” *κακιας*, “of malice.” (1 Cor. v. 8.) But, because it hath here no article, and because it often signifies *all manner of sin*, I will give it rope, without any limitation. The apostle, then, by “superfluity of naughtiness,” means the redundancy and overflowing of sin amongst those professors. There is a chaos of sin in all of us; but it was very spreading and luxuriant in these professors: and no marvel, for they loved money, which is the root of all evil.

Laying apart, αποθεμενοι—Or “laying down:” “The witnesses” *απεθεντο*, “laid down their clothes.” (Acts vii. 58.) It signifies the rejection, casting off, or putting away of sin. “Put ye off all these things,” (Col. iii. 8.) saith Paul: and again: “Put off the old man.” (Eph. iv. 22.) And so Peter: “Wherefore,” *αποθεμενοι*, “laying aside all malice.” (1 Peter ii. 1.)

Receive with meekness—Receive, that is, hear it, entertain it, give it entrance and admission.

With meekness, εν πραύτητι or εν πραοτητι.—Now *πραοτης* is *μετριότης περι οργης, καταστασις και ερημωσις της οργης*, “it is the moderation or rebatement of sinful anger.” For then, when the apostle saith, “Receive the word with meekness,” his meaning is: “Do not shut out the word by a peevish, froward, stormy, and angry spirit; but take it in with calmness, mildness, and submission.”

The engrafted word, τον εμφυτον λογον.—Though it be not *τον λογον εγκεντριζομενον*, which is the word used for “engrafting,” in Rom. xi.; yet, since *εμφυτειαι* signifies “graftings” and *εμφυτευειν*, “to graft,” the translation is warrantable. But yet *λογος εμφυτος* may respect the planting or the sowing of the word, and may be read, “the word planted,” or “the word sown;” that is, sown in your hearts by the hand of Christ’s ministers. See Mark iv. 15: “But when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.”

Which is able to save your souls.—That is, from hell and damnation. There is this power in the word; but it is mutuatitious, extrinical, and borrowed. It is the power of God to salvation: “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation.” (Rom. i. 16.) The word of itself saves not, but God by the word. “It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” (1 Cor. i. 21.)

The words thus opened, the case I am to speak to is this: *How we may hear the word so as to profit by it.*

For the resolution of this question, I shall,

First, Tell you what we mean by “the word.”

Secondly, What by “profiting.”

And, *Thirdly*, How we shall profit by the hearing of it.

I. By “the word” I understand the word of God; which word of God may be considered either as it is written in the scripture, or as it is preached, that is, expounded and applied by the ministers of Christ. The question is concerning the word preached, *How we may hear it so as to profit by it.* Ministers are to preach the word: “Preach the word.” (2 Tim. iv. 2.) *Preach the word!* what is that? That is, Open and unfold the scriptures with a suitable application of them to the estate and the condition of the hearers. Reprove from them, rebuke from them, exhort from them.

This was Christ’s preaching: “He found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,” &c., and then he expounds it: “This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.” (Luke iv. 17, 18, 21.) “And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.” (Luke xxiv. 27.) This was Peter’s preaching. (Acts ii. 14.) In this sermon he chiefly insists upon two scriptures, and expounds them both, and then applies all to their consciences: “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ.” (Acts ii. 36.) And this was Paul’s preaching: “There came many to his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening.” (Acts xxviii.

23.) And for the Levites before Christ, who taught the people the good knowledge of the law, they preached after this manner: "So they read in the book of the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused the people to understand the reading." (Neh. viii. 7, 8.) And that was the manner in the synagogues after Christ: "And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on." (Acts xiii. 15.) Moses was not only read, but preached: "Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day." (Acts xv. 21.) And Paul prescribes the way of preaching to Timothy: "Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine." (1 Tim. iv. 13.) I understand it of public reading the scriptures in the church, with the application of them by way of doctrine and exhortation.

Well, then, by "the word" we understand the word preached, which is the opening and unfolding the scriptures, by the ministers of Christ.

II. *What is meant by profiting? or, what is it to profit by the word?*

I answer, we profit by the word, when we get that good and spiritual advantage from it for which it was appointed and designed by God. Now, God hath appointed his word,

1. *For learning and instruction.*—"For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted." (1 Cor. xiv. 31.) The Colossians learned by the ministry of the word: "As ye also learned of Epaphras, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ." (Col. i. 7.) And the Philippians learned by Paul: "Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do." (Phil. iv. 9.) The things that are to be heard by the ministry, are matters of faith, and matters of practice; and if, by hearing the word, we get a good understanding in things that are to be believed by us, and the things that are to be done by us, then we profit by it. But if we remain ignorant as to these things after mercy received, then we hear the word without profit.

2. *For conversion.*—God hath appointed his word "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light." (Acts xxvi. 18.) And the angel, speaking of John Baptist's ministry, saith, "And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God." (Luke i. 16.) Now, the word turns man unto God,

(1.) *As it discovers sin.*—If the scriptures be dextrously handled, they will search into the very secrets of men's hearts: "If there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest." (1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25.) The Baptist's preaching discovered to the Jews their carnal security in trusting to Abraham: "And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father;" (Matt. iii. 9;) their want of charity, their covetous and humorous disposition: "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.) It discovered the publicans' exactings: "And he saith to them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you;" (verse 13;) and the soldiers' violence: "And he said unto them, Do violence to no man." (Verse 14.)

(2.) *As it brings people to the confession of sins.*—The Baptist's

preaching brought his hearers to confess their sins: "And they were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins." (Matt. iii. 6.) And so did Paul's: "And many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds." (Acts xix. 18.)

(3.) *As it works a kindly mourning and sorrow for sin.*—Upon Peter's sermon the Jews were pricked at the heart. (Acts ii. 37.) The people wept when they heard the word of the Lord. (Neh. viii. 9.) After the children of Israel had heard these words, they wept for the perverseness of their nature. (Jer. iii. 21.) The word which they heard was: "Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith the Lord." (Jer. iii. 20.)

(4.) *As it works amendment and reformation.*—The word turns people from their sins: "They themselves show of us what manner of entrance in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and the true God;" (1 Thess. i. 9;) and makes them fruitful toward God: "Ye heard before in the word of the gospel; which is come unto you, as it is in all the world, and bringeth forth fruit. (Col. i. 5, 6.) Now, then, if the word converts you to God, if it discovers your sins; if it causes you to confess them, to mourn for them, and to leave them; then you profit by the word. But if under hearing you do not see the sins that reign in you, as pride, covetousness, passion; if you do not confess them heartily before God, if you do not mourn kindly for them, nor leave them; you hear without profit.

3. *God hath appointed his word for the building up of those that are called, converted, and sanctified.*—"I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." (Acts xx. 32.) Apollos, by his preaching, "helped them that had believed through grace." (Acts xviii. 27.) The word doth not only serve for the implantation of grace, but it excites, strengthens, and draws out the graces of petitioners. Paul's preaching strengthened the disciples: "And he went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples." (Acts xviii. 23.) God's word is compared to meat: "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?" (Luke xii. 42.) And meat strengthens and nourishes the body; and so the word of God: "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine." (1 Tim. iv. 6.) Well, then, if by the hearing of the word you are built up, and grow by it; if your faith grow exceedingly, if your love abound, if you bring forth much fruit, then you profit by it. But if your sins grow not weaker, and your graces stronger, then you hear it without profit.

4. And, lastly, to name no more, *the word was appointed for consolation.*—"Ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted." (1 Cor. xiv. 31.) The Samaritans rejoiced at Philip's preaching: "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ to them. And there was great joy in that city." (Acts viii. 5, 8.) And so did the eunuch. (Acts viii. 29—38.) And so did

the jailor at Paul's preaching: "And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he rejoiced, believing in God with all his house." (Acts xvi. 32, 34.) Now the word comforts as it opens God's attributes, such as his mercy, wisdom, faithfulness, and power. Secondly: As it discovers Christ, the promises and privileges of the saints. Thirdly: As it discovers and reveals the marks and characters of God's children. Fourthly: As it answers the doubts and fears of saints. Well, then, if in hearing the word you find that it supports, strengthens, and revives your hearts like a cordial, then you profit by it. But if you find nothing sweet nor refreshing in it, you hear it without profit.

III. I come now to the third thing: *How we shall profit by hearing of the word.*—That is, How shall we attain the benefit from the word of God for which it was appointed? It was appointed for instruction, conversion, edification, consolation. How may we hear it so that we may obtain these things by it? I shall give you four directions, and conclude.

DIRECTION I.—First. *Hear it attentively.*—Christ, in the beginning of his sermons, calls upon his auditors to hearken: "And he said unto them in his doctrine, Hearken." (Mark iv. 2, 3.) And so doth Paul: "Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience." (Acts xiii. 16.) And, in Rev. ii. 7: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches." And you read in Luke xix. 48: "All the people were very attentive to hear him," *ἐξεκρεματο αὐτοῦ ακουειν*, "they hung upon him hearing," that is, they hung their ears upon his mouth, that they might receive every word, and miss nothing. This phrase is common in Greek authors: *Ἦων λογων ἐξεκρεμαντο. Της φωνης ἐξεκρεματο** and in the Latin,

Narrantis conjux pendet ab ore viri.†—OVIDII *Epist. Heroid.* i. 30.

And Augustine, speaking of his hearing Ambrose, saith, *Verbis ejus suspendebat intentus.*‡ And one promising to hear attentively, saith,

Incipe, suspensis auribus ista bibam.§—PROPERTII *Eleg.* lib. iii. *eleg.* v. 10.

Now this attentive hearing is a diligent heeding of the things that are spoken by the ministers of Christ, so as not to let any thing pass without notice and observation. This was the attention of the Samaritans to Philip's preaching: "And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake;" (Acts viii. 6;) and the attention of Lydia to Paul's preaching: "Whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended to the things which were spoken of Paul." (Acts xvi. 14.) *That were spoken by Paul*—That is, to all of them. What saith Cornelius? "Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God." (Acts x. 33.) So that our

* "They hung upon his words." "His attention was arrested by the sound of his voice."—EDIT.

† "His wife, while listening to her warlike lord,
With fix'd attention, hangs on every word."—EDIT.

‡ "His discourse absorbed my attention, and I heard him with admiration and interest."—EDIT.

§ "My ears shall drink-in all with joy intense,
If at the charming source thy words commence."—EDIT.

attention must be catholic and universal: we must listen to all that is spoken to us in the name of Christ the Lord. But yet, in preaching, some things are more especially to be attended to. 1. If any scripture be clearly opened, attend to that. 2. If any doubt of conscience be fully resolved, attend to that. 3. If any sin of yours be particularly discovered, attend to that. Lastly, if any thing be spoken by the minister with a more than ordinary warmth and fervency, attend to that: there is some divine signature with it, and it calls for our special observation.

That is the first: we are to *hear the word attentively*. I will only mention two hinderances of attention, and proceed:—

1. *Wandering thoughts, thoughts that are foreign and heterogeneous to the duty in hand.*—These thoughts employ the mind, and hinder the hearing of the word. Now these thoughts are various according to the employments, inclinations, and circumstances of men. Wanton people have filthy thoughts. Finical people are thinking of their attires and ornaments; worldly people, of their trades and callings.

2. *Drowsiness and sleepiness.*—When the head nods, and the eyes begin to swim, the sermon is likely to be heard well! But yet this is too common a practice, and that amongst professors; whereby they vilify the ordinance of preaching, they give an ill example to others, and render their uprightness and integrity suspected by sober Christians. And I wish that those professors who use it customarily and indulge themselves in it, would put off their livery and tell us plainly they are none of the Lord's family.

DIRECT. II. *Hear and receive the word with meekness.*—This is the direction of the text: "Wherefore lay aside all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word," &c. We must not be angry at the word; if so, it will do us no good. People are very apt to be angry at the word: see Luke iv. 28: "And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath." "Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?" (Matt. xv. 12.) "When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them." (Acts v. 33.) "Now it came to pass, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that the Lord had commanded him to speak unto all the people, that the priests and the prophets and all the people took him, saying, Thou shalt surely die." (Jer. xxvi. 8, 9.) "Wherefore the anger of the Lord was kindled against Amaziah, and he sent unto him a prophet, which said unto him, Why hast thou sought after the gods of the people, which could not deliver their own people out of thine hand? And the king said unto him, Art thou made of the king's council? forbear; why shouldst thou be smitten?" (2 Chron. xxv. 15, 16.) "And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said unto him, Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and not relied on the Lord thy God, therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thine hand. Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubims a huge host, with very many chariots and horsemen? yet, because thou didst rely on the Lord, he delivered them into thine hand. For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose

heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly : therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars. Then Asa was wroth with the seer, and put him in a prison house ; for he was in a rage with him because of this thing." (2 Chron. xvi. 7—10.)

This is a notable instance : 1. Because this anger is great, " a rage," and such a rage as put the prophet in prison. 2. It is expressly said that this rage was against the word. (Verse 10.) 3. This rage was found in a good and holy man, whose heart was perfect with the Lord his God.

Now, from this instance, we may learn what part of the word it is that men are most angry at. 1. *The word which discovers their sins, and charges them home upon their consciences.*—As the seer charged Asa home : " Thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and not relied on the Lord thy God ;" and this vexed him. 2. *That word that reproaches them for their sins.*—" Herein thou hast done foolishly." (Verse 9.) Men cannot endure to have their actions charged with folly. 3. *That word that threatens them for their sins.*—" Henceforth thou shalt have wars." (Verse 9.) People cannot bear it to be threatened. This was the great quarrel that the Jews had with Jeremiah : he came so often with a burden of the Lord, and threatened them : see Jer. xxvi. 9 : " Why hast thou prophesied in the name of the Lord, saying, This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate without an inhabitant ?" When Christ threatened the scribes and Pharisees, they could bear no longer : " And they sought to lay hold on him, but feared the people, for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them." (Mark xii. 12.)

Thus you see people are apt to be angry at the hearing of the word. But what kind of people are most apt to be angry ? First. *They that are great in the world.*—" And he taught daily in the temple ; but the chief priests and the scribes, and the chief of the people, sought to destroy him." (Luke xix. 47.) It was Jehoiakim the king that cut Jeremiah's roll in pieces, and it was Herod that thrust John into prison for reproving him. Secondly. *Proud men.*—" When Jeremiah made an end of speaking unto all the people all the words of the Lord their God, for which the Lord their God had sent him to them, then spake all the proud men, saying unto Jeremiah, Thou speakest falsely." (Jer. xliii. 1, 2.) Proud men cannot endure a check, either by the public ministry, or by a private admonition. Thirdly. *Guilty persons.*—Why was Cain so touchy when God asked him about Abel ? Because he was guilty of his blood. Guilty persons are like galled horses ; they kick if you touch their sores. Nothing hinders us from receiving the word with meekness like the conscience of sin ; wherefore when the apostle bids us " receive the word with meekness," he bids us " lay aside all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness." If the heart be surfeited with sin, it will rise and boak* against the word. When Christ preached against covetousness, the Pharisees that were covetous were vexed at him, and expressed their vexation by sneering at him : " And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things ; and they derided him." (Luke xvi. 13, 14.)

* An old word, sometimes written *boke*, which signifies " to belch," or " to retch."—EDIT.

DIRECT. III. *Hear the word with a good and honest heart.*—"But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience." (Luke viii. 15.) This is a comprehensive head, and takes-in all particulars that concern the right manner of hearing; but I shall contract it and reduce it, 1. To an understanding heart. 2. A believing heart. 3. A loving heart.

1. Then hear the word *with an understanding heart.*—The way-side hearers hear, but do not understand. "When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not: this is he that receiveth the seed by the way-side." (Matt. xiii. 19.) But they that receive it into good ground, that is, into an honest heart, understand it. "But he that received seed into the good ground, is he that heareth the word and understandeth it, which also beareth fruit." (Verse 23.) Jesus Christ calls upon his auditors to hear and understand: "Hearken unto me, every one of you, and understand." (Mark vii. 14.) And blames them that do not understand: "And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also?" (Verse 18.) And it was his manner, after preaching, to ask if they understood him: "Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things?" (Matt. xiii. 51.) The generality of hearers are without understanding; they neither understand doctrinal nor experimental truths; not the one *for lack of knowledge*, nor the other *for lack of feeling*; and hence it is that they remember so little of the word, and that they are so little affected with the word.

2. *With a believing heart.*—"Believe the gospel." (Mark i. 15.) "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper." (2 Chron. xx. 20.) Two things especially we are to mingle our faith with,—the threatenings and the promises: (1.) *With the threatenings.*—So the people of Nineveh. "So the people of Nineveh believed God." (Jonah iii. 5.) (2.) *With the promises.*—"And the people believed: and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshipped." (Exod. iv. 31.) Were the threatenings and promises which are constantly preached, fully understood, thoroughly believed, and brought home to your consciences by spiritual application, this would quickly put an end to sin; for the threatenings would scare you from sin, and the promises would allure you to duty.

3. *With a loving heart.*—"As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word;" (1 Peter ii. 2;) as new-born babes love the breast. David was a great lover of the word of God: "Thy word is very pure; therefore thy servant loveth it." (Psalm cxix. 140.) He loved it exceedingly: "My soul hath kept thy testimonies; and I love them exceedingly." (Verse 167.) His longing after the word was so vehement, that it almost consumed him. "My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath to thy judgments at all times." (Verse 20.) He loved it far better than gold: "Therefore, I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold." (Verse 127.) But how far he loved it, he could not tell: "O how I love thy law! It is my meditation all the day;" (verse 97;) and therefore leaves it with God to judge his love to it: "Consider how I love

thy precepts." (Verse 159.) Brethren, had there been such a love in the people of England to the word, the mouths of so many ministers had never been stopped: and whereas we judge that such and such are the causes of it, pray let us remember that no man living can take the word from us, unless they be first empowered by our disaffection to it.

DIRECT. IV. And last. *If you would profit by hearing of the word, keep what you hear of it.*—"They, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word," *κατεχουσι*, "keep it." (Luke viii. 15.) *Κατεχειν τον λογον* is "to hold fast the word" that it slip not from us. "Prove all things;" *το καλον κατεχετε*, "hold fast that which is good." (1 Thess. v. 21.) "The people sought him, and came unto him, and," *κατειχον αυτον*, "stayed him, that he should not depart from them." (Luke iv. 42.) "By which" (gospel) "also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory," *ει κατεχετε*, "if ye hold fast, what I preached unto you." (1 Cor. xv. 2.) You know, if the seed be not kept in the ground, it is sown to no purpose; so if the word be not kept in the memory and in the heart, it will come to nothing. Keep therefore the word in your hearts; *κατεχετε*, "hold it fast," lest the devil snatch it from you. For, look, as the fowls of the air follow the seedsman to pick up the corn as soon as he hath scattered it, so the prince of the air, the devil, is at hand to take the word out of our hearts: "But when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts." (Mark iv. 15.) Immediately, as soon as we have heard the word, the devil is at hand to take the word out of our hearts. He taketh the word out of our hearts; in Matthew (xiii. 19) it is *αρραξει*, "he snatcheth it;" and if you would know why the devil is so hasty to snatch away the word, Christ tells you: "Then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved." (Luke viii. 12.)

"But how shall we keep the word?"

1. *Repeat it in your families.*—The Bereans conned over Paul's sermons, and examined his proofs and allegations: "They received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." (Acts xvii. 11.)

2. *Talk of it as you go from hearing.*—Jesus Christ's hearers talked of the word by the way: "Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?" (Luke xxiv. 32.) After Paul had preached, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves: "And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves." (Acts xxvii. 29.)

3. *Pray to the Lord, that he would preserve the word in your hearts by his Spirit.*—The devil would snatch away the word of God from us, if there were not a stronger to guard it, and that is the Holy Ghost: "That good thing which was committed to thee keep, by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us." (2 Tim. i. 14.) Pray then after the word, as David: "O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the hearts of thy people." (1 Chron. xxix. 18.) And such a prayer, coming from an honest heart, shall secure the word, so that it shall abide with you, and it shall

come after to your minds; it shall come seasonably in the very nick and stress of exigency, and it shall come with efficacy and power.

Thus much shall serve for the resolution of the question, *how to hear the word so as to profit by it.*—Only this I add, and conclude:—that if God shall bless these directions, and give us thus to hear his word, it will be an excellent sign that God will continue the preaching of it to us, and that his ministers shall teach these things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding them.

SERMON VIII.

BY THE REV. THOMAS WATSON, A.M.

HOW WE MAY READ THE SCRIPTURES WITH MOST SPIRITUAL
PROFIT.

And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them.—Deuteronomy xvii. 19.

WHAT Cicero said of Aristotle's Politics, may not unfitly be said of this Book of Deuteronomy: "It is full of golden eloquence." In this chapter God instructs the people of the Jews about setting a king over them. And there are two things specified in order to their king:

1. His election.
2. His religion.

1. *His election.*—"Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the Lord thy God shall choose." (Verse 15.) Good reason God should have the choice of their king, seeing "by him kings reign." (Prov. viii. 15.)

2. *His religion.*—"When he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, he shall write him a copy of this law in a book, out of that which is before the priests the Levites." * (Verse 18.) Here was a good beginning of a king's reign: the first thing he did after he sat upon the throne, was to copy out the word of God in a book. And in the text: "It shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them." *It shall be with him*—The book of the law shall be his *vade mecum*, or daily companion. Charles the Great used to set his crown upon the Bible. Indeed the Bible is the best supporter of the crown. *And he shall read therein* †—It is not

* *Leviticus sacerdotes in atrio templi volumen legis, quod erat primariae autoritatis, custodiebant.*—PAULUS FAGIUS. "The book of the law, which was of supreme authority, was carefully preserved by the Levitical priests in the inner court of the temple."—EDIT.
† *Legere debuit, et sibi privatim, et in templo, ut sciret populus neminem a lege excipi.*—GROTIUS. "It was a part of his duty to read the law, both to himself in private, and publicly in the temple, in order that the people might know that no one was exempted from its observance."—EDIT.

below the majesty of a prince to peruse the oracles of heaven : in them are comprised sacred apophthegms : " I will speak of excellent things." (Prov. viii. 6.) In the Septuagint it is, *σεμνα*, "grave things;" in the Hebrew, מְנִיָּה "princely things;" such as are fit for a God to speak, and a king to read. Nor must the king only read the book of the law at his first instalment into his kingdom, but *he shall read therein all the days of his life.*—וְיִיָּן קִי־לֵב He must not leave off reading till he left off reigning. And the reasons why he must be conversant in the law of God, are in the subsequent words : (1.) "That he may learn to fear the Lord his God." Reading of the word is the best means to usher-in the fear of the Lord. (2.) "That he may keep all the words of this law, to do them." (3.) "That he may prolong his days in his kingdom."

I shall now confine myself to these words : "He shall read in it," that is, the book of the law, "all the days of his life." The holy scripture is, as Austin saith, a golden epistle sent to us from God.* This is to be read diligently. "Ignorance" of scripture is "the mother of" error, not "devotion." "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures." (Matt. xxii. 29.) We are commanded to "search the scriptures." (John v. 39.) The Greek word *Ερευνατε* signifies to search as for a vein of silver. How diligently doth a child read over his father's will and testament, and a citizen peruse his charter! With the like diligence should we read God's word, which is our Magna Charta for heaven.† It is a mercy the Bible is not prohibited. Trajan the emperor forbade the Jews to read in the book of the law. Let us inquire at this sacred oracle. Apollos was "mighty in the scriptures." (Acts xviii. 24.) Melancthon, when he was young, sucked *αδολον γαλα*, "the sincere milk of the word."‡ Alphonsus, king of Arragon, read over the Bible fourteen times. That Roman lady Cecilia had, by much reading of the word, made her breast *bibliothecam Christi*, "the library of Christ," as Jerome speaks.§ Were the scriptures only in their original tongue, many would plead excuse for not reading; but when "this sword of the Spirit" is unsheathed, and the word is made plain to us by being translated, what should hinder us from a diligent search into these holy mysteries? Adam was forbid, upon pain of death, to taste of the tree of knowledge : "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Gen. ii. 17.) But there is no danger of touching this tree of holy scriptures; if we do *not* eat of this tree of knowledge, we shall surely die. What will become of them who are strangers to scripture? "I have written to him the great things of my law; but they were counted as a strange

* *Quid est sacra scriptura, nisi quædam epistola Omnipotentis Dei ad creaturam, in quâ verba Dei sonant, et cor Dei discitur?*—AUGUSTINUS, in *Psalmos*. "What is holy scripture but a sort of epistle from Almighty God to his creatures, in which the words of God are heard, and by which they learn his mind?"—EDIT. † *Querit scripturâ lectorem vigilantem, desidiosum respuit.*—RIVETI *Isagoge ad Scripturas*, cap. 13. "The Bible invites an attentive reader, but rejects one who is slothful."—EDIT. ‡ MELCHIOR ADAMUS in *Vitâ Melancthonis*. § *Si Alexander Homerum ita amplectus est, et Scipio Africanus Xenophontis Παιδειαν vis e manibus deposuit, quid nos in sacro codice agere oportet?*—QUISTORPIUS. *Vide* CHYTREI *Prælect. in Jos., et MORNÆUM*. "If Alexander valued Homer so highly, and Scipio Africanus scarcely ever allowed the *Cyropædia* of Xenophon to be out of his hands, how ought we to act with regard to the sacred volume?"—EDIT.

thing." (Hosea viii. 12.) Many lay aside scripture as rusty armour; (Jer. viii. 9;) they are better read in romances than in St. Paul; they spend many hours *inter pectinem et speculum*, "between the comb and the glass;" but their eyes begin to be sore when they look upon a Bible. The very Turks will rise up in judgment against these Christians: they reverence the books of Moses; and if they find but a leaf wherein any thing of the Pentateuch is written, they take it up and kiss it. They who slight the word written, slight God himself, whose stamp it bears. To slight the king's edict, is an affront offered to the person of the king. Scripture-vilifiers are in a damnable state.* "Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed." (Prov. xiii. 13.) Nor is it enough to read the word of God, but it should be our care to get some spiritual emolument and profit by it, that our souls may be *εντροφομενοι*, "nourished up in the words of faith." (1 Tim. iv. 6.) Why else was the scripture written, but that it might profit us? God did not give us his word only as a landscape, to look upon; but he delivered it to us, as a father delivers a stock of money to his son, to improve. It is sad not to profit by the word, to be like a body in an atrophy, that doth not thrive: men would be loath to trade, and get no profit.

QUESTION. The grand question I am to speak to is this: *How we may read the scriptures with most spiritual profit.* It is a momentous question, and of daily use.

RESPONSE. For the resolution of this question, I shall lay down several rules or directions about reading of scripture.

DIRECTION I. *If you would profit by reading, remove those things which will hinder your profiting.*—That the body may thrive, obstructions must be removed. There are three obstructions [that] must be removed, if you would profit by scripture.

1. *Remove the love of every sin.*†—Let a physician prescribe never so good receipts, if the patient takes poison, it will hinder the virtue and operation of the physic. The scripture prescribes excellent receipts; but sin lived-in poisons all. The body cannot thrive in a fever; nor can the soul, under the feverish heat of lust. Plato calls the love of sin *magnus daemon*, "a great devil." As the rose is destroyed by the canker which breeds in it, so are the souls of men by those sins they live in.

2. *Take heed of the thorns which will choke the word read.*—These thorns our Saviour expounds to be "the cares of this world." (Matt. xiii. 22.) By "cares" is meant covetousness.‡ A covetous man is a pluralist; he hath such diversity of secular employments, that he can scarce find time to read; or if he doth, what solecisms doth he commit in reading! While his eye is upon the Bible, his heart is upon the world; it is not the writings of the apostles he is so much taken with, as the writings in his account-book. Is this man likely to profit? You may as soon extract oils and syrups out of a flint, as he any real benefit out of scripture.

3. *Take heed of jesting with scripture.*—This is playing with fire.

* *Dei eloquia rejicientes, multis se exitibus laqueis involvunt.*—CALVIN. "Those who reject the oracles of God, entangle themselves in intricate and destructive snares."—EDIT.

† *Plurimi peccata radunt, non eradicant.*—BERNARDUS. "Most persons slightly graze their sins, but do not totally eradicate them."—EDIT.

‡ *Μονον αργυρον βλεπουσιν.* "Money is the sole object of their gaze and pursuit."—EDIT.

Some cannot be merry unless they make bold with God. When they are sad, they bring forth the scripture as their harp to drive away the evil spirit.* As that drunkard who, having drunk off his cups, called to his fellows, "Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out." In the fear of God beware of this.† King Edward IV. would not endure to have his crown jested with, but caused *him* to be executed *who* said he would make his son heir to the crown,‡ meaning the sign of the crown: much less will God endure to have his word jested with. Eusebius relates of one who took a piece of scripture to jest with, [that] God struck him with frenzy. The Lord may justly give over such persons εις αδοκιμον νουν, "to a reprobate mind." (Rom. i. 28.)

DIRECT. II. *If you would profit, prepare your hearts to the reading of the word.*—The heart is an instrument [that] needs putting in tune. "Prepare your hearts unto the Lord." (1 Sam. vii. 3.) The Heathens (as Plutarch notes) thought it indecent to be too hasty or rash in the service of their supposed deities.§ This preparation to reading consists in two things: (1.) *In summoning our thoughts together to attend that solemn work we are going about.*—The thoughts are stragglers; therefore rally them together. (2.) *In purging out those unclean affections which do indispose us to reading.*—The serpent, before he drinks, casts up his poison. In this we should be "wise as serpents;" before we come to these "waters of life," [we should] cast away the poison of impure affections. Many come rashly to the reading of the word; and no wonder, if they come without preparation, [that] they go away without profit.

DIRECT. III. *Read the scripture with reverence.*—Think every line you read God is speaking to you. The ark, wherein the law was put, was overlaid with pure gold, and was carried on bars, that the Levites might not touch it. (Exod. xxv. 10—15.) Why was this, but to breed in the people reverence to the law? When Ehud told Eglon he had a message to him from God, he arose from his throne. (Judges iii. 20.) The word written is a message to us from Jehovah; with what veneration should we receive it!

DIRECT. IV. *Read the books of scripture in order.*—Though occurrences may sometimes divert our method, yet for a constant course it is best to observe an order in reading. Order is an help to memory: we do not begin to read a friend's letter in the middle.

DIRECT. V. *Get a right understanding of scripture.*—"Give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments." (Psalm cxix. 73.) Though there are some δυσνοητα, knots in scripture, which are not easily untied; yet things essential to salvation the Holy Ghost hath plainly pointed out to us. The knowledge of the sense of scripture is the first step to profiting. In the law Aaron was first to light the lamps, and then to burn the incense: the lamp of the understanding must be first lighted, before the affections can be inflamed. Get what knowledge you

* *Procul hinc, procul este, profani.*—VIRGILII *Aeneid.* lib. vi. 258.

† *Fly, ye profane! far, far away remove.*—PITT'S Translation.

‡ *Quos Deus vult perdere iis permittit ludere cum sacris scripturis.*—LUTHERUS. "Those whom it is the will of God to destroy, he permits to jest and trifle with the holy scriptures."—EDIT. † SPEED'S Chronicle. § Ουκ εν παραδη προσκυνει, &c.—PLUTARCHUS. "They do not worship in a cursory manner," &c.—EDIT.

can by comparing scriptures, by conferring with others, by using the best annotators. Without knowledge, the scripture is a sealed book; every line is too high for us; and if the word shoot above our head, it can never hit our heart.

DIRECT. VI. Read the word with seriousness.—"If one go over the scripture cursorily," saith Erasmus, "there is little good to be got by it; but if he be serious in reading of it, it is the 'savour of life.'" And well may we be serious, if we consider the importance of those truths which are bound up in this sacred volume. "It is not a vain thing for you; * because it is your life." (Deut. xxxii. 47.) If a letter were to be broken open and read, wherein a man's whole estate were concerned, how serious would he be in reading of it! In the scripture our salvation is concerned; it treats of the love of Christ, a serious subject. (Titus iii. 4.) Christ hath loved mankind more than the angels that fell. (Heb. ii. 16.) The loadstone, despising the gold and pearl, draws the iron to it: thus Christ passed by the angels, who were of a more noble extract, and drew mankind to him. Christ loved us more than his own life; nay, though we had a hand in his death, yet that he should not leave us out of his will, this is a love "which passeth knowledge." (Eph. iii. 19.) Who can read this without seriousness? The scripture speaks of the mystery of faith, the eternal recompences, the paucity of them that shall be saved: "Few chosen." (Matt. xx. 16.) One saith,† the names of all the good emperors of Rome might be engraven in a little ring. There are but a few names in the book of life. The scripture speaks of "striving" for heaven as in an agony; ‡ (Luke xiii. 24;) it cautions us of falling short of the "promised rest;" (Heb. iv. 1;) it describes the horror of the infernal torments, "the worm and the fire." § (Mark ix. 44.) Who can read this, and not be serious? Some have light, feathery spirits; they run over the most weighty truths in haste; like Israel, who ate the passover in haste; and they are not benefited by the word. Read with a solemn, composed spirit. Seriousness is the Christian's ballast, which keeps him from being overturned with vanity.

DIRECT. VII. Labour to remember what you read.—Satan would steal the word out of our mind; (Matt. xiii. 4, 19;) not that he intends to make use of it himself, but lest we should make use of it. The memory should be like the chest in the ark, where the law was put. "I have remembered thy judgments of old." (Psalm cxix. 52.)|| Jerome writes of that religious lady Paula, that she had got most of the scriptures by heart. We are bid to have the "word dwell in" us.¶ (Col. iii. 16.) The word is a jewel that adorns the hidden man; and shall we not remember it? "Can a maid forget her ornaments?" (Jer. ii. 32.) Such as have a disease they call *lienteria*, [in which] the meat comes up as fast as they eat it, and stays not in the stomach, are not nourished by it. If

* לאִדְבַר רֶקֶת *Non est verbum inane, quod contemni debeat a vobis.*—PAGNINUS.
 "It is not an empty word, that it should be despised by you."—EDIT. † FLAVIUS VOPISCUS.
 ‡ *Tanquam pro vitâ et morte luctilandum.*—CORNELIUS A LAPIDE.
 § *Sic morientur damnati ut semper vivant, et sic vivent ut semper moriantur.*—BERNARDUS. "The damned in hell will so die as to be always alive, and will so live as to be always dying."—EDIT. || *Memoria est intus scriba.* "Memory is an inward scribe or recorder."—EDIT. ¶ *Ἐρωκερω, id est, haud memoriâ excidat.* "Let it dwell in you, that is, let it not fall from your memory."—EDIT.

the word stays not in the memory, it cannot profit. Some can better remember a piece of news than a line of scripture; their memories are like those ponds, where the frogs live, but the fish die.

DIRECT. VIII. *Meditate upon what you read.*—"I will meditate in thy precepts." (Psalm cxix. 15.) The Hebrew word, מָדַד, "to meditate," signifies, "to be intense in the mind."* In meditation there must be a fixing of the thoughts upon the object: the Virgin Mary "pondered" those things, &c. (Luke ii. 19.) Meditation is the concoction of scripture: reading brings a truth into our head, meditation brings it into our heart: reading and meditation must, like Castor and Pollux, appear together. Meditation without reading is erroneous; reading without meditation is barren. The bee sucks the flower, then works it in the hive, and so turns it to honey: by reading we suck the flower of the word, by meditation we work it in the hive of our mind, and so it turns to profit. Meditation is the bellows of the affections: "While I was musing the fire burned." (Psalm xxxix. 3.) The reason we come away so cold from reading the word is, because we do not warm ourselves at the fire of meditation.

DIRECT. IX. *Come to the reading of scripture with humble hearts.*—Acknowledge how unworthy you are that God should reveal himself in his word to you. God's secrets are with the humble: pride is an enemy to profiting. It is observed [that] the ground on which the peacock sits is barren: that heart where pride sits is barren. An arrogant person disdains the counsels of the word, and hates the reproofs; is he likely to profit? "God giveth grace unto the humble." (James iv. 6.) The eminentest saints have been but of low stature in their own eyes; like the sun in the zenith, they showed least when they were at the highest. David had "more understanding than all his teachers." (Psalm cxix. 99.) But how humble was he! "I am a worm, and no man." (Psalm xxii. 6.) *David* in the Arabic tongue signifies a "worm."†

DIRECT. X. *Give credence to the word written.*—Believe it to be of God; see the name of God in every line. The Romans, that they might gain credit to their laws, reported that they were inspired by the gods at Rome. Believe the scripture to be *caelo missa*, "divinely inspired." "All scripture is," θεοπνευστος, "of divine inspiration." (2 Tim. iii. 16.) Who but God could reveal the great doctrines of the Trinity, the hypostatical union, the resurrection? Whence should the scripture come, if not from God? 1. *Sinners* could not be the authors of scripture. Would they indite such holy lines? or inveigh so fiercely against those sins which they love? 2. *Saints* could not be the authors of scripture. How could it stand with their sanctity to counterfeit God's name, and put "Thus saith the Lord" to a book of their own devising? 3. *Angels* could not be the authors of scripture. What angel in heaven durst personate God, and say, "I am the Lord?" Believe the pedigree of scripture to be sacred, and to come from the "Father of lights." (James i. 17.) The scripture's antiquity speaks its divinity. No human histories extant reach further than Noah's flood; but the scripture writes

* Πόλλης δεῖ ἡμῖν κατανοήσεως.—CHRYSOSTOMUS. "We should use much reflection."—**EDIT.**
 † Ὑψηλός τῆ μεγαλοπρεπείῃ, ταπεινός δὲ τῷ φρονήματι.—GREGORIUS NAZIANZENSUS. "Generous and noble in his conduct, but humble in his own estimation."—**EDIT.**

of things before time.* Besides, the majesty, profundity, purity, harmony, of scripture show it could be breathed from none but God himself. Add to this the efficacy the word written hath had upon men's consciences.† By reading scripture they have been turned into other men; as might be instanced in St. Austin, Junius, and others. If you should set a seal upon a piece of marble, and it should leave a print behind, you would say there was a strange virtue in that seal: so, that the word written should leave a heavenly print of grace upon the heart, it argues it to be of divine authority. If you would profit by the word, believe it to be of God. Some sceptics question the verity of scripture; though they have the articles of religion in their "creed," yet not in their *belief*. "Who hath believed our report?" (Isai. liii. 1.) Unbelief enervates the virtue of the word, and makes it abortive: who will obey those truths he doth not believe?‡ "The word did not profit them, not being mixed with faith." (Heb. iv. 2.)

DIRECT. XI. *Highly prize the scriptures.*—"The law of thy mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver." (Psalm cxix. 72.) Can he make a proficiency in any art, *who* doth slight and deprecate it? Prize this book of God above all other books. St. Gregory calls the Bible "the heart and soul of God." The rabbins say, that there is a mountain of sense hangs upon every *apex* and tittle of scripture. "The law of the Lord is perfect." (Psalm xix. 7.)§ The scripture is the library of the Holy Ghost; it is a pandect of divine knowledge, an exact model and platform of religion.|| The scripture contains in it the *credenda*, "the things which we are to believe," and the *agenda*, "the things which we are to practise." It is "able to make us wise unto salvation." (2 Tim. iii. 15.) "The scripture is the standard of truth," the judge of controversies;¶ it is the pole-star to direct us to heaven.** (Isai. viii. 20.) "The commandment is a lamp."†† (Prov. vi. 23.) The scripture is the compass by which the rudder of our will is to be steered; it is the field in which Christ, the Pearl of price, is hid; it is a rock of diamonds; it is a sacred *collyrium*, or "eye-salve;" it mends *their eyes that look upon it*; it is a spiritual optic-glass in which the glory of God is resplendent; it is the panacy or "universal medicine" for the soul.‡‡ The leaves of scripture are like the "leaves of the tree of life, for the healing of the nations." (Rev. xxii. 2.) The scripture is both the breeder and feeder of grace.§§ How is the convert born, but by "the word of truth?" (James i. 18.) How doth he grow, but by "the sincere milk of the word?" (1 Peter ii. 2.) The word written is the book out of which our evidences for heaven are fetched; it is the sea-mark which shows us

* *Id verum, quod primum.*—TERTULLIANUS. "That is true, which is first in order of time."—EDIT. † *Cum animum tangit, est sicut fulmen.*—LUTHERUS. "When the scripture comes in contact with the mind, it acts like lightning."—EDIT. ‡ *Ubi male creditur, ibi nec bene vivitur.*—HIERONYMUS. "Where the belief is wrong and defective, there the conduct will be immoral."—EDIT. § *הורח יהיה חמימה.* *In illa continentur omnia quæ ad perfectam pietatem pertinent.*—MUSCULUS, CAMERO. "It contains all things necessary to perfect piety."—EDIT. ¶ *Adoro plenitudinem scripturæ.*—TERTULIANUS. "I adore the fulness and completeness of scripture."—EDIT. †† *Regula et mensura veritatis.*—RIVETUS. *Κανον αληθειας ακληνης.*—IRENEUS. ** *Aninarum cynosura.*—QUISTORPIUS. †† *Φως εστι κοινον, επιλαμει πασι.*—CLEMENS ALEXANDRINUS. "It is a light which is common to every man, and enlightens all."—EDIT. ‡‡ *Vite phormaceum.*—QUISTORPIUS. §§ *Τροφη ζωης.*—ATHANASIUS. "The nourishment of life."—EDIT.

the rocks of sin to avoid; it is the antidote against error and apostasy, the two-edged sword which wounds the old serpent. It is our bulwark to withstand the force of lust; like the Capitol of Rome, which was a place of strength and ammunition. The scripture is the "tower of David," whereon the shields of our faith hang. (Canticles iv. 4.) "Take away the word, and you deprive us of the sun," said Luther.* The word written is above an angelic embassy, or voice from heaven. "This voice which came from heaven we heard. We have also," *βεβαιότερον λογον*, "a more sure word." (2 Peter i. 18, 19.) O, prize the word written; prizing is the way to profiting. If Cæsar so valued his Commentaries, that for preserving them he lost his purple robe, how should we estimate the sacred oracles of God? "I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food." (Job xxiii. 12.) King Edward the Sixth, on the day of his coronation, had presented before him three swords, signifying that he was monarch of three kingdoms. The king said, there was one sword wanting: being asked what that was, [he] answered, "The Holy Bible, which is the sword of the Spirit, and is to be preferred before these ensigns of royalty." Robert king of Sicily did so prize God's word, that, speaking to his friend Petrarcha, he said, "I protest, the scriptures are dearer to me than my kingdom; and if I must be deprived of one of them, I had rather lose my diadem than the scriptures."†

DIRECT. XII. *Get an ardent love to the word.*—Prizing relates to the judgment, love to the affections. "Consider how I love thy precepts." (Psalm cxix. 159; Rom. vii. 22.) He is likely to grow rich who delights in his trade; he who is *φιλομαθης* will be *πολυμαθης*, "a lover of learning will be a scholar." St. Austin tells us, before his conversion he took no pleasure in the scriptures, but afterwards they were his "chaste delights."‡ David tasted the word "sweeter than the honey which drops from the comb."§ (Psalm xix. 10.) Thomas a Kempis used to say, he found no content but to be *in angulo cum libello*, "in a corner, with the book of God in his hand." Did Alphonsus king of Sicily recover of a fit of sickness with that great pleasure he took in reading of Quintus Curtius? What infinite pleasure should we take in reading the book of life! There is enough in the word to breed holy complacency and delight; it is a specimen and demonstration of God's love to us. The Spirit is God's love-token, the word his love-letter. How doth one delight to read over his friend's letter! The word written is a divine treasury, or storehouse; || in it are scattered truths as pearls, to adorn "the hidden man of the heart." The word written is the true manna, which hath all sorts of sweet taste in it; ¶ it is a sovereign elixir, it "gives wine to them of an heavy heart." I have read of an ancient rabbi, who in a great concourse of people made proclamation of a sovereign cordial he

* *Si verbum Dei auferas, solem e mundo sustulisti.*—LUTHERUS. † *Juro tibi, Petrarcha, multò mihi chariores esse sacras scripturas, quàm regnum, &c.*—CORNELIUS A LAPIDE. ‡ *Sint castæ delitiæ meæ scripturæ.*—AUGUSTINUS. § *Quod sponte ex favo stillat mellis medulla vocatur; plus autem mellæ dulcedinis ab uberibus scripturæ sugitur.* "That which drops freely from the honeycomb, is called 'the cream or marrow of the honey;' but more delicious draughts of honied sweetness are imbibed from the breasts of holy scripture."—EDIT. ¶ *Pietatis gazophylacium.*—QUISTORPIUS. ¶ *Manna cujuslibet saporis.*

had to sell: many resorting to him, and asking him to show it, he opened the Bible, and directed them to several places of comfort in it. Holy David drank of this cordial. "This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me." (Psalm cxix. 50.) *Γλυκεια και αληθεια*. ["It combines sweetness with truth."] St. Chrysostom compares the scripture to a garden;* every line in it is a fragrant flower, which we should wear, not in our bosom, but our heart. Delight in the word causeth profit: and we must not only love the comforts of the word, but the reproofs. Myrrh is bitter to the palate, but good for the stomach.

DIRECT. XIII. *Come to the reading of the word with honest hearts.*—Christ speaks of the *καρδια καλη*, "the honest heart." (Luke viii. 15.)

QUESTION. "What is it to read the word with an honest heart?"

ANSWER 1. *To come with an heart willing to know the whole counsel of God.*—A good heart would not have any truth concealed; but saith, as Job, "That which I see not, teach thou me." (Job xxxiv. 32.) When men pick and choose in religion, they will do some things the word enjoins them, but not others. These are unsound hearts, and are not benefited by holy writ. These are like a patient, who having a bitter pill prescribed, and a julep, he will take the julep, but refuseth the pill.

2. To read the word with an honest heart, is to read it that we may be made better by it.†—The word is, *quoad se*, the medium and organ of sanctity; and we come to it not only to illuminate us, but consecrate us: "Sanctify them through thy truth." (John xvii. 17.) Some go to the Bible, as one goes to the garden, to pick flowers, that is, fine notions. Austin confesseth, that before his conversion he went to hear Ambrose more for the elegancy of speech and quaintness of notion, than the spirituality of the matter. This is like a woman that paints her face, but neglects her health. But *this* is to have an honest heart, when we come to the scriptures as Naaman to the waters of Jordan, to be healed of our leprosy. "O," saith the soul, "that this sword of the Spirit may pierce the rock of my heart; that this blessed word may have such a virtue in it, as the water of jealousy, to kill and make fruitful; (Num. v. 27, 28;) that it may kill my sin, and make me fruitful in grace."

DIRECT. XIV. *Learn to apply scripture.*—Take every word as spoken to yourselves. When the word thunders against sin, think thus: "God means my sins;" when it presseth any duty, "God intends me in this." Many put off scripture from themselves, as if it only concerned those who lived in the time when it was written; but if you intend to profit by the word, bring it home to yourselves: a medicine will do no good, unless it be applied. The saints of old took the word as if it had been spoken to them by name. When king Josiah heard the threatening which was written in the book of God, he applied it to himself: "He

* *Ἦδus παραδεισος, πολυ δε ἡδυτερον των θειων γραφων ἢ αναγνωσις: εκει μεν εστιν αυθη μαραινόμενα, ενταυθα δε νοηματα ακμαζοντα: εκει Ζεφυρος πνεων, ενταυθα δε Πνευματος αυρα, &c.*—CHRYSOSTOMI *Homil. in Psalm. xlii.* "A pleasure-garden is sweet; but much sweeter is the perusal of the sacred writings. The former contains fading flowers; but the latter blooming thoughts. There the cooling zephyr plays; but here we are refreshed by the breath of the Holy Spirit."—EDIT. † *Cor integrum, id est, quod prorsus desideret proficere.*—BRUGENSIS. "An honest heart, that is, one whose intense desire is to advance in the divine life."—EDIT.

rent his clothes, and humbled" his soul "before the Lord." (2 Kings xxii. 11, 13.)

DIRECT. xv. *Observe the preceptive part of the word, as well as the promissive.*—The precepts carry duty in them, like the veins which carry the blood; the promises carry comfort in them, like the arteries which carry the spirits. Make use as well of the precepts to direct you, as the promises to comfort you. Such as cast their eye upon the promise, with a neglect of the command, are not edified by scripture; they look more after comfort than duty. They mistake their comforts, as Apollo embraced the laurel-tree instead of Daphne. The body may be swelled with wind as well as flesh: a man may be filled with false comfort, as well as that which is genuine and real.

DIRECT. xvi. *Let your thoughts dwell upon the most material passages of scripture.*—The bee fastens on those flowers where she may suck most sweetness. Though the whole contexture of scripture is excellent, yet some parts of it may have a greater emphasis, and be more quick and pungent. Reading the names of the tribes, or the genealogies of the patriarchs, is not of the same importance as faith and "the new creature." Mind the *magnalia legis*, the "weighty things of the law." (Hosea viii. 12.) They who read only to satisfy their curiosity, do rather busy than profit themselves. The searching too far into Christ's temporal reign hath, I fear, weakened his spiritual reign in some men's hearts.

DIRECT. xvii. *Compare yourselves with the word.*—See how the scripture and your hearts agree, how your dial goes with this sun. Are your hearts, as it were, a transcript and counterpane* of scripture? Is the word copied out into your hearts? The word calls for humility; are you not only humbled, but humble? The word calls for regeneration; (John iii. 7;) have you the signature and engraving of the Holy Ghost upon you? have you a change of heart? not only a partial and moral change, but a spiritual? Is there such a change wrought in you, as if another soul did live in the same body? "Such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified," &c. (1 Cor. vi. 11.) † The word calls for love to the saints; (1 Peter i. 22;) do you love grace where you see it? ‡ Do you love grace in a poor man as well as in a rich? A son loves to see his father's picture, though hung in a mean frame; do you love grace, though mixed with some failings, as we love gold, though it be in the ore? The bringing the rule of the word and our hearts together, to see how they agree, would prove very advantageous to us. Hereby we come to know the true complexion and state of our souls, and see what evidences and certificates we have for heaven.

DIRECT. xviii. *Take special notice of those scriptures which speak to your particular case.*—Were a consumptive person to read Galen or Hip-

* One of two deeds, or the true copy of a deed or other legal instrument; a term now superseded by the word *counterpart*.—EDIT. † *Similia habet Nazianzenus, Oratione funebri in laudem Cypriani, ubi enarrat mirabilem ejus post gratie adventum μεταβολην.* "Similar expressions are employed by Gregory Nazianzen, in his funeral oration in praise of Cyprian, where he relates his wonderful 'change or transition' after divine grace had visited his heart."—EDIT. ‡ *Idem est motus animi in imaginem et rem.* "There is the same drawing of the mind towards the similitude of an object, as towards the object itself."—EDIT.

pocrates, he would chiefly observe what they writ about a consumption. Great regard is to be had to those paragraphs of scripture, which are most apposite to one's present case. I shall instance only in three cases : 1. Affliction. 2. Desertion. 3. Sin.

CASE I. First, *Affliction*.—*Hath God made your chain heavy?* Consult these scriptures : “If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as sons.” (Heb. xii. 7. See Job xxxvi. 8, 9; Deut. viii. 15; 1 Kings xi. 39; Psalm lxxxix. 30—33; Heb. xii. 10, 11; Psalm xxxvii. 39; Rom. viii. 28; 1 Peter i. 6, 7; 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11—13; Rev. iii. 19; 2 Cor. iv. 16; Job v. 17; Micah vi. 9.) “By this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away his sin.” * (Isai. xxvii. 9.) “Your sorrow shall be turned into joy.” (John xvi. 20.) The French have a berry, which they call *uve de spine*, “the grape of a thorn.” God gives joy out of sorrow; here is the grape of a thorn: “Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” (2 Cor. iv. 17.) The limner lays his gold upon dark colours: God first lays the dark colour of affliction, and then the golden colour of glory.

CASE II. Secondly, *Desertion*.—*Are your spiritual comforts eclipsed?* “In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment: but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee.” (Isai. liv. 8. See also Lam. iii. 31—33; Psalm cvi. 6, 9; ciii. 9; Mark xv. 34; Isai. viii. 17; xlix. 15; 1. 10; liv. 10; 2 Cor. vii. 6.) The sun may hide itself in a cloud, but it is not out of the firmament; God may hide his face, but he is not out of covenant. “I will not be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.” (Isai. lvii. 16.) God is like the musician, he will not stretch the strings of his lute too hard, lest they break. “Light is sown for the righteous.” (Psalm xvii. 11.) A saint's comfort may be hid as seed under the clods, but at last it will spring up into an harvest of joy.

CASE III. Thirdly, *Sin*.—1. *Are you drawn away with lust?* Read Gal. v. 24; James i. 15; 1 Peter ii. 11. “Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.” † Lust kills with embracing. “There met him a woman with the attire of an harlot. He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter; till a dart strike through his liver,” &c. ‡ (Prov. vii. 10, 22, 23.) “The mouth of strange women is a deep pit: he that is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein.” (Prov. xxii. 14.) Go to the waters of the sanctuary to quench the fire of lust.

2. *Are you under the power of unbelief?*—Read Isai. xxvi. 3: “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace,” שָׁלוֹם שָׁלוֹם [“peace, peace,”] “whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.” Mr. Bolton speaks of a distressed soul who found much comfort from this scripture on his sick bed: “The word of the Lord is tried: he is a buckler to all

* *Flagellis Domini lasciva caro atteritur, anima pennis virtutum ad caelestia sublevatur.* —BERNARDUS, Serm. x. *De Dominica Cona.* “While the lustful flesh is thus bruised by the scourgings of God, the mind towers to the skies on the powerful wings of the virtues.”—EDIT. † *Prava cupiditates sunt porta inferni, per quas homines descendunt ad inferos.* “Lawless desires are the gates of hell, through which men descend to the infernal regions.”—EDIT. ‡ *Plato in hepate το επιθυμητικον ponit.* “Plato makes the liver the seat of lust or eager desire.”—EDIT.

them that trust in him." (2 Sam. xxii. 31. See also Zeph. iii. 12; Psalm xxxiv. 22; lv. 22; xxxii. 10; Mark ix. 23; 1 Peter v. 7.) "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish." (John iii. 15.) Unbelief is a God-affronting sin: "He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar." (1 John v. 10.) It is a soul-murdering sin: "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John iii. 36.) Thus, in reading observe those scriptures which do *rem acu tangere*, "touch upon your particular case." Although all the Bible must be read; yet those texts which point most directly to your condition, be sure to put a special star upon.

DIRECT. XIX. *Take special notice of the examples in scripture.*—Make the examples of others living sermons to you.*

1. *Observe the examples of God's judgments upon sinners.*—They have been hanged up in chains *in terrorem*. How severely hath God punished proud men! Nebuchadnezzar was turned to grass, Herod eaten up with vermin. How hath God plagued idolaters! (Num. xxv. 3—5, 9; 1 Kings xiv. 9—11.) What a swift witness hath he been against liars! (Acts v. 5, 10.) These examples are set-up as sea-marks to avoid. (1 Cor. x. 11; Jude 7.)

2. *Observe the examples of God's mercy to saints.*—Jeremy was preserved in the dungeon, the three children in the furnace, Daniel in the lions' den. These examples are props to faith, spurs to holiness.

DIRECT. XX. *Leave not off reading in the Bible till you find your hearts warmed.*—"I will never forget thy precepts: for with them thou hast quickened me." (Psalm cxix. 93.) Read the word, not only as a history, but labour to be affected with it. Let it not only inform you, but inflame you. "Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord." (Jer. xxiii. 29.) Go not from the word till you can say as those disciples, "Did not our heart burn within us?" (Luke xxiv. 32.)

DIRECT. XXI. *Set upon the practice of what you read.*—"I have done thy commandments." † (Psalm cxix. 166.) A student in physic doth not satisfy himself to read over a system or body of physic, but he falls upon practising physic: the life-blood of religion lies in the practice part. So, in the text: "He shall read" in the book of the law "all the days of his life: that he may learn to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them." ‡ Christians should be walking Bibles. Xenophon said, "Many read Lycurgus's laws, but few observe them." The word written is not only a rule of knowledge, but a rule of obedience: || it is not only to mend our sight, but to mend our pace. David calls God's word "a lamp unto his feet." (Psalm cxix. 105.) It was not only a light to his eyes to see by, but to his feet to walk by. By practice we trade the talent of knowledge, and turn it to profit. This is a blessed reading of scripture, when we fly from the sins which the

* *Præcepta docent, exempla movent.* "Precepts teach us that which is right; but examples are motives for us to practise it."—EDIT. † ΤΗΣ ΨΥΧΗΣ ΚΑΛΛΟΣ ΑΠΟ ΎΠΑΚΟΥΣ ΓΥΝΕΤΑΙ.—CHRYSOSTOMUS. "The beauty of the soul springs from obedience."—EDIT.

‡ *Tantum scimus quantum operamur.* "We can be said to know only so much as we practise."—EDIT. || *Bis meminit legis qui memor est operis.*—BILLII *Anthologia.* "He is mindful of the law in a two-fold manner who does not forget to perform its commands."—EDIT.

word forbids, and espouse the duties which the word commands. Reading without practice will be but a torch to light men to hell.

DIRECT. XXII. *Make use of Christ's prophetic office.*—He is “the Lion of the tribe of Judah,” to whom it is given “to open the book” of God, “and to loose the seven seals thereof.”* (Rev. v. 5.) Christ doth so teach as he doth quicken. “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall have,” *lumen vitæ*, “the light of life.” (John viii. 12.) The philosopher saith, “Light and heat increase together.”† It is true here: where Christ comes into the soul with his light, there is the heat of spiritual life going along with it. Christ gives us *spiritualmente gustum*, “a taste of the word:” “Thou hast taught me. How sweet are thy words unto my taste!” (Psalm cxix. 102, 103.) It is one thing to read a promise, another thing to “taste” it. Such as would be scripture-proficients, let them get Christ to be their teacher. “Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.” (Luke xxiv. 45.) Christ did not only open the scriptures, but “opened their understanding.” ‡

DIRECT. XXIII. *Tread often upon the threshold of the sanctuary.*—Wait diligently on a rightly-constituted ministry: “Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching diligently at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.” (Prov. viii. 34.) Ministers are God's interpreters; it is their work to expound and open dark places of scripture. We read of “pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers.” (Judges vii. 16.) Ministers are “earthen” pitchers. (2 Cor. iv. 7.) But these pitchers have lamps within them, to light souls in the dark.

DIRECT. XXIV. *Pray that God will make you profit.*—“I am the Lord thy God, which teacheth thee to profit.” (Isai. xlvi. 17.) Make David's prayer: “Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.” (Psalm cxix. 18.) Pray to God to take off the veil on the scripture, that you may understand it; and the veil on your heart, that you may believe it. Pray that God will not only give you his word as a *rule* of holiness, but his grace as a *principle* of holiness. Implore the guidance of God's Spirit: “Thou gavest them thy good Spirit to instruct them.” || (Neh. ix. 20.) Though the ship hath a compass to sail by, and store of tackling, yet without a gale of wind it cannot sail. Though we have the word written as our compass to sail by, and make use of our endeavours as the tackling, yet, unless the Spirit of God blow upon us, we cannot sail with profit. When the Almighty is as “dew” unto us, then we “grow as the lily,” and our “beauty is as the olive-tree.” (Hosea xiv. 5, 6.) Beg the anointing of the Holy Ghost. (1 John ii. 20.) One may see the figures on a dial, but he cannot tell how the day goes unless the sun shine: we may read many truths in the Bible, but we cannot know them savingly till God's Spirit shine in our souls. (2 Cor. iv. 6.) The Spirit is Πνευμα σοφίας και αποκαλυψεως, “a Spirit of wisdom and revelation.” (Eph. i. 17.) When

* *Ancanorum Dei revelator.*—PAREUS. “The revealer of the secret things of God.”—EDIT. † *Calor et lux concresecunt.* ‡ *Cathedram habet in celo qui corda docet in terrâ.*—AUGUSTINUS. “He has his throne in heaven, who instructs the hearts of the faithful on earth.”—EDIT.

|| *Christus sedens ad dextram Dei misit vicarium vni Spiritus Sancti.*—TERTULLIANUS. “Christ, sitting at the right hand of God, has sent in his stead the power of the Holy Ghost.”—EDIT.

Philip joined himself to the eunuch's chariot, then he understood scripture. (Acts viii. 29—35.) When God's Spirit joins himself to the word, then it will be effectual to salvation.

These rules observed, the word written would, through God's blessing, be *εμφυτος λογος*, "an engrafted word." (James i. 21.) A good scion grafted into a bad stock changeth the nature of it, and makes it bear sweet and generous fruit; so when the word is grafted savingly into men's hearts, it doth sanctify them, and make them bring forth the sweet "fruits of righteousness." (Phil. i. 11.)

Thus I have answered this question, *How we may read the scriptures with most spiritual profit.*

I shall conclude all with two corollaries:—

1. *Content not yourselves with the bare reading of scripture, but labour to find some spiritual increment and profit.*—Get the word transcribed into your hearts: "The law of his God is in his heart." (Psalm xxxvii. 31.) Never leave till you are assimilated into the word. Such as profit by reading of the book of God are the best Christians alive; they answer God's cost, they credit religion, they save their souls.

2. *You who have profited by reading the holy scriptures, adore God's distinguishing grace.*—Bless God that he hath not only brought the light to you, but opened your eyes to see it; that he hath unlocked his hid treasure, and enriched you with saving knowledge. Some perish by *not having* scripture, and others by *not improving* it. That God should pass by millions in the world, and the lot of his electing love should fall upon you; that the scripture, like the pillar of cloud, should have a dark side to others, but a light side to you; that to others it should be a "dead letter," but to you the "savour of life;" that Christ should not only be revealed *to* you, but *in* you; (Gal. i. 16;) how should you be in an holy ecstasy of wonder, and wish that you had hearts of seraphim burning in love to God, and the voices of angels, to make heaven ring with God's praises!

OBJECTION. But some of the godly may say, they fear they do not profit by the word they read.

RESPONSE. As in the body, when there is a lipothymy or "fainting of the vital spirits," cordials are applied: so let me apply a few divine cordials to such as are ready to faint under the fear of non-proficiency.

1. *You may profit by reading the word, though you come short of others.*—The ground which brought forth but thirty-fold was "good ground." (Matt. xiii. 8.) Say not you are non-proficients, because you do not go in equipage with other eminent saints: those were counted strong men among David's worthies, though they did not attain to the honour of the first three. (2 Sam. xxiii. 19, 22, 23.)

2. *You may profit by reading the word, though you are not of so quick apprehension.*—Some impeach themselves of non-proficiency, because they are but slow of understanding. When our blessed Saviour foretold his sufferings, the apostles themselves "understood not, and it was hid from them." (Luke ix. 45.) The author to the Hebrews speaks of some who were *segnes auribus*, "dull of hearing;" (Heb. v. 11;) yet they belonged to the election. Such as have weaker judgments may have stronger affections. Leah was tender-eyed, yet fruitful. A Christian's

intellectuals may be less quick and penetrating, yet that little knowledge he hath of scripture keeps him from sin ; as a man that hath but weak sight, yet it keeps him from falling into the water.

3. *You may profit by reading scripture, though you have not so excellent memories.*—Many complain their memories leak.

*Nec retinent patulæ commissa fideliter aures.**—HORATIUS *Epist.* lib. i. ep. xviii. 70.

Christian, art thou grieved thou canst remember no more ? Then, for thy comfort,

(1.) *Thou mayest have a good heart, though thou hast not so good a memory.*

(2.) *Though thou canst not remember all thou readest, yet thou rememberest that which is most material, and which thou hast most need of.*—At a feast we do not eat of every dish, but we take so much as nourisheth. It is with a good Christian's memory as it is with a lamp : though the lamp be not full of oil, yet it hath so much oil as makes the lamp burn : though thy memory be not full of scripture, yet thou retainest so much as makes thy love to God burn. Then be of good comfort ; thou dost profit by what thou readest ; and take notice of that encouraging scripture : "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, he shall bring all things to your remembrance." (John xiv. 26.)

SERMON IX.

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HOW WE MAY MAKE MELODY IN OUR HEARTS TO GOD IN SINGING
OF PSALMS.

Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.—Ephesians v. 19.

In the former part of this chapter, especially in verse 4, we have the apostle checking *carnal mirth*, and accounting that a sin which the heathen philosophers (especially Aristotle in his Ethics) made a virtue ; namely, *ευτραπελια*, a kind of jesting which they supposed was an ornament to their speech, and a specimen of their ingenuity. But in this verse where the text is, we have the apostle commending *spiritual mirth*, which he approves as a duty, which the Heathens, especially in the primitive times, accounted a crime.

In the verse going before the text, we have the apostle condemning a vice universally reputed so both by Christians and Heathens, namely, "intemperance ; which doth usually frolic it in *putidos sermones*, 'into foolish speeches,' fond gestures, impure songs, wanton sonnets," as

* " Their leaky ears no secret can retain."—DUNSCOMBE'S Translation.

Bodius observes.* But here in the text the apostle teacheth us a more refined way of rejoicing, namely, to tune the heart in psalms, to raise the heart in hymns, and to vent the heart in spiritual songs; nay, to make the heart a choir where spiritual music may be chanted.

In the text we have five parts remarkable; namely,

1. *The singers*.—*Λαλουντες εαυτοις*, [“Speaking to themselves;”] Christians; especially those who dwelt in the city of Ephesus. Christians understand how to rejoice in God; their hearts can so set the tune, that God shall hear the music. Zanchius well observes, that the apostle doth here make the comparison between the mirth which is made *ex ubertate vini*, “from abundance of wine,” and that which is made *ex ubertate Spiritus*, “from abundance of the Spirit.” The drunkard’s song, how toyish! but the saint’s singing, how triumphal! How confused the one! how sweet the other! How empty the one, even to the very companions of their cups and mirth! but how melodious the other, even to the Lord himself! And he gravely takes notice, that *gaudent pii, sed garrunt ebrii*; “saints rejoice, but intemperate persons drivel in their chat.”

2. *The song itself*.—And here the apostle runs division, diversifying songs into three species; which, according to the descants of learned men, may be thus understood: † (1.) And here Jerome gives us a dexterous interpretation. (i.) “Psalms,” saith he, “may belong to moral things, what we ought to put in use and practise.” (ii.) “Hymns may belong to sacred things, what we ought to meditate on and to contemplate, as the power, wisdom, goodness, and majesty of God.” (iii.) “Odes, or spiritual songs, may belong to natural things, what we ought to debate, discuss; namely, the race, order, harmony, and continuance of the world, and God’s infinite wisdom manifested in it.” † (2.) Some distinguish these according to the authors of them. (i.) *Psalms*.—They are the composures of holy David. (ii.) *Hymns*.—They are the songs of some other excellent men recorded in scripture, as Moses, Heman, Asaph, &c. (iii.) *Spiritual songs*.—They are odes of some other holy and good men not mentioned in scripture, as the song of Ambrose, Nepos, and others. (3.) Some aver that these several speeches mentioned in the text, answer the Hebrew distinction of psalms. Among them there were, (i.) מזמורים *Mizmorim*, which treated of various and different subjects. (ii.) תהלים [*Tehillim*,] which only mentioned the praises of the Most High. (iii.) שירים [*Shirim*,] which were songs more artificially and musically composed, and, some divines observe, were sung with the help of a musical instrument. But I may add, Are not all these several species mentioned to prefigure the plenty and the joy which is reserved for the saints within the veil, when they shall join in concert with the glorious angels in singing their perpetual hallelujahs to their glorious Creator?

3. *The manner of singing*.—Our text saith, “making melody;” with

* *E vini assueti oritur lætitia quædam, sed impura, quæ tum in gestibus, tum in putidis sermonibus, se prodit.*—BODIUS. † *Cantio sacra est vel ευχαριστικη, vel ευμερικη, vel*

διδασκαλικη, vel προφητικη, vel θρηνητικη.—Idem. “Sacred song is either eucharistical, supplicatory, didactical and instructive, prophetic, or elegiac and mournful.”—EDIT.

† *Psalmi propriè ad locum ethicum pertinent: in hymnis Dei beneficia et facta miramur. Qui verò concordiam et consensum mundi contempletur, ille spirituale canticum canit.*—HIERONYMUS.

inward joy and tripudiation of soul: if the tongue make the pause, the heart must make the elevation. The apostle saith to the Colossians: "We must sing with grace;" (Col. iii. 16;) which is, as some expound it, (1.) *Cum gratiarum actione*, "with giving of thanks."—And, indeed, thankfulness is the very *Selah* of this duty, that which puts an accent upon the music and sweetness of the voice; and then we sing melodiously when we warble out the praises of the Lord. (2.) *With gracefulness*.—With a becoming and graceful dexterity. And this "brings both profit and pleasure" to the hearers, as Davenant observes.* Psalms are not the comedies of Venus, or the jocular celebrations of a wanton Adonis; but they are the spiritual ebullitions of a composed soul to the incomprehensible Jehovah, with real grace. God's Spirit must breathe in this service; here we must act our joy, our confidence, our delight. Singing is the triumph of a gracious soul, the child joying in the praises of his Father. In singing of psalms, the gracious heart takes wings, and mounts up to God, to join with the celestial choir. It is grace which fits the heart for, and sweetens the heart in, this duty. And where this qualification is wanting, this service is rather an hurry than a duty; it is rather a disturbance than any obedience.†

4. *The master of the choir, the preceptor*.—That is, the "heart." We must look to the heart in singing, that it be purged by the Spirit, and that it be replete with spiritual affection. *He* plays the hypocrite *who* brings not the heart to this duty. One observes, "There is no tune without the heart." † Singing takes its proper rise from the heart; the voice is only the further progress. And, indeed, God is the Creator of the whole man; and therefore he will be praised not only with our tongues, but with our hearts. The apostle tells us, he "will sing with the spirit." (1 Cor. xiv. 15.) And David informs us, his heart was ready to "sing and give praise." (Psalm lvii. 7, 8; cviii. 1.) Augustine admonisheth us, "It is not a musical string, but a working heart, [that] is harmonious." § The Virgin Mary sings her Magnificat with her heart. (Luke i. 46, 47.) And Bernard tells us in a tract of his,|| that "when we sing psalms, let us take heed that we have the same thing in our mind that we warble forth in our tongue, and that our song and our heart do not run several ways." If we in singing only offer the calves of our lips, it will too much resemble a carnal and a Jewish service.

5. *The end of the duty*.—"To the Lord:" so saith the text; namely, to Jesus Christ, who is here principally meant. Our singing must not serve our gain, or our luxury, or our fancy; but our Christ, our Lord, and dear Redeemer. In this duty it is his praises we must mainly and chiefly celebrate. And most deservedly we magnify the true God by psalms and singing, when the Heathens celebrate their false and dung-hill gods, Jupiter, Neptune, and Apollo, with songs and hymns. One well observes: "Singing of psalms is part of divine worship, and of our homage and service due to the great Jehovah." Bodius takes notice,

* *Et prodesse velint et delectare*.—DAVENANTIUS. † *Cantemus cum gratiâ a Spiritu Sancto donatâ*.—CHRYSOSTOMUS. "Let us sing with the grace which the Holy Ghost supplies."—EDIT. *Hoc quod præcinitur sine gratiâ Dei impleri non potest*.—ECUMENIUS. "That which is prophetic in singing cannot have its fulfilment without the grace of God."—EDIT. † *Sine corde nulla est modulatio*.—BODIUS. § *Non vox, sed votum, non musica chordula, sed cor*. AUGUSTINUS. || *De Modo bene vivendi*.

that "God is the true and only scope of all our singing."* And truly if the Spirit of God be in us, he will be steadily aimed at by us. Thus Deborah and Barak sang their triumphal song "to the Lord." (Judges v. 3.)

DOCTRINE.

The several parts of the text being thus opened, they may be set together again in this divine and excellent truth:—

In the ordinance of singing, we must not make noise, but music; and the heart must make melody to the Lord.—So the text. Augustine complained of some in his time, that "they minded more the tune than the truth; more the manner than the matter; more the governing of the voice, than the raisedness of the mind;" and this was a great offence to him. Singing of psalms must only be the joyous breathing of a raised soul; and here the cleanness of the heart is more considerable than the clearness of the voice. In this service we must study more to act the Christian than the musician.† Many in singing of psalms are like the organs, whose pipes are filled only with wind. The apostle tells us, we must "sing with our hearts." (Col. iii. 16.) We must sing David's psalms with David's spirit. One tells us, "God is a Spirit; and he will be worshipped in spirit even in this duty." Now, to traverse the truth,

I. *We will show the divine authority of this ordinance.*

II. *We will show the sweetness of it;*

III. *The universal practice of it.*

IV. *We shall show the honours God hath put upon this ordinance:*

V. *And then come to the main case;*

VI. *And make application.*

I. For the first: *We shall show the divine authority of this ordinance,*

1. *By scripture-command.* 2. *By scripture-argument.* 3. *By scripture-pattern.* 4. *By scripture-prophecy.*

1. *From scripture-precept.*—And here we have divers commands laid upon us, both in the Old and New Testament. David, who among his honourable titles obtains this, to be called "the sweet singer of Israel," (2 Sam. xxiii. 1.)—he frequently calls upon himself: "I will sing praise to the name of the Lord most high." (Psalm vii. 17.) And sometimes he calls upon others: "Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous works." (1 Chron. xvi. 9.) Nay, sometimes he summons the whole earth to join in this duty: "Sing unto the Lord, all the earth; show forth from day to day his salvation." (1 Chron. xvi. 23; Psalm lxxviii. 32.) And holy Hezekiah,—he propagated this service. (2 Chron. xxix. 30.) Nay, in their times when the royal Majesty was lodged in Judah, singers were a peculiar office enjoined constantly to sing the praises of the Lord. (1 Kings x. 12.) And Jehoshaphat "appointed singers." (2 Chron. xx. 21.) Nay, and Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun, and Ethan, men eminent and holy, were employed in this holy service. (2 Chron. v. 12.) But why should I light a candle at noon-day? Thus this harmonious service was most usual and most acceptable in the times of the law.

* *Deus est canendi unicus scopus.*—BODIUS. † *Non franges vocem, sed frange voluntatem; non serves tantum consonantium vocum, sed concordiam morum.*—BERNARDUS. For a translation of this passage, see p. 83.—EDIT.

And I need not straggle from my text to bring-in gospel-precept for this sweet ordinance. And the apostle takes care to acquaint other churches with the same injunction. So, Col. iii. 16 : " Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." And so firmly the apostle states this musical service, this exhilarating ordinance, that he himself acts his own injunction, though fettered in a prison, and makes Barnabas* a companion of his song as well as of his sorrows : Ὑμνοῦν τον Θεον (Acts xvi. 25 :) " They hymned God," that is, they celebrated his praises with a hymn; † and, as Bede saith, with singing.

2. *From scripture-argument.*—And I shall only take-out one shaft out of the whole quiver. I shall use one argument among many, which is this, namely, we always find this duty of singing psalms linked to and joined with other moral duties. Thus the Psalmist joins singing and prayer together, Psalm xcvi. : " O come, let us sing unto the Lord," in the first verse. " O come, let us worship and bow down : let us kneel before the Lord our Maker," in the sixth verse. There is prayer and singing connexed ; singing being supposed to be of equal necessity and authority with other ordinances. And so the apostle James joins these two together : " Is any among you afflicted ? Let him pray. Is any merry ? Let him sing psalms." (James v. 13.) So, you may observe, both these services are equally calculated for man's necessity. Thus Paul and Silas join them in their practice. (Acts xvi. 25.) And so Justin Martyr, in his 118th question *ad Orthodoxos*, tells us, that in his time " they sang, and sent up prayers to God ; " † the primitive church confirming David's injunction, and the apostolical command. So that by these instances we may observe, that the duties of praying and singing have walked in the same equipage, and lay claim to an equal authority from divine writ ; the scripture jointly favouring both.

3. *From scripture-pattern.*—Moses both pens a psalm, namely, the ninetieth ; and sings a holy song, and Exodus xv. is the record of it. So David tripudiates in the practice of this delightful service. (Psalm civ. 33.) Nay, David composeth psalms, and Hezekiah appoints them to be sung. (2 Chron. xxix. 30.) So David and Asaph, Hezekiah and the Levites, all join to sing forth the praises of the Lord. Nay, our dearest Jesus, the King of saints, and the Redeemer of mankind, practiseth this sweet duty, (Rev. xv. 3,) and calls-in his blessed apostles to make up the choir : " And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives." (Matt. xxvi. 30.) Our blessed Saviour honours this ordinance with his own practice ; and this he did a little before his death, so to seal this ordinance with his blood as well as to consecrate it with his lips. Thus this celestial choir of Christ and his apostles fix this sweet ordinance in the church for future successions.

4. *From scripture-prophecy.*—And here I may speak of singing as Paul speaks of Timothy's ordination : It " was given by prophecy." (1 Tim. iv. 14.) There are divers prophecies in the Old Testament cou-

* Our author has here mistaken Barnabas for Silas ; an error which he has himself rectified in several subsequent references to their prison-songs.—EDIT. † LORINUS. † Ὑμνοῦν και προσευχας τῷ Θεῷ αναπεμπομεν.—JUSTINUS MARTYR, 118 *quest. ad Orthodoxos*.

cerning this ordinance in the New. So in Psalm cviii. 3; upon which Mollerus observes, that in that text David pours forth ardent prayers and wishes for the kingdom of Christ. And so divines observe that the first and second verses of Psalm c. are prophetic: "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lauds. Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing." To which may be added that pregnant prophecy recorded in Isai. lii. 8: "Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing;" which clearly prognosticates this musical ordinance in gospel-times. And Musculus much favours this interpretation, when he saith, "These watchmen shall jubilee when they shall consider the great joy approaching for the redemption obtained by Christ."* And there are two things which not only establish, but sweeten and honour, an ordinance: (1.) Promises; (2.) Prophecies. Christ himself was the fruit and issue of both.

II. Secondly: *We may take notice of the sweetness of this duty.*—Singing is the soul's jubilee, our spiritual recreation, the shout of the heart, our tuning of our hallelujahs, the sweetest solace of a sanctified soul. David was in a kind of rapture, when he cries out, "I will sing praise to my God while I have my being." (Psalm civ. 33.) One well observes of singing, "There is a dilating of the sound, and a drawing out of the voice, which gives more time for the fixing of the heart upon that which is sung, and so puts the soul upon a sweeter meditation." (Psalm civ. 34.) And we may animadvert it, that when we sing psalms, there is more than ordinary raising and lifting up of the soul, there is an elevation to a higher degree of communion with God. It is the soul's high mount towards heaven; the saint flies higher towards the element and sphere of joy; then we are fledged for sublime things. One asserts: "There is not a greater resemblance of heaven upon earth, than a company of God's people singing a psalm together." Then the soul rejoiceth in divine goodness, and exults in divine excellencies, meditates on divine promises. And whatever we make the matter of our singing, it will much affect the heart.

1. *If we sing of God.*—Of his goodness, it inflames our heart to love; of his wisdom, it raiseth our heart to admiration; (Rom. xi. 33;) of his power, it engageth the heart to faith and confidence; nay, of his judgments, it over-awes the heart to a due and reverential fear.

2. *If we sing of any thing concerning ourselves.*—If for the diversion of a trouble, it fills the heart with humility: if for the obtaining of a mercy, it boils up the heart in desire.

3. *If we sing of our enemies.*—This likewise draws the heart to a just indignation, zeal, and compassion. The very matter we sing doth abundantly sweeten this duty. Nay, further,

1. *Singing is the music of nature.*—The scriptures tell us, the mountains sing; (Isai. xlv. 23;) the valleys sing; (Psalm lxxv. 13;) the trees of the wood sing. (1 Chron. xvi. 33.) Nay, the air is the birds' music-room, where they chant their musical notes.

2. *Singing is the music of ordinances.*—Augustine reports of himself, † that when he came to Milan and heard the people sing, he wept for

* *Speculatores simul jubilabunt, opinari quantum sit gaudium futurum ob redemptionem adeptam per Christum.*—MUSCULUS.

† AUGUSTINUS, lib. iii. *Confessionum*, cap. 6.

joy in the church to hear that pleasing melody. And Beza confesses, that at his first entrance into the congregation, and hearing them sing Psalm xci., he felt himself exceedingly comforted, and did retain the sound of it afterwards upon his heart. The rabbies tell us, that the Jews, after the feast of the Passover was celebrated, they sang Psalm xci., and the five following psalms; and our Saviour and his apostles "sang an hymn" immediately after the blessed supper. (Matt. xxvi. 30.)

3. *Singing is the music of saints.*—(1.) They have performed this duty in their greatest numbers. (Psalm cxlix. 2.) (2.) In their greatest straits. (Isai. xxvi. 19.) (3.) In their greatest flight. (Isai. xlii. 10, 11.) (4.) In their greatest deliverances. (Isai. lxxv. 14.) (5.) In their greatest plenties. In all these changes singing hath been their stated duty and delight. And indeed it is meet that the saints and servants of God should sing forth their joys and praises to the Lord Almighty: every attribute of him can set both their song and their tune.

4. *Singing is the music of angels.*—Job tells us, "The morning stars sang together." (Job xxxviii. 7.) Now these morning stars, as Pineda tells us,* are the angels; to which the Chaldee paraphrase accords, naming these morning stars, *aciem angelorum*, "a host of angels." Nay, when this heavenly host was sent to proclaim the birth of our dearest Jesus, they deliver their message in this raised way of duty. (Luke ii. 13.) They were *amboures*, delivering their messages in a "laudatory singing," the whole company of angels making a musical choir. Nay, in heaven, there is the angels' joyous music, they there sing hallelujahs to the Most High, and to the Lamb who sits upon the throne.† (Rev. v. 11, 12.)

5. *Singing is the music of heaven.*—The glorious saints and angels accent their praises this way, and make one harmony in their state of blessedness;‡ and this is the music of the bride-chamber. (Rev. xv. 3.) The saints who were tuning here their psalms, are now singing there hallelujahs in a louder strain, and articulating their joys, which here they could not express to their perfect satisfaction. Here they laboured with drowsy hearts, and faltering tongues; but in glory these impediments are removed, and nothing is left to jar their joyous celebrations.

III. Now, thirdly: *We come to show the universal practice of this duty.*—Singing psalms and spiritual songs to God is not more sweet than œcumenical; it hath been always the way of saints thus to express their joy in the Lord. This duty hath been practised,

1. *By all varieties of persons.*

(1.) *By Christ and his apostles.*—As hath been shown. (Matt. xxvi. 30.) The glorious sun and stars have shined in favour upon this joyous service, and left their practice of it upon record; the supernal and upper orders of the world have not been too high for this spiritual harmony.

(2.) *Godly princes have glorified God in this duty.* (2 Chron. xxix. 30.)—Their thrones have not raised them above this spiritual service.

* *Comment. in Job.* † *Creaturarum psalmus est.*—STELLA. "This is a psalm of praise from every living creature."—EDIT. ‡ *Ibi nil nisi laus Dei, nisi amor Dei.*—AUGUSTINUS. "In that glorious place nothing is known but praise to God, and love to him."—EDIT.

King Jehoshaphat assaults his enemies not only with the brandishing of his sword, but with the singing of his song. (2 Chron. xx. 21.) Princes who have swayed regal sceptres, have sung spiritual songs, and have minded the choir as well as the crown. David not only takes the sceptre into his hand to rule the people, but takes the harp into his hand to sing the praises of the Lord.

(3.) *Worthy governors.*—Nehemiah takes care, that as soon as the wall of Jerusalem was set up, singers should be appointed to perform this part of God's worship. (Neh. vii. 1.) These eminent magistrates held not only the reins of government, but lifted up those hands which held them with the voices in singing the praises of God. Magistracy is a spur, not a curb, to duty. I need not mention Ethan, Heman, and Asaph, eminent and worthy men, engaged in this pleasing service. (2 Chron. v. 12.)

(4.) *Holy prophets.*—They did not only prophesy of things to come, but they practised duties for the present, more especially this. And as David pens prophetic, so he sings musical, psalms, and professes his dying and his singing air should both expire together. (Psalm cxlvi. 2.) This duty should lie by him on his death-bed; and, as Moses in Deuteronomy xxxii., he will close up his life with a swan-like, with a saint-like song. So 2 Samuel xxii. was a song of thanksgiving for manifold mercies, a little before his death.

(5.) *The body of the people.*—As singing is not too low for kings, so not too choice for subjects. The whole multitude sometimes engaged in the harmony: "Then Israel sang this song." (Num. xxi. 17.) The people's voice may make melody, as the lesser birds contribute to the music of the grove, their chirping notes filling up the harmony.

(6.) *Eminent fathers.*—Basil calls the singing of psalms "spiritual incense." Augustine was highly commendatory of this service, and assures us Ambrose and Athanasius were coincident with him in this particular.*

(7.) *Primitive Christians.*—And here I shall only mention what Tertullian relates of the practice of those times he lived in: "When we come to a feast," saith he, "we do not sit down before there is prayer; and after the meal is past, one cometh forth, and either out of the holy scriptures, or else from some composure of his own, begins a spiritual song."†

2. *In all ages.*—This service of singing to God was soon started in the world. Moses, the first penman of scripture,—he both sung a song and penned a Psalm, as we hinted before. In the Judges' time, Deborah and Barak sang a triumphant song. (Judges v. 1, 2, &c.) During the time of the kings of Judah, the Levites sang the praises of God in the sanctuary. A little before the captivity, we find the church praising God in singing. (Isai. xxxv. 2.) In the time of the captivity, Israel did not forget the songs of Zion, though they were in Babylon. (Psalm cxxvi. 2.) After their return from captivity, we soon find them return to this joyous service. (Neh. vii. 1.) Their long exile had not banished this duty. Towards the close of their prophets' prophesying, the church is again engaged in this part of God's worship. (Zeph. iii. 15, 17.)

* AUGUSTINE, lib. ix. *Confessionum*, cap. 6.
oratio ad Deum sit, &c.—TERTULLIANUS.

† *Non discumbitur priusquam*

In the beginning of the Christian era, when the gospel first made the world happy with its glorious shine, we find the primitive Christians much taken up in this duty. Cyprian, in his epistle to Donatus, adviseth, "that there may not be an hour of feasting without some heavenly grace; and let every sober feast be accompanied with singing of psalms."* And Chrysostom, in his Commentary on Psalm xli., admonishes all persons, "country-men, mariners, weavers, &c., to sing psalms and spiritual songs." Estius cries out, "Take notice of the custom of the primitive Christians, who did not only sing psalms and hymns in their public assemblies, but in their private families." Eusebius relates, that "Plinius Secundus, in an epistle he wrote to Trajan the emperor, makes mention, that the Christians of those times, being gathered together before day, sang hymns and praises to Christ, as to a God." This was about the year 98 after the birth of our Saviour. Those early and more pure times rejoiced in this duty. Nicephorus tells us, that Chrysostom caused psalms to be sung for the suppression of the Arian heresy. And Ruffin witnesseth, that Basil commanded the people to meet "for the pouring-out of their prayers to God, and for singing of psalms to the Most High." The worthy Junius informs us, that "the eastern church, from the time the Sun of Righteousness arose in the east, did propagate the practice of singing of psalms to successive generations." And Paulinus testifies, that "this practice overspread every province of the western church."† Holy Ambrose so zealously pressed this duty of singing psalms, that he would not allow times of persecution to be a sufficient excuse for the neglect of it. But the empress Justina raging against Ambrose, "he commanded the common people to lie in the church, and there sing psalms and hymns according to the practice of the Oriental Christians, that they might not be sensible of their sorrows or tediousness. And this custom prevailed in after-times, and was scattered in other places, the churches in other parts imitating this worthy practice." This, then, was the genius of the primitive times.

In the middle times of the church, Rabanus Maurus and Gregory the Great mention this service with great approbation, and speak liberally of the practice of it. But since the Reformation, the universal practice of the Reformed churches gives free suffrage to the duty of singing psalms; and I need not cite Zanchius, &c., to give in their testimony, our judgments being best discovered by our practices.

3. *In all places.*—Moses praiseth God by singing in the wilderness, throughout Exodus xv. David practises this duty in the tabernacle; (Psalm xlvi. 6;) Solomon in the temple; (1 Kings x. 12;) Jehoshaphat in the camp; (2 Chron. xx. 21;) Christ and his apostles in a particular chamber; (Matt. xxvi. 30;) and Paul and Silas in an uncomfortable prison. (Acts xvi. 25.) We may say of singing, as the apostle speaks of prayer: "I will," saith he, "that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands." (1 Tim. ii. 8.) Thus every place is now commodious for lifting up pure voices and pure hearts to the Most High. Where devout Christians meet in any convenient place to sing praises to the Lord, they make up a heavenly choir.

* *Ne sit hora convivii celestis gratiæ immunis; sonet psalmis convivium sobrium.*—
CYPRIANUS. † *Per omnes penè occidentis provincias manasse refert.*—PAULINUS.

4. *In all conditions.*—(1.) *In a time of cheerfulness and inward joy.*—The apostle James commands us then to take the advantage of singing psalms. (James v. 13.) Holy singing is the best exertion of inward rejoicing. Joy may excite, must not stifle, this duty. A dilated heart is fittest for a raised voice. (2.) *In a time of affliction.*—Paul and Silas sang in prison, a place of sorrow and confinement. (Acts xvi. 25.) A chain might bind their feet, but not their tongue; while others sleep, they sing, and turn their dungeon into a chapel. Holy singing can nobilitate every duty, and raise it to a better notion. (3.) *In a time of fear.*—When some would press Luther with the dangers the church was in, and what a black cloud hung over Zion, he would presently call for Psalm xli. to be sung; and he thought that psalm was a charm against all fears whatsoever. And since, this psalm is called “Luther’s psalm,” his sacred spell against invading fears.

5. *By all sexes.*—Miriam sings a song to God, as well as Moses. (Exod. xv. 21.) Rivet well observes, “God is the Lord of both sexes, and therefore both may sing his praises.”* Every sex may tune their hearts to proclaim their thanksgivings to God. And so Deborah may sing her song as well as Barak. (Judges v. 1.) Holy singing befits the female as well as the masculine tongue. Though women may not speak, yet they may sing, in the church; there is no silence imposed on them in this particular. Rivet here takes notice, “Women are not to be driven from joining in divine praises, when the apostle enjoins singing of psalms and hymns upon all believers, in Col. iii. 16.” And here Isidore Pelusiota well interposes: “Although the holy apostles, those masters of modesty, will not permit women’s loquacity, and the loudness of their tongues; yet, in the greatness of their wisdom, they do permit the loudness of their voices in singing forth the praises of the Almighty.”† Thus he. Women, though they are removed by apostolical command from the desk or pulpit, yet they are not debarred the choir, to join in that harmony where God’s praises are elevated.

IV. *And now we come to speak of that honour which God hath put upon this heavenly duty.*—And this will appear in three things; namely,

1. *God hath honoured this duty with glorious appearances.*—This we find upon record in 2 Chron. v. 13: “And it came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord.” The cloud was a certain sign of divine presence in those times: a cloud, to rain blessings; a cloud, because divine brightness would overpower human sight; a cloud, not to darken service, but to denote the certainty of God’s approach.

2. *With eminent victories.*—This we find upon record, 2 Chron. xx. 21, 22: “And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed

* *Quemadmodum est omnium Deus, olim uterque sexus adhibebatur ad laudes Dei canendas.*—RIVETUS. † *Importunas in ecclesiâ loquacitates apostoli Domini in ecclesiis, et magistri modestiæ et gravitatis, reprimere studentes, ut mulieres in ipsis concernerent sapienti consilio permisissent.*—ISIDORUS PELUSIOTA.

singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth for ever. And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, which were come against Israel; and they were smitten." Israel's success follows Israel's singing. If the people of Israel will look to their duty, God will look to their enemy, and lay that ambush which shall ensnare and overthrow their power.

3. *With evident miracles.*—This we find upon record, Acts xvi. 25, 26: "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed." Behold here an eminent miracle! Prisons saluting the prisoners' liberty: Paul and Silas's singing set God on working; and if their tongues were loosed in duty, their hands shall be loosed for liberty. Singing, like praying, can work wonders. Lorinus observes, that "the prisoners' chains were taken off, and their bands loosed, by the peculiar power and work of angels." *

CASE.

And now I come to the main case, *How we may make melody in our hearts to God in singing of psalms.*

ANSWER 1. *We must sing with understanding.*—We must not be guided by the tune, but the words, of the psalm; we must mind the matter more than the music, and consider *what* we sing, as well as *how* we sing. The tune may affect the fancy; but it is the matter [which] affects the heart, and *that* God principally eyes. The Psalmist adviseth us in this particular; (Psalm xlvii. 7;) and so doth the apostle. (1 Cor. xiv. 15.) Otherwise, this sweet duty would be more the work of a chorister than of a Christian; and we should be more delighted in an anthem of the musician's making, than in a psalm of the Spirit's making. A Lapidè observes, that in the text, 1 Cor. xiv. 15, the word "understanding" is *maschel*, מַשְׁכֵּל, "profound judgment." We must sing wisely, if we will sing gratefully; we must relish what we sing. In a word, we must sing as we must pray. Now the most rude petitioner will understand what he prays. (1 Cor. xiv. 15.) If we do not understand what we sing, it argues carelessness of spirit, or hardness of heart; and this makes the service ineffectual. Upon this the worthy Davenant cries out, "Adieu to the bellowing of the Papists, who sing in an unknown tongue." † God will not understand us in this service, which we understand not ourselves. One of the first pieces of the creation was light, and this must break out in every duty.

2. *We must sing with affection.*—Love is the fulfilling of this law. It is a notable saying of Augustine: "It is not crying, but loving, that sounds in the ears of God." † In Isai. v. 1, it is said, "I will sing to my well-beloved." The pretty child sings a mean song; but it delights the mother, because there is love on both sides. It is love, not skill, [which]

* *Angelica peculiari operâ solutio vinculorum accidit.*—LORINUS. † *Facescant beatus Papistarum, qui Psalmos in templis reboant, sed lingua non intellectâ.*—DAVENANTIS. † *Non clamans, sed amans, cantat in aure Dei.*—AUGUSTINUS.

makes the music and the service most pleasing. When we go about this work, we must lay our book before us,—a heart full of love. The primitive Christians sang hymns to Christ, whom they entirely loved. Love, indeed, is that ingredient which sweetens and indulcorates every service.

3. *We must sing with real grace.*—This the apostle admonishes us. (Col. iii. 16.) It is grace, not nature, sweetens the voice to sing. We must draw out our spices, our graces, in this duty. The hundred forty and four thousand, who were elected and glorified saints, sang the “new song.” (Rev. xiv. 3.) Singing is the tripudiating of a gracious soul. Gorran well notes, that “grace is the root of true devotion.”* Wicked men only make a noise, they do not sing; they are like cracked strings of a lute or a viol,—they spoil, they do not make, music. The righteous “rejoice in the Lord.” (Psalm xxxiii. 1.) The raven croaks, the nightingale sings, the tune. As God will not hear sinners when they pray, so neither when they sing; the singing of wicked men is disturbance, not obedience. Indeed the saints’ singing is a more solemn ovation; † praising Him who “causeth them to triumph in Christ.” (2 Cor. ii. 14.) The saints above sing their hallelujahs in glory, and the saints below must sing their psalms with grace. Fashion puppets as you please, they cannot sing; it is the alive bird can chirrup that pleasing noise.

4. *We must sing with excited grace.*—Not only with grace habitual, but with excited and actual. The musical instrument delights not but when it is played upon. In this duty we must follow Paul’s advice to Timothy, *αναζωπυρειν*, “stir up” the grace that is in us; (2 Tim. i. 6;) and cry out as David, “Awake, love, awake, delight.” (Psalm lvii. 8.) The clock must be plucked up before it can guide our time; the bird pleaseth not in her nest, but in her notes; the chimes only make music while they are going. Let us therefore beg the Spirit to “blow upon our garden, that the spices thereof may flow out,” when we set upon this joyous service. (Canticles iv. 16.) God loves active grace in duty; that the soul should be ready trimmed, when it presents itself to Christ in any worship.

5. *We must sing with spiritual joy.*—Indeed, singing only makes joy articulate; it is only the turning of bullion into coin; as the prophet speaks to this purpose. (Isai. lxxv. 14.) Singing is only the triumphant gladness of a gracious heart, a softer rapture. We must sing as David danced before the ark, “with shouting” and rejoicing in God. (2 Sam. vi. 15.) We sing to Christ. And Dr. Bound observes, “There is no joy comparable to that we have in him; this is ‘joy unspeakable and full of glory.’” Joy must be the *selah* of this duty.

6. *We must sing with faith.*—This grace only puts a pleasingness upon every service: if we hear, the word must be “mixed with faith;” (Heb. iv. 2;) if we pray, it must be “the prayer of faith.” (James v. 15.) We must bring faith to Christ’s table, or else, as Austin saith, *dormit Christus, si dormit fides*; “if faith sleeps, Christ is likewise asleep.” And so faith must carry-on this ordinance of singing: especially

* *Gratia est devotionis radix.*—GORRANUS. † In the first edition, this word is printed *occasion*; but to all who are familiar with the minor triumphs of the Romans, on account of some bloodless victory, “ovation,” which is the reading of the second edition, will recommend itself as the most correct.—EUIT.

there must be a credence in the hallelujahs above ; we must believe that the saints here are only tuning their instruments, and the louder music will be above ; that in glory there will be such pleasing sounds, which, the apostle tells us, no ear ever heard. (1 Cor. ii. 9.)

7. *We must sing in the Spirit.*—As we must pray in the Spirit, (Jude 20,) so we must sing in the Spirit ; the Spirit must breathe, as well as grace act, or the voice sound, in this duty. Davenant well observes, “They are called spiritual songs, *ratione originis*, ‘in point of their original:’ the Spirit excites and impels the soul to this holy service.”* And he observes, that the Spirit is the prime artificer in this work. Thus, in the foregoing verse to the text, the apostle adviseth us to “be filled with the Spirit ;” (Eph. v. 18 ;) and in the text itself, he calls us to be singing of psalms and hymns, &c. When the Spirit fell upon the apostles, then they spake those glorious things recorded, Acts ii. 4 : and so must we sing, being sublimated and raised with the Spirit. This “wind” (as the Spirit is called, John iii. 8) must fill our organ, before we can make any music.

8. And what Davenant suggests is very pertinent here : “*In singing of psalms, our principal care must be of our hearts, and to follow the wise man’s counsel, to ‘keep our hearts with all diligence.’*” (Prov. iv. 23.)† —And this learned man gives us a good reason : “For they who neglect their hearts, may please men with the artificial suavity of their voice ; but they will displease God with the odious impurity of their hearts.” And we must watch our hearts ; for vain and sinful thoughts will fly-blow this duty as well as others. Gorran well observes, “There are four conditions of right singing : there must be, (1.) The alacrity of the voice ; (2.) The conformity of the work ; (3.) The attention of the heart ; (4.) A rectitude towards God.”‡ And holy Bernard draws-up an indictment against offenders in this kind : “Thou singest,” saith he, “to please the people more than God ; thou breakest thy voice musically, break thy will morally ; thou keepest a consonancy in thy voice, keep a concord and harmony in thy manners.”§ A holy heart and life make that sing to chant melodiously. First purify, then thou wilt tune, thy heart.

9. *Neglect not preparatory prayer.*—Prayer prepares for singing as well as other ordinances. Indeed *Jehovah est Archimusicus*, “the great Harmonist,” who must put every heart in tune : He must screw-up every peg of affection, and strain every string of meditation, in this ordinance. The wise man observes : “The preparations of the heart in man are from God.” (Prov. xvi. 1.) “Preparations” in the plural number,—preparation to hearing, preparation to praying, preparation to receiving of the holy supper, and so preparation to singing. Our singing must needs be melody to the Lord, if it be assisted by the Lord : God will surely hear the melody he himself makes in a gracious heart engaged in this duty. Thus the case may be answered.

* *Spiritu Sancto impellente et excitante.*—DAVENANTIUS. † *In psalmis canendis præcipua Christianorum cura esse debet, ut cor ritè afficiatur.*—DAVENANTIUS. ‡ *Quatuor sunt conditiones rectè canendi : 1. Vocis alacritas ; 2. Operis conformitas ; 3. Cordis attentio ; 4. Pia rectitudo.*—GORRANUS. § *Cantas ut placeas populo, non Deo ; fraugis vocem, &c.*—BERNARDUS.

USES.

USE 1. *This checks those who despise this ordinance.*—Who look upon it as noise, but not singing, as the crackling of thorns, but not the music of hearts. But,

1. These do not consider *the holy ends of this duty*; namely,

(1.) *Psalms are sung for instruction.*—We instruct one another in this service; this duty is for spiritual and mutual edification. As a learned man well observes, “That knowledge we acquire from the scriptures, we draw out in this duty for our brother’s edification.”* We edify our brother by singing as well as by speaking; by warbling forth the word in holy singing, as well as by urging and pressing the word in holy discourse. A proclamation is never the less authentical because it is proclaimed by sound of trumpet: the tune only accents the matter. Clemens Alexandrinus well observes: “There is an appetite in good persons to strengthen their brethren;”† and this may be done in singing as well as in other ordinances.

(2.) *Psalms are sung for admonition.*—This the apostle expressly intimates: “Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns.” (Col. iii. 16.) We may reprove a sin in singing of a psalm, as well as in the quoting of a text; and encourage virtue as well by lifting up our voice, as by giving of our praise. Thus David, Psalm li. 13. We may truly be satirists in this very ordinance. When we sing a psalm of judgment, we may awaken sinners; and when we sing psalms of mercy and loving-kindness, we may encourage saints.

(3.) *Psalms are sung for praise and thanksgiving.*—Then, as the Psalmist speaks, we “awake our glory,” (Psalm lvii. 8,) which interpreters call the tongue, an excellent instrument for praising God. Singing of psalms is only the echo of praise, the rebound of a joyous heart in a laudatory speech, praise loudly and musically proclaimed, that men may hear our thanksgivings, and bear testimony to our gratulatory enlargements; as the passenger bears witness to the music of a grove; there the pleasant birds sit and sing.

2. Nor do such consider *the rare effects of this duty*, namely, of singing to the Lord: and they are,

(1.) *Singing can sweeten a prison.*—Thus Paul and Silas indulcorated their bondage by this service. (Acts xvi. 25.) As prayer can shed a perfume, so singing can cast a delight, on the most displacent dungeon; this truly divine service can turn a prison into a paradise, a place of restraint into “the glorious liberty of the sons of God.” As Cyprian used to triumph: “Our conventions sing our psalms.”‡

(2.) *Singing can prepare us for sufferings.*—When Christ was ready to be offered up, he sang an hymn with his disciples: Christ sups and sings, then dies. Joy in the Lord, whereof singing is only the rebound, arms against the dint of suffering. It is a good saying of Chrysostom: “This kind of delight is most natural to the soul. God appointed psalms, that

* *Scientiam quam comparavimus ex scripturis, expronimus ad fratrem edificandum.*

† *Inest appetitus piis generandi pius et fidelis.*—CLEMENS ALEXANDRINUS.

‡ *Ne sit*

hora gratiæ immunis gaudio; conventus nostri sonent psalmos.—CYPRIANUS.

from thence profit and pleasure may flow together."* Singing raises the heart above the discouragement of suffering; nor can we so well muse upon our pains, while we are so sedulously tuning our praises.

(3.) *Singing lightens and exhilarates the soul.*—We may say of this duty, as Tremellius speaks of David's harp, that by the music of it the storms of Saul's spirit were allayed, and he was composed and serene. Singing both reveals and amplifies our joy; it is not only a discovery, but an improvement. As a learned man well takes notice, "Let us delight ourselves in singing psalms, and from them let us draw our cheerfulness and delight."† Let all our sweet waters gush from this spring.

3. Nor do such consider the *sweet allurements, which draw us to this duty.*—And if we inquire what it is that puts us upon rejoicing in God by singing, I shall tell you,—

(1.) *The good Spirit.*—That heavenly principle both leads us to this duty, and helps us in it. This is one of the good motions of the blessed Spirit, to put us upon singing the praises of the Lord. Wine tempts us to vain and wanton songs; but the Spirit excites us to holy and heavenly hymns: the Spirit first sets the tune, and Christ is the burden of the song.

(2.) *The joyous heart.*—Holy singing is both the sign and vent of joy. The little child is pained, and then it cries; the saint is surprised with joy, and then it breaks-out into singing. Smothers will turn into flames; and the heart overcharged with complacency will discharge itself in this holy exultation. In the church's triumph, recorded by the prophet Isaiah, "singing" follows "joy" as its proper and genuine product and birth. (Isai. xxxv. 2.)

(3.) *A sense of obedience.*—To sing praises to the Lord, is a duty which the saints know not how to wave or respite. The apostle James joins praying and singing together; (James v. 13;) and the believer knows not how to neglect the one, no more than the other. Sometimes God calls us to the cross, and then we must be calm and patient; and sometimes he calls us to the choir, and then we must be pleasant and delightful.

USE II. *This checks those who scruple this ordinance.*—Surely this must proceed from the evil one, turning himself into an angel of light. It was a serious moan which sometimes many ministers in New-England made, even in this case: "The singing of psalms," say they, "though it breathe forth nothing but heavenly harmony and sweet melody, yet such is the subtilty of the enemy, and the enmity of our nature against God and the ways of God, that our hearts can find matter of discord in this harmony, and crotchets of division in this holy melody." And hence arise so many questions about singing of psalms. But I shall only touch upon three objections.

OBJECTIONS.

OBJECTION I. "How can a serious Christian sing in a mixed congregation? The presence of the wicked will surely jar the music, and give a very just occasion of offence."

* *Hoc genus delectationis est animæ nostræ valde cognatum. Deus psalmos instituit, ut ab his simul caperetur utilitas et voluptas.*—CHRYSOSTOMUS. † *Ps dñis nos oblectemus, et ex hisce hilaritatem nostram promanare annotandum est.*

ANSWER I. Many who forbear singing in the congregation, will not forbear it in their families. And is there no Ham, no Judas, no withered branch? Are all the sons of Zion? Are all the friends of the bride-chamber? This is not an usual happiness.

ANS. II. And are there not mixtures when we pray, and when we hear? And this scruple may be levelled against these as well as against singing. There is as much purity, and so ought to be, in petitioners and hearers as in singers. And why then are we not as curious in these duties as in singing! which if we were, few would join with us in these solemn approaches. Let us not, dear Christians, consult fancy, but reason and scripture-proof.

ANS. III. Singing may be sanctified for conviction of sinners. Moses penned a song, and God commands the people to sing it. (Deut. xxxi. 19, 22, 30.) And this song was to convince the sinful Israelites of their obstinacy and apostasy.

ANS. IV. And if we are thus shy and scrupulous, with whom at last shall we join? Our Saviour himself had but twelve apostles, and there was a Judas among them. What constellation shall we aim at, where there is no blazing comet or falling star? Let us at least avoid that language, "Stand further off; I am holier than thou." It was but a pharisaical boast to say, "I am not as this publican." (Luke xviii. 11.)

ANS. V. If singing be a duty, as most certainly it is, thou art bound to perform it in the best manner thou canst; and then others' presence will not enfeeble thy comfort, nor invalidate thy service; thou shalt have peace in thy own soul. Heathenish spectators (for so are wicked men at an ordinance) did not eclipse the glory of the martyrs; their stakes were hung with laurel notwithstanding. But it is observed by a worthy and learned man, that all these objections arise from the ignorance of the nature, use, and ends of this blessed duty.

OBJECT. II. But some are ready to object, there are many passages in the Psalms which are not so accommodate to their condition. As, how can they sing Psalm vi. when they are in prosperity? or Psalm xxxviii. when they are in health? or Psalm li. when they know no notorious scandal hath lately fallen on them? And they must not lie before the Lord.

ANS. I. Every passage in the Psalms is matter for meditation; a gracious spirit may spring sweet contemplation from it. In Psalm li. we may meditate on the grievous nature of sin; and in Psalm vi. we may meditate on the mournful effects of sin, and that it will surely be bitterness in the latter end.

ANS. II. What is not now, may afterwards be, thy condition. Thou mayest fall, and then Psalm li. is accommodated to thee; thou mayest be under distempers, and then Psalm xxxviii. is not incongruous to thee; thou mayest be penitentially inclined, and then Psalm vi. is well calculated for thy condition.

OBJECT. III. "But why must we be confined to David's Psalms?"

ANS. Why? What more comprehensive and suitable to every condition? They are the Bible epitomized. How full of sweet counsels, divine raptures, humble complaints, hearty expressions of love to God! Sometimes we may find David swimming in his tears; (Psalm vi. 6;)

sometimes ravished with his joys ; (Psalm xliii. 4 ;) sometimes eclipsed with distrust ; (Psalm lxxvii. 7 ;) sometimes raised with confidences. (Psalm xxx. 7.) The Psalms are a Christian's choicest oracle to fly-to in times of distress. And was not the holy Psalmist guided by an infallible Spirit? How often are the Psalms quoted by Christ, (Luke xx. 42 ; xxiv. 44,) and so by the apostles, (Acts i. 20,) as divine authority to establish truth! Let us therefore not disturb ourselves with these groundless objections, but let us pursue and embrace this holy duty, which is the very suburbs of heaven. And let us observe what a reverend person notes upon this occasion : "I observe," saith he, "they never thrive well who neglect or scruple singing of psalms. They commonly begin at this omission, but they do not end there, but at last they come to be above all ordinances, and so indeed without them ; whose sad condition is not sufficiently to be deplored." And another learned and reverend divine yet living hath observed fatal and judicial proceedings of God against those who have turned their backs upon this joyous and sweet ordinance. But let the Lord lead us into all understanding : the wise Christian will pause and consider.

USE III. *Let this check those who suspend and neglect this heavenly ordinance.*—And this is an evil much to be deplored in our times. We may now walk in the streets on God's holy day, and not hear the least noise of a psalm, or sound of a spiritual song. It was, not long since, the wont of the Puritans, who were the most precious Christians, to echo forth the praises of the great Jehovah in this duty, especially upon the Lord's day. Then was there a holy choir in their houses : their children were the little birds to sing the praises of the Creator ; the servants likewise joining in the harmony to make up a fuller music. But, alas ! now the voice of the bride, singing to her beloved, is not heard in the places of our abode ; there is silence instead of singing, and prating instead of praising, frivolous discourses instead of joyous praises. It might behove us to ponder, how much of heaven do we lose in neglecting this service ! In singing psalms we begin the work of heaven. In heaven we read of "the song of Moses, and of the Lamb ;" (Rev. xv. 3 ;) and of "a new song." (Rev. xiv. 3.) And the angels, though they have not tongues, yet they have voices to sing the praises of the Most High ; and, therefore, that this heavenly service is so neglected and unexercised, "is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation." (Ezek. xix. 14.)

USE IV. *This likewise checks those who formalize in this duty ; who act a part, not a duty.*—They make a noise, and not music ; and more provoke the eyes, than please the ears, of God. Jerome pathetically exclaims against those formalists : "We must not," saith he, "act as players, who stretch their throats to accommodate their tongues to the matter in hand ; but we must sing psalms as saints, praising God not only with our voice, but with our heart, not only with a sweet voice, but with a melting heart." Bernard makes two conditions of grateful singing : "1. We must sing purely, minding what we sing ; nor must we act or think any thing besides ; there must be no vain or vagrant thoughts ; no dissonancy between the mind and the tongue. 2. We must sing strenuously, not idly, not sleepily or perfunctorily ; we must sing *ex animo*, 'most heartily and energetically.'"

USE V. *Let us get an interest in Christ.*—If we are not in Christ, we are certainly out of tune. The singing of a sinner is natural, like the singing of a bird. But the singing of a saint is musical, like the singing of a child. Saints in singing perform a grateful duty; but sinners offer “a vain oblation.” (Isai. i. 13.) It is Christ must put an acceptance upon this service, as well as others; here the altar must sanctify the gift. Christ perfumes the prayers of the saints; (Rev. v. 8;) and he must articulate the singing of the saints. Indeed, he alone can turn our tune into melody; and though in ourselves we have Esau’s garments, yet he can give us Jacob’s voice. We are accepted in Christ in this offer of love. Therefore let us get into Christ: he can raise our voice in singing to a pleasing elevation. Let us be in him; and then our steps shall be metrical, our pauses musical, and our very cadences shall be seraphical; our singing of psalms shall be the music of the spheres.

USE VI. *Let us sometimes raise our hearts in holy contemplation.*—Let us think of the music of the bride-chamber. There shall be no cracked strings, displeasing sounds, harsh voices, nothing to abate or remit our melody: there shall be no willows to hang-up our harps upon. (Psalm cxxxvii. 2.) In the bride-chamber, there shall be no sorrow to interfere, when we sing the song of the Lamb, no grief to jar our harmony. (Rev. xxi. 4.) These pleasing meditations should sometimes possess and sweeten our spirits, that while we are walking “in the galleries,” (Canticles vii. 5,) we may be nearer to the palace of the Great King. (Psalm xlv. 15.)

SERMON X.

BY THE REV. THOMAS MANTON, D.D.

HOW OUGHT WE TO IMPROVE OUR BAPTISM?

Be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.—Acts. ii. 38.

THIS chapter gives us an account of the pouring-out of the Spirit according to the promise presently after Christ’s ascension. As soon as the Spirit was poured out, the apostles were enabled to speak in various languages to the astonishment and wonder of the hearers. This was for the glory of God, the confirmation of the gospel, and to authorize them as special messengers sent by Christ. At the sight of this miracle some wonder, others mock, as if this speaking with divers tongues had been a confused jabbering, that proceeded from the fumes of wine, rather than the gift and operation of the Holy Spirit. To satisfy both, Peter declares in a sermon the effect and intent of the miracle; proving Jesus, whom they had crucified, to be Lord and Christ. When they heard this, many of the most obstinate among them were “pricked in their heart,” and relented. A happy sermon it was that Peter preached: it brought-in

thousands of souls to Christ ; the first hanel of the power of the Spirit, and success of the gospel.

It is good to observe what course they took for ease and relief, after this piercing and brokenness of heart. They "said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" This is the usual question of men under a sound and thorough conviction. To their serious question Peter makes a seasonable answer. (Verse 38.) It is the part of a good physician, not only to discover the disease, but also to prescribe a remedy : especially should spiritual physicians be tender of broken-hearted sinners, and willing and ready to give them counsel.

In Peter's direction and counsel to them, observe,—

First. What he persuades them to do.

Secondly. By what motive and argument ; what they should do, and what they should receive.

In the advice he persuades them to repentance, and to be baptized in the name of Christ. The latter we are upon.

QUESTION I. For explaining it, we may inquire, first, "Why is baptism mentioned rather than faith, and other things more internal and necessary to salvation?"

I ANSWER, first. Certainly faith is implied ; for "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark xvi. 16.) Baptism is an open and real profession of Christ crucified : so that, "Be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ," is as much as, "Be baptized believing on the name of the Lord Jesus for the remission of sins." Secondly. Baptism is mentioned because it was the visible rite of receiving proselytes to Christ. Now it imported them who were convinced as persecutors to turn professors, if they would have ease for their consciences ; and therefore not only to believe with the heart, but to make open profession of faith in Christ. (Rom. x. 10.)

QUESTION II. "Why in the name of Christ only? The Father and the Holy Ghost is not mentioned according to the prescript-form." (Matt. xxviii. 19.)

I ANSWER. He speaks not of the *form* of baptism, but the *use* and end thereof. Now the great use of baptism is, that we may have benefit by the mystery of redemption by Christ ; therefore elsewhere we are said to be "baptized into Jesus Christ," (Rom. vi. 3,) and to "put on Christ." (Gal. iii. 27.) He is the Head of the church ; and by baptism we are planted into his mystical body.

This being premised, my work shall be to show, *what use and respect baptism has unto this benefit of obtaining remission of sins by Jesus Christ.* I shall do it in these considerations :—

First. *That God hath ever delighted to deal with his creatures in the way of a covenant.*—That we might know what to expect from him, and might look upon ourselves as under the firmer bonds of obedience to his blessed majesty. In a covenant, which is the most solemn transaction between man and man, both parties are engaged,—God to us, and we to God. It is not meet that one party should be bound, and the other free ; therefore both are bound to each other,—God to bless, and we to obey. Indeed, in the first covenant, the *debitum pœnæ* ["the penalty due"] is only mentioned, because that only took place. "In the day that thou

etest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Gen. ii. 17.) But the other part is implied, and it doth in effect speak thus much, "Do and live, sin and die."

Secondly. *Because the first covenant was broken on our part, God was pleased to enter into a second.*—Wherein he would manifest the glory of his redeeming grace and pardoning mercy to fallen man. This was brought about in Christ: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." (2 Cor. v. 19.) And therefore this second covenant is called a "covenant of peace," as being made with us after the breach, and when man was obnoxious to the wrath of God: "Neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed." (Isai. liv. 10.) Man needeth such a covenant, and God appeased by Christ offereth it to us.

Thirdly. *In this covenant of peace, the privileges and duties are suited to the state in which man was, when God invited him into covenant with himself.*—Man was fallen from his duty, and obnoxious to the wrath and displeasure of God; and therefore the new covenant is a doctrine of repentance and remission of sins. What is, in Mark xvi. 16, "Preach the gospel to every creature," is, in Luke xxiv. 47, "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations." For that is the gospel, or the new remedial law of our Lord Jesus,—“repentance,” to heal us and set us in joint again, as to our duty; “remission of sins,” to recover us into God’s favour. Both these benefits we have by the Redeemer: “Him hath God exalted to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins.” (Acts v. 31.) He giveth the one simply, and both giveth and requireth the other; so that, by the new covenant, remission of sins is conveyed to all true penitents.

Fourthly. More distinctly to understand the tenor of this new and second covenant, *we must consider both the duties and the privileges thereof.*—For in every covenant there is *ratio dati et accepti*,—there is “something promised and given, and something required:” and usually the promise consists of somewhat which the party is willing of, and the duty or condition required of that to which he is more backward and loath to submit. So in the covenant of grace, in the promise God respects man’s want, in the duty his own honour. Every man would have pardon, and be saved from hell; but God will have subjection. Even corrupt nature is not against desires of happiness; these God makes use of to gain us to holiness. All men readily catch at felicity, and would have impunity, peace, comfort, glory; but are unwilling to deny the flesh, to renounce the credit, profit, or pleasure of sin, or to grow dead to the world and worldly things. Now God promiseth what we desire, on condition that we will submit to those things that we are against. As we sweeten bitter pills to children, that they may swallow them the better; they love the sugar, though they loathe the aloes: so doth God invite us to our duty by our interest. Therefore, whosoever would enter into the gospel-state, must resolve to take the blessings and benefits offered for his happiness, and the duties required for his work. Indeed, accepting of the benefits is a part of the condition, because we treat with an invisible God about a happiness that lieth in another world: but it is but part; there are other terms, and therefore we must “draw nigh with a true heart in full assurance of faith.” (Heb. x. 22.) *With*

a true heart—Resolving upon the duties of the covenant. *In full assurance of faith*—Depending upon God's word, that he will give us the blessings.

Fifthly. *The privileges are two, pardon and life.*—These are the great blessings offered in the new covenant. You have them both together, Acts xxvi. 18: "To turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith." These two benefits are most necessary,—the one to allay the fears of the guilty creature, and the other to gratify desires of happiness which are natural to us; the one to remedy the misery incurred by sin and the fall of man, the other to establish our true and proper felicity in the everlasting enjoyment of God; the one to ease our consciences, and support us against troubles of mind, the other to comfort us against the outward troubles and afflictions which sin hath introduced into the world; in short, the one to free us from deserved punishment, the other to assure us of undeserved blessedness. The one importeth deliverance from eternal death, and the other entrance into eternal life.

Sixthly. *The duties thereof do either concern our first entrance into the Christian state, or our progress therein.*—Our Lord representeth it under the notions of "the gate," and "the way;" "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life." (Matt. vii. 14.) Other scriptures deliver it under the notions of "making covenant," and "keeping covenant" with God: "making covenant;" (Psalm l. 5;) "keeping covenant." (Psalm xxv. 10; ciii. 18.) The covenant must not only be made, but kept.

1. *As to entering into covenant with God, there is required true repentance and faith.*—"Repent, and believe the gospel." (Mark i. 15.) Repentance respects God as our end; faith respects Christ as the great means, or way to the Father: "Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." (Acts xx. 21.) God is our end, for Christ died to "bring us to God;" (1 Peter iii. 18;) and Christ is our "way;" (John xiv. 6;) and whole Christianity is a "coming to God by Christ." (Heb. vii. 25.) Now in our first entrance, faith and repentance are both mixed; and it is hard to sever them, and show what belongs to the one, and what to the other; at least, it would perplex the discourse. Both together imply, that a man be turned from a life of sin to God by faith in Christ; or a renouncing [of] the devil, the world, and the flesh, and a devoting and dedicating [of] ourselves to God.

(1.) *A renouncing of the devil, the world, and the flesh.*—For these are the three great enemies of God and our salvation. "In time past ye walked according to the course of this world, after the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom also we all had our conversation in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind." (Eph. ii. 2, 3.) There all our enemies appear abreast: the devil, as the grand deceiver, and principal of all wickedness; the world, with its pleasures, honours, and profits, as the bait by which it doth deceive us, and steal away our hearts from God, and pervert and divert us, that we should not look after the one thing necessary; the flesh is that corrupt inclination in us, which

entertains and closeth with these temptations, to the neglect of God and the wrong of our own souls; this is very importunate to be pleased, and is the proper internal cause of all our mischief; for "every man is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." (James i. 14.) These must be renounced before we can return to God; for till we put away our idols, we cannot incline our hearts to the true God; and these are the great idols by which our hearts are estranged from him. (Joshua xxiv. 23.) When God is laid aside, self interposeth as the next heir; and that which we count self is the flesh. Many wrong their own souls; but never any man hated his own flesh. That which feeds the flesh, is the world; and the devil, by proposing the bait, irritateth and stirreth up our affections. Therefore we must be "turned from Satan to God;" we must be "delivered from the present evil world;" we must "abstain from fleshly lusts;" for God will have no co-partners and competitors in our hearts.

(2.) *A devoting and giving up [of] ourselves to God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*—As our God; (2 Cor. viii. 5; Rom. vi. 13;) as our owner by creation; (Psalm c. 3;) and by redemption; (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20;) as our sovereign Lord: "Other lords beside thee have had dominion over us," &c.; (Isa. xxvi. 13; Jer. xxiv. 8;) as the fountain of our life and blessedness: "I trusted in thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my God." (Psalm xxxi. 14.) "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him." (Lam. iii. 24.) "Thou art my portion, O Lord: I have said that I would keep thy precepts." (Psalm cxix. 57.)

2. *As to our progress and perseverance.*—Which is our walking in the narrow way, and shows the sincerity and heartiness of our consent in making the covenant. And besides, this is not the work of a day, but of our whole lives; we have continual need of coming to God by Christ. Here three things are required:—

(1.) *As to the enemies of God and our souls, there must be a forsaking as well as a renouncing.*—The devil must be forsaken, we must be no more of his party and confederacy; we must "resist," stand out against all his batteries and assaults. (1 Peter v. 8, 9.) The world must be "overcome," (1 John v. 4, 5,) and the flesh must be subdued and mortified, (Gal. v. 24,) that we be no more governed by the desires thereof. And if we be sometimes foiled, we must not go back again, but renew our resolutions; and the drift of our lives must still be for God and heaven.

(2.) *As to God, to whom we have devoted ourselves, we must love, and please, and serve him all our days.* (Luke i. 75.) We must make it our work to love him, and count it our happiness to be beloved by him, and carefully apply ourselves to seek his favour, and cherish a fresh sense of it upon our hearts, and "continue with patience in well-doing," (Rom. ii. 7,) till we come to the complete sight and love of him in heaven. (1 John iii. 2.)

(3.) *You must always live in the hope of the coming of Christ, and everlasting glory.*—"Looking for the blessed hope;" (Titus ii. 13;) and, "Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." (Jude 21.) As we did at first thankfully accept of our recovery by Christ, and at first consent to renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh, and resolve to follow God's counsel and direction; we must still persevere in this mind, and use his appointed means in order to our final happiness.

The sum, then, of our Christianity is, that we should by true repentance and faith forsake the world, the flesh, and the devil, and give up ourselves to God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that he may take us for his reconciled children, and for Christ's sake forgive all our sins, and by his Spirit give us grace to persevere in those resolutions, till our full and final happiness come in hand.

Seventhly. *This covenant, consisting of such duties and privileges, God hath confirmed by certain visible ordinances, commonly called sacraments.*—As baptism and the Lord's supper; both which, but in a different manner, respect the whole tenor of the covenant. For as the covenant bindeth mutually on God's part and ours, so these duties have a mutual aspect or respect to what God does, and what we must do. On God's part they are a sign and a seal: on our part they are a badge and a bond.

1. *On God's part they are sealing or confirming signs.*—As circumcision is called “a sign or seal of the righteousness which is by faith,” (Rom. iv. 11,) that is, of the grace offered to us in Christ; so is baptism, which came in the room of circumcision: “In whom ye are circumcised, buried with him in baptism.” (Col. ii. 11, 12.) Surely the gospel ordinances signify as much grace as the ordinances of the legal covenant. If circumcision was a sign and seal of “the righteousness which is by faith,” or a pledge of God's good will to us in Christ, so is baptism, so is the Lord's supper. They are a sign to signify, and a seal to confirm; to represent the grace, and assure the grant of pardon and life. As, for instance, baptism signifies pardon and life, so does the Lord's supper: (Matt. xxvi. 28, 29:) that for our growth and nourishment, this for our imitation. Baptism is under our consideration at present. That it hath respect to remission of sins, the text is clear for it, and so are many other scriptures. It was Ananias's advice to Paul, “Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” (Acts xxii. 16.) So, Eph. v. 26: “That he might sanctify and cleanse us with the washing of water by the word.” The washing represents the washing away the guilt and filth of sin; it signifies also our resurrection to a blessed and eternal life. “Baptism doth also now save us by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter iii. 21.) Well, then, it is a sealing sign. When God promised longer life to Hezekiah, he said, “What shall be the sign that the Lord will heal me?” (2 Kings xx. 8.) So, when he promiseth pardon and life to us, what shall be the sign that the Lord will do this for us? Baptism is this sign; a witness between us and God: “This heap is a witness between thee and me.” (Gen. xxxi. 48.)

2. *On our part they are a badge and a bond, to oblige us to the duties of the covenant.*—A badge of the profession, and a bond to engage us to the duties which that profession calls for. As the apostle speaks of circumcision, that “whosoever is circumcised, is a debtor to the whole law;” (Gal. v. 3;) binds himself to the observances of Moses; so a Christian by being baptized becomes a debtor, “not to the flesh, to live after the flesh,” &c. (Rom. viii. 12.) And it is called an “answer toward God.” (1 Peter iii. 21.) The answer supposes the demands of the covenant, and so it is an undertaking faithfully to perform the conditions required of us; a vow or an obligation whereby we “reckon” ourselves bound to die “unto sin,” and to live “unto righteousness, through Jesus Christ our

Lord." (Rom. vi. 11.) It bindeth us chiefly to the duties that belong to our entrance, as the Lord's supper doth more directly to the duties which belong to our progress; it bindeth us to a true belief of the gospel, or an acceptance of Christ, and consent to the covenant of grace; to renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh, and to give up ourselves unto God. And therefore the baptismal covenant, by which we are initiated into Christianity, is expressed by our being baptized "in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost;" (Matt. xxviii. 19;) which implies a giving up ourselves to them in their distinct personal relations. To the Father, that we may return to him, and obey him as our rightful Lord; that we may love him, and depend upon him, as the Fountain of all our good and all-sufficient happiness; and prefer his favour before all the sensual pleasures of the world. We are baptized in the name of Christ, that we may believe in him, accept him as our Saviour and Redeemer; expecting to be saved, by his merits, righteousness, and intercession, from the wrath of God, and guilt of sin and eternal death. To the Holy Ghost, as our Guide, Sanctifier, and Comforter; that he may free us from sin, change us into the image and likeness of Christ, and lead us into all truth and godliness, and comfort us with the sense of our present interest in God's love, and the hopes of future glory.

Eighthly. These visible confirming ordinances give us great advantages above the word and bare proposal of the covenant.

1. *As these sealing signs are an expression of God's earnest and sincere respect to our salvation.*—God hath opened his mind in his word concerning his love and good-will to sinners in Christ; and he hath also added his seal, that the charter of his grace might be more valid and authentic. It argueth the goodness and communicativeness of God, to give notice in his word; but his solicitousness and anxious care for our good, to give visible assurance in the sacraments, as being willing *επιπροσθεν*, "over and above," to satisfy the heirs of promise. If a man be more than ordinarily cautious to make all sure, it is a sign his heart is upon the thing. Surely it is a great condescension that God would dispose his grace into a covenant-form; but it is a further condescension that he would add seals, which needed not on his part; but he added them to give us the more strong consolation. *Nudum pactum*, "a naked promise," is not so valid and authentic, as when articles of agreement are put into a formal instrument and deed of law, and that signed and sealed, and interchangeably delivered; this breeds more confidence and security on both sides. God's word certifieth us of his good-will; but when he is pleased to make a formal indenture of it, and to sign it and seal it, it doth breed more assurance in our minds, that his promises are made with a real intent to perform them; and [it] bindeth us the more firmly to God, when, besides our naked promise, there is a kind of vow and oath on our part solemnly entered into by baptism.

2. *There is this advantage in the sacraments above the word, that they are a closer application.*—The word speaks to all promiscuously, as inviting; the sacraments, to every one in particular, as obliging. By the word, none are excluded from the grace offered upon God's terms: "Go, preach the gospel to every creature;" but by the sacraments, every one is expressly admonished of his duty. The object revealed in the word is

like the brasen serpent, which without difference was exposed to the eye of all, that whosoever looked upon it might be healed; but the same object offered in the sacraments is like the blood sprinkled on the door-posts, that every man might be assured that his family should be in safety. Now the reason of this difference is, because things propounded in the word are like a treaty between God and us, or an offer and a debating of matters till the parties do agree; but sacraments are not of use till both sides have agreed upon the conditions of the covenant. In adults at least the word conduceth to the making of the covenant, but sacraments suppose it made; therefore the word universally propoundeth that which in the seals is particularly applied. Now those things do not affect us so much which are spoken indifferently to all, as those that are particularly applied to ourselves, because they stir us up to a more accurate care and endeavour to fulfil the duty incumbent upon us. The conditions are propounded in the word: "Repent and believe, and I will pardon, and give thee eternal life:" but the sacraments suppose an actual consent, that thou hast done, or undertaken so to do; and then God comes and saith, "Take this as an undoubted pledge, that thou shalt have what I have promised;" which doth more increase our hope, and persuade our duty.

3. *By these sealing signs we are solemnly invested into a right to the things promised.*—As when we are put in possession of what we have bargained for by due formalities of law. "This is my body:" that is our solemn investiture into the privileges purchased by Christ's crucified body. A believer receiveth Christ in the word, (John i. 12,) and he receiveth Christ in the Lord's supper. What is the difference? There his right is solemnly owned and confirmed in the way which God hath appointed. As soon as a man consents to a bargain, he hath an interest in the thing bargained for; but the right is made more explicit, when it is delivered to him by some formalities of law, as an house by a key, a field by a turf or twig. In such delivery we say, "This key is my house; this turf or twig is my field." So are we put in possession of Christ by these words, "This is my body." Every penitent and believing sinner hath a right to Christ and pardon; but his solemn enfeoffment is by the sacraments: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you for the remission of sins;" or, as it is, Acts xxii. 16: "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." God gave Abraham the land of promise by word of mouth; but, Gen. xiii., he bids him go through the land and view it, and build an altar, and offer sacrifice there: then was he actually invested in the gift. God gave Israel a grant of Canaan; but the clusters of Eshcol were, as it were, the livery and seisin of it. Though the gift be sufficiently made-over by the promise, yet it is further ratified and more solemnly conveyed and delivered by the sacraments.

4. *This is one advantage more,—that the great mysteries of godliness are laid before our eyes in some visible rites, and so have greater force to excite the mind to serious consideration.*—When God will condescend to give us help against our infirmities, it must be by the senses, by which all knowledge comes into the soul. Now feeling, smelling, tasting, seem not so fit for this, as being more gross, and conducing to the welfare of the body; but seeing and hearing convey objects to the understanding,

and therefore are called the "senses of discipline and learning." Now the covenant is made by words, which strike the ear ; but the seals, by visible things, set it before our eyes ; and, as the apostle saith, "Christ is crucified among" us, and "evidently set forth." (Gal. iii. 1.) The sight doth in a more lively manner stir-up the mind than the bare hearing. Washing from sin doth fitly represent to us, and raise thoughts in us about, the sanctification of the Spirit, and so in a lively manner excite us to expect this benefit.

USE.

Let us not be slight in the use and improvement of baptism ; for it implieth a solemn covenanting with God, that we may obtain remission of sins and eternal life. John the Baptist calleth it "the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." (Mark i. 4.) Therefore let us reflect upon ourselves : We are all baptized, but what are we the better ? Have we the more confidence of the pardon of our sins, and a greater sense of our covenant-vow, "to die unto sin and live unto God ?" We cannot have the former without the latter ; both must be regarded by us. Volateranus reporteth of Lucian, that scoffing atheist, that when he revolted from the profession of Christianity, he scoffed at his baptism, saying, *se nihil ex eo consecutum, quàm quoddam nomen ipsius esset corruptum, ex Lucio Lucianus factum* : "that he got nothing by his baptism but a syllable to his name, it being changed from Lucius to Lucianus." Alas ! what do most get by their baptism but a name ? It should not be so with you ; you may have great advantage by it, if you improve it to the ends for which it was appointed. To quicken you, consider,

1. *Baptism is a perpetual bond upon us, obliging us to repentance, and a holy life.* (Rom. vi. 4.)—Therefore the scripture often reasoneth from it ; as, Rom. vi. 2 : "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein ?" He argueth not *ab impossibili*, but *ab incongruo* ; not "from what is impossible," but "what will misbecome" our renewed estate, which we profess to enter into by baptism ; which is a vowed death to sin, and a bond wherewith we bind our souls to new obedience. So elsewhere : "If ye then be risen with Christ," (in the import and signification of baptism,) "seek the things which are above." And again : "Ye are dead, mortify therefore," &c. Once more : "Put off all these, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds." (Col. iii. 1, 3, 5, 8, 9.) And in many other places the apostle argueth from the baptismal engagement to the effect intended and signified thereby.

2. *The improvement of baptism is the best preparation for the Lord's supper.*—"If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." (John xiii. 8.) That washing had a spiritual meaning ; and presently after it the sacrament of Christ's body and blood was instituted, to the participation of which this spiritual washing was necessary. In the supposition, "If I wash thee not," is implied baptism ; in the commination, "Thou hast no part with me," is implied the Lord's supper, which Christ was then about to institute. *In foro ecclesie*, "before the church," none but baptized persons have a right to the Lord's table ; *in foro Cæli*, "before God," none but those who have the fruit of baptism have right to the benefits thereof : they that are sanctified by the Spirit of Christ have only

right to the benefits purchased by his blood. Our Lord would mind his disciples of this, before he would admit them to his table.

3. *If we improve it not, our baptism will be a witness to solicit vengeance against us.*—As the gospel itself is preached, either for a witness to us, or for a witness *against* us, if we obey it not; (Matt. xxiv. 14; Mark xiv. 9;) so baptism, instead of being a witness to us, will be a witness against us, if we mind it not; and in the judgment we shall fare no better than the Heathen; for all the difference between us is, that they are uncircumcised in flesh, and we in heart; (Jer. ix. 25, 26;) they are not washed in water, and we are not cleansed from our sins. I remember a passage in Victor Uticensis concerning one Elpidophorus, who had revolted from Catholicism to the Vandal Arians. The deacon who had baptized him showed him the stole, or linen clothes, in which he was baptized, saying, *Hæ te accusabunt cum Majestas venerit Judicantis*, &c. “O Elpidophorus, these shall be a witness against thee to all eternity for thy just perdition, when the Judge cometh: what wilt thou do, wretch, when the people of God shall be admitted to the joys of heaven, and thyself thrust out?” &c. If we have been baptized, and lived directly contrary to our baptismal vow, as if we were in covenant with the devil, the world, and the flesh, rather than with Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, what will become of us in the judgment?

“But how shall we improve it?”

1. *We must personally and solemnly own the covenant made with God in infancy.*—Every one of us should choose the Lord for our sovereign Lord and portion; and Christ Jesus for our Redeemer and Saviour; and the Holy Ghost for our guide, sanctifier, and comforter. Every one must personally thus engage himself to God. It is not enough that Christ engage for us as the common “Surety” of all the elect. (Heb. vii. 22.) Something he did for us, and in our names; but every one must take a bond upon himself, before he can have the benefit of it; you must “yield yourselves unto the Lord.” (2 Chron. xxx. 8.) It is not enough that the church engage for us, as a visible political body, or a community and society of men, who are in visible covenant with God and Christ. “I entered into a covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine;” (Ezek. xvi. 8;) meaning it of the body of the church; but every individual person must also enter into covenant with God, and become his: “I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant;” (Ezek. xx. 37:) where there is an allusion to the sheep’s passing out of the fold, when they were to be tithed for God; they were to be told with a rod,—one, two, three, &c., and the tenth was the Lord’s. (Lev. xxvii. 32.) God will not covenant with us in the lump and body, but every one was to be particularly minded of his duty: it is not enough that our parents did engage for us in baptism, as the Israelites in the name of their little ones did avouch God to be their God. (Deut. xxix. 10—12.) No man can savingly transact this work for another; we must ratify the covenant in our own persons, and make our own “professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ.” (2 Cor. ix. 13.) This work cannot be done by a proxy or [by] assigns; our parents’ dedication will not profit us, without some personal act of our own, if we live to years of discretion. Once more: this must be done not only in words,

or visible external rites, which may signify so much as personal covenanting with God, but a man must "engage his heart" to God. (Jer. xxx. 21.) Yea, this is a business that must be done between God and our own souls, where no outward witnesses are conscious to it. God speaketh to the soul in this transaction: "Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation;" (Psalm xxxv. 3;) and the soul speaketh to God, "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul;" (Lam. iii. 24;) and, "O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord." (Psalm xvi. 2.) Thus the covenant is carried on in soul-language. Now upon this personal inward covenanting with God our right to all the privileges doth depend.

2. *Renew often the sense of your obligation to God, and keep a constant reckoning, how you lay out yourselves for him.*—"Whose I am, and whom I serve." (Acts xxvii. 23.) "To me to live is Christ." (Phil. i. 21.) Some few renegadoes *renounce* their baptism, but most Christians *forget* their baptism: "He is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." (2 Peter i. 9.) Therefore we should be continually exciting ourselves both to obedience and dependence, that the sincerity of our first vow and consent may be verified by a real and constant performance of it.

3. *You should use frequent self-reflection, that you may come to know whether you are indeed washed from the guilt and filth of sin.*—"Such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor. vi. 11.) You should observe what further sense you have of the pardon of sin, how you get ground upon your bondage of spirit, and grow-up into some rejoicing of faith; for by these signs God intended our "strong consolation;" (Heb. vi. 18;) and the eunuch, when he was baptized, "went on his way rejoicing." (Acts viii. 39.) "Hath God applied his covenant to me? taken me into the family? planted me into the mystical body of Christ? and shall not I be glad and rejoice in his salvation?" So, for sanctification, see whether God's interest doth prevail in you, or the interest of the flesh; what power and strength of will you get against corruption easily; whether sin be more subdued, and you can govern your passions and appetites better. (Gal. v. 16, 17, 24.) They that are Christ's should find something of this in themselves; otherwise their baptism is but an empty formality.

4. And, lastly: *You must use it as a great help in all temptations.*—As when you are tempted to sin, (1.) Either by the *delights* of sense, a Christian hath his answer ready: "I am no debtor to the flesh," or, "I am baptized, and dedicated to God in the way of mortification and holiness, to obtain pardon and life. 'Shall I take the members of Christ,' &c. (1 Cor. vi. 15.) This soul, this body, this time, this strength, is Christ's, not to please the flesh, but the Lord." (2.) Or by the *terrors* of sense. Dionysia comforted her son Majoricus, an African martyr, when he was going to suffer for owning the Godhead of Christ, with this speech: *Memento, fili, baptizatum esse in nomine Patris, Filii, et Spiritus Sancti*: "Remember, my son, that thou art baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and be constant." So, when you are tempted by the devil, taking advantage of your melancholy and grievous afflictions, to question God's love and mercy to penitent believers;

remember the covenant sealed in baptism, that you may keep-up your faith in God through Christ, who pardoneth all your sins, and hath "begotten us again unto a lively hope." We must expect to be tempted: the devil tempted Christ after his baptism to question his filiation so solemnly attested. (Compare Matt. iii. 17 with Matt. iv. 6.) Luther saith of himself, that when the devil tempted him to despair, or to any doubts and fears about the love of God or his mercy to sinners, he would always answer, *Ecce, ego baptizatus sum, et credo in Christum crucifixum*: "Behold, I am baptized, and believe in Christ crucified." And he telleth us also of a holy virgin, who gave this reply, when the devil abused her solitudes, and injected any despairing thoughts into her mind, *Baptizata sum*, "I am baptized, and entered into God's covenant, and will expect the pardon of my sins by Jesus Christ."

Thus should we all the days of our life improve our baptism, till we have the full of that holy and happy estate, for which we were first purified and washed in God's laver.

SERMON XI.

BY THE REV. THOMAS LYE, A.M.



BY WHAT SCRIPTURAL RULES MAY CATECHISING BE SO MANAGED,
AS THAT IT MAY BECOME MOST UNIVERSALLY PROFITABLE?

"*Train up,*" or *catechise,* "*a child in the way he should go,*" or *in his way:*
"*and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*"—Proverbs xxii. 6.

THIS most excellent book of sacred aphorisms, or divine proverbs, is by some not unfitly compared to a costly chain of orient pearls; among which, though there be a fair connexion, yet there is little or no coherence. I shall therefore immediately enter on the words themselves; and in them I observe a *precept* and a *promise*; an *important duty*, and a *persuasive motive*.

1. *A grand, important, necessary duty enjoined.*—"Train up," or *catechise,* "*a child in the way he should go.*" In which words we have,

(1.) *The act or duty prescribed.*—"Train up," or *catechise*; piously and prudently instruct and educate.

(2.) *The object or person that is to be trained up.*—"A child." By a synecdoche, all such younger ones and inferiors as are committed to the care and conduct of their superiors.

(3.) *The subject-matter wherein these inferiors are thus to be trained up.*—"In the way he should go," in that way or manner of life which most suits and becomes him, that makes most for God's glory and his own temporal, spiritual, and eternal good.

2. *A cogent argument or prevalent motive to excite and quicken to the faithful discharge of this important duty.*—"And when he is old, he will

not depart from it;”* that is, not easily, not ordinarily depart from it. He will be the better for it as long as he lives.†

From the first of these, namely, the precept that enjoins the duty, I infer, **OBSERVATION.** *That it is the great and indispensable duty, and therefore ought to be the serious and constant care, of superiors, prudently and piously to train up or catechise, to instruct and educate, all such inferiors as are committed to their care and conduct.*

In the pursuing of this momentous truth, I shall tread in this method, laying before you these five things:—

I. *What it is to train up or catechise.*

II. *What is meant by that “way,” wherein persons are to be trained up.*

III. *Who they are, that are to be trained up or catechised.*

IV. *Who they are, that are to train up or catechise, and why.*

V. *How the whole affair may be so prudently, piously, spiritually managed, as that it may be crowned with such a blessed success, as to become most universally profitable.*

I. *What it is to train up or catechise.*

SOLUTION. The word הַנְּחִיף in the text is very pregnant, and greatly significant: *Primùm imbue*; “Give the first dip, dye, tincture, seasoning.” Hence, by a metaphor, the word is diversely translated. *Initia*; so Arias Montanus: “Begin, or give the first instruction; lay the groundwork, foundation, or first stone.” *Deduc*: So [the] Chaldee Paraph. Version. *Instrue*: “Set in order or array, arm, train up, instruct.” Thus Abraham armed, or led forth his “trained” or “instructed servants.” (Gen. xiv. 14.) § The word is also translated, *dedicavit, consecravit*; that is, “to set a person or thing apart, and to devote it to the true God in a right manner, for holy uses and ends, with solemn prayer and praise.” Thus the word הַנְּחִיף is used, Deut. xx. 5; in the title of Psalm xxx.; 1 Kings ix. 7; 2 Chron. vii. 5; 1 Kings viii. 63; 1 Chron. xviii. 11. The Greeks render the word $\mu\sigma\tau\alpha\gamma\omega\gamma\epsilon\iota$, $\sigma\pi\omicron\kappa\alpha\iota\delta\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\epsilon$, $\kappa\alpha\tau\eta\chi\iota\zeta\epsilon$: [which last is] a word of a peculiar signification, and imports a plain and familiar teaching and instructing of the ignorant by word of mouth, in the first grounds and fundamental principles of the true, and (in the strictest sense) the Christian, religion. || Thus the word is used, Luke i. 4; Acts xviii. 25; 1 Cor. xiv. 19; Gal. vi. 6. Hence it may be supposed it was that our translators, in the margin, render the word “catechise,” as being prompted thereunto by the Jewish rabbins, who style their form of catechism סֵפֶר הַנְּחִיף “a book of first instruction.”

II. *What is meant by that “way” wherein persons are to be trained up, or catechised and initiated.*

SOLUTION. עַל־פִּי דְרָבּוֹ “In the way he should go;” in the way or

* *Quo semel est imbuta recens servabit odorem*

Testa diu.—HORATII *Epist.* lib. i. Ep. ii. 69.

“Now suck-in wisdom: for the vessel well

With liquor season’d, long retains the smell.”—FRANCIS’S Translation.

† *Ad plurimum.*—So HILDERSHAM. † הַנְּחִיף *Initia, primùm imbue, institue, dedica.*—BUXTORF. “Initiate, early imbue, instruct, dedicate.”—EDIT. § הַנְּחִיף *Instructos, expeditos, incipientes suos pueros, fidos, initiatos, quos domi nutriverat, et quos arte bellicâ et lege Divinâ instruxerat.* “Instructed, equipped, his rising young men, who were trustworthily, initiated, whom he had cherished and brought up in his house, and whom he had instructed in the art of war, and in the law of the Lord.”—EDIT. || Whether by way of question and answer.—*vide* page 105.

manner of his life, (Gen. xliii. 7,) *in viâ sud*, "in his way," in his kind, and according to his capacity and measure, and suitably to the weakness and tenderness of his years; * in the sound knowledge and practice of those truths and principles which may fit him for the service of his God and generation here, and for the eternal enjoyment of his God hereafter. Let Paul interpret Solomon in his "way." 1. "In the nurture and admonition of the Lord;" (Eph. vi. 4;) *εν παιδεια*, that is, in all profitable instruction suitable to a child's age and state, for the framing and moulding of him by knowledge unto a commendable and virtuous carriage, and for the doing of greater good in human society when he comes to write himself MAN. 2. But especially in religious instruction, in "instruction in righteousness;" (2 Tim. iii. 16;) "in the words of faith and of good doctrine;" (1 Tim. iv. 6;) "the first principles of the oracles of God, and of the doctrine of Christ." (Heb. v. 12; vi. 1.) There is something more yet in the words: אֶפֶסֶת *Ad os, supra os*, (ARIAS MONTANUS,) "upon the mouth of his way:" a form of speaking frequently used in scripture to note the suitableness or proportion of the thing: "according to the mouth of his eating;" (Exod. xvi. 21;) that is, according to the measure of his eating. So Num. vii. 5: "To every Levite according to the mouth," that is, the condition and degree, "of his service." Thus here, "Train up a child upon the mouth of his way," that is, in such a way as is not only good and honest in itself, but most proper and suitable to the spirit, disposition, end, and capacity of the child. † As children are to be fed with such meat, so they are to be taught in such a manner, as they can most easily and profitably digest. Teach them but thus "upon the mouth," and then out of their mouth shall come praise. (Psalm viii. 2.)

III. *Who they are that are thus to be trained up or catechised.*

SOLUTION. *All younger ones and inferiors that are committed by God or men to the care and conduct of superiors; all included in the name "child."*—The original word עָלֵף admits of several significations: "An infant newly born; (Judges xiii. 7;) of three months old; (Exod. ii. 6;) a child as soon as he begins to speak and exert his reason." † Thus it runs parallel with the Greek word βρεφος; and so we find Timothy instructed ἀπο βρεφους, "from a child," a babe, a suckling. (2 Tim. i. 5, with iii. 15.) It takes in boys, also, and girls, sons and daughters of somewhat riper age, youths, as Shechem, (Gen. xxxiv. 19,) damsels and those marriageable. § (Deut. xxii. 19.) The word is also applied to Abraham's men-servants; (Gen. xxii. 3;) and to Boaz's maid-servants; (Ruth ii. 22; Esther iv. 4;) to such as, though they may be men in years, are "children in understanding." (Jer. i. 6; 2 Chron. xiii. 7; Isai. iii.

* *Juxta viam suam, id est, juxta viam genus quod ipsum sequi velit.* "According to his way; that is, according to the way in which you wish him to proceed."—EDIT. † *Pro captu ingenii ejus inferioris, ut non cum plus oneres, quàm atus fert.* "According to the capacity of his more infirm genius, so as not to burden him with more than his age is capable of bearing."—EDIT. ‡ *א עָלֵף Excussit: puerum, puerulum, infantem ex utero superrime excussum.* "It is derived from a root signifying, he shook off; and its meaning is, a child, a little child, an infant just born."—EDIT. § *Ita hodiè Rabbini puerum quinque annorum ad Biblia, decem ad Mischna seu textum Talmudicum, tredecim ad Precepta, quindecim ad Talmud.* "Thus in modern times, the Rabbins direct a boy of five years of age to read and study the Bible; one of ten years, the Mischna, or the text of the First Talmud; one who is thirteen years old, the Precepts; and one of fifteen years, the Second Talmud or Gemara."—EDIT.

4; viii. 4.) These all, and every one of these, come within the list of those that Solomon and his God would have trained up and catechised. (Prov. xxii. 6.) Nay, let me add, there is not "a younger son of the prophets;" not one that sits at the feet of those learned Gamaliels, those truly reverend Elijahs, that can justly plead exemption from this (*seeming task*, shall I say? or) *real honour* of being clearly taught in, and firmly fixed upon, those everlasting foundations, "the first principles of the oracles of God." (Heb. v. 12; vi. 1.)

IV. *Who they are that are thus to train up or catechise these inferiors and younger ones, and why.*

SOLUTION. *All their respective superiors in [the] church or family.*

(I.) SUPERIORS IN THE CHURCH.—These, under what name or title soever the scripture presents them, are all bound to catechise; that is, in a most plain and sound manner, publicly to instruct the most ignorant of their charge in the first principles of the Christian religion. This duty so peculiarly belongs to them, that their whole work and office is set down under the name of catechising. "Let him that is taught," (in the Greek it is *ὁ κατηχούμενος*, "catechised,") "communicate unto him that teacheth;" in the Greek, *τῷ κατηχούντι*, "that catechiseth." (Gal. vi. 6.) But, to speak closely:—

1. Was not Paul a great apostle, yea, the grand doctor of the Gentiles? and yet he professeth himself a catechist. Paul's work was *to plant*, as well as *to water*; and *to beget*, as well as *to bring up*. (1 Cor. iii. 6, 7; iv. 15.) Paul compares himself to a nurse; (1 Thess. ii. 7;) the saints to babes, such as had need of milk, and not of stronger meat. (1 Cor. iii. 1; Heb. v. 12, 13.) Paul professeth himself to be one of God's "stewards;" (1 Cor. iv. 1, 2;) and, if "faithful," he will see that the meanest, the weakest, in the family hath his due allowance. In a word, Paul styles himself "a master-builder." (1 Cor. iii. 10.) And wherein lies the art and honour of "a master-builder" so much as in solidly laying the foundation-stone, lest, for want of it, the building totter? (Matt. vii. 26, 27,)

2. Was not Peter a great officer in the church? and yet, sure I am, that, whatever dispensation Peter's pretended successor, or any of his allies, may boast and crack of, Peter himself stands charged with feeding "lambs" as well as "sheep." (John xxi. 15—17.) In the church there are not only adult and perfect fathers, and strong in faith, but infants and babes, weak in faith, such as are ignorant of the word of righteousness, "lambs" to be carried in the bosom. (Isai. xl. 11.)

3. The great dulness, incapacity, and slowness of heart, that is in the people to understand by any other way of teaching, calls aloud for this elementary way of teaching. By this means, those that in vain do hear those *elaborate labours of the learned* in a more full and copious dilating on the articles of faith, are, by *these little morsels of catechising*, (as it were, chewed for them,) nourished-up unto salvation. This manner of teaching the prophet hints, like a discreet schoolmaster, not to pour-in his precepts all at once; (Isai. xxviii. 10, 13;) for then, like water poured on narrow-mouthed vessels, it would mostly run over; but instil drop by drop. It becomes pastors to be frequent in preaching, to be accurate in their sermons; but yet they may by no means forget the shallow,

indocible, intractable temper of their hearers. It is in vain to give great gobbets of meat to an infant; so far from feeding of him, that is a ready way to choke him.* That ministry usually proves the most effectual that drops as the rain, and distils as the dew.† (Deut. xxxii. 2; Ezek. xx. 46.)

4. The want and neglect of catechism [are] confessed to be one of the principal causes of all those desperate defections that have been made from the faith in this our English Africa, and of those insolent invasions that have been made upon it by loose tongues and lewder pens. What blasphemous disputes against the infinite merit and Deity of our Saviour! as if we intended to justify the Jews in condemning him to the cross, for avouching himself the co-essential and co-eternal Son of God! (John xix. 7.) How audaciously have they proceeded in the like sacrilegious attempts against the Holy Ghost! ‡ What proud brags of the purity of man's nature, and the sufficiency of his power to save himself! How daring have men been to decry the scriptures, the Lord's day, and all the ordinances of God's institution! to despise the sacraments, as if they were as beggarly elements as the Jewish ceremonies! to deride singing of psalms, as if David's harp were out of tune! to reject prayer, as if they were raised to such a plentiful measure of spiritual riches, that it were a shame for them to crave any further supply! In a word, scarce any article of the Christian religion which hath not received many a desperate stab under its fifth rib, and that from the hand of those whose hearts did erewhile seem ready to expose their heads to the greatest hazard, for the least tittle of sacred truth. And whence all this, but from ignorance of truth? Had truth been clearly understood, it could never have been so unworthily undervalued, much less so treacherously undermined, and least of all so impudently affronted, as woe is us! we behold it, both to our grief and horror. And whence this barbarous ignorance, but from want of due catechising? *Hinc illæ lachrymæ.* §

OBJECTION. "True: the laying of foundations, instructions in the first principles of religion, [is] a most useful, necessary work; but what ground is there in the holy scriptures for that form or manner of catechising as is now in use; namely, by way of question and answer?"

SOLUTION 1. There are several texts of scripture from which the learned conclude that this mode of catechising was used in the apostles' days, and by the apostles themselves and their immediate successors; and this in imitation of the Jews, who had *την μορφωσιν της γνωσεως και της αληθειας εν τω νομω*, "a form of knowledge and of the truth in the law," (Rom. ii. 20,) out of which they instructed the ignorant, and taught babes. Thus, the apostle had given the Romans *τυπον διδαχης*, a "form of doctrine;" (Rom. vi. 17;) and to Timothy, *υποτυπωσιν υγιανοντων λογων*, "a form of sound words;" (2 Tim. i. 13;) "a form of sound words," which contained "the principles of the doctrine of

* *Laterem lavat.*—BOWLES, *Pastor Evangel.* lib. ii. "He who expects by washing a brick to change its colour, labours to no purpose."—EDIT.

† *Serpendum humi, et cum suis quasi balbutiendum.*—*Ibid.* "The pastor who looks for success among a dull and uneducated people, must be content to speak in lowly strains, as if his words crept along the ground, and appear only to be prattling among his children."—EDIT.

‡ BIDDLE'S "Catechism."
§ "This is the source of all our grief."—EDIT.

Christ," and "the first principles of the oracles of God;" six whereof are distinctly mentioned, Heb. v. 12; vi. 1, 2. To these plain and fundamental rules, as to their standard, the apostles would have all doctrines that were preached to be brought and tried, and so far to be allowed of as they held proportion with them. This is that which the apostle calls "prophesying" *κατα την αναλογιαν της πιστεως*, "according to the proportion of faith." (Rom. xii. 6.) Thus the Magdeburg [Cen-turiators] from these scriptures assert, that there was a catechism delivered by the apostles, in which they had drawn the doctrine of the gospel into short heads, for instructing of the children of the church.

2. Eusebius saith, that there was one set apart on purpose for this office in the primitive church, called "the catechist," *qui catechismum docebat*, and others called *catechumeni*, "that learned the catechism;" and these were of two sorts. (1.) *Jews and Heathens*, that offered themselves to be listed among the Christians, and were not as yet sufficiently seen in the great fundamentals of the Christian religion. (2.) *The children of believing parents that had been baptized*. Both these were put under the careful institution of the catechist, and by him to be so far instructed, till they had attained so much knowledge in the principles of the Christian religion, as that the Heathens might be admitted to baptism, and the Christian children to the Lord's supper.

To this custom some of the learned judge that Peter alludes in 1 Peter iii. 21: "Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but *επερωτημα*, the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." True, the main thing is "the answer of a good conscience" in a man's own self; yet there was "a good answer" in his mouth to the catechist, who was to ask them "a reason of the hope" that was in them. (1 Peter iii. 15.)*

3. The primitive fathers, that trod on the heels of the apostles, and were most likely to be best acquainted with the apostles' practice, highly esteemed this way of teaching, and constantly used it. "Cyprian," saith Optatus, "used it at Carthage; Origen, at Alexandria." Hence Clemens Alexandrinus's *Pædagogus*; Cyril's [of Jerusalem] *Catecheses Mystagogicæ*; Lactantius's *Institutiones*; Athanasius's *Synopsis*; Augustine's *Enchiridion*, *Liber de Doctrinâ Christianâ, et Liber de catechizandis Rudibus*; Fulgentius *De Fide*.

4. Many of the ancient councils made decrees and canons for catechising. (*Concil. Neocæs.* Canones 6, 7; *Concil. Tolet.* Canon 24.) In this, consent all the Reformed churches *uno ore*. Nay, which is more, the Papists themselves that were assembled in the council of Trent, (observing that, in the later spring of the gospel, the use of catechising in the Reformed churches was one of the special means of with-

* *Allusio facta ad morem veterem catechistarum interrogantium catechumenos adultos ante baptismum, qui ad Christianismum, vel Judæis, vel Gentilitate vocati, Credis? Credo. Abrenuntias? Abrenuntio. Cujus origo in exemplo Eunuchi, Actor. viii. 37.*—SPANHEMII *Dubia Evangelica*, pars iii. p. 97; TRAP in *Mat. xiii. 51*; BOWLES, *Pastor Evangelicus*, lib. ii. cap. 5. "An allusion is here made to the ancient method adopted by the catechists, when interrogating adult catechumens before baptism, who had been called out of Judaism or Heathenism, to the public profession of Christianity: *Dost thou believe in Christ Jesus? 'I believe in him.' Dost thou renounce all other trust? 'I renounce it.'* The origin of this practice may be traced up to the example of the Eunuch, who gave to Philip the answer of a good conscience, as recorded in Acts viii. 37."—EDIT.

drawing people from the darkness of Popery to the light of the gospel, and of so firmly grounding professors in the true religion as nothing could withdraw them from the same; and so the heretics, as they were pleased to style them, had got much ground,) strongly moved the council, that there might be a Catechism compiled of the principles of the Romish religion, as *that that was most likely to give check to that deluge of heresy which, through the heretics' catechising, was breaking-in upon them.*

5. This manner of teaching by way of catechising, (namely, by propounding the question, and putting the child to answer it, as the echo doth the voice,) is a most ready way to make any instruction to take. Whence it is that in all schools of learning this course is taken; namely, the teacher propounds his questions, and requires answers from those that are instructed: whereas if you speak never so well or so long, (yea, the longer the worse,) in a set and continued speech, it useth to vanish in the air, without any observable notice or after-fruit.

(II.) SUPERIORS IN THE FAMILY.—And these are *parents and family governors*: to whom we may adjoin *schoolmasters and tutors*. These all are concerned in this great duty of training-up and catechising those that are committed to their charge and conduct.

FIRST. How deeply parents are obliged to this duty, is written, as it were with a sun-beam, in the scriptures, where we find precepts, precedents, arguments, more than many, to evince it.

1. *Precepts.*—The Israelites are bound to “tell in the ears of their sons, and of their sons’ sons, what things” the Lord had “wrought in Egypt,” that they also might know Jehovah to be the Lord. (Exod. x. 2.) The parents are bound to be expositors of that great rite of the paschal lamb, (Exod. xii. 24, 26, 27; xiii. 8, 14, 15,) and of the stones set up in the midst of Jordan; (Joshua iv. 6, 7, 21, 22, 24;) bound also to teach their children the words which they heard from the Lord their God in Horeb, even the ten commandments. (Deut. iv. 9, 10.) How doth this duty sparkle with a radiant lustre in that great text, Deut. vi. 6, 7!—“These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.” “It is the eternal God that here gives forth his strict command to parents. *These words*—All these words, precepts, promises, threatenings. *Shall be in thy heart*—Not in thy *head* only, so as to know; but in thy *heart*, to affect. An heart inflamed with the love of God and his truth, God knew, was one of the most effectual means to engage the tongue to make known his truth. But not only in their heart, but houses too: (Joel i. 13; Deut. xi. 19:) *Thou shalt teach them unto thy children*—Nor was this a *ceremonial* precept, or a command given peculiarly to the Jews, for their assistance in their remembrance of the law of God, as their phylacteries and fringes, &c.; (Exod. xiii. 9; Deut. vi. 8, 9;) but was and is a *moral*, perpetual, standing precept, binding us in gospel-times as well as them.”* The same things [which] we find in this text, we find also in the New Testament. “The word of Christ” must “dwell

* AINSWORTH in Deut. vi. 6, 7.

richly in us ;” (Col. iii. 16 ;) all one with this here : “ Let it be in thine heart,” and in our houses also. We must “ teach and admonish ” *others* ; we are to “ bring up *our children* in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” (Eph. vi. 4.)

Two branches in this precept :—

(1.) *Parents warned not to abuse their authority by provoking their children.*—In the best of parents there is not only natural affection, but also natural corruption ; by reason whereof, if they watch not well, they will be very prone, not only to be rash, but furious, with their children, that their will may be fulfilled ; therefore is this bridling caution needful : “ Provoke not.” (Eph. vi. 4.)

(2.) *Parents are here commanded not to neglect to lay-out and improve their authority in instructing their children.*—This also is necessary, because parents are too, too apt to be fondly indulgent, and on that account careless to bring up their children in such courses as are necessary for knowing and doing the will of God. Both, therefore, are of special use. Do not *provoke*, but *instruct*. Yea, in instructing, take care that you do not provoke ; and *so* instructing, you will not, at least, you shall not have cause to, provoke : for a well-instructed child is in God’s way to be an obedient child, and very tractable to instructing parents, so that there will be no occasion of provocation from him, or being provoked against him. Bring them up, therefore, we must ; but in what ? “ In the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”

Εν παιδείᾳ, in all *profitable knowledge*, suitable to a child’s age and state ;* for the composing and framing of him, by this his knowledge, unto a commendable and virtuous carriage, for the doing of greater good in human society for the time to come ; but more especially in religious nurture, “ instruction in righteousness ;” (2 Tim. iii. 16 ;) and, as it follows, “ in the admonition of the Lord ;” in the best and highest kind of “ nurture,”—that which is drawn and fetched from the word of the Lord, and so will be most accepted of him, and most profitable to children : not only in arts and sciences, to make them worldly wise and learned ; nor only in the mysteries of trading and worldly employment, to make them rich ; nor only in matters of morality and civil honesty, to make them sober and virtuous ; but in the mysteries of true religion, “ in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,” “ in the words of faith and of good doctrine.” (1 Tim. iv. 6,) to make them truly happy.

2. *Precedents.*—It was the constant practice of the saints of old carefully to instruct their children in the things of God ; and that,

First. *In the truths and worship of the true God.*—Thus divines conclude that Adam instructed his sons, Cain and Abel, to bring their offerings to the Lord. (Gen. iv. 3, 4.) And from Adam down along to Moses, for the space of two thousand years, how was the true religion communicated, but by oral tradition from parents to their children ? “ I know Abraham, 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 ; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.” (Gen. xviii. 19.) In this text we have Abraham’s testimonial subscribed by God himself ; wherein God,

* Vide ZANCHIUM et MUSCULUM, in loc.

(1.) *Asserts what Abraham was for the present.*—A man of integrity, a man greatly beloved of God. "I know Abraham;" I know his judgment, I know his heart; I am well acquainted with the frame of his spirit, the inclination of his will, the bent of his affections; and I know him so well, that I cannot but highly approve and dearly love him, and will trust him with an *arcanum*, make him as it were of my privy council, in imparting to him my great design concerning wicked Sodom.

(2.) *Foretells for the future.*—

(i.) *What Abraham would do for God.*—Namely, that he would endeavour to bring all that were under his command to be at God's command. Abraham will not leave his children and servants to their own genius, counsels, lusts, ignorance, idleness, superstition, idolatry, but "command" them to "keep the way of Jehovah." Abraham will endeavour to set-up God in his family, to instruct it in that way of faith, worship, and obedience, which God requireth.

(ii.) *What God will do for Abraham.*—Namely, fulfil his promise, keep his word. Holy Job, that nonpareil of the world; "none like him in the earth; that perfect, that upright man;" (Job i. 8;) Job sends and sanctifies his children; (Job i. 5;) that is, says that late burning and shining light, * "sent a message to them, to command them to prepare and fit themselves for the holy duty of sacrificing." This preparation to holy duties is often called "sanctifying." (Exod. xix. 22; 1 Sam. vi. 15; John xi. 55.) Job's main and special care was for the souls of his children. Job's message to his children was not to ask them how they did after their feasting, whether they had surfeited, how the reckoning was inflamed. No; his eye and heart mostly fixed on this, that they might be sanctified. His holy soul struck a perfect light to Paul's desire before Agrippa: "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;" (Acts xxvi. 29;) and to John's joy: "I have no greater joy than to hear that *my children walk in the truth.*" (3 John 4.) Thus David, that man after God's own heart: "Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord." (Psalm xxxiv. 11.) But more especially, I would commend to your most accurate view that lovely prospect presented to us in Prov. iv. 3, 4. Behold there a great and glorious king, descending from his imperial throne, laying aside his golden crown and royal sceptre, and sitting down on a lower seat with a child, a Solomon at his knee. So that the king is now humbled into a tutor, the prince into a pupil. A brief account of the lecture the text gives us: *I was my father's son*; that is, I was so my father's son, as that I was also his Jedidiah; so *beloved*, as if I had been his only son. "He taught me also, and said unto me, *Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live.*"

Thus we have seen the practice of GODLY FATHERS.

But what have GODLY MOTHERS done? Have they been so cruelly forgetful of their children, as not to have compassion on the sons of their womb? What! worse than sea-monsters, who "draw out the breast, and give suck to their young ones?" (Lam. iv. 3.) No, no! those true daughters of Sarah have been more spiritually kind and benign.

* JOSEPH CARYL on Job i. 5.

(1.) In the front of these stands our mother, **THE SPOUSE OF CHRIST**: *I would lead thee, and bring thee into my mother's house.* (Canticles viii. 2.)—"That is, 'into mine own house or mansion;' as is usual with us to call our own houses, 'the houses of our fathers.' The church, in her universal latitude, is the mother of all her members. *Who would or doth instruct me*—The church, who is 'the pillar and ground of truth' in this respect, that she presenteth and holdeth forth that truth outwardly, which only Christ bringeth to the heart, and makes effectual. (John vi. 45.)" *

(2.) Upon her right hand stands David's royal consort, queen **BATHSHEBA**, whom we find laying the law before king Lemuel; that is, her son Solomon; called Lemuel, that is, "of God," because God had ordained him to be king over Israel, rather than any of his elder brethren. (1 Kings ii. 15, 22.) "The words of king Lemuel, the prophecy," doctrine, or instruction, "that his mother taught him. What, my son? and what, the son of my womb? and what, the son of my vows?" (Prov. xxxi. 1, 2.)

(3.) Upon her left hand let the hoary-headed, holy grandmother **LOIS**, and the tender, discreet, pious mother **EUNICE**, be placed, who even *απο βρεφους*, "from the dug," as it were, instructed their hopeful Timothy in the knowledge of the holy scriptures, which were "able to make him wise unto salvation." (2 Tim. i. 5; iii. 15—17.)

[It was the constant practice of the saints of old carefully to instruct their children,] †

Secondly, *In the ways and works of God's providence.*—Thus Gideon gives testimony to his forefathers, that they had told their children of "all the miracles" which the Lord had done; saying, "Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?" (Judges vi. 13.) Thus the Psalmist: "We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old." (Psalm xlv. 1, 2.) And again: "Sayings of old, which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers that they should make them known to their children: † that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God." (Psalm lxxviii. 2—7.) Thus Hezekiah, upon his recovery from death: "The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth." (Isai. xxxviii. 19.) They that survive, they alone can, and each of them should, praise the Lord; this being the principal end to which men should live, and for which they should desire life. (Psalm lxxi. 17, 18.) "The father to the children shall make known thy truth." That is, they shall transmit the memory of thy faithfulness in the performance of thy promises to posterity. (Psalm cxlv. 4.)

* "Assembly's Annotations," in Canticles viii. 2.
† Deut. iv. 9; vi. 7; xi. 19.

† See page 106.—EDIT.

3. *Arguments.*

(1.) *The souls of children, as well as their bodies, are committed to the care and trust of parents by the Lord, to whom they must give a strict account.*—It is a grand mistake to think that the care of souls belongs only to ministers. True, indeed, it eminently belongs to our spiritual pastors. If they “warn not the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will” God require at the negligent pastor’s hand. (Ezek. iii. 18, 19.) And no less doth God bespeak parents in the same language that we find, 1 Kings xx. 39: “Keep this man,” *this child*: “if by any means he be missing, then shall thy life be for his life.” If he be lost, and miscarry through thy neglect, thy life, thy soul shall go for his. As, therefore, parents dread the guilt of soul-murder of their children, they ought to be careful of their pious education.*

(2.) *The state of poor children’s souls calls aloud on parents for the discharge of this duty.*—Alas! poor creatures; conceived in sin, brought forth in iniquity; (Psalm li. 5;) those whom we fondly miscall “innocent babes,” come into the world with an indictment on their foreheads, with ropes about their necks, full of guilt, full of filth; bloody, loathsome, creatures; (Gen. viii. 21; Job xiv. 4; Prov. xxii. 15;) “children of wrath;” (Eph. ii. 3;) nothing in them by nature that is good, an averseness from all good; (Rom. vii. 18;) a proneness to all evil. (Psalm lviii. 3; Eph. iv. 18.) These young lions [are] prone to cruelty; they are serpents in the very egg, and cockatrices in the very shell. (Isai. lix. 5.) And whence comes all this guilt and filth, but from “the hole of the pit out of which they are digged,” from that unhappy rock out of which they “are hewn,” (Isai. li. 1,) their unhappy parents? (Job xiv. 1, 4; xv. 14.) Sinful parents, having utterly lost God’s image, like Adam, beget children in their own. (Gen. v. 3.) Nay, Abraham himself, though a circumcised saint, as a natural father, begets an uncircumcised Isaac. The vine they spring from is a “vine of Sodom;” and therefore the children are the grapes of Gomorrah. (Deut. xxxii. 32.) Bloody parents are we to our children; how much then doth it concern parents, even in common justice, to endeavour to cure those wounds that they themselves have given, (Exod. xxi. 19,) and to preserve their little ones from perishing by that leprosy, infection, poison, which they by nature convey into them! And here what topics do not offer themselves to convince the judgments of rational parents?

(i.) *There is στροφή, a “natural love and affection,” in parents to their children.*—Nature gives bowels of pity to them that are in misery, specially to children. (Isai. xlix. 15; Psalm ciii. 13.) Will parents, then, prove unnatural? nay, worse than beasts; for “even the sea-monsters draw out the breast, and give suck to their young ones.” (Lam. iv. 3.) “Charity edifieth,” saith the apostle. (1 Cor. viii. 1.) David’s and Bathsheba’s tender love to their Solomon put them upon careful instructing of him; wherein they showed their love to his soul as well as his body.

* *Omnia quæ deliquerint filii, a parentibus requirentur, qui non erudierint filios suos.*—ORIGENES. “The punishment due to the delinquencies of which children have been guilty, will be exacted from those parents who have not imparted to them salutary instruction.”

—EDIT.

(ii.) *Parents either do or should principally aim at the spiritual and eternal good of their poor children.*—And what more profitable and effectual way to promote this, than pious instruction and education? The earth often proves according to the seeds cast into it. The vessel usually retains a smack and tincture of that with which it was first seasoned. What blessings might parents prove to their children! What excellent things might be effected by them, if they did but take the advantage of their tender years, and *then* resolutely set themselves to bring them unto God!

(iii.) *Parents cannot but love themselves, their own peace, their own comforts, their own delights.*—And what more probable means to advance these than the pious education of their children? which fully appears by this dilemma: *Either their conscientious endeavours prove successful, or not.*

If not, if after all care, pains, prayer, faithfulness, the crop should not answer the seed, why, this may relieve and support,—that it is not through the parent's default. The child dies, but not by the father's hand. He hath discharged his duty, and thereby, in the sight of God, delivered *his own soul from guilt*,* though he could not deliver *his child's soul from ruin*. Where God sees such "a willing mind," backed with sincere, utmost, constant, endeavours, God "accepts" the faithful parent "according to that he hath, and not according to that he hath not." (2 Cor. viii. 12.) But,

If the Lord please to smile on endeavours, into what a transport and ecstasy of joy will it raise the serious parent, to see the corruption of his child's nature healed, to see saving grace wrought in his heart! If such a sight be so pleasing to spiritual fathers, to Paul, (1 Thess. ii. 10,) to John, (3 John 4,) how ravishing must it needs be to natural parents! (Prov. x. 1; xxiii. 24, 25;) but especially when this is wrought by their own means.

(iv.) *When this grace is wrought in the hearts of children, and that especially by their parents, this cannot but inflame the hearts of children with dearest love of, and engage them to the highest duty to, their parents.*—They must of necessity be far more loving and dutiful than otherwise they could or would be. "A wise son maketh a glad father." (Prov. xv. 20.) But how? Namely, by a dutiful and respectful carriage.

(v.) *By this means parents shall do unspeakable good to their families and posterity.*—Hereby, even many ages after they are dead, like Abel, they shall yet speak; and posterity hearing the voice of their ancestors, coming as it were from the dead, they will be more apt to credit and believe. (Deut. iv. 9.) By pious education, the true religion is kept up in the world, and propagated from age to age. The care of the two tribes and a half of propagating the true religion to their posterity, is very notable in that famous scripture, Joshua xxii. 24, 25. They built an altar of testimony. (Verse 10.) At this their brethren the Israelites are highly offended; but received full satisfaction, when they were assured that this was done for the sake of posterity, lest they should be made to "cease from fearing the Lord."

(vi.) *Parents have many and great advantages, above all others, for the successful instructing and educating of their children.*

* *Liberavit animam suam.*

Children are more confident of their parents' love than any others'.— Whether ministers and strangers speak to them *in love*, they are uncertain; but of their parents' love they are well assured. Now nothing takes so much with any one, as that which is believed to proceed from love, especially by one that loves. "This instruction," saith the loving child, "comes not only from my dear father's lip or head, but from his affectionate heart; and therefore I will readily receive it, and lodge it in my own."

Parents have their children in hand betimes, before they are fly-blown with any false opinions, or leavened with bad impressions.—Before they have any other sin than that which was born with them. Parents, therefore, have an opportunity of making the first impressions on them, even while they are most docile, tender, flexible, and least apt to make resistance against instruction. But now, when they come to their minister, instructor, tutor, they are as a paper printed before, and, therefore, unapt to receive another impression. They have much to be untaught before they can be taught. Fraught with self-conceitedness and proud objections, [they are] more apt to strive against and resist instruction, than humbly and readily to receive it.

(3.) To wind up this argument on the closest bottom: *Children wholly depend on parents for their present maintenance and their future portions.*—And they know it is their interest to hearken and obey. Parents' authority over their children is most unquestionable. They dare not open their mouths against it, as they will adventure to do against ministers'. Parents have the power of the rod, to back instruction. (Prov. xxii. 15.) They best know the peculiar diseases and temperatures [temperaments] of their children, and so best know how to choose and apply the most proper remedy. Parents are nearest their children, and can best discern all their faults in time; and have opportunity of speaking to them in the most familiar manner, that may best be understood; and, after this, to inculcate their instructions, and drive them home, that what is not done at one time may be done at another.

By all these advantages it appears that God hath furnished parents, above all others, to be instruments of their children's good, and the first and greatest promoters of their salvation.

OBJECTION I. But methinks I hear some parents muttering: "To instruct children is the grand duty of our ministers. It is they that are to take the great charge of the souls of these our lambs."

SOLUTION. And do you indeed give up these your lambs to be fed, to be instructed by them? Suppose you did, (as, Heaven knows! thousands of parents do not, as they ought,) yet know,

That every parent is as deeply charged with the souls of his children, as any pastor is with the souls of his flock, and more deeply too.

1. *You are as oft and as expressly charged to use the means to save your children's souls, and to breed grace in them, as any minister is.*—Read, consider, remember, Exod. xiii. 8. Thou shalt show thy son the meaning, end, use of the sacrament. (Deut. vi. 6, 7; Psalm lxxviii. 5; Eph. vi. 4.) Show me any text of scripture more express and peremptory for any minister's instructing of his flock.

2. *Parents stand obliged to their children by more and stronger bonds than any pastor can be to his flock.*—Bonds of nature, as well as grace.

3. *Parents have more means and opportunities to prevail with their children than any pastor living can have to do good on his flock.*—What a surpassing interest have parents in the esteem, love, affection of their children! What advantage may they take of their children's tender years! What continual converse with them! What an awful authority over them! What strict obligations upon them, which no minister can so much as pretend unto! The truth is, none upon earth have such fair opportunities to instruct and bring others to goodness, as parents have. (Deut. iv. 10.) This was that that holy Hezekiah meant in his prayer: "The living, the living, he shall praise thee." And who among all the living? "The father;" he shall do it chiefly, principally; but how? "By making known thy truth to the children?" (Isai. xxxviii. 18, 19.) As though he had said, Parents, by deriving religion to their posterity, may greatly honour God above others.

OBJECTION II. "But to what end should we teach children? Alas! they do not understand what they say. They do but act the parrot, know not what it is they do repeat; and so, whilst we pretend to advance the fear and service, we do but make our children to profane the name, of God, or to take it in vain."

SOLUTION 1. *Our carnal reasonings ought not to countermand divine injunctions.*—The text is express: "Train up a child." "Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children," (Deut. vi. 7,) or whet and sharpen my law upon them. Timothy's instruction, and that from a little sucking child, is commended by the apostle as a fair precedent to the whole Christian world. (2 Tim. iii. 15.) We know not who are under God's election, nor the appointed time of his effectual calling; and therefore must use the means to all, especially to children that are under the federal stipulation; such are commanded to "remember their Creator in the days of their youth." (Eccles. xii. 1.) And who should endeavour to make deep 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.)

2. *If this fear and jealousy must hinder catechising of children, who knows how long it will be hindered?*—For even children well grown up, being not before catechised, are not likely, at their first teaching, so to understand what is said to them as to repeat it with due reverence. Do we not find Christ himself instructing Nicodemus in the great mystery of regeneration, when he was able to return him no more than that childish answer: "How can a man be born again when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb?" (John iii. 4.) We find our Saviour delivering a divine truth to those that were known to be his disciples, who still accompanied him, and repeated themselves what he spake to them in the very same words wherein he delivered it, and yet, when all was done, confessed they could not tell what he said. (John xvi. 16—18.) May we therefore say, that, by reason of their ignorance, they took that name of God, his Word, in vain? No; this was not a vain business, for in this way they understood the words of Christ at last, the meaning whereof they knew not at first.

3. *Catechising may be considered under a double notion.*

(1.) *In regard of the present action.*

(2.) *As it is an introduction and preparation to the future and further knowledge of God.*—Now, though little ones do not at first so understand as to use with due reverence the name and things of God, yet it follows not that they take God's name in vain, because they repeat good things in order to, and for the gaining of, such a knowledge of God and of those holy things, as whereby they afterwards come to use them more reverently. And therein the first use of them, though not so reverent, hath a part, as being preparatory to it, and having an influence unto it, and working as a good means for the begetting of it. Do not we teach little ones their letters by signs, and certain petty devised sayings and resemblances, which put them in mind of their letters? And this is not a vanity, but a way suited to their narrow capacities, to make them learn them the sooner. So in this, and the like cases; the first rudiments are still to be taken and judged of, not in a way of *disjunction from* what follows after, but as a *preparation to it*; and being so taken, they are not vain, but material things, because they serve to very considerable ends. "It is neither vanity nor hypocrisy," saith a reverend author,* "to help children first to understand words and signs, in order to their early understanding of the matter and signification. Otherwise no man may teach them any language, or to read any words that be good, because they must first understand the words before the meaning." If a child learn to read in a Bible, it is not taking God's name or word in vain, though he understand it not, for it is in order to his learning to understand it. And it is not vain *which is* to so good a use.

Thus for parents.

SECONDLY. *Nor are Christian ministers and governors of families, together with school-instructors and tutors, less obliged to take care of the religious instruction and education of their respective servants and pupils.*

—Which clearly appears from hence:—

1. *The Lord commands it, and expects it, at the hands of masters.*—

When others intrust masters with the bodies of servants, God intrusts them with their souls, commands them to take care of them, as for which they must and shall give a strict account. "Lo, here," saith God, "is a poor mean servant; but he hath a precious and an immortal soul; a soul purchased with the same blood of God-man that his master's was; (Col. iii. 11;) and himself, though never so vile in the eye of sense, yet capable of being made a co-heir with Christ in heaven. Take this man, and take care of him, as thou wilt answer it at the great day. If this soul perish through thy default, thy life shall go for his." Look to it, therefore: "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven." Do not use them as slaves, as beasts, but rather as fellow-servants of the same Lord. (Col. iv. 1.)

In this text we may observe a *divine precept*, and a *persuasive argument* to back that precept.

(1.) *The precept*,—"Ye masters, give unto your servants,"

(i.) To δικαιοῦν, "*That which is just*," whatever is due to them by any positive contract, legality, or obligation. Aristotle names three things as due to servants: "work, food, correction." † To which, since our

* BAKER'S "Christian Directory," p. 682. † Εργον, τροφην, κολασιν.—*Æconomica*, i. 5.

servants are usually such as are not so by conquest, but by compact, but may add a fourth, namely, "wages:" Moderate work, convenient food, due correction, proportionable wages.

(ii.) Not only that which is just, but *την ισοτητα*, "that which is equal," too. And this refers not to the works themselves of servants and masters, but to the mind and manner of doing, which ought to bear a due proportion in both: For instance, in Col. iii. 22, 24, "servants" are commanded to "obey their masters in all things; not with eye-service, but in singleness of heart, fearing God, and as serving the Lord Christ." And masters are required to return them "that which is equal," when they rule them piously and religiously. That is just which the law of nature or nations requires; that is equal which true Christian charity and meekness requires, and which is due to servants by a moral obligation.*

(2.) *The argument.*—"Knowing," that is, holding this for an undoubted principle, believing it, and constantly remembering, that masters on earth have a superior Master in heaven. As servants, if gracious, are God's *sons*, and thereby may be comforted; so masters are God's *servants*, and thereby may be cautioned. Are masters' eyes on their servants, to see whether they do their duties faithfully? so God's eye watcheth them much more, to observe whether they carry themselves in their relation conscientiously. Holy Job stood in awe of this great Master, and acted accordingly. (Job xxxi. 13.) "Servants" must "be obedient unto their masters as unto Christ," as "serving the Lord Christ;" and the masters must instruct and command in Christ. (Eph. vi. 5—8.) Mr. Dod, that great servant of our Lord Jesus Christ, from Exod. xx. 10, gravely observes from those words, "Thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant," &c., that it belongs to all family-governors to see that their servants, and all inferiors under their charge, holily observe and keep the Lord's day.

2. I argue from those many and great benefits which accrue from the holy instruction of servants and other family inferiors.

(1.) *The church is in an immediate capacity to receive benefit by it.*—If mistresses of families did their parts, and sent such polished materials to the churches as they ought to do, the work and life of the pastors of the church would unspeakably be more easy and delightful. What a reviving of heart would it be to us to preach to such an auditory! to catechise, instruct, examine, and watch over them who are so prepared by a wise and holy education, and understand and love the doctrine which they hear. How teachable and tractable will such be! How successfully the labours of their pastors laid-out upon them! How comely and beautiful the churches be, which are composed of such persons! and how pure and comfortable will their communion be! The orchard is according to what the nursery is; so churches are according to what families are. Good families make good churches, and good education makes good families.

(2.) *Not only the church but state would receive much good by this.*—Towns, cities, counties, kingdoms, would gain by it: and it must needs be so; for what are they, but the whole made up of these parts? And

* DAVENANT in Col. iv. 1.

the whole must needs be such as the parts are of which it consists. Families are but like the book in loose sheets, and kingdoms like the book bound up: the one but like letters that are single and apart; the other like letters joined together. Now if the sheets be not good, or the letters not good, the book or writing cannot possibly be good. Give us the best magistrates, let them enact the best laws, and back them with the strictest execution; yet societies will be nought, whilst governors of families neglect their duty in religious education.

(3.) *With what a "cloud of witnesses" do the holy scriptures present us of governors of families, that have been greatly conscientious in their faithful discharge of this duty!*—We told you before of Abraham's trained, instructed, catechised servants. (Gen. xviii. 19.) After him, Joshua, who resolves, that, whatever others might do, he and his household would serve the Lord: (Joshua xxiv. 15 :) though others should forsake the Lord, yet he, like Noah and Lot, [would be] just in his generation. Joshua doth not only choose to be saved by Jehovah, but to serve Jehovah. But, more especially, observe the latitude and circumference of his choice: "I and my house:" not himself without his family, much less his family without himself; but himself and his family; and first himself, and then his family: "*we will serve the Lord.*" Lo here the firmness and stability of Joshua's choice! "*We will serve the Lord;*" not only, "*We desire to do it,*" but, "*We are fully resolved to do it.*"

Hear what David promises and pre-engages whenever he came to sway the royal sceptre; namely, to be a singular example, both as a prince, and as a master of a family. (Psalm ci. 1—8.) In which respect this psalm should be often read and ruminated on by such, that their houses may be as "the house of David;" (Zech. xii. 8;) and as Melancthon attests concerning the palace of George prince of Anhalt, that it was at once *ecclesia, academia, et curia*, "a royal court, a learned academy, and an holy church." Mr. Fox reports, that bishop Ridley often read and expounded this psalm to his household, hiring them with money to get it by heart.* Well, what says David here? "I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way." (Psalm ci. 2.) I will begin the intended reformation at myself, and then set things to rights in my family. "I will walk within my house with a perfect heart." And then see what work he makes, how conscientiously he demeanes himself towards those under his family-charge, from verses 3—8. Good governors of families are like that nobleman, who had for his impress two bundles of millet bound together, with this motto, *Serrare et servari, meum est*: for "the nature of millet is to guard itself from corruption, and all those things that lie near it." It is a rare eulogy that is given the late reverend and religious Dr. Chatterton, that "he was an house-keeper fifty-three years, yet in all that time never kept any of his servants from church to dress his meat; saying, that he desired as much to have his servants know God as himself." †

In short, observe the strain and current of the whole scriptures, and you shall find very few or none of those family-governors that were really converted themselves, but they gave this excellent testimony of the truth and soundness of the grace of God in them, namely, in being

* "Acts and Monuments," 1559, fol.

† CLARK'S "Lives."

careful and solicitous to beget and breed it in the hearts of those that were under their roof and charge.* If Esther fasts, so shall her maids too. (Esther iv. 16.) And in the New Testament we find the master's interest and duty taken to be so great for the conversion of the rest, that as he was not to content himself with his own conversion, but to labour presently that his household should join with him, that so the whole family at once might be devoted to God; so God did bless his own order and ordinance to that end. And where he imposed duty on masters, he usually gave such success, that commonly the whole family was converted and baptized with the ruler of the family. So we read, Acts x. 2: Cornelius a centurion, a godly captain, a devout man, "and one that feared God with all his house:" to whom the angel promised that Peter should tell him words whereby he and all his household should be saved. (Acts xi. 14.) Doth the Lord open Lydia's heart to attend to the things spoken by Paul? It follows instantly: "She was baptized, and her household." (Acts xvi. 15.) Doth the gaoler believe on the Lord Jesus? Paul assures him that he shall be saved, and his house; and so it was, for "he, and all his, were baptized straightway," for "he believed in God with all his house." (Acts xvi. 32—34.) Christ no sooner comes to Zaccheus's soul, but salvation comes to Zaccheus's house. (Luke xix. 9.) Crispus "believes on the Lord with all his house." (Acts xviii. 8.) The nobleman "himself believed, and his whole house." (John iv. 53.) These family-governors, it seems, took special care of the welfare of their servants' souls; did not act like Turks, who mind nothing about their slaves but their doing their own work. These judged that if it were cruelty not to allow their servants bodily food, much more savage and bloody to starve their souls. And therefore it might well be said of those happy servants whom Providence fixed under their conduct, as the queen of Sheba of Solomon's servants: "Happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom." (1 Kings x. 8.)

OBJECTION. But there are some masters, whose weakness and delusion I cannot but pity, that are apt to object thus: "True, it is good to teach our ignorant servants; but we much question, yea, in our consciences doubt, whether we may require and command them to learn. Will not this encroach on the liberty of their consciences, which ought to be left free?"

SOLUTION 1. I cannot but wonder at this depth of Satan, who so strangely inveigles men to tolerate all things by mere scrupling of them, and to let the reins loose purely out of strictness: to think it a sin in themselves to press a duty on others, and no less than a breach of God's holy laws to enjoin the keeping of them.

2. Tell me how comes it to pass that masters who can allow themselves to be severe enough to their servants for loitering in their shops, cannot find in their hearts to rebuke them for neglect of their souls; that they who hold themselves bound in conscience to inform their servants in all the secrets of their trade, should think themselves as much tied-up from pressing them to learn the mysteries of religion.

3. There is but too much cause of fear, lest they who use not all the means they can to bring their own servants to the faith, be themselves

* DR. JACOME'S *Dom. Deo Jun.*, p. 207.

brought at last to an unprofitable repentance. Sure I am, they that have not learned their duty to God, will never rightly perform their duty to men. I heartily wish, that proud, saucy, debauched behaviour, and lame quarrels, be not too sad proofs of this unhappy truth.

V. I have done with the fourth, I now proceed to the fifth and last inquiry, namely, *How the whole affair may be so prudently, piously, scripturally managed, as that it may become most universally profitable.*—And here I shall first address myself to my *superiors*, and then close all with directions to *inferiors*.

(I.) Then for *SUPERIORS*; and, among these, *ECONOMICAL ONES*:

1. *Let parents begin betimes with their children.*—*Απο βρεφους*, “As soon as ever they find them to have any use of reason, as soon as ever their understandings begin to bud and blossom.”

The discreet gardener begins to graff as soon as ever the sap begins to arise, and the stock to swell. In the old law we find more lambs, kids, young turtles, first-fruits, and green corn required, than other elder sacrifices. (Lev. ii. 14.) “Sow thy seed in the morn.” (Eccles. xi. 6.) Begin, I say, betimes; the sooner the better; according to that of the prophet: “Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.” (Isai. xxviii. 9.) Old men (nay, indeed, and too many young men) think themselves too wise, as well as too old, to learn. Indeed, childhood and youth are the fittest times to learn in. It is best drawing a fair picture on a *rasa tabula*. The most legible characters are best written on the “whitest paper before it be soiled and slurred.” The twig, whilst young, is most easily twisted; the ground best sown, when soft and mollified.* Hence that of the royal preacher: “Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth.” (Eccles. xii. 1.) Little ones have not as yet imbibed such false principles and notions, nor are they drenched with such evil habits, as elder ones are too, too frequently dyed with. *He* hath a very difficult province *whose* task it is to wash out the spots of a leopard, or to whiten an Ethiopian. And little less work hath he that undertakes to teach the truth to one that hath been brought-up in [error], and is now, as it were, naturalized to err: for those false notions must first be wholly rooted up, before truth can profitably be implanted. Such must be untaught much, before they can well be taught, though but a little.

2. *Labour, as much as in you lies, to entertain their tender attention with such truths as mostly affect their senses and fancies, and are most easily conveyed to their little understandings.* To wit:—

(1.) *Such truths, the sparks whereof are most alive in their corrupt nature.*—For instance, to know God that made the whole world, and them in particular; that this God is to be worshipped; that their parents are to be honoured; that no lie is to be told; that they must love others as themselves; that they must certainly die, and after death

* *Udum et molle lutum es; nunc, nunc properandus, et acri Fingendus sine fine rotâ.*—PERSII Sat. li. 23.

“But you who yet are moist and yielding clay,
Call for some plastic hand without delay;
Nor cease the labour till the wheel produce
A vessel nicely form'd, and fit for use.”—GIFFORD'S Translation.

be judged to an eternal state. Begin to season them with the sense of God's majesty and mercy.

(2.) *Deal as much in similitudes and plain and easy resemblances as you can.*—Taking your rise from the creatures [which] they see and hear, always greatly respecting their weak capacity. Are you sitting in your houses? you may thus bespeak them: "O my dear child! is this a handsome dwelling, this house made with stones and timber? O how much desirable is that house above with God, that 'house not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens!'" When they awake out of sleep, mind them of their duty, of giving their first thoughts to God; (Psalm cxxxix. 1—18;) and of awaking out of sin "unto righteousness;" (1 Cor. xv. 34; Eph. v. 14;) and of their awaking, the last day, out of the grave by the sound of the trumpet. (1 Thess. iv. 16.) Do they see the light of the day shining into their eyes? ask them: "Is it indeed a pleasant thing to behold the sun? O how excellent, then, is God's goodness in causing 'the Sun of Righteousness to arise upon us, with healing in his wings!'" (Mal. iv. 2.) Are you putting on their clothes? "O my child! think on sin, which was the cause of your soul's nakedness, and of your body's need of apparel. Be not proud of your clothes, which are given to hide your shame. Never rest satisfied till your soul be arrayed with the robes of Christ's righteousness." When at the fire, tell them of that "lake of fire and brimstone that burneth for ever," into which all those that live and die in sin shall be cast: at table, how easy is it, how profitable, how delightful will it be, out of every creature there, to extract spiritual food for our souls! The bread minds them of the bread of eternal life; their hunger, of hungering after Christ's righteousness. By a river's side, how easy is it to mind them of "the water of life," and of those rivers of pleasure at God's "right hand for evermore!" (Psalm xvi. 11.) Thus may you, without the least tedium or disgust, teach those little bees to suck spiritual honey out of every flower. By these "similitudes," as by so many golden links, you may draw truths into their heads and memories.* (Hosea xii. 10.) Thus it pleased the Lord to teach his people of old, by using similitudes. (Isai. v. 1; Ezck. xvi. 3; Hosea i. 2.) Thus the Great Bishop of our souls taught his disciples by parables. (Matt. xiii. 39.) †

3. *Teach them the most useful, delightful, affectionate stories you can find in the word of God.*—For example, the creation of man; man's fall; the deluge; Isaac sacrificed; Lot and Sodom; Joseph; the golden calf; David and Goliath; the three children in the fiery furnace; Daniel in the lions' den; Jonah in the whale's belly; the children devoured by bears.

4. *Betimes acquaint them with the practice of religious duties.*—Read the word, pray, give thanks, sing psalms, in their presence. It is conceived by the learned, that the little children learned to sing hosanna to the praise of Christ, by hearing their parents sing the hundred and eighteenth Psalm, out of which that hosanna is taken.

5. *Endeavour to restrain them from all evil, and to breed in them a*

* *Assimilavi יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ* propheta etenim multis rebus Deum compararunt, patri, pastori, amico, leoni.—POLI *Synopsis*. "For the prophets compared God to many things; to a father, a shepherd, a friend, a lion," &c.—EDIT. † This paragraph is an imitation of the very eloquent and beautiful one in page 150 of the first volume of "the Morning Exercise at Cripplegate," 8vo. edition, 1844.—EDIT.

conscience of sin, even from the very breast.—No playing, no idle and vain chat, on the Lord's day. (Exod. xx. 10.) Ezekiel, from his youth and infancy, had not eaten any thing forbidden in the law; (Ezek. iv. 14;) made conscience of meals, when the appetite was most unruly. One fault amended by a child, out of conscience that it is a sin, is worth amending an hundred out of fear of the rod, or hope of reward only.

6. *Bring them to the public ordinances, as soon as they can come to be there, and kept there, without the disturbance of the church.*—The parent is to take care that the child sanctifies the sabbath day. (Exod. xx. 9, 10.) Joshua read all the words that Moses commanded "before all the congregation of Israel, with the women and the little ones." (Joshua viii. 35.) And not only captains, and elders, and officers, "with all the men of Israel," but their "little ones also stood before the Lord," to enter into covenant with him.* (Deut. xxix. 11.) "There were brought unto Christ little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them." But our Saviour gives check to their rebukes, and commands them to "suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto him;" and that on a weighty reason, because "of such is the kingdom of heaven:" and those little ones enjoyed the benefit and blessing of Christ's hand and prayer. (Matt. xix. 13—15; Mark x. 13; Luke xviii. 15.) "Sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: gather the children, and those that suck the breasts." (Joel ii. 15, 16; Isai. ii. 5; Jonah iii. 5.) †

7. *After their return from the public [ordinances], be sure to call them to an account, according to their capacity.*—Examine, and try how they profit, how they understand and remember any thing at all that they have heard: repeat it, and make it still more and more plain to them; and, in repeating it, apply it also to their consciences. This is that which some divines understand by that "whetting or sharpening of the word on our children;" ‡ that is, Teach them by way of repetition; going over and over again, as men do with knives when they whet them; that so, as knives by such whetting are more keen and fit to cut, so the truths of God, by often turning and returning them on the ears and tongues of children, may pierce more deeply into their hearts and consciences, for their better understanding and affecting of them. This was our Saviour's practice, to call his disciples to an account, and to know of them what they remembered and understood of what they heard: "Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things?" (Matt. xiii. 51.) "And when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples." (Mark iv. 34.) How careful will the child or servant be heedfully to mark what he hears, if he knows he shall be examined when he comes home! How much will this course help and confirm

* Joel ii. 15, 16; Jonah iii. 5. *Omnes sine ullo discrimine, ne infantibus exceptis.*—DRAUSIUS. "All persons, without any distinction, even infants not excepted."—EDIT. † *Ut patres et majores natu in illis perspicerent quid essent meriti, et magis exhorrent scelerum sua, propter quæ non sibi solum, sed et liberis suis imminere interitus.*—CALVINUS. "That their parents, and those who were older than themselves, might have a due perception of their demerits, and might conceive the greater horror of their own transgressions, on account of which not only they, but likewise their children, were threatened with impending destruction."—EDIT. ‡ Deut. vi. 7; וְשָׂנְנָתָם *Et exarues ea; accuratè et commodissimè inculcabis.* Hinc וְשָׂנְנָתָם *proverbium, Quod in ore sit, et inculcetur.* "And thou shalt whet or sharpen these words on thy children; thou shalt inculcate them in a manner at once accurate and most convenient. Hence the origin of the Hebrew proverb, 'That which is in the mouth, and may be inculcated.'"—EDIT.

your children and servants, yea, yourselves also, to understand, believe, and practise that which hath been taught you! When those noble * Bereans had publicly received the word with all readiness of mind, that is, [when they] took the heads of Paul's sermon truly, they privately searched the scriptures daily, to see whether things were so; and finding, on their search, that the truths delivered were consonant to the scriptures, it is said, "Therefore," that is, for that very reason, "many of them believed." (Acts xvii. 11, 12.) And † not your understandings only, but your memories also. This way with your family will make you, the governors of it, better able to retain [the memory of these things]. This is clearly inferred from Deut. iv. 9: "Take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen," &c. But how shall this forgetfulness be prevented? Why, by "teaching them thy sons, and thy sons' sons." And this refreshing of your memories will not a little conduce to the stirring-up of your affections, and to work in you greater sense and deeper feeling of the truths you have heard. (2 Peter i. 13.)

8. *In all your instructions, most carefully avoid all tedious prolixity.*—Nothing more disgusts a child's spirit, than long and tedious discourses. Make-up the shortness of your discourse by frequency; a little now, and a little then, not all at once; drop by drop, as you pour liquor into narrow-mouthed bottles. As you do when you first begin to feed their bodies with a spoon, so must you do when you first begin to feed their souls with instruction. Long speeches burden their small memories too much; and, through men's imprudence, may unhappily occasion them to loathe spiritual manna. As physicians, therefore, in their dietetic‡ precepts prescribe to children, "Little and often;" so must we. Young plants may quickly be even over-glutted with rich manuring, and rotted with too much watering. Weak eyes, newly opened from sleep, at the first can hardly bear the glare of a candle. "Line upon line," therefore, "and precept upon precept; here a little, and there a little." (Isai. xxviii. 10.) You must drive the little ones towards heaven, as Jacob did his towards Canaan, very gently. (Gen. xxxiii. 13.) Fair and soft goes far.§

9. Having thus far seasoned your little ones, and their understandings being somewhat grown with their years, *now is the fittest time to put a catechism into their hands.*—That is, a platform of "sound words," (2 Tim. i. 13,) "by way of question and answer, in a short compendious method; whose terms, being clear and distinct, should be phrased, as near as may be, out of the holy scripture, and fitted to their capacities by a very plain and solid style, and to their memories by brief expressions."¶ And here I would humbly offer this advice: Make use of a double catechism,—a shorter and a larger: a *shorter*, to be learned by

* *Ευγεσσεροι*, "of better descent." *Non per civilem dignitatem, sed per spiritualem dignitatem.*—TRAP. "Not through any civil dignity to which they had attained, but through spiritual and gracious worthiness."—EDIT. † The sense requires the repetition of "How much will this course help," from a preceding sentence.—EDIT. ‡ One

edition has "diuretic," instead of this word; and another has "diaretic."—EDIT. § This entire paragraph is copied, almost *verbatim*, from the eighth sermon in the first volume of "the Morning Exercise in Cripplegate," (p. 150,) which was the composition of the Rev. Samuel Lee, A. M., and for which the author makes a proper acknowledgment in the next paragraph, where he produces another quotation from the same sermon.—EDIT. ¶ DR. JACOMB, *Dom. Deo*, p. 167. ¶ "Morning Exercise at Cripplegate," pp. 150, 151, edit. 1844.

those that have weak memories and capacities: a *larger*, to be got by heart by those that have more years, greater parts, and larger capacities. Thus I find the Synod of Dort prescribing in their Act for Catechizing.* In this we agree with that burning and shining light, Mr. Crook, of Winton, in Somerset, and that acute, grave, and pious pastor of Sutton, in Bedfordshire, Mr. Bowles, in his *Pastor Evangelicus*; and especially we find it done to our hands by the late "Assembly of Divines," sitting at Westminster, in their lesser and larger Catechism; and that upon this solid reason, lest, on the one hand, whilst we impose a burden on such weak shoulders as are not able to sustain it, they should despond and sink; and, on the other hand, [lest,] when we require of others that which is much beneath their supposed ability, they should pass it by with neglect at least, if not throw it off with scorn.

But what are the forms of catechising [which] I would propose?

I answer:—

1. *For the youngest and lowest rank.*—I suppose the articles of the Christian faith contained in that very ancient creed, commonly called "the Apostles' Creed;" "the Decalogue, or Ten Commandments;" "the Lord's Prayer;" and "the Institution of the two Sacraments of the New Testament." But here, as indeed in all religious instruction, remember that you are not to teach parrots, but Christians; persons, though for the present ignorant, yet capable of understanding both words and things.† Be not therefore satisfied in the child's bare repeating of the words, as a thick-skulled Papist is taught to mumble over his *Pater-noster* or *Ave-Maria*, which he no more understands than that sottish priest did his *mumpsimus*; but first unlock *the cabinet*, that is, open to the child the true meaning of the words, and then present him with *the jewels*, that is, the truths contained in those words. Remember it as an undoubted maxim: It is impossible clearly to apprehend truths, unless we rightly understand those words in which truths are wrapped up.

2. *For others that are of a larger capacity.*—I shall not presume to dictate, among those more than scores of excellent Catechisms that are extant, and may be of singular use both in families and churches, which to pitch upon, with the slighting of any of the rest. I bless the Lord for the common Catechism of our church, and for Dr. Hill's improvement of it, in which I was initiated when a child. God hath signally owned Mr. Perkins's "Six Principles," and no less Mr. Ball's "Catechism." Crook's "Guide" is highly esteemed by the learned, judicious, and godly; and, I judge, not unworthily, if for nothing else than this,—its great harmony with the "Sum and Substance of Christian Religion," composed by that great master in our English Israel.

These Catechisms, I say, to me, with many, many more, sparkle like so many precious diamonds in my eyes. But it pleased the Lord, in the beginning of my ministry, to direct me to the use of those Catechisms that were composed by the late reverend "Assembly of Divines at Westminster;" Catechisms which I then found greatly approved, not only by the godly and judicious at home, but also by several of the Reformed churches abroad; and such as have this peculiar excellency beyond most that I have seen,—that every answer in them is an entire proposition of

* November 30th, 1618, sess. 17; lib. ii. cap. 2.
ii. c. 5.

† BOWLES, *Pastor Evang.* lib.

itself, without relation to the question preceding. These Catechisms I have made use of, both in my congregation and family, now near thirty years; and, (I desire to speak it with all humility and thankfulness,) if ever the Lord smiled on my poor labours, it hath been whilst I have been busied in this great, useful, necessary work of catechising, and that out of these Catechisms.

ECCLESIASTICAL SUPERIORS.

How these excellent Catechisms may be used to the best advantage by parents and governors of families, I have long since given Directions, which may be had at Mr. Parkhurst's, at the Bible and Three Crowns, near Mercers' chapel. And as to my dear and reverend brethren of the ministry, that would at the great day be publicly owned as pastors after God's own heart, such as have minded the flock more than the fleece, and in that flock the lambs as well as the sheep;—to these my brethren though I dare not presume to give advice, (what can my taper do to their sun, my drop to their stream?) yet they will give me leave to be their remembrancer. Dear brethren, who are to me as my own soul, our great and good God hath been pleased to honour us so far, as to set us up as stewards in his house, to give every one his proper portion in due season; and of all others, you know, our Master's will is that young ones be especially provided for. The duty, therefore, that we owe to God;—the love [that] we bear to truth, and to souls that are not capable of being saved without the knowledge of truth; to the souls of younger ones especially, who, if they be not taught the truth in their greener years, will more difficultly be brought to learn it when they are grown older;—nay, the love [that] we owe to our own souls, who must give a just account for every poor soul committed to our charge;—we, knowing how great a price the least lamb of our flock hath cost, how rich a prey Satan hath ever reckoned-on in the poorest soul, how industrious he is in hunting, how many nimble beagles he hath that rejoice to do their *best* in the *worst* service [in which] he lists to employ them, how great advantages they have at this time by the many sad and fatal breaches made in all our hedges;—surely, in the serious consideration of these and many more particulars, we shall, in the strength of our God, arise and be doing, and revive that most necessary exercise of catechising in the midst of us. “But how?”

1. *For advice at large*, and such as you will have cause to bless God for ever for, if you please to follow it, I refer you to that faithful and skilful workman, MR. BAXTER'S “Christian Directory,” fol. pp. 498, 509, 512, 515, 543, 582, and fourth part, p. 44.

2. *More particularly*:—

(1.) *Whatever you do in this work, you will do it soundly and purely.*—If ever a pastor will “in doctrine show uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity,” let him do it in catechising: “Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed.” (Titus ii. 7, 8.) Give to babes “the sincere milk,” not sophisticated wine. (1 Peter ii. 2.)

(2.) *Do it plainly.*—So plainly, that he that runs may read and understand; so plainly, that none may excuse themselves at the day of judgment, and say, “Lord, we would have learned thy saving truths, but

they were too high, too hard, too difficult for us." Remember, the generality of people are very "dull of hearing," and "such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat." (Heb. v. 11, 12.) Speak we therefore so as that our discourse may *rise* to the conviction of the wisest, but yet at the same time *sink and condescend* to the capacity of the meanest. I am apt to fear, that even then when we aim lowest, we yet at that very time shoot above not only the hearts, but heads, of our people.* Let our main care therefore be to open the understandings of our *catechumeni*. This is that which the Lord had in his eye, when he did not only command *the Levites* to instruct the children of Israel in the meaning of all his "statutes;" (Lev. x. 11;) but he laid this charge also upon *every parent*, to teach the children the meaning of every law and ordinance of God. (Exod. xii. 26, 27; xiii. 14; Deut. vi. 20.) If God required this under the law, much more now under the gospel, when it is promised that "the earth should be filled with the knowledge of God." (Isai. xi. 9.) The only service that is now acceptable unto God, is our "reasonable service;" (Rom. xii. 1;) that is, such service as is done unto him with reason and understanding. (Neh. viii. 2, 3.) The word read profits not unless understood. "Understandest thou what thou redest?" said Philip to the noble eunuch. (Acts viii. 30.) As if he had said, "To what purpose redest thou, if thou be not careful to understand what thou redest?" The word *preached* either by pastor or teacher, the truth delivered in a way of *catechising*, will do us no good, unless we hear with understanding. "Hearken unto me every one of you, and understand," saith the greatest Preacher; (Mark vii. 14;) and, "Have ye understood all these things?" (Matt. xiii. 51.) Dear brethren, as I know you desire not to sow your seed on the highway, so as that the fowls of that prince of the air should come and pick it up; (Matt. xiii. 19;) so be careful to make poor creatures to understand what they are taught. Now, for the opening of the truths laid down in "the Assembly's Catechism," I cannot but commend those four books which I have found so exceeding useful for the younger ones among our people; namely, Dr. Wallis's, Mr. Joseph Alleyn's, Mr. Thomas Vincent's, and Mr. Thomas Doolittle's excellent "Explanations."

(3.) *You will be sure to act very wisely, very discreetly.*—You know, in catechising you have to do with different sexes, ages, tempers, capacities. Some are less capable and more bashful: these must not be exposed to the scorn and contempt of those that have (it may be) more glib tongues and brasen foreheads, but worse hearts. You know when and how to encourage the willing, to praise the forward, to check the presumptuous, to admonish the unruly, patiently to bear with all. You know what it is *εκτρέφειν*, "to be soul-nurses;" (*τροφος*, 1 Thess. ii. 7, 8;) how to impart with all dearness those fundamental truths which make for their spiritual and eternal good and growth. And shall I take leave, in your names, to assure younger ones, that you will have a tender eye to the slowness of apprehension in some of them, to the slipperiness of memory in others, to the bashfulness of most, to the reputation of them all; that you will opportunely prevent their grosser mistakes, and candidly palliate their lesser ones; that you will give the best sense to the

worst of their answers, and put some necessary words into their mouths, the better to facilitate the expression of their thoughts; that you will so wisely manage the whole business, as that it may make for their reputation as well as instruction, and that they may find "favour both with God and man?"

(4.) *What you do, do it resolutely, and that in God's strength, not in your own.*—Expect opposition from within, from without. (i.) *From within*, a proud heart, apt to mutter: "It is a low, mean piece of drudgery." No; but [it is] rather the most doctor-like part of our work; and such as cannot accurately be performed without a clear insight into the greatest depths of religion, and a proportionable gift of ready exposition. The lowest principles of religion are the highest mysteries. Again: the tender shoulder, that shrugs, and enters its plea against the burden, as being "too troublesome a weight to be added to the load of our other Lord's-day labours." Neither will this prevail with you, brethren; we are confident, you are not only able, but "apt to teach." (2 Tim. ii. 24.) It is your joy "to spend" yourselves, "and be spent" in the utmost service of your God and his church. (2 Cor. xii. 15.) You will not be much concerned in the consuming of your oil, so you may lend your light. To such gracious souls as yours there is, there can be, no greater burden than the sense [which] you have of the heaviness of your people in hearing. (ii.) But *from without*, the general averseness of young ones is pleaded as a grand obstruction. As to that, you are so well seen in spiritual logic, as to fetch "meat out of this eater;" (Judges xiv. 14;) and will easily conclude, that this averseness in young ones from this exercise of catechising, is not the least argument of its singular usefulness. The more unwilling the patient is to have his wound opened, searched, plastered, and bound, the more eager the compassionate surgeon is to give relief. The more unwilling they are to present themselves to be catechised, the more reason have we to press them to it by the greatest violence of persuasion.

(5.) *Lastly. Let not want of success discourage.*—Your heavenly Master, you know, hath assured you that "your labour is not," shall not be, "in vain in the Lord." (1 Cor. xv. 58.) God takes the measures of his servants, not from their success, which is *his sole work*; but from their sedulous and faithful endeavours, which is *their duty*. (2 Cor. viii. 12.) Go you on to "plant and water;" let the great Lord of the vineyard alone to "give the increase." (1 Cor. iii. 6, 7.) And know, you are "a sweet savour unto God;" (2 Cor. ii. 15;) and "though Israel be not gathered," but you seem to have spent your strength in vain, "yet surely your judgment is with the Lord, and your work and wages with your God." (Isaiah xlix. 4, 5.)

3. I have now done with the *particular directions*: there remain yet some more *general ones*, which, being observed, may, with God's blessing, much promote the success of this whole work. And so,

(1.) *To spiritual instruction, add holy admonition, exhortation, good advice, and counsel.*—Do not only let them know by instruction what their duty is, but press, urge, enforce this duty upon them by admonition and good counsel. "O my child! you see your duty, you know what you ought to do. O do according to what you know!" What a strong

powerful, prevailing influence hath good counsel when duly applied!
Only see,

(i.) That you *back your counsel with the clearest scripture, and most convincing arguments you can possibly*.—Good advice without these is but a bullet without powder, an arrow without a feather. Argue with them about the excellency of God, Christ, the Spirit, grace, the vanity of the creature, the folly and sinfulness 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.) Hear what Bathsheba saith to Solomon: "What, my son? and what, the son of my womb?" &c. "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine," &c. (Prov. xxxi. 2—4.) Show them the beauty of Christ. Draw aside the curtain; let them behold the image of that blessed Saviour portrayed in scripture. Do to them as the spouse did to the daughters of Jerusalem; run over all the excellences of Christ to them, and then conclude: "He is altogether lovely. This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend, O daughters of Jerusalem." (Canticles v. 16.)

(ii.) *Labour as much as possible to insinuate yourselves into their affections*.—Having cleared your way into their heads, labour to wind and screw yourselves into their hearts. Let them know that you have no design upon them, but to make them happy; no private end, only their everlasting good. This done, thou hast done all thy work. When all jealousies of any sinister ends are blown away, then exhortations and counsels go down glybly. When persons are fully satisfied, that, in all our addresses to them, we study only their benefit and profit, this opens an effectual door to all the means that we shall use. Thus Paul accosts the Romans: "I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift." (Rom. i. 11.) Thus he smooths 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.) Labour then to get their love, their good esteem; and the work will thrive beyond expectation. Love is like the oiling of the key, which makes it to open the lock more easily; love greaseth the nail, and makes it enter with more facility.

(2.) *To holy, hearty, serious, affectionate, frequent admonition, add an exemplary conversation*.—Inferiors are apt to be led rather by example than rule, and are more prone to imitate practices than to learn principles. They are more mindful of what we do, than of what we say; and they will be very prone to suspect, that we are not in good earnest, when they see that we command them one thing, and do another ourselves. When we teach them well, and do amiss ourselves, we do but pull down with one hand what we build with the other; like a man that at the same time sings a lovely song, and drowns the melody of it by playing an ugly tune. When the father is immodest, the child that sees it soon grows impudent; and therefore the ancients thought themselves concerned to be very reserved and cautelous before their children.*

* Nil dictu fœdum visuque hæc limina tangat,
Intra quæ puer est. Procul hinc : . . .
Maxima debetur puero reverentia.—JUVENALIS *Satyra*, xiv. 44.

"Let nought which modest eyes or ears would shun
Approach the precincts that protect thy son!"

Walk as David, therefore, "within thy house with a perfect heart." (Psalm ci. 2.) Let thy children and servants behold nothing in thy department, which, if followed, may prove sinful.

(3.) *To an exemplary conversation add faithful, fervent, humble, constant supplication.* (Phil. i. 4; Col. i. 3.)—Paul, without ceasing, makes mention of his "heart's desire;" and his "prayer to God for Israel was, that they might be saved." (Rom. x. 1.) Ministers, like spiritual priests, should not fail to offer their daily sacrifices for their people, confess their iniquities, bewail their misery, and cry mightily to God for his mercy. All our instructions without prayer will do no good. Go to God to sanctify all. By prayer carry thy children, servants, to the blessed Jesus in the arms of faith; and beseech him to bless them, by laying on his hands on them, as Isaac did. (Gen. xxvii. 1—29; xlviii. 9, 14; with Matt. xix. 13; Mark x. 16.) * How pathetically did Abraham plead with God for Ishmael! "O that Ishmael might live before thee!" (Gen. xvii. 18.) Bathsheba calls for Solomon, "the son of her vows." (Prov. xxxi. 1, 2.) Austin [was] the child of Monica's prayers and tears. O pray, then, pray earnestly: "O that this my son, daughter, servant, might not die for ever! Thou, Lord, art the Prince and Lord of life! O speak powerfully to their poor souls, that these pieces of my bowels, that are now dead in trespasses and sins, may hear thy voice and live!" Cry out to God, with that poor man in the gospel: "Lord, have mercy on my son!" (Matt. xvii. 15.) If a mother, do as the woman of Canaan did: "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David, my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." If he seem not to hear, and to be silent; go nearer to him by faith, and cry: "Lord, help me! Lord, help me!" If his answer seem to be a repulse, do not thou desist, but rather gather arguments from his denial, as she did; and conclude, that if he once open his mouth, he will not shut his hand; and if importunity may prevail with an unrighteous man, then much more it will obtain with a gracious God. Never leave him, therefore, till, by laying hold on his own strength, thou hast overcome him. At last thou mayest hear that ravishing voice: "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt;" and see thy daughter "made whole from that very hour." (Matt. xv. 21—28.)

(4.) Lastly. *To fervent supplication add wary inspection.*—Keep a strict hand and a watchful eye continually over those that are committed to your charge: † your utmost care and vigilancy in this will be found little enough. How soon will those gardens, that now look like a Paradise, be overgrown with weeds, if the keepers thereof do not look to them daily! How soon is childhood and youth tainted with sin, if it be not narrowly watched! "Be thou diligent, therefore, to know the state

Far be the revel from thy halls away,
And of carousing guests the wanton lay!
His child's unsullied purity demands
The deepest reverence at a parent's hands."—DR. BADHAM'S Translation.

* The accustomed ceremony used in blessing. BEZA in Matt. xix. 15. *Impositio manuum symbolum fuit apud Judæos familiare, quoties solennis erat precatio, vel benedictio.* "Among the Jews, the imposition of hands was a common domestic symbol, which was performed whenever the accustomed solemn prayer or benediction was pronounced."—EDIT.

† DR. JACOMB'S *Dom. Deo*, p. 83.

of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds." (Prov. xxvii. 23.) Carefully observe the natural temper of your inferiors; you will by this the better know how to apply yourselves to them in advice, reproof, correction. Observe the first sprouts and buds of what is either good or evil in them: encourage, commend, reward them in the one; curb, restrain, and prevent the further growth of the other. Do they begin to take God's name in vain? Do they nibble at a lie? Doth pride in apparel peep forth? Be sure to kill this serpent in the very egg, to crush this cockatrice in the shell.

Thus of superiors.

(II.) A word to INFERIORS, and I have done.

Dear lambs, the Searcher of hearts knows how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. Shall I prevail with you to remember this, when I am laid with my fathers? namely, that it is no less your duty to make religion your business in the relation of children and servants, than it is ours in the relation of parents and masters. O what a credit, what a glory, is it to drink-in the dews of godliness in the morning of your lives! What a lovely sight to behold those trees blossoming with the fruits of the Spirit in the spring of their age! "Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king." (Eccles. iv. 13.) What a garland of honour doth the Holy Ghost put on the head of an holy child! How profitable is early piety! Some fruits ripe early in the year are worth treble the price of latter fruits. Godliness at any time brings-in much gain; (1 Tim. vi. 6;) but he that comes first to the market is likely to make the best price of his ware. On the other side, how dangerous are delays! Remember, children, Late repentance, like untimely fruits, seldom comes to any thing. Your lives are very uncertain. As young as you are, you may be old enough for a grave. O then seek your God, and seek him when and "while he may be found." (Isai. lv. 6.) If thou refuse him now, he may refuse thee hereafter.* I have heard of one, that, deferring repentance to his old age, and then going about it, heard a voice, *Des illi fufurem, cui dedisti farinam*; "Give him the bran to whom thou hast given the flour." Every day renders you more and more indisposed. The longer sin and Satan possess the forts of your hearts, the more they will fortify and strengthen them against God and holiness. (Jer. xiii. 23.) Your God deserves your youth. The best God deserves the best of days. Briefly: your God will call you to an account for your youth. (Eccles. xi. 9.) Here is a cooler for the high-flown youngster's courage. The words, after an ironical concession, thunder out a most dreadful commination. Well, then, be persuaded truly to reverence and honour your parents, masters, ministers. (Mal. i. 6; Eph. vi. 2; Lev. xix. 3.) Even lambs will kneel to their dams. Reverence them *inwardly* in your hearts with an awful fear; *outwardly* in your lives, in language and in carriage. (Gen. xlviii. 12; 1 Kings ii. 19.) Obey your superiors. (Eph. vi. 1.) In a word, read Prov. ii. 1—6: "My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; yea,

* We read of one that truly repented at his last gasp, that so none might despair; but it is of *but one*, that none might presume.

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."

Up, therefore, and be doing; and "the blessing of Him that dwelt in the bush" shall be with you.

SERMON XII.

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

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HOW MAY IT APPEAR TO BE EVERY CHRISTIAN'S INDISPENSABLE DUTY TO PARTAKE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER?

This do in remembrance of me.—1 Corinthians xi. 24.

THESE words are a command of the Lord Jesus, received, through revelation, by the apostle Paul, and by him as Christ's herald proclaimed to the church, that not only this particular church of Corinth, but that the whole catholic church of Christ, in their successive generations until his second coming, might take notice thereof, and yield obedience thereto, as to a command of that nature, wherein very much of the glory of their once-crucified Redeemer, and their own spiritual joy and consolation, is concerned. This will further appear in the following explication of the words.

In the words you have four parts, two of which are expressed, and the other two implied.

I. A duty: "This do."

II. The end for which: "In remembrance of me."

III. The obligation to the duty: *Christ's command*: this is implied.

IV. The persons under the obligation: *the whole church catholic militant, so far as they are scripturally capacitated thereto*: this likewise is implied.

But of these in their order.

I. *The duty*: "This do."—What is this to be done? The apostle tells you in the beginning of this verse, and in the following verse: and it is this: "This broken bread take and eat; this cup take and drink."

Here is a duty, my brethren, so plain, so easy, of whose obscurity or difficulty certainly we have no cause to complain.

For what can be less obscure than a command so evidently expressed, and what more easy than to eat and drink, and call to mind the greatest and best of friends, "that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood?" (Rev. i. 5.) And surely, then, a neglect herein must needs prove a sin that will admit of no excuse.

But if any of you be offended at the outward meanness of the ordi-

nance, and be thereby tempted to neglect the observance, I wish you to remember, who they were that stumbled at Christ himself because of the poverty of his parents. "Is not this," they say, "the carpenter's son?" (Matt. xiii. 55.) This was the introduction to their rejecting of Christ, and to that great plague that followed, namely, their being rejected of Christ. Certainly, as the meanness of his parents ought not to have prejudiced the glory of his person to those infidels, so ought not the seeming poverty of these elements of bread and wine any ways [to] abate of the glory of that mystery of our redemption that is shadowed out by them. I know, our carnal reasonings are apt to suggest, that since Christ intended to leave behind him a monument of the greatness of his person, and of his gracious undertaking in redeeming a church to himself by his blood, it would have been more suitable to the honour of such an undertaking, if the monument had been more magnificent; as, if he had given in charge to his disciples to have erected his statue of beaten gold, and set it up in the places of their solemn assemblies, as the Roman senate used to do for the honour of their excellent men, whose statues they erected in their capitol; or as the London senate doth in honour of their kings,—they give them their statues in their Royal Exchange.

To this I say, that certainly Christ is wiser than man, and that this memorial of himself, which is already appointed by him, is more suitable to the end intended, than what our vain thoughts have or can propose. For to what end should he have caused such golden statues to have been erected to his memory, when he was so acquainted with the nature of man, and with his propensities to idolatry, and therefore could not but foresee, that at least they would probably make no better use of them than the Israelites did of the brasen serpent, to whom they most unworthily paid that honour that was only due to God himself? And that this is no vain conjecture, I only desire you to call to mind, that, though the wisdom of our Saviour pitched upon bread and wine, that of all things seem most unfit to make idols of; yet what bad use men have made thereof, and how foolishly their vain minds have transubstantiated them into God, I need not tell those that know there are Papists in the world, and have heard of their idolatrous doctrine of transubstantiation.

OBJECTION. But peradventure some may yet further urge, that "since it pleased our Saviour to choose to appoint a feast for his remembrance, it had been meet this feast should have been more magnificent, and, consequently, more significant of the majesty and the riches of that Lord whose table it is; but to have only a piece of broken bread and a cup of wine, what poor man could have made a meaner entertainment?"

This also is easily answered: I say, therefore, that such a pompous feast [as] you talk of had not so well comported with his principal end in the institution; for Christ did not in this supper intend the filling of your bellies, but the refreshing of your souls. It was not instituted for that end as the feast of first-fruits among the Jews,—for the remembrance of God's blessing of the earth and giving them full harvests; but for the remembrance of things of a higher nature, of things invisible, spiritual, and eternal,—as, the saving you from sin, the law, from the grave and hell,—which were all procured by the breaking of Christ's body, and the

pouring out his blood, for you. Now your magnificent feasts were not so fitted for such a commemoration; for they rather would have tended to have clogged your spirits, made them dull and stupid, and far less apt to have contemplated such divine and heavenly things as those now named are: and therefore that this supper is so mean as it is, it is far better than if it were so great and royal as you conceive.

There are others [who] are well enough satisfied with the wisdom of their Lord, and in the nature of the things appointed for the remembrance of him, who yet may be, and ought to be, inquisitive as to the reason of them; which I shall reduce to these four questions:—

1. *Why did the Lord appoint bread rather than any other kind of food?*

2. *Why must it be broken bread?*

3. *Why must it be taken and eaten?*

4. *Why wine as well as bread? and why wine rather than any other drink?*

1. To the first I say, He appointed bread as most apt to signify the thing thereby to be presented to our faith; and that is himself, as he is bread of life to our souls, for so he calleth himself, John vi. 33: "The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." And, verse 35: "Jesus said, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger." This is evident, that man's natural life doth not more depend on the virtue of the bread that perisheth, than the soul's life of grace and glory depends on that virtue that proceedeth from a suffering Jesus. "I live," saith the apostle Paul; "yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." [Gal. ii. 20.] All that life of faith, all the indwellings of grace in our hearts, come from, and are maintained by, the virtues and influences of Jesus Christ, this "bread of life." And so likewise doth our eternal life depend on him, as he likewise tells us, John vi. 27: "Labour for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you." This meat is the Lord himself, who by his sufferings made our peace, and purchased the life of grace and glory for us.

And, indeed, no other meat, as bread, could so aptly set forth this mystery; because no food is so suitable to man's nature, none for a constancy so pleasant, none so strengthening: a man can better subsist with bread without other meats, than with any other meats without bread. Thereby the mystery of conveying soul-life to the sinner is excellently set forth; for, as there is other meat for the body beside bread, so there is another way of giving life to the soul beside that of a Saviour, and that is an exact obedience to the law of God. But, alas! the sinner through the weakness of the flesh can never digest that strong meat, and so cannot live by it. But for a poor, weak, infirm sinner to be maintained in a life of grace and acceptance with an offended God in and by a Saviour, is a way of living so suitable to a sinner, that men and angels could never have thought of one so suitable; and therefore nothing, as bread, was so fit to set forth this mystery.

2. *But why must it be broken bread?*—Christ himself acquaints us with the mystical reason thereof in the verse of the text; it is to set forth the breaking of the body of Christ. By breaking his body, must

be taken to comprehend all the sufferings of his human nature as united with the divine, as all his soul-sufferings, (of which there are three phrases used by the evangelists very emphatically, as *λυπεισθαι, εκθαμβεισθαι, αδημονειν*, which all signify those dolours of mind he underwent through the dereliction of God,) and likewise all the other sufferings of his body, which are by Isaiah set forth with great variety of phrase. Speaking of Christ, he saith, "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." (Isai. liii. 3.) And, verse 4: "He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." And, verse 5: "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." And, verse 7: "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted." Now, all these sufferings were consummated in his crucifixion: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." (1 Peter ii. 24.) These are those sufferings that made that "one sacrifice of himself" by which he "put away sin," and "hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." (Heb. ix. 26; x. 14.) Upon this account it is that the bread of this supper must be broken before it be taken and eaten. The broken bread—that is the sign; and Christ's sufferings—that is the mystery signified by it, as I have showed.

3. *Why must this broken bread be taken and eaten?*—This is not without its mystery; for thereby is meant that these breakings, bruising, woundings of Christ's soul and body, were not for any sin of his own, for he was "a lamb without spot;" (1 Peter i. 19;) but it was for our sins and for our benefit. Our dear Jesus sows in tears, and we reap the harvest of his tears in joy: he, by the meritorious extraction of his bloody sweat and agony in the garden, by his tremendous dolours of soul and body on the cross, prepares a cordial, and perfects it by his death; which prepared cordial we by faith drink-up, and from a state of sin and death revive: he offered himself as good wheat, to be ground by the law and justice of God, that thereby he might be made "bread of life" for us by faith to feed on, that we may live for ever. So that Christ's breaking and giving the bread in this sacrament to his church doth mystically declare that the sole intention of all his sufferings was for us; and therefore he saith, "This is the bread that was broken for you:" and likewise taking and eating it doth further signify, that we do profess to believe in him for life, and do rely wholly on him for acceptance with God, and for the salvation of our souls.

4. *But why did he add wine also to this supper, and commanded us to drink thereof in remembrance of him?*

I answer, This addition was for a very good reason; for thereby a further mystery of our salvation by his bloody death is explained.

(1.) As, first, if you consider that man's natural life is not maintained by eating only, except he drink also; for we may die as well by thirst as by hunger. Christ, therefore, by giving us his blood to drink, which is signified by the cup, as well as his body to eat, doth thereby declare that his suffering of death for us is every way complete and sufficient for the spiritual and eternal life of our souls. So that as he that hath bread and drink wants nothing for the sustaining [of] his natural life; so he that hath by faith an interest in a broken, bleeding Christ, wants nothing to the

upholding [of] the soul in a state of acceptance with God, or in a condition of spiritual life, that is the forerunner and earnest of a life of glory.

(2.) But, again, if you consider the nature of the drink which he hath appointed: it is wine and not water. By it may be signified thus much: that as there is no sort of drink so grateful to the palate, so reviving and strengthening to the spirits; so *that* spiritual life that the soul is raised to by the death of Christ, is a life of the greatest pleasure and joy that is conceivable; for as no liquor like wine doth cheer a sad, drooping spirit, so nothing doth so glad and cheer the soul as faith in a crucified Christ; according to that of the apostle Peter: "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." (1 Peter i. 8.)

Thus much for the duty: "This do."

II. *The end of the duty, and that is, "In remembrance of me."* Here are two things to be inquired into:—

1. *What reason was there for the instituting an ordinance for his remembrance?*

2. *Why, of all the acts and expressions of his love to sinners, above all, he would be remembered in his sufferings for us, which is the special signification of this supper?*

1. To the first I say, You must call to mind, that the time of instituting this supper was the night before that day [on which] he died. Now the consequent of his death was to be this,—that he should be taken from earth to heaven, there to be personally present till the day of judgment. Now, that his church on earth might not forget him in this long absence, he therefore appointed this supper for a frequent quickening them to the remembrance of him till he came again.

2. To the other question I answer, that the reasons why Jesus would have this act of his love to be especially remembered above all other, may be these:—

(1.) Because his dying for his church was the greatest act of love he ever showed his church. "Greater love," saith Christ, "bath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John xv. 13.) Again, saith the apostle, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us." (1 John iii. 16.) If a man should part with his liberty and suffer bonds, or lay down his estate and become poor, or leave his country and become an exile, for his friend, these were all expressions of great love; but none of them are comparable to laying down life and shedding one's blood for a friend. This last is that wherein Christ hath eminently demonstrated his love to his church, this he glorieth in, and this is that which he would never have his church forget, but frequently remember in this supper.

(2.) Because that though he gave and still doth give very great testimonies of his love to us, as in his resurrection, ascension, intercession, preparing glory, and, lastly, in his coming again to raise us, justify us, and to take us to himself, to behold and enjoy that glory that he had with the Father before the world was; yet this ordinance is rather for the remembrance of his bloody death for us, than for the remembrance of any of the other blessings. And why? Because that all these other depend on this. Christ could never have risen to our justification, had

he not died for the satisfaction of the law and his Father's justice; nor would he have been admitted as an intercessor, nor have been allowed one mansion in glory for any of us, nor would his Father have suffered him to have returned again to take any one of us to himself, if he had not by his death made our peace, opened the new way into the holy of holies, and purchased a glorious resurrection and an ascension to the heavenly and eternal glory for us. So that since all his other acts of love to his church depend on this of his dying, no wonder if he appointed this supper for the remembrance of his death rather than any thing else he either did or promised to do for us.

The conclusion is, that, since that the end of this ordinance is so glorious, and that is the remembrance of the greatest love that ever God the Father or Son showed to us, it cannot but cast a lustre and glory upon the duty of coming to this supper, and engage us to a cheerful participation thereof.

III. *The obligation to this duty; and that is Christ's command.*—This is implied in the text, but expressed in the foregoing verse: what saith the apostle Paul? "I have received of the Lord that which also I declare unto you." The apostle doth but "declare;" the command is Christ's, he is the author of it. It is Christ, not Paul, that said, "This do in remembrance of me." Christ's commands are the bonds by which we are tied up to obedience; if we break his bonds, we are transgressors. Remember who they were that conspired together, saying, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us;" they were such that the Lord hath "in derision," to whom he will one day "speak in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure." [Psalm ii. 2—5.]

The commands of superiors set out all duty to inferiors, and punish for neglect; and the higher or greater the superior is, the more authority hath the command, and the greater punishment will be inflicted on the disobedient. If disobedience to "the word spoken by angels received a just recompence of reward, of how much sorer punishment shall they be thought worthy" that disobey the command of Jesus Christ? [Heb. ii. 2; x. 29.] If a child's disobedience deserves the rod, or a servant's the cudgel, or a subject's the axe or halter, what doth disobedience to the Lord Jesus deserve, that is greater than father or master, or any earthly sovereign whatever? Take heed then, my brethren, of being found guilty of neglect of this duty that is bound upon you by the command of so great an authority as this of the Lord Jesus, that hath said, "This do in remembrance of me."

IV. In the next place are to be considered *the persons obliged; and those are the church of Christ, so far as by scriptural qualifications they are capacitated to a participation thereof, who are,—*

1. *Those that can discern the Lord's body in this supper.*—The want of this the apostle gives as the reason of unworthy receiving it, and tells us, "they eat damnation to themselves." (1 Cor. xi. 29.) Now there are two ways wherein the Lord's body may be said to be discerned in this supper:—

(1.) *When the understanding is spiritually enlightened to perceive the true nature and ends of this supper.*—And thereby is enabled to see a greater difference between this and our ordinary meals: for he that shall

for want of knowledge therein come to this table with no better preparations, or to no other intents, than when he goes to his own table, he doth certainly pervert the ends of the institution, and profanes the ordinance; and therefore cannot choose but incur the great displeasure of God for so doing.

(2.) But there is another way of "discerning the Lord's body" in this supper; and that is *by a spiritual taste and relish*.—For the palate hath not a greater ability of discerning the different relish in the variety of meats man feeds on, than the soul of man that hath its spiritual senses exercised, hath in tasting the things of God, and of judging the different sweets thereof. This is that spiritual faculty that Jesus Christ speaks of, when he tells Peter that he "savoured not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." (Matt. xvi. 23.) Now, this you must well observe, you that do partake of this supper, whether you do relish the love of the Lord Jesus in his dying for sinners, and for you in particular. Is this great love of Christ sweet to your souls, sweeter than honey or the honey-comb? Can you admire the heights and depths of this love, and wonder that the Son of God should take a body, to be bruised, wounded, slain for the vilest of sinners, among whom you reckon yourself as one? Do you find this love of his to you draw your hearts to a love of him, and a delight in him, and a readiness to part with all for him? This is indeed to "discern the Lord's body" in this supper; and by this you are enabled to see a vast difference betwixt this supper and all the feasts of fat things that ever you were at in all your lives. If it be so with you, then are you qualified for this supper, and are by Christ's command obliged to partake thereof.

2. *Those that have fellowship with God in Christ, they are those [whom] Christ hath obliged by his command to partake of this supper.*

This is another qualification [which] the apostle gives us in 1 Cor. x. 18, 20, 21; where, discoursing of the nature of divine and likewise of diabolical sacrifices, and of the reason of the priests' and people's eating some part thereof, he also shows the reason of our partaking of the Lord's table, which, though it is not properly a sacrifice that is there offered, yet it holds some resemblance unto the sacrifices of the law and to the people's eating thereof, inasmuch as it is a commemoration of that "one sacrifice" [which] Christ offered up to the Father for our sins; of the benefits of which "one sacrifice," those that communicate at the Lord's table do as effectually partake, as if Christ was offered up as often as you there do eat and drink.

"Now," saith the apostle, of the legal sacrifices, verse 18, "they which eat thereof are partakers of the altar;" that is, are partakers of the blessings of that God to whom that altar is erected, and to whom those sacrifices are offered. And not only so, but there is yet a further meaning, which is, that those that eat of the altar do thereby declare that they take the God of that altar to be their God, from whom they expect all that good they are capable of in this life and that which is to come; and likewise they thereby declare that him, and him only, will they worship and serve. Now this engagement of themselves to God signified by eating of the sacrifice, is that "fellowship" spoken of, verse 20, where the apostle further tells you that there is the very same intendment in those

sacrifices that are offered to devils, and the people's eating of those feasts that attended those sacrifices; they thereby did signify that they took those devils to be their gods, and resolved for the future to worship and serve them as gods; which is the proper meaning of that, verse 20, "But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils;" that is, "I would that you would not associate with devils, or enter into a confederacy with them to serve and worship them, as the idol-feasts do signify." Now if the idol-feasts signified the confederacy betwixt the devils and their worshippers, so also did the feast that attended the Jewish sacrifice signify a fellowship betwixt the true God and his worshippers, whereby the true God was acknowledged as their God, and that they would worship and serve him only. Thus the apostle having illustrated the meaning of eating of the Jewish and also of the Gentile sacrifice, he proceeds to accommodate those notions to that of the Lord's table, verse 21: "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils." The meaning is this: "You cannot serve two such contrary masters as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus, and devils also: for if you eat of idols' feasts, you thereby declare you own devils as gods; and then coming to the Lord's table, you thereby declare you only acknowledge the true God to be your God in and through Jesus Christ your Sacrifice and Mediator; which practices are very absurd and contradictory." The conclusion is this, that those who partake of the Lord's table are such that from the heart do take the God of that Christ whose death is remembered in that supper to be their God, and that do believe that God is really reconciled to them by that sacrifice; and they declare likewise hereby [that] they will worship and serve this God in this Christ, and him only. Now if any of you are thus engaged to God in Spirit, you have fellowship with him, and you are those that have right to partake of this supper.

DOCTRINE.

Having thus opened the words of the text, I shall now give you that chief point I would have you observe, which is this:—

That it is the indispensable duty of all such members of Jesus Christ that can discern the Lord's body in this Lord's supper, and have fellowship with the Father by this crucified Jesus, to come to this supper, and to partake thereof.

There is not any thing in the doctrine [that] I shall insist on, except this one; which is, to prove it is *your duty to partake of it*, and that it is therefore *indispensable*, because *the neglect of it is a very great sin*.

Which I prove by this one argument: Jesus Christ, who instituted it,—he hath commanded you to remember him in it; and, therefore, if you do it not, you break his command; and what is that but to sin against him? for what else is sin, but either to do what your God and Saviour forbids, or not to do what he commands? This is so plain, that it were but to waste time to use more words for the clearing thereof. What I have therefore more to say is, to show you those many things that accompany this sin, that tend to aggravate it; that, when you under-

stand not only that the neglect of this duty is a sin, but [that it is] a very great one, you may be deterred from continuing any longer in it.

1. I beseech you, consider *whose command it is you break*.—It is the command of the Lord Jesus ; to remember him in this supper is a debt you owe to him, your Saviour, Lord, and Head ; it is a command that bears the superscription of the most supreme authority in heaven or earth ; and if by the sentence of Christ it was but just to pay the tribute-money to Cæsar, because it bore his superscription, it is much more just for you to pay the tribute of obedience to this command, that bears the superscription of an authority greater than all the Cæsars that ever were. What is the name of Cæsar in compare to the name and title of the Son of God ? which is a title that speaks him greater than all angels or archangels in heaven : “ For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee ? ” (Heb. i. 5.) This is he whom the prophet Isaiah calleth “ Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The Prince of Peace,” on whose shoulders it hath pleased “ the Everlasting Father ” to lay the government. (Isai. ix. 6.) This is he whose “ kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,” and of whose dominion there will be no end ; (Dan. iv. 3 ;) of whom David speaketh : “ Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever : a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.” (Psalm xlv. 6.) All power, my brethren, God hath given into his hands, and hath given him to bear this royal title, “ King of kings, and Lord of lords ; ” (Rev. xix. 16 ;) and it is he only that is Head of his church. It is this great Lord that hath said, “ This do in remembrance of me.” How, then, dare you disobey him ? Believe it, if he hath so great authority to command, he hath as great a power to punish, if he find you presumptuously disobedient : he that could strike some sick and others dead for profaning this supper,—he can do as much to you for not observing it ; and that he doth not, is not because he wants power, but because he is gracious, long-suffering, not willing you should perish for your neglect, but that you may be drawn to repentance, and so to obedience ; but if you be obstinate after you are told thoroughly of your fault, take heed, it will be a horrible thing for you to fall into the hands of “ consuming fire.”

2. Consider, *your neglect of this ordinance is a sin against the command, not only of “ the greatest,” but of “ the best,” prince in heaven and earth*.—He is not only *maximus*, but *optimus* also : this is a further aggravation of your sin. Who ever thought but that Absalom’s taking-up arms against David was treason ? But he that shall consider that the rebellion was against David, the “ man after God’s own heart,” against David, the holiest of men and the justest of princes, and, besides all this, against David his father, cannot but judge it an act of the highest treason imaginable. My brethren, in your disobeying this command, you sin against Jesus the Just, and Jesus the Gracious ; against him that is by place your Head, in love your Father, in openness of heart your Friend ; against him that emptied himself that he might fill you, that became poor that he might enrich you, that became an exile from his throne and Father’s kingdom that he might bring you home to your Father’s house, that became a curse that you might be blessed, that hung on a tree for you that you might sit on thrones with him, who

called you and washed you from your sins in his blood: and after all this, when he shall leave such a command as this, to remember him in this supper for all this his love, how inexcusable must your neglect be, let your conscience be judge, with whom I leave it.

3. If you consider *what relation you that are believers stand-in to this Jesus that left this command with you.*—Ye are the elect of the Father, who committed you to his Son to redeem and effectually call you, that he might save you from sin, wrath, the grave, hell, and to bring you to everlasting glory. Why are you called “believers,” but from that faith whereby you acknowledge this Jesus as your Lord and your God, whereby you trust in him, and in what he hath done and suffered for you, for the making your peace, procuring your pardon, and opening a new and living way into your Father’s kingdom and glory? It is by this faith that you love him, cleave to him, and are therefore called his friends, his children, his brethren, his subjects, servants, followers, witnesses. And shall such as you be found disobedient to him? Shall you carelessly forget to remember him in a supper appointed by himself for the remembrance of the greatest act of his love, that is, his dying for you? I tell you, Christ will take it worse of you than of any others. How heinously did David take a contempt from his friend!—“Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.” (Psalm xli. 9.) Ye are those that he hath chosen out of the world, brought into his Father’s family; and for you to turn the heel upon him, and refuse to eat at his table, this is a contempt that cannot but grieve and anger him. When Christ had been teaching that they who did not “eat” his “flesh, and drink his blood,” had no life in them, at this multitudes were offended and forsook him; but, saith he to his disciples, “Will ye also go away?” implying, that if they should forsake him, it would be matter of greater trouble than that of the multitudes leaving him. (John vi. 53, 67.) That the ignorant, profane world comes not nigh his table, *that* comes not so nigh his heart; but that ye believers should withdraw, *this* is that which he must needs take ill from you. O, do not, as you tender the good pleasure of your Lord, do not grieve him by absenting yourselves from his table.

4. If you consider *the command itself as it is easy, pleasant, honourable*, your neglect must needs receive further aggravation.—What is more *easy* than to eat and drink, or more pleasant than to come to a feast, or more honourable than to feast with the King of kings? Christ puts you not upon the painful duty of circumcising your flesh; nor on the troublesome duty of washing yourselves every time you touch a dead carcass, or what is ceremonially unclean; nor on the costly duties of sacrificing your lambs, goats, or oxen; nor on the costly and toilsome duties of travelling scores of miles every year to feast before the Lord at Jerusalem, to which the church of the Jews were bound. He hath eased you of all these burdens, and made your task far easier: instead of all these, he hath instituted but two duties like them,—the one of baptism, the trouble of which you are to undergo but once in all your lives, and the other of this supper, which you may have without travelling far for, and which costs you next to nothing.

But, further, it is a duty not less *pleasant* than easy. What is more

pleasant than a feast? And this of all feasts is the sweetest: if the perishing manna in the wilderness were so delicious as that "the taste of it was like wafers made with honey," (Exod. xvi. 31,) how much more delicious must this celestial manna, this bread of eternal life, be, which is spread before you in this supper? It is a feast of love, of the love of the Father and of the Son; there is a voice in every morsel of bread you there eat, and in every draught of wine you there drink, saying, "Behold, O sinners, how you are beloved of the Father and Son! Had not the Father loved you, he would never have parted with his Son; and if the Son had not loved you, he would never have parted with his life for you. O, therefore, come ye to this supper; come, eat and drink, ye beloved of the Lord, and remember his love more than wine; let all the redeemed of the Lord come hither and praise him."

Nor is it a duty less *honourable* than pleasant. It is a pleasant thing to feast; but it is honourable to feast with a king, most honourable with the King of kings and Lord of the whole earth. How did Haman glory that he was invited to the banquet with the king! He reckoned not of it as his task, but his privilege; not as his work, but his reward. And shall a feast with an earthly, mortal king be more valued than a feast with the heavenly and immortal God? This supper is the *Lord's supper*; it is the great God [that] hath made the provision, and it is his eternal Son that hath made the invitation. O, take heed of excuses; for though you make them, God will not take them: make therefore yourselves ready, put on your wedding-garments, and come away; let not a table so well furnished want its guests, lest Christ lose the honour, and you the comfort, of the entertainment. But if you will still draw back, know this, that you do not only sin, but that your sin is great, because against a command that is so easy, sweet, and honourable, as I have shown you this is.

5. There is one circumstance more in the command which should quicken you to the observance; and that is *the time when this command was given*.—It was the very night in which he was betrayed, the very last night he lived on the earth, the night before that day in which he offered up himself a sacrifice to justice for us. Then it was he said, "Do this in remembrance of me." What is this but as if he had said, "My friends, I am now to leave you, and to be taken out of your sight; but, O, let me not be out of your mind: to-morrow you shall see how I love you, when you see me scorned of men, deserted of God, praying, groaning, bleeding, dying for you; O, let not that love of mine be forgotten! And lest it should, I therefore institute this supper, charging you, with my whole church, till I come again, that so often as they eat this bread and drink this cup they remember me." This is the charge of our dying Lord; and, surely, if we have any love for him, we should not dare but observe it. When Jacob was dying, he gave in charge, as some of his last words, that Joseph should forgive the unkindness of his brethren; and when he was dead, the brethren thought it a good argument to move Joseph to take pity on them. They therefore "sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren." This argument broke Joseph's heart; it is said he "wept when they spake unto him, and

said, Fear not." (Gen. 1. 16, 17, 19.) O, how did the words of his dying father move and melt him! Methinks I hear him say, "Was this the desire of my dying father? I cannot then but yield. Would my father have me forgive? I freely do it." Now, my brethren, why should you not do as much for your dying Jesus, as Joseph for his dying Jacob? Was Jacob his father? Jesus is our Saviour. Did Jacob love Joseph? But he did not die for him as Jesus did for us; and shall we find a heart to deny our Lord in his dying request, when Joseph could not find one to deny his father? O, then, as Joseph forgave, so let us "this do in remembrance of" him, which will be an instance of that great love and honour we do keep for his memory.

6. In the next place, I desire you would think of *the contempt you throw upon this ordinance by your neglect*.—What is it but that you have slight thoughts of the authority of the Institutor, and very mean thoughts of the institution itself? And is not this to proclaim to the world, that there is, in your judgment, a command of the Lord Christ, and a duty in the Christian religion, that is frivolous and childish, not worth the observance? Believe it, the world will judge of it by your practice, and not by your profession. The Rechabites would drink no wine, because Jondab the son of Rechab did forbid them; nor will the Turks drink wine, because that impostor Mahomet forbade them; thus the one honoured their father, and the other their false prophet; and will you that are Christians let these men rise up in judgment against you? Shall error be more prevalent with *them*, than truth with *you*? And will you let the Turks outdo you, in honouring a false prophet more than you do the true? Is Mahomet dearer and his institutions more sacred to his followers, than Jesus Christ and his institution are to you? Christ bids you drink of this cup in remembrance of him, and you will not; but Mahomet forbids them wine, and they obey him: judge you now, who gives the greatest honour,—they to Mahomet, or you to Christ? Methinks you should blush to think of it. O Christians, for shame amend, and give no more occasion to Christ's ministers to reprove you for so gross a sin.

7. I have not yet done. Think, once more, *with what hypocrisy this neglect is accompanied*.—What is hypocrisy, but to endeavour to seem better than indeed we are? to seem zealous for Christ and his ordinances, when in truth we are lukewarm and indifferent? Ye are Protestants by profession; your fathers were so before you, and ye seem ready to plead their cause: O that ye would look back and consider the age past! With what zeal was this ordinance pleaded for in king Henry VIII.'s and queen Mary's days! The Papists would give you the bread only, but you would have the cup also; they would have you adore the bread, as a God, ye would not commit so great idolatry; for which cause how many were exiled, how many imprisoned, racked, hanged, burned! And after all these heats, O gross hypocrisy! you will neither have bread nor wine, nor will you take it in the gospel-way without the incumbrances of superstition and idolatry. Ye talk of Popery returning, and truly not without ground: for when I consider how slight we make of this ordinance rescued from the Papists with the expence of so much blood, methinks it is but a righteous thing with God to bring us under their iron yoke

again ; and if it once comes to that, then you would be glad of this ordinance, if you could get it. Then you will be brought into this strait :— either you must take it in the Popish way, and be damned for your idolatry ; or in the gospel way, and be burnt at a stake for opposing Antichrist. O repent in time, renew your first love, strengthen your zeal that is ready to die. Come to the Lord's table as you are invited, take it in his way, that is, with knowledge, faith, love, thankfulness, lest you provoke the Lord by your neglect to take it quite away from you, as he is likely to do if he suffer Popery to return.

8. Consider again, *how scandalous you are in this neglect.*—There are not a few about this kingdom, that are ancient Christians, that have a long time had the reputation of wisdom, sobriety, and godliness in their lives, that yet are notoriously guilty in this matter. I beseech such to consider their scandal herein. What is it, my brethren, to scandalize weak brethren, but to lay stumbling-blocks in the way of such, over which they may fall, and if not ruin themselves, yet they may at least wound their peace ? When weak Christians see such as you live in the neglect of this ordinance, what do they but by your example take encouragement to neglect it also ? For thus, it is likely, they reason : “ If there were any necessity of partaking of that supper, why do not such and such do it ? They are godly, wise men ; sure, if they thought it a sin, they would not persevere in this neglect.” And so are the weak emboldened to sin also, though against their light : for it is scarce possible that they should read or hear of so plain a command as this, “ This do in remembrance of me,” and not be in some measure awakened to the sense of their duty ; which light yet they stifle because of your example. I beseech you, therefore, by the mercies of God and love of the Lord Jesus, and the bowels you ought to have to your weak brethren, that you would not give such a manifest occasion of their falls, their soul-wounds, if not their destruction.

9. Once again : let me entreat you to lay to heart, *how unworthily hereby you cast contempt upon the practice of the churches of Christ in all ages past.*—Tell me, if you can, what church of Christians for sixteen hundred years but have made conscience of this duty. In Justin Martyr's time, by what we can gather from his writings, it seems the church always closed their solemn public meetings with this supper. And Austin tells us, there were Christians in his days that were for taking it every day of the week ; and though he himself thought such daily participation thereof was not needful, yet he “ persuaded to partake thereof every Lord's day.” *Quotidie, inquit, eucharistiæ communionem percipere nec laudo nec vitupero ; omnibus tamen Dominicis diebus communicandum suadeo.* Now though Christ hath not expressly tied us to such a frequency, yet he hath intimated to us, he would have himself remembered herein very often, when he saith, “ As often as ye eat this bread.” But for you to live in a perpetual neglect, is very far from taking it often. It was a saying of Asaph, “ If I say, I will speak thus ; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children.” (Psalm lxxiii. 15.) O that you would consider, that so long as you continue this neglect, you offend against the children of God in many generations, even from the time of the institution !

10. Lastly. Do but think *how unmerciful you are to your own souls in denying them this ordinance.*—What do you, but withhold their proper and necessary food from them? You call upon them to exercise their graces, and you find them faint and languid; you then complain of them, “O, what a dead and listless heart have I to God and duty?” Alas, man! it is thy own fault: thou, like an Egyptian taskmaster, callest for the tale of brick, and deniest straw: thou callest to thy soul to do her work, and wilt not give her the bread to refresh her which her Saviour hath allowed. Bring thy soul to this supper, feed her, satisfy her with a crucified Jesus that is there presented; and then tell me whether her faith will not strengthen, her love increase, her joys and consolations multiply. Ask your brethren, what tastes and relishes, what sweet refreshments, they have received from the Lord in this ordinance. They will cry unto you, “O come, taste and see how gracious God is to us at this feast!” It was a saying of Bernard, *Cum defecerit virtus mea, non conturbor, non diffido; scio quid faciam, calicem salutarem accipiam*: * that is, “When my strength faileth me, I am not troubled, I do not despond; I know a remedy,—I will go to the table of the Lord: there I will drink and recover my decayed strength.” And I dare say, that good man experienced no more but what ten thousands of the Lord's people do frequently experience. Where would you have Christ give you his loves, but in his garden of spices, in his wine-cellar, where his banner over you is love? Here it is he broaches his side, and lets-out his heart-blood to you, which is more sweet to a believing sinner than the most delicious banquet to the most hungry appetite; and if it proves not so to all that come, it is because of their own indispositions, and not because of any deficiency in the ordinance itself.

OBJECTIONS AND ANSWERS.

And now I had done, were it not that I understand there are some objections to be removed, which I shall propose and answer, and then leave you to the blessing of the Lord for to give you a full satisfaction in the whole matter.

OBJECTION 1. But some may say, “All that you have been hitherto pleading-for is but a ceremony; and, sure, God will not be so much concerned with a failure in so small a punctilio as a ceremony!”

ANSWER. True, it is a ceremony; but it is such an one that beareth the stamp of the authority of the Lord Jesus. If he appoints it, will you slight it, and say, “It is but a ceremony?” But, again, if it be a ceremony, it is the most glorious one that ever was appointed, inasmuch as it is designed to set forth the redemption of the world as it was completed and perfected by the death of Jesus Christ. Yet again: it is but a ceremony; but you are greatly mistaken if you think that therefore there is no danger to neglect it. What was the tree of knowledge of good and evil but a ceremony? Yet, for disobedience in eating thereof, do you not know and feel what wrath it hath brought on the whole race of mankind? And, tell me, was circumcision any more than a ceremony? Yet it had almost cost Moses his life for neglecting to circumcise his son; for the angel stood ready with his sword to slay him, if he had not prevented it

* This clause, as it stands in the text, is literally: “I will take the cup of salvation,” in allusion to Psalm cxvi. 13.

by his obedience. (Exod. iv. 24, 25.) So for the Lord's supper, as much a ceremony as it is, yet for the abuse of it, some of the church were sick and weak, others fell asleep, that is, died. (1 Cor. xi. 30.) And if God did so severely punish the abuse, how think you to escape, *that* presumptuously neglect the use thereof?

OBJECT. II. "But if I am regenerate and become a new creature, I am sure I shall be saved: I do not fear that God will cast me away for the disuse of a ceremony."

ANSWER. Is this the reasoning of one regenerate? Surely thou dost not understand what regeneration meaneth: is it not the same with being born of God? And is not he that is born of God a child of God? And what is it to be obedient to the Father, but to do as he commandeth? And hath he not commanded you by his Son to remember your Saviour in this supper? When you have considered this, then tell me what you think of this kind of reasoning: "I am a child of God, therefore I will presume to disobey him; he bids me remember Jesus in this supper, and I will not." Methinks thou blushest at the very mentioning of it; and what, if he should not cast thee quite off for this neglect? Yet thou hast no reason to think but that either outwardly or inwardly, or both, he will scourge thee for this sin before thou diest: and do thou examine whether the languor of thy graces and poverty of thy consolations be not the lashes of your heavenly Father for this sin.

OBJECT. III. "But I remember a crucified Saviour in the word read and preached; I see him there lifted up and dying for me, and, I bless God, to my great comfort. How needless a thing then is it to remember him in this supper so!"

ANSWER. Vain man would be wiser than Christ, who is the Wisdom of his Father. Jesus Christ hath thought fit not only to command that himself should be preached to his church, but also remembered in this supper. But thou dost say, (O presumption!) that the first was sufficient, the latter is needless and impertinent. Wilt thou undertake to give counsel to the Son of God, or advise him in the affairs of his kingdom? Shall the Holy Ghost say?—"He was faithful over his own house as a son;" (Heb. iii. 5, 6;) and wilt thou argue him of weakness in his administrations? "He that reproveth," the Son of "God, let him answer it." (Job xl. 2.)

But why shouldst thou say, "This supper is needless, because Christ is remembered in the word?" May not truth in some cases be more effectually conveyed to the soul by the eye than ear? Do you not find yourselves more moved to see the execution of a man, to see one hanged or beheaded, than barely to hear the story of it? Jesus Christ in this ordinance is, as it were, crucified before your eyes, in a manner more affecting than when you only hear of his crucifixion by the word. But, further: this supper hath further ends than the word preached: for Christ, and the covenant of grace founded in his blood, is preached to the intent that you may believe, and enter into this covenant with God; but the supper is instituted as an outward sign to ratify this covenant betwixt God and you, after it hath been once entered into by faith. You do not think it enough in marriage to take one another's word, but you complete it by a solemn vow in the presence of witnesses. I tell you, Christ hath

not thought it enough to take your word, but he will have it confirmed solemnly by this ordinance; and this he will have often repeated, for he knows us too well as to our proneness to backsliding, which by this supper he would prevent.

But, yet further, who is it [that] dares presume to give Christ his measures, how, and where, and by what means he should manifest himself and his love to his believers? What, if he hath reserved some peculiar degrees of light and strength and comfort to convey to his people by this supper, that he thinks not fit ordinarily to do by his word? And if it be so, who shall say to him, "Why doest thou thus?" I remember what is recorded of the two disciples travelling to Emmaus: by their discourse it appeared that they doubted whether Jesus was the Christ. Christ, meeting with them, and perceiving that their faith staggered, took this method: first, he endeavoured to settle them in their faith, that notwithstanding he had been crucified and buried, yet he was the true Christ; which he did by "expounding Moses and the prophets," from whence he proved that it was necessary that Christ must suffer. And this was with good effect upon their hearts; for they said, "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way?" But yet he reserved a fuller manifestation of himself to them until he came to break bread with them at their house; then it is said, "Their eyes were opened, and they knew him." (Luke xxiv. 13—32.) I do not say that breaking of bread in that place was the Lord's supper in the sense [in which] I speak of it; but it will serve me so far as to illustrate what I intend, which is this: that it may be the pleasure of Christ to entail peculiar manifestations of himself to his people upon several ordinances; he will beget faith by the preaching of the word, and set your hearts in a flame of love to him from what you hear there, and yet may reserve the confirmation of your faith, and establishment of your love to him, to be wrought by this of the Lord's supper, which is that which many of his people have experienced. And therefore it cannot be said to be in vain to have Christ presented to you in the Lord's supper, as well as in the Lord's word preached. And this I conceive abundantly enough to silence this objection.

OBJECT. IV. "But I am not prepared worthily to receive, and therefore I dare not come to this table, lest I 'eat and drink damnation' to myself."

ANSWER. Whose fault is that? What hast thou been doing all thy life? If thou hast not been "working out thy salvation with fear and trembling," thou hast done nothing. Repentance hath been preached; why hath not thy heart been broken? Christ hath been offered; why hast thou not received him by faith? This supper hath been explained; why hast thou not understood it? If thou hadst but repented of thy sins, and believed in the Lord Jesus, and understood the meaning of this supper, thou hadst been prepared for a worthy receiving of it: but if it be not thus with thee, it is thy own fault; get thee therefore into thy closet, humble thyself mightily before the Lord for this long abuse of the means of grace, and pray him to give thee that repentance, faith, and knowledge, that may make thee worthy. And be assured that God is merciful, and "giveth liberally" to those that ask,

“and upbraideth” no man. (James i. 5.) “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find.” (Matt. vii. 7.) But if you will not be at this pains, thy unworthiness is voluntary, and thy complaint of unfitness is mere hypocrisy: and then remember the many woes denounced against hypocrites.

Yet there may be some children of God that are prepared, but yet dare not come, because they do not understand that they are prepared.

To these I say, If through ignorance of your own state you be kept off, why do you not come to such ministers that you judge faithful to help you? You will carry your evidences to men skilful in the law, to judge of your title to an earthly inheritance; and if your body be under some distemper, you will ask your physician what he thinks of you: and why will you not then go to some able minister, and ask his judgment of you, and desire his directions? I dare say, this course would set many a weak Christian at liberty from his doubts and perplexities, which have and may so entangle him, that as he yet hath not seen his right to his privileges, so he may go on in this darkness, for aught I know, to his death. Be therefore persuaded to take advice.

The conclusion is this: I would that all of you whose consciences bear you witness that you are the Lord's people, and that you have given yourselves up to Christ, would take-up a resolution to be obedient to the Lord in coming to this supper as he hath commanded; and as you have heard this morning, take heed of sinning against light, with your eyes wide open upon it. Sins of ignorance God may wink at; but when you sin presumptuously, though it be against the least command, and persevere in it, I question whether it be consistent with salvation. But if it be, doubtless it will be a salvation through the fire. The Lord give you understanding!*

SERMON XIII.

BY THE REV. MATTHEW BARKER, A.M.,

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A RELIGIOUS FAST. THE DUTY WHEREOF IS ASSERTED, DESCRIBED, PERSUADED, IN A BRIEF EXERCISE UPON—

But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.—Mark ii. 20.

THESE words are an answer to a question, or rather a reply to an objection made by the disciples of John and the Pharisees against Christ concerning fasting, verse 18: “And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come and say unto him, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not?”

Christ returns his answer by a fit parable, as that was his usual way

* In this sermon a few discrepancies occur between the first edition and the second.
—EDIT.

of teaching: verse 19: "Can the children of the bride-chamber fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast." And so the duty was not now in season. We have the same story recorded by two other evangelists,—Matt. ix. 14—17; Luke v. 33—35; only with this difference: in Matthew we read, it was only "the disciples of John" that made the objection, but in Mark and Luke is added, "the disciples of John and of the Pharisees." Again: Matthew and Mark mention only fasting; Luke addeth, "Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers?" He means it of the prayers used by them upon their fast-days. Luke also addeth, "But thine eat and drink." Here was the objection.

Wherein we shall, first, consider *the occasion of it*, and then *the persons that made it*, and then *the reply that Christ maketh to it*: which will bring me to the text.

I. *The occasion of it was,*

First. That which is mentioned by all these evangelists,—Christ's entering the house of Levi the publican, who had made him a great feast; and there was a great company of publicans and others present, and Christ and his disciples sat down, and did eat and drink with them. Now this was one ground of the objection, that Christ and his disciples did not use that austerity and abstinence in meat and drinks as they ought, but did too much indulge their sensual appetite; as elsewhere he was accused as a "wine-bibber and gluttonous," (Matt. xi. 19,) especially seeing he did eat and drink with "publicans and sinners."

Secondly. The disciples of John and the Pharisees used several fasts beside the annual fast enjoined by the law upon the seventh month and the tenth day of the month, for the whole congregation of Israel: as we read of their "often fasting;" (Matt. ix. 14; Luke v. 33;) and the Pharisee mentioned, Luke xviii. 12, pleads: "I fast twice in the week;" and Chemnitius in his "Harmony" conjectures they did still observe the fasts of the fourth month, and fifth month, seventh and tenth month, that the Jews observed in the seventy years' captivity, mentioned, Zech. viii. 19; as also that which was observed by Esther and her maidens, Mordecai, and the Jews in Shushan, before her going in unto the king, to speak for the lives of her people; (Esther iv. 16;) to preserve the solemn remembrance of the calamities of those times, he thinks, they kept still those fasts; but besides, they observed many fasts devised and appointed by themselves, which may be reckoned among the traditions of the Pharisees imposed upon their disciples. Now, Christ and his disciples not fasting as they fasted, was another ground of the objection, as is expressly mentioned by the evangelist.

II. Next we may consider *the persons that make the objection*, whereby we may see yet further ground of it. It was the disciples of the Pharisees and John. These Pharisees were the chief ring-leaders upon all occasions in any opposition against Christ: one while, they object against him and his disciples for not observing the sabbath; another while, for not washing before they did eat; and sometimes for his too much familiarity with publicans and sinners, &c.; and here for not fasting. And now they engaged the disciples of John with them, that they might make their objection and opposition the more plausible; for John was in

great reputation with the people. Wherein John's disciples were justly to be blamed for joining with the Pharisees in an opposition to Christ, who were his inveterate adversaries. But John their master being now in prison, they were the more easily drawn-in with them; for had he been with them he would not have suffered such a thing; his great errand and business being to raise-up the reputation of Christ among the people, to remove prejudices against him, to prepare the way for him, and to turn the hearts of the people to him. A pregnant instance whereof we have, John iii. 26—30, where John's disciples came with a story to their master: "Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him." But John answered, "A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. Ye yourselves bear me witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom," &c. "He must increase, but I must decrease." John would not suffer any envy or prejudice to remain in the hearts of his disciples against Christ upon his account, but seeks to check it presently. But he being now not present with them, the Pharisees more easily engaged them in this opposition and objection against Christ about fasting, to join with them therein. And the zeal that John's disciples had for the reputation of their master might somewhat incline them also to it; for they saw the people following Christ, which they thought might be some eclipse to it, and consequently to their own [reputation] as they were his disciples.

And, besides, they knowing the austerity and abstinence that was practised by John, his meat being locusts and wild honey, such food as he found in the wilderness; they might be more easily offended at that greater liberty that was taken by Christ and his disciples about eating and drinking. Especially at this time, when their master was in prison, they thought fasting might be more seasonable than going to a feast, as Christ and his disciples did at the house of Levi; as Grotius observes upon the place.

III. Next we have *Christ's reply to the objection*.—And he presents it in a parable, as I said: the parable of a bridegroom, who at his wedding hath his bridemen and bridesmaids attending him in the wedding-chamber, who, according to the Hebrew dialect, are here called "the children of the bride-chamber." And is it *then* a proper season for their fasting, while they are in the wedding-chamber, and the bridegroom with them?

Wherein Christ doth represent himself as a "Bridegroom," and his disciples as "the children of the bride-chamber." And he doth now represent himself thus, the rather to put these disciples of John in remembrance of their master's speech, when he called Christ "the Bridegroom." As we read, John iii. 29: "He that hath the bride is the Bridegroom." And should then his disciples fast and mourn, while Christ, the Bridegroom, was with them? And their master John,—he professed that he was "the friend" of this Bridegroom, and "rejoiced greatly" to hear his voice. (John iii. 29.) And therefore why should they be offended at his disciples, that they did not fast and mourn, when their master John rejoiced, and had his "joy fulfilled" in hearing his voice? as we read, John iii. 29. And herein Christ doth intimate to them,

that if they were indeed his disciples, and the children of the bride-chamber, they would not fast neither; for "the children of the bride-chamber cannot fast while the Bridegroom is with them." But he adds: "The days will come, when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days." And so I come to the text.

Wherein we may observe by the way,

1. That Christ doth exempt his disciples from observing those fasts that the Pharisees and John's disciples were in the practice of. And the rather, because they were observed, especially on the Pharisees' part, *ex simulato pietatis studio*, "out of ostentation of piety," and for self-justification.* As he did exempt them from their other traditions, so also from their fasts.

2. That the Bridegroom was to be taken away; which is to be understood of Christ's fleshly presence; for his spiritual presence never was, nor ever will be, taken away from his church. And this presence discontinues till his coming to judge the world; and then the cry will be heard at midnight, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh." (Matt. xxv. 6.) The Bridegroom that was once visibly present on earth with his disciples, is so taken away, that he will not be in that manner present with them again, till his return from heaven. And his taking away doth either respect the acts of men, who, by cruel hands, took him "from prison and from judgment," and nailed him upon the cross, and took him "out of the land of the living;" (Isai. liii. 8;) or else it respects the act of his Father, who took him up into heaven after he had finished his work here upon earth; as it is said, "Received up into glory;" (1 Tim. iii. 16;) which is the more probable, though there is nothing in the original word, *αναβη*, to determine it to either sense.

3. He also declares what the practice of his disciples would be after his taking away: "Then shall they fast in those days." So that he doth not deny the practice of fasting to his disciples, but rather commends it; only it was not at present seasonable, as it afterwards would be.

QUESTION. "But why should they fast after he was taken away?"

ANSWER 1. Some say, "Because till then the Holy Ghost was not given in such a degree as might fit them for such extraordinary duties: † as Christ seems to intimate, when upon this occasion he excuseth his disciples, as being not yet fit for such spiritual services: 'No man seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment; nor putteth new wine into old bottles.' (Mark ii. 21, 22.) It is true, they might be able to keep fast-days, as the Pharisees did; but Christ, that values our duties by the frame of spirit exerted in them, would not have them put upon extraordinary duties till they had a suitable measure of the Spirit to enable them thereunto."

2. Others, and I think more properly, understand the words of Christ with respect to the afflictions and persecutions that would come upon the church after his ascension into heaven, which would give them great occasions of prayer and extraordinary supplications, and which would reduce them to such great sorrows and distresses, whereby fasting would be not only seasonable, but that principle of grace that would act them in other duties would also naturally lead them to it; not to take-up again

* CHEMNITII *Harmonia*, in loco.

† CHRYSOSTOMUS.

the practice of these pharisaical fasts, as the Montanists would hence infer, but the duty of fasting as suited to gospel-times.

And these persecutions began early : First by the Jews, and then the Arians, and then the heathen persecutions under the dragon in the Roman empire, and then under the beast with the seven heads and ten horns, to whom the dragon gave his power, and his seat, and great authority. (Rev. xiii. 1, 2.) And Christ foretold this to his disciples before he was taken away, that they that killed them would think they did God good service ; (John xvi. 2 ;) and that "nation should rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom : and there should be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes." (Matt. xxiv. 7.) Now, in these days, should his disciples fast. Not that in these words Christ doth give an institution for fasting, but declares what eventually would come to pass.

Neither doth he determine any particular days and time for fasting ; but only in general, during the absence of the Bridegroom, they should fast in those days. And indeed, as soon as the Bridegroom was gone, they began to have cause of mourning : his absence itself was one great cause, as, when he foretold them of it, "sorrow filled their heart." And so upon several other causes of sadness that should fall-out afterwards, there would be great occasion of fasting and mourning till his coming again.

Thus much for explication. And because my subject is about fasting, I shall not consider Christ in the relation of a bridegroom, as he is here styled, of which might be made a long discourse, which would rather lead me to speak of Christian festivals and spiritual joy, than a religious fast, which is the subject I must attend unto.

Neither need I make any logical division of the text ; but, instead thereof, shall propose these three observations :—

OBSERVATION I. *There are some times that are more particular seasons for fasting.*

OBSERV. II. *That Christians ought wisely to observe what is the proper duty of the times, and especially when they are called to the great duty of a fast.*

OBSERV. III. *That fasting is a duty to be practised in the days of the New Testament, even all the time of the Bridegroom's absence. So that it is not a duty that was peculiar to the times of the Old Testament and the Mosaic pedagogy, but is to be practised in the gospel-times.*

The last I shall only insist upon, and touch upon the other in the handling of it ; wherein I shall take notice, that fasting may be considered either as, 1. Merely natural. 2. Civil. 3. Religious.

1. *As merely natural.*—Which is only an abstinence from food ; as the Greek word *νηστεια*, "a fast," grammatically imports no more but "a not eating ;" which may arise sometimes from necessity and want of food ; as when the people followed Christ in the wilderness, and continued three days there, and had nothing to eat ; and hereupon Christ wrought a miracle to feed them, because he would "not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way." (Matt. xv. 32.) So when Paul was in his voyage to Rome, for want of provision he and his company fasted fourteen days. (Acts xxvii. 33.) Or else this natural fast is through want of appetite, though food is present. There may be an atrophy upon nature, and man fasts only because he cannot eat. Now this fasting is of no avail with

God. If a man eats not, he is nothing the better; and if he eats, he is no whit the worse. Bodily exercise profiteth nothing of itself. As—"the kingdom of God is not meat and drink," so neither is it abstinence from meats and drinks, especially such abstinence as this that is not voluntary, but upon necessity.

2. *Civil*.—When there is a fasting upon a civil account, with respect to some civil end. As when the magistrate doth impose abstinence from meats for a while for some civil good: as Saul imposed it upon the people in his pursuit of the Philistines, that his victory might not be hindered. (1 Sam. xiv. 24.) And such fasting sometimes may be imposed for the increase of provision, and for the public health.

3. *Religious*.—When fasting is attended with duties of religion, and is to some religious end. For the end doth in such things as these specify and denominate the action. And, to give a particular account of it, take it thus:—

A religious fast is the devotion of the whole man to a solemn, extraordinary attendance upon God, in a particular time separated for that end, for the deprecating [of] his displeasure, and for the supplicating of his favour, joined with an abstinence from bodily food, and other bodily delights, and from secular affairs. So that he that fasteth doth for that time separate himself to God, and doth voluntarily dedicate a part of time to his more solemn service; and doth put himself, as it were, under a religious vow, to abide solemnly with God in the duties of the fast he is engaged in.

Now this religious fast is either public or private:—

1. *Public*.—As when a whole city fasts, as in the case of Nineveh; or a whole nation, as in Jehoshaphat's case, who "proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah." (2 Chron. xx. 3.) And the prophet Joel calls to such a fast: "Sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the Lord," &c. (Joel i. 14.) When the occasion is public, so ought the fast to be.

2. *Private*.—Which is, (1.) *Either of a particular person*; of which Christ speaks, Matt. vi. 17, 18: "But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." And of this private fast, Anna is an instance, of whom it is said, that "she served God in the temple with fastings and prayers night and day." (Luke ii. 37.) And Daniel another, who tells us, in three whole weeks he "was mourning, ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth." (Dan. x. 2, 3.) And Cornelius is another. (Acts x. 30.) And the occasion for private fasting is more peculiarly some private concerns, unless the person that fasts be a public person, and then a private personal fasting may be upon a public account, as Daniel's was. (2.) *Or of a particular family*; which the apostle seems to speak of, 1 Cor. vii. 5; where husband and wife, being of the same family, are advised by the apostle not to defraud one another, but "by consent for a time to give themselves to fasting and prayer." And when the prophet Zachary speaks of families mourning apart, (Zech. xii. 12--14,) it may probably be meant of fasting joined with mourning: and though the word "family" may be understood patronymically, and

extend further than to a particular house, yet it may by analogy be applied to particular houses and the inhabitants therein.

Again: a religious fast is either stated or occasional:—

1. *Stated*.—As the fast of the seventh month and the tenth day of the month was a stated fast to Israel every year; and the fasts the Jews observed in Babylon of the fourth, fifth, seventh, tenth month, mentioned, Zech. viii. 19, were stated fasts; and the Pharisee in the gospel boasted of his stated fasting: “I fast twice in the week.” (Luke xviii. 12.) Against which stated fasts I have nothing to speak, or to censure any men’s practice herein, if the occasion still continues, and it do not degenerate into formality.

2. *Occasional*.—Of which we have frequent instances; as the fast observed by Esther and her maidens, and the Jews in Shushan, was occasional. And so that which I mentioned of Jehoshaphat was occasional. And the fast in Nehemiah’s time, mentioned, Neh. ix. 1, was occasional. These fasts did not pass into any stated course of observation.

Having premised these distinctions, I shall discourse of this religious fast,—

I. *In the sanction of it.*

II. *The manner of observation.*

III. *The occasion that requires and calls for it.*

IV. *The concern that abstinence from food hath in the right observation of it.*

V. *The abuse of the ordinance in the wrong managing of it.*

I. *First. For the sanction of it.*

1. *It seems partly to be dictated by the light of nature*.—For the Heathen observed it, especially when any sore calamity was either felt or feared by them. As in the case of Nineveh, when Jonah denounced destruction to the city, they presently betook themselves to fasting, both king, nobles, and people; yea, the very beasts must be concerned in it. (Jonah iii. 7, 8.) So, when they would make their prayers more prevalent, in such cases they would join fasting with their prayers. As Baal’s priests, when they cried to their God Baal to hear them, the text saith, “They cried” all day “until the evening sacrifice.” (1 Kings xviii. 18, 19.) So that they did not only pray, but fast also. As they used lustrations, sacrifices, festivals, in their religious rites and worship of their gods; so sometimes they had their *jejunia* and religious “fasts;” (as we have some account of this in Tertullian, in his book *adversus Psychicos*;) by which they thought to make some satisfaction for their sin, and to reconcile to themselves the deity they had offended, or to obtain some special favour they had need of.

2. *It is a duty by institution, and that both in the Old and New Testament*.—The fast of the seventh month was by direct institution in the Old Testament. And at other times God called them to it: “Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly,” said the prophet Joel. (Joel i. 14.) And God is said to “choose” it: “Is not this the fast that I have chosen?” (Isai. lviii. 6.) And God’s declaring there in that chapter the right way of observing it, doth prove the duty itself to be of his own appointment. And the New Testament requires it also; for the duty is

of a moral nature, and therefore the obligation of it remains, only with this difference :—

(1.) *We are not to use those rites and outward expressions of sorrow that were practised in those times.*—Which belonged to the rigour of that legal ministration. As rending the garment, (Joel ii. 13,) putting on of sackcloth, (Neh. ix. 1,) covering with ashes, (Dan. ix. 3,) bowing down the head, (Isai. lviii. 5,) putting earth upon their head, (Neh. ix. 1,) and sometimes putting-off their sandals or shoes, and plucking-off the hair, (Ezra ix. 3,) and making themselves bald. (Isai. xxii. 12.) And the Pharisees used disfiguring of their faces. But, saith Christ to his disciples, “When thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face;” (Matt. vi. 16;) which in their fasting the Jews should forbear, though used at other times; as appears by Daniel’s fasting: “I ate no pleasant bread, neither did I anoint myself at all.” (Dan. x. 3.) “But,” saith Christ, “do not ye do so; but anoint thy head, and wash thy face, &c., and so use not such visible signs of sorrow, that thou mayest not appear to men to fast.”

(2.) *We ought not to fast with that legal frame of spirit which was upon the Jews in those days.*—For every duty in the days of the New Testament is to be managed with a spirit suiting the gospel ministration.

3. As to its sanction, there may be also the addition of *human authority in the appointing of fasts.*—Especially public fasts, when the public state of affairs may require it; the duty in general being of God’s institution, and the voice of providence calling people to it, the magistrate in this case may determine the time, if it be general to a nation; or the pastors and guides of the church, with respect to the several churches over which they preside. For where a duty is required of God, and the circumstance of time not determined, there Christian prudence in magistrates or churches is to be the rule for determination; as the particular times for baptism and the Lord’s supper are left to Christian prudence to determine.

II. *The manner how a religious fast is to be observed.*—And that both with respect to the outward and inward man.

1. *With respect to the outward man.*

(1.) *Abstinence from food* is requisite and necessary so far as may consist with mercy to the body. For the very name of a fast implies this abstinence; and not only the Jews, but the very Heathen, in their fasts did enjoin this abstinence upon themselves and others, as appears by that of Nineveh. (Jonah iii. 7.) And if some cannot bear a total abstinence, some coarser food may be used; as in Tertullian’s time they had their *xerophagiæ*, so called from a “dry kind of food” used by them.*

(2.) As also *meaner apparel* than what may be used at other times; though not to put on sackcloth, yet to lay aside ornaments and richer dresses upon such a day. When the Israelites would express their sorrow for the sad tidings of God’s refusing to go before them, it is said, they laid aside their ornaments. (Exod. xxxiii. 4.) Though they had a command for it, yet nature itself did teach it them; as it did the king of Nineveh, who laid aside his robe when he fasted and mourned. (Jonah

* TERTULLIANUS *De Jejunii adversus Psychicos.*

iii. 6.) Purple and scarlet and shining apparel are not suitable to such a duty, nature itself being judge.

*Non est conveniens luctibus ille color.**—OVIDII *Tristium* lib. i. eleg. i. 6.

And verily those gay and gaudy dresses which multitudes garb themselves with at this day, are no whit suitable to the sad times upon which God hath cast us.

(3.) Yea, and *humble gestures* also, which may best express a solemn, serious mind. Though no particular gesture is absolutely commanded, yet nothing ought to be discovered either in the countenance or any actions and gestures of the body that may be unsuitable to the nature of the day and the solemn duties thereof; wherein partly the light of nature and the custom of the place may direct and regulate us.

The Jews had three sorts of gestures that were used in worship:—

(i.) The one was bowing the head, called, קָדַד

(ii.) The other was bending the knee, called, כָּרַע

(iii.) The third was prostration of the body, called, הִשְׁתַּחוּוּת

But where there is no particular gesture determined, there Christians are left to their liberty; only it is to be guided by a due respect to the greatest advantage of the duty, and with caution against any just offence.

(4.) *Abstinence from secular affairs* is requisite; for a fast is a solemn devoting a certain part of time to God, and to an extraordinary attendance upon him. And if meats and drinks are to be forborne for to give advantage to the duties of the day, so also bodily labours and secular business upon the same account. The Jewish fasts were reckoned among their sabbaths, and so they were days of rest from bodily labours.

And there was a severe punishment to be inflicted upon the men that did any work upon their solemn fasts of the tenth day of the seventh month; as we read, Lev. xxiii. 30: "The same soul will I destroy from among his people." Though the rigour of that legal ministration is abated under the gospel, yet it holds still in the moral and equitable part of it,—that whatever may hinder the managing of any duty in that manner that is suitable and necessary thereunto ought to be laid aside. But,

(5.) To these I shall here add *the external duties of religion*, and sacred ordinances, to be used in the discharge of the work of the day.

The first is *confession of sin*.—A fast day is for atonement, and therefore confession of sin is necessary. As we read of Ezra, when he heard of the sin of the Jews in their making affinity with the people of the land, he "rent his garment, and sat astonied until the evening sacrifice," and made confession of their sin. (Ezra ix. 3—6.) So in Neh. ix. 1, 2, we read, "The children of Israel were assembled with fasting. And they stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers." And so Daniel, in his solemn fast, which he set himself to in the behalf of the captivity now almost expired, he makes an ample confession of sin, as we read, Dan. ix. 4—11. And as a fast is an extraordinary duty, so confession of sin ought to be more than ordinary in such a day;

* "Gay purple garments ill beseeem
A mind oppress'd with grief extreme."—EDIT.

and what may suffice at another time, may not be sufficient then. It ought to be more extensive with respect to the several kinds and acts of sin, with respect to the aggravations of sin, and with respect to the persons that are under guilt, and with respect to the inward principles of sin in the heart, out of which all actual sins do spring: as Daniel's confession of sin extended to the kinds of it, the several aggravations of it, and to the persons that were concerned in it, as their kings, princes, fathers, people of the land, those "that were near," and those "that were afar off," as we find in that chapter. And this confession of sin is requisite to the deeper humiliation of the soul, to the condemnation of ourselves, and to the justifying of God, whereby he may have the greater glory.

The second is *supplication*.—Which is the imploring mercy from God, either with respect to the pardon of sin committed, or the preventing those judgments that are impending, or the removing such as are inflicted. As we find, Daniel in the time of his fasting, after his confession, made earnest supplications for "forgivenesses" of sin, for the turning away God's anger and fury, for the shining of his face upon his sanctuary, for the repairing the desolations of their city called by his name, and for the people in general. (Dan. ix. 9, 16—18.) And therefore "fasting and prayer" are frequently mentioned together in scripture. (Luke ii. 37; Acts x. 30; xiv. 23; 1 Cor. vii. 5.) Though prayer in general comprehends confession and thanksgiving in it, as well as supplication; yet, in a stricter acceptation, "petition for mercy" doth most properly express the import of the word, and the main matter of the duty. And this the king of Nineveh enjoined in the fast appointed by him: "Let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God." (Jonah iii. 8.) So that supplication and crying to God is another great part of the duty of the day.

The third is *hearing the word*.—For the word is necessary both for the discovery of sin for our present humiliation, and for the discovery of our duty with respect to future reformation; both which are necessary to an acceptable fast. And the word of the gospel sets before men a door of hope, that their sin may be pardoned, and judgment removed. It presents God not only as reconcilable, but delighting in mercy; it sets before men many instances of God's hearing prayer, and the prevalence of repentance and humiliation with him, and particularly what acceptance solemn fasting hath found with him in several ages. And all this mightily tends to the furthering the great duties of the day. And it is observed of the fast kept by the children of Israel, that "they read in the book of the law of the Lord their God one-fourth part of the day; and another fourth part they confessed, and worshipped the Lord their God." (Neh. ix. 3.) If repentance, spiritual mourning, and soul-humiliation, be necessary to the day, as I shall show presently, then the hearing the word may be of great use thereunto. As when Josiah heard the words of the law, he rent his clothes, and humbled himself; (2 Chron. xxxiv. 27;) and Ahab, upon the like occasion, humbled himself, though not in the like manner; and we read how God appointed Jeremiah, and Jeremiah Baruch, to read the roll that was written from the mouth of God, "in the ears of the people upon the fasting-day."

(Jer. xxxvi. 1—6.) And what was the cause of Nineveh's repentance and humiliation? was it not Jonah's preaching? As our Saviour speaks of it: "They repented at the preaching of Jonas;" (Matt. xii. 41;) though his preaching was only this, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed." The word is effectual through Christ to bring the impenitent to repentance, and to renew the exercise of repentance in those that have already repented; which is a proper work for a fast-day.

The fourth is *renewing our covenant with God*.—Which in private fasts is to be done betwixt God and a man's own soul; and in public fasts by the mouth of the preacher, and the people's consent thereunto. And this covenant is either the general covenant that we renew; or else a particular covenant, with respect to some particular duties that we engage ourselves unto; or else both together. As in the public fast observed by the children of Israel in Neh. ix., both princes and nobles and people renewed their general covenant to walk in God's law, which was given by Moses the servant of the Lord; and particularly they covenanted not to give their daughters to the people of the land, nor take their daughters for their sons, as we read, Neh. x. 29, 30; and the covenant being written, their princes, Levites, and priests did seal to it: so if a church or people have contracted guilt upon themselves by the omitting of some duties, or the committing of any sins, for which the Lord may have a controversy with them, it is a proper work upon a day of fasting to engage themselves to a reformation by a solemn renewing their covenant with God. And though we have not a particular instance of this in the New Testament, yet the law of faith that requires men now to take hold of God's covenant, and in all cases to make use of it, so in some special cases [requires them] to renew it also; not that it needs renewing as to the substance or sanction of it on God's part, but we are on our part to renew it with God, by laying new engagements and obligations upon ourselves to carry it in all things according to the law of this covenant, in the re-stipulating part of it.

Fifthly. The next duty of the day is *thanksgiving*.—Though this seems not the proper duty of the day, yet is [it] not to be omitted; for the due consideration of God's mercy tends to the aggravation of sin, and so to make men's confessions and humiliations more affectionate and evangelical. As in that fast I mentioned before, (Neh. ix.,) the Levites did stand up among the people, and begin the day with blessing God: "Blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise." (Verse 5.) And so they proceed to recite a catalogue of God's mercies, even from the first call of Abraham, to their settlement in the land of Canaan, which reacheth to verse 25. And all this was to bring in the "nevertheless," mentioned verse 26, with the greater emphasis to their humiliation: "Nevertheless they were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and cast thy law behind their backs, and slew thy prophets," &c. And the same we may observe in Ezra ix. He takes notice of the "reviving" God had given them in their bondage, and the "nail in his holy place," and the "wall in Judah and Jerusalem," (verses 8, 9,) the more to aggravate the people's sin in doing according to the abominations of the Canaanites, and mingling themselves with the people of

the land. (Verses 1, 2.) The goodness of God is said to lead men to repentance; (Rom. ii. 4;) and therefore mention is to be made of it upon a day when the exercise of repentance is specially in season.

Yea, thanksgiving also is requisite as an attendant of supplication; for the giving thanks for mercy received is an effectual way to obtain new mercy: according to that known saying, *Efficacissimum genus rogandi est gratias agere*: "Giving thanks for mercy received, is the most effectual way to obtain new mercy." Thanksgiving carries supplication in the spirit of it. And if, according to the apostle, "we are in every thing to make known our request with supplication and thanksgiving;" (Phil. iv. 6;) then, whenever we come to God with supplications, we are to couple them with thanksgiving.

Sixthly. The last duty I mention, which is the appendix to the rest, is that of *alms-deeds*.—For, when we come to beg mercy from God, we should not forget to show it to men. And he that "stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor," he may cry, "but shall not be heard;" (Prov. xxi. 13;) yea, his prayers are so far from coming-up as incense before God, that they are an abomination. Cornelius, that was a man much in prayer and fasting also, (as is noted of him, Acts x. 30,) was full also of alms-deeds; and both together came up as a memorial before God. (Verse 31.) Alms-deeds, as they are not to be confined to a fast-day, so surely are not to be excluded. He that will on such a day shut-up his purse, let him take heed lest God shut-up against him his ear, his heart, and his hand. The people complain, Isai. lviii. 3: "Wherefore have we fasted, and thou seest not?" God tells them, they fasted, but showed not mercy; and therefore fasted not aright: and then tells them what was the fast that he had chosen: "Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry? and when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him?" (Isai. lviii. 7.) Certainly those duties that ought to follow our fasting, or else it avails nothing with God, ought not to be shut out of the duties of such a day, if there be call and opportunity thereunto.

Thus I have shown the duties of a fast-day which are *external*, with respect to the outward performance.

2. And next I shall show *what frame of spirit is requisite to such a day*.—Without which all these duties may be externally performed, and yet the fast not accepted. For as the apostle saith of circumcision, it "is that of the heart, in the spirit;" (Rom. ii. 29;) so is that fasting that is well pleasing to God. There may be confession, supplication, renewing the covenant, thanksgiving, alms-deeds; and yet if there be wanting a suitable frame of heart, all this may be but as a body without the soul, or matter without form, that may have praise with men, but none with God.

Now this frame of soul consists in, First. *Self-debasement*. Secondly. *Godly sorrow*. Thirdly. *Filial fear*. Fourthly. *Ingenuous shame*. Fifthly. *Inward purity*. Sixthly. *Evangelical faith and hope*.

I shall speak briefly to them all.

The first is *self-debasement*.—God complains of the Jews' fasting: they did hang down their heads like a bulrush, (Isai. lviii. 5,) but their souls did not bow down within them. We call a fast-day a "day of humiliation;" but we have the name, but not the thing, if the soul be not

humbled. What is it for the body to wear sackcloth, if pride cover the heart? or to spread ashes under us, if the soul lie not down in the dust? or to fast from bodily food, if the soul be not emptied of selffulness.

The second is *godly sorrow*.—A fast-day is for afflicting the soul; and how is the soul afflicted without true sorrow? The Hebrew word *עניתי* that signifies a fast, is derived from a root that signifies to afflict; so essential is the afflicting the soul to the day. It was a charge against the Jews: "Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure." (Isai. lviii. 2.) What kind of pleasure it was is not there mentioned; but it was some sinful pleasure that was not congruous to the day. Daniel speaks of his fast, "I was mourning three full weeks." (Daniel x. 2.) As at our funerals many enter the house of mourning and wear black, but there is no mourning within, nor no garment of heaviness covers their soul; so do many enter the day and duty of fasting, but no godly sorrow enters with them into it, or attends them in it. "Every thing" is "beautiful in its season:" (Eccles. iii. 11:) a fast-day wants its beauty, if no true sorrow attends it. We make confession of sin; but if there be no sorrow, we feel not what is spoken; and what will words of confession avail? Ephraim is said to "bemoan himself;" (Jer. xxxi. 18;) and God is said to hear it, and he bemoaned him also. But how can we think God's heart should be affected with our confessions, when our own are not? The Jews upon their solemn days had their solemn sacrifices. A fast-day is a solemn day, and it is not to be without its sacrifices; and the great sacrifice or sacrifices of the day, is "a broken and a contrite" spirit. (Psalm li. 17.)

The third is *filial fear*.—Natural fear hath sometimes brought a people to the duty, and a filial fear is to be exercised in the performance of it; as Jehoshaphat "feared," and then "proclaimed a fast;" (2 Chron. xx. 3;) and so did the king of Nineveh. (Jonah iii. 6, 7.) When God's judgments are abroad, we ought to fear, and this fear should lead us to meet him in the ways of his judgment by prayer and fasting; for all our serving God is to be coupled "with fear;" our rejoicing is to be "with trembling," (Psalm ii. 11,) much more our mourning. In a fast-day we especially deprecate God's wrath, and therefore we ought to have such a sense of it, as may cause sacred fear. There is no affection of the soul but ought to be sanctified to the service and honour of God; and so fear among the rest, and [it] is then to be exercised when we draw nigh to God, especially in the solemn duties of a fast.

The fourth is *ingenuous shame*.—Sin is in itself a shameful thing; and therefore, when it is confessed upon a solemn day, it ought to be with shame. As Ezra, hearing of the sin of Israel after their return from their captivity, he "sate astonished until the evening;" and then riseth up, and reads the mantle, and speaks to God: "O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face unto thee." (Ezra ix. 4—6.) And, "To us belongeth confusion of face," said Daniel in his fasting. (Dan. ix. 8.) Two things cause shame: one is, to act contrary to our own reason; and the other is, to act unsuitably to another's kindness. The one is absurd, and the other is disingenuous, and both may cause shame. And there are both these in sin, especially when committed with allowance; for

right reason doth condemn it, and it is a high violation of the law of kindness, to return evil where we receive all our good.

The fifth is *inward purity*.—By which I mean not a total freedom from sin, but a freedom from a corrupt end, and the secret allowance of sin, in our fasting. Either of these will spoil the fast.

(1.) *A corrupt end*.—As the Pharisees, who fasted to appear religious before men; and the Jews in Babylon, who fasted; but, “Did ye at all fast unto me, even to me?” saith the Lord. (Zech. vii. 5.) Their end was not right.

(2.) *A secret allowance of sin*.—This made the Jews’ fasting of no avail with God: “They have loved to wander.” There is their allowance of sin. “When they fast, I will not hear their cry.” (Jer. xiv. 10, 12.) There their fast turns to no account. It is said of Ahab, “He rent his clothes, put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted.” (1 Kings xxi. 27.) But still he kept fast his sin, and so [was] not accepted. As when the Jews came to inquire of God, Ezek. xiv. 7, God tells them, he will not be inquired of by them; and why? Because they “set up idols in their heart.” So if men come to God by fasting and prayer, and have in their hearts an allowance of sin, which God the searcher of hearts can know, they bring an idol along with them in their hearts, and their prayer and fasting are rejected of him. David well knew this, when he saith, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.” [Psalm lxi. 18.] Though men, while they are fasting and praying, are not visibly acting sin, yet God seeth the aspect of the soul; if that be looking towards sin with pleasure and delight, as that Hebrew word *חַיָּתָה* there imports, the prayer is rejected. Or if we read the words as the French translation, I think more properly, renders them: *Si j’eusse pensé quelque malice, &c.*: “If I had regarded some wickedness in my heart, God would not have heard my prayer;” the sense is the same to my present purpose.

The sixth is *evangelical faith and hope in God*.—All our confessions, and humiliations, and supplications ought to be joined with faith in Christ, and hope in God’s mercies, or else they want the great ingredients of their acceptableness with God. As in Ezra’s fast, Shechaniah stands up and saith to him, “We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land: yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing.” (Ezra x. 2.) “To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses,” said Daniel, in his fasting. (Dan. ix. 9.) God’s mercy and Christ’s merits should bear-up our faith and hope, while our sin is casting us down with sorrow. As Samuel endeavoured to bring the people first to a sense of their sin in their choosing a king, and then bears-up their faith and hope by telling them, “The Lord will not forsake his people for his great name’s sake.” (1 Sam. xii. 22.) And David, while he was confessing his sins of adultery and murder, yet styleth God the “God of his salvation;” (Psalm li. 14;) and while he was applying to God “out of the depths,” as he speaks, and making his supplication, yet he joins therewith faith and hope in God’s mercy: “But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.” (Psalm cxxx. 1—4.) All our duties, even our fasting and humiliations, ought to be performed evangelically, which

cannot be, except faith and hope do accompany the performance of them.

III. I next proceed to speak of *the special occasions that call us to this religious fast.*

The first is *the affliction and distress of the church.*—When the Jews were in great distress, then Esther appointed Mordecai and the Jews to fast. (Esther iv. 16.) When the Ammonites and Moabites invaded Judah with a great army, then “Jehoshaphat proclaimed a fast.” (2 Chron. xx. 3.) When a great famine was upon the land of Israel, then said the prophet Joel, “Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly.” (Joel i. 14.) And when the Jews were in Babylon, then they kept their fast of the fourth, fifth, seventh, and tenth month, all the time of their captivity, though the several months had respect to some particular calamities that befell them in those months. Sympathy and sorrow are naturally expressed by fasting; and are spiritually to be expressed with respect to the church’s distress by a religious fasting.

The second is *upon the occasion of extraordinary sin.*—If in a particular family, it may be a just occasion for a fast in the family; if in a particular church, or in a nation, it may be an occasion of a more public fast: as the fast of Ezra and of Nehemiah was upon the occasion of the sin of Israel in making marriages with the people of the land. (Ezra ix; Neh. ix.) And “Hezekiah rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the Lord,” upon the occasion of Rabshakeh’s reproaching and blaspheming God, as well as the distress that was upon himself and the people by Sennacherib’s invasion, as we read, Isai. xxxvii. 1. We should mourn over the dishonour done to God, as well as any distress and trouble that may come upon ourselves: and we read of “the congregation of Israel weeping before the door of the tabernacle,” upon the account of the whoredom committed by many of them with the daughters of Moab, and “bowing down to their gods.” (Num. xxv. 2, 6.)

Thirdly. *For the obtaining some eminent mercy, or for success in any great undertakings and enterprises.*—As Esther before she went in to the king to beg for the lives of her people,—she required her maidens, Mordecai, and the Jews to fast. (Esther iv. 16.) And Ezra proclaimed a fast to seek a right way from God, for themselves, their little ones, and all their substance, when they were coming out of the captivity to settle in their own land. (Ezra viii. 21.) When Paul and Barnabas were sent forth to their more public ministry, certain prophets “fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, and sent them away.” (Acts xiii. 3.) And when they ordained elders for the churches, “they commended them to the Lord” with prayer and fasting. (Acts xiv. 23.)

Fourthly. *For conquest over some eminent temptation.*—This may be the occasion of a private fast, when a private person lies under it; or of a more public fast, if the temptation reacheth further: as Christ speaks of some kind of devils that are not cast-out but by fasting and prayer; and the rule may reach to soul-temptations, as well as bodily possessions, whereof our Saviour there speaks. But I hasten.

IV. I shall next speak of *the concern that abstinence from food hath in the duties of a fast.*

1. *That hereby the soul may be more fit for its operations.*—The

pampering and feeding the body is usually injurious to the free exercise of the soul. And therefore the chastening it with due fasting may befriending the soul therein, especially in such exercises wherein the soul is to have least communion with the body.* As the body ought not to be robbed, for the serving of God, of that which is necessary for it, (for God hates robbery for sacrifice,) so, by undue providing for it, we may rob the soul, and rob God of that service which it ought to perform unto him. The body is called by philosophers *το αλογον*, or *bruta pars hominis*, "the brute part of man." And a brute is not so fit for man's service, if he be kept either at too high or too low a rate. *Nec supra negotium, nec infra negotium, sed par negotio*, † is a good rule for the body to be treated by; and, as Aquinas speaks, abstinence from food upon a solemn fast is requisite, *ob elevationem mentis*, "for the elevation of the mind," that it may get loose from the sensitive part, and so more freely ascend to things above: as the apostle kept his body in subjection, that he might with more freedom run the race to obtain the crown that is incorruptible. (1 Cor. ix. 25—27.) Severity to the body may in some cases be mercy to the soul: as David "chastened" his "soul with fasting." (Psalm lxix. 10.) It was its sensitive part he immediately chastened, that the rational and intellectual part might be more vigorous and active.

2. In this bodily abstinence there is *something of a self-judging* in it.—For by abstaining for a while we judge ourselves unworthy of returning to such refreshings and comforts of nature at all. We are, by abstaining from food, to reckon ourselves unworthy of it.

3. By it we also express *our sympathy with the church's sufferings*.—I mean in those fasts that are kept upon that account. And nature seems to teach men this: as, when David would have had Uriah go to his own house when he was come from the camp, he answered, "The ark, and Israel, and Judah, are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into my house, to eat and to drink?" &c. (2 Sam. xi. 11.) As by eating and drinking we express our gladness, so by abstaining we properly express our sorrow and sympathy with others' suffering. Whilst David's child lay sick, he fasted and would eat nothing; but when the child was dead, he then would declare his shaking-off his sorrow by calling for food and eating. (2 Sam. xii. 20.)

V. Lastly, I shall speak of *the abuse of a religious fast*.—And this great ordinance is several ways abused.

1. *There is a pharisaical abuse of it by ostentation*.—When men fast to put-on a disguise of extraordinary devotion and sanctity, as the Pharisees did thus; and by disfiguring their faces and counterfeiting a solemn and dejected countenance, and by mortified habits, &c., did seek to gain the reputation of extraordinary holiness among the people: as the Pharisee in the parable among other things boasted of his often fasting: "I fast twice in the week." Strict piety hath such a real value

* *Jejunium purgat mentem, sublevat sensum, carnem spiritui subjicit, concupiscentie nebulas dispergit*; as AUSTIN speaks of it, tom. x. serm. 230. *De Tempore*. "Fasting purifies the mind, elevates the understanding, subjects the flesh to the spirit, and disperses the clouds of lawless lust."—EDIT.

† "An animal ought to receive sustenance in such just proportions as will neither raise it above its labour, nor depress it below it, but will render it equal to the performance."—EDIT.

in it, that some that have it not, yet will pretend to it, as thinking to advance their reputation by it.

2. *There is a mischievous abuse of it, if I may so express it.*—When men's hearts are full of malice, mischief, and cruelty, and will hide it under the disguise of a religious fast. As Jezebel when she was designing against Naboth's vineyard, and life also, she proclaims a fast; (1 Kings xxi. 9;) and those Jews that are reprov'd, Isai. lviii. 1—7, they fasted and fasted, but it was "for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness." They oppress'd the poor, laid heavy yokes upon their necks, and ruin'd them by their cruelties, and yet were very zealous fasters; as our Saviour speaks of the Pharisees, who made "long prayers for a pretence," while they were "devouring widows' houses." (Matt. xxiii. 14.)

3. *There is a formal abuse of it.*—When men have not such sinful ends as I mentioned, but yet rest in the externals of the day, and care not to reach the spiritual part of the duty. They go along with the several duties of the day; but *deest aliquid intus*, "there is that wanting within" that is the proper work of the day. They sit before God as his people, as if they were humbling themselves before him, but there is nothing in their hearts that answers before God to the outward show they make before men. Religious duties, according to scripture-language, are not done, if not done aright: so that as the apostle tells the Corinthians, "This is not to eat the Lord's supper," (1 Cor. xi. 20,) because they did not eat aright; so, when men are formal in fasting, this is not keeping a fast.

4. *There is a Popish abuse of it.*—

(1.) *By groundless fasting.*—As on the vespers of their saints' days, and their Quadragesimas, fasting the holy time of Lent, in imitation of Christ's fasting in the wilderness, which was miraculous, and so not imitable.

(2.) *By making fasting meritorious, and that which is part of satisfactory penance for the expiation of sin.*—As Aquinas speaks expressly, "Fasting is to be used" *ad satisfaciendum pro peccatis*, "to make satisfaction for sin."*

(3.) *By their prohibition of certain meats, which God hath "commanded to be received with thanksgiving,"* and yet allowing others in their room, which are as inconsistent with the abstinence of a true fast as those that their church prohibits; but yet they have the salvo of a dispensation in such cases; and if men will open their purses, they may gratify their palates. †

5. *Lastly. Fasting may be abused by too frequent use, especially public fasts.*—It is an extraordinary duty, and therefore not to be practis'd upon ordinary occasions. The too ordinary use of it may take-off from the reverence and solemnity of the duty. We find [that] the several public fasts upon record in scripture were taken-up upon some eminent occasions. And, besides, it may make religion burdensome; and weak converts may be discouraged that are already brought-in, and those that

* AQUINAS, *Secunda Secundæ*, quest. 147, art. 1. † They forbid *carnes, ova, et lactinia*; ["flesh, eggs, and white-meats prepared with milk;"] but all sorts of fish, and other viands, and junkets, are allowed.—AQUINAS, *Secunda Secundæ*, quest. 148, art. 8.

are without may be prejudiced and hindered. We should not make Christ's yoke heavier than he would have it. Christ did not impose the rigour of the legal ministration upon his disciples, nor the burdensome traditions of the Pharisees; nor did himself practise the austerity used by John the Baptist, nor imposed it upon his disciples.

Thus I have run through the five particulars I proposed to discourse this subject in. And upon the whole shall make some practical use.

USES.

USE I. *It reproves such who, instead of prayer and fasting when required of them, give-up themselves to all excess of riot.*—Who make their belly their god, so far they are from denying it for the service of God; who practise as it was said of Israel in case of the golden calf, "The people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play;" [Exod. xxxii. 6;] and say according to this licentious proverb, quoted by the apostle out of Isaiah xxii. 13, "Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die." [1 Cor. xv. 32.] Though God be visiting the world with his judgments, dashing the nations, like potters' vessels, one against another; yet they care for none of these things; they are loath so far to own God as to fast and pray under his rebukes, and their spirits are too high to stoop to the humbling duties of such a day. Because fasting and praying have been abused, it may be, by some in hypocrisy, they are glad of that excuse to lay it quite aside. The book of Ecclesiastes they value above all scripture, because of two or three verses they find therein, that they can interpret to gratify a sensual life. Chap. ii. 24: "There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour." And to the same purpose in chap. iii. 13, and v. 18, 19. But they should consider that Solomon only speaks of the good of man with respect to this life, and the end that God giveth man the good things of this life for, which is, to use them for the outward comfort of his life; which he speaks of in opposition to such "to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour," yet hath not given "him power to eat thereof." (Eccles. vi. 2.) Sure there is a medium betwixt sordid sparing, and luxurious spending; betwixt using meats and drinks to the due comfort of nature, and the abusing them to the great injury of the soul. And though due feasting is lawful, yet still with respect to the proper season, and not to be "slaying oxen, and killing sheep, and drinking wine" in bowls, when God calls to fasting, "and baldness, and girding-on of sackcloth," as the prophet complains. (Isai. xxii. 12, 13.) And who can reckon the manifold evils that arise from this sensual course of life? The Schoolmen, speaking of the sin of gluttony, assign to it five daughters: *Inepta lætitia, scurrilitas, immunditia, multiloquium, and hebetudo mentis circa intelligentiam*; that is, "Foolish mirth, scurrility, uncleanness, talkativeness, and dulness of mind." And Solomon gives an account of the offspring of sensual and inordinate drinking, Prov. xxiii. 29, 30: "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine," &c. And as men are hereby injurious

to themselves, not only as Christians, but as men, so they walk contrary to God in the present course of his providence among us.

USE II. We may hence take notice, that *God sometimes calls us to extraordinary duties, as this of fasting is; and in such cases we are not to satisfy ourselves with ordinary.*—Christians should, like those men of Issachar, [Gen. xlix. 15.] be wise in discerning the times, and the proper duties that belong to them. Christ would not have his disciples fast while he was with them; but when he was departed, the duty would come in season. So that if we meet with matter of sorrow and mourning, let us not be discouraged or offended; it will be so until the bridegroom's return.

Now, therefore, let us take a view of the present face of the times, and consider whether this extraordinary duty of fasting be not *now* in season. If we consider the several occasions which call for this duty, are they not all found at this day amongst us?

1. *Is the abounding of sin an occasion?*—Pray consider, whether wickedness is not grown up to a greater height and impudence than in former ages in this nation? What shameful and yet shameless whoredom and drunkenness are among us, and oaths that our fathers knew not! How many of these fools have we amongst us, whom Solomon speaks of, that “make a mock at sin,” (Prov. xiv. 9.) and mock at religion as fanaticism, deny Providence, and dispute against a Deity! [So] that now it becomes necessary with respect to many, instead of leading them to the higher points of religion, to convince their reasons of the being of God, and to awake the innate notices of a Deity in their hearts, which are even extinguished by a course of sin. What endeavours are used by many to debauch men into wickedness, and then to glory in what they have done! And, the more to take-off the scandal of sin, they seek to propagate it and make it common, and, if it was possible, to make piety scandalous, and wickedness noble and honourable.

Now, ought there not to be fasting and mourning, when religion is thus despised, the great God dishonoured, and his laws made void? Was not this practised by David? who said, “Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law.” (Psalm cxix. 136.) What we cannot reform, let us mourn over; and mourn the rather, because those that can and ought to do it, so little concern themselves in it.

And hath not the temptation of the times overtaken many that have formerly made great profession, and drawn them to many unworthy compliances for secular advantages; who have thereby laid-up matter to themselves for future repentance and sorrow, and are become to others objects of sorrow also? as the apostle blames the Corinthians about the incestuous person, Why “have ye not rather mourned?” (1 Cor. v. 2.) And was it not to have been wished that all that fear God in the nation should have been better united by this time both in principles and practice, that we might no longer defame and persecute one another until the net be thrown over us all, and it be then too late to relieve ourselves, though not to repent? When many are at work to let-in Popery as a torrent upon us, we should surely endeavour to stem the tide both by fasting and praying unto God, and unity amongst ourselves.

2. *Is the distress of the church of God an occasion for it?*—Look

abroad, and look at home, and you may behold such a sad face upon it, that may reflect sadness upon all your hearts. Where hath God a people, especially in these European parts of the world, but there is a distress upon them? whether ye look into France, Germany, Upper or Lower Hungaria, Silesia, Polonia, &c. And doth not all this make fasting a duty in season? When Nehemiah heard from certain that came from Judah, that the remnant left of the captivity were in great affliction, and that the wall of Jerusalem was broken down, &c., he "sat down and wept, and mourned, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven." (Neh. i. 4.) And this he did, though he himself was in a good office in the Persian court. Was our condition ever so good at home, yet we should lay to heart the afflictions of our brethren abroad: for as we are to "rejoice with them that rejoice," so to "weep with them that weep." And what further calamities may yet break forth, we know not; but the sky looks still red and loursing, and portends bad weather; and it is our wisdom so to discern the face of the sky, as to betake ourselves to the proper duty of the times. And thus to observe and serve the times is good Christian policy.

3. *Is the agitation of great affairs in the world an occasion for fasting?*—This also requires it of us at this day. Are not the nations embroiled in wars both by land and sea? Are there not also some negotiations of peace on foot? Is not the great council of the land to meet here at home? And do not these extraordinary affairs call us to extraordinary duties, that they may be all superintended and guided to a happy issue in the end?

4. *Is there not a strange stupidity and security upon the hearts of most men?*—That they will not see the hand of God, though they feel it; and though God walks contrary to them, yet they observe it not, but rather walk contrary to him in a course of sin, than meet him by repentance in the way of his judgments. Now, the less others are affected, the more should we endeavour to affect our own hearts; and to fast the more, because they fast not at all; and the more others are widening the breach, to stand so much the more in the gap. (Ezek. xxii. 30.)

Now, if we have these calls from God to this great duty of fasting and prayer, let us not fail God herein; and though we should obtain nothing for others, yet we may deliver our own souls; and we know the respect God had to those that sighed and mourned in Jerusalem, that the prophet was bid to set a peculiar mark upon them. (Ezek. ix. 4.)

And I shall only add this further word of encouragement, which is, that *this extraordinary duty of fasting hath been often answered with extraordinary success.*—As Esther's fast when she went-in to the king; and Jehoshaphat's fast when the Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites invaded him; (2 Chron. xx. 1—30;) and Ezra's fast. (Ezra viii. 23.) And upon Daniel's fasting he had the angel Gabriel despatched to him to give him understanding in the things he sought; (Dan. ix. 22;) and again, upon his fasting in chapter x. he saw a vision, wherein a man appeared to him, and told him that he was "a man greatly beloved," and from the first day that he set himself to understand and chasten himself before God, his prayers were heard. And sometimes, where

ordinary prayer hath not prevailed, extraordinary hath had success ; which Christ intimates in saying, "This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." (Matt. xvii. 21.)

Those that now fast and mourn in the bridegroom's absence, shall rejoice with him for ever at his return. Then they shall feast, but fast no more, and the days of their mourning shall be ended : as Christ said to his disciples, "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." (John xvi. 22.) Though their present fasting and mourning hath a good in it beyond the world's feasting and rejoicing, yet the consequent of it makes it incomparably better. The Bridegroom was once upon earth with his church, but departed, and so gave her occasion of fasting and mourning ; but when he comes again, he and his church shall never fast, and therefore fasting will then never come into season again. As the fast of the fourth, fifth, seventh, and tenth month was "to the house of Judah joy and gladness," (Zech. viii. 19.) so all the fasts kept by the people of God here on earth will be, and that incomparably, more joy and gladness to them in heaven, and that for ever.

But, to conclude all, take these two rules :—

1. *Fasting, being an extraordinary duty, ought to be managed with an extraordinary exercise of grace.*—Christ would have his disciples endued with a greater measure of grace, before he would put them upon this duty ; this new wine must be put into new bottles : so that, as Christ asked James and John concerning his baptism, "Are ye able to be baptized with my baptism?" so may we ask Christians now concerning fasting, "Are ye able to keep a fast?"

2. *Fasting ought to be followed with sincere and universal reformation ; else it avails nothing.*—The Jews' fasting, mentioned Isai. lviii., was rejected upon this account. They went from their fasts to strife, debate, oppression, covetousness ; and no wonder then that they complain, and say, "Why have we fasted, and thou takest no notice?" Nay, this reformation is so necessary, that the denomination of a fast is attributed to it, Isai. lviii. 6, 7 : "Is not this the fast that I have chosen ? to loose the bands of wickedness, to deal thy bread to the hungry?" &c. If moral duties be neglected, the practice of the strictest institutions is unacceptable to God.

* * In this sermon many verbal variations occur between the first edition and the second.—EDIT.

SERMON XIV.

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

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HOW TO MANAGE SECRET PRAYER, THAT IT MAY BE PREVALENT WITH GOD TO THE COMFORT AND SATISFACTION OF THE SOUL.

But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.—Matt. vi. 6.

WE have here our blessed Lord's instruction for the management of secret prayer, the crown and glory of a child of God: wherein observe,

1. *The direction prescribed for our deportment in secret duty, in three things:—*

(1.) *Enter into thy closet*—The word *ταμειον* Hesychius glosses by *αποκρυφον οικημα*, “a secret or recluse habitation;” and Suidas, by *δησαυρος*, “a hiding-place for treasures,” by a metonymy. The LXX. (such as we have it) turn the Hebrew word *קִדְרָר* so frequently by *ταμειον*, that we need inquire no further; as Gen. xliii. 30; Exod. viii. 3; 2 Sam. xiii. 10; 1 Kings i. 15; and elsewhere, for “a chamber, a parlour, a bed-chamber.” Sometimes, the word *קִדְרָר*, *foramen, caverna*, “a hole, cleft, or cavern in a rock,” as Isai. xlii. 22, which they render also by *τραγωλη* and *σπη*, *rima*. The etymon of the word, being derived *απο του τεμνειν*, from holes, pits, caves “cut out” in rocks, shows that it notes secret places for retirements or repositories. It is accordingly rendered by “secret chambers,” Matt. xxiv. 26; and by “closets,” Luke xii. 3.

(2.) *Shut the door*—Or, “lock it,” as the word insinuates, *Κλεισας την θυραν*, (from whence *κλεις*, “a key,” is deduced; and [they] are both put together, as appears by Rev. iii. 7; xx. 1, 3,) implying that we must “bar or bolt” it.

(3.) *Pray to thy Father in secret*—“Father,” which is *pietatis et potestatis appellatio*, as Tertullian notes,* “a name hinting both piety and power.” *To thy Father*—Noting both propriety and intimacy.

2. *A gracious promise.*—Which may be branched into three parts:—

(1.) *For thy Father sees thee in secret*—His eye is upon thee with a gracious aspect, when thou art withdrawn from all the world.

(2.) *He will reward thee*—*Αποδωσει*, *retribuet, reponet*, or, as Ambrose† reads it, *reddet*: so the word is sometimes translated by “rendering,” (Matt. xxii. 21; Rom. ii. 6; xiii. 7,) by “delivering,” (Matt. xxvii. 58; Luke ix. 42,) by “yielding” or “affording.” (Heb. xii. 11; Rev. xxii. 2.) All which comes to this: “He will return thy prayers or thy requests amply and abundantly into thy bosom.”

(3.) *He will do it openly*—*Εν τω φανερω*, “perspicuously and manifestly” before the world sometimes, and most plentifully and

* *De Oratione.*

† *De Abel et Cain,*

exuberantly before men and angels at the great day. Secret prayers shall have open and public answers.

3. *Here is a demonstration of sincerity*, from the right performance of this duty, set forth by the antithesis: "But thou shalt not be as the hypocrites." (Matt. vi. 5.)

When—That is, as often as *Thou prayest*—By thyself. *Enter*—Not thy house only, thy hall, or thy common chamber, but *Thy closet*—The most secret and retired privacy. *Shut the door*—That others may neither discern thee, nor rush in suddenly upon thee. *He shall reward thee*—That is, he shall answer thee and perform thy request; as a gracious return to thy secret sincerity. God is pleased by promise to make himself a debtor to secret prayer. It brings nothing to God but empty hands and naked hearts; to show that reward, in scripture-sense, does not flow-in upon the streams of merit, but grace. It is monkish divinity to assert otherwise; for, what merit, strictly taken, can there be in prayer? The mere asking of mercy cannot merit it at the hands of God, who out of our most sincere petitions (being at best impregnated with sinful mixtures) might take-up matter enough to fling as the dung of our sacrifices in our faces. (Mal. ii. 3.) We halt like Jacob both in and after our choicest and strongest wrestlings; but such is the grace of our heavenly Father, who spies that little sincerity of our hearts in secret, that he is pleased to accept us in his Beloved, and to smell a savour of rest in the fragrant perfumes and odours of his intercession.

Hence, though I might draw forth several notes, yet [I] shall treat but of one, containing the marrow and nerves of the text:—

OBSERVATION. *That secret prayer, duly managed, is the mark of a sincere heart, and hath the promise of a gracious return.*—Prayer is the soul's colloquy with God; and secret prayer is a conference with God, upon admission into the privy-chamber of heaven. When thou hast shut thine own closet, when God and thy soul are alone, with this key thou openest the chambers of Paradise, and enterest the closet of divine love. When thou art immured as in a curious labyrinth from the tumultuous world, and entered into that garden of Lebanon in the midst of thy closet, thy soul, like a spiritual Dædalus, takes to itself the wings of faith and prayer, and flies into the midst of heaven among the cherubims. I may term secret prayer "the invisible flight of the soul into the bosom of God:" out of this heavenly closet rises Jacob's ladder, whose rounds are all of light; its foot stands upon the basis of the covenant in thy heart, its top reaches the throne of grace. When thy reins have instructed thee in the night-season with holy petitions, when thy soul hath desired him in the night, then with thy spirit within thee wilt thou seek him early. (Psalm xvi. 7; Isai. xxvi. 9.) When the door of thy heart is shut, and the windows of thine eyes sealed-up from all vain and worldly objects, up thou mountest, and hast a place given thee to walk among angels "that stand by" the throne of God. (Zech. iii. 7.) In secret prayer the soul, like Moses, is in the backside of the desert, and talks with the angel of the covenant in the fiery bush. (Exod. iii. 1—6.) Here is Isaac in the field at even-tide, meditating and praying to the God of his father Abraham. (Gen. xxiv. 63.) Here is Elijah under the juniper-tree at Rithmah in the wilderness, and anon in the cave

hearkening to the still small voice of God. (1 Kings xix. 4, 12.) Here is Christ and the spouse alone in the wine-cellar, and the banner of love over her; (Canticles ii. 4;) where she utters *verba dimidiata, ubi bibit ebriam sobrietatem Spiritus*, "but half words, having drunk of the sober excess of the Spirit." * (Eph. v. 18.) Here we find Nathanael under the fig-tree, though it may be at secret prayer, yet under a beam of the eye of Christ. (John i. 48.) There sits Austin in the garden alone, sighing with the Psalmist, *Usque quò, Domine?* "How long, O Lord?" and listening to the voice of God, *Tolle, lege*, "Take up the Bible and read." †

It is true, hypocrites may pray, and pray alone, and pray long, and receive their reward, *παρ' ὧν ἐπιθυμοῦσιν αὐτοί*, "from such whose observation they desire;" but they take no true delight in secret devotion, they have no spring of affection to God. (Matt. xxiii. 14.) ‡ But, "O my dove," says Christ, "that art in the clefts of the rock, let me hear thy voice; for the melody thereof is sweet." (Canticles ii. 14.) A weeping countenance and a wounded spirit are most beautiful prospects to the eye of heaven. When a broken heart pours-out repentant tears, like streams from the rock smitten by the rod of Moses's law in the hand of a Mediator; O, how amiable in the sight of God! "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee." (Psalm cxxx. 1.) As Chrysostom glosses, *Καταθεν ἀπο τῆς καρδίας σου ἔλκυσσον τὴν φωνὴν μυστηρίον ποιεῖσον σου τὴν εὐχὴν*. "Draw sighs from the furrows of thy heart, *e sulco pectoris*: let thy prayer become a hidden mystery of divine secrets;" like good Hezekiah upon the bed with his face to the wall, that none might observe him; (Isai. xxxviii. 2, 5;) or like our blessed Lord, that grand Example, who retired into solitudes and mountains apart, and saw by night the illustrious face of his heavenly Father in prayer. The reasons follow:—

1. *Because a sincere heart busies itself about heart-work.*—To mortify sin, to quicken grace, to observe and resist temptations, to secure and advance his evidences; and therefore is so much conversant in secret prayer. The glory of the king's daughter shines within, arrayed with clothes of gold; (Psalm xlv. 13;) but they are the spangled and glittering hangings of the closet of her heart, when she entertains communion with her Lord. The more a saint converses with his own heart, the more he searches his spiritual wants, and feels his spiritual joys.

2. *Because a sincere heart aims at the eye of God.*—He knows that God, being a Spirit, loves to converse with our spirits, and "to speak to the heart" more than the outward ear. (Hosea ii. 14.) He labours to walk before God, as being always in his sight, but especially when he presents himself at the footstool of mercy. Because God is invisible, *τὴν εὐχὴν σου τοιαυτὴν εἶναι βουλεται*. § An invisible God is delighted with invisible prayers, when no eye sees but his; he takes most pleasure in the secret glances of a holy heart. Therefore a gracious soul prays in secret with the same diligence and care, nay, sometimes more, when in a holy frame, that he may reap the comfort of his sincerity before the eyes of God. (Job xxxi. 33.)

* GERSON. † *Confess.* lib. viii. cap. 12. ‡ CHRYSOSTOMUS *in loc.* § *Idem.* Because God is himself invisible, "it is his will that thy prayers also should possess the same character of invisibility."—EDIT.

But no more of this : let us descend to the question deducible from the words, a question of no less importance than daily use, and of peculiar concernment to the growth of every Christian :—

QUESTION. *How to manage secret prayer, that it may be prevalent with God to the comfort and satisfaction of the soul.*

For method's sake, I shall divide it into two branches :—

1. *How to manage secret prayer, that it may prevail with God.*

2. *How to discern and discover answers to secret prayer, that the soul may acquiesce and be satisfied that it hath prevailed with God.*

Before I handle these, I would briefly prove *the duty and its usefulness*, leaving some cases about its attendants and circumstances towards the close.

1. *As to the duty itself*, the text is plain and distinct in the point. Yet further observe in Solomon's prayer, that if any man besides the community of the people of Israel shall present his supplication to God, he there prays for a gracious and particular answer ; (1 Kings viii. 38, 39 ; 2 Chron. vi. 29, 30 ;) and we know Solomon's prayer was answered by fire ; (2 Chron. vii. 1 ;) and, therefore, hence we may learn a promise given-forth to personal prayer. Besides the many special and particular injunctions unto individual persons in the case, as Job xxii. 27 ; xxxiii. 26 ; Psalm xxxii. 6 ; and 1. 15, &c. ; wives, as well as husbands, are to pray "apart," (Zech. xii. 14,) לְבָדָּ "solitary, alone by themselves ;" and James v. 13.

We may argue this point from the constant practice of the holy saints of God in all ages, but especially of our blessed Lord ; and it is our wisdom to "walk in the way of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous." (Prov. ii. 20.) What should I speak of Abraham, Eliezer, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Hannah, Hezekiah, David, and Daniel ? The time would fail me to bring-in the cloud of witnesses. Our Lord we find sometimes in a desert, in a mountain, in a garden, at prayer ; Cornelius in his house, and Peter upon the house-top, in secret supplications to God. The experience of God's gracious presence and answers sent-in upon secret prayer, as in the stories of Eliezer, Jabez, Nehemiah, Zechariah, Cornelius, and Paul, &c. (1 Chron. iv. 10 ; Nehem. ii. 4.) "For this" cause, because David was heard, "shall every one that is godly pray unto him." (Psalm xxxii. 6.)

2. I might urge the *usefulness*, nay, in some cases the necessities, of secret applications to God :—

(1.) Are we not guilty of secret sins in the light of God's countenance, that cannot, ought not to be, confessed with or before others ? Inasmuch that near relations are exhorted to secret and solitary duties. (Zech. xii. 12 ; 1 Cor. vii. 5.)

(2.) Are there not personal wants that we would prefer to God alone ?

(3.) Are there not some special mercies and deliverances that concern our own persons more peculiarly, which should engage [us] "to commune with our own hearts," and "offer the sacrifices of righteousness" to God ? (Psalm iv. 4, 5.)

(4.) May there not be found some requests to be poured out more particularly in secret, as to other persons, and as to affairs of the church of God, which may not commodiously be insisted upon in common ?

(5.) Do not sometimes emergent and urgent passions spring out of the soul in secret, that are not comely in society?

(6.) To argue from the text : may not the soul's secret addresses about inward sorrows and joys be a sweet testimony of the sincerity and integrity of the heart, when "the heart knoweth his own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy?" (Prov. xiv. 10.) Perhaps a man has an Ishmael, an Absalom, a Rehoboam to weep for, and therefore gets into an inward chamber : (2 Sam. xviii. 33 :) where, behold, his "witness is in heaven," and his "record on high," and when others may "scorn" or pity, his "eye poureth out tears unto God." (Job xvi. 19, 20.)

To end this : when a holy soul is close in secret, what complacency does it take, when it has bolted out the world, and retired to a place that none knows of, to be free from the disturbances and distractions that often violate family communion ! When it is in the secret of the face of God, in the hidden place of the Most High, and in the shadow of the Almighty, O how safe, how comfortable ! (Psalm xxxi. 20 ; xci. 1 ; Job xxix. 4.)

These and the like I pass by ; neither can I insist upon secret prayer under the variety of mental and vocal ; nor enlarge upon it as sudden, occasional, or ejaculatory, referring somewhat of this toward the end.

Let us address, then, to the first question : in answer whereto I must preface, that some things which aptly belong to secret prayer, yet being in some measure coincident with all prayer, public, private, and secret, it is congruous to treat of such as are of great use as to the management of our present duty ; and therefore must refer to a double head.

QUESTION I. *How to manage secret prayer, as it is coincident with prayer in general, so that it may prevail ?*

1. *Use some preparation before it ; rush not suddenly into the awful presence of God.*—Sanctuary-preparation is necessary to sanctuary-communion. Such suitable preparatory frames of the heart come down from God : "Thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear." (Psalm x. 17.) It was a good saying of one, *Intimè et devotè nunquam mens orat, quæ se, &c., præmeditationibus prius non excitat.** "He never prays ardently that does not premeditate savourly." Daniel, when he made that famous prayer, it is said he "set" his "face to seek" the Lord. (Dan. ix. 3.) Jehoshaphat also "set himself to seek the Lord." (2 Chron. xx. 3.) The church in her soul desires the Lord in the night, and then with her spirit seeks him early. (Isai. xxvi. 9.) Desires blown by meditation are the sparks that set prayer in a light flame.

The work of preparation may be cast under five heads, when we apply to solemn and set prayer :—

(1.) The consideration of some attributes in God that are proper to the intended petitions.

(2.) A digestion of some peculiar and special promises that concern the affair.

(3.) Meditation on suitable arguments.

(4.) Ejaculations for assistance.

(5.) An engagement of the heart to a holy frame of reverence and

* RICHARDUS DE SANCTO VICTORE, *De Eruditione Hominis interioris*, lib. i. cap. 7.

keeping to the point in hand.—*Nec quicquam tunc animus quam solum cogitet, quod precatur*, was serious advice from Cyprian : “ Let the soul think upon nothing but what it is to pray for ;” and [he] adds that therefore the ministers of old prepared the minds of the people with, *Sursum corda*, “ Let your hearts be above.” * For how can we expect to be heard of God, when we do not hear ourselves, when the heart does not watch while the tongue utters ? The tongue must be like “ the pen of a ready writer,” to set down the good matter which the heart indites. (Psalm xlv. 1.) Take heed of ramblings ; to preach, or tell pious stories, while praying to the great and holy God, is a branch of irreverence, and a careless frame of spirit. (Heb. xii. 28.)

2. *Humble confession of such sins as concern and refer principally to the work in hand.*—Our filthy garments must be taken away, when we appear before the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem. (Zech. iii. 4.) “ Look upon mine affliction and my pain,” cries David ; “ and forgive all my sins.” (Psalm xxv. 18.) There are certain sins that often relate to afflictions. First, “ Deliver me from all my transgressions ;” then, “ Hear my prayer, O Lord ;” (Psalm xxxix. 8, 12 ;) for this is the heavenly method : he first “ forgiveth all ” our “ iniquities,” and then “ healeth all ” our “ diseases.” (Psalm ciii. 3.) A forgiven soul is a healed soul : while a man is sick at heart with the qualms of sin unpardoned, it keeps the soul under deliquiums and swooning-fits, that it cannot cry strongly unto God ; and therefore in holy groans [he] must discharge himself of particular sins, and pour out his soul before God. Thus did David in that great penitential psalm, Psalm li. 4. For sin like a thick cloud hides the face of God, that our prayers cannot enter. (Isai. lix. 2.) We must blush with Ezra, (ix. 6,) and our faces look red with the flushings of conscience, if we expect any smiles of mercy. Our crimson sins must dye our confessions ; and the blood of our sacrifices must sprinkle the horns of the golden altar, before we receive an answer of peace from the golden mercy-seat. When our persons are pardoned, our suits are accepted, and our petitions crowned with the olive-branch of peace.

3. *An arguing and pleading spirit in prayer.*—This is properly wrestling with God, humble, yet earnest, expostulations about his mind towards us : “ Why hast thou cast us off for ever ? why doth thine anger smoke ?” (Psalm lxiv. 1.) “ Be not wroth very sore, O Lord, neither remember iniquity for ever : behold, see, we beseech thee, we are all thy people.” (Isai. lxiv. 9.) “ If it be so, why am I thus ?” as frightened Rebekah flies into prayer. (Gen. xxv. 22.) An arguing frame in prayer cures and appeases the frights of spirit, and then inquires of God. (Psalm xxxiv. 4.) The temple of prayer is called the soul’s inquiring-place. (Psalm xxvii. 4.) “ Why is God so far from the words of my roaring ? Thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.” (Psalm xxii. 1, 21.) “ How long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people ? Turn us again, and cause thy face to shine upon us.” (Psalm lxxx. 3, 4.) “ O the hope of Israel, why shouldest thou be as a wayfaring man, as a man astonished ? Yet thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy name ; leave

* CYPRIANUS *De Oratione*, p. 106, sixth edition.

us not." (Jer. xiv. 8, 9.) I must refer to Abraham, Jacob, and Moses, Joshua, David, and Daniel, how they urged arguments with God: sometimes from the multitudes of God's mercies, (Psalm v. 7; vi. 4; xxxi. 16,) from the experience of former answers, from the name of God, (Psalm iv. 1; vi. 9; xxii. 4, 21; xxxi. 2, 3, 7; xli. 7,) from their trust and reliance upon him, (Psalm ix. 10; xvi. 1,) from the equity of God, (Psalm xvii. 1,) from the shame and confusion of face that God will put his people to, if not answered, and that others will be driven away from God, (Psalm xxxi. 17; xxxiv. 5,) and, lastly, from the promise of praise. (Psalm xx. 5; xxxv. 18.) These and many like pleadings we find in scripture, for patterns in prayer; which, being suggested by the Spirit, kindled from the altar, and perfumed with Christ's incense, rise-up like memorial-pillars before the oracle. Let us observe one or two particular prayers, what instant arguments holy men have used and pressed in their perplexities. Jehoshaphat—what a working prayer did he make! taking pleas from God's covenant, dominion, and powerful strength; from his gift of the land of Canaan, and driving out the old inhabitants,—ancient mercies! from his sanctuary, and his promise to Solomon; from the ingratitude and ill requital of the enemies; with an appeal to God's equity in the case, and a humble confession of their own impotency, and yet that, in their anxiety, their eyes are fixed upon God. (2 Chron. xx. 6—12.) You know how gloriously it prevailed, when he had set ambushments round about the court of heaven, and the Lord turned his arguments into ambushments against the children of Edom, &c. (Verse 22.) Yea, this is set as an instance how God will deal against the enemies of his church in the latter days. (Joel iii. 2.) Another is that admirable prayer of the Angel of the covenant to God for the restoration of Jerusalem, wherein he pleads from the length of time and the duration of his indignation for threescore and ten years, from promised mercies and the expiration of prophecies: (Zech. i. 12:) and behold an answer of good and comfortable words from the Lord; and pray observe, that when arguments in prayer are very cogent upon a sanctified heart,—such being drawn from the divine attributes, from precious promises, and sweet experiments of God's former love,—it is a rare sign of a prevailing prayer. It was an ingenious passage of Chrysostom concerning the woman of Canaan, *Φιλοσοφει ἡ γυνη** the poor distressed creature "was turned an acute philosopher" with Christ, and disputed the mercy from him. O, it is a blessed thing to attain to this heavenly philosophy of prayer, to argue blessings out of the hand of God. Here is a spacious field. I have given but a small prospect, where the soul, like Jacob, does in *arenam descendere*, "enter the lists" with Omnipotency, and by holy force obtain the blessing.

4. *Ardent affections in prayer, betokening a heart deeply sensible, are greatly prevalent.*—A crying prayer pierces the depths of heaven. We read not a word that Moses spake, but God was moved by his cry. (Exod. xiv. 15.) I mean not an obstreperous noise, but melting moans of heart. Yet sometimes the sore and pinching necessities and distresses of spirit extort even vocal cries not displeasing to the inclined

* CHRYSOSTOMUS in *Matt. xv.*

ears of God. "I cried unto the Lord with my voice," says David, "and he heard me out of his holy hill." (Psalm iii. 4.) And this encourages to a fresh onset: "Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God." (Psalm v. 2.) "Give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears." (Psalm xxxix. 12.) Another time he makes the cave echo with his cries: "I cried, I cried. Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low." And what is the issue? Faith gets courage by crying: his tears watered his faith that it grew into confidence, and so concludes, "Thou shalt deal bountifully with me, and the righteous shall crown me for conqueror."* (Psalm cxlii. 1, 5—7.) Plentiful tears bring bountiful mercies, and a crying suitor proves a triumphant praiser. Holy Jacob was just such another: at the fords of Jabbok he prevailed with the Angel; for "he wept, and made supplication unto him." (Hosea xii. 4.) Hezekiah may bring up the rear: for the Lord told him he had heard his prayer, for he had seen his tears. (2 Kings xx. 5.) Such precedents may well encourage backsliding Ephraim to return and bemoan himself; and then the "bowels" of God "are troubled for him." (Jer. xxxi. 18—20.) Nay, we have a holy woman likewise weeping sore before the Lord in Shiloh, and then rejoicing in his salvation. (1 Sam. i. 10; ii. 1.) The cries of saints are like *vocal* music joined with the *instrumental* of prayer; they make heavenly melody in the ears of God. The bridegroom calls to his mourning dove, "'Let me hear thy voice;' for that is pleasant." (Canticles ii. 14.) What Gerson says of the sores of Lazarus, *Quot vulnera, tot linguas habuit*,† "As many wounds, so many tongues," we may say of sighs, cries, and groans in prayer, "So many eloquent orators at the throne of God."

5. *Importunity and assiduity in prayer is highly prevalent.*—*Non ut fastidiosa continetur oratio, sed ut assidua frequenter effundatur*: ‡ "Not that we should lengthen out prayer with tedious and vain repetitions," as the Heathen did of old, (Matt. vi. 7,) or as the Euchitæ in Constantius's time, that did little else but pray; § "but that we should be frequent, and continue instant, in prayer." Whereas our Lord bids us to "pray always," (Luke xviii. 1,) and the apostle Paul to "pray without ceasing," (1 Thess. v. 17,) we are to understand it of constancy at times every day. As the morning and evening sacrifice at the temple is called the "continual burnt-offering;" (Num. xxviii. 4, 6;) as Mephibosheth is said to "eat bread continually" at David's table, (2 Sam. ix. 7,) and Solomon's servants to stand continually before him, that is, at the set and appointed times; so it is required of us to be constant and assiduous at prayer, and to follow our lawful requests with perseverance. Thus Hannah is said to "multiply prayer," (1 Sam. i. 12,) and received multiplied answers; expressly indeed she prayed but for one son, but she had six children returned-in upon prayer.

When the soul perseveres in prayer, it is a sign of a persevering faith; and such may have what they will at the hand of God, when praying according to prescript. (John xvi. 23.) Nay, urgent prayer is the token of a mercy at hand: when Elijah prayed seven times one

* יכתרו *Coronabunt.*
De Cain et Abel, lib. i. cap. 9.

† GERSON, tom. II. fol. 77, a.
 § EPIPHANIUS, *Hæres.* 30.

‡ AMBROSIIUS

after another for rain, the clouds presently march up out of the sea at the command of prayer. (1 Kings xviii. 43, 44.) "Ask of me things to come," saith the Lord, "and concerning the work of my hands command ye me." (Isai. xlv. 11.) When we put forth our utmost strength in prayer, and will, as it were, receive no "nay" from heaven, our prayers must be like the continual blowing of the silver trumpets over the sacrifices "for a memorial before the Lord;" (Num. x. 10;) like the watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem, who "never hold their peace day nor night," [and] are commanded "not to keep silence, nor to give him rest." (Isai. lxii. 6, 7.) Nay, God seems offended at another time, that they did not lay hands upon him, that they might not be consumed in their iniquities. (Isai. lxiv. 7.) Such prayers are, as it were, a holy molestation to the throne of grace.

It is said of the man that rose at midnight to give out three loaves to his friend, he did it not for friendship's sake, but *δια την αναιδειαν*, "because he was impudent," so importunately to trouble him at such a season as twelve o'clock at night. (Luke xi. 8.) Our Lord applies the parable to instant prayers. The like we find of the success of the widow with the unjust judge, because she did *παρεχειν κοπον*, "vex and molest" him with her solicitations. (Luke xviii. 5.) But of all, the pattern of the woman of Canaan is most admirable, when the disciples desired her to be dismissed, because she troubled them by crying after them, and yet she persists. (Matt. xv. 23.) May I say it reverently? Christ delights in such a troublesome person. Though, as an ancient observes, by comparing both evangelists, that first she cried after Christ in the streets, (Matt. xv. 22,) but our Lord taking house, she follows him thither, and falls down at his feet; (Mark vii. 24, 25;) but as yet he "answered her not a word:" (Matt. xv. 23:) *In eo silentio egressum fuisse Jesum de domo illâ*:* then our Lord going out of the house again, she follows with stronger importunity, and argues the mercy into her bosom, and Christ ascribes it to the greatness of her faith; *καλη αναισχυντια*, as another terms it, "a laudable and praiseworthy immodesty;" as, in the former case, to knock so rudely at midnight is deemed no incivility at the gate of heaven. This is *δεησις ενεργουμενη* as Guil. Parisiensis reads it, *deprecatio justi assidua*.† (James v. 16.) "An assiduous prayer" is the way to become "an efficacious prayer." It is ill taken, if not importunate: cold petitioners must have cool answers. If the matter of prayer be right, and the promise of God fervently urged, thou art likely to prevail like princely Israel, that held the Angel by the collar, (to speak with reverence,) and would not let him go until he had blessed him. But it was hot work most of the night, even to break of day; (Gen. xxxii. 24—26;) to show that in some cases of extremity we must hold-out in prayers. For our Lord in the next verse to the text does not forbid the length of prayer, for he himself upon occasion continues a whole night in prayer; (Luke vi. 12;) but [he forbids] such as are filled with impertinent multiplications of vain words, and have neither holy reasonings nor spiritual and warm affections, and yet think to be "heard for their much speaking."

* AUGUSTINUS *De Consensu Evangelistarum*, tom. iv. lib. ii. p. 447. Edit. Basl. 1569.
 † *De Rhetoricâ Divinâ*, p. 353.

QUESTION. "But can God be moved by our arguments, or affected with our troubles? He is the unchangeable God, and dwells in the inaccessible light. There 'is no variableness, neither shadow of turning;' (James i. 17;) a metaphor from the fixed stars, which admit no parallax; and therefore astronomers cannot demonstrate their magnitude: for our eyes or instruments can yet give no intelligence of any increase or diminution of their diameter or light." *

ANSWER. Those holy motions upon the hearts of saints in prayer are the fruits of the unchangeable decrees of his love to them, and the appointed ushers of mercy. God graciously determines to give a praying, arguing, warm, affectionate frame, as the *prodromus* and "fore-runner" of a decreed mercy. That is the reason that carnal men can enjoy no such mercies, because they pour out no such prayers. The spirit of prayer prognosticates mercy ensuing. Wherefore, when the Lord by Jeremy foretold the end of the captivity, he also pre-signifies the prayers that should open the gates of Babylon. (Jer. xix. 10, 12.) Cyrus was prophesied of, to do his work for Jacob his servant's sake and Israel his elect; but yet they must ask him concerning those things to come, and they should not seek him in vain. (Isai. xlv. 1, 2, 4, 11, 19.) The glory of the latter days in the return of Israel is foretold by Ezekiel; but yet then the Lord "will be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them." (Ezek. xxxvi. 24, 37.) The coming of Christ is promised by himself; but yet "the Spirit and the bride say, Come;" and he "that heareth" must "say, Come." And when Christ says he will "come quickly:" "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." (Rev. xxii. 12, 17, 20.) Divine grace kindles these ardent affections, when the mercies promised are upon the wing.† Prayer is that intelligible chain, as Dionysius calls it, that draws the souls up to God, and the mercy down to us; or like the cable that draws the ship to land, though the shore itself remain unmovable. Prayer has its kindlings from heaven, like the ancient sacrifices that were inflamed with celestial fire. (2 Chron. vii. 1.)

6. *Submission to the all-wise and holy will of God.*—This is the great benefit of a saint's communion with the Spirit, that "He maketh intercession for" them "according to the will of God." (Rom. viii. 27.) When promised mercies are revealed in more absolute terms, the sanctified will concentres with the will of God. When we pray for holiness, there is a concurrence with the divine will: "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification." (1 Thess. iv. 3.) When we pray that our bodies may be presented "a living sacrifice, acceptable unto God," we then "prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." (Rom. xii. 1, 2.) But I speak here as to outward mercies and enjoyments, and the gradualities or degrees of graces and spiritual mercies. But as to substance of spiritual mercies, the promises in such cases run freely; as, if in any place there seem to lie any limitations or conditions, those very conditions are otherwise graciously promised to be wrought in us. In the covenant of grace, God does his part and ours too. As, when God commands us to pray in one place, he promises in another place to pour-out upon us "the spirit of grace and of supplica-

* KEPLER's *Astronomia*, lib. iv. p. 495. Fran. 1635, &c. ARGOLI's *Tables*, p. 72.
† GERSON, tom. ii. KK. 3, 6.

tions." (Zech. xii. 10.) God commands us to "repent and turn" unto him. (Ezek. xiv. 6.) In another place, "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God; (Jer. xxxi. 18;) and again, "Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned." (Lam. v. 21.) "Make you a new heart and a new spirit:" elsewhere, "A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you," &c., "and cause you to walk in my statutes." (Ezek. xviii. 31; xxxvi. 26, 27.) "That ye might walk unto all pleasing," says Paul, "for this cause we do not cease to pray for you," &c.; (Col. i. 9, 10;) that he would "work in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight." (Heb. xiii. 21.) "Work out your own salvation. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Phil. ii. 12, 13.) Precepts, promises, and prayer, are connected, like so many golden links, to excite, encourage, and assist the soul in spiritual duties. But in other cases, as to temporal and temporary mercies, let all thy desires in prayer be formed with submission, guided by his counsel, and prostrate at his feet, and acted by a faith suitable to the promises of outward blessings; and then it shall "be unto thee even as thou wilt." (Matt. xv. 28.) He said well, *Cardo desideriorum sit voluntas Dei; [ut] exaudiat, pete cardinem*: "Let all thy desires as to temporals turn upon the hinge of the divine good pleasure. That man shall have his own will that resolves to make God's will his." * God will certainly bestow that which is for the good of his people. (Psalm xxxiv. 17; lxxxiv. 11; Matt. vii. 11; Rom. viii. 28.) One great point of our mortification lies in this, to have our wills melted into God's; and it is a great token of spiritual growth, when [we are] not only content, but joyful, to see *our* wills crossed, that *his* may be done. We pray that his "kingdom" may "come;" let it appear by sincere prayer that his "will" may "be done." When our wills are sacrificed in the flames of holy prayer, we many times receive choicer things than we ask expressly. It was a good saying, *Non dat quod volumus, ut det quod malimus*: "God many times grants not what we will in the present prayers, that he may bestow what we had rather have," when we have the prayer more graciously answered than we petitioned: we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit helps us out with groans that secretly hint a correction of our wills and spirit in prayer. (Rom. viii. 26.) In great anxieties and pinching troubles, nature dictates strong groans for relief; but sustaining grace, and participation of divine holiness, mortification from earthly comforts, (Heb. xii. 10,) excitation of the soul to long for heaven, being gradually weaned from the wormwood-breasts of these sublunary, transient, and unsatisfying pleasures, and the timing of our hearts for the seasons, wherein God will time his deliverances, are sweeter mercies than the present return of a prayer for an outward good into our bosoms. What truly holy person would lose that "light of" God's "countenance," which he enjoyed by glimpses in a cloudy day, for a little "corn and wine?" "Thou hast put more gladness into my heart," says David. (Psalm iv. 6, 7.) Nay, in many cases open denials of prayer prove the most excellent answers, and God's not hearing us is the most signal audience. Therefore at the foot of every prayer subscribe, *Fiat voluntas tua*, ["Thy will be done,"] and

* GERSON, tom. ii.

thou shalt enjoy preventing mercies that thou never soughtest, and converting mercies to change all for the best ; resting confident in this, that having asked "according to his will, he heareth" thee. (1 John v. 14.)

7. Lastly. *Present all into the hands of Christ.*—This was signified of old by praying toward the temple, (1 Kings viii. 33,) because the golden mercy-seat, typifying Christ, was there: he is "ordained" of God "to offer gifts and sacrifices;" and therefore it is of necessity that he should have something from us to offer, being the "high priest over the house of God." (Heb. viii. 3; x. 21.) What does Christ on our behalf at the throne of grace? Put some petition into the hands of Christ; he waits for our offerings at the door of the oracle; leave the sighs and groans of thy heart with this compassionate Intercessor, who is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," (Heb. iv. 15,) who sympathizes with our weaknesses. He that lies in the Father's bosom, and hath "expounded," *ἐξηγησατο*, the will of God to us, (John i. 18,) adds much incense to "the prayers of all saints before the throne" of God, and explains our wills to God; (Rev. viii. 3;) so that *our* prayers, perfumed by *his*, are "set forth as incense before" him. (Psalm cxli. 2.) He is the "days-man," (Job ix. 33,) the heavens-man betwixt God and us. Whatever we ask in his name, he puts into his golden censer, that the Father may give it to us. (John xv. 16; xvi. 23.) When the sweet smoke of the incense of Christ's prayer ascends before the Father, our prayers become sweet and amiable, and cause "a savour of rest" with God. (Gen. viii. 21.) This I take to be one reason why the prevalency of prayer is so often assigned to the time of the evening sacrifice,—pointing at the death of Christ, "about the ninth hour" of the day, near the time of the evening oblation. (Matt. xxvii. 46; Acts iii. 1; x. 30.) Hence it was that Abraham's sacrifice received a gracious answer, being offered about the going down of the sun. (Gen. xv. 12.) Isaac went out to pray "at eventide." (Gen. xxiv. 63.) Elijah, at mount Carmel, prays and offers "at the time of the evening sacrifice." (1 Kings xviii. 36.) Ezra "fell upon" his "knees, and spread out" his "hands, at the evening sacrifice." (Ezra ix. 5.) David begs that his prayer may be virtual in the power of "the evening sacrifice." (Psalm cxli. 2.) Daniel, at prayer, was touched by the angel "about the time of the evening oblation." (Dan. ix. 21.) All to show the prevalency of our access to the throne of grace by the virtuous merit of the intercession of Christ, the acceptable evening Sacrifice. Yea, and therefore we are taught in our Lord's prayer to begin with the title of a "Father:" in him we are adopted to children, and to use that prevalent relation as an argument in prayer. There are some other particulars in respect to prayer in general, as it may be connected and coincident with secret prayer, as stability of spirit, freedom from distraction by wandering thoughts, the actings of faith, the aids of the Spirit, &c., which I pass by, and come to the second branch.

DIRECTIONS SPECIAL AND PECULIAR TO SECRET PRAYER.

1. *Be sure of intimate acquaintance with God.*—Can we presume, that are but dust and ashes, to go up into heaven, and boldly to enter the presence-chamber, and have no fellowship with the Father, or with the Son? "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace," &c. "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." The decrees of thy heart "shall be established unto thee: and the light shall shine upon thy ways." (Job xxii. 21, 26—28.) First shining acquaintance, and then shining answers. (Job xxix. 3, 4.) Canst thou set thy face unto the Lord God? Then thou mayest seek him by prayer. First Daniel sets and shows his face to God, and then seeks him "by prayer and supplications." (Dan. ix. 3.) Does God know your face in prayer? Do you often converse in your closets with him? Believe it, it must be the fruit of intimate acquaintance with God, to meet him in secret with delight. Can ye come familiarly, as a child to a father, considering its own vileness, meanness, or unworthiness, in comparison with his divine love,—the love and bowels of a heavenly Father? Such a Father, the Father of fathers, and the Father of mercies! How sweetly does the apostle join it!—God is "our Father" because "the Father of our Lord;" and because his Father, and so our Father, therefore "the Father of mercies." (2 Cor. i. 2, 3.) O what generations of mercies flow from this paternity! But plead we must to that *προσαγωγή*, that "manuduction and access" to this Father through Christ by the Spirit. (Eph. ii. 18.) We must be gradually acquainted with all Three. First with the Spirit, then with Christ, and last with the Father: first God sends "the Spirit of his Son into our hearts," and then through the Son we cry, "Abba, Father." (Gal. iv. 6.) The bowels of mercy first wrought in the Father to us: he chose us in Christ, and then sends his Spirit to draw us to Christ, and by Christ to himself. (Eph. i. 4, 5.) Have ye this access to God by the Spirit? Bosom-communion flows from bosom-affection. If your souls are truly in love with God, he will graciously say to your petitions, "Be it unto you according to your love."

2. *Times of finding God.*—A godly man prays in finding seasons; when God's heart and ear are inclined to audience, when God is said to "bow down" his "ear unto" us. (Psalm xxxi. 2.) There are special seasons of drawing nigh to him, when he draws nigh to us, times when he "may be found." (Isai. lv. 6; Psalm xxxii. 6.) When thy "beloved looketh forth at the windows, showing himself through the lattice,"—that is a time of grace, when he knocks at the door of thy heart by his Spirit. (Canticles ii. 9; v. 2.) Motions upon the heart are like the doves of the East sent with letters about their necks; as he* said of Bernard, *Ex motu cordis Spiritus Sancti presentiam agnoscebat*: "He knew when the Holy Spirit was present with him, by the motion of his heart." When God reveals himself to the heart, he opens the ears of his servants for some gracious message. (2 Sam. vii. 27.) When God bids us "seek his face," then the soul must answer, "One thing have I desired, that will I seek after." (Psalm xxvii. 4, 8.) First holy desires warm the heart, and then set the soul on seeking. They are like messengers sent from heaven to bring us into his presence. Take heed, then, of quenching the Spirit of God. He "that is born of the Spirit" knows "the sound," *φωνήν*, "the voice of the Spirit." (John iii. 8.) When the soul is melted by the word, or softened by afflictions, or feels some holy groans and sighs excited by the Spirit, that is a warm time

* GERSON, tom. ii. 27, a.

for prayer; then we enjoy "the sense," το φρονημα του Πνευματος, "the intimations of the Spirit of God." (Rom. viii. 27.) Or when prophecies are nigh to expire, then there are great workings and searchings of heart in Daniel, Zachary, Simeon, and Anna. Or when some promise comes with applying power: "Therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee:" for "thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant." (2 Sam. vii. 27, 28.) When we find promises dropped into the soul like wine, it causes "the lips of" them that were "asleep to speak." (Canticles vii. 9.)

3. *Keep conscience tender of, and clean from, secret sins.*—With what face can we go to a friend to whom we have given any secret affronts? And will ye be so bold as to come before the God of heaven, when he knows ye maintain some secret lust in your heart? Darest thou to bring a Delilah with thee into this sacred closet? True is that of Tertullian, *Quantum a preceptis, tantum ab auribus Dei longè sumus.** He that turns his ear from God's precepts, must stop his mouth in the dust, if God turn his holy ears from his cries. (Prov. xxviii. 9.) When our secret sins are in the light of his countenance, we may rather expect to be "consumed by" his "anger, and troubled by" his "wrath." (Psalm xc. 7, 8.)

OBJECTION. "But, then, who may presume and venture into secret communion?"

ANSWER. True, if God should strictly mark what we do amiss, who can stand? David was sensible of this objection, but he answers it humbly: "There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared." (Psalm cxxx. 3, 4.) If we come with holy purposes to leave all sin, he hath promised to "pardon abundantly." His thoughts and ways are not as ours: (Isai. lv. 7, 8:) guilt makes us fly his presence; but proclamation of pardoning grace to a wounded soul that comes for strength from heaven to subdue its iniquities, sweetly draws the soul to lie at his foot for mercy. (Micah vii. 19.) Though we cannot as yet be so free as formerly, while under the wounding sense of guilt, yet when he "restores to" us "the joy of his salvation," he will again "uphold" us with his "free Spirit." (Psalm li. 12.) Yet take heed of scars upon the soul. God "knows our foolishness; and our guiltinesses are not hid from him;" (Psalm lxix. 5;) yet we come for purging and cleansing mercy. A godly man may be under the sense of divine displeasure, for some iniquity that himself knoweth, as the Lord spake of Eli; (1 Sam. iii. 13;) yet the way to be cured is not to run from God, but, like the distressed woman, come fearing and trembling, and fall at his feet, and tell him all the truth. (Mark v. 33.) But if prayer have cured thee, sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. For if we "regard iniquity in" our "heart, the Lord will not hear" us; (Psalm lxvi. 18;) but the guilt may stare conscience in the face with great amazement. As it is storied of one that secretly had stolen a sheep, it ran before his eyes in prayer [so] that he could have no rest. How strangely will memory ring the bell in the ears of conscience! If we have any secret sin *in deliciis*, if we look but asquint with desires and secret thoughts, after our "peace-

* *De Oratione*, p. 213. "Our distance from the ears of God is exactly proportionate to our departure from his precepts."—EDIT.

offerings," (Prov. vii. 14,) to meet our "beloved lusts" again, this is dangerous. God may justly give-up such to cast off that which is good, to cleave to their idols, and let them alone. (Hosea iv. 17; vi. 4.) But if the face of the heart be not knowingly and willingly spotted with any sin or lust, bating infirmities which he mourns under, then thy countenance through Christ will be comely in the eye of God, and thy voice sweet in his ears; and as he* said, *Qui bene vivit, semper orat*: "A holy life will be a walking continual prayer; his very life is a constant petition before God."

4. *Own thy personal interest with God, and plead it humbly.*—Consider whom thou goest to in secret: "Pray to thy Father who seeth in secret." Canst thou prove thyself to be in covenant? What thou canst prove thou mayest plead, and have it successfully issued. In prayer we take God's covenant into our mouths, but without a real interest: the Lord expostulates with such: What have they "to do with" it? (Psalm l. 15, 16.) God never graciously hears but it is upon interest. This argument Solomon presses in prayer: "For they be thy people, and thine inheritance." (1 Kings viii. 51.) Thus David pleads: "Thou art my God: hear the voice of my supplications." (Psalm cxl. 6.) "I am thine," Lord, "save me." (Psalm cxix. 94.) "Truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant." (Psalm cxvi. 16.) Arias turns פָּנָם by *obsecro, quæso*, "I beseech thee, O Lord, I am thy servant." God will "avenge his elect" when they cry unto him: "I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly." (Luke xviii. 7; Psalm xxii. 10.) Therefore Asa turns the contest heavenward: "O Lord, thou art our God; let not mortal man prevail against thee." (2 Chron. xiv. 11.) "Thou takest me for the 'sheep' of thy fold, and the 'servant' of thy household; therefore 'seek' me." (Psalm cxix. 176.) When Israel shall be refined as silver and tried as gold, "they shall call on" his "name, and" he "will hear them: I will say, It is my people," my tried, refined, golden people: "and they shall say, The Lord is my God." (Zech. xiii. 9.) When thou canst discern the print of the broad seal of the covenant upon thy heart, and the privy-seal of the Spirit upon thy prayers, and canst look upon the Son of God in a sacerdotal relation to thee, thou mayest "come boldly unto the throne of grace in time of need." (Heb. iv. 16.)

5. *Be very particular in secret prayer, both as to sins, wants, and mercies.* (Psalm xxxii. 5; li. 9.)—Hide none of thy transgressions, if thou expect a pardon. Be not ashamed to open all thy necessities. David argues, because he is "poor and needy;" four several times he presses his wants and exigences before God, like an earnest but holy beggar; (Psalm xl. 17; lxx. 5; lxxxvi. 1; cix. 22;) and "showed before him" his "trouble," (Psalm cxlii. 2,) from פָּנָם, *coram*, presents "before" him his ragged condition, and spreads open his secret wounds; as Job said, He "would order" his "cause before him," (Job xxiii. 4,) from פָּנָם, *disponerem, instruerem*, "marshal" every case as a battle in rank and file. There we may speak out our minds fully, and name the persons that afflict, affront, and trouble us; and woe to them that a child of God upon a mature judgment names in prayer! I find not

* GERSON, tom. ii. p. 76, 6.

that such a prayer in scripture returned empty. Jacob, in a great strait: "Deliver me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau." (Gen. xxxii. 11.) David, in the ascent of Mount Olivet: "O Lord, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness." Prayer twisted the rope for him at Giloh. (2 Sam. xv. 12, 31; xvii. 23.) Thus Jehoshaphat in his prayer names Ammon, Moab, and Edom conspiring against him. (2 Chron. xx. 10.) Thus Hezekiah spreads the railing letter before the Lord; (Isai. xxxvii. 14;) and the Psalmist takes them all in a round catalogue that consulted against Israel. (Psalm lxxxiii. 5—8.) Thus the church in her prayer names Herod Antipas and Pontius Pilate; (Acts iv. 27;) whereof the first was sent into perpetual banishment, and the latter slew himself.* It is of great use in prayer to attend to some special case or single request with arguments and affections suitable. "For this cause," says Paul, "I bow my knees." (Eph. iii. 14.) Suppose a grace deficient in its strength: "Lord, increase our faith;" (Luke xvii. 5;) or a temptation urgent: "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me." (2 Cor. xii. 8.) A great reason why we reap so little benefit by prayer [is], because we rest too much in generals; and if we have success, it is but dark, [so] that often we cannot tell what to make of the issues of prayer. Besides, to be particular in our petitions would keep the spirit much from wandering, when we are intent upon a weighty case, and the progress of the soul in grace would manifest its gradual success in prayer.

6. *Holy and humble appeals before the Lord in secret, when the soul can submissively and thankfully expose itself to divine searching about some measures of holiness and grace wrought in the heart.*—The soul cannot bide by the presence of God under flashings of defilement; *neque agnoscipotero a Spiritu Sancto spiritus inquinatus*; "neither will the Holy Spirit own a defiled soul." † But when a person can humbly, modestly, and reverently say, "Search me, and try my reins; and see if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the everlasting way;" (Psalm xxvi. 2; cxxxix. 23, 24;) it will be the means of the ebullitions and boilings-up of joyful affections and meek confidence at the footstool of grace, especially in pleas of deliverance from wicked and proud enemies. When David can plead in comparison with, and in the case stated between, his enemies and himself, "For I am holy," it shows him "a token for good." (Psalm lxxxvi. 2, 14, 17.) Or when we plead against the assaults of Satan, can we be conscious that we have watched and prayed against entering into temptation? When in the main we can "wash" our "hands in innocency," we may then comfortably compass God's altar about. (Psalm xxvi. 6.) In case of opposition and injustice: "He rewarded me," says David, in the point of Saul, "according to my righteousness, and to the cleanness of my hands before him." (Psalm xviii. 20; vii. 3—5.) Or about the truth of the love that is in the heart to God: "Thou that knowest all things," says Peter, "knowest that I love thee." (John xxi. 17.) As to zeal for the worship and ordinances of God, so did Nehemiah. (Neh. xiii. 14, 22.) As to the integrity of a well-spent life, so did Hezekiah. (Isai. xxxviii. 3.) Or if we cannot rise

* JOSEPHUS, lib. xviii. cap. 9. EUSEBIUS PAMPHILI *Chronicon*. lib. ii. p. 159. † TERTULLIANUS *De Oratone*, p. 213.

so high, yet [we may say] as the church did, "The desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee." (Isai. xxvi. 8.) Or, lastly, when we can unfeignedly plead the usefulness of a mercy entreated, in order to the divine glory; as when a minister, or the church of Christ for him, prays for such gifts and graces, such knowledge and "utterance," that he may win souls to Christ, and can appeal that it is his principal aim; (Eph. vi. 19; Col. iv. 3;) this is glorious.

7. *Pray for the Spirit, that ye may pray in and by the Spirit.*—Awaken the north and the south to "blow upon thy garden, that the spices thereof may flow forth." Then thou mayest invite Christ: "Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits;" (Canticles iv. 16;) that the soul may enjoy him, and hold sweet communion with him. All successful prayer is from the breathing of the Spirit of God, when he inspires and indites, when he directs the heart as to matter, and governs the tongue as to utterance. (1 Cor. ii. 13.) God graciously hears the sighs of his own Spirit formed in us. (Rom. viii. 26, 27.) He sent forth his Spirit, "and the waters flow." (Psalm cxlvii. 18.) That I may allude: the waters of contrition flow upon the breathing of the Spirit; and the soul is, as it were, all afloat before the throne of grace, when these living waters issue from under the threshold of the sanctuary. (Ezek. xlvi. 1.) *Sequitur lachrymosa devotio fante Spiritu Sancto*: "Devout tears drop down from the Spirit's influences." * Melting supplications follow the infusions of grace by the Spirit. Then "they shall mourn for" piercing of Christ, says the prophet, "and shall be in bitterness, as for a first-born: like the mourning at the town of Hadadrimmon," where Josiah was slain. (Zech. xiii. 10, 11.) Then, "in that day," what inundations of mercy shall refresh the church, when the Lord "will extend her peace like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream;" great things to the church, and gracious things to the soul! (Isai. lxvi. 12; Zech. xiii. 1, 2, 4; xiv. 8.) *Inter orationem suspiria cognoscit*: "Holy sighs in prayer give intelligence of great mercies to follow." † Nay, to withstand powerfully all the wiles of Satan, one means is, to consecrate every part of the spiritual armour by "prayer in the Spirit." (Eph. vi. 18.)

8. *Apply special promises to special cases in prayer.*—"For God hath [magnified]" and will magnify his "word" of promise "above all his name." (Psalm cxxxviii. 2.) When we are under the word of command for a duty, we must seek for a word of promise, and unite them in prayer. (John xii. 28.) When a promise of aid suits to the precept, it renders prayer victorious, and obedience pleasant: when we come with God's own words into his presence, when we take his words with us that he would "take away all iniquity," he will "receive us graciously." (Hosea xiv. 2.) Jacob urged that God had bid him return unto his country and kindred. (Gen. xxxii. 9.) Solomon urges the word of promise to David. (1 Kings viii. 24.) Jehoshaphat urges the word of promise to Solomon. (2 Chron. xx. 8, 9.) Daniel fills his mouth with the promise given to Jeremiah; he reads, and then applies it in prayer. (Dan. ix. 2, 3.) First, search the Bible, and look for a promise; and

* GERSON, tom. ii. KK. iv. 49.

† RICHARDUS DE SANCTO VICTORE, *ult.* p. 321.

when found, open it before the Lord. Paul teaches us to take the promise given to Joshua, and then to "say boldly, The Lord is our helper," &c. (Heb. xiii. 5, 6.) For the special ground of the answer of prayer lies in the performance of a promise. (Psalm l. 15; lxxv. 2, 4.) Simeon lived upon a promise, and expired sweetly in the arms of a promise in the breathings of a prayer. (Luke ii. 29.) Sometimes the soul depends for an answer by virtue of the covenant in general; as of that, "I will be thy God;" (Gen. xvii. 7, 8;) sometimes, by the great Remembrancer, "draws water out of some well of salvation:" (John xiv. 26; Isai. xii. 3;) but in both, God's faithfulness is the soul's surety. Hence it is that David in prayer does so often argue upon the veracity and truth of God; and the church, in Micah, is so confident that "the mercy" promised "to Abraham, and confirmed in truth to Jacob," should be plentifully performed to his people Israel. (Micah vii. 20.)

9. *Sober and serious resolutions before God in prayer.*—Psalm cxix. is full of these: "I will keep thy statutes." (Verse 8.) "I will run the way of thy commandments." (Verse 32.) "I will speak of thy testimonies before kings." (Verse 46.) "I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments." (Verse 106.) And elsewhere: "Quicken us, and we will call upon thy name." (Psalm lxxx. 18.) And again: "O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart." (Psalm ci. 2.) "Visit me with answers of mercy to prayer;" and then the soul makes holy stipulations and compacts of obedience to God. Thus Jacob: "If God will be with me, then shall the Lord be my God;" and resolves upon a house for God, and reserving the tenth of all his estate to his service and worship: (Gen. xxviii. 20—22:) where the particle כִּי , *si*, "if," is not to be taken for a single conditional, as [that] if God should not bestow what he promised, he should not be his God; that were a great wickedness: but it is a rational particle, or of order and time: * "Because," or, "Since God is graciously pleased to promise, I will acknowledge him to be the God whom I adore, by erecting a temple, and paying tithes to maintain his worship." (Gen. xxxv. 3.) But whatever it is that the soul in distress does offer to God in promise, be not slack to perform; for many times answers of prayer may delay till we have performed our promises. (Eccles. v. 4.) David professes to pay what his lips had uttered in trouble; for God had heard him. (Psalm lxvi. 13—19.) If we break our words to God, no wonder if we feel what the Lord threatened to Israel, that they should "know his breach of promise." (Num. xiv. 34.)

10. *A waiting frame of spirit in prayer.*—"I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry." (Psalm xl. 1.) קָוִי קְוִי־תִי , "I expected with expectation:" he walked up and down in the gallery of prayer. This is set forth by hope till God hear: "In thee, O Lord, do I hope: thou wilt hear, O Lord my God." (Psalm xxxviii. 15.) "Our eyes" must "wait upon the Lord our God, until he have mercy upon us, more than they that watch for the morning;" (Psalm cxxiii. 2; cxxx. 6;) and persist praying: "Cause us to hear thy loving-kindness in the morning; for in thee do we

* RIVETUS in loc. p. 489.

trust ;" (Psalm cxliii. 8 ;) and say, with Micah : " I will look unto the Lord ; I will wait for the God of my salvation : my God will hear me ;" (Micah vii. 7 ;) hoping, expecting, trusting, living upon the promise, and looking for an answer of peace ; as he* said of prayer, *Sagitta moeetur post quietem sagittantis, et navis quiescentibus nautis* : " When an archer shoots an arrow, he looks after it with his glass, to see how it hits the mark." So says the soul : " I will attend and watch how my prayer flies towards the bosom of God, and what messages return from heaven." " As the seaman, when he has set sail, goes to the helm and the compass, and sits still" and observes the sun or the pole-stars, and how the ship works, and how the land-marks form themselves aright according to his chart : so do you, when you have been at prayer : mark your ship how it makes the port, and what rich goods are laden back again from heaven. Most men lose their prayers in the mists and fogs of non-observation : and thus we arrive at the second question.

QUESTION II. *How to discover and discern answers to secret prayer, that the soul may be satisfied that it hath prevailed with God.*

Let us now consider the *αποδοσις*, " rendition or reply " to prayer, in the text. He will return it into your bosoms. And as to this in general, when the mercy sought-for is speedily and particularly cast into your arms ; like the irrational creatures [which] in their natural cries seek their meat from God, and gather what he gives them, and " are filled with good ;" (Psalm civ. 28 ; cxlvii. 9 ;) when God openly returns to his children, there is no further dispute : for the worst of men will acknowledge the divine bounty, when he fills their " hearts with food and gladness." (Acts xiv. 17.)

OBSERVATIONS.

OBSERV. I. But when cases are a little dubious, *observe the frame and temper of thy spirit in prayer.*—How the heart works and steers its course in several particulars :—

1. *A holy liberty of spirit is commonly an excellent sign of answers, a copious spirit of fluency to pour out requests as out of a fountain.* (2 Cor. iii. 17.)—As God shuts-up opportunities, so he shuts-up hearts, when he is not inclined to hear. The heart is sometimes locked up that it cannot pray ; or if it does and will press on, it finds a straitness, as if the Lord had spoken, as once to Moses, " Speak no more unto me of this matter ;" (Deut. iii. 26 ;) or as God spake to Ezekiel, " Though Noah, Daniel, and Job " should entreat for a nation, when the time of a land is come, there is no salvation but for " their own souls." (Ezek. xiv. 14 ; vii. 2, 7, 11.) When God intends to take away near relations or any of his saints unto himself, many times neither the church of God nor dear friends have either apt seasons or hearts to enlarge ; the bow of prayer does not abide in strength. God took away gracious Josiah suddenly : the church had time to write a book of Lamentations, and to make it " an ordinance in Israel," but no time for deprecation of the divine displeasure in it. (2 Chron. xxxv. 25.) But in Hezekiah's case there was both a season and a heart enlarged in

* GERSON.

prayer, and the prophet crying for a sign of the mercy. (2 Kings xx. 11.) Holy James might be quickly dispatched by the sword of Herod Agrippa; but the church had time for supplication in behalf of Peter. (Acts xii. 2, 12.) When the Lord is pleased graciously to grant space of time and enlargement of heart, it is a notable sign of success. "Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress," says David. (Psalm iv. 1.) Though it be meant of deliverance, yet it may be applied to prayer, as the holy prophet seems to do. Yea, though the soul may be under some sense of displeasure and in extremities, yet [it] lifts up a cry; (Psalm xviii. 6;) when conscience stops the mouth of hypocrites, that they shun and fly the presence of God.

2. *A blessed serenity and quiet calmness of spirit in time of prayer.*—Especially when the soul comes troubled and clouded at first, whilst it poured out its complaints before the Lord; but at length, *nescio quid serenius emicat, &c.*,* "the sun shines forth brightly, and the heavens look serenely and cheerfully upon the soul in prayer." It is said of Hannah, She "was no more sad," Hebrew, "her countenance was not," עַרְבָּה לִי *illi ulterius*, "any longer in the old huc," cast down and sorrowful because of her rival. (1 Sam. i. 18.) Thus the Lord dealt with David, though not yet fully answered, yet filled with holy fortitude of spirit, and "revived in the midst of" his "trouble." (Psalm cxxxviii. 3, 7.) Prayer dispels anxious solicitude, and chases away black thoughts from the heart; it eases [the] conscience, and fills the soul with "the peace of God." (Phil. iv. 6, 7.)

3. *A joyful frame of spirit.*—God sometimes makes his people not only peaceful but "joyful in" his "house of prayer." (Isai. lvi. 7.) Thus sped Hezekiah, when his crane-like chatterings were turned into swan-like songs, and his mournful elegies into glorious praises upon ten-stringed "instruments in the house of the Lord." (Isai. xxxviii. 14, 20.) The "lips" of Habakkuk "quivered," and his "belly trembled;" but before he finished, his voice was voluble in holy songs, and his fingers nimble upon the harp. (Hab. iii. 16, 19.) Thus, at Solomon's prayer, when the fire came down, the people were warmed at worship, and went away "glad and merry at heart." (2 Chron. vii. 1, 10.) David's experience of this sent him often to the house of God for comfort; and [he] thus chides his soul when cast down at any time: "I am going to the altar of God; unto God my exceeding joy. Why art thou disquieted within me?" (Psalm xliii. 4, 5.) His old harp, that had cured Saul of his malignant dumps, being played upon with temple-songs, now cures his own spiritual sadness. When we look upon God with an eye of faith in prayers, it "enlightens" our faces with heavenly joy. (Psalm xxxiv. 5.) When Moses came out of the mount from communion with God, how illustrious was his face from that heavenly vision! Wherefore prayer for divine mercy and comfort sometimes exhibits itself in this language: "Cause thy face to shine" upon us; "and we shall be saved." (Psalm lxxx. 3.) On this wise the priests of old were to bless the children of Israel: "The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee." (Num. vi. 25.) These and the like expressions in scripture

* HIERONYMUS.

import that sometimes the Lord was pleased to give forth a shining glory from the oracle, and thereby made known his presence unto his people, and filled them with awful impressions of his majesty and mercy. (Exod. xl. 34 ; Lev. ix. 23 ; Num. xvi. 19, 42 ; xx. 6 ; 1 Kings viii. 11.) This joyful light of God's countenance is like the sun rising upon the face of the earth : it chaseth away the dark fears and discouragements of the night. Such heavenly joy shows the strength of faith in prayer, and the radiant appearances of God ; yea, to this end all prayer should be directed, that our "joy may be full." (John xvi. 24.)

4. *A sweetness of affection to God, when the soul has gracious sentiments of God in prayer.*—Clouds of jealousies and suspicions of the divine mercy, as if God were a hard master, are marvellously unbecoming a soul that should go to God as to a father ; and hence, from such unsuitable thoughts of infinite mercy, to hide the talent of prayer is greatly provoking. Whereas the apprehension of God's excellent goodness should work the heart into lovely thoughts of God. Man, but especially a saint, is *acervus beneficiorum Dei*,* "an accumulated heap of divine favours ;" and if nothing but the gifts of mercy should attract our hearts, yet herein we are every moment laden with his numerous benefits. But when the soul comes to perceive that all flows from the fountain of his eternal love, it makes prayer to be *res amorosa*, to be "filled with holy delights and joys." The ecstasies of love often rise upon the soul in secret ; and such divine affection, as Gerson said, it is *res ecstastica*, † "it carries the soul beyond itself." Let the profane world say what they will, when spiritual ardours, like so many fragrant spices, flow out of the soul ; "I love the Lord," says David, "because he hath heard my supplications." (Psalm cxvi. 1.) As answers of prayer flow from the love of the Father, (John xvi. 27,) so suitable workings of holy affections flow from the hearts of children. When the soul is filled with gracious intimations, like those of the angelical voice to Daniel, "O Daniel, greatly beloved, O man of desires," to stand before the King of Saints ; (Dan. ix. 23 ; x. 11 ;) or like that to the Holy Virgin, "Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee ;" (Luke i. 28 ;) how greatly does it inflame the heart to God !

5. *Inward encouragements sometimes spring in upon the heart in prayer from remembrance of former experiments, which mightily animate the soul with fervency.*—When Moses calls to mind that God had forgiven and delivered, from Egypt until then, immediately follows a sweet intimation of mercy : "I have pardoned according to thy word." (Num. xiv. 19, 20.) When the soul considers the days of old, the years of ancient times, and "calls to remembrance" its former "songs in the night," he draws an argument out of the quiver of experience : "Will God be favourable no more ? Can he forget to be gracious ? Can he in anger shut up his tender mercies ?" The soul concludes this thought to flow from its own "infirmity ;" (Psalm lxxvii. 5—10 ;) for when God once hears a prayer, as coming from a child of his in covenant, prove our filial interest, we may sweetly rest assured in all things according to his will to be always heard.

* GUIL. PARIENSIS, p. 376.

† GERSON, tom. ii. KK. 4.

6. *A ready heart for thankfulness and service.*—The heart is brimful, and ready to flow-over in grateful memorials of his mercy. “What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?” (Psalm cxvi. 12.) As of old at temple-sacrifices there was music, so it ought to be now: while the mercy is praying for, the heart must be winding up and tuning for praise. The “vials full of the odours” of prayer are joined with harps for heavenly melody: (Rev. v. 8:) when the “heart is fixed” or prepared, then follows song and praise. (Psalm cviii. 1.) This streams from the sense of divine love; and love is the fountain of thankfulness and of all sprightly and vigorous services. That prayer that does not end in cheerful obedience, is called by Cyprian * *oratio sterilis* and *preces nudæ*, “barren and unfruitful, naked and without ornament;” and so we may glance upon the expression of holy James, the *δησις ενεργουμένη* (James v. 16;) “a working prayer” within will be working without, and demonstrate the labour of love.

OBSERV. II. *The principal subject-matter of prayer, the mark, the white that the arrow of prayer is shot-at, the scope it aims at.*—There is usually some special sin unconquered, some untamed corruption, some defect, some pressing strait that drives the soul to prayer, and is the main burden of the spirit: take notice how such a sin withers, or such a grace flourishes, or such a need [is] supplied upon the opening our hearts in prayer. “Watch unto prayer:” (Eph. vi. 18:) watch to perform it, and then to expound the voice of the divine oracle, and to know that ye are successful. Cry to thy soul by way of holy soliloquy: “Watchman, what of the night?” (Isai. xxi. 11.)

OBSERV. III. *Ensuing providences.*—Set a vigilant eye upon succeeding passages; examine them as they pass before thee; set a wakeful sentinel at the posts of wisdom. “That his name is near, his wondrous works declare;” (Psalm lxxv. 1;) his name of truth, his glorious title of hearing prayers. When prayer is gone up by the help of the Spirit, mark how “all things work together for good,” and note the connexion there: the working of things together follows the intercession of the Spirit for all saints. (Rom. viii. 27, 28.) God is pleased often to speak so clearly by his works, as if he said, “Here I am; I will ‘guide thee continually: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.’” (Isai. lviii. 9, 11.) Secret promises animate prayer, and open providences expound it. Cyrus was promised to come against Babylon for the church’s sake: but Israel must ask it of God; and they had a word for it, that they should not seek his face in vain; (Isai. xlv. 4, 11, 19;) and then follows Babylon’s fall in the succeeding chapters. When we cry unto the Lord in trouble, he sends his word of command, and heals us. (Psalm cvii. 19, 20.) There is a set time of mercy, a time of life. When Abraham had prayed for a son, the Lord told him, “At the time appointed I will return.” (Gen. xv. 2; xviii. 10, 14.) In a great extremity, after the solemn fast of three days by the Jews in Shushan and the queen in her palace, on the fourth day at night the king could not sleep, and must hear the chronicles of Persia read; and then follows Haman’s ruin. (Esther iv. 16; vi. 1.) Prayer has a strange virtue to give quiet sleep sometimes to a David, (Psalm iii. 4, 5,) and

* *De Oratione*, p. 107.

sometimes a waking pillow for the good of the church.* When Jacob had done wrestling, and the angel gone at the springing of the morning, then the good man saw the angel of God's presence in the face of Esau. [Gen. xxxiii. 1.] Sometimes Providence is not so quick. The martyrs' prayer as to complete answer is deferred for a season; but long white robes are given to every one, a triumphant frame of spirit, and [they are] told they should wait but a little season till Divine Justice should work-out the issue of prayer. (Rev. vi. 11.) The thunder upon God's enemies comes out of the temple, the judgments roar out of Zion, the place of divine audience; but the means, and methods, and times of God's working are various, such as we little forethink. (Rev. xi. 19; Joel iii. 16.) Submit all to his infinite wisdom; prescribe not, but observe, the embroidery of Providence; it is difficult to spell its characters sometimes, but it is rare employment. His works are searched into by such as delight in his providences, for all things are beautiful in his season. (Isai. lxiv. 5; Psalm cxi. 2; Eccles. iii. 11.)

OBSERV. IV. *Mark thy following communion with God.*—Inward answers make the soul vegete and lively; like plants, [which,] after the shining of the sun upon rain, lift up their heads, and shoot-forth their flowers. (2 Sam. xxiii. 4.) A saint in favour does all with delight. Answer of prayer is like oil to the spirits, and "beauty for ashes:" the sackcloth of mournful fasting is turned to a wedding garment. (Isai. lxi. 3.) He grows more free and yet humbly familiar with heaven. This is one I would wish you to pick acquaintance with, that can come and have what he will at court. (John xvi. 23.) As the Lord once told a king by night, that Abraham was a prophet, and would pray for him. (Gen. xx. 7.) He was acquainted with the King of heaven. O blessed person! I hope there are many such among you, whose life is a continued prayer: as David that gave himself to prayer. (Psalm cix. 4.) Hebrew, "But I prayer:" he is all over prayer, prays at rising, prays at lying down, prays as he walks; he is always ready for prayer, like a prime favourite at court, that has the golden key to the privy stairs, and can wake his prince by night. Christians, there are such (whatever the besotted, profane world dreams) who are ready for spiritual ascents at all seasons, beside the frequency of set communions. His wings never weary: his willing spirit is flying continually, and makes God the "rock of his dwelling," לְבוֹא חָדִיד into which he may upon all assaults have holy retirements. (Psalm lxxi. 3.)

But so much for the main question, with its branches. There be many particular queries of some weight that may attend the principal subject, and such I shall briefly reply to; as,

QUERY 1. "What is the proper time for secret prayer?"

ANSWER. Various providences, different temperaments and frames of spirits, motions from heaven, opportunities dictate variously. Some find it best at even; others, in the night, when all is silent; others, at morning, when the spirits are freshest. I think, with respect to others, that conscientious prudence must guide in such cases, when others are retired, and the spirit in the best frame for communion.

* Eliezer, Gen. xxiv. 15.

QUERY II. "How often should we pray in secret?"

ANSWER. If we consult scripture-precedent, we find David at prayer in the morning, (Psalm v. 3,) our blessed Lord early before day in the morning, (Mark i. 35.) Chrysostom advises, *Νιψον προ του σωματος την ψυχην*, &c. : * "Wash thy soul before thy body;" for as the face and hands are cleansed by water, so is the soul by prayer. At another time our Lord went to secret prayer in the even; (Matt. xiv. 23;) and Isaac went to prayer in the eventide. (Gen. xxiv. 63.) David and Daniel prayed three times a day; (Psalm lv. 17; Dan. vi. 10;) and once it is mentioned that David said, "Seven times a day do I praise thee," that is, very often. (Psalm cxix. 164.) Such cases may happen that may require frequent accesses to the throne of grace in a day; but I humbly think, at the least once a day, which seems to be imported by that passage in our Lord's prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread;" since, after our Lord's appointment of secret prayer in the text, he gives this prayer as a pattern to his disciples.

QUERY III. "When persons are under temptations or disturbance by passions, is it expedient then to pray?"

ANSWER. Since we are enjoined to "lift up holy hands, without wrath and doubting," (1 Tim. ii. 8,) I judge it not so proper to run immediately to prayer; but with some foregoing ejaculations for pardon and strength against such exorbitances, and when in some measure cooled and composed, then speed to prayer, and take heed that the "sun go not down upon your wrath," (Eph. iv. 26,) without holy purgation by prayer: though I must confess, a Christian should always endeavour to keep his course and heart in such a frame as not to be unfit for prayer upon small warnings. The very consideration of our frequent communion with God should be a great bar to immoderate and exuberant passions.

QUERY IV. "Whether may we pray in secret, when others must needs take notice of our retirement?"

ANSWER. I must confess, in a strait house, and when a person can many times find no seasons but such as will fall under observation, I think he ought not to neglect secret duty, (if his heart be right before God,) for fear of others' notice. We must prevent it as much as may be, and especially watch our hearts against spiritual pride; and God may graciously turn it to a testimony and for example to others.

QUERY V. "Whether we may be vocal in secret prayer, if we cannot so well raise or keep-up affection, or preserve the heart from wandering, without it?"

ANSWER. No doubt; but yet there must be used a great deal of wise caution about extending the voice. That of Tertullian, counselling persons at prayer, *Ne ipsi quidem manibus sublimius elatis, &c., ne vultu quidem in audaciam erecto. Sonos etiam vocis subjectos esse oportet; aut quantis arteriis opus est, si pro sono audiamur! &c. Qui clarius adorant, proximis obstrepunt; imò prodendo orationes suas, quid minus faciunt quam si in publico orent?* † advises that both hands and countenance and voice should be ordered with great reverence and humility. "What arteries need we, if we think to be heard for noise! and what else do we by discovering our prayers, than if we prayed in public?" Yet

* CHRYSOSTOMUS, in *Psalmum* v. p. 542. *Etim.*

† *De Oratone.*

surely if we can obtain some very private place, or when others are from home, and the extension of the voice be found to some persons by long experience to be of use, such may lawfully improve it to their private benefit.

QUERY VI. "How to keep the heart from wandering thoughts in prayer?"

ANSWER. Although it be exceedingly difficult to attain so excellent a frame, yet by frequent reflecting upon and remembering the eye of God in secret, by endeavouring to fix the heart with all possible watchfulness upon the main scope of prayer in hand, by being very sensible of our wants and indigences, by not studying of impertinent length, but rather being more frequent and short, considering God is in heaven and we upon earth, and by exercise of holy communion, as we may through the implored assistance of the Spirit attain some sweetness and freedom, so likewise some more fixedness of spirit in our addresses before the Lord. (Eccles. v. 2.)

QUERY VII. "What, if present answers seem not to correspond to our petitions?"

ANSWER. We must not conclude it by and by to be a token of displeasure, and say, with Job, "Show me wherefore thou contendest with me;" (Job x. 2;) but acknowledge the sovereignty of divine wisdom and love in things that seem contrary to us in petitions for temporal mercies, and submit to the counsel of Elihu: "Since he giveth not account of any of his matters," neither can we find out the unsearchable methods of his holy ways to any perfection. (Job xxxiii. 13; xi. 7.)

There be other cases and scruples that might be treated of, as about prescript words in secret prayers, to which I need say but little; since such as are truly converted have the promise of the Spirit of God to assist and enable them, (Gal. iv. 6; Rom. viii. 26; Zech. xii. 10; Acts ix. 11,) and *they* need not drink of another's bucket *that* have the fountain, nor use stilts and crutches *that* have spiritual strength; neither are words and phrases, but faith and holy groans, the nerves of prayer. Yet for some help to young beginners, doubtless it is of use to observe the style of the Spirit, as well as the heavenly matter of several prayers in the holy scriptures.

Neither need I to press frequency to a holy heart that is fallen in love with spiritual communion; for he delights to be continually with him, the thoughts of God are so precious to him. (Psalm xxiii. 6; cxxxix. 17, 18.) His soul is even sick of affection, and prays to be "stayed with" more of the "flagons," and "comforted with the apples" in greater abundance. (Canticles ii. 5.) To some (though I fear how few) [asking] how far it is lawful and expedient to withdraw for the necessity of the frail body in this vale of tears, it may be replied that "the Lord is very pitiful" and gracious to our frailties, that he had rather have mercy than sacrifice in some cases. (James v. 11; Hosea vi. 6.) Though I doubt these phenixes are but rare that are in danger of expiring in prayer, as martyrs of divine love, as Gerson expresses.*

Having now finished, with what brevity I could, the foregoing queries, I should treat about short, sudden, occasional prayers, commonly called "ejaculations;" but, indeed, that requires a set and just discourse. Yet,

* GERSON, tom. ii. KK. 5.

because of a promise above-recited, I shall give a few tastes of it, and then conclude with some application.

EJACULATORY PRAYER

Is a sudden, short breathing of the soul towards heaven upon instant and surprising emergencies. In holy persons it is quick and lively, rising from a vehement ardour of spirit, swifter than the flight of eagles, and keeps pace with a flash of lightning. It flies upon the wings of a holy thought into the third heavens in the twinkling of an eye, and fetches auxiliary forces in times of straits.

There are many precedents recorded in sacred page upon great and notable occasions, with strange success. When good magistrates are busy in the work of reformation, let them imitate Nehemiah when redressing the profanation of the sabbath: "Remember me, O my God, concerning this," &c. (Neh. xiii. 14, 22.) When generals and captains go forth to war, observe Israel's appreciation to God, rather than acclamations to men: "The Lord thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses." (Joshua i. 17.) In time of battles or pursuit of the enemy, valiant Joshua darts-up such a prayer as this, "O that the Lord would lengthen this triumphant day!" and the Lord heard his voice. (Joshua x. 12.) The tribes beyond Jordan [cried unto the Lord] in a battle with the Hagarites; (1 Chron. v. 20;) Jehoshaphat, in a sore strait at Ramoth-Gilead; (2 Chron. xviii. 31;) Samson, ready to perish at Lehi with thirst, and, when blind, exposed to contempt in the temple of Dagon; (Judges xv. 18; xvi. 28;) David, near stoning at Ziklag, and when flying from Absalom in "the ascent of Mount Olivet;" (1 Sam. xxx. 6; 2 Sam. xv. 31;) Elisha, at Dothan, compassed with a Syrian host, "Lord, open the young man's eyes;" (2 Kings vi. 17;) in the midst of lawful and laborious callings, Boaz, to the reapers, "The Lord be with you." (Ruth ii. 4; Psalm cxxix. 8.) We may pray "that our oxen may be strong to labour; that there be no breaking in, nor going out; that there be no complaining in our streets." (Psalm cxliv. 14.) It sanctifies the plough, as Jerome said of the fields of Bethlehem: *Quocunque te verteris, arator, stivam tenens, alleluja decantat, &c.** "The tillers of the field, and the dressers of vineyards, sang David's psalms." It keeps the shop, and inclines the hearts of customers; it bars the doors, it quenches fire, it "blesseth thy children within thee," it "preserves thy going out and coming in." (Psalm cxlvii. 13; cxxi. 8.) Jacob found it to rest upon his children going a journey to Egypt. (Gen. xliii. 14.) It closes the eyes with sweet sleep, it "gives songs in the night," and wakens the soul in the arms of mercy. (Job xxxv. 10; Psalm iii. 5; iv. 8; cxxxix. 18.) It sits at the helm when a storm rises at sea; it gives strength to anchors in roads, and prosperous gales to the venturesome merchant. (Psalm cvii. 28; Jonah i. 6.) When, in the palace at dinner, Nehemiah presents the cup to his prince, he presents also a *nichtam*, a "golden prayer" to the King of heaven. (Neh. ii. 4.) At the reading of the law Josiah was heard as to some secret cries to heaven. (2 Chron. xxxiv. 27.) At a holy conference in a journey the disciples occasionally pray, "Lord, increase our faith." (Luke xvii. 5.) Jacob on his dying

* *Ad Marcellum*, p. 129, tom. i.

pillow, predicting future events to his children, falls into a holy rapture : "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord." (Gen. xlix. 18.) At sacred death in martyrdom Zechariah cries out, "The Lord look upon it, and require it;" (2 Chron. xxiv. 22;) and Stephen, under a shower of stones, melts in prayers for the stony hearts that flung them : "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge ;" (Acts vii. 60 ;) and our blessed Saviour in his greatest agonies makes a tender-hearted prayer : "Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do." (Luke xxiii. 34.) And, lastly, in the distresses of others, Eli puts-up a sudden petition for Hannah : "The God of Israel grant thee thy petition." (1 Sam. i. 17.)

In these and many like cases, the holy word stores us with patterns for ejaculation in all extremities, which I cannot now digest and improve. Only in a few words let us take a view of the usefulness of such a sudden flight of the soul to heaven.

1. It helps us to a speedy preparative for all duties. With such an ejaculation, "let us lift our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens." (Lam. iii. 41.)

2. It is a guard against secret sins in the first risings, and the first assaults of temptation.

3. It suffers not divine mercies to slip-by unobserved in a wakeful Christian, and proves a fruitful mother of gratitude and praise.

4. It sanctifies all our worldly employments ; (1 Tim. iv. 4, 5;) it fastens the stakes in the hedge of divine protection, and turns every thing to a blessing.

5. It is a saint's buckler against sudden accidents, a present antidote against frights and evil tidings. It is good at all occasions, and consecrates to us, not only our meals, but every gasp of air, &c.

6. It is a sweet companion, that the severest enemies cannot abridge us of. Outward ordinances and closet duties they may cut off ; the little "nail in the holy place" they may pluck out. (Ezra ix. 8.) But no labyrinth, no prison, not the worst of company can hinder this ; *cælo restat iter* ; in the very face of adversaries "we may lift our souls to God." No more of this. Let us briefly conclude with some uses.

USES.

USE I. *To convince such of their dangerous state that neglect secret duties.*—That have no heart-communion, that draw no water out of this sealed fountain ; (Canticles iv. 12;) but all they do is in public only. It is a suspicious token of hypocrisy, since the kernel and soul of religion lies so much in the heart and closet. Mark the phrase in the text, how it varies : "Thy Father which is in secret, which seeth in secret." God's eye is open upon thee in the closet ; and if thy eye be open upon his, thou mayest see a glorious beauty. The excellency of grace lies in making conscience of secret sins and secret duties.

USE II. *To examine such as perform secret duty, but not from a sincere principle.*—Like Amaziah, that prays, "but not with a perfect heart." (2 Chron. xxv. 2.) Like Ahab, they mourn, but with crocodile tears. Such as do it only because they find precept or example for it, and, therefore, to quiet conscience, will into secret, but converse only in the shell and trunk of a duty ; that rest in the naked performance, but

matter not whether they taste of the sweet streams that flow-in from heaven in the golden pipe of an ordinance; what account can such render, that go into their closets but, like Domitian, to catch flies only;* and when the doors are shut to the world, their hearts are shut to heaven and communion with God? He that sees in secret beholds the evil frame of such a heart, and will one day openly punish it.

USE III. *To excite and awaken all to this excellent duty, and to manage it in an excellent manner.*—Would ye live delightfully? would ye translate heaven to earth? Then keep-up communion in secret prayer, to know Him, to discern His face, to behold the lustre of His eye that shines in secret. Remember the glorious Person that meets [you] in your closets: all the world yields not such a glittering beauty as a gracious person sees, when he is in a happy frame at secret prayer. Shut your eyes when ye come out; for all other objects are but vile and sordid, and not worth the glances of a noble soul. O the sweetness, the hidden manna, that the soul tastes when in lively communion with God! Part of that which is “laid up for” saints in glory,—let us a little relish our spirits with it. (Psalm xxxi. 19.)

1. Consider *what amorous agonies the soul delights to conflict with in secret.*—Fears that raise confidence, humility that exalts, tremblings that embolden, bright clouds that shine upon our Israelites in the night, and darkness that enlightens, solitudes full of heavenly company, and tears brimful of joy, and holy sighs like a cooling wind in harvest, sweats of love, and sick fits that are symptoms of health, and holy faintings that are the soul’s cordials, a weariness to the flesh that is the healthful exercise of, and vigour to, the spirit, and a continual motion that never tires it. As Austin said of divine love, *Illo feror quocunque feror; pondus meum, amor meus*: † “It is the weight of my soul; it carries me up and down in all that I speak, and all that I act.”

2. *Its ecstasies and heavenly raptures.* ‡—Which allure and draw the heart from earthly vanities; when the soul shuts its eyes to wordly delights, and says of laughter, with Solomon, “It is mad: and of mirth, What doeth it?” (Eccles. ii. 2;) cannot warm its thoughts at “the crackling of thorns under a pot,” nor be joyful in the house of fools. (Eccles. vii. 4, 6.) It is the soul’s pleasure to loathe pleasure itself; none so beautiful to him as Christ, “the chiefest among ten thousand;” (Canticles v. 10;) no sweetness like that of the tree in the midst of the wood, “the tree of life in the midst of the Paradise of God;” he sits under it with great delight, while it drops sweeter than honey into his closet. (Canticles ii. 3; Rev. ii. 7; 1 Sam. xiv. 26.)

3. *Its admirable prophecies.*—Prayer stands upon Mount Zion with a divining, presaging spirit: it foretells great things to the church’s joy and its enemies’ terror. Elijah at prayer in Horeb receives answer of the ruin of the house of Ahab, and [is] bid to go and “anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi king over Israel.” (1 Kings xix. 16.) The two witnesses under the Romish defection “have power to smite the earth with plagues, as often as they will;” (Rev. xi. 6;) consonant to what Tertullian said

* Suetonius in *Vita Domitiani*, cap. 3. † GERSON, tom. ii. KK. 4. ‡ *Quæ major voluptas, quàm fastidium ipsius voluptatis?*—TERTULLIANUS. “What greater delight can there be than the very height of delight itself?”—EDIT.

of old: *Votum Christianorum confusio nationum*,* “The prayers of Christians confounded the nations.” And so it will shortly prove; the doom of Babylon comes out of the temple. When the sanctuary is full of the smoke of the incense of prayer, the seven angels come out with the seven last “vials full of the wrath of God,” to pour them out upon the anti-christian world. (Rev. xv. 7, 8; xvi. 1.) Prayer calculates and hastens the ruin of Rome. When the spirit of prayer is once poured out, it brings deliverance to mount Zion, and “gathers the nations into the valley of Jehoshaphat” unto judgment. (Joel ii. 21, 32; iii. 1, 2.) Let us never be discouraged: if prayer fall to work, and awaken Christ in the ship of the church, her storms will cease in a halcyon calm. (Luke viii. 24.)

4. *Its comforting evidences.*—Secret prayer duly managed is a notable evidence of adoption: “Pray to thy Father who is, and sees, in secret,” who “knows the secrets of thy heart,” thy “groanings are not hid from” him. (Psalm xlv. 21; xxxviii. 9.) None but a child of promise has this sweet freedom with God as a Father.

5. *Its rewards and revenues.*—Nothing revives and cheers the spirit so much as answers of love and mercy from heaven. As it feasts the conscience with the royal dainties of sincerity, so it sets a lustre upon every mercy, as being the child of prayer. Our closets influence upon our shops, our ships, our fields, and all we enjoy, that they smell of divine blessing: as David said of precepts, (Psalm cxix. 56,) the soul may say, “This I have, because I urged the promises.”

USE IV. *To pity the miserable blind world, that know not where true comfort, joy, and strength is to be found.* (Gen. xxvii. 28.)—That see no beauty in the ways of God, and feel no sweetness in communion with him; that find no pleasure in closets, but play-houses, which Tertullian called “the devil’s churches;” † that cry out, with Esau, they “have enough.” (Gen. xxxiii. 9.) Alas! what “enough” can be in the creature, unless of dunghills, rattles, and vanities? O, how ignorant of heavenly treasures, of that fountain of mercies, whereof prayer drinks and refreshes the spirit of a saint! that know not that blessed “enough” whereof Jacob speaks, that ocean of “all” things to be found in God! ‡ (Gen. xxxiii. 11.) Now Europe is in flames, and the ark in danger, he cares not though the one be burnt, and the other in ashes, so he be safe. But if his concerns catch fire, he knows not to repair but to Endor or Ekron. (1 Sam. xxviii. 7; 2 Kings i. 2.) Such have no acquaintance with, no help from, God, no interest in the Keeper of souls. The world is a deplorable hospital, the great lazarus-house of sick, lame, and impotent persons, as Gerson terms it, § that have no face nor heart to go to the Physician of souls.

But ah! most lamentable is the state of some prostitute wretches of our age, that are, I fear, almost incurably gone with spiritual ulcers in their lungs, and eating, putrid cancers in their tongues; that breathe nothing but venom, and openly spit-out their rotten atheistical jeers against the spirit of prayer, and make a mock at communion with God; that scoff at what God hath promised as one of the choicest tokens of

* *De Oratione.* † TERTULLIANUS *De Spectaculis*, cap. 25, 26. † מִיְהוָה לִי *Mihi omnia.* [“I have all things.”] § GERSON, tom. ii. 76, 6.

his love to the church, and symptoms of the glory of the latter times, (Zech. xii. 10; Joel ii. 28, 32; Rom. x. 13; John vii. 39,) when God will turn such Ishmaels into the desert, and their drunken songs shall expire in dreadful howlings; (Amos viii. 10; Job xxx. 31;) profaner than many Heathens, that in the primitive times had some reverence for Christian worship, though they persecuted. But those of this adulterous Romish age, like brute beasts, speak evil of what they are ignorant [of], and are in danger to "perish utterly in their own corruption." (2 Peter ii. 12.) Pity such, if there be yet hope, and commend their condition to God's mercy, and penitent sorrow; that they may weep here, where tears prick; not in hell, where they scald and burn, and swell that river of brimstone.*

In the mean time, O ye that fear the Lord, be diligent to observe and interpret messages after secret prayer; for the life and joy of a Christian is improved by it. God has declared himself graciously pleased with secret prayer, so as to send an angel, that glorious creature, to fly into Daniel's chamber, and he "weary with flying," he moved so swiftly, *הַעֲבֵהּ הַיְעָבֵהּ volans in lassitudine*, as the original text expresses it. (Dan. ix. 21.) What a high expression is this, that even angels are represented weary with hasty flights to bring saints their answers! and of what great account does the Lord esteem his praying people, that angels are expressed to be tired in bringing tidings of mercy!

USE V. *Meditate on the glory of heaven, where all our prayers shall be turned into praises.*—When every sigh below shall be an accent to the heavenly music above, and the fears of the valley shall be turned into orient gems in the diadem of glory. Here we groan under † wants and desires, empty within, and live on the craving hand; but there palms in the hand, white robes, and everlasting joys upon the heads and hearts of saints.

SERMON XV.

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

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HOW MAY THE DUTY OF DAILY FAMILY PRAYER BE BEST MANAGED
FOR THE SPIRITUAL BENEFIT OF EVERY ONE IN THE FAMILY?

But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.—Joshua xxiv. 15.

JOSHUA being old and stricken in age, and desirous, before his departure out of the world, solemnly to engage the people of Israel to adhere to God and his holy worship, gathered all their tribes to Shechem, called for the chief of them that were governors, and representatives of the

* GERSON, tom. ii. 49, KK. 3. † The first edition commences the clause thus: "Here we live in wants," &c. Other slight variations occur between it and the second.—EDIT.

whole body of the people ; * namely, “for the elders of Israel,” or the senate, that did chiefly manage the affairs of church and state ; “for their heads,” the most eminent of each tribe, and prime rulers thereof ; “for their judges,” that sat in courts to hear causes and execute judgment betwixt man and man, and such magistrates that ruled over them for their peace and welfare ; “and for their officers,” who did see to the execution of the sentences and judgments of superior magistrates. All these being present, Joshua makes a brief historical narrative of God’s signal providences and singular benefits to them and their fathers, in this order : First. His calling of Abraham from idolatry to the knowledge of the true God, and profession of true religion. (Verses 2, 3.) Secondly. His multiplying of his seed. (Verses 3, 4.) Thirdly. His delivering them out of Egypt, and making a way for them through the Red Sea, which, returning, destroyed the Egyptians that did pursue them. (Verses 5—7.) Fourthly. His preserving them in the wilderness. (Verse 7.) Fifthly. The victories that he gave them over the Amorites when they fought against them. (Verse 8.) Sixthly. His defending them against Balak, the son of Zippor, king of Moab, and restraining Balaam from cursing of them. (Verses 9, 10.) Seventhly. His miraculous providence in drying up the waters of Jordan, that they might pass over. (Verse 11.) Eighthly. His delivering the men of Jericho, and their several enemies, into their hands. (Verse 11.) Ninthly. That it was not by their own sword, nor by their own bow, that they subdued the nations ; but God, by weak and contemptible creatures, (as hornets,) drove them out from before them. (Verse 12.) Tenthly. His giving them the possession of such cities which they had not built, and to eat of the vineyards and olive-yards which they had not planted. (Verse 13.) Thus he brings to their remembrance the great and wonderful things that God had done for them.

The mercies of God to man being strong enforcements of man’s duty to God, upon these moral grounds and reasons, Joshua, in the 14th verse, earnestly exhorts them to “fear the Lord, and to serve him in sincerity,” with a pure heart, without hypocrisy ; “and in truth,” without false pretences, and counterfeit shows of godliness, as becometh such as worship the most holy, the most wise and glorious, God ; † and declareth

* *Quatuor erant in quilibet urbe gradus officiorum* : (1.) שְׂנֵי־זָקֵן Senes, vel senatus. (2.) תְּבִיבֵי־אֲבוֹתָא capita patrum, singularum trium primates, primi et eminentiores in urbe, tribuni. (3.) שֹׁפְטֵי־בָרִיִּים Judges, qui jus noverant et dicebant. (4.) אֲוִי־בָרִיִּים Apparitores, qui res judicialas exequebantur, et baculo et loro populum cohibebant ad observantiam præceptorum.—SCHINDLERI *Lexicon Pentaglotton*.—“Every city had four different degrees of official men : 1. *The elders, seniors, or senate.* 2. *The heads of the fathers, the chief men in each of the tribes, the principal and more eminent persons in the city, the tribunes.* 3. *The judges, who were deeply versed in the law, and engaged in its administration.* 4. *The officers, who attended to all those matters on which the judges had delivered their sentence, and who, with staves and thongs, compelled the people to observe the divine commands.*” These four grades are enumerated in Joshua xxiv. 1.—EDIT. † *A capite bona valetudo ; inde omnia vegeta sunt, atque erecta, aut languore demissa ; prout animus eorum viget, aut marcet. Et erunt cives, erunt socii digni hac bonitate : et in totum orbem recti mores revertentur.*—SENECA *De Clementiâ*, lib. ii. cap. 2. “The gentleness of thy spirit, O Cæsar, will by degrees be diffused through every portion of the empire, and all things will be conformed to thy likeness. The head itself is the source of good health : from it all things either vegetate and raise themselves upwards, or fall down in a state of languor, according as the animating principle which actuates them is either in a vigorous or

his own fixed resolution, that he and his house would serve the Lord. As if he should say, "I have given you a catalogue of the great and many mercies of God vouchsafed to you, and I have exhorted and charged you all, in the name of the great and eternal God, to fear and serve him; but if ye will not, I do here declare, profess, and publish my purpose and resolution in the ears of all you, the elders, heads, judges, and officers, and all others, that I and my house will serve the Lord. Be it known unto you, that I will not only serve and worship God myself, but will also set-up his worship in my house: *and both I and mine will serve the Lord.*" *

The original words in [the] Old and New Testament, translated "house," have various significations; † amongst the rest these:—

1. *Pro domicilio*: "For an earthly habitation," properly taken.—*This house cannot serve the Lord: but the inhabitants in this house must serve the Lord.*

2. *Pro sepulchro*: "For the grave."—Where we must all shortly take up our lodgings, and be carried on men's backs from our now dwelling-houses to this sleeping-house. We that are now alive shall be in a little time housed in the earth. While we live, we dwell in several houses. One house can contain or entertain but a few; but what a large, capacious house is the grave, that shall hold all the living! "For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living." (Job xxx. 23.) ‡ There is no praying to or praising of God in *this* house. In the houses where you now dwell, you may, you ought; but in *this* you are going to (and O how quickly might you or I be in it!) you will be past praying, and past hearing, and calling upon God, when death and dust have stopped your mouths and tied your tongues. § "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." (Eccles. ix. 10.) Sirs, you are going, you are going every day, every hour, every moment, to this house, whether you are eating, or drinking, or sleeping. Whether you pray or not pray in your houses

in a drooping condition. Among the Roman citizens and confederates will be found those who are worthy of this benignity; and throughout the whole world correct morals will once more prevail.—EDIT.

• אֶתְּכִי וְאֶתְּיָי *Et ego et domus mea.* † οἶκος οἰκία *usurpantur.*
 "The word both in the Hebrew and in the Greek is employed to denote a dwelling-place and its inhabitants," &c.—EDIT.

‡ Εὐ γὰρ ἐγὼ τοῦτε οἶδα κατὰ φρενα καὶ κατὰ θυμὸν,
 Ὡς με ταχ' ἐς θανάτου πᾶνθημιὸν οἶκον οὐχίσει
 Πᾶσι δὲ ἴσοις κερήμενον ἐστὶ καθευδειν.—DUPORTUS.

These verses of the learned professor require no translation, as they are only an elegant amplification of Job's declaration in the text.—EDIT.

§ *Eheu, fugaces, Posthume, Posthume,
 Labuntur anni! Nec pietas moram
 Rugis et instanti senectæ*

Afferet, indomitæque morti.—HORATIUM Carm. lib. II. od. 14.

"How swiftly glide our flying years!

Alas! nor piety nor tears

Can stop the fleeting day:

Deep furrow'd wrinkles, posting age,

And death's unconquerable rage,

Are strangers to delay."—FRANCIS'S Translation.

where now you dwell, you are going to this house where you can never pray.* Therefore pray *now or never*. Serve God, and pray unto him, now where you dwell, or you must hold your peace for ever, except you cry and roar and lament your negligence and folly in a lake of burning brimstone, because you did not pray in your houses upon earth. "For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?" (Psalm vi. 5.) "For the grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth." (Isai. xxxviii. 18.)

3. *Pro re familiari*: "For earthly riches, possessions, and goods." (Matt. xxiii. 14.)—*These* cannot serve God: but, *with these*, men might serve and honour God, by laying them out, when and as God commands. (Prov. iii. 9.)

4. *Pro corpore naturali*: "For our weak and frail body."—In which our souls do dwell in a state of sin and imperfection. (2 Cor. v. 1.) *This house* must serve the Lord, though the soul be the principal part which God requires. (Rom. xii. 1.)

5. *Pro sede seu statu beatorum*: "For the state and place and glory of the blessed."—And blessed are they that are in this house; for sure I am, they in this house are still praising God, loving him, and delighting in him: "an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." † (2 Cor. v. 1.) This is called an house, (1.) Because there the saints do dwell with God, as children in their father's house. (2.) Because there they have clear, distinct knowledge of, and perfect love to, God their Father. (3.) Because there they are safe from all their enemies, and from all dangers, as houses are our castles of defence. (4.) Because there all God's children shall be gathered together, and called home, and live in love for ever. (5.) Because of the excellent beauty of that state and place; as houses of kings and nobles are set forth with rich and costly furniture. What is that then of the King of kings, the place of the glorious God?

6. *Pro domesticis*: "For persons belonging to the house or family."—And thus it is taken either, (1.) *More generally*, for "a people, or whole nation." In Ezek. ii. 3, the children of Israel are called "a rebellious nation;" and in verse 5, "a rebellious house." "Speak to the house of Israel." (Ezek. iii. 1.) "Go, get thee to the house of Israel." (Verse 4.) "But the house of Israel will not hearken: for all the house of Israel are impudent and hard-hearted." (Verse 7.) Or, (2.) *More strictly*, for "a stock or tribe." So, "the house of Benjamin" is taken for *the* tribe of Benjamin. (2 Sam. iii. 19.) Or, (3.) *Most strictly*, for "an household, or persons living together in one proper house." The whole

* ————— *Dum loquimur, fugerit invida*

Ætas; carpe diem, quum minimum credula postero.—Idem, lib. i. od. xi. 7.

"Improve the moments whilst they last,

And snatch the hours that fly so fast:

To-day let hope prevent despair;

To-morrow is not worth your care."—Translation by several Hands. (Lintot, 1713.)

† *Reliquorum sententia spem afferunt; si te fortè hoc delectat, posse animos, cum e corporibus excesserint, in celum, quasi in domicilium suum, pervenire.*—CICERONIS *Tusc. Quest.* lib. i. cap. 11. "The opinions of others are charged with hope, if it is any pleasure to you to think that souls, after they leave the body, may go to heaven as their abode."

—MAIN'S Translation.

people of the Jews did consist of several tribes; a tribe, of several families; a family, of several households; an household, of several persons. "In the morning therefore ye shall be brought according to your tribes: and it shall be that the tribe which the Lord taketh shall come according to the families thereof; and the family which the Lord shall take shall come by households; and the household which the Lord shall take shall come man by man." (Joshua vii. 14.) In this place I take it strictly for an household properly, at least necessarily, included; of which more in the first argument to prove the question before us.

Will serve the Lord.—The original word is used concerning *God*, concerning *men*, concerning *the earth*.* The first is only to our present purpose, and signifieth the religious worship which we owe to God. "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God," וְיָרֵאוּ אֶת־יְהוָה "and him shalt thou serve." (Deut. vi. 13.) עֲבָדוּ אֶת־יְהוָה בְּיִרְאָה "Serve the Lord with fear." (Psalm ii. 11.) Of this more also in the first argument to the question, which I am limited to: which is well enough grounded upon the text; as will appear in the proof drawn from it. The question is this:—

"How might the duty of daily family prayer be best managed to the spiritual benefit of every one in the family?"

For the more distinct proceeding in this question, I shall inquire after these five things:—

QUESTION I. "How it will appear, or be proved, that it is a duty incumbent upon proper families, jointly to pray to God?"

II. "Whether it be the duty of proper families, or those that live together in one house, under the government of the master of the family, to pray daily to God together? or what are the reasons for the daily performing of it?"

III. "How these daily family prayers should be so performed and managed, that every one in the family might be benefited thereby?"

IV. "With what arguments masters of families might be urged, and they press their own hearts, withal, to a conscientious, serious, and constant performance of family prayer?"

V. "What are the common pleas and excuses ordinarily alleged to stop the mouth of conscience, or to shift-off the guilt from themselves in the neglect of it? and how they may be made appear to be frivolous and vain?"

In the first I shall speak of *the duty itself*. In the second, of *the time and frequency of it*. In the third, to *the manner of it*. In the fourth, to *the motives to it*. In the last, to *the objections against it*.

* עָבַד *Servitū Deo, homini, terræ.* (1.) *Deo*; adorando et venerando: adoravit, veneratus est, religiosè coluit. (2.) *Homini*; operando: vel operâ et officiis subjectus fuit. (3.) *Terræ*; laborando, arando, sementem preparando: aravit, coluit, exercuit.—SCHINDLERI *Lexicon Pentaglotton.* "The Hebrew word, which is here rendered to *serve*, is applicable to God, to man, and to the earth. 1. *To God*, by acts of adoration and reverence to Him: and then it means to adore, to venerate, and render religious worship to Him. 2. *To man*, by engaging in working for him: and then it signifies a subjection to him by laborious services and the performance of certain duties. 3. *To the earth*, by toiling in it, by ploughing and preparing the ground for the reception of seed: and then its meaning is, to plough, to cultivate, and bestow much labour upon the soil."—EDDT.

QUESTION I.

“Whether it be the duty of proper families or households to pray to God together?”

ANSWER in the affirmative.

ARGUMENT I.

That it is the duty of those that live together under the government of the master of the family to *pray together*, will appear and be proved from this chapter, whereof the text is a part, by making good these four PROPOSITIONS:—

1. *That by Joshua's "house" is meant, or at least necessarily included, Joshua's household or proper family.*

2. *That serving of God, taken generally, (as here it is,) doth comprehend and include prayer, as one way whereby Joshua and his house together would serve the Lord.*

3. *That Joshua made this resolution, as he was guided by the Holy Ghost.*

4. *That Joshua, in the name of God, and by authority received from him, doth exhort all the families of Israel to do the same in their houses, which he doth promise and resolve for himself and his house; and this upon moral grounds and reasons, for which all families are obliged to do the like.*

PROPOSITION I. *By Joshua's "house" is meant, or at least included, his household or proper family.*—That this is a frequent acceptance of the original words translated “house” in the scripture, for a proper family,* consult these places: “Come thou and all thy house into the ark.” (Gen. vii. 1; Gen. xviii. 19; xxx. 30; xxxi. 41.) “A lamb for an house.” (Exod. xii. 3.) “And if the household” (Hebrew, *house*) “be too little for the lamb.”† (Verse 4.) “Take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover.” (Verse 21.) It was said, an “house” before, now “families,” לְמִשְׁפְּחֹתֵיכֶם “according to your families;” both house and family are here taken strictly and properly;‡ for the passover was to be eaten in every household, if there were ten persons in it; for, according to some, there were never less than ten in number, nor more than twenty,§ at the eating of one lamb at the passover. “If the household were too little for the lamb, they were to take the next neighbours in, according to the number of persons;”|| and the blood of the lamb was to be stricken on the two side-posts, and upon the upper door-post, of the houses where they did eat it, which was for a token upon such several houses that they should not be destroyed. “The earth swallowed them up, and their households.” (Deut. xi. 6.) In the Hebrew, “their houses.” [So] 1 Sam. i. 21; ii. 36; 2 Kings x.

* חֵיטָּ in *Instrumento Veteri non simpliciter pro ædificio capitur, sed pro ipsâ familiâ, οὐκ ἐδοχμασ, continens pro contento.* “This word, in the Old Testament, is not merely used to denote an edifice, but likewise the family that inhabits it, by a common synecdoche, the container being put for that which it contains.”—EDIT. † *Pro quâque familiâ, nempe minore, et in unâ domo degente.*—PISCATOR in loc. “For each family, that is, such as were few in number, and living together in the same house.”—EDIT. ‡ *Domus patris pro domo in quâ est paterfamilias.*—OLEASTER, MARIANA. “The father's house signifies any house in which the master of the family resides.”—EDIT. § JOSEPHUS *De Bello Judaico*, lib. vii. c. 17. || *Prout numerosa fuerit familiâ, ita tibi magnam vel parvam familiam adjunget.*—VATABLUS in loc.

21; Psalm ci. 2, 7. So, in the New Testament: * Luke xix. 9; John iv. 53; Acts x. 2; xi. 14; xvi. 15, 31, 34; xviii. 8; 1 Cor. i. 16; Phil. iv. 22; 2 Tim. i. 16; iv. 19; Titus i. 11; Heb. xi. 7. "One that ruleth well his own house;" (1 Tim. iii. 4;) that is, his wife, children, and servants. By which it is manifest, that frequently by "house" is understood *the persons dwelling together in one house*, constituting one particular proper family.

And it must be taken in a limited sense in the text, as distinguished from all the rest of the families of all the people of Israel: for to all the rest Joshua doth declare, that though they all should forsake the Lord, yet he and his household would serve the Lord. And if any would extend it beyond his own proper family to his kindred, yet his own house and family, strictly taken, cannot, with any colour of reason, be excluded; for can it be imagined, that Joshua should be so zealously resolute, that his tribe or kindred should worship God, and yet take no care of those that were nearest to him, in his own house or proper family? Or would this be suitable to the spirit of a man so holy, wise, and zealous as Joshua was, so to do?

PROP. II. *Serving of God comprehendeth and includeth under it praying unto God.*—This being put for the whole worship of God, prayer, that is a most eminent part thereof, cannot be excluded. That serving God is so comprehensive as to take-in the whole worship of God, these scriptures make manifest: Exod. iii. 12; iv. 23; vii. 16; viii. 1, 20; ix. 1, 13; x. 3, 7, 8, 11, 24, 26; xii. 31; Deut. vi. 13; x. 12, 20; xiii. 4; xxviii. 47; 1 Sam. vii. 3; xii. 10; Psalm ii. 11; Jer. xxx. 9; Matt. iv. 10; vi. 24; Luke i. 74; ii. 37; iv. 8; Acts vii. 7; xxvi. 7; xxvii. 23; Rom. xiv. 18; 1 Thess. i. 9; 2 Tim. i. 3. The Septuagint † translate the text, *Εγω δε και η οικια μου λατρευσομεν Κυριω*: "But I and my house will worship the Lord." So it is translated in Phil. iii. 3: *Οι ωνευματι Οω λατρευοντες*, "Which worship God in the spirit."

Calling upon God is such an eminent part of worship, and such a principal way of serving the Lord, that it is frequently put for the whole worship of God, ‡ according to these scriptures: Gen. iv. 26; xii. 7, 8; xiii. 4; xxi. 33; xxvi. 25; Psalm lxxix. 6; Isai. xliii. 22; Jer. x. 25; Joel ii. 32; Matt. xxi. 13; Acts ii. 21; ix. 14, 21; Rom. x. 12—14; 1 Cor. i. 2; 2 Tim. ii. 22. Can prayer then be excluded? Can any be said to be devoted to the service of God in general, that never call upon

* *Eodem modo oikos et οικια in Instrumento Novo.* "In the same manner the Greek word for 'house,' in the New Testament, also signifies a household."—EDIT. † *Græci Interpretæ indifferenter hoc verbum* ἡ οἰκία *verterunt, modò verbo δουλευειν, modò verbo λατρευειν.* "The Greek Interpreters translate the Hebrew word indifferently, as signifying either to serve or to worship."—EDIT. ‡ *Precatio omnium ferè benorum operum complexus quidam est et compendium; nam in ed se exerit cordis fides, agnitio, timor, amor, et fiducia in Deum. Omnium hominis virium quies et cessatio ab omni aliâ occupatione.—Sic et legitima dilectio nostræ et proximi salutis per omnes ferè virtutum classes piis precibus exercetur. Imò totius doctrinæ theologica in oratione praxis est.—CROCIJ Syntagma de Precatione.* "Prayer is a comprehensive compendium of almost every good work: for in it the heart exercises faith, acknowledgment, and confession, fear, love, trust and confidence in God. In it all the powers of man are brought into action, and cease to be occupied with other objects. Thus likewise, through nearly all classes of the virtues, the lawful desire for our own salvation, and for that of our neighbour, finds its appropriate exercise in pious petitions and requests. Nay, in effectual and fervent prayer the whole of doctrinal theology is reduced to practice."—EDIT.

God, or pray unto him? Can a particular person be accounted a servant of God, that never prayeth to him? Or can a family, as such, be said to serve the Lord, that, as such, doth not call upon him? Are God's servants prayerless servants? Or are not such more worthy of the name of "atheists," since they are described by not calling upon the name of the Lord? (Psalm xiv. 4.)

PROP. III. *Joshua, being guided by the Spirit of God, doth thus resolve and promise, that he and his house would serve the Lord.*—Was this good or evil that he declareth he and his would do? Was he bound to do it, or was he not? Was this *cultus Deo indebitus*, "worship not due to God?" If it were due upon moral reasons, then, upon the same reasons, it is due from other families as well as it was from his: if not, it was but Joshua's superstition* to serve God in his house. But was he ever blamed for superstition in this thing? Was it obedience to God that Joshua served God in his house? If it was, it must be founded upon some law, and it must be conformity to some rule; for what is *no way* commanded by God, though done, cannot be obedience to him.† Beside this, add, that, in his preface to his speech, of which the text is a part, he declares that what he said to them he had it from the Lord. (Joshua xxiv. 2.)

PROP. IV. *Joshua, in the name of God, and by authority from him, exhorteth all the rest of the families of Israel to the same duties, which he promised and resolved upon before them all, that is, that they in their houses should serve the Lord.*—That his exhortation was in the name of God, and by authority from him, is evident; for he protesteth that he was to say the Lord's words to them: "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel." (Verse 2.) That he exhorted them in the name of the Lord to serve God with their families, is also manifest.‡ Doth he engage that he will serve the Lord? So he exhorteth them to do also: "Now therefore fear ye the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth." (Verse 14.) And again: "Serve ye the Lord." The matter of the duty then is the same, expressed in the same words. That this exhortation of serving the Lord reached to their families also, is apparent from the argument that he useth to enforce it, namely, his own example in his house; else the strength and reason of it would be lost. Would you have it run thus?—"When I do so earnestly persuade, counsel, and command you to serve the Lord, I would not have you to understand

* *Superstitio est quæ Deo cultus indebitus exhibetur.*—AMESII *Medulla*. "Superstition is that which renders to God a worship which is not due to him, and which he has not required."—EDIT. † *Cultus ab hominibus extra Dei revelationem, pro arbitrio confectus, suo nomine appellatur εθελοθρησκεια, quæ non honoratur Deus, neque obedientia habet rationem, quæ esse non potest ubi mandatum non est.*—WIND. *Theolog.* lib. II. "The worship devised by men as the figments of their own imaginations, without any regard to Divine revelation, is distinguished by a Greek appellation, signifying *will-worship*; an act by which God is not honoured, and which has no reference to obedience; for *this* cannot exist except where God has given a command." The author from whom this sentence is quoted has been imperfectly described by Mr. Doolittle. Some of our old divines cite WENDELINI *Philosophia Moralis*; but I am of opinion, that the treatise intended by the preceding slight notation, is J. P. WINDECCIUS *De Theologia Jureconsultorum, libri duo*, 4to, 1604.—EDIT. ‡ *Suo et familie sue exemplo ad perseverantiam in vero cultu hortatur.*—PAREUS *in loc.* "By his own example, and that of his family, he exhorts them to perseverance in the true worship of God."—EDIT. *Interea ut pudorem ipsis inculcat, se in Dei cultu cum domo sua perseveraturum testatur.*—CALVINUS *in loc.* "In the mean time, in order to fill them with shame, he solemnly protests that he and his house will continue in the worship of God."—EDIT.

me, as if this reached to your houses and proper families, that ye should there set up conjunct religious duties ; but I and my house will serve the Lord." Would not this destroy the very sense and strength of his reasoning? But if you take it, on the contrary: "When I persuade you, and command you in the name of God, to serve him, I would have you understand that my meaning is, that both you and your houses should be engaged conjunctly to serve God; and I exhort you to no more than what I do declare before you all that I will do in my house." And so the sense is good, and the argument strong to move them to it, when he doth, according to the proverb,* "begin at home," and, by his own example, influence them into the same practice: it being an effectual way to back an exhortation by one's own example, doing what we persuade others to do:—

Sic agitur censura, et sic exempla parantur;

Cum iudex, alios quod monet, ipse facit. †—*OVIDIUM Fasti*, lib. vi. 647.

"In his resolution he doth not only show his zeal in glorifying God by doing him faithful service, though all others should forsake him; but also and chiefly, like a prudent governor, draweth them on to imitate him, of whom they had justly so great an opinion for his wisdom and piety."—"English Annotations." †

The sum of all this affordeth this argument for family prayer:—

ARG. 1. If Joshua, guided by the Spirit of God, and upon moral grounds and reasons, did promise and resolve that he and his house would jointly serve the Lord, which includeth prayer also; and doth upon the same moral grounds and reasons, and in the name of God, exhort and command all the heads and the governors of Israel, and all the people, to do the same in their houses; § then, the same moral grounds and reasons still continuing, it is the duty of all families jointly to serve the Lord, including prayer also:

But all the parts of the antecedent are true:

Therefore it is the duty of all families jointly to serve the Lord, including prayer also.

ARGUMENT II.

The second topic or head from whence family prayer might be proved to be our duty, shall be taken from *the law of nature*. In this

* *A lure incipe, id est, a domesticis ac familiaribus initium sumito, rectè dicitur in magistratus et alienæ vitæ censors: quorum officium est ut in primis suam suorumque vitam corrigant.*—*ERASMI Adagia*. "Commence at your own hearth; that is, 'Make a beginning in the domestic circle, in your family-affairs.' This proverb is with propriety addressed to magistrates, and to those who have to sit as censors on the conduct of other persons, and whose duty it is in the first instance to correct and amend their own course of life, and that of their family."—*EDIT.* † "In this manner are the censor's duties rightly discharged, and thus are appropriate examples furnished; when he who is appointed to sit in judgment upon the conduct of others, himself practises that which he enjoins."—*EDIT.* † *Efficacissimum argumentum erat exemplum imperatoris, præsertim prudentissimi, sanctissimi, et felicissimi; exemplum hic proponitur gubernandæ familiæ nostræ.*—*MASIUS in loc.* "The most efficacious argument to be employed was the example of a general who was remarkable for consummate prudence, deep piety, and uncommon success; an example which is here proposed for our imitation in the government of our families."—*EDIT.* § *Beneficiorum prædictorum commemorationis scopus est, ut ostendat extreme ingratitudeis esse pro tot tantisque beneficiis non vicissim Deum colere et sequi.*—*PAREUS in loc.* "He enumerates the benefits which God had previously conferred on them, for the purpose of showing it to be an act of extreme ingratitude if they did not worship and obey the Lord, in return for such manifold and transcendent blessings."—*EDIT.*

I shall proceed also by laying down several PROPOSITIONS, by which, as by so many steps, we might come up to the argument that will determine it.

PROPOSITION I. *Man, being made by God a rational creature and a voluntary agent, is obliged to take God for his Governor and Ruler.*—The actual existence of a creature doth necessarily and immediately infer his relation to a Creator, as the being of a son doth the relation of a father. Actual creation is the *fundamentum* or “ground” of this relation: and as it is an absurdity in nature, that a son should be a son, having his being by his parents under God, and should not be obliged to be thankful to them, to honour them, love them, and obey them; so it is much more absurd, that man should have a rational being from God, and not be obliged to take him for his Governor, by how much God is greater than our parents, and the First Cause of our being. And *this* man is obliged unto, antecedently to his own consent; yea, though he should never consent unto it; as a son is bound to obey his parents, though he should never consent thereto. Though to take God for our Ruler in order to salvation, our own consent is necessary;—for God saveth no man against his will, nor without his own consent, but by his powerful Spirit maketh them willingly consent; but as our consent was not necessary (nor possible) to our own creation, so it is not necessary to our obligation and subjection unto God;—yet if man doth not consent to take God for his Governor, he is a rebel against his Maker; and though he do it not, he stands bound to do it: else obedience to God were not man’s duty, nor disobedience his sin; and then man might act as he list, and do what he please, and never have any accusation from his own conscience, nor reason to be ashamed of nor afraid of any thing he doeth, if he can by policy or power escape punishment from men; and if they should come to any harm by what they do, it would be rather for their silliness and unwariness, than for their wickedness; or if they do good, moved thereunto by their own profit, and not by obligation of obedience to God their Governor, it would be attributed to their craftiness, rather than their goodness.*

* *Quòd si homines ab injuriâ pœna, non natura, arcere debet, quam sollicitudo veraret impios, sublato suppliciorum metu? Quòd si pœna, si metus supplicii, non ipsa turpitudine, deterret ab injuriâ facinorosâque vitâ, nemo est injustus, ut incauti potius habendi sunt improbi. Tum autem qui non ipso honesto movemur, ut boni viri simus, sed utilitate aliquâ atque fructu, callidi sumus, non boni. Nam quid faciet is homo in tenebris, qui nihil timet nisi testem et judicem? quid in deserto loco, nactus quem multo auro spoliare possit imbecillum atque solum?..... Si negabit se illi vitam erepturum, et aurum ablaturum, nunquam ob eam causam negabit, quòd id natura turpe judicet, sed quòd metuat ne emanet, id est, ne malum habeat. O rem dignam! in quâ non modò docti, verùm etiam agrestes, erubescant.*—CICERO *De Legibus*, lib. i. cap. 14. “But if the dread of impending pains and penalties, and not the dictate of nature, ought to restrain men from committing acts of injustice, what kind of sollicitude would that be with which the wicked would then be distressed, when they saw all fear of punishment removed? But if the fear of punishment and of penal infliction, and not the very turpitude attached to all base deeds, should deter men from an unjust and iniquitous career, no man in that case is unjust; and they only who have been too incautious in the perpetration of their crimes are to be considered as rank scoundrels. But then if our inducement to become good men be solely some personal profit or advantage, and not this high and honourable principle, we are not virtuous persons, but astute and crafty villains. For if such a wretch dreads nothing so much as the sight of a witness or a judge, what will be the character of his actions under the cover of darkness? What will be his conduct when, in a sequestered spot, he meets with a lonely and feeble tra-

PROP. II. *Man, being made by God a rational creature, is governed in a way suitable to the nature of such a creature.*—That is, by a law, and not merely by physical motion, or natural necessity, or objects proposed to his sense only, as brutes and inanimate creatures are. If we consider the nature of man, we shall discern a necessity and an aptitude in him to be governed by a law :—A NECESSITY, because in his first estate *mutable*, in his fallen estate *corrupt* ; AN APTITUDE, because he is rational, acting for some end, to be attained by such means as are conducive to the same, and both end and means to be discerned by reason : * whereas brutes, that neither know the end, *sub ratione finis*, [“in reference to what is proposed by the end,”] nor the means, *sub ratione mediorum*, [“with respect to that which the means are intended to produce,”] are not capable of moral government. But it is suitable to the nature of man, being an understanding and voluntary agent, to be ruled by a law constituting his *debitum officii, præmii, et pœnæ*, “DUTY unto God *his reward*, if he be obedient ; *his punishment*, if he walk contrary to that law prescribing his duty to him.” Such a law God hath made for the government of men : else no man could be guilty of sin, because there would be no such thing as sin ; for where there is no law, there is no transgression : else there would be no such thing as virtue and vice, and no such difference of men as good and bad : else there would be no need of repentance for any man, no need of reproofs and exhortations : else there would be no rewards and punishments ; to be short, there would be no religion in the world.†

PROP. III. *Though all men, for some time, were without the written law of God, which is full and sufficient to salvation, and many are without*

veller, who has abundance of gold, and who he perceives can be easily plundered ? If he will boldly assert, that he had entertained no design of killing his victim or of filching his gold, for the same reason he will never deny, that, in the judgment of nature, such an act would have been one of deep turpitude ; but he will not admit, that he was restrained from that evil deed only through fear of its becoming publicly known, and his being visited with unpleasant consequences. O notable affair ! the reflections concerning which may furnish cause for blushing not only to learned men, but also to uncivilized rustics.”—EDIT.

* *Lex est ratio summa insita in natura, quæ jubet ea quæ faciendæ sunt, prohibet contraria : seu, regula et mensura actuum agendorum vel omittendorum : seu, neque hominum ingenii excogitata, nec sanctum aliquod populorum, sed æternum quiddam, quod universum mundum regeret, imperandi prohibendique sapientiâ.*—ALTENSTAIGI *Lexicon Theologicum*, (Antwerp. 1677.) “This law implanted in our nature is the highest reason, which commands the things that are to be done, and prohibits the contrary. Or it is the rule and measure of all actions that are to be performed, or that must be omitted. Or it is a law which was never devised by any ingenuity of men, nor is it a sacred principle which was discovered and embraced by whole nations. But it is an eternal and undefinable something which was intended to govern the entire intellectual world by the obvious wisdom of its commands and prohibitions.”—EDIT.

† *Si natura confirmatum jus non erit, virtutes omnes tolluntur ;—neque solum in homines obsequia, sed etiam in Deos carimonia religionæque tolluntur ;—jus esset latrocinari, jus adulterare, jus testamenta falsa supponere, si hæc suffragiis aut scitis multitudinis probarentur ; quæ si tanta est potentia stultorum sententiis atque jussis, ut eorum suffragiis rerum natura vertatur, cur non sanciant ut quæ mala perniciosaque sunt, habeantur pro bonis et salutaribus ? &c.*—CICERO *De Leg.* lib. i. cap. 16. “But if nature be not the established law, the foundation of all the virtues will be destroyed ; and not only courtesy and complaisance toward men, but likewise all reverential worship and pious observances toward the gods, will be removed. It would soon become lawful for a man to rob and plunder, to commit adultery, and to forge wills, if these deeds of evil were left to be approved by the suffrages and decisions of the multitude. If then the opinions and judgments of fools possess such a wonderful potency, as to change and subvert the nature of things by their decrees, why do not they at once ordain and appoint, that those things which are evil and pernicious shall be accounted good and salutary ?”—EDIT.

*it still; yet all men have a law written in their hearts, showing them that good is to be embraced, and evil to be shunned, and [it] is sufficient to leave them without excuse.**—Beside what is said before, the apostle proveth this by a twofold argument or testimony: the first *external*, from the lives of many of the more sober Heathen, who did many things contained in, and commanded by, the law of God: “For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:” the second is *an internal testimony*: “Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.” (Rom. ii. 14, 15.) The very Heathen have been filled with fears of punishment after they have committed sin: but what need [for] that, unless they knew they had transgressed some law? What law, then? Not the written law of God; for that they had not: therefore a law of nature; being for such evils for which they were not exposed to punishment by the laws of men.

It is not essential to this law that it be either spoken or written; † but it is sufficient that it be some fit signification of the will of God to man, authoritatively instituting what shall be due to God from man; and declaring what benefit and good shall redound to him if he do obey, and what evil of punishment shall be inflicted upon him if he doth transgress. And yet this will of God is signified and promulged, in that God hath engraven such a law on all men’s hearts, and imprinted it in their very natures, that doth discover such a deformity in some evil that it is to be abhorred, and such a beauty in some good that it dictates it is to be embraced. ‡ There are certain *κοιναι εννοιαι*, “common notions,” “innate or natural principles,” known to all men; such light and dictates of reason by which, when they come to understanding, they may see a plain difference betwixt good and evil in some things, and conclude that one is commanded by God, and the other forbidden, and, consequently, that they are bound to do the one, and to avoid the other: §

* *Est quedam non scripta, sed nata lex; quam non didicimus, accepimus, legimus, verum ex natura ipsa arripimus, hausimus, expressimus; ad quam non docti, sed facti, non instituti, sed imbuti sumus.*—CICERO'S *Oratio pro Milone*, 4. “For this is not a written but an innate law. We have not been taught it by the learned; we have not received it from our ancestors; we have not taken it from books. But it is derived from nature, which has forced it upon us, and it is stamped in indelible characters upon our very frame. It was not conveyed to us by instruction, but wrought into our constitution. It is the dictate of education, but of instinct.”—DUNCAN'S Translation. † *Quæ lex ipsa ratio imperandi et prohibendi; quam qui ignorat, is est injustus, sive est illa scripta uspiam, sive nusquam.*—CICERO *De Legibus*, lib. i. c. 15. “This law is the rule and reason of commands and prohibitions, and he who is unconscious of its dictates is an unjust man, whether it is written somewhere or nowhere.”—EDIT.

‡ *Promulgatio legis naturæ est ex hoc ipso, quod Deus eam mentibus hominum inseruit naturaliter cognoscendam.*—AQUINAS, *Prima Secundæ*, Q. 90. “The promulgation of the law of nature arises from the fact of God having implanted that law in the minds of men, that it may be naturally known and discerned.”—EDIT. § *Jus naturæ est dictamen rectæ rationis, indicans actui alicui, ex ejus convenientiâ aut inconvenientiâ cum ipsâ naturâ rationali, inesse moralem turpitudinem aut necessitatem moralem, ac consequenter ab auctore naturæ, Deo, talem actum aut vetari, aut præcipi.*—GROTIVS *De Jure Belli et Pacis*, lib. i. cap. 10. “That which we call natural right, or the law of nature, is the dictate of right reason, showing the moral malignity or the moral necessity that there is in any act, by either the repugnancy which it hath to rational nature itself, or its congruity with it; and consequently that such an act is either commanded or forbidden by God, who is the very author of nature.”—EVANS'S Translation. *Lex naturæ est lumen et dictamen rationis, divinitus inditum in intellectu, hominem communibus notionibus ad justum et injustum, honestum et turpiter discretionem informans, ut quid facienti-*

and, withal, [it] doth dictate to them that it shall be well with them that embrace good, and punishment shall be inflicted on them that do evil. "And this signification of the will of God concerning *duty, rewards, and punishments* is the law of nature, as it is common to all men." *Lex naturalis est significatio divinæ voluntatis, quam Deus ipse nostris mentibus inserit.*—VALESIUS *De Philosophiâ Sacrà*, p. 279; though described something otherwise by others.

PROP. IV. *By this light and law of nature all men might know that there is a God.*—The knowledge [which] we have of God in this life is either natural or by revelation; by the book of nature, or by the book of scripture. The book of nature is either *external*, the works of God's creation, which declare and show το γνωστον του Θεου, "some things that might thereby be known of God;" (Rom. i. 19, 20;) and this is *acquired* or *objective* knowledge of God: or else *internal*, to which are referred those natural, common principles, the relics of the image of God in man lying in his rubbish after the fall, and the inward testimony of conscience, which is *innate*, *subjective* knowledge of God.* Not that there is any actual knowledge born with man; but by these we might at years of understanding draw as certain a conclusion that there is a God, as that we are, or that any thing is that we behold with our eyes. For when we see the earth and heavens, &c., light of nature tells us that they had some cause by which they were produced; because nothing could make itself, because it would have been before it was, which, reason tells us, is impossible: therefore things made must be made by something that is and was never made. Reason tells us, that if any thing be *possible*, there is something that is *necessary*; if any thing *may be*, something *must be*: that which is *possible to be* must have something to *bring it into actual being*. Reason telleth us, that if there had been one instant in which nothing was, nothing could have ever been, for nothing can make nothing.

All these four propositions do but make way for that which is chiefly to our present purpose, which is that which follows:—

PROP. V. *The light and law of nature doth dictate, that it is man's*

dum sit vel fugiendum intelligat.—CROCI *Syntagma*. "The law of nature is the light and dictate of reason, which is divinely infused into the understanding, instructing the mind of man in general notions for the separating and disparting of that which is right from that which is unjust, of the honourable from the shameful, that he may gain a competent understanding of the things which must be done, and those which must be avoided."—ENR.

* *Quæ est enim gens, aut quod genus hominum, quod non habeat, sine doctrinâ, anticipationem quandam Deorum? cum enim non instituto aliquo aut more aut lege sit opinio constituta, maneatque ad unum omnium firma consensio, intelligi necesse est, esse Deos, quoniam insitas eorum vel potius innatas cognitiones habemus; de quo autem omnium natura consentit, id verum esse necesse est; esse igitur Deus confitendum est: quod quoniam ferè constat inter omnes, non philosophos solum sed etiam indoctos, fateamur constare illud etiam, hanc nos habere sive anticipationem, ut antè dixi, sive prænotionem Deorum.*—CICERO *De Naturâ Deorum*, lib. i. "For what nation, what people are there, who without any learning have not a natural idea or pre-notion of a Deity? For since it is the constant and universal opinion of mankind, independent of education, custom, or law, that *there are gods*, it must necessarily follow that this knowledge is implanted in our minds, or, rather, is innate in us. That to which there is a general agreement through nature, must infallibly be true; therefore it must be allowed that *there are gods*; for in this we have the concurrence not only of almost all philosophers, but likewise of the illiterate. It must be also confessed, that we have naturally this idea, as I said before, or pre-notion of the existence of the gods."—Translation. (Oxford, 1829.)

duty to pray to God, and that not only severally, but conjunctly; and that not only in public assemblies, but in private families.—For the clearing of this, I shall lay down several POSITIONS, including certain truths; and fetch the proof of them from the light of nature and the testimony of Heathens themselves; and then gather up the argument from the whole.

POSITION I. *That the light of nature doth dictate that the souls of men are immortal, and do not die when the body dieth.**—This the Heathen did gather from the great care that there is naturally in all men, at least, that do improve their natural light, and hearken to the voice of sober reason, what shall become of them after death. Though all men do not seriously provide for the soul after its separation from the body, and the light of nature cannot direct us in this matter; yet such cares and fears that there be in men about their state after death, even in such as never had a Bible, is a certain evidence that they believed the soul's immortality. Reason gathers also the immortality of the soul from the simplicity and immateriality of its nature, that it is not compounded of material parts as the body is, nor hath such contrary qualities combating one with another as the body hath, to cause its dissolution or cessation of being; for the destruction of a thing is the tearing asunder those parts which, before such destruction, were joined together.† The soul therefore, that is not so compounded, hath nothing in its own nature that should cause it to cease to be, nor render it liable to be destroyed by any creature, though it might be annihilated by Divine Power.

POS. II. *The light of nature tells us, that the immortal souls of men must be happy or miserable after their separation from the body, and that there is a life of retribution after this.*—Heathens have plainly taught that there are two ways that the souls of men do go, after they are loosed from the body, according as their lives were in this world; that such as have wallowed in sin, and given themselves to gratify their lusts,—that these souls are shut out from God, and shut up in extremity and eternity of torment.‡ Hence Heathens mention Tityus, who being cast down

* *Maximum verè argumentum est, naturam ipsam de immortalitate animorum tacitam judicare, quòd omnibus curæ sunt, et maxima quidem, quæ post mortem futura sunt.*—CICERONIS *Tusc. Quæst.* lib. 1. cap. 14. "But the greatest argument is, that nature herself gives a silent judgment in favour of the immortality of the soul, in that all are anxious, and greatly so, in what relates to futurity: 'One plants what future ages shall enjoy.'"—MAIN'S Translation. † *Nihil animis admistum, nihil concretum, nihil copulatum, nihil duplex; quod cum ita sit, certè nec accerni, nec dividi, nec discerni, nec distrahi potest, nec interire igitur: est enim interitus quasi discessus et secretio ac diremptus earum partium, quæ ante interitum junctione aliquid tenebantur.*—CICERONIS *Tuscul. Quæst.* lib. 1. cap. 29. "In our knowledge of the soul, we cannot but be satisfied that it has nothing but what is simple, unmixed, un-compounded: which being admitted, it cannot be separated nor divided, dispersed nor parted, and therefore cannot perish. For, to perish implies parting asunder, a division, a disunion of those parts which, while it subsisted, were held together by some band."—Idem. *Sed nescio quo modo inhaeret in mentibus quasi seculorum quoddam augurium futurorum; idemque in maximis ingenii altissimisque animis et existit maxime, et apparet facillime.*—CICERONIS *Tusc. Quæst.* lib. 1. cap. 15. "But, I know not how, there adheres to our minds a certain presage of future ages; and this both exists most, and appears clearest, in men of the best parts and greatest souls."—Idem. ‡ *Socrates, supremo vite die, de hoc ipso multa disseruit, et cum pend in manu jam mortiferum illud poculum teneret, locutus est ita, ut non in mortem trudi, verùm in caelum videretur ascendere, ita enim cenebat; itaque disseruit duas esse vias duplexque cursus animorum et corpore excedentium: nam qui se humanis vitiis contaminassent, et se totos libidinibus dedidis-*

to hell had a vulture that came every day, and did gnaw his liver, and in the night it was repaired and made up again; that what was torn by the vulture one while, again did grow, that his punishment might be perpetual: and some that are punished by being put to labour in rolling huge stones, and racked upon wheels, and to be there in this misery for ever.

*Saxum ingens volvunt alii, radiisque rotarum
Districti pendunt: sedet, æternùmque sedebit,
Infelix Theseus*— VIRGILII *Æneis*, lib. vi. 616.

“Some roll huge stones, and stretch’d on wheels do lie;
Damn’d Theseus sits there to eternity.”

Thus they make mention of Pluto, by whom those that were most vicious were most tormented; and of Charon’s boat, who they imagined was ferryman of hell; of Rhadamanthus, the judge; of Tantalus, thirsting in the midst of waters; of the Stygian and other infernal lakes; of Cerberus, a dog with three heads, porter in hell: and give descriptions of the place of torments.

*Spelunca alta fuit, vastoque immanis hiatus,
Scrupea, tuta lacu nigro, nemorumque tenebris;
Quam super haud ullæ poterant impunè volantes
Tendere iter pennis: talis sese halitus atris
Faucibus effundens, supera ad convexa ferebat;
Unde locum Graii diserunt nomine Avernum.*—Idem, lib. vi. 237.

“There was a deep cave, with a mighty gulf,
With black lakes moated, and a horrid grove,
O’er which not safely swiftest wings could move,
Such were the vapours from these foul jaws came:
This place the Grecians did *Avernus* name.”

And as they set forth the eternity of their hellish torments, so they did acknowledge the variety of them to be more than could be expressed.

*Non, mihi si linguæ centum sint, oraque centum,
Ferreæ vos, omnes scelerum comprehendere formas,
Omnia pœnarum percurrere nomina, possim.*—Idem, lib. vi. 625.

“Had I an hundred mouths, as many tongues,
A voice of iron, to these add brasen lungs,
Their crimes and tortures ne’er could be display’d.”

Take the testimony of another, that you may see what a common received opinion this was, among the Heathen, of misery of many in hell.

sent, quibus cæcati velut domesticis vitis atque flagitiis se inquinassent—iis devium quoddam iter esse seclurum a concilio Deorum; qui autem se integros castoque servassent, quibusque fuisset minima cum corporibus contagio, seseque ab his semper servocassent, essentque in corporibus humanis vitam imitati Deorum, his ad illos, a quibus essent profecti, reditum facilem patere.—CICERONIS *Tusc. Quæst.* lib. i. cap. 30. “Socrates maintained a manly freedom, not the effect of pride, but of the true greatness of his soul; and, on the last day of his life, he held much discourse on this subject; and, a few days before, he refused his liberty, when he might have been easily freed from his confinement; and, when he had hold, in a manner, of that deadly cup, he spoke with an air of one not forced to die, but as ascending into heaven. For so he thought himself to be; and thus he harangued: ‘That there are two ways; and that the souls of men, at their departure from the body, took different roads: for, those who were polluted with vices that are common to men, and had given themselves up entirely to unclean desires, blinded by which, they had habituated themselves to all manner of debaucheries, or had laid detestable schemes for the ruin of their country, took a road wide of that which led to the assembly of the gods. But they who had preserved themselves perfect and chaste, and free from the slightest contagion with the body, and had kept themselves always at a distance from it, and, whilst on earth, had conformed to the life of the gods, found the return easy to those from whom they came.’”—Idem.

—Και τους μεν ὑπο χθονος ευρωδεις
 Πενθησαν, και δεσμοισιν εν αργαλειοισιν εδησαν,
 Νικησαντες χερσιν, υπερθυμους περ εοντας,
 Τωσσαν ενερθ' ὑπο γης, ὅσον ουρανος εστ' απο γαιης.—HESIODI *Theogonia*, 717.

The sense take thus :—

“ God mighty ones in chains of darkness bound,
 And cast them down to hell ; which under ground
 (So deep and black) so far remote doth lie
 As the earth is distant from the starry sky.”

Yet (bear with me) once more : Another of them brings-in God threatening the disobedient with hell-torments, where he useth the same word for “ hell ” as the apostle doth in 2 Peter ii. 4 ; describing hell to be a place far remote from heaven ; a great gulf or deep pit, whose gates are of iron, and whose pavement is of brass ; a place of utter darkness ; in sense so near the former, that I shall not need any further to translate,

Η μιν ελθων ριψω ες Ταρταρον ηεροεντα,
 Τηλε μαλ', ἤχι βαθιστον ὑπο χθονος εστι βερεθρον
 Ενθα σιδηρειαι τε πωλαι και χαλκεος ουδος,
 Τωσσαν ενερθ' αιδω, ὅσον ουρανος εστ' απο γαιης.*—HOMERI *Iliad*, lib. viii. 13.

All these testimonies of the Heathens (and there are many more) do plainly manifest that the light of nature doth discover a place of punishment, where wicked men after this life shall be sorely tormented. I might bring as many of them also that by the light of nature did determine of a place of happiness for good men in another world, but that I would not be too tedious in this point. The use of these, and how they make to our present business in hand, will appear in the following positions :—

POS. III. *As the light of nature tells us all this, so also it doth dictate to us that no man is born for himself, to mind only his own good, and to escape evil and punishment himself ; but to our utmost power, in the places and societies of which we are heads or members, to endeavour the good of that society, and every member thereof.*—He that will help no other, who should help him ? or with what reason can he expect it ? He that is so selfish, is unprofitable to any society, and good for nothing. Man being ζων πολιτικον, † nature hath inclined him to a sociable life, not only for his own, but also for the good of others ; which whoso doth neglect, sins against that society. ‡ Come then, you parents and masters of families !

- * “ Or far—O far !—from steep Olympus thrown,
 Low in the dark Tartarean gulf shall groan,
 With burning chains fix'd to the brasen floors,
 And lock'd by hell's inexorable doors ;
 As deep beneath the' infernal centre hurl'd,
 As from that centre to the' ethereal world.”—POPE'S Translation.

† “ A being formed for enjoying the benefits of citizenship ; ” “ a gregarious animal, fond of association.”—EDIT. ‡ *Nemo sibi nascitur. Non nobis solum nati sumus, sed oris nostri partem patriam, partem parentes vindicant, partem amici ; atque quæ in terris gignuntur, ad usum hominum omnia creantur ; homines autem hominum causa generantur, ut ipsi inter se alii aliis prodesse possent. In hoc naturam debemus ducem sequi, et communes utilitates in medium efferre, mutatione officiorum, dando, accipiendo, tum artibus, tum operibus, tum facultatibus devincire hominum inter homines societatem.*—CICERO, *De Officiis*, lib. i. cap. 8. “ But seeing, as is excellently said by Plato, ‘ we are not born for ourselves alone ; but that our native country, our friends and relations, have each a just claim and title to some part of us ; ’ and seeing whatsoever is created on earth was merely designed, as the Stoics will have it, for the service of men ; and men themselves, for the service, good, and assistance of one another ; we certainly in this should be followers of nature, and second her intentions, and, by producing all that lies within the reach of our power for the general interest, by mutually giving and

See now why I alleged, before, what the light of nature doth dictate concerning the soul's immortality, and the state of souls in another world,—even that you may do your utmost to save the precious souls in your houses from this place of torment, and to help them to prepare for an everlasting state. The law of charity firmly binds you to it. If your children were fallen into a pit, would not nature tell you, you are to help them out? If any of your house were falling into the fire, would not nature tell you, you should prevent it if you can, or to snatch them out with haste and speed? * Doth nature tell you, (as hath been showed,) that there is a place of torment where sinful souls must suffer? and do you see any in your houses in danger of falling into it? and will you sit still and do nothing to endeavour to prevent their everlasting misery? If they were sick, or had drunk down poison, doth not nature tell you, you should use means for their recovery, to prevent their death? And doth not nature tell you, that their souls are more precious than their bodies, and more to be regarded? It doth; certainly it doth. Are not their souls sick and diseased, and poisoned with the venom of sin? and doth not nature tell you, there is charity to be shown to their souls, as well as to their bodies, and much more? Certainly these are the dictates of nature. If I suppose you have not one spark of grace, the light of reason will tell you all this.

Pos. iv. All these things being suggested by the light of nature, let me add, that *reason tells you that for you to pray with them in your family, tendeth to their good, and the neglect thereof to their detriment and damage.*—Let reason be heard, and it will dictate to you, that conjunct prayer with them is a likely means for the good of their souls. Will it not tell thee, that to pray to God for them, and to bring them to pray with thee, may be for their benefit to escape the misery of another world, and obtain happiness in the life to come? Enter into thine own heart, and debate this with thyself, and judge impartially, as thou wouldst do if thou wast a dying man; and then tell me, if the light that is within thee doth not prompt thee to all this. Prayer is a part of natural worship, which is due to God from all: and would it not tend to the profit of their souls to give God his due? And shouldst not thou that art a parent or a master, whom nature hath set over them and committed them to thy trust, and requireth thy help to thy utmost power for their good, assist them herein, and see that they do it? and use thy gifts and parts and knowledge in praying with them, that they also by thy example might be induced to this duty, and, by hearing thee pray in their company, may learn to pray also? Light of nature did dictate to the heathen mariners that prayer to God was a means to save them in the storm; therefore the master of the ship, the head of that society, called Jonah from sleep to prayers; and this they did not only severally, but conjunctly:

receiving good turns, by our knowledge, industry, riches, or other means, should endeavour to keep up that love and society which should be amongst men."—COCKMAN'S Translation.

* *Quæ est melior in hominum genere natura, quàm eorum qui se natos ad homines juvandos, tutandos, conservandos, arbitrantur?*—CICERONIS *Tuscul. Quest.* lib. 1. cap. 14. "There is no doubt but a judgment may be formed of nature in general, from those of the best natural dispositions. And what is a better natural disposition in man, than those discover who look on themselves born for the protection, preservation, and assistance of others?"—MAIN'S Translation.

“They cried unto the Lord, and said, We beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech thee,” &c. (Jonah i. 14.) And shall the heathen master of the ship do more in that society whereof he was chief, than the Christian master of a family in that household society whereof he is head?

Moreover, that the light of nature doth dictate that there should be conjunct worshipping of God in men’s houses, the practice of the Heathen makes manifest. They had their “household gods,” so called because they thought they had the rule over them and their households, and the keeping and preserving of their families;* though indeed they could not defend themselves, nor them that did in their houses worship them, as Juno in her speech to Æolus:—

*Gens inimica mihi Tyrrhenum navigat æquor,
Ilum in Italiam portans, victosque penates:*—VIRGILII *Æneis*, lib. i. 67:

yet these gods they served in their houses, and sacrificed to them; † in which sacrifice their custom was to eat up all that was left at the offering, thinking it a heinous matter to send any of that sacrifice abroad to their friends, or to the poor. §

Of this sort were יְרֵפִים the *teraphim*, an idol or image made for men’s private use in their own houses. Laban had such household gods. “Wherefore hast thou stolen my gods?” || (Gen. xxxi. 19, 30.) By this you see that the light of nature doth dictate household worship to be given to God, and the Heathens did it to their false gods. And if you, called Christians, will not in your houses jointly pray unto the true God, let the Heathens stand up as witnesses against you.

However, take this argument, containing the sum of the five foregoing propositions:—

ARG. II. If all men are bound to take God for their ruler, governing them by a law written in their hearts, which doth dictate to them that there is a God, and jointly to be prayed unto in men’s families, then it is their duty so to do. (The reason of this is, because if they be bound to do it, and do it not, they sin.)

* Θεοὶ κατοικοῦσι. *Lares, Penates, Dei domestici, qui domi coluntur.*

Ego

Deos Penates hinc salutatum domum

Devortar.—TERENTII *Comœd.* Phormio, act. i. scen. v. 80.

“The Greeks had their domestic Deities; and the Romans, their household Gods, called *Lares et Penates*, which they worshipped in their tenements and at their fire-sides. Thus Demipho, in the Phormio of Terence: ‘I will now return home, to address my vows and praises to the household gods.’”—EDIT.

† “A race, I long have labour’d to destroy,

Waft to Hesperia the remains of Troy.

E’en now their navy cuts the Tuscan floods,

Charged with their exiles, and their vanquish’d gods.”—PITT’S Translation.

‡ *Vesta vis ad aras et focos pertinet; itaque in eâ deâ, quæ est rerum custos intimarum, omnis et precatio et sacrificatio extrema est: nec longè absunt ab hac vi Dii Penates, sive a penù ducto nomine, sive ab eo quòd penitule insident.*—CICERO *De Naturâ Deorum*, lib. ii. “The province of Vesta is over altars and hearths; and in the name of this Goddess, who is the keeper of all things within, all prayers and sacrifices are concluded. The *Dii Penates*, ‘household gods,’ have some affinity with this power; and are so called either from *penus*, ‘all kind of human provisions,’ or because *penitule insident*, ‘they reside within;’ from which, by the poets, they are also called *Penetrates*.”—Translation. (Oxford, 1829.)

§ GODWIN’S “Roman Antiquities.” || *Videntur fuisse Dii Penates, qui ad tuendam rem domesticam colerentur.*—DE DIEU, in *Gen.* sxxi. 19. “These *teraphim* seem to have been household Gods, who were propitiated by acts of worship, to engage their services in defence of the domestic property.”—EDIT.

But all men are bound to take God for their ruler, (as in the first proposition is shown,) governing them by a law (as in the second) written in their hearts, (as in the third,) which doth dictate to them that God is, (as in the fourth,) and to be jointly prayed to in their families (as in the fifth).

Therefore it is their duty so to do.

For the proof of the last part of the minor proposition, namely, that the light of nature doth dictate that men or masters of families ought to pray conjunctly with the members of their families, consider this :—

If the light or law of nature doth dictate, that masters of families ought to use all means to prevent the damnation of the immortal souls in that domestic society of which they are heads and governors, and to further their eternal happiness, having opportunities so to do ; then it doth dictate that they ought to pray conjunctly with them.* The reason of this is because prayer is a means, (made together with them,) which the light of nature doth dictate, profitable to prevent their misery, and further their happiness, (as in the fourth position before laid down,) and they have opportunities for this means :

But the light or law of nature doth dictate, that masters of families ought to use all means to prevent the damnation of the immortal souls in that domestic society whereof they are heads and governors, and to further their eternal happiness, having opportunities so to do. For if the light of nature doth dictate they ought to take care of their bodies that are mortal, it doth tell them they are much more to take care of their souls which are immortal, and must for ever live in happiness or misery : (as in position first, second, and third :))

Therefore the light or law of nature doth dictate, that it is their duty to pray conjunctly with their families : and if the law of nature doth, the law of God doth, because the law of nature is God's law.

ARGUMENT III.

The third seat or head of argument shall be taken from what God is to families, as such, in these **FOUR PROPOSITIONS** :—

PROPOSITION I. *God is the Founder of all families, as such : therefore families, as such, should pray unto him.*—The household society usually is of these three combinations : *husband and wife, parents and children, masters or servants* : † though there may be a family where all these are not, yet take it in its latitude, and all these combinations are from God. The institution of husband and wife is from God, (Gen. ii. 21—24,) and of parents and children, and masters and servants ; and the authority of one over the other, and the subjection of the one to the

* “ Seeing societies, as such, are totally dependent upon God, and men's gifts are communicative, and solemnities are operative, nature teacheth us that God ought to be solemnly acknowledged, worshipped, and honoured, both in families and in more solemn-appointed assemblies.”—MR. BAXTER'S “ Reasons of Christian Religion,” part i. p. 74. † *Familia est inter plures personas quæ sunt sub unius potestate, et vel naturâ, vel jure subjecta ; vel societas constituta secundum naturam, quotidiani usûs gratiâ : estque conjugalis, patriâ, et heriliis.*—LIEBENT. Col. Polit.

“ A family is an association subsisting between many persons, who either by nature or by law are subject to the government of one : or it is a society constituted according to nature, for the common purposes of everyday life ; and, in reference to these, it comprehends the conjugal, the parental, and the herile relations.”—EDIT.

other, is instituted by God, and founded in the law of nature, which is God's law. The persons, singly considered, have not their beings only from God, but the very being of this society, as such, is also from him; and as a single person is therefore bound to devote himself to the service of God, and pray unto him, so a household society is therefore bound jointly, as such, to do the same; because, as such a society, it is from God. *Utriusque est par ratio.** And hath God appointed this society only for the mutual comfort of the members thereof, or of the whole, and not also for his own glory, even from the whole? And doth that household society, as such, live to God's glory, that do not, as such, serve him, and pray unto him? Hath God given authority to the one to command and rule, and the other a charge to obey, only in reference to worldly things, and not at all to spiritual? only in things pertaining to the world, and in nothing to things pertaining to God? Can the comfort of the creature be God's ultimate end? No: it is his own glory. Is one by authority from God and order of nature *pater-familias*, "the master of the family," so called in reference to his servants, as well as to his children, because of the care he should take of the souls of servants, and of their worshipping God with him, as well as of his children? and should he not improve this power, that God hath given him over them all, for God and the welfare of all their souls, in calling them jointly to worship God, and pray unto him? Let reason and religion judge.†

PROP. II. *God is the Owner of our families, as such; therefore as such they should pray unto him.*—God being our absolute Owner and Proprietor, not only *ratione inæpochis essentialis suæ*, "by reason of the supereminency of his nature," *sed etiam jure creationis*, ["but also through the right of creation,"] giving us our being and all [that] we have, we ourselves and all that is ours (we and ours being more his than our own) are unquestionably bound to lay-out ourselves for God, wherein we might be most useful for our Owner's interest and glory. Beside the title of *creation*, God is the Owner of our families by right of *conservation and redemption*. For hath God a right to and propriety‡ in the persons in a family, or the particular members of it, and not of the whole? Whose are your families, if not God's own? Will you disclaim God as your Owner? If you should, yet, in some sense, you are his still, though not by *resignation* and wholly devoting of yourselves to him. Whose would you have your families to be, God's own, or the devil's own? Hath the devil any title to your families? And shall your

* "The same reason is as valid for the one as for the other."—EDIT. † *Patres secundum hac temporalia bona, filiorum sortem a servorum conditione distinguunt; ad Deum autem colendum omnibus domus suæ membris pari dilectione consulunt; quod naturalis ordo ita præcipit, ut nomen patrum-familias hinc exortum sit.—Qui autem veri patres-familias sunt, omnibus in familiâ suâ tanquam filiis ad colendum et promerendum Deum consulant.*—AUGUSTINUS *De Civitate Dei*, lib. ix. cap. 16. "In regard to these temporal blessings, fathers should make a distinction between the condition of their sons and that of their servants. In the social worship rendered to Almighty God, however, they ought to pay an equal regard to the interests of every member of their household. This is what the order of nature itself has so prescribed, that the name of *fathers of families* derives its origin from the very circumstance. But let those who in this view are the true *fathers of families*, make a suitable provision for every person under their roof, for the meanest individual as for one of their own children, to unite with the rest in acts of worship and honour to God."—EDIT. ‡ "Propriety," in the whole of this paragraph, signifies *property or proprietorship*.—EDIT.

families serve the devil, that hath no title to you, either of *creation*, *preservation*, or *redemption*? and will you not serve God, that by all this hath a title to you, and an absolute, full propriety in you? If you will say, your families are the devil's, then serve him; but if you say, they are God's, then serve him. Or will you say, "We are God's; but we will serve the devil?" If you do not *say* so, yet if you *do* so, is it not as bad? Why are you not ashamed to do that, that you are ashamed to speak out, and tell the world what you do? Speak, then, in the fear of God. If your families, as such, be God's own, is it not reasonable, that, as such, you should serve him, and pray unto him? For do not you expect honour and obedience from your children, because they be your own? and work and labour and service from your own servants, because they be your own? And whatever you are owners of, would you not have it for your use? And will you require these things from yours, because they are yours, and shall not God require service from his? And if he do, shall he not have it? especially when God's title of propriety in you is infinitely greater than any title you have to any thing you have or call your own? Take heed lest your demands and expectations from yours be not a condemnation of yourselves, in denying that to God which is his due from you, because you are his.

PROP. III. *God is the Master and Governor of your families; therefore, as such, they should serve him in praying to him.*—If he be your Owner, he is your Ruler too: and doth he not give you laws to walk by and obey, not only as you are particular persons, but as you are a combined society? (Eph. v. 25—33; vi. 1—10; Col. iii. 19—25; iv. 1.) Is God, then, the Master of your family, as such, and should not then your family, as such, serve him? Do not subjects, as such, owe obedience to their governors? "A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a Father, where is mine honour? and if I be a Master, where is my fear?" (Mal. i. 6.) Where, indeed? Not in prayerless, ungodly families.

PROP. IV. *God is the Benefactor of your families, as such; therefore, as such, they should serve God, in praying to him, and praising of him.*—God doth not do you good, and give you mercies, only as individual persons, but also as a conjunct society. Is not the continuance of the master of the family, not only a mercy to himself, but to the whole family also? If he be not [a mercy to them,] he is not over good. Is not the continuance of the mother, children, servants, in life, health, and being, a mercy to the family? That you have an house to dwell together, and food to eat together,—do not you call these family-mercies? And do not these call aloud in your ears, and to your consciences, to give praises to your bountiful Benefactor together, and to pray together for the continuance of these, and the grant of more, as you shall need them? * It would be endless to declare how many ways God is a Benefactor to your families conjunctly; and you are shameless, if you do not

* Παρα των Θεων, το αγαθους παππους, αγαθους γονεας, αγαθην αδελφην, αγαθους διδασκαλους, αγαθους οικειους, συγγενεις, φιλους, σχεδον απαντα σχειν. Το μελλουσας νεαν τελευταν την τεκουσαν, ομως οικησαι μετ' εμου τα τελευταια ετη. Το την γυναικα τοιαυτην ειραι, ουτωςι μεν πειθεινιον, ουτω δε φιλοστοργον, ουτω δε αφελη. Παντα γαρ ταυτα Θεων βοηθων και τυχης δεεται.—MARCI AUREL. ANTONINI *Meditationes*, lib. i. cap. 17. "To the Gods my thanks are due, that I had an excellent grandfather both by my father's and mother's side; excellent parents, a good sister, good preceptors, kind relations, faithful

conjunctly praise him for his bounty. Such an house is rather a sty for swine, than a dwelling-house for rational creatures.

May not God call-out to such prayerless families, as to them in Jer. ii. 31?—"O generation, see ye the word of the Lord. Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness? wherefore say my people, We are lords; we will come no more unto thee?" Hath God been forgetful of you? Speak, ye ungodly, prayerless families. Hath God been forgetful of you? No! Every morsel of bread [which] you eat tells you, God doth not forget you. Every time [that] you see your table spread, and food set on, you see God doth not forget you. "Why, then," saith God, "will not this family come at me? When you have food to put into your children's mouths, that they do not cry for bread, and you constrained to say, 'I would, my poor hungry child! I would, but I have it not!' Why, then, will you not come at me? live together and eat together at my cost, and care, and charge, and yet be whole months, and never come at me? and that your children have reason, raiment, limbs, not born blind, nor of a monstrous birth, (which things Heathens have been affected with,)* and a thousand ways besides have I done you good; " may God say, "why, then, will you live whole years together, and never together come at me? Have you found one more able, or more willing, to do you good? That you never can. Why then are you so unthankful as not to come at me?" After the like manner the Lord expostulates with his people, to whom he had been a bountiful Benefactor; † and yet they answered not his bounty, nor served him their Benefactor, for which he calls to the heavens to be astonished, and the earth to be horribly afraid: "Thus saith the Lord, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me? Neither said they, Where is the Lord that brought us up out of the land of Egypt?" (Jer. ii. 5, 6.) Should such a people forsake such a God, and go far from Him that did them so much good? Yet they did. "Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this." (Verse 12.) You see, when God is a Benefactor to a people, (and there is the same reason for

friends, and trusty domestics; and, in short, for almost all the blessings which life can afford. I think myself happy likewise, that, although my mother was destined to an early death, I was blessed with her company all the latter years of her life. I esteem it also a peculiar blessing, that I have a wife so obsequious, so affectionate to me and my children, and so little fond of the pomp and parade of life. Now, all these blessings could never have been obtained without the particular favour and over-ruling providence of the Gods."—GRAVES'S Translation.

* Παρα των Θεων, το δεσκις εβουληθην επικουρησαι τιμιν πνευμενε, η εις αλλο τι χρηζοντι, μηδεποτε ακουσαι με, οτι ουκ εστι μοι χρηματα, οθεν γενηται, κ. τ. λ. Το παιδια μοι αδημη μη γενεσθαι, μηδε κατα το σωματιον διαστροφα.—MARCUS AUREL. ANTONINI *Meditationes*, lib. i. cap. 17. "To the favour of the Gods also I am indebted, that, whenever I wished to assist any one in necessity or in any other distress, I never was told that my finances were exhausted; and that I myself never happened to be in a situation to want the assistance of any other person. It is also a blessing, that my children were not born with any natural incapacity, or with distorted limbs."—Idem.

† Mercies do engage to duties. We should have him for our God for ever, and serve Him that always doeth us good. So the poet:—

*O Melibœe! Deus nobis hæc otia fecit.
Namque erit ille mihi semper Deus; illius aram
Sæpe tener nostris ab oculibus imbuet agnus.*—VIRGILII *Eclog.* 1. 6.

"O Melibœus, to a God I owe
This bless'd repose: to him, as God, I bow;
For him the tend' rest of my fleecy breed
Shall oft in solemn sacrifices bleed."—WRANGHAM'S and WARTON'S Translation.

families,) and they do not serve him, what monstrous wickedness it is ! God hath kept you all safe in the night, and yet in the morning you do not say, "Where is the Lord that did preserve us? Come, O come, let us give joint praises to him!" God hath done you and your families good so many years; and yet you do not say, "Where is the Lord that hath done such great things for us? Come, let us acknowledge his mercy together." God hath carried you through affliction and sickness in the family: the plague hath been in the house, and yet you live: the small-pox and burning fevers have been in your houses, and yet you are alive: your conjugal companion hath been sick, and recovered: children nigh to death, and yet restored:—and for all this you do not say, "Where is the Lord that kept us from the grave, and saved us from the pit? that we are not rotten among the dead!" and yet you do not pray to nor praise this your wonderful Benefactor together. Let the very walls within which these ungrateful wretches live, be astonished at this! Let the very beams and pillars of their houses tremble! and let the very girders of the floors on which they tread and walk be horribly afraid! that such as dwell in such an house together, go to bed before they go to prayer together! Let the earth be amazed, that the families which the Lord doth nourish and maintain are rebellious and unthankful! being worse than the very ox that knoweth his owner, and of less understanding than the very ass.* (Isai. i. 2, 3.) There is such validity in the consequence, from God's being our Benefactor to our duty to him in serving of him, that Joshua builds his exhortation to the heads and people of Israel to fear and worship God, upon this very foundation, as appeareth plainly to any that read the chapter where the text lieth.

From what hath been said, I reason in this manner:

ARG. III. If God be the Founder, Owner, Governor, and Benefactor of families, as such, then families, as such, are jointly to worship God and pray unto him. (This cannot be denied.)

* *Officia etiam fere sentiunt, nec ullum tam immansuetum animal est, quod non curis mitiget, et in amorem sui vertat. Leonum ora a magistris impunè tractantur. Elephantorum feritatem usque in servile obsequium demeretur cibus; adeò etiam quæ extra intellectum atque astimationem beneficii sunt posita, assiduitas tamen meriti pertinacis evincit. Ingratus est adversus unum beneficium? adversus alterum non erit. Duorum oblitus est? tertium etiam eorum quæ exciderunt memoriam reducet. Is perdit, qui citò se perdidisse credit. Qui instat et onerat priora sequentibus, etiam es duro et immemori pectore gratiam ostendit. Non audebit adversus multa oculos attollere, &c.—SENECA De Beneficiis, lib. 1. cap. 3.* "The very wild beasts themselves are not insensible of the favours which they receive: nor is any animal so intractable as not to be rendered gentle by care and benignity, by which their ferocity is changed into affection. Thus lions have frequently allowed their keepers and feeders to handle the inside of their mouths with impunity; and the distribution of food to elephants has so completely conciliated their regards as to turn their native fierceness into slavish obsequiousness. Even those creatures which are placed within the confines of *instinct*, and consequently have no *rational* understanding and appreciation of benefits conferred, are in this manner conquered by the ceaseless and untriting assiduity of kindness. Is any man therefore ungrateful after the reception of a *single act of beneficence*? Unthankful he will not remain after a *second*. Has he forgotten *both* of them? *The third* will recall to his recollection those of which he had been forgetful. He who too hastily concludes that all his benevolent labours have been fruitlessly expended, is sure to find the result such as himself anticipated. But he who is incessant in his attentions, and perseveres in piling additional favours upon the mass already bestowed, will extort from the most obdurate and unmindful heart a sense of grateful obligation. He will not be so audacious as scornfully to raise his eyes against them; but in whatever direction he may turn, losing all remembrance of his former self, let him have nothing to behold but thy image powerfully reflected upon him in those multiplied kindnesses. Continue therefore to encircle him about with fresh benefits."—EDIT.

But God is the Founder, Owner, Governor, and Benefactor of families, as such. (Neither can this be denied.)

Therefore families, as such, are jointly to worship God, and pray unto him.

ARGUMENT IV.

Masters of families ought to read the scripture to their families, teach and instruct their children and servants in the matters and doctrines of salvation. Therefore they are to pray in and with their families.—No man that will not deny the scripture can deny the unquestionable duty of reading the scripture in our houses, governors of families teaching and instructing them out of the word of God. Amongst a multitude of express scriptures, look into these: "And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean you by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses." (Exod. xii. 26, 27.) And there is as much reason that Christian parents should explain to their children the sacraments of the New Testament, to instruct them in the nature, use, and ends of baptism and the Lord's supper: "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach," חַמְדָּךְ * *whet or sharpen*, "them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up," that is, morning and evening. (Deut. vi. 6, 7; xi. 18, 19.) "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." (Eph. vi. 4.) And God was pleased with this in Abraham: "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord." (Gen. xviii. 19.) This then is undeniable, if the word is to be believed, received as our rule, and obedience to be yielded thereunto. And the Heathens taught a necessity of instructing youth betimes.†

* *Crebris admonitionum quasi ictibus hac mea præcepta infiges et aptabis, sicut repetitis mallei ictibus ferrum aptatur.*—LUD. DE DIEU. "By frequent touches and strokes of admonitions, thou shalt infix and fit into their memory these my precepts, even as iron is rendered malleable, and fitted to its place, by oft-repeated strokes of the hammer."—EDIT. *Et dentibus ea; id est, inter dentes versabis, assiduo loqueris; vel dentibus mandes, præmansa in os ingeres filiis tuis.*—MALVENDA. "And thou shalt sharpen them with thy teeth—That is, thou shalt frequently revolve them between thy teeth; thou shalt assiduously talk about them: or thou shalt exercise thy mandibles upon them by chewing; and that which thou hast thus prepared thou shalt place within the mouths of thy children."—EDIT. † *Ου μικρον ουν διαφερει το οδτως η οδτως ευθως εκ νεων επιζεσθαι, αλλα ψαμπολυ, μαλλον δε το ψαυ.*—ARISTOTELIS *Moralia*. "The difference does not lie so much in the acquisition of the principle as a habit, after this or that manner in a regular course from early life, as in having made considerable proficiency in it, or rather in becoming fully imbued with it."—EDIT.

————— *Nunc adhibe puro*

Pectore verba, puer; nunc te melioribus offer:

Quo semel est imbuta recens servabit odorem

Testa diu.—HORATII *Epistola*, lib. i. epist. ii. 67.

"To good advice give ear: 'tis now the time,
Now, while your youthful mind is free from crime.

When new the caak, it should be tinctured well;

Once season'd, it will long retain its smell."—SHARD'S Translation.

Adeo in teneris consuescere multum est.—VIRGILII *Georgica*, lib. ii. 272.

"Such is the strength of custom, such appears

The force of habits gain'd in tender years."—WARTON'S Translation.

The reason of this consequence, from family reading and instructions to family praying, is evident, (we need to beg of God the illumination of his Spirit, the opening of the eyes of every one in the family,* the blessing of God upon our endeavours, without which it will be to no saving benefit,) and will be more manifest, if we consider and lay together these things following :—

First. *Whose word it is that is to be read in the family together.*—The word of the eternal, blessed, glorious God. And doth this call for and require preceding prayer, no more than if you were to read the book of some mortal man? The word of God is that *out of which* God speaketh to us; it is that *by which* he doth instruct us, and inform us, in the highest and weightiest concerns of our souls; it is that *from which* we must fetch remedies for the cure of our spiritual maladies; it is that *from whence* we must have weapons of defence against our spiritual enemies that do assault our souls, and be directed in the paths of life.† And is not prayer together needful, then, that God would prepare all their hearts to receive and obey what shall be read to them of the mind of God? Is all the family so serious and so sensible of the glory, holiness, and majesty of that God that speaketh to them in his word, that prayer is not needful that they may be so? And if it be needful, should it not first be done? And when it hath been read, and the threatenings, commands, and promises of the glorious God been heard, and your sins discovered and God's wrath against them, and duties enjoined, and precious privileges opened, and promises of a faithful God, both "great and precious promises," made to such as do repent, believe, and turn to God with all their hearts unfeignedly; have you not all need together to fall down upon your knees, to beg and cry and call to God for pardon of those sins that by this word you are convinced you are guilty of, and to lament them before the Lord? and that, when your duty is discovered, you might have all hearts to practise and obey, and that you might unfeignedly repent and turn to God, that so you may apply those promises to yourselves, and be partaker of those privileges? From this, then, there is great reason, when you read together, you should also pray together.

Secondly. *Consider what great and deep mysterious things are contained in the word of God which you are to read together.*—And there will appear a necessity of praying together also. Is there not in this

* *Ευχου δε σοι προ παστων φωτος ανοιχθησαι πυλας ου γαρ συνοπτα, ουδε συνοπτα πασων εστιν, ει μη τη Θεοσ δω συνιεναι και ο Χριστος αυτου.*—JUSTINI MARTYRIS *Dialog. cum Tryphone*, p. 37. (*Editio Stephan. 1651.*) "But, before every thing else, address thy prayers to God, that the gates of divine light may be opened to thee. For these things can neither be perceived nor understood by any one, except by him on whom God and his Christ bestow this privilege."—EDIT.

† *Scriptura sacra est, 1. Dei cathedra, ex qua ad nos loquitur. 2. Dei schola, in qua nos erudit et informat. 3. Dei iatruon et spiritu alis rerum medicarum officina. 4. Dei πανοπλα et armamentarium, in quo munit et armat nos contra omnis generis hostes. 5. Dei manus, qua nos per semitas fidei et justitie ducit ad vitam aternam.*—GERHARDI *Loci Communes*, tom. i. p. 141. "Holy scripture is, 1. *The chair of God*; from which he addresses himself to us. 2. *It is God's school*; in which he teaches us, and communicates information. 3. *It is God's dispensary*, and the spiritual office from which he distributes his healing medicines. 4. *It is God's armoury*, and grand collection of suitable weapons; from which he furnishes us with defensive and offensive arms, for our protection against enemies of every description. 5. *It is the hand of God*; by which he leads us onward through the paths of faith and righteousness, and safely conducts us unto life eternal."—EDIT.

word the doctrine concerning God, how He might be known, loved, obeyed, worshipped, and delighted in? concerning Christ, God-man, a mystery that the angels wonder at, and no man fully understands, or can express and fully unfold? * concerning the offices of Christ,—Prophet, Priest, and King? the example and the life of Christ, the miracles of Christ, the temptations of Christ, the sufferings of Christ, his death, the victories of Christ, the resurrection, ascension, and intercession of Christ, and his coming to judgment? Is there not in the scripture the doctrine of the Trinity, of the misery of man by sin, and his remedy by Christ? of the covenant of grace, the conditions of this covenant, and the seals thereof? the many precious, glorious privileges that we have by Christ,—reconciliation with God, justification, sanctification, and adoption? the several graces to be got, and duties to be done, and of men's everlasting state in heaven or hell? Are these, and such like, contained in the word of God that you ought to read daily in your houses? and yet do not you see the need of prayer before and after your reading of it? Weigh them well, and you will.

Thirdly. *Consider how much all the family are concerned to know and understand these things so necessary to salvation.*—If they are ignorant of them, they are undone. If they know not God, how shall they love him? *Invisa possunt amari, incognita nequaquam*: “Things unseen may be loved, but things unknown cannot.” We might love an unseen God, and an unseen Christ; (1 Peter i. 8;) but not an unknown God. If they in your family know not Christ, how shall they believe on him? And yet they must perish and be damned, if they do not. They must for ever lose God and Christ, and heaven and their souls, if they do not repent, believe, and be converted: and yet when that book is read by which they should understand the nature of true saving grace, is not prayer needful? especially when many have the Bible and read it, yet do not understand the things that do concern their peace!

Fourthly. *Consider, further, the blindness of their minds, and their inability, without the teachings of God's Spirit, to know and understand these things.*—And yet is not prayer needful?

Fifthly. *Consider, yet further, the backwardness of their hearts to hearken to these weighty, necessary truths of God, and their unwillingness naturally to learn, show prayer to be necessary that God would make them able and willing to receive them.*

Sixthly. *Once more, consider, that prayer is a special means to obtain knowledge from God, and a blessing upon the teachings and instructions*

* *Scripturis sacris incumbat Christianus fidelis: ibi inveniet condigna fidei spectacula. Spectabit mundum in delictis suis, piorum premia, impiorum supplicia; religione superatus feras et in mansuetudinem conversas intuebitur, et animas ab ipsa morte revocatas; et in his omnibus jam majus videbit spectaculum, diabolum illum, qui totum triumpharet mundum, sub pedibus Christi jacentem: quàm hoc decorum spectaculum, fratres! quàm jucundum! quàm necessarium!*—CYPRIANUS, p. 416. “Let every faithful and believing Christian devote his attention to the sacred scriptures. In them he will find wonderful exhibitions, worthy of the faith by which they were produced. He will behold the men of the world lying in their wickedness, the rewards of the godly, and the punishment of the wicked. He will also look with wonder on wild beasts overcome by religion, and their fierceness changed into mildness, and the souls of men recalled into their lifeless bodies. But a spectacle far surpassing all these will be displayed to his enraptured view,—he will see that devil who wishes to triumph over the whole world, lying as a vanquished foe under the feet of Christ. Brethren, what an appropriate, delightful, and necessary spectacle is this!”—EDIT.

of the master of the family.—David prayed that God would “open his eyes,” that he might “behold wondrous things out of God’s law.”* (Psalm cxix. 18.) There are “wondrous things” in the word of God. That fallen man should be recovered, is a wondrous thing. That a holy God should be reconciled to sinful man, is a wondrous thing. That the Son of God should take upon him the nature of man, and God be manifested in the flesh, and a believer justified by the righteousness of another,—these are wondrous things. But there is darkness upon our minds, and a veil over our eyes, and the scripture is a clasped, closed book, that we cannot savingly understand these great wonderful things, to have our love chiefly upon them and our delight in them, except the Spirit of God take away the veil, and remove our ignorance, and enlighten our minds. And this wisdom is to be sought from God by fervent prayer. You that are masters of families, would you have your children and servants know these things, and be affected with them? Would you have impressions made upon their minds and hearts of the great concernments of their souls? and therefore you do instruct them. But can *you* reach their hearts? Can *you* awaken their consciences? Can *you* not? And yet doth it not become you to pray to God with them, that He would do it? While you are a-praying jointly with them, God may be secretly disposing and powerfully preparing their hearts to receive his word, and your instructions from it.

From all this I argue thus for family prayer:—

ARG. IV. If it be the duty of families, as such, to read and hear the word of God together read, then it is the duty of families, as such, to pray together. (This is shown by the six things last mentioned.) But it is the duty of families, as such, to read the word of God, and to hear it together read. (This was proved from scripture before.) Therefore it is the duty of families, as such, to pray together.

ARGUMENT V.

Christian families are, or ought to be, so many domestic churches. Therefore they ought to pray together.—In a church, conjunct prayers are made to God. But what kind of church would that be in which there is never any joint praying? There are three families in the scripture renowned with the name of a “church,” and have this honourable title put upon them by God himself; as, 1. The family of Aquila and Pris-

* *Petit se doceri divinitus, ut doctrinam rectè intelligat. Ex antithesi verò monet, omnium hominum mentes esse cæcas, nec intelligere doctrinam quamdiu non illuminantur a Spiritu Sancto. Monet igitur quasi velamen esse obductum oculis nostræ mentis, vel volumen legis seu doctrinæ clausum esse, ut legi et intelligi non possit, nisi Spiritu detrahente velamen oculis nostris, et evolvente volumen, ut oculis nostris subjiciatur. Ideoque assidue petendum esse significat, ut hic Doctor mittatur in corda nostra, qui ea illuminet et sapientiâ celesti imbuat.*—MOLLERUS in Psalmum cxix. 18. “David prays that he may be divinely instructed, that he may have a right understanding of the doctrine which is according to godliness. In the antithesis, however, which he employs, we are admonished that the minds of all men are blinded, nor are they capable of understanding heavenly doctrine so long as they remain unilluminated by the Holy Spirit. His admonition, then, amounts to this: That a veil has been drawn over the eyes of our minds, or that the volume containing the law or divine doctrine is completely closed and rolled up, so as to prevent it from being read and understood by us, unless the Holy Spirit withdraw the veil from our eyes, and unroll the volume, so as to present it unfurled before our enlightened vision. He intimates, therefore, that we must assiduously ask and pray, that this Divine Teacher may be sent into our hearts, to illumine them, and to imbue them with heavenly wisdom.”—EDIT.

cilla: *Και την κατ' οικον αυτων εκκλησιαν*, "And the church in their house." (Rom. xvi. 5.) So, 1 Cor. xvi. 19. 2. The family of Nymphas: *Και Νυμφαν, και την κατ' οικον αυτον εκκλησιαν*, "And Nymphas, and the church in his house." (Col. iv. 15.) 3. The family of Philemon: *Και τη κατ' οικον σου εκκλησια*. "And to the church in thy house." (Philemon 2.) Erasmus renders it, "the congregation in their house:" but this is disliked by Calvin and by Beza too. Pareus interprets these texts either for "the company of Christians that were wont to assemble in their houses" to hear the word, and to worship God; or else of "their proper families," of which these were the heads and governors, whose houses were called "churches," because of the religious duties there performed, as "reading of the scripture, praying unto God together, and singing of psalms." * Aquila and Priscilla by occupation were tent-makers: (Acts xviii. 3:) yet though they laboured in this calling, and worked with their hands, they found time for family-worship and joint religious duties, and were eminent and exemplary therein; and stand in scripture upon record for a pattern worthy of all Christian families' imitation. Here is a plain proof. So did the godly families in the primitive times, and they are approved by God; for what they did in their houses and families was pleasing unto God, having this honourable name of a "church" by God's Holy Spirit put upon them.

And they will afford us this argument:—

* *Magnificum elogium, quum uni familiae nomen ecclesiae tribuitur; et tamen sic institutas esse convenit singulas piorum familias, ut totidem sint ecclesiola: quod autem Erasmo congregationis nomen magis placuit, alienum est a mente Pauli. Honorificè de Christianè œconomid voluit loqui.*—CALVINUS, in 1 Cor. xvi. 19. "A grand and noble eulogy indeed it is when the name of CHURCH is bestowed, as in this passage, on a single family; and yet it is requisite and desirable for the families of the pious to be severally trained up and instructed in such a manner that they may become so many little churches. But to translate the word *ecclesia*, 'congregation,' a rendering with which Erasmus seems to be mightily pleased, is alien from the design of the apostle: for it was his wish to make honourable mention of the economy of Christian households."—EDIT. *Erasmus in Annotationibus vertendum potius dicit congregatione, quàm in re ab eo dissentio: apparet enim apostolum commendare Aquilæ et Priscillæ familiam, quasi sit ecclesiola quaedam; alioquin dixisset, Συν τη οικω αυτων.*—BEZA. "In his Annotations Erasmus declares, that *ecclesia* ought rather to be rendered 'congregation.' However, I totally dissent from him in this view of the passage: for it is apparent that the apostle is here speaking in commendation of the family of Aquila and Priscilla, on account of its being a kind of small church. Had his intention been otherwise, the construction in Greek would have stood thus: *With their household.*"—EDIT. *Privatam familiam 'ecclesiam' vocat.*—ESTIUS. "He calls a private family a church."—EDIT. *Vel de Ecclesiae membris, vel de domesticis tantum ipsius Nymphæ ad Dominum conversis; laudans hunc virum, quòd œconomiam suam Christianè admodum rezerit et instituerit.*—PAREUS. "The apostle here speaks of the members of the church, or only of the household of Nymphas himself that had been converted to the Lord. He commends this man, because he ordered his domestic economy, and ruled those under his care, in a manner truly Christian."—EDIT. *Erat igitur tota familia pia et benè et Christianè instituta, sicut solent esse ecclesiae; quia ibi legebatur verbum Dei, et preces habebantur, et canebantur Psalmi. Discamus ita regere familias, ut sint veræ ecclesiae.*—Idem. "The whole family therefore was pious, having been trained and instructed in a good and Christian way, as churches usually are; because in it the word of God was read, social prayer was offered up, and psalms were chanted. Let us learn thus to rule our families, that they may become true churches."—EDIT. *Adjungit etiam familiam ejus, quam honorifico nomine vocat ecclesiam; quod ipsum quoque ad Philemonis laudem pertinet, ut qui in familiâ educandâ fidelis patrisfamiliâs officio fungatur.*—PISCATOR in Philemon 2. "He also subjoins the family of Philemon, which he distinguishes by the honourable title of a church. This epithet still more enhances the commendation bestowed on Philemon, as on one who, in the education of his family, properly discharged the duties of a faithful and believing master and father of a family."—EDIT.

ARG. v. Those families that are or ought to be household-churches, ought to serve God together therein, and pray jointly to him. (For the worship and prayers of a church, as such, are conjunct, and from such religious duties these families were so called.)

But Christian families are or ought to be household-churches. (And they will be such churches, or synagogues of Satan.)

Therefore Christian families ought jointly to pray to God.

ARGUMENT VI.

That God is to be served and called upon conjunctly in proper families, will appear from the practice of holy men in the first age of the world.—Conjunct worship was first performed in families, before it could be given to God from more public assemblies; the domestic society being the first, and the foundation and original of all other. God's church was first in Adam's family, and for some time only there; therefore God was there worshipped and called upon, or else God had a church from which he had no conjunct worship at all.

That there was such religious worship in the first families, I offer these two things for confirmation thereof:—

First. *God appointed Adam, after his fall, to offer sacrifice to him; and declared to him the use and signification thereof, and commanded him to teach his children to do the same.*—Which will be manifest by these two things:—

1. *That Abel did sacrifice, and thereby pleased God.*—"The Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering;" (Gen. iv. 4;) that is, God accepted Abel and his offering.* It is not said what outward testimony it was, whereby God did declare this respect and acceptance of Abel's offering, whereby Cain did perceive that Abel and his offering were pleasing unto God, when himself and his offering were both rejected. It is conceived that fire came down from heaven, and consumed Abel's sacrifice, but not Cain's offering; † and by this sign God did discover his acceptance of the sacrifices in following ages. (Lev. ix. 24; 1 Kings xviii. 38; 1 Chron. xxi. 26; 2 Chron. vii. 1.) But if this had not been by God's own appointment, it would not have pleased him; for will-worship God is not delighted in.‡ If it had not been commanded by God, it had not been obedience in Abel; and if it had not been obedience, it

* Π Ψ Δ Deo tributum, significat respicere cum gratiâ et favore. — PAREUS. "The Hebrew verb, to have respect unto, which is here ascribed to God, signifies, to regard any thing with grace and favour."—EDIT. Quasi dicat, Placuit Domino.—FAGIUS. "It was well-pleasing to the Lord."—EDIT. Requievit in Abel.—OLEASTER. "He regarded Abel with complacency."—EDIT. † Igne de cœlo consumpsit, et sic grata esse probavit.—LYRANUS, PISCATOR, AINSWORTH. "The Lord consumed it with fire from heaven, and thus gave a proof that it was grateful to Him."—EDIT. ‡ Cultus modum et mensuram homines ex se ignorant, quem a revelatione divinâ expectare debent; neque corde se tantopere presumere oportet, ut modum quo Deus religiose coli debet, ipsi sibi pro libitu et arbitrio præscribant; non enim Deus hominum εὐλοβρησκείας delectatur: æquum est, non quo nos volumus ipsi, sed quo ipse vult, modo eum colamus et veneremur.—*Syntagma Thesium in Acad. Salmur.* "Men, of themselves, are ignorant both of the mode and measure of worship, the information concerning which they must expect to derive from divine revelation. Neither should they evince such presumption of heart as to prescribe to themselves, according to their own will and pleasure, the mode in which God ought to be religiously worshipped. For God is not delighted with the will-worship of men. It is right and proper that we offer worship and reverential adoration to God, not according to the manner which we ourselves devise, but according to that which He has deigned to prescribe."—EDIT.

would not have been pleasing to God: for, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." (1 Sam. xv. 22.)

2. *Abel did by faith what he did in sacrificing unto God.* (Heb. xi. 4.)—But faith must be bottomed upon some signification of the will of God, and must be done by virtue of some command, if done in faith; else there is no ground nor reason to believe that what is done will be pleasing unto God.*

Second. *That there was religious worship in Adam's family, and so handed down from his to others, appears in that Adam did yield obedience to the command of God given to him concerning sacrifices and other duties belonging to it, and did educate his children in the same.*—Though we do not read that Adam did sacrifice and pray to God, yet it doth not follow that he did not.† The great wickedness of Cain, and the martyrdom of Abel, gave occasion to this first mention of their offering; but it is not likely that this was the first offering made to God. For do you think, that Adam and Eve had so many sabbaths before Cain and Abel were born and brought up, that they kept none of them? no, not one? or that they spent their time and days in the matters of the world, in the total neglecting of God and their own souls? If any be so uncharitable, let them consider these three things:—

1. *Had not Adam and Eve sad experience of the difference of being under God's favour and his frowns, of being filled with the sense of his love, and fears of his wrath?*—Were there ever any in the world that knew both these as our first parents did? the one in the state of innocence, the other after their apostasy? When God himself came to look after these transgressors of his law, and to arraign them at his bar, and convince them of the evil [which] they had done, and pronounce sentence upon them for the same, and cursed the one and the other, and

* *Fide oblata fuerunt sacrificia ab initio: sunt autem ασυστατα in religione fides et εθελοθρησκεια. Hęc enim habet τα ενταλματα και διδασκαλιας των ανθρωπων, illi autem nititur divina revelatione voluntatis, ut qui cultus Deo ex fide pręstatur sit obedientia.*—CLOPPENBURGH, *Sacrif. Schol.* "From the very beginning sacrifices were offered in faith. But, in matters of religion, faith and *will-worship* are incompatible the one with the other: for while the latter holds for its foundation 'the commandments and doctrines of men,' the former rests on the ground of the revelation of the divine will, that the worship which through faith is rendered to God may be real obedience."—EDIT.

† *A non scripto ad non factum non valet consequentia. Inter primam promissionem de venturo semine mulieris et primum sacrificium, non relinquimus ullum temporis intervallum.*—*Munit hanc sententiam nostram apostolus docens vetus fudus absque sanguine dedicatum non fuisse, et absque sanguinis effusione non fieri remissionem, Heb. ix. 18, 22. Hinc enim consequens est, vel cum promissione illi de venturo semine mulieris nullam factam esse federis Dei cum homine spiritualis instaurationem, quę peccatorum remissionem speraret et crederet, vel non esse factum χρωσις αιματεκχυσις, qui est sacrificiorum character.*—CLOPPENBURGH, *Sacrif. Schol.* "The inference drawn from this mode of reasoning, *Because it is not written, therefore it was not done*, possesses no validity. We do not leave any interval of time between the declaration of the first promise concerning the future Seed of the woman, and the first sacrifice. This our opinion is strengthened by the apostle, when he teaches us, that 'neither was the first covenant dedicated without blood,' and that 'without shedding of blood is no remission.' (Heb. ix. 18, 22.) For, the consequence flowing from these expressions is, either that, with the promise concerning the woman's future Seed, no renewal was made of God's spiritual covenant with man, by which he might hope and believe for the remission of sins; or that it was not made 'without the shedding of blood,' which is the proper character of sacrifices."—EDIT.

the earth for their sakes, and drove them out in anger from that delightful, pleasant Paradise in which at first they were placed by God, were they not terrified *now* by the anger of the Lord, as they were *before* delighted in his love?

2. *Then add to this and consider, Did not God after this, out of his abundant grace and mercy towards them lying in this misery, preach recovering grace by and through his own Son? (Gen. iii. 15.)—As if he had said, “Adam, thou art a lost man.” Yes, Lord, I see I am! “Thou art exposed to my wrath, and to the death that I did threaten, if thou didst disobey.” Yes, Lord, so I am! “Adam and Eve! you two have undone yourselves and all the world, and plunged yourselves and them into the depth of misery, and are exposed to my wrath and justice for ever.” Yes, Lord, so it is! so it is! Woe unto us! so it is! “Well, but yet, out of my mere mercy and free grace, I will help you out of this condition: I have a remedy for you, I have kindness for you sinners, for you rebels; and such that all the angels in heaven could not have thought of, for you poor sinners; and that is, My own Son shall be your surety, shall become a man, and suffer in your nature, and bear the punishment of your sin. He shall die, and you shall live; He shall suffer, and you shall be saved, if you will yet consent to the terms of a new covenant, after you have violated the former; and this shall come to pass at the time that I have appointed. In the mean while, you shall offer such sacrifices to me, and pray unto me for your pardon and my grace; and these sacrifices shall be types of this promised Saviour, and it shall be through him, but not for these, that I will have mercy on you.” Do you not think that these “glad tidings” did wonderfully affect their hearts? Do you not think that this grace and kindness in their sad condition, at the first manifesting of it, did strongly oblige them to yield obedience to what God should reveal to them to be his will? Or do you think, that neither the sense of their before-desperate condition, when they saw no way of help or hope, nor the sense of this grace and mercy, did stir them up to hearken to the commands that God would give them? Is it likely that they did not go together and praise God for such love as this? Do but consider what they did enjoy *before* they fell, and what their fears were *after*; and then how much must this first tidings of mercy needs affect their hearts, and engage them to obedience.*

3. *That our first parents had religious worship in their family, appears by the religious education of their children.—Do you think, when they had undone their children, and yet God had discovered a way of salvation to them, that they did not timely tell their children of this? Had they exposed their children’s souls to hell and to damnation, and yet [did they] not tell them and teach them God’s gracious dealings with them, by which it might be prevented? Do you think that they did not pray with them, that themselves and theirs might be indeed partakers of this mercy? Is it likely that Adam and Eve did not acquaint their children how God did make them in a blessed condition, and how they lost it; and how God himself had been with them after they had so offended, and made known a way of salvation to them? Would not their natural affection to their children, and the sense of God’s mercy, put them on to instruct them in*

these things, and praise God with them for his love, and pray for the certain fruits and benefits of it?*

OBJECTION. "This might make it probable; but there is nothing in scripture from whence you can conclude it."

ANSWER. But there is. The express mention of Cain's and Abel's offering doth plainly prove, that they were thus brought-up in the worship of God. Cain, though he had no grace, yet did make a profession of religion. And that they were instructed in the things before expressed, is the judgment of learned men, who conclude that Adam received instructions from God, and Cain and Abel from their father Adam.† And Abel's sacrifice being accepted, doth fully prove that he did understand the fall and recovering grace by Messiah then to come. For, was God pleased with the sacrifice itself, and for itself, that Abel did bring? There never was any thing in them to reconcile God to sinners; but they were types and shadows of good things to come, and they pointed unto Christ. Abel then must understand this. Besides, Abel did offer by faith—in whom? In Christ to come. Then he was instructed in the doctrine of redemption by Christ; and this doth suppose a lost estate. Moreover, it is said, Heb. xi. 4, that by this faith Abel obtained a testimony "that he was righteous." What? by the offering he did? by the sacrifice itself that he offered? Is any sinner justified

* *Adamus cum totius generis humani esset paterfamilias et promissionem seminis victricis posteris omnibus predicandam acceperit, illius officii nexu, et naturæ et positivi præcepti juris virtute, tenebatur. Officio isti eum non defuisse, plurima sunt quæ suadent. Munera enim mandato ut sedulo fungeretur, effecerunt sine dubio beneficium a Deo maximum recens acceptum, sui generis amor et misericordia, atque in quem statum per peccatum redgisset miseros posteros sensus tenerrimus. Tota itaque illius familia, ipso curante et regente, hoc est, totum in universum humanum genus, nemine excepto, Dei erat ecclesia, in quâ fides, observantia, et cultus religiosus vixerunt.*—DOCTOR OWEN, *Theologoumena: sive, De Naturâ, Ortu, &c., veræ Theologiæ*, lib. ii. cap. 2. "Since Adam was the father of the great human family, of all the race of man, and received the promise of the woman's conquering seed to be proclaimed and made known to all his posterity, he was held to the performance of this obligation by the bond of his duty, and by virtue not only of the law of nature, but likewise of that of positive precept. Many considerations concur in persuading us to think, that Adam was not deficient in fulfilling this important duty. For, the very great benefit which he had so recently received from God, the love and pity which he had for his own helpless offspring, and a most tender and acute feeling of the deplorable condition to which he had, through sin, reduced the whole of his unhappy posterity:—all these reasons would have the effect of inducing him sedulously to discharge this great duty which had been commanded. The whole of his family, therefore, with him at its head exercising over them a paternal care and controlling influence, that is, the entire human race, without a single exception, constituted the infant church of God, in which faith, reverential obedience, and religious worship flourished."—EDIT. † *Unde habuerunt Cain et Abel quod sacrificiis Deum honorarent? A patre suo qui eos instituit.*—FAGIUS, LYRANUS. "Who was it that advised Cain and Abel to honour God by sacrifices? They received this counsel from their father, by whom they had been instructed."—EDIT. *Ex Dei instinctu aut verbo, primi parentes obtulerunt.*—OLEASTER. "Our first parents presented their offerings either in consequence of a secret divine impulse, or by express direction."—EDIT. *Constat cultum aliquem externum Majestati Divinæ fuisse institutum, et a patre Adamo de eo fuisse instructos Cainem et Abelem.*—RIVESTUS. "It is evident that some external worship to be paid to the Divine Majesty had been instituted, and that Cain and Abel had been instructed concerning it by their father Adam."—EDIT. *Cain obtulit non fide, sed pro consuetudine paterne institutionis.*—MUSCULUS. "Cain made his offering not in faith, but according to the external usage of his father's institution."—EDIT. *Deus docuit Adam cultum divinum; quo ejus benevolentiam recuperaret, quam per peccatum amiserat; ipsaque docuisse filios suos dare Deo decimas et primitias.* "God taught Adam divine worship; by the observance of which he might recover the favour and loving-kindness of his Maker, that he had lost through transgression. Adam also taught his children to render to God tithes and first-fruits."—EDIT.

from the condemning sentence of the law by works of his own? No! but Abel was justified by faith in Christ, signified by the sacrifice which he did offer; for without a Mediator there is no peace with God, no pardon from God, no justification before God, no acceptance with him, for any sinful man. There were then religious duties in Adam's family, and that by God's command and appointment.

OBJECTION. "But this was offering of sacrifice; what is this to prayer, or to us, when the way of sacrificing is abolished?"

ANSWER I. Do you think they did sacrifice, and not pray when they did so? Did they not confess their sin when sacrifice was offered; and acknowledge that they deserved to die for their sins? And this was signified by a man's laying his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering. (Lev. i. 4.) Prayer then usually accompanying sacrificing, (Heb. x. 3.) the one doth infer the other. "And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense." * (Luke i. 10.)

If such sacrifices are ended, yet there are sacrifices for Christians to offer-up to God; yourselves, your hearts, your prayers, and praises. (Rom. xii. 1; Heb. xiii. 15.) And there are the same moral grounds and reasons why you should serve God in your families, in the way prescribed by God *since* the coming of Christ, as there was why they should serve God in their families, in the way of worship appointed by God *before* the coming of Christ.

ANSWER II. And this was practised not only in Adam's family, but by godly families after too. So, "Enoch walked with God;" (Gen. v. 24;) and Noah; (Gen. vi. 9;) which implies their universal sincere obedience, at home as well as abroad. And that this implies their worshipping God in their families, I think for this reason—because if a man be never so great a professor abroad, if he totally and constantly neglect God's worship at home, nay, if it be not constantly done, (except in some cases that might fall out,) he shall not be accounted to be one that walketh with God. I judge *that* man cannot be said to walk with God that in his house, with his family, doth not kneel before him. Besides, Abraham's duty was comprehended in this phrase, "Walk before me." (Gen. xvii. 1.) But Abraham, in his walk, took his household along with him. "He will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord;" (Gen. xviii. 19;) the way in which his household should walk: and by "the way of the Lord" is often understood the worship of God.

One place more I would have considered for conjunct prayer of a domestic combination, which is concerning Isaac. We read it: "And

* *Ponetque manum, &c., quo protestabatur se dignum qui, pro peccato, jugularetur.*—OLEASTER, in loc. "And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering.—By which significant act he confessed that he was himself worthy to be slain for his own transgressions."—EDIT. *Qua lex instituit oblationem sacrificiorum, eadem præcipit quoque orationes Deo fieri; quia absque orationibus illa peragi nequeunt.*—HOORNBECKII Socin. *Confut.* tom. ii. p. 431. "The same law which instituted the offering of sacrifices, commanded likewise that prayers should be made to God; because without prayers the offering of sacrifices could not be completed."—EDIT. "The offerer laid his two hands between the horns of the sacrifice, and confessed his sin over a sin-offering in this wise: *I have sinned: I have done perversely: I have rebelled, and done thus and thus. But I return by repentance before thee: and let this be my expiation.*"—LIGHTFOOT'S Works, "Temple Service," vol. ix. cap. 8 (Octavo edition.)

Isaac entreated the Lord for his wife." (Gen. xxv. 21.) In the Hebrew: *וַיִּעֲמָר יִצְחָק לִיהוָה לְנִכְחַ אִשְׁתּוֹ* two words especially make for our purpose: that which is translated, "for his wife" might be read, *with his wife, in the presence of his wife*, being with him and joining with him in his duty: "He prayed for and before his wife:" it was then conjunct prayer, Isaac praying with his wife.* The other word, translated "entreated," signifieth *to multiply powerful words in prayer, to pour out words in abundance*, and denoteth, 1. *The multiplying of his prayers*.—It was not only once, but frequently, that he prayed with his wife. 2. *The earnestness of his prayer*. 3. *The continuance, and their perseverance therein, till they had the mercy prayed for*.—As follows: "And the Lord was entreated of him." Isaac had been married near twenty years with Rebekah, and so long without a child; so that it seems they had been exercised in this duty for many years upon this account, that Rebekah had no child for so long time, for which they did unanimously and constantly offer up prayers to God.† And if they prayed together for issue, should not you for the favour of God, pardon of sin, interest in Christ, and eternal life?

By all, you see that there was family conjunct worship and praying to God by God's command and appointment, and approved by God's acceptance of it. Now, let any one show where God hath taken-off this obligation. If God hath any where said, "Though I did appoint Adam to worship me in his family, and did accept of Abel's offering, that did as I commanded, and did hear Isaac praying together with his wife, yet now I will be prayed-to in families no more:" show it if you can: what book, chapter, and verse is it?

OBJECTION. Will you say that "the reason of their worshipping God in their families at first was, because there was no other to worship him with: but when men did multiply, and there were public assemblies, men were not bound to do it?"

ANSWER I. Show that. Which is the text that tells you that God's instituting of public worship hath disobliged men from praying to God in their families?

ANSWER II. When men were multiplied, godly men did serve God in their families; Abraham did, and Isaac did, and Job did, and Joshua did, and Cornelius did. Did they do it, and were they not bound to do it? What will you make of all the worship and prayers which these did give and offer up to God in their houses? If there was no obligation upon them, they had not sinned if they had omitted it; and it was no obedience, when they did so. Will you say either of these? What! were they works of supererogation? No, surely.

* *Ed presente, et una cum illa.*—JUNIUS. "She being present, and together with her."
—EDIT. *Simul cum uxore, cum qua communicabat preces.*—FAGIUS. "He prayed in company with his wife, whom he made a partaker of his prayers."—EDIT. † *וַיִּעֲמָר* *orare guidem significat, sed non simpliciter, quia assiduitatem et importunitatem simul connotat, et precum multiplicationem. Res convenit; non enim dubium est, tam longo tempore, Isaacum scipsum interpellasse Deum, fretum spe promissionum.*—RIVETUS in loc. "The Hebrew word indeed signifies to pray; but not that simply, for it at the same time denotes assiduity and importunity, and the multiplication of prayers. This meaning is in accordance with the facts of the case: for, doubtless, during such a lapse of years, Isaac had frequently solicited and entreated God, relying with hope on the promises."—EDIT.

OBJECTION. "But when Aaron's priesthood was instituted, then the obligation on families ceased; and, after that, the Israelites did not pray in their houses."

ANSWER I. Why will you speak without book? Show me this either. I have proved an obligation by God's institution: show me where it is null and made void, even after the Aaronical priesthood was instituted.

ANSWER II. But I say they did pray in their houses after this; for after the institution of Aaron's priesthood, the Israelites celebrated the passover in their own houses; and that was not done without prayer. For though after the priesthood was settled, the priests killed the lamb, yet after the lamb was killed, the master of the house caused it to be brought back to his own house, and did eat it with his family. (Luke xxii. 7—13.) And the cup that was used at the passover (whether it were sacramental or no, is controverted) was blessed by the master of the family: * so that there was prayer and praise attending this celebration in their houses conjunctly after the priesthood was settled: in which service they had also the explication of it, why they kept it, what was the meaning of the bitter herbs, and why eaten with unleavened bread, done in form of catechising. And in their feasts the master of the house prayed before and after: after, he gave thanks, 1. For their present food. 2. For their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. 3. For the covenant of circumcision. 4. For the law given by the ministry of Moses. Then he prayed that God would have mercy, 1. On his people Israel. 2. On his own city Jerusalem. 3. On Sion, the tabernacle of his glory. 4. On the kingdom of the house of David his anointed. 5. That he would send Elias the prophet. 6. That he would make them worthy of the days of the Messiah, and of the life of the world to come.† Do you not call *this* conjunct prayer and praise, thus done by the master of the family? May we not now with confidence of the truth from all, under this last topic or head of argument, frame this manner of reasoning?—

ARG. VI. If serving of God, and praying conjunctly to him in proper families, was commanded and appointed by God, and never yet revoked; then it is the duty of proper families so to do.

But serving of God, and praying to him conjunctly in proper families, was commanded and appointed by God, and never yet revoked.

Therefore it is the duty of proper families so to do.

So much for the **FIRST QUESTION.**

QUESTION II.

"Whether it be the duty of families jointly to pray to God daily?"

ANSWER in the affirmative.

Some that are convinced that family prayer is a duty, will sometimes practise it, and yet but seldom; some, upon the Lord's day, and yet but once then, in the evening, and that serves for all the week, till the evening of the Lord's day next doth come. Others pray once a day through the week, but omit it in the morning; when yet the very same reasons which should move them to do it at all should be cogent for more frequent performance of it, and are so. Though it be not determined expressly in

* WEEVES.

† GODWIN'S "Jewish Antiquities."

the scripture, that Christian families should pray together morning and evening every day, yet in the general it is required that we should "continue in prayer;" (Col. iv. 2;) which seems to be meant of family-prayer.* For the apostle had been speaking to family-relations, husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, and treating of family relative duties; carrying on his speech still to the same persons, [he] saith, "Continue in prayer." But such as make such great gaps, as from one Lord's day to another, cannot be said to continue therein. We have general precepts to serve God "all the days of our lives." (Luke i. 75.) So that that worship for which we have opportunity every day, should *no day* be omitted.† But families have, or may have, such opportunities every day, if they be well ordered, and wisely governed, as they ought to be. Particulars are commanded under generals; God hath commanded us to preserve our own lives and the lives of others, and therein is included food and physic, &c. Yet God hath not expressly commanded, that we shall eat once or twice or thrice a-day, nor how often we shall take physic; yet we do these as often as we find we need them. Know yourselves, feel your own spiritual wants, and do so as to prayer, and we need to say no more upon this subject. But because we are not so sensible of the wants of our souls as of our bodies, and are not so easily brought with frequency to our knees in our families together, as to sit down at our tables together, something must be said to show the reasonableness, usefulness, and necessity of daily praying to God in our houses.

We are commanded to "pray without ceasing." (1 Thess. v. 17.) "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance." (Eph. vi. 18.) We should always be habitually disposed to pray, and should actually be engaged in it, as we have occasion and opportunity, and watch for such praying seasons.‡ "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." (Phil. iv. 6.) But can such be said to answer these commands

- *Parcus Deorum cultor, et infrequens
Insanientis dum sapientie
Consultus erro; nunc retrorsum
Vela dare, atque iterare cursus
Cogor relectos.*—HORATII *Carminum* lib. 1. od. xxxiv.

"A fugitive from heaven and prayer,
I mock'd at all religious fear,
Deep-scienced in the mazy lore
Of mad philosophy; but now
Hoist sail, and back my voyage plough

To that bless'd harbour which I left before."—FRANCIS'S Translation.

† *Præceptum est generale, ut serviamus Deo cunctis vitæ nostræ diebus.* (Lucas i. 75.) *Ille igitur cultus, qui commodè possit quotidie frequentari, non debet ullo die omitti. Sed oratio (etiam cum domesticis) est talis; ergo.*—AMESII *Casus Conscientie*. "It is a general precept, that 'we should serve God all the days of our lives.' (Luke i. 75.) Therefore that worship to which without inconvenience daily attention can be given, ought not on any day to be omitted: But prayer even with the members of our household is of this kind, and can be daily repeated: Therefore it ought never to be omitted."—EDIT. † *Quoad dispositionem et preparationem cordis ad orandum, debemus perpetuò illam retinere. Quoad actum orationis, debemus occasionem omnem capere et captare illius exercendi. Similis phrasit: 2 Sam. ix. 13: "Mephibosheth semper comedebat in mensâ regis."*—Idem. "With regard to the disposition and preparation of the heart to pray, we ought perpetually to retain it. As to the act of prayer, we ought to embrace and seize upon every opportunity of exercising it. A similar kind of phraseology occurs in 2 Sam. ix. 13: 'Mephibosheth did eat continually at the king's table.'—EDIT.

that do not pray at all? Is praying *always*, and *not at all*, all one? Or is *continually* and *seldom* all one and the same? Or doth *praying without ceasing*, and *ceasing to pray* all the week long, import and signify the same thing? Nothing less. Frequency then is expressly commanded.

Set before you the example of Daniel: "Noy when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a-day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." (Dan. vi. 10.) Where may be observed, 1. *The place*.^{*}—He prayed in his own house; and why not with his household? For if it had been in secret alone, Daniel might have found out, in so large an house as such a great man as he was had, some retired closet, where the nobles that waited to accuse him, might not have known that he did pray. 2. *The circumstance of time*.—"Three times a-day;" in the morning, before he went to his employments; at noon, when he came home to eat meat; and at night, before he went to sleep.† These three times a-day David observed for prayer also: "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice." (Psalm lv. 17.) 3. *The danger he was in*, if he prayed, of being cast into the lions' den; and yet he prayed thrice a-day, even in hazard of his life. 4. *That this was his usual practice*.—For he did thus "aforetime." 5. *From the event* we might gather how pleasing this was to God, who did so miraculously deliver and save him by stopping of the lions' mouths.

The Jews had their daily sacrifices morning and evening: "Thou shalt say unto them, This is the offering made by fire which ye shall offer unto the Lord; two lambs of the first year without spot day by day, for a continual burnt-offering. The one lamb shalt thou offer in the morning, and the other lamb shalt thou offer at even." (Num. xxviii. 3, 4.) By this daily sacrifice they showed their thankfulness to God, and expected from him a blessing upon themselves, upon their labours, and their rest. And is there not as much reason that Christians under the gospel should worship God morning and evening, and pray unto him? Take these REASONS for it:—

REASON I.

Ad orationem statam quotidie habendam a Deo variis beneficiis invitamur. "Because we receive every day family-mercies from the hand of God."—He loads us daily with his benefits. (Psalm lxxviii. 9.)‡ When you wake in the morning, and find your dwelling safe, not consumed with fire, not broken through by thieves, is not this a family-mercy?

^{*} *Cum fenestras suas aperiret versus Jerusalem, hoc symbolo et sibi et domesticis suis ostendere voluit, se perseverare in spe et fiducia promissæ redemptionis.*—CALVINUS *in loc.* "When Daniel opened his windows toward Jerusalem, he was desirous of showing, by this symbolical act, in behalf of himself and his household, that he still indulged in the hope of the promised redemption from slavery."—EDIT. † *Manè orandum est. Revedente item sole, ac die cessante, necessariò rursus orandum est.*—CYPRIANUS *in Orat. Dominic.* "In the morning we must pray; when the sun begins to decline, and at the close of the day, we must again address our prayers to heaven."—EDIT. ‡ *Communda quibus utimur, lucemque quâ fruimur, spiritumque quem ducimus, ab eo [Deo] nobis dari atque impertiri vidimus.*—CICERONIS *Oratio pro Sexto Roscio Amerino.* "We have seen, that the conveniences and comforts of life which we possess, the light which we enjoy, and even the breath which we inhale, are all bestowed on us by God, and are acts of his bounty."—EDIT.

—EDIT.

When you wake, and find none dead in their beds, that news is not brought you in the morning, there is one child dead in one bed, and another in another, and there is not a lodging-room in the house but the last night one or other died in it; but, on the contrary, you find all well in the morning, and refreshed by the rest and sleep of the night; are not these, and many more such mercies to the family, that, when you rise, you should call them all together jointly to bless God for? If it had been otherwise, [if] master or mistress [were] dead, children or servants dead, would not the rest say, "It would have been a mercy to us all, if God had spared *him, her, or them?*" If your house had been consumed by flames, and God had turned you all out of doors before morning, would you not have said, "It would have been a mercy, if God had safely preserved us and our dwellings, and caused us to rest and sleep and rise in safety?" Why, sirs, will you not acknowledge mercies to be mercies, till God hath taken them away from you? And if you do, should you not give the praise daily unto God? Was it not God himself that watched over you, while you did sleep, and could not, did not, watch yourselves? When you all did sleep, you knew not where you were, nor what dangers you were exposed unto, nor how you might prevent them; but God then was good unto you; * and should you not conjunctly acknowledge this when you do wake and rise and see that God hath kept you, and do enjoy the comfort and the benefit of his watchful providence over you? "Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. For so he giveth his beloved sleep." (Psalm cxxvii. 1, 2.)

And as you have had many family-mercies in the night to bless God for in the morning; so you have many family-mercies in the day, to give thanks to God for at night before you go to bed. If you see not cause to acknowledge God's goodness towards you, you are blind; if you do, and have not hearts, you are worse. Methinks you should not quietly sleep till you have been together on your knees, lest God should say, "This family that hath not acknowledged my mercy to them this day,

* *Ante omnes actus seculi debemus actus habere pietatis, qui nos quiescentes et dormientes in lectulis custodivit. Quis enim nisi Deus dormientem custodit hominem? qui ita resolutus in somnum, et oblitus sui vigoris humani, a se alienus efficitur, ut nesciat quid ipse sit, ubi iam demoretur, adesse sibi ipsi certè non possit. Necessarius igitur Deus adest dormientibus, quia dormientes sibi adesse non possunt: et a nocturnis insidiis genus hominum ipse custodit; quia id temporis ad custodiendum alter nemo pervigilat. Debeo ergò illi gratiam, quia, ut ego securus dormiam, ille pervigilat. Sed et cum vespera diem claudit, ipsi debemus per psalteriam laudem dicere, et gloriam ejus modulatâ voce concinere.*—AMBROSII *Liber Sermonum*, Serm. 23. "In the morning, prior to our engaging in any secular affairs, we ought to perform acts of piety towards HIM who has kept and preserved us while we have reposed on our couches, and been fast asleep. For what being is there, except God himself, who guards man when sleeping? He is then so dissolved in sleep, so completely oblivious of his own manly vigour, and is rendered so absent from his former self, that he is utterly devoid of personal consciousness, knows nothing even about the place in which he is reposing; and, in this supine condition, certainly, it is impossible for him to pay any attention to himself. God, therefore, is the indispensable and intimate attendant on men while immersed in deep slumber, because in that state they are incapable of bestowing any care or attention on themselves. He likewise preserves and defends the whole human race from nightly perils and insidious snares, because at that drowsy season none but God is awake and acting as a watchful guardian. To HIM, therefore, I ought to offer up my early thanksgivings, because, in order that I might sleep in security, he has, through the live-long night, watched over me, and been my defender. But, when the shades of evening, like a curtain, close-in the day, to HIM again we should direct our praises, and extol his glory on the psaltery and harp, as well as with joyful voices in social harmony."—EDIT.

nor given me the glory of those benefits of which to them I gave the comfort, shall never see the light of another day, nor have the mercies of one day more to bless me for. When sleep doth close their eyes, so shall death too; they shall live no longer, and rise no more. This night they shall go to their beds, and, the day or two after, shall be carried to their graves." I wonder, sirs, that you do not dream of an angry God, because thus slighted by you. I wonder that you do not dream of some sore judgment or other, that might overtake you before the sun doth rise. What, if God should say unto you, when you are laid down in your beds?—"This night your souls shall be required of you, you that went to bed before you had given me the praise of the mercies that I had given unto you all the day, and before you had prayed for my protection over you in the night;" and should send some sudden sickness to make you feel that he is offended with you for this neglect? Might not God say?—"Shall I keep and preserve that family till the morning, that would not so much as ask me so to do? and if I do, will not acknowledge it to be a mercy or a kindness to them?" Take heed: though God be patient, do not provoke him.

REASON II.

Ad eandem a defectibus nostris excitamur. "You should pray to God daily in your families, because there are sins committed every day in your families."—Do you indeed sin together, and will you not pray together? What, if you should be damned all together? Doth not every member of your family commit many sins every day? How great is the number then of all, when considered or put together? What! so many sins every day under your roof, within your walls, committed against the glorious, blessed God, and not want prayer? One sin should be lamented with a thousand tears; but you have not one tear shed by one, and another by another, in prayer together, for a thousand sins. Is this to repent daily, when you do not confess them daily? Would you have God to pardon all the sins of your family? Say, would you or no? *If you would not*, God might justly let you go to your graves and hell too, with the guilt of sin upon your souls. *If you would*, is not pardon worth asking for? Would you have it, and not beg it at the hands of God? Would not all judge that man worthy of death, that, being justly condemned, might yet have life for asking for, and will not? How do you, how can you, quietly go to your beds, and sleep with the guilt of so many sins upon your souls? and have not prayed to have them blotted out? What do you take to make you sleep? What is your pillow made of, that your heads can rest upon it, under the weight and load of so much guilt? Is indeed your bed so soft, or your heart so hard, that you can rest and sleep, when, to all the sins of commission in the day, you add this sin of omission in the evening? Lay to heart your daily family-sins, and you will feel a reason why you should pray to God in your families daily.

REASON III.

Ad eandem plerisque tum corporalium, tum spiritualium bonorum indigentis premimur. "You should pray in your families daily unto God,

because you have many daily family-wants, which none can supply but God."—God wants not your prayers, but you and yours want God's mercies: and if you will have them, should you not pray for them? * Can you supply your families' wants? If they want health, can you give it them? If they want bread, can you give it them, except God first give it unto you? † Why then did Christ direct us to pray?—"Give us this day our daily bread." If they want grace, can you work it in them? Or do you not care though they die without it? Is not God the Giver of every good gift? ‡ "Every good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights." § (James i. 17.) Mercies are *above*; and good things are *from above*; and prayer is a means appointed by God to fetch them down. "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God." (James i. 5.) Do you think you do not want wisdom to discharge your duties to God and man? that you do not want wisdom to manage your family for their temporal, spiritual, and eternal good? If you think so, you are fools; and if you think you want it not, by those very thoughts you may discern your want of it. If you think you have enough, it is plain that you have none; and should you not ask it of God, if you would have it? If you and yours want health in your family, should you not ask it of God? Can you live without dependence upon God? Or can you say you have no need of God's help to supply your wants? Then you speak contradictions; for, to be under wants, and not to be dependent beings, is a contradiction. To think you do not live in dependence upon God, is to think you are not men, nor creatures: and if you do depend on Him, and want his help to supply your wants, your own indigency should bring you upon your knees, to pray to him, as the heathen poet's verse (which Melancthon said was the best verse in all Homer) doth express:—

Ευχεσθαι πάντες δε θεων χαιτεουσ' ανθρωποι.—HOMERI *Odyss.* lib. iii. 48.

"All men need God, therefore should prayers use."

REASON IV.

Ad eandem quotidianis operibus promovendis permovemur. "You should pray in your families daily, because of your families' daily employments and labours."—Every one that puts his *hand* to work, his *head* to contrive, should set his *heart* to pray. For will not your trading be in vain, and your labouring and working, your carking and projecting for the world, be to no purpose, without the blessing of God? Will you be convinced if God himself doth tell you? Then read Psalm cxxvii. 1, 2: "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows." *Bread of sorrows!* What bread is that? "Bread gotten with much care, and labour, and toil, is 'bread of sorrows.'" || Without

* Δεωμεθα quia δεωμεθα. "Let us ask as suppliants, because we are needy."—EDIT.
 † Indiget vir viro, sed omnes Deo, etiam Hercules. "Man stands in need of the services of his fellow; but all men, athletic Hercules himself not excepted, require the aid of God Almighty."—EDIT. ‡ ——— Θεοι δωρητες εστων.—HOMERI *Odyss.* lib. viii. 325.

"The gods, by whose beneficence ALL live."—COWPER'S Translation.

§ Omne bonum
 Dei donum.

|| *Panis multis laboribus curisque conquistus.*—GEIERUS. *Panis plenus arumnarum, et maximis molestiis partus.*—VATABLUS.

God, you labour to get bread for yourselves and families in vain; you might miss of it, after all your labours: and without God's blessing, if you eat it when you have got it with much toil and care, you eat it in vain; for without Him it cannot nourish your bodies. And yet is it not necessary to pray to God to prosper and succeed you in your callings? *Prayer* and *labour* should both promote what you aim at: *to pray*, and *not to do the works of your callings*, would be to expect supplies while you are negligent: *to labour and trade*, and *not to pray*, would be to hope for increase and provision without God. Religion, that puts you upon holy duties, doth not teach you to neglect your callings, nor yet to trust to your own endeavours without praying unto God; but both are to keep their place, and have a share of your time.* Prayer is a middle thing betwixt God's giving and our getting. How can you receive, if God do not give? And why do you expect that God will give, if you do not ask? "Ye have not, because ye ask not." (James iv. 2.) What ye *work* for, *pray* for; and what ye *pray* for, *work* and *labour* for; and this is the true conjunction of labour and prayer. Or will you be like to them [whom] the apostle speaks to?—"Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain." (James iv. 13.) *You will!* But will you not ask leave from God whether you shall or no? *You will* go: what! though God cast you upon a bed of sickness, or into your graves? Do, if you can. *You will continue there a year*: what! if death drag you out as soon as you come there? If death fetch your bodies to the dust and grave, and devils fetch your souls to hell, after this will you "continue in such a city for a year?" If one part of you be in the grave, and the other part in hell, what is left of you to *continue in the city*? *You will* buy and sell, *will* you? What! if God give you neither money nor credit? With whom, I wonder? And *you will get gain*: you are resolved upon it; you *will* thrive, and prosper, and grow rich. What! if God curse your endeavours, and say, "You shall not?" *You will* all this, and you would have your will; but your power is not equal to your will. Here is much *will*, but not a word of *prayer*. A Heathen will teach you a better lesson; and that is, that you should not go unto your work, nor to your shops and callings, till you have first prayed unto God:—

— Αλλ' ἔρχεν ἐπ' ἔργον
Θεοσιν ἐπειζόμενος τελεσάται.—PYTHAGORÆ *Aur. Carmin.* 49.

* *Nec ita fidendum industrie, ut divinam operam negligamus; nec ita rursim pendendum ab illâ, ut nostrum pratermittamus officium.*—ERASMUS. "We must not confide so much in our own industry as to neglect the Divine aid; nor, on the contrary, ought we so to depend upon that gracious aid as to remit our exertions, and to neglect our duty."—EDIT.

† "Before thou hast commencement made,

Implore the gods to grant their aid."—EDIT.

Πάντα τα πρὸς κτήσιν τῶν ἀγαθῶν συντελούντα διὰ βραχείων ὑπεγράψεν ὁ λόγος, τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς αυτοκινήτων, καὶ τὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ συνεργίαν. Εἰ γὰρ καὶ ἐφ' ἡμῖν αἰρείσι τῶν καλῶν, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ ἐφ' ἡμῖν θεοῦ ἐχόντες, τῆς παρ' ἐκείνου συνεργείας καὶ τελειώσεως τῶν ἀσθητῶν πᾶντως πρὸς χρῆσιν. Ἡ δὲ εὐχὴ μεθαρῶν εἶναι τῆς τε παρ' ἡμῶν ζητήσεως, καὶ τῆς παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ δόσεως. Πῶς δ' ἂν λαβοῖ τις τὸ εὖ, μὴ δίδοντας Θεοῦ; Πῶς δ' ἂν δοῇ τῷ πρὸς τὰς ὁρμὰς αὐτεξουσίῃ μὴ αἰτοῦντι ὁ δίδοναι πεφύκως Θεός; Ἴν' οὖν μῆτε λόγῳ μόνῳ τὴν εὐχὴν πωσόμεθα, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐργῷ ταυτῆν κρατούμεν; μῆτε τῆ ἑαυτῶν ἐνεργείᾳ μόνῃ διαβῶμεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐργῷ θεοῦ συνεργείας εὐχόμεθα; καὶ τὸ ὅλον τοῦτο, ὅπως ἂ ἐργαζόμεθα καὶ εὐχόμεθα, καὶ ἂ εὐχομεθα ἐνεργῶμεν. Σπουδαεῖ ἂ εὐχεται, καὶ εὐχεται ἂ σπουδαεῖ. Ταυτῆ μὲν ἢ τῆς σπουδῆς καὶ τῆς εὐχῆς ἐρώσις.—HIEROCLEIS

*Nullius est felix conatus et utilis unquam,
Consilium si non detque juvetque Deus.**

REASON V.

Ad eandem ab hostibus animarum nostrarum, diabolique insidiis urgemur. "You should pray to God in your families daily, because you are all every day liable to temptations."—As soon as you wake, the devil will be striving for your first thoughts; and when you are risen, he will be urgent with you to do him the first service, and attend you all the day to draw you into some heinous sin before night. And is the devil a subtle, watchful, powerful enemy, and unwearied? And do you not all need to get together in the morning, that Satan might not prevail against any of you before night, till you come to God together again? How many temptations might you meet-with in your callings, and your company, which without God you will not be able to resist! And how might you fall and dishonour God, discredit your profession, defile your souls, disturb your peace, and wound your consciences! This Origen bewailed in his lamentation; for, that day [in which] he omitted prayer, he heinously sinned: "But I, O unhappy creature! skipping out of my bed at the dawning of the day, could not finish my wonted devotion, neither accomplish my usual prayer; [but] folded and wrapped myself in the snares of the devil."—EUSEBII *Eccl. Hist.* lib. vii. cap. 1.

REASON VI.

Ad eandem variis casibus imminentibus instigamur. "You should pray in your families daily, because all in your families are liable to daily hazards, casualties, and afflictions."—And prayer might prevent them, or obtain strength to bear them, and prepare you for them. Do you know what affliction might befall your family, in a day's time, or in a night's time, either in regard of sickness, death, or outward losses in your estate? Might not you hear of one man's breaking in your debt, and gone away

Aureus Comment. "The preceding verse tersely describes those two things, the junction of which contributes greatly to the acquisition of every blessing; they are *the active and spontaneous motion of the human spirit*, and *the energetic co-operation of the Deity*. For though we possess the choice of those things which are good; yet, deriving from God, as we do, even this power of choosing, we almost constantly feel our need of his proffered aid, and his perfective influence on those powers which move our senses. But prayer resembles a middle spot, or neutral territory, which lies between the act of asking on our part, and God's bestowing that which has been asked. How then can any man receive what is good, unless it be given by God? And, indeed, how can the Deity, inclined though he evermore is to beneficence, bestow his benefits on one who in reference to his own efforts is endowed with freedom of action, but will not deign to ask a favour from Heaven? Let not, therefore, our petitions consist merely of the words in which we embody them, but let them likewise be seconded and confirmed by our strenuous exertions; let us not confide solely in these exertions, but, while we employ our best energies, let us entreat from God his potent and Divine assistance. This is the counsel which the verse propounds: Let us pray for Divine aid upon the affairs about which we are occupied, and let us energetically exert ourselves in the performance of those concerning which we have prayed. The man who acts according to this principle is sedulous in executing the designs upon which he had previously invoked the Divine benediction, and zealously invokes the blessing of Heaven upon those works in which he is actively engaged. Such is the constitution of that beautiful union which subsists between diligent exertion and earnest prayer."—EDIT.

- * "Futile is that which man intends,
And hapless his design,
Unless, as his most potent friends,
God's smile and help combine."—EDIT.

with so much, and another gone away with so much? And are you indeed so weaned from the world, that this shall not put you into a passion, and cause you to sin against God, or that you can bear it without murmuring and discontent, that you need not pray for a composed frame of heart, if such things befall you? Do you know, if you go abroad yourself, or send a son or servant, that you or they may return alive again? Though you go out alive, you may be brought back again dead. Had you not then need to pray to God in the morning, that he would keep you in your goings-forth and comings-in? and bless him together in the evening, if he do? How many evils is man exposed to, whether he be at home or abroad! Anacreon lost his life by the kernel of a raisin going wrong down his throat. Fabius, a senator of Rome, in a draught of milk swallowing a small hair, was strangled.* (PLINI *Nat. Hist.*) Do not your daily sins cry aloud for daily punishments? And should you not, in daily prayer, cry as loud that God in mercy would prevent them; or if they come upon you, to sanctify them for your good, or remove them; or, if they remain, to support you under them? Know indeed that you are nowhere safe without God's protection, night or day. If your houses were built upon foundations of stone, and the walls were made of brass or adamant, and the doors of iron, yet you would be no longer safe than [so long as] God protects you from all dangers. Pray, then.

REASON VII.

Ad eandem Ethnicorum exemplis provocamur. "You must pray to God in your families daily, or the very Heathen will rise up against you Christians, and condemn you."—Those that never had the means of grace, (as you have had,) nor a Bible to direct and teach them, (as you have,) nor ministers sent to them, (as you have had in abundance,) do shame many that are called "Christians," and go for great professors too. When I have read the sayings of some Heathens, showing what they were wont to do, and consider and know the practice and negligence of many Christians in their families, I have been ready to conclude the Heathen to be the better men. It was their manner to sacrifice to their gods morning and evening, that they might have the favour of them, and be successful in their outward estates, as you may learn from their poets.

Καθυναμιν δ' ἔρδειν ἱερ' ἀθανάτοισι Θεοῖσιν
 Ἄγνος και καθαρως, ἐπι δ' ἀγλαα μῆρια κκειιν.
 Ἀλλοτε δη σπονδρησι δνεσσι τε Ἰλασκεσθαι,
 Ἡμεν δτ' ευναζη, και δταν φως ἱερον ελθη'
 Ὡς κε τοι Ἰλαον κραδιην και θυμον εχωσιν'
 Οφρ' ἄλλων ωνη κληρον, μη τον τεον ἄλλος.—HESIODI *Opera et Dies*, lib. i. 334—339.

Which I render thus :—

"With all thy might, to God immortal bring,
 Holy and pure, the best burnt-offering;
 That he appeased might be by sacrifice,
 When thou liest down, and when the sun doth rise.
 In him, to thee, a pleased heart shall dwell;
 And thou shalt purchase, when shall others sell."

Another :—

* Θεου ἀεκητι *nihil firmum, nihil tutum, nec murus aheneus, nec arx adamantina.* "Nothing is firm, nothing safe, in opposition to the will of God; without this neither walls of brass nor citadels of adamant avail for defence."—EDIT.

Σπείσαντες, κοιτω μελωμεθα· τοιο γαρ ὄρη.*—HOMERI *Odys.* lib. iii. 334.

Do not the Heathen shame many of you? They were wont to say, "Now we have sacrificed, let us go to bed." You say, "Now we have supped, let us go to bed;" or, "Let us play a game or two at cards, and go to bed." Are you men, or swine in the shape of men? Mr. Perkins likened such to swine that live without prayer in their families, "which are always feeding upon the mast with greediness, but never look up to the hand that beats it down, nor to the tree from whence it falleth." (*Christian Econo.*)

So much for the SECOND QUESTION.

QUESTION III.

"How family prayer might be so managed, that it might be for the spiritual benefit of every one in the family?"

FOR ANSWER to this,

(I.) Something must be considered *in reference to the master of the family*, that is the mouth of the rest to God: or rules concerning this duty.

(II.) Something *in reference to those who are to join*: or rules for them.

(III.) Something *in reference to governors and governed conjunctly*: or rules common to both for the better performance of family prayer, that it might be for the good and benefit of all.

(I.) *The DIRECTIONS that chiefly concern the master of the family are these*:—

DIRECTION I.

Let the master of the family exercise his authority in the good government of his household.—He is to be the foreman in the worship of God in the family. Mr. Perkins writes thus: "That the master of the family hath the proper government of the whole household, and he comes not to it by election, but by the ordinance of God, settled even in the order of nature; and by the light of nature hath the principality and sovereignty therein. He is *pater-familiás*, 'the father and chief head of the family,' and ought therefore to bear the chief stroke, and to be the principal agent, director, and furtherer of the worship of God in his family, and to keep order, and to exercise discipline in his house." Let him improve his authority in commanding and causing every one in his house, under his charge, to be present, and to attend upon God, in family prayer. God and nature have made him the head of all the rest; and the head is to govern, rule, direct, and influence the whole body. Let him also take care to purge his house from sin; and, to his utmost power, endeavour that none in his house live in gross sins, that there be no swearers, drunkards, and openly profane sinners under his roof.

Thus Jacob purged his house, when he was with them to worship God. Family-reformation tendeth much to the better and more profitable managing of family prayer. "And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God. Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange

* "Nor fits it to prolong the heavenly feast,
Timeless, indecent, but retire to rest."—POPE'S Translation.

gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments : and let us arise, and go up to Bethel ; and I will make there an altar unto God. And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand." (Gen. xxxv. 1—4.) So, David : " He that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me. He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house : he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight." (Psalm ci. 6, 7.) Family-disorders hinder family prayer ; (1 Peter iii. 7 ;)* where the apostle giveth directions to family relations, that their conjunct prayers might " not be hindered," *εις το μη εκκοπτεσθαι τας προσευχας υμων.* † The same word is used, Matt. iii. 10, and is translated, " hewn down," speaking of a tree that bringeth not forth good fruit ; and, in the same sense, Matt. vii. 19 ; Luke iii. 9. It signifieth also " to be cut off," Rom. xi. 22. Unsuitable walking in our houses strikes at the very root of family-prayer. Family-wickedness is hewing at this duty, and, if not remedied, will cut them short, if it do not cut them quite down, quite cut them off.

Now this family-reformation lieth much on the care of the master of the family, who is to rule as king in his own house. Ahasuerus made a law, " that every man should bear rule in his own house." (Esther i. 22.) And God hath appointed the master of the family to be *προισταμενος του ιδιου οικου*, " ruler of his own house." (1 Tim. iii. 4.) " Kings are fathers of their own countries ; and fathers are kings in their own houses," † in respect of their rule and authority over them.

Αυταρ εγων οικιο αναξ εσομ' ημετεροιο
Και δμωων. §—HOMERI *Odysse.* lib. i. 398.

Θεμιστευει δε εκαστος
Παιδων ηδ' αλοχων. ||—Idem, *Odysse.* lib. ix. 115.

DIRECTION II.

That prayer be managed to the spiritual benefit of the family, *the master thereof should make it his business to be accomplished with gifts and knowledge suitable to the place where God hath set him.*—Ignorance in a master of a family renders him incapable of the discharge of the duties of his place, ¶ and is worse than in a child or servant.** Such a family is like a body that hath a head without eyes. It is a shame to see what little knowledge many governors of families have in matters of

* This text speaks of conjunct prayer. † *Alloquitur quidem Petrus maritum et uxorem, dum jubet concordare esse, ut simul Deum uno animo precentur. Hac ratio domesticas omnes turbas et jurgia debet componere, ut in singulis familiis invocetur Deus.*—CALVINUS in 1 Petri iii. 7. " Peter indeed accosts both the husband and wife, while he commands them to live together in concord,—that with one mind and heart they may address their prayers to God. The reason which he here assigns ought to compose all domestic strife and bickering,—that in each family God's name might be suitably invoked."—EDIT.

‡ *Res est pater-familias (pater-patriæ) in suo regno, et pater-familias est res in sua domo.*

§ ——— " But, king, myself, I am

In my own house, and over all my own
Domestics."—COWPER'S Translation.

|| " Each Cyclops o'er his household doth preside,
And governs well his children and his bride."—EDIT.

¶ *Nec sibi, nec aliis utilis.* " He is useless both to himself and to others."—EDIT.

** *Omne animi vitium tanto conspectius in se*

Crimen habet, quanto major qui peccat, habetur.—JUVENALIS *Satyræ*, sat. viii. 140.

" Vice glares more strongly in the public eye,

As he who sins, in power or place is high."—GIFFORD'S Translation.

religion, that, when they should instruct and catechise their children and servants, need to be catechised themselves. The apostle requireth this qualification in masters of families, that they should be "knowing men," (1 Peter iii. 7.) so some interpret this place: *Οἱ ἄνδρες ὁμοίως συνοικούντες κατὰ γνώσιν* "as becomes knowing men." * Naturally men are endued with greater powers to understand than women are; and a master of a family hath had more time to get knowledge than children and servants have. And if he hath not attained to more, it is his shame and reproach, and renders him more contemptible in the eyes of those that are subjected to him; † who have not that reverent awe of him and his authority as they would have, if authority were accompanied with knowledge. Study then, you masters, the scripture more, and the grounds of religion more, that you might be able to manage this duty to the greater profit of all in your families.

DIRECTION III.

It is necessary also to this purpose, that *the master of the family instruct each member of his house in the principles of religion, that they may be able to understand the matter of the prayers that are put-up to God.*—For if the governor have knowledge how to ask, and those that kneel down with him know not the meaning of his words, (though commonly used, and plain to them that have been instructed,) how shall they concur in such requests or confessions, or say "Amen" to what they do not understand? Or what spiritual profit can they get? When you lament original sin, which you and they were guilty of and defiled with, if they know not what this means, nor how they are corrupted even from their birth, how shall they in prayer be humbled for it? If you pray that you may be justified, sanctified, or have the image of God engraven on your hearts; that you may have faith in Christ, repentance for sin, be converted, &c.; how shall they join with you, if they have no knowledge of these things? when they are ignorant what is meant by the image of God, by faith, repentance, conversion, &c.? and what benefit can they have by such prayers, as to their own concurrence with you, to make these things their own desire? when, yet, they are the things you must daily beg of God. That prayer then might be performed to their spiritual edification, lay first the foundation, be knowing yourselves, and make them so too; and prayer will be more advantageously done to you and them.

DIRECTION IV.

That prayer be managed to the spiritual profit of those in the family, *the master of the family should get his own heart in good frame, and get his own affections warmed in the duty.*—Do you come to prayer with a lively heart, and quickened affections yourselves; your heat might warm them, and your earnest importunity might stir them up unto the same.

* *Viri similiter unâ versentur, ut scientes decet.*—BEZA et PISCATOR. † *Quid est stultius, quàm quia diù non didicervis, non discere? Omnis ætatis homines schola admittit. Tamdiù discendum est, quamdiù nescias.*—SENECÆ *Epist.* 76. "What can be more ridiculous than to think, because you have for some time desisted from study, you need no further instruction? The school of philosophy invites men of every age. A man must still be learning somewhat, as long as there is any thing to be learned; that is, according to the proverb, as long as he lives."—MORELL'S Translation.

Let them see you are in good earnest by your fervent praying, as becomes men that are begging for such things as *the life of their souls, the pardon of their sin, the favour of God, deliverance from hell, and for everlasting happiness*. Whereas if you come to the duty with flat, dull, and cold affections, this will make them so too. As you find it with yourselves when you are under a dull and lukewarm preacher,—you have little workings of affections; so your family will find it under your prayers, if they be such. For as a minister should get lively workings in his own breast of those affections which he would raise in the people,* so should you, in family-duties, get those workings of love, joy, and sorrow for sin, which you would desire should be in those that join with you; for what a minister is in the church, that you are, proportionably, in your house.†

DIRECTION V.

When you are to set actually on the duty, prepare your family by some short advice, to carry themselves as becomes those that are going to speak to the great eternal God.‡—At least sometimes, and the oftener the better. Do not rashly rush out of your worldly callings into the presence of the glorious God. Say to them to this or the like purpose: “The God we are going to pray unto is a holy, just, omniscient God, that looks into all our hearts, that sees and knows the frame of our spirits, that will not be mocked, and cannot be deceived. All we are sinful creatures, that have broken his righteous laws, and thereby have deserved hell and everlasting torments. Yet this gracious God holds forth his golden sceptre, and gives us leave to approach his presence, to beg for pardon, and for Christ, and grace, and heaven. Our wants are great and many too; and yet our mercies are great and many too. Come then, O come, let us, with a holy fear of God, put up our joint petitions, that God would supply our wants, especially of our souls; and make joint confessions of our sins to God with humble, broken, penitent hearts; and jointly bless him for the mercies we are all partakers of. But let us do all as those that would please God while we pray unto him, and not by our carelessness and sloth provoke him while we kneel before him.” Thus Job prepared his household, when he with them did sacrifice to God: “Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt-offerings according to the number of them all. Thus did Job continually.” (Job i. 5.)

Could Job sanctify his children? Could Job give them grace? Pa-

* *Nisi prius in nobis ejusmodi affectus exarscitamus, quos aliorum animis impressos volumus, frustrâ erit quicquid conamur.*—BOWLES, *Pastor Evangelicus*. “Unless we previously excite within ourselves affections of this very kind, which we wish to impress on the minds of others, whatever attempts we may make, they will all prove abortive.”—EDIT.
 † *Quod enim minister ecclesiæ est in templo, id pius pater-familias est in domo; ille publico docendi munere fungitur, hic privatim suam instituit familiam, et ad pietatem ac honestatem domesticos suos format.*—GERHARDI *Loci Communes, De Conjug.* “For that which a Christian minister is in his church, the same is a pious father of a family in his own house. The former discharges the office of public instruction; the latter teaches the members of his family, and forms them to habits of piety and honesty.”—EDIT. † *Orationis lex, ut non aliter quàm eos devert, qui ad Dei colloquium ingrediuntur, mente animoque compositi simus.*—CALVINI *Institut.* lib. iii. cap. 20. “It is a law of prayer, that we should be composed in our minds and spirits, and should conduct ourselves in no other manner than that in which it becomes guilty men to behave, who are admitted into the Divine presence, to enjoy converse with Deity.”—EDIT.

rents might give their children portions ; but can they give them holiness too ? They might put money into their purses ; but can they put goodness into their hearts ? yea, they may advise and exhort them to get grace ; but can they work it too ? Is not this bestowed by God, the author of all grace ? How then did Job sanctify his children ?” The meaning is, that Job did what he could to prepare and dispose them for the religious duties they were entering upon.* So the word *sanctify* is often used : “ Let the priests sanctify themselves.” (Exod. xix. 22.) “ And the priests and the Levites were ashamed, and sanctified themselves. For there were many in the congregation that were not sanctified.” (2 Chron. xxx. 15, 17.) All is explained by Hezekiah’s prayer, in verse 18 : “ The good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek God, the Lord God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary.”

DIRECTION VI.

It will be useful to this purpose, that *the master of the family understand the spiritual condition of every one in the family, that he may put-up requests suitable to their condition.*—Let him get a particular knowledge of their wants, doubts, fears, temptations, afflictions of soul, of their sins, as far as is convenient, and the mercies of God towards them.† For, as it is for the spiritual benefit of a people that their minister understand the state of his flock, that so he might study for them, and preach to them, pray for them and with them, according as their case requires ; so it will be for the benefit of a family to have their particular cases spread before the Lord in prayer.

DIRECTION VII.

Keep seasonable hours for family-prayer, and take the fittest time when all might be most free from distraction and disturbance.—In the morning, put it not off too long, lest by worldly occasions it be put quite by. Be not too late at night, when the family, after weariness by their callings all the day, will be more fit to sleep than to pray. Late prayers are too commonly sleepy prayers ; one asleep in one place, and another in another, and, it may be, the master of the family himself prays

* *Solemnis erat apud Ethnicos mos lavandi manus ante sacrificandum ; ut χερρπτεν idem ac διεν apud quosdam significet.* “ Washing the hands was a solemn custom constantly observed among Heathens prior to their offering sacrifices : thus, among some authors, the Greek word for *washing the hands* bears a similar signification to that which has the strict import of *sacrificing.*”—EDIT.

Χερσι δ' ἀνιπτοιων Διὶ λειβειν αἰθοπα οἶνον
 Ἀζομαι.—HOMERI *Ilias*, lib. vi. 266.

“ I dare not pour, with unwash'd hands, to Jove

The rich libation forth : it cannot be,” &c.—COWPER'S Translation.

† *Cui aliis in precando præcundum, sedulo perquirat, quæ apud suos obtinent peccata : quibus maxime indigent, gratiæ ; quibus exercentur, tentationes ; quæ illos cujuscunque generis premunt, gravamina ; quæ illis imminet, judicia ; quæ in illos indies confert Deus, beneficia : haud aliter suis se inter orandum accommodabit qui non hæc omnia in numerato habet.*—BOWLES, *Pastor Evangelicus.* “ It is specially required in him who has to precede others in prayer, sedulously to inquire into the *sins* which prevail among his people ; the *graces* which they principally need ; the *temptations* with which they are exercised ; the *various grievances and troubles* with which they are oppressed ; the *divine judgments* which are impending over them ; and the *blessings* which God is every day conferring on them. He who has not completely furnished himself with all these particulars, is ill-qualified to accommodate himself, during prayer, to the different feelings and conditions of his people.”—EDIT.

between sleeping and waking. Be not clubbing abroad when you should be praying at home. This is in the power of the governor of the house to remedy, the other being to be at the hour appointed by him.

DIRECTION VIII.

Spend so much time in family-prayer, that those that join might be affected, but not so much as to be wearied, with the duty.—Be not too short, nor yet too tedious. *Not too short*: for, the heart is not easily tuned, nor the affections warmed, nor the mind brought into frame. Our wants are many, and our sins are many; and some time must be spent to get the heart sensible of them, and of God's mercies to us. To rise-up from your knees before these can be probably done, is to come away no better than you went unto it. This over-hasty brevity argues but little delight in the duty, and showeth you care not how soon you get out of God's special presence. I doubt, such as thus slubber-over family-prayer with so much haste,* do it because they may be said to do it; to stop the mouths of others, and the mouth of their own conscience, with the work done. And yet *too much prolixity and length of the duty* may have its inconveniences also, † and make it to some graceless persons in the family, or to others that are good but wearied in their daily callings before, to be burdensome, and they more backward to it. But the most do not err on this hand; therefore, to say little here will be enough, and leave it to the prudence of the governor to consider the persons that join, and other concurring circumstances, and to act accordingly.

So much for THE DIRECTIONS for the master of the family.

(II.) *The DIRECTIONS for such as are to join in family-prayer for their greater benefit.*

DIRECTION I.

Let them be careful that they be all present at the beginning of a duty, and continue till it be ended.—In some families, there is great disorder in this respect. Servants, either by reason of the backwardness of their hearts, for want of love to and delight in prayer, or by not wisely forecasting their business, come when the prayer is half over, or else go out before it is ended, or, if at the beginning and end, yet, to look after one thing or other, make breaches and interruptions in the prayer, by going-out and coming-in once or twice or more in the prayer-time; which, if possible, should be carefully avoided. For, family-prayer being ordinarily not very long, to lose any part of it cannot but be to the detriment and disadvantage of such persons; for when their affections begin to be warmed, by these interruptions they are cooled and damped again. You should be more willing to go to your prayer than to your meat when hungry, by how much your souls are better than your bodies, and serving God better than feeding of the body. If business come when we are eating at our table, we commonly let it stay

* *Ut canis e Nilo*; As the Egyptian dog, which, when lapping the waters of the Nile, runs along the banks. See note in vol. i. p. 471.—EDIT. † Πλατων, Αντισθηενους ποτε μακρολογησαντος, Αγνωεις, εφη, οτι του λογου μετρον εστιν ουχ ο λεγων, αλλα ο ακουων;—POSIDONIUS. "Once when Plato heard Antisthenes talking with much diffuseness, he said, 'Art thou not aware, that he who is best qualified to adjudge its due praise to a discourse, is not the man himself who utters it, but he who is the patient listener?'"—EDIT.

till we have done. What business shall wait upon you in that case, let it do so also in the other, that you might not lose the benefit of the prayer. Numa Pompilius made a law amongst the Romans, that men should not serve the gods as they passed by, or were in haste, or did any other business; but that they should worship and pray to them, when they had time and leisure, and all other business set apart.—PLUTARCH.

DIRECTION II.

When you are present at family-prayer, *give diligent attention, and mind what confessions of sins are made, what petitions are put-up, and what praises are returned to God for mercies received.*—The devil will be striving that you may be absent in prayer, when you are present at prayer; absent in mind when present in body.* God is not pleased with the prostrating of the body, when your hearts join not in the work. Do not so dissemble on your knees with God and man. Are you then desiring the mercies prayed for, whether pardon of sin, strength against sin, love to God, repentance for sin, an interest in Christ, and evidences thereof, when your minds and thoughts are wandering about other things? Which if they do, let conscience call to thee to mind the work thou art about. † For is not this to sin against God, when you pretend to be serving of him? and to be provoking of him, when you should be praying to him to be reconciled unto you, and turn away his anger from you? Conjunct prayer should be made with one mouth, and with one mind: “These all continued in prayer,” *ὁμοθυμαδον*, “with one accord: (Acts i. 14:) which word is translated, in Rom. xv. 6, “with one mind:” “That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God.” ‡ But where your thoughts are wandering in family-prayer, though there be but “one mouth,” there be *many minds*: these persons do *not accord* in prayer, which is *great discord* before God.

There should be a sympathy and agreement of hearts in conjunct prayer: “If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.” (Matt. xviii. 19.) A harmony of hearts should be in prayer. The word is borrowed from musicians, when several playing together do make an accord in music, a concert of many voices in one; thence translated to the mind, [it] denotes a consent of more hearts in one: such prayers make sweet harmony in the ears of God. Keep your minds fixed, then; else, though you do agree to go together into one room to pray, there will not be an agreement of hearts when you pray.§

* *Cum milite isto præsens, absens ut sis.*—TERENTII *Eunuchus*, act. i. scen. ii. 112. “Be with you soldier present, as if absent.”—COLMAN’S Translation.

† *Ut vivas igitur, vigila.* Hoc age.—HORATHII *Sermones*, lib. ii. sat. iii. 152.

‡ “Then wake, that you may live;

Here take the best prescription I can give.”—FRANCIS’S Translation.

§ *Qui rectè orare cupit, debet necessariò in se esse collectus, non distractus, aut sensibus dissipatus, aut vagus.*—AMESII *Cas. Conscient.* “He who desires to pray aright, ought necessarily to be self-collected, his spirit not distracted by sensible objects, nor in a wandering mood.”—EDIT.

§ *Εαν δυο συμφωνησωσω Συμφωνειν est vox musica, significat concentum: concentus autem a cantu eo differt, quod cantus unius sit, concentus non nisi plurium: hic verò concentus animorum significat.*—CAMER. *Præl.* “If two of you shall agree on earth—The word *symphony* is one used in music, and signifies concord or harmony. Concord, however, differs from singing in this, that *singing* may be

DIRECTION III.

Those that join should not only attend, but also assent, to the matter of the prayer, so far as it is agreeable to the word of God.—When the corruption of the heart is acknowledged, believe that this is true; the misery of an unregenerate state lamented, believe it to be true; when grace is prayed-for as necessary to your salvation, and that you are undone without it, believe this as a most certain truth. For if these things be spoken by him that prayeth, and heard by you that join, and not believed, your hearts will not be humbled when sin is confessed, nor earnest after grace when it is prayed for; and so you will lose the benefit of that prayer.

DIRECTION IV.

Do not only believe these things in prayer, but make particular application thereof unto yourselves.—When original sin is acknowledged, think and say in your own hearts: “Lord, this is my condition; my heart is thus corrupt, loathsome, and vile.” When wants are expressed, and supplies begged, go along with what is said, and apply it particularly to yourselves: “Lord, this is my want; the want of Christ is my want. O that He may be given to me! The want of love to God and delight in him is my want. O that I might love thee! O that I could love thee!” And so, in other things: “This is my sin, and these are my doubts and my fears. This is my burden, and this is my temptation;” according as these are insisted-on in prayer; and this will make the duty to be for your spiritual benefit and profit.

These are the DIRECTIONS for them that are to join with him that is your mouth to God.

(III.) The DIRECTIONS more common to all, that prayer might be managed to spiritual profit, are these following:—

DIRECTION I.

Get and keep upon all your hearts awful, lively impressions of the perfection of that God that you pray unto.—Take heed of coming with low, irreverent, unsuitable thoughts of God.* But conceive of him, and believe, and work, and press it upon your hearts, that the God you kneel before is most holy, most wise, most gracious and merciful, most just, eternal, unchangeable, all-sufficient, true in his threatenings, righteous in his commands, faithful in his promises, every where present, and knowing all things; that he observeth all your words and ways, and looks into your hearts and thoughts; that this God you cannot deceive,

practised by one person, but concord can only be produced by a combination of many. But its meaning in this passage is *spiritual concord*, harmony of mind.”—EDIT. *Verbo Græco elegans subest metaphora: συμφωνειν de musico vocum concentu, harmonicoque sono; dicitur tanquam si diceretur, Non minus gratam esse Deo concordem plurimum orationem, quàm concentus musicus hominum auribus sit gratus.*—NOVARINUS in loc. ex *Criticis Sacris*. “An elegant metaphor is concealed under this Greek word. *Symphony* is employed to describe the musical accord and harmonic sound of many voices; and it is here used as if it had been said, Not less pleasing to God is the harmonious prayer in which many concur, than is musical concord to the ears of men.”—EDIT.

* *Sciamus non alius ritè probèque se accingere ad orandum, nisi quos afficit Dei Majestas.*—CALVINI *Instit.* “Let us know that no others than those who are suitably affected with the Majesty of God, do apply themselves in a right and proper manner to the duty of prayer.”—EDIT.

though you should deceive yourselves and one another. Consider and believe, that this God is present among you; and doth know your ends, your desires, and what you are, as well as who you are.* Then think, "Is this that God that we are to speak unto, to kneel before, and shall we not so manage this duty that we might please this God?" and if you do, you shall find it shall be for your spiritual benefit.

DIRECTION II.

Put-up your prayers to this great and glorious God in the name of Jesus Christ.—There is no access for sinners to God but by and through a Mediator. You shall reap no benefit by praying, except you go in the name of Christ. Joseph told his brethren, they should not see his face except they brought Benjamin with them; (Gen. xliii. 5;) nor we, the face of God without Christ. (Eph. iii. 12; Heb. vii. 25; Col. iii. 17; Heb. xiii. 15.) This praying in the name of Christ doth not consist in the bare mentioning of his name with our tongues, but to pray in obedience to his command, in his strength, for his glory, trusting his promises, resting on his merits, expecting audience and acceptance only for his sake.†

DIRECTION III.

Get and keep upon your hearts a true, real, lively sense of your sins, and wants, and mercies.‡—Hereby shall every part of prayer—confession, petition, and thanksgiving—be more profitably managed, and you better disposed for the work you have to do upon your knees.

- *Speculator adstat desuper,
Qui nos, diebus omnibus,
Actusque nostros prospicit,
A luce primâ in vesperam:
Hic Testis, hic est Arbiter,
Hic intuetur quicquid est
Humana quod mens concepit:
Hunc nemo fallit Judicem.*—Q. AUR. PRUDENTII *Cathem.* hymn. ii.
- “ See our strict OBSERVER stand,
Looking down on every land,
Viewing what from men proceeds,
All their thoughts, their words, and deeds,
At each moment of the day,
Dawning morn, and evening grey!
WITNESS and the JUDGE is He
Of his numerous family,
WITNESS of the thoughts conceived,
JUDGE who cannot be deceived!”—EDIT.

† For further direction in this point, *how you should do all in the name of Christ*, see the Sermon on Col. iii. 17. [It is the twenty-third in this volume, and was the composition of Dr. Wilkinson.] † *Quid odiosius aut etiam Deo magis execrandum putamus hac fictione, ubi quis veniam peccatorum postulat, interim aut se peccatorem non esse cogitans, aut certe peccatorem esse non cogitans? quia Deus ludibrio habetur. Rogando semper inopiam nostram verè sentiamus, ac seriò cogitantes, omnibus, quæ petimus, nos indigere. Generalis quidem et confusus necessitatis suæ affectus illuc eos ducit: sed non eos sollicitat, quasi in re præsentì, ut egestatis suæ levamen petant.*—CALVINI *Institut.* “What can we suppose to be more odious, or indeed more execrable, in the sight of God, than this fiction,—when any man asks for the pardon of his sins, and meanwhile he either thinks himself not to be a sinner, or, certainly, *his being a sinner* never troubles his thoughts? In this instance, God is made an object of derision. By constant asking, let us really feel our indigence and emptiness, while we seriously reflect that we are greatly in want of those things for which we are begging. Indeed, a general and confused sense of their own necessities will bring men to this point; but such a vague feeling does not urge and impel them, as if it were a matter of pressing and importance, to ask and entreat for the instant relief of their necessities.”—EDIT.

Know your sin in the intrinsecal malignity of it, the vileness of it in its own nature, as it is sin. Know it also, and understand it, as to the dreadful consequents of it, in its several kinds, acts, and aggravations of them. Get also a sense of your wants, and of the necessity of the things you are to pray for. If you want grace, know that you want it, and are undone without it; and pray accordingly. Pray as persons that believe you must be damned if you are not sanctified, that you must perish if you do not repent; and pray as men that do believe it. And if you have grace already in truth, know how much you want of it in respect of growth; that you love God but a little, which is your shame; and, O what a blessed thing were it, to love him more! Pray as those that would get at least one degree of love to God more by every prayer you make. Think seriously what a little grace you have, 1. To what you may have: 2. To what you might have had: 3. To what you ought to have: 4. To what others have: 5. To what you need: and that, 1. To fight against such strong corruptions: 2. To resist such strong temptations: 3. To bear such afflictions that might befall you: 4. To perform such duties as are required from you: 5. That you die at last with peace, comfort, and joy. Know also your mercies: *personal*, to body, to soul; *relative*, what mercy you have one in another, by being made mercies one to another; mercies for this life, and the life to come. Think how many, how great, how precious, how suitable, how durable, how sufficient, how satisfying good, God hath given you;—himself, [his] Son, Spirit, promises, privileges, much in hand, and more in hope, and all undeserved. A real abiding sense of these things will make you think and say, “Why me, Lord? why me?” and will wind up your hearts to lively praises, too much neglected in family duties; so that you shall find the benefit and sweetness of drawing near to God in prayer.

DIRECTION IV.

Realize invisible things to yourselves, by believing of them as certainly as if you saw them with your eyes.—When you are going to pray, look into the unscen world.* Stand and take a view of departed souls, and seriously think what is their state; and what *they* are enjoying or suffering *that* are already gone into eternity: and from thence fetch arguments to quicken your hearts when dull, and to be laborious when slothful, and lively and fervent in your duty. O how would a believing view of souls in heaven and hell help you to pray in prayer! Suppose then you saw the glorious saints in heaven, and the happiness [which] they there enjoy, in that they shall sin no more, and suffer no more, and be tempted no more, and sigh and sob, nor weep nor sorrow, any more for ever. All sin is expelled from those glorious souls, and all tears are wiped from their eyes; and [they] now are full of love to God, solacing themselves in the perfect, perpetual, and immediate fruition of the Chiefest Good; and then think: “This is the state that I am hoping for, and looking,

* *Istuc est sapere, non quod ante pedes modò est
Videre, sed etiam illa quæ futura sunt
Prosperare.*—TERENTI *Adelphi*, act. iii. scen. iii. 32.
“O Demeca! that is to be wise,—to see
Not that alone which lies before your feet,
But even to pry into futurity.”—COLMAN’S Translation.

longing, waiting for, and that now I am going to beg and pray I may be fitted and prepared for, and hereafter be possessed of :” and then pray as becometh such that unfeignedly desire to be partakers of their joy and felicity.

Again : Stand and take a view of poor damned souls, and suppose you saw them with your eyes rolling in a lake of burning brimstone, full of the fury of the Lord : * suppose you heard their direful execrations, their doleful outcries, their hideous roarings, and bitter lamentations ringing in your ears, saying : “ Woe and alas that ever we were born ! that are come to this place of torment, to this place of torment ! O ! it is, it is a place of torment ! Once we had praying time and hearing time, but we did not improve it for our good ; else we had not been now in this extremity of pain ! no, we had not ! no, we had not ! We did pray, but we did but trifle in our prayers, and did but dally with that God whom now we find and feel to be to us consuming fire : and yet we burn and are not consumed. We were not in good earnest in those prayers we were at, but

* *In seipos furenter exardescunt damnati, et assidue ipsi lugubrem hanc cantilenam occinent : O tempus, rerum omnium preciosissimum ! O dies ! O hora plusquam aurea ! quò evanuitis, aeternum non reditura ? Nos caci et excordes, obstructis oculis et auribus, libidine furebamus et mutuis nosmet exemplis trahebamus ad interitum. Post longissima annorum spatia, nihil de bonis nostris accisum erit, sed iterum quasi ab initio pati tormenta incipientes ; atque ita sine interruptione, sine fine, sine modo, volvetur assidue nostrorum tormentorum rota. Ibi erit calor ignis, et rigor frigoris : erunt ibi perpetuae tenebrae, erit ibi funus et perpetuae lachrymae, erit ibi aspectus terrificus daemonum, erit clamor in perpetuum : O aeternitas interminabilis ! O aeternitas nullis temporum spatibus mensurabilis ! Quam grave est in mollissimo lectu per triginta annos immobilem jacere ! quid erit in sulphureo isto lacu triginta millia millium annorum ardere ? O aeternitas, aeternitas ! tu sola ultra omnem modum supplicia damnatorum exaggeras. Mors erit sine morte, finis erit sine fine, defectus sine defectu, quia mors semper vivit, finis semper incipit, et defectus deficere nescit. Quid gravius quam semper velle quod nunquam erit, et semper nolle quod nunquam non erit ? In aeternum damnati non assequuntur quod volunt : et quod nolunt in aeternum pati cogentur.*—GERHARDI *Meditationes* (sparsim). “ The damned souls in hell will furiously rage against themselves ; and this will be the burden of the lugubrious lament which they will constantly urge in self-reproaching accents :— ‘ O time, of all things the most precious ! O ye days ! O ye hours ! each of you more valuable than gold ! whither have you all vanished, to return no more for ever ? Blind and silly creatures that we were ! having stopped our ears and closed our eyes, we and our unhappy companions in iniquity became outrageous through lust ; and, by our bad examples, we mutually drew each other down to everlasting destruction. After the lapse of the longest uncomputable succession of ages, no portion of our punishment will have been diminished, neither will it have approached any nearer toward its termination. But even when we shall have passed through that undefinably distant space of miserable duration, then shall we again commence, as if that were only the first moment of our unmitigated sufferings, still to undergo our endless anguish ; and thus, without the least interruption, without any hope of their expiration, without the slightest abatement in the intensity of their measure, will our torments revolve, age after age, like an ever-rolling wheel upon its axis.’ In that horrible abode the extremes will meet of the intense heat of fire, and the rigour of cold. The darkness and thick smoke will there be perpetual ; the tears and sighs of the unhappy will be unceasing ; the sight and aspect of the devils terrific and appalling ; and the unvarying tenor of their clamorous tongues will be,— ‘ O interminable eternity ! O eternity ! not to be measured by the most extended calculations of time ! What a hardship should we once have accounted it, to be compelled to lie, even on the softest couch in the world, in one posture, incapable of being moved ! What an intolerable grievance, then, shall we feel it, to be burning in this lake of brimstone for thirty millions of years ! O eternity, eternity ! it is thou alone that dost utterly beyond measure augment and exaggerate the punishments of us damned ones.’ In hell death is there always undying, the end endless, defect will be without deficiency ; because death is there always alive, the end is ever beginning, and defect knows no failure. What is more galling to a never-dying spirit, than to be always wishing and willing that which never can be, and to evince a reluctance and unwillingness against that which never can be otherwise than in active operation ? The damned will never obtain that which they eternally wish ; and they will be compelled to endure that which they eternally fear and deprecate.”—EDIT.

now we suffer in good earnest, and are damned in good earnest. O this place is hot, it is hot, it is exceeding hot! Will not God pity us? Will not God have mercy on us? We once thought he would; but we did flatter and deceive ourselves, and thought it would be well because we lived in a praying family, and were frequent at the duty. But we did not pray as they should do that were to pray for the escaping of such dreadful torments. We did sleep often in our prayers; but there is no sleeping here, no ease, no resting here! O that God would try us once more, once more! were it but for a month or two, and set us out, and send us to a praying life again! O that we were in time again, in time again, and in the same circumstances again, as once we were, and had the same possibility, yea, probability, of escaping these restless torments! But this cannot be, this must not be, this will not be! Time is gone, is gone, and we must pray no more for ever! O time, how didst thou slip away! How swift was thy motion! O that this eternity would hasten as fast as time did hasten! When we had lived twenty years, our life was so much nearer expiration; but here we have been a thousand years, and yet as far from an end as the first moment we came into this dreadful place, and dark and doleful dungeon. This then addeth to our misery, that here we are, and must be here for ever! Here we are! woe be to us that here we are, and that without all hopes of recovery, and possibility of redemption and deliverance! Had our pain been extreme, yet if it had not been eternal, it might have been the better borne; or if it were to be eternal, if it had not been extreme, it might have been more easily endured. But *to feel* [that] it is *extreme*, and *to think* it is *eternal*, makes our misery unexpressible! What! O what! *extreme* and *eternal* too? *extreme* and *eternal* too? Cannot we die? Cannot we dig into our own bowels, and take away our own beings? But must we live in pain and torment *extreme* and *eternal* too? O miserable caitiffs that we are! Those creatures that were toads and serpents feel none of this: as they are not happy, so they are not miserable. But we are not happy. No! no! there is no happiness here; misery is our portion. O cursed wretches! O foolish sinners that we were! that prayed with no life to escape eternal death. Damnation is a dreadful thing; *we find, we feel*, to our own confusion, that damnation is a dreadful thing."

Thus realize the happiness and the misery of souls in the unseen world, and take a believing view of them beyond this life; and try whether you shall not find much benefit by such prayers that, after such a sight, are put-up unto God.

DIRECTION V.

Then next consider, that one of these two places you must shortly, very shortly, be in.—When you are going to prayer, look behind you, and you shall see death hastening after you, that death is at your backs; and look forward, and you shall see heaven and hell before you, yourselves standing upon the very brink of time, and the next step might be into [an] eternity of joy or sorrow. Where you did but now by faith see others were, there you yourselves must quickly really be, where you shall rejoice with them, or suffer and sorrow with them. Do but look a little, before you fall down upon your knees, and you might see yourselves cast

down upon a bed of sickness, your friends weeping and fearing you will die ; the physicians are puzzled and at a loss, giving you over for the grave, and yourself gasping for life, and breathing out your last. Look but a little before you, and you might (as it were) hear your friends saying, "He is dead, he is dead! He is gone, he is departed!" and then (as it were) you might see them haling you out of your bed, and wrapping you in your winding-sheet, and nailing you up in your coffin : you might see your grave a-digging, and men hired to carry you on their shoulders from your house to your grave ; relations and neighbours following-after to see you lodged in the dust, to lie and rot among the dead.*

Then think, before all this can be done unto your body, your soul hath taken its flight into eternity, where it is, without change and alteration, for ever to be with God or devils. Work it on your hearts that you must quickly (and O how quickly will it be that you must!) be in heaven or hell ; that when you die, heaven must be won or lost for ever, and everlasting torments escaped or endured for ever. Try whether such believing thoughts as these will not stir you up to manage all your praying together, as well as apart, in that manner that you shall find great benefit thereby.

DIRECTION VI.

Since this is so, consider next that you do not know, but now you are going to make your last family-prayer together.—You do not know but God and death might seize upon some of you before the next time of prayer do come again, that God might single-out the master or mistress of the

* *Per has mortalis ævi moras, illi meliori vitæ longiorique prolieditur. Quemadmodum novem mensibus nos tenet maternus uterus, et preparat, non sibi, sed illi loco, in quem videmur emitti, jam idonei spiritum trahere et in aperto durare : sic per hoc spatium, quod ab infantia patet in senectutem, in aliam naturæ sumitur partem ; alia origo nos expectat, alius rerum status, &c. Detrahetur tibi hæc circumjecta, novissimum velamentum tui, cutis : detrahetur caro, et rufissus sanguis, discurrensque per totum : detrahentur ossa, nervique firmamenta fluidorum et libentium : dies iste, quem tanquam extremum reformidas æterni natalis est.—SENECÆ Epist. ep. cil.* "This short stay in mortal life is but the prelude to a better and a more lasting life above. As each of us is detained nine months in our mother's womb, which prepares us not for itself, to dwell always therein, but for that place whereunto we are sent, as soon as we are fit to breathe the vital air, and strong enough to bear the light ; so, in that space of time which reacheth from infancy to old age inclusive, we aspire after another birth as from the womb of nature ; another beginning, another state of things, awaits us. Whatever things are spread around thee, look upon them only as the furniture of an inn. We must leave them, and go on. We can carry nothing away with us out of the world, as we brought with us nothing into it. Nay, even great part of that which attended us when we came into the world, must be thrown off. This skin which was thrown over us as a veil, must be stripped off : our flesh, and our blood, that so wonderfully circulates through every part of it, must be dispersed ; as also the solids, the bones, and the nerves, which supported the fluids and weaker parts. This day, which men are apt to dread as their last, is but the birth-day of an eternity."—DR. MORELL'S Translation. *Vigilandum est : nisi properamus, relinquitur ; agit nos, agiturque velox dies. Inscii rapimur : omnia in futurum disponimus, et inter præcipitia leni sumus. Fugit dies : fugere currendi genus concitissimum est ; quid ergo cessamus nos ipsi concitare, ut velocitatem rapidissimæ rei possimus æquare ?—Idem, Epist. cviii.* "We must watch : unless we mend our speed, we shall be left behind. The swift day drives us on, and is driven itself. We are imperceptibly hurried away. We postpone every thing ; and are slow and lazy, while every thing about us is posting away with great rapidity. It is never said, 'The day passeth,' but, 'It flies,' which is the swiftest kind of speed. Why cease we, then, to incite and spur ourselves on, that, if possible, we may equal the velocity of the swiftest thing in the world ?"—Idem.

house, this child or that servant; and every one think, "I might be the first," that you may never pray all together again. Pray then as if you were to pray no more, and see if you shall not find real spiritual benefit by such a prayer. A Heathen, writing a letter to his friend, did say, "I write unto you, not knowing but death might call me away, whilst the pen is in my hand." * And should not Christians pray as such as do not know but death might seize upon them with their prayers in their mouths?

DIRECTION VII.

Be laborious and importunate in your prayers.—If your thoughts do wander, call them in; if your thoughts be dull, stir them up. A Heathen advised "to do as becomes a man, like a Roman;" † and should not you pray as becomes Christians to do? But that is not in a dull and sluggish manner. Labour at your prayers together, as you use to do at your worldly work together, and more too; for in this you are concerned more. Strive and wrestle with joint fervency and faith, as becomes a society to do that are all a-praying for their lives, for their souls, for the pardon of their sin, for the favour and the love of God, as becometh those that are praying against everlasting flames and for eternal happiness. Pray together as persons desirous that you may live in heaven all together, and praise God in heaven for his love and mercy to you all together. But pray not coldly and lukewarmly together, lest you be damned, and hereafter lie in scorching flames all together. You must be instant in this work. You will meet with opposition from the devil, and the world, and your own hearts: you must then strive, and tug, and labour hard, or else your prayer will be spoiled: Προσκαρτερεῖτε, "Continue in prayer." (Col. iv. 2.) The word there is very significant: Be present at your work in heart as well as body; attend to your work, and stand to it; *continue in prayer*, not only with continuance of time, but of earnest importunity, till you prevail with God, and get the victory over sin and Satan. ‡

* *Id ago, ut mihi instar totius vitæ sit dies; nec mehercule tanquam ultimum rapio, sed sic illum aspicio tanquam esse vel ultimus possit: hoc animo tibi hanc epistolam scribo, tanquam cum maximè scribentem mors evocatura sit, &c.*—SENECÆ *Epist.* lxi. "And this I do, that one day may be a whole life: not that I indeed take it for my last, but I look upon it as what possibly may prove so. In such a disposition of mind I now write this epistle to you, as if death was to call upon me before I had finished it. Be it so: I am ready to attend to him; and therefore I truly enjoy life, because it is of little concern to me how far death is off. Before old age, my study and care was to live well; and now in old age, it is to die well."—DR. MORELL'S Translation.

† Πᾶσης ὥρας φροντίζε σπιθαμῶς, ὡς Ῥωμαῖοι καὶ ἀρῆνη, τὸ ἐν χερσὶ, &c. πρᾶσσειν καὶ σχολῆν σαυτῶ ἀπο πάσων τῶν ἄλλων φαντασιῶν ποριζέω. Ποριεὶς δὲ, ἀν ὡς ἐσχάτην τοῦ βίου, ἐκαστὴν πρᾶξιν ἐνεργῆς.—MARC' ANTONINI *Medit.* lib. ii. 5. "Take care always to perform strenuously the business in hand, as becomes a man and a Roman, with attention and unaffected gravity, with humanity, liberality, and justice; and call off your thoughts, for the time, from every other object. This you will do, if you perform every action as if it were the last of your life."—GRAVES'S Translation.

‡ *Vehementer et assiduè incumbere rei alicui difficulti et laboriosæ, donec eam ad optatum finem perduxeris et quasi victoriam obtinueris, significat. Προσκαρτερεῖς igitur hæc duo involvit, et vehementem quandam animi intentionem, et quasi pugnam, dum versatur in actu orandi, et assiduam frequentationem orationis.*—DAVENANTIUS *in loc.* "The Greek verb signifies vehemently and assiduously to exert yourself, and to devote your attention to some matter of great difficulty and labour, until you have at length brought it to the desired issue, and have apparently gained a complete victory. The noun derived from the verb, therefore, involves both these meanings: a certain intensity of mind, resembling a straggle or fight, while we are occupied in the act of intercession, and a frequent recourse to prayer."—BRIT.

Let me, therefore, warn praying families, as you love your souls, as you would have God incline his ear to what you say, take heed of customariness and formalities.* Do not rest in the work done, in pouring-out words before God. This is your great danger. It must be a fervent prayer that pleaseth God and profits you. (James v. 16.) Be praying Christians indeed, and do not seem only to be so; † that you might all be happy indeed, and saved indeed, and not only to be thought to be so.

And, because we are apt to slide into such formality and lukewarmness, (when we use constant family-prayer,) which eats-out the very heart and life thereof, and hinders our benefit thereby, I shall propose twenty-five questions; some of which at one time, and some at another, you may put unto yourselves, to make you lively in your duty. But I shall, I must, but name them, because I would not willingly take-up more paper than comes unto my share, as also that, lying close together, you may the better have them in your eye.

When thou art called to family-prayer, put some of these QUESTIONS to thyself:—

1. *What am I?* A sinful sinner, dust, ashes, guilty. O how should a guilty person, going to the dust, pray for pardon!

2. *Where am I?* In whose presence do I kneel? Is it not before God? and doth not he know whether I trifle or am serious?

3. *Where might I now have been?* In hell, among devils and damned souls; and shall I not pray indeed with all my might, that I never may be cast into that place or company?

4. *Whither am I going?* To eternity. *Where shall I shortly be?* In eternity; and shall I trifle in my way?

5. *What am I come about?* What is now my business? About the highest matters that concern my soul.

6. *What, if this were to be my last prayer before I die?* Should I then fall asleep upon my knees?

7. *What, if my everlasting state should be determined according to my sincerity or hypocrisy in this duty I am now going to?* Should I dally then with God?

8. *What, if God should tell me, if I trifle with his majesty, he would strike me sick, or dead, or blind, or deaf, and dumb, upon my knees?* Should I not then watch my heart in prayer?

9. *What, if I were to speak to an earthly king, or were to see some glorious angel?* Should I not be filled with fear and reverence? and is not God infinitely above these?

10. *What, if I were to give an account to God immediately how I pray,*

* *Defunctoriū multi preces ex formulā recitant, ac si pensum Deo solverent: apparet hoc officio ipsos defungi ex more, quia interim frigent animi, neque expendant quid postulent.*—CALVINI *Instit.* “Many persons carelessly recite their prayers from a form, as though they were paying a dull and prescribed service to God, or were repeating a hard task. It is evident, that these men perform this duty by rote and merely through custom, because while employed in it their minds are cold and languid, neither do they reflect upon those things which they are asking.”—EDIT. † *Πρεπον εστι μη μονον καλεισθαι Χριστιανους, αλλα και ειναι ου γαρ το λεγεσθαι, αλλα το ειναι, μακαριον ποιει.*—IGNATIUS *ad Magnesianos.* “It is proper for us, not merely to be called Christians, but to be such in reality: for a man is not rendered happy by being called after the name of Christ, but by being His true disciple.”—EDIT.

and should appear at his bar as soon as I rise from off my knees? Should I then be formal and lukewarm?

11. *Am I come to have communion with God? to pray-down my sin? to please God and profit my soul?* Will careless praying do it?

12. *What, if those that join in prayer with me could look into my heart, and see how I do discharge my duty?* Should I not be ashamed of many of my thoughts, and of the deadness of my heart? and is not the eye of God ten thousand times more to awe my heart than the knowledge of a fellow-creature?

13. *Will dead and careless praying yield me comfort, when I review it when I come to die?* Or should I not so pray now, that I might have comfort then?

14. *Should I cozen and deceive myself in matters of the greatest weight?* Shall I crawl to hell upon my knees? What! pray now, and be damned hereafter? Awake, my heart, and mind thy business.

15. *Will God be mocked?* And is not heartless praying a mocking of God?

16. *Should I not do more than hypocrites do? Or shall I not be damned if I do not?* But may not an hypocrite pray at that rate, as I have too often done?

17. *Doth not the same God that commands me to pray, command me also to give him my heart in prayer? and to do it with life and fervency?* Do I obey him in the one, and shall I not in the other? in the lesser, and not in the greater? and if I do not, do I not rebel upon my knees?

18. *If dead, and dull, and formal praying stops the mouth of my conscience now, will it do so at the bar of God?* And should I not endeavour now to have the witness of my conscience for me then?

19. *Will it do me any good to have a name to live among men, if I be dead in the sight of God?* and if others think and say when I am dead, my soul is gone to heaven, but is indeed cast down to hell? Will it lessen my torments, that I was applauded by men, and condemned by God? Will it ease my pain to be an applauded damned man?

20. *Should I so pray as to make prayer a burden to me?* Lifeless, heartless prayer is a burden; when lively prayer is delightful, and hath its sweetness in it.

21. *Have I not sinned indeed? Hath not my heart been in my sins? Are not my sins really sins?* And shall I not now pray indeed? Shall not my heart be in duty, and my prayers be really prayers? What! real sinning and counterfeit praying? and is not counterfeit praying real sinning? Awake, O my soul, unto thy work.

22. *Are not my wants real wants?* Do I not want grace indeed, or at least really want more of it? And should not my prayers be as real as my wants?

23. *Would I have God to put me off with seeming mercy?* Should I then put God off with seeming duty?

24. *Are not my temptations real temptations, and strong, and powerful?* And should not then my prayers be so too?

25. *Am I not real and lively in my worldly business? Am I not in good earnest in my shop, in the market, and at the exchange?* And

should I not be so in the matters of another world, in the business of my soul?

Thus take some of these questions, lay them warm unto your hearts, and propose them to yourselves in the fear of God; and they will heat you when you are cold, and quicken you when you are dull, if God set them home upon your hearts, that you shall manage your family-prayers to your spiritual benefit; which was the THIRD part of my work to direct you in. The FOURTH follows.

QUESTION IV.

“With what considerations may masters of families be urged to the constant performance of family prayer?”

Notwithstanding it be a certain duty to pray in your families, yet I doubt, when death shall come to drag you out of your houses, it will find some of you guilty of neglecting of it to your dying day; but yet I hope some may be prevailed with. What! have you neglected it? and will you all do so still? God forbid. “When you sin, you act like men; but when you go on in sin, you act like devils.”* I shall propound a few considerations to urge you to it; and I entreat you, in the name of the great eternal God, before whom you and I must shortly stand and be judged, to weigh them seriously; and if you find there is no reason in them, throw them by, and look for, and inquire after, better; but if there be, resolve in the fear of God to buckle to your duty. It is time, it is high time, to reform. Did you sin when you were young? and will you go on in riper years?† What do you come to sermons for? to hear what ministers can say upon such a question? to discern their parts? or to mend your own hearts and lives? Do you come to hear, that you may hear? So you *may*, and go to hell when you have done. Or do you come to hear, that you may practise and obey? So you *must*, if you are men for heaven. I charge you, therefore, here before the Lord, and by Jesus Christ that shall shortly judge both you and me, that your families be no longer prayerless families. If I put you upon work that God doth not require from you, then tell me so when you and I shall meet and stand at God’s judgment-bar. But if it be no more than what you owe to God, neglect it at your peril. Sirs, the day is coming, and it hastens, when you will, you must, be serious. If thou diest within a week or two, within a day or two, or whenever thou shalt leave this world, if, the next hour after, thou art not of this mind,‡ that thou shouldst have

* *Humanum est errare; perseverare diabolicum.*

† ——— *Fecimus et nos*

Hæc juvenes. Esto; desisti, nempe, nec ultra

Fovisti errorem. Breve sit quod turpiter audes.

Quædam cum primâ rescenitur crimina barbâ.—*JUVENALIS Satyræ*, viii. 163—166.

“Here some perhaps my growing warmth may blame:

‘In youth’s wild hours,’ they urge, ‘we did the same.’

’Tis granted, friends! But then we stopp’d in time,

Nor hugg’d our darling faults beyond our prime.

Brief let our follies be! and youthful sin

Fall, with the firstlings of the manly chin!”—*GIFFORD’S Translation.*

‡ *Res ipsa fidem dictis dabit. Serò sapiunt Phryges.* “This warning will at last obtain credence from you, when its truth is proved by your own sad experience! The Trojans themselves were too late in acquiring the wisdom necessary for the preservation of their city.”—*EDIT.*

prayed in thy family, then say I did needlessly call thee to it. But if thou shalt then see it was thy duty, thou shalt also see, when it is too late, that thou didst befool thyself, and make thyself guilty before God, in thy neglecting of it. Be wise therefore, before it be too late, and mind this work while thou hast time and opportunity. To this purpose, press your backward hearts with these things following :—

MOTIVE I.

Consider, *The souls that live in your families are precious and immortal souls.**—The soul of the meanest servant in your house is more precious than all the silks and wares in your shop, than all the gold in your bags, yea, than all the riches in the world. (Matt. xvi. 26.) And as they be of great worth, so they be immortal too, that must be damned or saved for ever. And are these the souls that you do not pray with, that you thus neglect and slight? Must they live for ever? and will not you call them to pray with you, that they may live happily for ever?

Ψυχη δ' αθανατος και αγηρωσ (η δια παντος.†—PHOENICIDIS Poem. Admonit. 11 .

MOTIVE II.

These precious and immortal souls in your families are committed to your charge and care.—You masters of families have a charge of souls as well as ministers. When you have a child born and continued to you, there is one immortal soul that God intrusts you with to bring-up for him and heaven. When you take a servant into your family, there is another soul committed to your care.‡ Do you question this? Study well the meaning of the fourth commandment, and you shall see that this is true.§ And is it so? And shall not the blood of those that go to hell out of your families, through your neglect, be required at your hands? Have you done your duty, when a servant that hath served you seven years, and you make him free, can truly say?—“My master taught me my trade; but he taught me not to serve God. He often called me up unto my work; but he never called me to prayer.” Are you not afraid that your very children and servants will rise-up in judgment against you, and accuse you at the bar of God? “Lord, my father,” saith the son,—“No, nor my master,” saith the servant,—“never prayed with us; and we,

* Ψυχης ουδεν εστι τιμιωτερον. “Nothing is of greater worth than the soul of man.”—EDIT. Εστιν ανθρωποις ψυχη παντων προτιμιωτερον. “Every man possesses a soul which exceeds all things else in value.”—EDIT.

† The soul, not subject to decay,

shall flourish through eternal day.”—EDIT.

‡ Quomodo ad nos pertinet in ecclesiis loqui vobis, sic ad vos pertinet in domibus vestris agere, ut bonam rationem reddatis de his qui vobis sunt subditi.—AUGUSTINUS in Psalmum I. “As it is incumbent upon us ministers to speak to you in the church; it is the duty of each of you in the same manner to act toward your respective household, that you may be able to render to God a good account of those who are placed under your care and control.”—EDIT.

§ Cum diserta mentio fiat liberorum, servorum, ex eo colligitur a parentibus, patribus-familias exigi, ut non ipsi solum sabbatum sanctificent, sed etiam a filiis, servis, &c., cura ac fidei suae commissis, illud sanctificari curent.—GERHARDI Loci Communes de Decalogo. “Since express and frequent mention is here made of children, servants, &c., from this circumstance we may conclude that it is required of parents and of masters of families, not only that they must keep holy the sabbath themselves, but that they must also take care for its being kept holy by their children, servants, and others committed by providence to their charge and custody.”—EDIT.

both children and servants, being so brought-up, and having such examples before us, did not mind thy service neither. Lord, we are justly condemned; but yet we perish much through our parents' and masters' neglect." "There stands my father," saith the son,—“and there stands my master,” saith the servant,—“that never prayed with us. We do accuse them; they never did, and they cannot say they did.” Will you not then wish you had never been parents to such children, nor masters to such servants? * As you would avoid this, be faithful to your trust, and mindful of your duty, lest thou wish

O utinam cælebs mansissem, ac prole curerem.†

MOTIVE III.

Consider, *You have but a little time before you for the performance of this trust.*—You and your families shall live together but a while; and if once you are parted by death, it will be too late, whether you die first, or some of them.‡

1. *Suppose some of them die before you.*—If your conscience be not seared, and your hearts past feeling, will you not be almost distracted, when you follow them to their graves, to reflect and consider?—“Here is one dead out of my house with whom I never prayed. We did dwell together, and eat together, and work together many years; but we never prayed together. O! what, if his soul be gone to hell through my neglect? What, if he be damned, and I be found guilty of his damnation? Prayer was a means appointed by God to have done him good; but I did not do it. Who knows, if I had called him to prayer, and I had been confessing sin, but God might have broken his heart for sin, and given him repentance, of which I saw no sign before he died? And now, O! what now, if there be one soul the less in my house, and one the more in hell? O! this is that which wounds my soul, this is that for which my conscience now doth sting me, that when I had him with me, I did not do my duty; and now he is gone, he is gone, and now it is too late! O my child, my child! whither art thou gone? whither art thou gone? O that he may live with me again, were it but for a year or two, a month or two, that we might do together our before-neglected duty!” If you be wise, timely prevent such uncomfortable reviews.

2. *Suppose you die before them.*—For if they do not die and leave you, you must die and leave them: and can you die, without trembling for anguish of your heart, without terrors in your souls, and fearful gripes in your consciences, more bitter than the pangs of death, to consider, you leave a wicked, prayerless family behind you, through your own neglect? Would it not trouble you to leave them poor, wife and children

* *Damnati seipsos omnesque sceleris socios assiduis execrationibus devovebunt; parentem filium, matrem filia execrabitur.* “The damned in hell will load with perpetual execrations themselves and their companions in wickedness; the son will then curse his father, and the daughter her mother.”—EDIT.

† “O had I in celibacy remain’d,
With children’s crimes reproachless and unstain’d!”—EDIT.

‡ *Ελπίδες εν ζωοισιν, αελπιστοι δε θανοντες.*—THEOCRITUS, *Idyl.* iv. 42.

Spes est in vivis, non est spes ulla sepulchris.

“Hope clings to those of life possess’d;
Despair and fear o’erwhelm the rest.”—EDIT.

nothing to live upon, if this hath been through your sloth? And will it not, should it not, much more trouble you to leave an ignorant wife, children, and servants, unacquainted with God, unaccustomed to prayer, and all through your neglect? Might you not then say?—"If I had left them poor, yet if I had left them good, and fearing God, and given to prayer by my example, I could now have died with joy, and left them all with comfort. But, now I lie a-dying, it is the wounding of my soul to take so sad a farewell of my family. If I do live, it shall be otherwise; if I recover, and God trust me with life and time yet further, I will hereafter do it. But my heart is sick, my spirits fail me, and I perceive the symptoms of death are upon me; and though I am loath to take my leave of my wife and children, because I have been no more careful of the good of their souls, yet I see I must, I must bid farewell unto them. Come then, dear wife, farewell! farewell! I shall now be no longer thine, and thou shalt be no longer mine. But this had been no matter, if I and thou had both been *His whom* we should have prayed unto together; but we did not. Woe is me, poor dying man, that we did not! Farewell, dear children! now farewell! adieu! adieu for ever!* But O! how shall I take my leave of you, with whom I have not done what God required? But yet I must, whether I will or no, I must now leave you. But let me give among you what I have gotten for you: therefore to you, my wife, I give so much, and to this child so much, and to that so much. But when I think I worked for you, but never prayed with you, this doth trouble me. O! this doth trouble my departing soul. However, you will have my goods: the grave and worms shall have my body: but who, O! who must have my soul?" This will be a sad parting, whenever it shall come; and yet this parting hour is a-coming. Pray now with them, and in that manner too that then you may be comforted. On the contrary, if you discharge your duty faithfully and unfeignedly, whether your family be good or bad, when you shall die you might take comfort that you did your duty. So Mr. Bolton, that was abundant in conjunct prayers in his family, could comfort himself, and did say on his death-bed to his children, "I think verily none of you dare think to meet me at the great tribunal in an unregenerate condition."

MOTIVE IV.

The love that you should bear unto your families should engage you often to pray together with them.—Will you show your love unto your children in providing portions for them, that they may live in credit in this life? and will you not so much as pray with them, that they may

* *Substitit Æneas, gemituque hæc addidit alto :
Nos alias hinc ad lacrymas eadem horrida belli
Fata vocant. Salve æternum mihi, maxime Palla,
Æternumque vale!*—VIRGILII *Æneis*, lib. xi. 96—98.

"In long procession, halts Æneas here,
And, groaning deep, these final words subjoins:
'Us the same horrid destinies of war
From these to other tears now call away.
Hail, mightiest Pallas! hail eternally!
Eternally farewell!'"—BERESFORD'S Translation.

live in glory in the life to come? * Will you do much for their bodies, and nothing for their souls? You that are fondest husbands and fathers, never love wife and children as you ought, till you love their souls. The soul is the best and more noble part; and love to the soul is the best and more noble love. But, to love the body, and neglect the soul, is but cruel, brutish love. What do you more for your young ones, than the birds and beasts do for theirs? Do you feed their bodies? Do not birds and beasts do the same for theirs? † Love your wife, children, and servants as you ought, and this will provoke you to pray together with them.

MOTIVE V.

Consider, *that family reformation is a necessary means to public reformation, and to hand-down religion from one generation to another.*—Reformation begins with *persons*, thence is carried on to *families*, thence to *parishes*, thence to *towns*, and so to *cities* and to *kingdoms*. ‡ But when these consist of families, how can there be a reformation of cities and kingdoms without a reformation of persons and families? § You complain of the badness of the times and age in which you live, and that no more care is taken to mend what is amiss: why do you not reform your own houses? Why do you not amend what is amiss in your own families? If you have not power to reform a parish, city, or kingdom, yet you have a power to reform your own houses. If religion die in families, will it not die in cities too, and in kingdoms too? Will not you do your utmost to keep religion alive? to recover it, when decaying? Or shall it be extinguished with this generation? God forbid! Or do you see nothing amiss in your houses to be reformed? What! no praying there, and yet nothing amiss there? Certainly there is. Let yours, then, have a pattern and example of family-prayer from you, to do the same in their houses, and their children from them, and so let it pass from one age to another. An effectual way to keep the city clean, will be for every house to sweep before their own door.

MOTIVE VI.

If religious duties are not set-up in your families, there will be the more sinning there, and wickedness abounding in them.—How much cursing is there in many families, where there is no praying! “The field

* *Diligatur proles, non ut nascatur tantum, verum etiam ut renascatur: nascitur enim ad peccatum, nisi renascatur ad vitam.*—AUGUSTINE *De Nuptiis et Concupiscentiâ*, lib. 1. cap. 17. “In happy wedlock let your progeny be the objects of your love; not merely because children are born to you, but rather that they may be born again. For they are born to punishment, unless they be born again to life eternal.”—EDIT. † *Ipsæ feræ, sævæ, et immanes bestię prolem nutrire solent. At non tantum curare debent parentes ut liberi sui vivant, sed etiam ut Deo benè vivant.*—AMESII *Cas. Conscient.* “Wild beasts themselves, fierce and savage though they be, are always careful to nourish their own young. But human parents ought to be solicitous not only that their children may be kept alive by suitable nutriment, but that they may likewise live to God in righteousness and true holiness.”—EDIT. ‡ *Æconomia est veluti paradisus, in quo plantantur arbores, quarum fructus odore et dulcore suo imbuunt omnes vitæ ordines.*—ALSTEDIUS. “That orderly economy which sheds a benign influence over all ranks of society, resembles a paradise, a garden of delights, in which are planted beautiful trees, the blossoms and fruits of which diffuse their odours and fragrance all around.”—EDIT. § *Qualis est cuiusque domus, talis est universa civitas.* “The morality of an entire city receives its character and impress from that which prevails in each person’s household.”—EDIT.

that is not dressed and manured is full of weeds and thorns."* Where God is not served, the devil is. If in your houses God hath not a church, the devil will have a chapel. What hopes will the devil have, that he shall have souls out of those families where there is much sinning and no praying? And if he might have their souls, he will be content that you may have all the rest.† If your houses be not nurseries for heaven, they will be breeding-places for hell. If souls under your roof are not prepared for salvation, they will there be fitted for damnation: and is this nothing to you? Awake, arise, you drowsy governors of families, to your work and duty!

MOTIVE VII.

It would be an effectual way and means to make those in your families more obedient and better towards you, if you would call on them to serve the Lord, and you were more in prayer with them.—You cry-out of stubborn and disobedient children. "They grieve and break my heart," saith one. "I have a child that is my daily wound and sorrow," saith another. And, "Servants never worse," is your often complaint. Whom is all this 'long of?‡ Do not you read your sin in your punishment? If you had taught them better their duty towards God, they would have made more conscience of their duty towards you; if you had prayed with them, God might have bowed their hearts, as a return to your prayers, to have walked more suitably to their relative duties. I have read of a young man going to the gallows [who] desired to speak with his mother in her ear, [and] who bit off her ear with his teeth, crying out against her as the cause of his death: "By your negligence," saith he, "I am come to this woful end!" If you are alike careless of your families, if you do not lose your ears by your own children, yet you might lose something that is better.

MOTIVE VIII.

If you make profession of religion, and yet do not pray in your families, it is base and cursed hypocrisy.§—When you hear with God's people, and pray with them, and receive with them, and seem to be devout abroad, and do not pray with your families at home; is not this to make others believe you are what you are not?|| Do you not profess, by your

* *Neglectis urenda filix innascitur agris.*—HORATI *Sermonum* lib. 1. satyr. iii. 37.
———"For, a neglected field

Shall for the fire its thorns and thistles yield."—FRANCIS'S Translation.

† *Da mihi, quæso, animas; cætera sume tibi.* † *Along of, or 'long of,* with the meaning of "in consequence of," or "on account of," is an old colloquial term, in common use, at this day, in various English counties in which the Saxon idiom preponderates.—EDIT.
§ *Aliud in titulo, aliud in piride.* "The contents of the box differ from those which the label professes to describe."—EDIT.

|| *Pelliculam veterem retines, et, fronte politus, Astutam vapido servas sub pectore vulpem.*—PERSII *Satyræ*, sat. v. 115.

"But if thy manners yet no change have known;

—Thine, which were, late, no better than my own;—

If the same outside, if the same old skin,

Conceal the same old vices still within;

And while thy face is gloss'd with specious art,

The wily fox lies lurking at thy heart:

Then back I draw the length of chain I gave,

And once again pronounce thee *Fool and Slave!*"—BREWSTER'S Translation.

joint duties with God's people in all ordinances, that you are devoted unto God; and doth not he that sincerely devotes himself to God, devote also all he hath to him? But is your family devoted to God, when there is no worship there? It would be well if you were found out, that you were denied the supper of the Lord for want of a sufficient credibility of a sound profession. But is it your way to be zealous abroad and negligent at home? Let your house speak for you.

*Sed videt hunc omnis domus et vicinia tota
Introrsum turpem, speciosum pelle decord.*—HORATI Epist. lib. i. epist. xvi. 44.*

MOTIVE IX.

The neglect of calling upon God in your families will bring the curse of God upon them. †—"Pour out thy fury upon the families that call not upon thy name." (Jer. x. 25.) 1. *The persons threatened are families.* Which if in this text [it] comprehendeth many households, or yet more largely taken, yet there is the same parity of reason to a proper family. 2. *Their crime is, not calling upon the name of God.* 3. *The thing threatened, the fury of the Lord.* Fury is fervent anger, anger in its height and rage. 4. *The abundance of it.* It shall not fall drop by drop upon prayerless families, but pour-down in great showers upon them. Whereas the way to have God's blessing and protection over you and your household is to set-up the worship of God therein. There is a passage in a worthy divine of a remarkable providence of God to this purpose, concerning a town consisting of ninety houses, [in the Canton of Berne.] that was, in the year 1584, destroyed by an earthquake, except the half of one house, where the master of the family was earnestly praying with his wife and children upon their bended knees to God. ‡

OBJECTION. "But we see no such thing; we perceive not but those families prosper that have no prayer in them, as much as those that do."

ANSWER. God is often angry when he doth not strike and punish presently the offender; but his wrath hangs over your house, and you are never safe in your greatest prosperity. An Heathen could say, "If a wicked man prosper, you need not wish that God were angry with him; for he is angry with him, though for the present he do prosper: but when it comes, it will be the heavier." § The poet gives a full answer to this objection:—

Ἐπερ γὰρ τε καὶ αὐτὴ Ὀλυμπίος οὐκ ἐτελεσσεν,
Ἐκ τε καὶ οὐθε τελεῖ σὺν τε μεγάλῃ ἀπεισίαν,
Σὺν σφῆσι κεφαλῆσι, γυναικὶ τε, καὶ τεκεσσῶν.—HOMERI *Ilias*, lib. iv. 160.

The sense I give thus:—

- * "Yet his own house, with every neighbour, cries,
'There lurks a rotten heart in that disguise!'"—DUNCOMBE'S Translation.
- † *Plus valet humanis viribus ira Dei.*—OVIDII *Tristium* lib. v. eleg. xii. 14.
- ‡ God's wrath in potency transcends
The powerful might of human friends.—EDIT.

‡ Anno 1584 terræ motu mons quidam in ditone Bernatum ultra alios montes violenter latus. Pagum quendam nonaginta familias habentem contexit lotum, dimidit domo exceptâ, in quâ pater-familias cum uxore et liberis in genua provolutus Deum invocabat.—POLANI *Synagoga*, De Terræ Motibus. § Non est quare cuiquam, quem dignum pœnâ putaveris, optes, ut infestus habeat Deos; habet, inquam, etiamsi videtur eorum favore produci.—SENECÆ *Epistolæ*.

“ Though wicked men feel not the’ Almighty’s blow
Forthwith; his wrath is sure, when it is slow.
At length his plagues in greater loads shall lie
On them, their wives, and all their progeny.”

QUESTION V.

The last thing only now remains, wherein I must be short.

“ What excuses are often brought for the non-performance of family-prayer? How answered?”

OBJECTION I. “ All this while, you do not give us any one express scripture in so many words: show that, and we will do it.”

ANSWER. This is objected, either by *openly profane* or *more sober men*.

1. To the first I answer:

(1.) *Wilt thou do nothing but what thou hast an express command for in so many syllables?*—Why then art thou so often drunk, and dost thou so often swear, and lie, and take God’s name in vain? Where is thy command? Nay, is not all this against express command?

(2.) *Why dost thou not do that for which thou hast express commands?*—Wilt thou repent, be holy, and believe in Christ, and forsake thy sin, if I can show express commands from God for these? Then read Ezek. xviii. 30, 31; Acts ii. 38; xvii. 30; 1 John iii. 23. Go thy way now, and do these things sincerely, and I shall not doubt but thou wilt see reason from what hath been said to set-up prayer in thy family, nor question but thou wilt do it. But if thou wilt not repent, and leave thy manifest and apparent sins, when thou art expressly commanded to do so, why should any man think thou wouldst do this, if this were showed to thee? Yet know, there is enough said to render thee inexcusable, if thou wilt not do it.

2. To the more sober I answer, that *what is drawn from the word of God by just, necessary, and immediate consequence, is the mind of God.**—The sense of the scripture is God’s revealed will.† And you yourselves allow some things to be a duty, that are not expressly commanded in the word of God. I could give you instances in many particulars; but, because I am straitened for room, and for plainness of the case, I will instance but in this one, which is a woman’s receiving of the Lord’s supper. Is it the duty of some women so to do? “No doubt.” But where is your express command? or any express example that ever they did? Look for it, and produce it. Will you say, “The word *ανθρωπος*, used 1 Cor. xi. 28, signifying both ‘man and woman,’ shows the command for women’s eating at the Lord’s table?” But what, if it be sometimes in scripture used for the man only, and the woman excluded? as it is, John vii. 22: “Ye circumcise,” *ανθρωπον*, “a man;” being taken in one place for the man only, how will you prove it is not so in the other,

* *Dum scripturam dicimus perfectam, non intelligimus, ac si ad literam omnia que ad salutem sunt necessaria continerentur; sed quod quadam per certam consequentiam, ex illis que clarè dicta sunt, deduci debeant.*—MACCOVIUS, *Distin.* p. 9. “When we call the scriptures *perfect*, we do not understand by this term that all the truths necessary to salvation are literally contained in them; but that some truths ought to be deduced, by plain and certain consequence, from those which are clearly delivered.”—EDIT. † *Quicquid per bonam consequentiam ex scriptura deducitur, illud ipsum est scriptura. Quod elicitur ex Mose et Davide, dicuntur Moses et David dixisse.*—Idem, p. 21. “Whatsoever is, by fair and good consequence, deduced from scripture, that deduction itself is scripture. Moses and David are said to have declared that which is elicited from them by inference.”—EDIT.

but by consequence? "True." But where then is your express command? Consequence must be allowed in this case, and is abundantly sufficient. For validity of scripture-consequence much may be said. But my length already commands me to forbear, seeing there is as much scripture and firm immediate consequence for your praying in your family, as [for] a woman's receiving the Lord's supper, which is an acknowledged duty.*

OBJECTION II. "But I pray alone in secret; and that is sufficient."

ANSWER. But it is not.

1. *One duty done doth not excuse you from the performance of another.*—It hath been proved before to be your duty; you ought then to do the one, and not to leave the other undone.

2. *But do all in thy family pray in secret every day?*—Dost thou watch them daily so narrowly, as thou art sure they do? every one? So they should; but yet, notwithstanding, conjunct prayer is a duty also, as hath before been shown.

3. *Dost thou pray in secret?*—So thou mightest have done, if God had struck all thy family dead in the night beside thyself. Take heed thou dost not hereby cause God to strip thee of thy relations, and thy comfort in them with whom thou wilt not pray, and send thee, with a witness,† into a corner, to pray by thyself alone.

4. *Dost thou pray alone?*—So thou mightest have done, if thou hadst lost thy tongue. Hast thou a tongue only to buy and sell, and talk of the world, or of religion only? and not to employ it in conjunct praying to and praising of God, in thy family? Read [what has been adduced] before.

5. *Dost thou pray alone?*—I doubt thou dost. It may be, thou speakest more in that word "alone" than thou thinkest of. Dost thou not pray *alone*, without God? without meeting with God? Hadst thou there had thy heart inflamed with the love of God, and tasted of the sweetness in communion with God, would not this have filled thy heart with love to God, and [to] souls in thy house, and burning zeal that they might be partakers of the same divine refreshments? † Coudest thou hold

* *Scripturæ vim consistere non in verbis sed in sensu communiter dicitur. Sunt autem conclusiones in scripturâ, vel totidem verbis et κατὰ το ὄνομα; vel habent præmissas suas in scripturâ expressas, ex quibus evidenter deducuntur; vel unâ tantùm positiâ præmissâ in scripturâ, additâ aliâ ex rationis principiis, aut ex evidentâ sensûs, conclusio etiam eruitur necessaria, quæ vim eandem habet cum propositionibus, quæ totidem verbis leguntur. Juxta regulam, Quædam in scripturis sunt, et dicuntur; quædam in iisdem sunt, etsi non dicuntur (nempe totidem verbis).—RIVETI Isagoge ad Scrip. cap. 17.* "It is commonly asserted that the strength and force of scripture do not consist in the words employed, but in their sense and meaning. But there are in scripture some conclusions which are contained in so many express words, according to its own phraseology; other conclusions have their premises expressly laid down in scripture, from which they are evidently deduced; and others, having only one of the premises plainly propounded in scripture, the other being added to it either from the principles of reason or from the evidence of sense,—are also accounted necessary conclusions, that possess exactly the same force as those propositions have which are there plainly read in so many words. For, according to the rule, *some things are CONTAINED in the scriptures, and are plainly DECLARED; while there are certain other truths in them, though they are NOT OPENLY ENUNCIATED*, that is, not in so many express words."—EDIT. † A colloquial expression resembling in meaning, if not exactly in its application, the phrases, *with a vengeance, in a manner of which none shall be ignorant, in which there is no mistake, notorious to all the world, &c.*—EDIT. † *Infelix et iniqua lex amoris rerum, nolle ut amet alii, nolle ut amet alios; non ita miserum et pressum eligas amorem: superest Deo amor dilatatus, superest bonitas, ut amet et ametur: cum abest a felle ut rivales optet, zelotypiâ gaudet Hoc interest inter zelum humani amoris et divini: zelus amantis Deum optat ut ulii amet; zelus*

thy peace after such discoveries, while thy poor family are without? Or wouldest thou [at] no time call them together, that they also might experience the same delights that thou hast found? as the woman of Samaria called her neighbours. (John iv. 28, 29.) If thou hadst got some earthly jewels, thou mightest be loath that others should share with thee in the value of it; because, in earthly things, participation causeth a diminution: if a sum of money be divided amongst many, the more one hath, the less will fall to the others' share. Art thou indeed afraid of this? Fear it not. There is enough in God for thee, and thine too. Communication in spirituals causeth multiplication, even in him that doth communicate to others. If thou be an instrument to draw thine to the love of God, and to joy and delight in him, this would fill thee with the greater joy. Methinks then, when thou hast been alone, and God hath graciously been with thee, thou shouldest go down into thy family with burning love to God and them, and say, "Come, my wife, children, servants, leave your work and business for a while. There is much sweetness in communion with God. There is indeed delight which comes into the soul by holy, fervent prayer. I would not have you feed on husks, while there is not only bread, but dainties too, in seeking God.

amantis hominem, ne alius amet: ille socios querit, iste fugit, pro qualitate nimirum amatorum. Socios ille querit, quia superest bonitas amato, cui amorem suum aequalem non putat; coadjutores exoptat, ut suppleat votis alienis proprium defectum; iste non admittit collegas, exiguum bonum timet ne desit sibi, distributum etiam aliis: perinde ac qui splendidi- dum epulum paravit, cui ipse non est satis, convivas querit, invitat plures, gavisus consortio epulantium. At misellus et fumelicus rusticus frustulum hordeacei panis, quia sibi non sufficit, non distribuit aliis, non palmam comest, ne alius qui appetat petat. O latissimum affectum! O securissimum amorem Dei! quem zelus non excruciat, quem rivalis delectat, sine absinthio, sine aloë, sine felle, totus dulcis et consentaneus cordi.—JOH. EUSEB. NIEREMBERGIUS De Arte Vol. pp. 336, 337. "Unhappy and unjust is the law which regulates our love of earthly objects: it renders us unwilling that others should love them, unwilling that they should love others. Let not such a miserable and oppressive love as this be the object of your choice. The love of God, dilated and expanded beyond the utmost stretch of the human capacity, in overflowing abundance, still remains for us. His goodness still survives in all its plenitude, as the cause of his love to us and of our love to him in return. Our love of God is so devoid of gall, that it desires to have others as rivals in it, while it delights in jealousy. But this is the difference between the jealousy of human love and of that which is divine:—The jealousy of that man who loves God is an ardent desire that others too may love Him; while the jealousy of him whose love terminates on his fellow-creature, is desirous that no one beside himself should love that creature. Divine jealousy seeks out associates, human jealousy carefully avoids all approach toward association, according to the different quality of those objects upon which each of them has placed its affection. The former of these inquires for companions, because He on whom its love is fixed possesses a superabundance of goodness, to embrace which it does not consider its own love to be adequate; it therefore earnestly desires co-adjutors, that its own deficiency may be supplied by the ardent vows of others. But the jealousy of earthly love admits of no participation: it is afraid lest the fountain should fail which supplies its shallow stream of good, and much the sooner if it were distributed among others! The jealousy of him who loves God, resembles a man who has prepared a splendid banquet, to which he is himself incompetent to do justice; he therefore begins to search for guests; having found a few, he invites a still greater number, and rejoices in the multitude of those who crowd the festive board, and partake of his dainties. But he whose wretched jealousy consumes itself on an earthly object, resembles a pitiful and famishing rustic, who, having found a little crust of barley-bread, runs with it into a corner; and because the sorry morsel is insufficient for himself, he distributes no part of it to others; neither does he eat it openly, lest any one, who has as craving an appetite for it as himself, should ask him for a taste. O divine love, thou most joyous affection! How infinitely secure is this love of God, the possessor of which feels no torment from his indulgence in jealousy, but rejoices in the rivalry of those who strive to surpass him in its highest exercise! Without the bitterness of wormwood, aloes, or gall, thou art the very essence of sweetness, and most agreeable to the renewed heart."—EDIT.

I do not love to see you always muddling in the world, and be strangers unto God. Come then, come away; for my soul doth long that you should taste what I have found." Thus thou wouldest think surely with thyself, if thou spakest not out to them, if thou didst meet with God in secret. When it is not so with thee, but thou canst constantly neglect prayer in thy family, reflect upon thyself, whether in this sense thou didst not pray *alone*, that thou didst not find God with thee warming of thy heart. Tell me, couldst thou be content to eat thy food constantly alone, without thy wife and children? and canst thou be content to pray alone only? As you eat together, so pray together also.

OBJECTION III. "But I am ashamed to pray with others; and that hinders me."

ANSWER 1. *Ashamed to pray!* ashamed to do thy duty? The more shame for thee! Be ashamed to sin, and of this shame: for it is sinful, and is to be lamented, and prayed against, and striven against, and overcome. Will thou tell God at the day of judgment, that thou wast ashamed to pray in thy house and family?

2. But why ashamed? when you are only with your own family, and those you daily converse withal, and are head and chief and governor of?

3. "It is for want of use." Set upon the work, and you will quickly overcome this.

OBJECTION IV. "But I am not ashamed of the duty, but of my own weakness. I have not gifts and parts to manage this duty. If I were gifted as other men be, I would perform it as other men do."

ANSWER 1. *Where do you live? in London?*—What! an old house-keeper in London, or where there hath been much means of grace? and are you so ignorant, that you are not qualified to pray in your family? This is your sin; and will one sin be pleadable to excuse you from another? One of the ancients of the parish, and plead ignorance! are you not ashamed?

2. *It is not parts, and gifts, and florid expressions that God looks at, but an humble, penitent, broken, and believing heart.*—Have you not this, neither? If you have not, get it quickly, or you must to hell. If you have, God will accept of such a sacrifice; bring it then.

3. *Study your sins, and wants, and mercies.*—And get a sense of all these upon your heart, and you will be able to express them in your family, in such a manner as may be more for their profit, than the constant omission can be. If a man feel himself sick or hungry, do you think he could not find words to make his complaint, and ask for help? Study the scripture and your own hearts, and these will be good prayer-books to furnish you for the duty. Besides, by praying you shall learn to pray.

4. *Do not deceive yourself, and say, it is for want of gifts; when it is more for want of a heart and love to the duty.*—To discover this, suppose a law were made by our governors, that every master of a family that doth not pray in his house with his family shall be cast into the lions' den. What would you do then? Would you rather venture your life, and be torn in pieces by lions, than set upon this duty, with that knowledge and those gifts that now you have? Would you not find something to say to save your lives? And is not the law of God as

binding as the laws of men, and the dungeon of hell as dreadful as the lions' den? Go then, set upon your duty.

OBJECTION V. "But there are some graceless and wicked persons in my family, that I cannot say, 'We desire this or that spiritual blessing, grace, Christ,' &c.; for I see no ground to judge they desire any such thing."

ANSWER 1. *Have they no grace? and must they not pray that they may have some?*—O cruelty! Is he exempted from duty, because he is not good? Or wilt thou say, that such must only pray alone, and be excluded (while such) from conjunct prayers? Whither will this carry you? Even to the shutting of all graceless or at least visibly-wicked persons from all prayers in public congregations, as well as from family-duty. But this is so gross, that I suppose you will not own it. You have no reason then for the other.

2. *How do you know, when you are confessing sin and acknowledging the evil of it, but God might affect and break their hearts, and they be changed on their knees, and so be saved from damnation?*—And will you deny them that means that God may bless for their conversion?

3. *Do you indeed use all other means, to your utmost power, to have them better?*—Do you reprove them, and show them the danger they are in, and persuade them to turn from sin to God, and this with constancy and compassion to their souls? Or do you scruple this too? Wilt thou neither pray with them, nor speak to them, when thou oughtest to do both? I doubt, it is thy sloth that hinders thee, or the wickedness of thy heart, and that thou pleadest the wickedness of another to cover thine own.

4. *Was not Judas graceless?*—Did he desire truly and sincerely spiritual blessings? and did not Christ say and know he was a devil? and yet did not Christ pray with his disciples, when Judas was among them? (Luke xxii. 14, 17.)

5. *Your words might be so ordered, that you need not make a scruple to pray with them.*

6. *By kneeling down with you, do they not profess to join with you?*—And if they do not that sincerely which they profess to do, the sin is theirs, and none of yours.

7. *But be really more careful that you do not pray to God with a reigning lust in your own hearts, than fearful to pray with an unconverted person in your house.*

OBJECTION VI. "But I cannot bring my servants to the duty. They are so stubborn and unwilling to it, that all that I can do cannot prevail with them to yield thereto. They will rather leave my house; and so I shall be left to do my work myself."

ANSWER 1. *Are they not sometimes as backward to do what you set them about as they be to come to prayer?*—But yet do you not bring them to it, and make them stoop and buckle to obedience? Deal plainly: if they did daily totally neglect your work, would you bear it at their hands? Would you not make them know your power and authority over them? Can you use your power effectually to make them do your work, though backward to it; and may you not, can you not, to bring them to prayer, if you were as hearty and as in good earnest for the glory of

God, and the good of their souls, as you are in your own concerns?

2. *Why did you take no more care whom you did receive for servants into your house?*—Why did you not make a better choice? Did you not look for one with most * money you could get, rather than one well-educated, and likely to conform to the good government of an house? Servants inquire for places, where they might have least work, and greatest wages and vails, but not where they might have a good master to help forward the good of their souls; and parents put forth their children apprentices, where it might be most for their outward advantage, though there be no religion in the house; a great evil! So, many masters look for greatest profit in taking apprentices that have been without all education as to their souls, and then cry out, their servants will not be brought to family-prayer!

3. *But will they not?*—And are they such that you may remove and put out of your family, after you have tried all other means you can? If they will not, you had better be without them, than without the worship of God. David would out with them. (Psalm ci. 6, 7.) † But do you say, you must then do your work yourself? So you had better. “But why so? Are young people generally so bad, that there are no better to be found?” God forbid! If they be, is it not high time to be in good earnest, and resolved to set-up God’s worship in our families, that it might be remedied, and not continue so from one age to another?

OBJECTION VII. “But I have not time to spare, for myself and family to spend time to pray twice every day: this would be an hinderance to me in my calling.”

ANSWER 1. *Not time, man? What! not to pray?*—How justly might God say, “Thou shalt die this day, and thou shalt have no time to pray; no, nor to trade, neither; nor to sport and game, neither!” Thou hast time; what dost thou do with it all? Twenty, forty years are a great deal of time, and much might be done therein; but canst thou find no time out of so many years to pray in thine house? Thou findest time to trade, and work, and eat, and drink, and sleep, yea, and to sin too; and yet hast thou no time to pray? Doth God give thee and thy family all the time that thou and they have, and shall God have none of it? † O ungrateful sinner! O unthankful wretch! Let the heavens

* The mention of “most money” in this connexion refers principally to the fees received with apprentices; which will be apparent to those who peruse the conclusion of the paragraph.—EDIT.

† *Integer vitæ mihi sit minister.*

Tecta non intret mea fraudulentus,

Nemo mecum intra meâ commoretur

Limina mendas.—BUCHANANUS.

In this beautiful metre, a lyrical favourite with Horace, the clever Caledonian poet has very tersely versified the sentiments of David: “He that walketh in a perfect way shall serve me. He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.” (Psalm ci. 6, 7.)—EDIT. † *Quid de rerum naturâ querimus? Illa se benignè gessit; vîsa, si acias uti, longa est. Alium insatiabilis tenet avaritia; alium in supervacuis laboribus operosa sedulitas; alius vino madet; alius inertidâ torpet; alium mercandi præceptis cupiditas circa omnes terras, omnia maria, spe lucri ducit. Nemo invenitur, qui pecuniam suam dividere velit: vitam unusquisque quâdam multis distribuit: astricti sunt in continendo patrimonio; simul ad temporis jacturam ventum est, profusissimi in eo cuius unius honesta avaritia est.*—SENECA *De Brevitate*

be astonished, and the earth amazed : the one, that they give light and influence to such a monster ; and the other, to bear such a burden, a man so laden with such impiety !

2. *Why dost thou gripe and grasp so much worldly business, and burden thyself and family with so many earthly employments, and then cry out thou hast no time?*—If thou canst not trade so much, and pray in thy family too ; trade something less, that thou mayest have time to pray. Cannot you get food and raiment while you live, and a winding sheet and coffin when you die, without so great a trade that you have no time to pray ? Or will you say, “ We must mind more than food and raiment ? ” and must you not mind heaven too ? and look after Christ and grace and your souls too ? What, if you be rich while you live, and damned when you die ? Is your heart so set upon the world, that you must have it, though you have hell and damnation with it ? Well might the poet cry out and wish :—

Χρυσε, κακων αρχηγε, βιοφορε, παντα χαλεπων,
Ειθε σε μη δηητοισι γερασθαι πημα ποθειων.*—PHOCYLIDIS *Poem. Admon.* 40.

3. *What will you do with those worldly riches [which] you are so eager to obtain? or what can they do for you?*—Will you take them with you to your graves, or carry them with you to another world ? † You know you cannot. (Job i. 13—21 ; Eccles. v. 15.) No, not so much as to fill your hand. It was a ridiculous action of a rich man, that Mr. Rogers, in his “ Treatise of Love,” speaks of, that, being very sick to death, called for his gold ; and [it] being brought to him, [he] took a twenty-shillings’ piece and put it in his mouth, saying, “ Some are wiser than some ; this I will take with me, however.” If some were not wiser than he, they would all be fools ; for he and his gold might perish together : though it may be likely, that, when he was dead, his gold was taken from him ; and so, in his own sense, he was not wiser than

Vita, cap. ii. iii. “ Why do we complain of the nature of things ? Toward us nature has been most benignant ; and life itself, if we know the right method of employing it, is sufficiently long. An insatiable avarice seizes upon one man ; another wears himself with laborious trifling. One is drenched with wine, while another indulges himself in a slothful torpor. The cupidity which is the constant attendant on traffic, precipitately impels some men to travel into all countries, and to venture across every ocean, allured by the hopes of immense profit. Amidst those who are engaged in such multifarious pursuits, not a man can be found who wishes to divide and distribute among others the money which he has obtained ; yet on what a variety of matters does every one of them squander away the minute particles of that which constitutes life ! All men are very strict and particular in preserving intact and unimpaired their patrimonial inheritance ; but as soon as they begin to enter upon the disposal and management of their time, they show themselves to be most profuse in the waste of that valuable commodity, in the saving and hoarding of which avarice itself would become an honourable virtue.”—EDIT.

* “ O gold ! thou ringleader of ills, thou corrupter of life, thou tormenting assaillant of every thing ; how do I wish that to mortal men thou wert not an evil most desirable ! ”—EDIT.

† Μεμηνησ' οτι δηητος υπαρχεις.

Ουκ εν' es εδην ολβον εχειν και χρηματ' αγασθαι.—PHOCYLIDIS *Poem. Admon.* 104.

“ Remember that thy brief life is only that of a mortal creature. In the separate state in which human spirits dwell, thou canst possess nothing which now contributes to thy happiness ; and thither thou canst not convey any part of thy riches.”—EDIT. *Transcundum est ; excutit redeuntem naturam, sicut intrantem ; non licet plus efferre quam intuleris ; imò etiam ea eo quod in vitam attulisti pars magna ponenda est.*—SENeca *Epistole*, epist. cii. “ We must leave them, and go on. Nature throws us out of the world, as she threw us into it. We can carry nothing away with us, as we brought with us nothing into it. Nay, even a great portion of that which attended us when we came into the world, must be thrown off.”—DR. MORELL'S Translation.

others. But will gold go in heaven or in hell? There it is nothing worth. When you have got much by your trading, which keeps you from praying, will it not make you loath to die, having laid-up no better treasure elsewhere? and vex you to the heart, that for this you have lost God, and Christ, and heaven, and your souls, and your riches too at last? As Mr. Latimer, in a sermon before king Edward VI., relates of a rich man that was sick; and one, coming to him and seeing how he was, told him, he thought he could not recover, but was a dead man; who presently flew into a rage, saying, "Must I die? Send for the physician! wounds! sides! heart! Must I die? Must I die? wounds! sides! heart! Must I die, and leave all my riches?" and so continued crying out in this language till he died. And are these the things you are so earnest for, that you can find no time to pray for better? A like passage Mr. Jeremy Burroughs, on Psalm xvii. 14, relates of one that once lived near to him, that being sick called for his bags of silver, and, hugging them in his arms, said, "Must I leave you? must I leave you?" Pray for an interest in God and Christ; and when you die, being his and he yours, you shall not leave him, but be taken into fuller enjoyment of him. Consider, again: as you cannot take them with you when you die, so these things cannot comfort you in your sickness. As the same author mentions another, that on his sick bed called for his bags of gold; which being brought he laid to his breast as near his heart as he could, but after a while said, "Here, take them again! take them again! These will not do, these will not do!" "What! will not bags of gold do?" No: they are trash and dirt to a dying man. "What will they not do?" They will not procure health to a sick man, nor prolong life to a dying man, nor speak peace to a troubled man, nor procure heaven for a graceless man. No, no! it will not do, it will not do! and you shall find it will not do. And are these the things you are so bent upon, that you have no time, for looking after these, to pray to God for something that would do you good while you live, when you die, and after death? Consider, and be wiser.

4. *It is a great mistake that prayer will hinder you in your worldly callings.**—To drive a trade for heaven and on earth, may both be done. You cannot love both with a predominate love, nor serve both as principal masters; but you may work for one, and pray for the other. When you are in a journey, doth it hinder you to stay and bait? If you were travelling far, if you bait daily, you may come there in time; but if you did not bait at all, you would never get thither. It is a true proverb, "Prayer and provender hinder no man." Surely, you forget that the success of all your labours depends upon the blessing and providence of God. Cannot God blast your endeavours, and blow upon your estates, and cause you to "put it into a bag with holes?" (Haggai i. 6.) Nothing is more likely to further you than prayer.

5. *Tell me, in good earnest, and let thy conscience speak: Dost thou not mis-spend more time every day than this duty would take-up?*—Art

* ————— Κηδομενοι γαρ
 Αθανατων αυτοι πλειον εχουσι βροτοι.—THEOCRITI *Epigram*. xiii. 5.
 "Important benefits accrue
 To those who render God his due."—EDIT.

thou not longer in some impertinent company, and longer in some unnecessary business, or lingering and loitering at home or abroad, or at some club or other, longer than family-prayer may be profitably performed; and yet [dost thou] say, thou hast no time?*

6. *What, if God should visit thy family with some lasting sickness, and take thee and thy servants too from your work and callings, and make you spend that time in sickness in your beds from your labour which you would not spend in prayer?*—Must you find a time to be sick and die, and yet find no time to pray?

7. *Wilt thou tell God so, when thou standest at his judgment-seat?*—Which of you is the man, (stand forth!) that shall be accused at the bar of God, that he did not pray to God in his family, that will now say he will give God this answer *then*?—"Lord, I was so employed in the world, and my family too, that we had no leisure for thy service." "No! not to look after heaven? nor to seek my favour and my love? nor to beg for pardon and salvation? Go, get you gone! Go, get you down to a place of torment. Though you could find no *time* to pray to me, I will find an *eternity* to plague and punish you!"†

* *Non exiguum temporis habemus, sed multum perdimus: satis longa vita et in maximarum rerum consummationem largè data est, si tota bene collocaretur; sed ubi per luxum et negligentiam defluit, ubi nulli rei bonæ impenditur, ultima demum necessitate cogente, quam ire non intelleximus, transisse sentimus: ita est, non accepimus brevem vitam, sed fecimus; nec inopes ejus, sed prodigi sumus.*—SENECA *De Brevitate Vitæ*, cap. i. "It is not because we have a very small portion of time in possession, but because we wastefully squander much of that which we have received. Life itself is of sufficient duration; and its moments are bestowed with so unsparing a hand, that, if the whole of them be skilfully arranged and well-expended, we may engage in the grandest designs, and be enabled to complete the most useful undertakings. But when our life is suffered to glide along in luxurious negligence, and is devoted to the performance of nothing that is beneficial, at length we are alarmed at the arrival of the last day of our mortal existence; and we then feel, with useless regret, that the invaluable time whose silent lapse we had scarcely regarded, is passed away, and can never be recalled. This therefore is the fact: The life which we received has not been a brief one, but it has been curtailed by ourselves; neither do we act, with respect to time, as those who are beggars and in want of it, but like confirmed rakes and prodigals."—EDIT.

† *Ah! quid respondere velis
Christo venturo de cælis,
Cum a te poscet rationem
Ob boni remissionem,
Et mali commissionem?
Dies illa, dies iræ,
Quam conemur pravenire,
Obviamque Deo ire.
Quantus tremor est futurus,
Quando Judex est venturus,
Cuncta strictè discussurus!
Quid tu, miser, tum dicturus?
Quem patronum rogaturus,
Quam vix justus sis securus?*

To enforce the solemn warning in his sermon, the learned author has very ingeniously altered a part of the celebrated hymn which commences thus:—

*Dies iræ, dies illa
Solvet sæclum in favillâ, &c.*

It is one of the earliest of those Latin hymns which were composed in monkish rhymes, and which we have been taught to regard as the primitive models of all our popular versification. From the numerous excellent translations which have been given by some of our best poets, with whom it was a great favourite, I have selected that by lord Roscommon, on account of its general faithfulness, but principally because it bears the most complete resemblance to the Latin original in the terseness of its language, and its elegant triplets. It did not suit

8. *Are you the better for your riches, when you have by this labour got them? or do you work so hard, and spend your time, even all your time, for such things, that, when you have them, you are no better?*—You account him the best man in the parish that hath the most riches, and is the greatest; but so doth not God: no, the Heathens would not neither; * but he that is most holy, and loves God best, and serves him most. Those are goods indeed, that make you good indeed: but you are the worse, by how much you spend your time, more precious than all in time you get, with the neglect of your duties unto God.

9. *What, if thou shouldst some time sustain some loss in thy outward estate, if it be made-up with the favour of God, and true peace of conscience in the way of duty, and with the real advantage of thy own soul, and the souls of all thy family?*—Canst thou be willing to lose nothing for the gaining of heaven? or hadst thou rather that thou and they should lose God, and Christ, and glory, and souls, and all? Surely, when you come to cast-up your accounts, what you have got, and what you have lost, your gains will prove your loss.†

Mr. Doolittle's purpose to insert the remaining verses, which contain strong pleadings, on behalf of the penitent supplicant, for the exercise of divine mercy toward himself. — EDIT.

1. "The day of wrath, that dreadful day,
Shall the whole world in ashes lay,
As David and the [prophets] say.
2. "What horror will invade the mind,
When the strict Judge, who would be kind,
Shall have few venial faults to find!
3. "The last loud trumpet's wondrous sound
Shall through the rending tombs rebound,
And wake the nations under ground.
4. "Nature and death shall, with surprise,
Behold the pale offenders rise,
And view the Judge with conscious eyes.
5. "Then shall, with universal dread,
The sacred mystic Book be read,
To try the living and the dead.
6. "The Judge ascends his awful throne;
He makes each secret sin be known,
And all, with shame, confess their own.
7. "O, then, what interest shall I make,
To save my last important stake,
When the most just have cause to quake?" — ROSCOMMON.

* 'Ουτοι οι λογοι ασυνακτοι. Εγω σου πλουσιωτερος ειμι, εγω σου αρα κρεισσων. Εγω σου λογιωτερος, εγω σου αρα κρεισσων. Εκεινοι δε μαλλον συνακτικοι. Εγω σου πλουσιωτερος ειμι, η εμη αρα κτησις της σης κρεισσων. Εγω σου λογιωτερος, η εμη αρα λεξις της σης κρεισσων. Συ δε γε ουτε κτησις ει, ουτε λεξις.—EPICETI *Enchiridion*, cap. lxvi. "These reasonings are unconnected: *I am richer than you; therefore I am better. I am more eloquent than you; therefore I am better.* The connexion is rather this: *I am richer than you; therefore my property is greater than yours. I am more eloquent than you; therefore my style is better than yours.* But YOU, after all, are neither property nor style."—MRS. CARTER'S Translation.

† *Nolo tollas cupiditatem, sed mutes; nolo perdas, sed lucreris. Avarum cupiditas argentei nummi incitat ad cupiendum aureum, pro quo relinquit argenteum: namque ipse volor argentei est in aureo; ideo plures areos atque argenteos pro uno commutat aureo: O locupletissimum qui ita suas cupiditates contrahit! Commutanda omnia pro Deo sunt; et totum gaudium nostrum latissimum in uno colligendum. Nolo aliquid nimis severum; nolo ut consumas cupiditates omnes; sed ut resumam omnes et in und sumas.*—NIEREMBERGIUS *De Art. Volunt.* "I do not wish you to cut-off all desire, but to change it: in this I am wishful that you should be a gainer, and not a loser. Greediness or desire for silver money incites an avaricious man to covet gold coin, for which he relinquishes his silver. For the real value of the large mass of silver pieces resides intrinsically in the much smaller bulk of the gold coins for which those of silver have been

10. *If God should bring back some from the grave and hell, and set them in this world again, dost thou think that they would so follow the world, and run up and down after money, that they would say, they could find no time to pray that they might escape that dreadful place of torment [which] they had been in?—If some of those that had been in hell but a month or two, were now in thy circumstances, dost thou think they would not let their work stand still, or rise the sooner, and sit-up the later, or would deny themselves much of their eating-time and sleeping-time, that they might have time to pray?—“Lord, let us not go down to hell again! O let us not return to the place which we have found to be so restless and so dreadful!” And shouldst not thou be as much, and often, and as earnest, with thy family, that neither thou nor any of thine be cast into it?*

I durst not let this pass, (though I am sensible I have taken-up too much room,) without endeavouring to remove this hinderance that lies in the way to keep many families from their knees in holy prayer. I beg, for the Lord's sake, and for your souls' sake, that you would watch against it, and resolve against it, and that your worldly interest shall no longer keep you from family-prayer.

In the close, then, of all that hath been said, let me in the name of God exhort you all to the practice of family-prayer. You have heard it *proved* to be your duty, you have been *directed* how you might manage it for the good of all in your houses, you have had *motives* to press you to the performance of it, your *pretences and excuses* brought against it have been manifested to be frivolous and vain. What say you, sirs? Will you resolve upon it here in the presence of the Lord, or will you still neglect it? Shall I lose all my labour, or shall it be in vain that I have preached, and you have heard this doctrine? I tell you to your faces, it shall not be in vain; the word of the blessed God shall convince you and reform you, or condemn you. What come we hither for, but faithfully to show you your duty, and earnestly to persuade you to obey? Do ministers study for you, when you are sleeping in your beds, and declare the mind and will of God in the congregation? and will you cast all our counsel behind your back? I hope, you will be wiser for your own everlasting happiness. Say, then, are you convinced in this point, that it is your duty? If not, view over again what hath been said, and seriously consider it, and let me beg this at your hands, that you would think of all *now*, as you would do if you were with an awakened conscience upon your dying bed, or if you were standing at God's judgment-bar; and when this question is put to you, (*whether you ought to pray in your families?*) let conscience say, “Yes” or “No,” according as its verdict and dictate shall be at death and judgment; and then I am persuaded you will say, you are convinced you ought to do it. And are you indeed? What! and yet go-on in the omission of it? Will you so sin

exchanged. He therefore gives a great number of silver coins, and a still greater of copper pence, for a single piece of gold. Rich and most affluent indeed is he who thus contracts his desires, and concentrates them all in one that is of most value. All things are to be given in exchange for God; and all our joy, which has been most diffusive in its character, must collect itself into him alone as its true centre. I am unwilling to recommend any thing which is too severe. It is not my wish that you should *consume* all your desires, but that you should *resume* them, and then *assume* them into one of transcendent excellence.”—EDIT.

against your consciences? Will you dare so to do? You parents, for God's sake, consider in what a condition you have brought your children into the world; are they not by nature enemies to God, dead in sin, children of wrath, unfit for heaven, and in danger of damnation? And will you not so much as pray daily with them, that they may be delivered out of this condition, and be saved from damnation? Is it nothing to you whether your children are damned or saved? Is it nothing to you whether they live with the blessed, glorious God, or with cursed devils and damned souls? Have you no pity nor compassion for them, that are flesh of your flesh? * Where are the yearnings of your hearts? where are the workings of your bowels? If their bodies were a-dying, would you not pray by their bed-sides, that they may be preserved from the grave? and will you not, that their souls might be saved from hell? Dare you not be guilty of the murder of their bodies? and dare you of their souls? Do not the laws of men justly *hang* those that do the one, and will not the laws of God righteously *damn* them that do the other? You fathers, and you mothers, can you look upon your graceless, Christless children, and not pity them, and weep over them, and call them to you to come and pray with you? Have you not a word to say to God for them in their hearing? Will you not call them to this duty, and let them be *eye-witnesses* of the tears that you should shed in lamenting their sinful state and misery thereby, and *ear-witnesses* of the requests you put-up to God for their conversion? And how might this work upon their hearts, if they were! But what shall I say to you fathers, and to you mothers, that do neglect your duty, which God requireth for the good of your children? The father doth not pray; the mother doth not persuade him, nor entreat him, so to do; and, by the negligence of both, the children are ungodly. Are they more wicked, or you more cruel? They are full of impiety, and you are full of cruelty, both father and mother: because it is so much 'long † of you that they are so bad.

Crudelis mater magis, an puer improbus ille?

Improbus ille puer, crudelis tu quoque mater.—VIRGILII *Bucolica*, Ecol. viii.

Appendatur et hoc:—

Crudelis pater es; per te puer improbus ille.‡

* Such parents are like the ostrich. You negligent parents, read Job xxxix. 13—19, and Lam. iv. 3. Look your faces in that glass: do you not blush, look, that you are so like to such a foolish bird? *Struthio-camelus derelinquit ova sua in terra, crudelis in prolem: nihil præ stupiditate, oblivione, et crudelitate filii suis timet.*—VALESII *Philosophia Sacra*. ["The ostrich leaves her eggs on the ground, and is cruel to her offspring. In consequence of her stupidity, forgetfulness, and cruelty, she is afraid of nothing which can happen to her young."] *Sicut hæc avis non curat sua ova, ita insipientes non curat instrui liberos in pietate.*—FRANZIUS. ["As this bird takes no care about her eggs, so silly parents make no provision for the instruction of their children in solid piety."] "The ostrich, if it thrust her neck or head into any shrub or bush, and get that hidden, thinks herself safe, and that no man seeth her."—PLINY'S "Natural History." Such fools are these ungodly parents, that, if they get their heads under their roofs, remember not that God seeth their great neglect there.

† For the meaning of this word, see page 258.—EDIT.

‡ "O barbarous mother, thirsting to destroy!

More cruel was the mother, or the boy?

Both, both alike delighted to destroy,

The' unnat'ral mother and the ruthless boy."—WARTON'S Translation.

"To this let the following reproof be appended:—

"And thou, the cruel father, art to blame,

Through whose neglect thy son a wretch became."—EDIT.

But if the profane parents and masters amongst us will not reform and pray in their houses, shall I not prevail with many of you professors, that have been shamefully guilty of this neglect? Then pluck-off your vizard of profession abroad, and tell us what you are. Do not deceive us any longer, and make the world believe you are that which you are not, but let us know what you are. What shall I say? Will nothing prevail? Then they that are for hell, are for hell, and we cannot help it. But it will be more profitable for you and your families, that you be really and indeed what you have with much zeal abroad professed yourselves to be. I pray you, be better in your houses, and act as men resolved for heaven, and to have all your family with you there. However, if any do miscarry, let it not be by your neglect. And as for you that have and do make conscience of this duty, go on, and the Lord be with you! Go on, sirs! Hold out; it is but a little while, and your praying shall be turned into perfect praising. Go on, that your children might bless God that they had such parents, and your servants bless God that they had such masters, and that ever they came under your roof, and lived within the walls of your house. You will have comfort when you come to die, in the review of holy diligence, and might leave them with peace; which will be better to you than all the world. Keep fast then your resolution, *that, while you live, you and your house will serve the Lord!*

SERMON XVI.

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WHAT ARE THE DUTIES OF HUSBANDS AND WIVES TOWARDS EACH OTHER?

Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.—Ephesians v. 33.

My business is to declare, from this scripture, *What are the duties of husbands and wives towards each other*,—a subject of manifest use and need; for as this relation is the foundation of all others in the world,* so the right discharge of the duties hereof doth greatly promote the like in all the rest. But here it is easier to direct than to persuade, and harder to please man than God. And, you know, we must be faithful to him, and we must be faithful to you; and you must labour to bring your will to the rule, and not to bring the rule to your will. And your rule is laid down in these words: “Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.”

* Πρωτη δε και στοιχειωδεστατη των κοινωνιων, η κατα τον γαμον.—HIEROCLES *De Nuptiis*, p. 210. “But the first of all the forms which human society assumes, that indeed which contains its most essential elements, is the marriage-relation.”—EDIT.

Wherein you have, 1. *The connexion* : “ Nevertheless ; ” that is to say, leaving that mystery of the spiritual marriage,* “ Let every one of you,” &c. Or, notwithstanding that the copy, proposed verse 25, of Christ’s love to his church is so superlative and above your reach,† *yet* “ let every one of you so love his wife as himself : ” unless we understand it illatively, and read it, “ So then,” or “ therefore ; ” † as if he had said, “ The sum and short of what is said, amounts to this, that as Christ loved his church, so every one of you,” &c. §

2. *The direction*, in the rest of the verse : “ Let every one of you,” &c. Wherein you see,

(1.) *The universal obligation of it* : “ Let every one of you ; ” which might, with some ordinary supplement to the Greek, || make a sentence of itself : thus : “ Let every one of you,” though you be never so good, and though they be, never so bad, ¶ “ look to this,” do you this.

(2.) *The particular application of it* : “ In particular ; ” what hath been determined in general, let it be applied by every one to themselves. For both these passages may well respect both husband and wife, and do import that each of them should study and practise their particular duty.

3. *The summary description of each of these their duties.* And,

(1.) *Here is the sum of every husband’s duty* : To “ love his wife.” Indeed, this is not all : but this is the chief of all, this will fulfil all. And to this is added an excellent clause, “ as himself ; ” which may pass both for a rule and for a reason. (i.) *For a rule* ; for he that may not know how our Saviour loved his church, yet cannot but know ** how he should love himself : why, let him love his wife as himself. (ii.) *For a reason* ; for it being certain, that a man’s wife is a great part of himself, that they are but two in one, †† “ let every one of you love his wife as himself.”

(2.) *Here is the sum of every wife’s duty* : “ And the wife see that she reverence her husband. Where the word “ see ” is added in our translation as a convenient supplement to the sense, †† though it be not in the letter of the Greek. But the substance of the wife’s duty is here concluded to be “ reverence,” as we translate it, though most others read it, φοβηται, “ fear ; ” §§ and doubtless intends that inward respect to the place

* So ZANCHIUS and MUSCULUS in loc. † Πλην, *veruntamen*.—TRENELLIUS, VULG. VERSIO. *Ceterum*.—GAGNEUS. † So “ the Dutch Annotations,” BEZA, and HAMMOND in loc. § *Non dicit, “ Verum vos,” sed, “ Verum et vos ; ” quasi dicat, Sicut Christus ecclesiam suam dilexit.*—ZANCHIUS et MUSCULUS in loc. “ The apostle does not say, ‘ But do ye,’ &c. He says, ‘ But do ye also,’ &c. As if he had said, ‘ As Christ loved his church,’ &c.”—EDIT.

|| *Græcis et Latinis deest aliquid hic supplendum, viz. Vos singuli id præstate.*—GAGNEUS. [“ Both in the Greek original and in the Latin versions of the passage, something seems to be deficient here, which requires to be supplied ; namely, Let each of you do this.”] So our old translation. ¶ *Sive hæ formosæ sint sive deformes, sive divites sive pauperes, sive morigeræ sive immorigeræ, ad unum omnes.*—ZANCHIUS et MUSCULUS in loc. “ All wives, without exception, are entitled to this, whether they be handsome or deformed, rich or poor, complaisant or disobedient.”—EDIT.

** *Ουκ εις σφοδροτερον ηλθεν υποδειγμα, αλλα και ως εγγυτερον και σαφεστερον.*—CHRYSOSTOMUS in loc. “ This is not produced as a more ardent pattern of affection, but as one that is nearer to a man, and more easily understood.”—EDIT. †† *Οσαρ ημτομα δυο εισι.*—*Idem in Coloss.* homil. xii. “ Like something that is but half-separated, they are still two in one.”—EDIT. †† *Ellipsis ; subauditur φρονιζετω aut tale.*—CAMERARIUS in loc. “ An ellipsis occurs here, which is to be supplied by the word ‘ see : ’ Let the wife see, or be solicitous,” &c.—EDIT.

§§ So “ the Dutch Annotations,” the Vulgate, BEZA, &c.

and person of a husband, which inclines them to a voluntary subjection, and an agreeable behaviour : * which reverence or fear is so far from excluding love, that it both supposeth it, † and is an effect of it ; for when we love, we study to please, and fear to offend.

And though there be no *express explication* of this duty of the wife, as there was of the husband's, who is charged to love his wife "as himself ;" yet there is an *implicit direction* to the wife in her duty to her husband ; namely, to reverence him, and to be subject to him "as unto her head." ‡

So that our lesson hence is plain, which is this :—

DOCTRINE.

That every husband should love his wife as himself, and every wife should reverence her husband.

This is the dictate of our Creator, both by the light of nature and of scripture. This is the constant language both of the Old Testament and of the New ; and is more purposely handled and pressed by the two great apostles of the Jews and Gentiles, that so all Christians, however descended, should submit unto it. The apostle Paul, Eph. v. 22, &c. ; Col. iii. 18, &c. ; the apostle Peter, 1 Peter iii. 1, &c.

Not that these are all their respective duties ; but these are specified, either, 1. Because in these are the most frequent failings ; § husbands too commonly being defective in their love, and wives most defective in their reverence and subjection ; or, 2. Because these two are the sum of the rest ; and no other duties are either possible or acceptable without them.

And my present work is to digest and urge these in a solemn and impartial manner, that it may appear, our religion doth not only pro-pound rewards to make us happy in the world to come, but doth also direct the methods of settling our quiet and comfort in this present world. For, certainly, it is not the having of husbands or wives that brings contentment, but the mutual discharge of both their duties ; and this makes their lives, though never so poor, a heaven upon earth.

But herein I can but draw-up an abstract, and send you where you may be far better provided. In the mean time, let us all, in the prosecution hereof, sadly reflect on our former failings, and sincerely resolve on future amendment, according to that whereof we shall be convinced by the word of truth.

And here, I shall endeavour these four things :—

I. *To propound the mutual or common duties of both.*

II. *The special duty of every husband.*

III. *The special duty of every wife.*

* φοβεισθαι, *doctrina de reverentia cultu, quo is qui inferior est superiorem colit.*—BEZA *in loc.* "In this passage the Greek word inculcates the doctrine of her cultivating such reverence toward her husband, as he who is an inferior evinces toward his superior."—EDIT. "Fear ; that is, with respect and awe be subject to him."—"Dutch Annotations." *Nusquam erit voluntaria subjectio nisi precedat reverentia.*—CALVINUS *in loc.* "There will never be any voluntary subjection, unless it be preceded by reverence."—EDIT. † "Sup-
porteth" is the reading of the first edition.—EDIT. ‡ "She to behave herself reverently to her husband as to her head."—HAMMOND *in loc.* § MR. BYFIELD on Col. p. 111.

IV. *Directions how to accomplish them, that so they may most certainly be blessings to each other.*

MUTUAL DUTIES.

I. Let us see what are those *mutual duties* that lie common between husband and wife, wherein both of them are equally, at least according to the place and power of each, concerned and obliged. And they are these following :—

1. *Mutual cohabitation.*—For the man, he must “leave father and mother, and cleave unto his wife;” (Gen. ii. 24;) and the woman, she must “forget her kindred and her father’s house.” (Psalm xlv. 10.) The husband, he must “dwell with the wife;” (1 Peter iii. 7;) and the wife, she must not “depart from the husband,” though he be an infidel. (1 Cor. vii. 10.) And indeed the ends and duties of marriage are such as will not ordinarily dispense herewith. For example: “Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.” (1 Cor. vii. 3—5.) Which plainly shows that even the sober use of the marriage-bed is such a mutual debt, that it may not be intermitted long without necessity and consent.* Nay, in the old law, the greatest necessity should not send the husband from his wife the first year, that their affections might be thoroughly settled, and that he might “cheer up his wife which he hath taken.” (Deut. xxiv. 5.) Neither indeed can any of the following duties toward each other’s souls or bodies, be thoroughly performed, nor many grievous snares avoided, without dwelling together. †

And therefore neither desire of gain, nor fear of trouble, nor occasional distastes, nor pretence of religion, should separate those from conjugal converse and cohabitation, (unless with consent, and that but for a time,) whom God hath joined together. ‡

2. *Mutual love.*—This, though in a peculiar manner it be the duty of the husband, (“Husbands, love your wives,” Col. iii. 19,) yet it is required also of the wife; they must “love their husbands.” (Titus ii. 4.) Indeed this is the conjugal grace, the great reason and the great comfort of marriage.§ Not a sensual or doting passion; but genuine, conjugal, and constant, “out of a pure heart fervently.” Not grounded on beauty, wealth, or interest; for these may soon wither and fail: nor only upon grace and piety; for this may decay to the least degree, and in the opinion of both parties quite disappear: but it must be

* The wife of Galeac. Caracciola denying this debt, upon the direction of her confessor, on pain of excommunication, was judged a sufficient reason of divorce.—*In Vitâ.* † “For the man is the head, the woman is as the body: for the head and body to be sundered, it is present death to either.”—GATAKER’S “Sermons,” p. 203. ‡ *Alibi fluctuare sese existimet; in domo autem apud uxorem suam, tanquam in portu optato, conquiescere.*—DAVENANTIIUS in *Coloss.* “In other places, a husband may consider himself to be in the midst of boisterous billows; but when at home, and in the company of his wife, let him feel himself to be in tranquillity and at repose in his desired haven.”—EDIT. § “First you must choose your love, and then you must love your choice.”—SMITH’S “Sermons.”

grounded upon the command and ordinance of God, whereby of two they are made one flesh.* So that though either of them be poor, deformed, froward,—though unregenerate, wicked, infidels,—yet, in obedience to God, and in conscience of the marriage-vow, which obligeth “for better and for worse,” they ought to love each other with a superlative love; † and when the sacred knot is once tied, every man should think his wife, and every wife her husband, the fittest for them of any in the world. And hereupon, the Heathens took the gall from their nuptial sacrifices, and cast it behind the altar; to intimate the removing of all bitterness from the marriage-state; there should be nothing but love. ‡

And this love must be as durable and constant as are the grounds of it, to the persons of each other until death: and to the memory and posterity of each other, when they are dead and gone: and thus the good wife is understood by some to do her husband “good all the days of her life;” not only of his life, but, when he is dead, to his posterity. (Prov. xxxi. 12.) What strange instances of this lasting love former ages have given, § and some Pagans at this day, || is in history both evident and admirable. .

This true-hearted love will bring true content and constant comfort into that condition, will make all counsels and reproofs acceptable, will keep-out jealousy, that bane of marriage-comfort, will keep the thoughts fixed, and the heart chaste; for it is not the having a husband or wife, but the loving of them, that preserves from adultery. This will prevent or soon quiet those storms within doors: as we see the mother that dearly loves her child, though it cry all night and disturb her quiet, yet love to it makes them very good friends in the morning. If love be eclipsed for a day or an hour between husband and wife, they are “like a bone out of joint;” ¶ there is no ease, nor order, nor work well done, till it be restored again.

3. *Mutual fidelity, especially to the marriage-bed, and also in each other's secrets.*—And this is directed 1 Cor. vii. 2: “Let every man have his *own* wife, and let every woman have her *own* husband.” By which rule, the thoughts, desires, and actions of each of them are confined to their own lawful yoke-fellow, as the dearest, sweetest, and best object in the world; and this by virtue of the covenant of their God.** The least aberration herein (if it be not speedily and sincerely mortified) will strangely get ground and fester in the soul, and never rest till it come to plain adultery. And then the comfort of their lives, the quiet of their consciences, and the credit of their families, lie bleeding; and, without true repentance, their eternal happiness shipwrecked. †† Yea, this

* *Una caro, non nexu amoris, nec commixtione corporum, nec procreatione liberorum, sed vinculo conjugii.*—ZANCHIUS. “*One flesh*—Not by the fetters of love, nor by the commingling together of their bodies, not by the procreation of children, but by the strong bond of marriage.”—EDIT. † *Ὅτις γὰρ, οὐτως πάσης τυραννίδος αὐτῆ ἢ ἀγαπῆ τυραννικότερα.*—CHRYSOSTOMUS in *Ephes.* homil. xxix. “For, indeed, of all tyrannies, love itself is the most tyrannical.”—EDIT. ‡ CÆLIUS RHODIGINUS, lib. xxviii. p. 1675.

§ Portia, the wife of Brutus; Arria, the wife of Cæcinnæ Pætus.—In VALERIUS MAXIMUS. || The Banyan wives among the Indians burn themselves to ashes at the funeral of their husbands.—HERBERT in his “*Travels.*” ¶ MR. BAXTER'S “*Directory,*” p. 520. ** “Choose whether Adam thou wilt imitate, the old or the new; the one hath but one wife, the other hath but one church.”—JEROME, cited by Gataker.

†† See of this, largely and excellently, LUD. VIVES *De Christianâ Femina*, p. 699.

virtually dissolves the bond of marriage, and, if the divine law were executed, brings the offender to a severe death. (Deut. xxii. 22.) And though some greater shame and other inconveniences do follow the unfaithfulness of the wife; yet man and wife being one flesh, and equal power granted to them over the bodies of each other, the guilt of this sin is equal; unless the wisdom and strength of the man do make his fault the greater.

And therefore all possible care must be used to avoid all occasions and incentives of wandering desires from home; and the rather, because he or she that is not content with one, will not be content with more; for sin is boundless, and nothing but grace and the grave can limit the desires of the heart.

The same faithfulness is necessary in the wise concealment of each other's secrets, whether natural, moral, or civil, unless in such cases wherein a superior obligation doth release them. For there cannot be a more unnatural treachery than when husband or wife (the nearest of friends) make one another obnoxious to shame or harm: bad, when it is done by inadvertence; worse, when in their passion; worst of all, when it is through ill-will and malice.

4. *Mutual helpfulness.*—Hence they are called “yoke-fellows.” And of the woman it was said at her creation, that she should be עֲזָרָה כְּנֶפֶשׁ “an help meet for him;” (Gen. ii. 18;) which may be rendered, “an help like him;” for they should be both of them helps to each other. There are three yokes which they must jointly carry: (1.) *The yoke of cares.*—This all people must expect to bear in a married condition, and, for the most part, that of labour also. And these lying always on one shoulder will overload; but when some help comes-in, [when] the husband takes care without, the wife takes care within; the husband travels abroad, the wife is busy at home; then the burden is easier. To this end, it behoves the wife to read often the last chapter of Proverbs, and the husband the rest of that book, for their quickening hereunto. (2.) *The yoke of crosses and troubles.*—For such as are married, though they expect nothing but pleasure, yet must “have trouble in the flesh,” (1 Cor. vii. 28,) losses in their estates, afflictions in their children, crosses both from friends and enemies. Now every man and woman should choose such yoke-fellows as may be friends as well as relations; and may comfort, support, and advise each other with all faithfulness and sympathy. (3.) *The yoke of Jesus Christ.*—For they should live “as heirs together of the grace of life.” (1 Peter iii. 7.) And it is the highest end of their relation to promote one the other's everlasting happiness. The knowledge of the husband must help the wife, and the zeal of the wife must help the husband. When the sun shines, the moon absconds; when that is set, this appears.* When the husband is at home, then it is his work to instruct and pray with his family, and sanctify the sabbath; but in his absence the wife is his stated deputy, and must look to it: and both must study both in prudence and conscience to be of one mind, encouraging, reproving, or correcting their inferiors; lest their authority be weakened, their spirits distempered, and their endeavours frustrated.

5. *Mutual patience.*—This grace we are bound to exercise toward all

* CÆLIUS RHODIGINUS, lib. xxviii.

men; how much more to such near and dear relations! "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." (Eph. iv. 31, 32.) Innumerable are the occasions that may minister contention in the daily affairs, wherein they are concerned;* and Satan is ever ready to blow the coal, and they have corrupt and froward natures; and therefore there is a flat necessity of this blessed grace. Alas! a civil war within doors is the most intolerable. The soul, the body, the worship of God, the affairs, the family, are all disordered by it. No good can come of it; passion reforms nothing, but patience may: † "The wrath of man works not the righteousness of God."

The married couple, therefore, must study and pray for a meek and quiet spirit; mortify pride, learn self-denial, and sometimes wisely withdraw till the storm be over; and hold their peace, to keep the peace. ‡ They must consider, as holy Mr. Bolton saith, that two angels are not met together, but two sinful children of Adam, from whom little can be expected but weakness and waywardness. They must reckon the greatest worth and honour to be first in overtures of peace, and never suffer those unnatural heats to ferment. What honour or comfort can any one have in falling out with himself? What prize in that victory? Let some lesser faults be winked at; § and let the husband spy a season discreetly to admonish his wife, || and the wife respectfully to acquaint the husband, of things amiss. And if the faulty person would conscientiously make an acknowledgment of their error to the other, and both beg pardon of God for it, it would be a good antidote against the like folly, and bring glory to God. This is certain, he or she that can without scruple injure the other, is not kept from wronging others by any honest principle. And, lastly, let them consider, that it is much better to give place to one another, than by nourishing anger to "give place to the devil."

6. *Mutual endeavours for each other's salvation.*—This is clearly inferred from 1 Cor. vii. 16: "For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?" as if he had said, "This should be your chief design; and if you can attain this, though with trouble, you are

* &c. יבחר כמה Quomodo probabit homo animam suam? Si possit tolerare uxorem malam.—BUXTORFIUS *ex Miphcah Happen*. "According to the Hebrew saying, How will a man prove his spirit? If he be able to endure a bad wife."—EDIT. † *Magis veremur prudentes, quam iracundos: plus cogit quietum imperium, quam vehementis imperiosior concitatione quies.*—LUD. VIVES *De Christianâ Femina*, p. 729. "We entertain a greater reverence for prudent persons, than for those who are passionate. A still and quiet rule possesses far more potency, than does that which is vehement and hasty. The domination which is mild and unostentatious is more powerful than that which is exciting."—EDIT. ‡ Thus Albutius lived with his Terentiana twenty-five years, and P. Rubrins Celer with his Ennia forty-four years, without a quarrel. So Mr. Smith, in his Sermons, tells of a choleric couple that kept the peace by each keeping silence, when the other was angry. § *Και τα μεν μικρα των ψαισματων και τοις εκουσια οντα, συγγνωμης αξιουν.*—ARISTOTELES *De Curâ Rei Familiaris*, lib. i. "Those slight offences also, and indeed such small faults as are committed freely and without premeditation, are deserving of excuse and forgiveness."—EDIT. || *Observanda sunt porro admonendi tempora. Officium extra tempus molestia est. Quum peccillus nullâ perturbatione agitur, seorsum et senolis arbitris, cum dexteritate et suavitate sermone.*—LUDOV. VIVES, p. 717. "Moreover, proper seasons for admonition must be observed. The unreasonable performance of a duty renders it troublesome and annoying. When her breast is agitated by no perturbation, let her be admonished in private, no witnesses being present, with some address and much sweetness of speech."—EDIT.

made!" How paganish, yea, how brutish, a thing is it, only to enjoy the comforts of marriage together, and then to go together into hell! If you suffer one another to be damned, where is your love? * Nay, how can you lie with comfort with a limb of the devil in your bosom? It is true, they must not pass uncharitable censures on one another, either in heart or in speech; nor condemn them in their everlasting estate for every deviation, nor obtrude religious matters in a distasteful manner; but they ought affectionately to inquire into the spiritual estate of each other; and, if need require, use all proper means incessantly to bring the ignorant or vicious party into the good ways of God; and that by drawing them to the means of grace, and giving them no rest in the unsafe condition of unrenewed nature. "Let them both go to the church," saith Chrysostom; "and afterwards, at home, let the husband require of the wife, and the wife of the husband, those things which were spoken and read, or at least some part thereof." † "And what knowest thou, O man, but hereby thou mayest save thy wife?" that is, thou knowest nothing to the contrary. Nay, there is a cloud of witnesses to verify the blessed effects of these endeavours. ‡

And if you be both married to Christ Jesus, your work is to build-up one another in your most holy faith, and in all wisdom and holiness. And to that end you ought carefully to watch over each other, lest at any time you fall into temptation; to study each other's dispositions, consider each other's snares, observe each other's decays in zeal and piety, that you may speedily apply remedies; and "exhort one another daily, lest either of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." Your curtain-talk should often be of God, and of your eternal estate; and you should improve that analogy which is between Jesus Christ and his church and the married couple, to your comfort and direction. § In short, you should in both your carriages declare plainly that you are going together to seek a country.

7. *Mutual marriage-chastity.* ||—For "marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled." (Heb. xiii. 4.) And the great care both of husband and wife should be to be chaste in marriage, ¶ to abhor all wanton speeches, and unfit incentives of lust, and to be sober, seasonable, and regular in the use of the marriage-bed. They should beware lest

* *Nunquam verus et perpetuus erit amor, nisi in iis rebus collocetur, quæ etiam sepulchro sunt superstites.*—LUDOV. VIVES *De Officio Mariti*. "No love will be true and perpetual, unless it be placed on those things which survive the tomb, and flourish in eternity."—EDIT.
 † *Εὐχαί γινεσθῶσαν ὑμῖν κοιναί. Ἐκαστος εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν πρῶτῳ καὶ τῶν λεγομένων καὶ τῶν ἀναγινωσκομένων ἐκεῖ, καὶ ὁ ἀπὴρ τὴν γυναῖκα ἀπαυτεῖτω ἐπὶ τῆς οἰκίας, κακεῖνη τὸν ἀνδρα.*—CHRYSOSTOMUS *in Ephes. v. homil. xx.* "Unite together in mutual prayers." &c. The remainder of the sentence is translated in the text itself.—EDIT. ‡ Flavius Clemens, kinsman to Domitian, by his wife Domitia; Clodoveus, king of France, by Clotilda; Hermogillus, king of the Goths, by his wife Jugula, &c. § *Desinat paulatim in vobis seorsus discerni, et incipite ad caelestem illam vitam prelude, in qua nullus est seorsus.*—LUD. VIVES *De Officio Mariti*. "Let the sex of each of you by degrees cease to be discerned; and both of you begin to make serious preparation for that heavenly life in which there is no distinction of the sexes."—EDIT. ¶ *Continentia legem nuptiarum honorat.*—TERTULLIANUS *De Monog.* "Continence honours the law of marriage."—EDIT. ¶ *Neque alibi magis quàm apud uxorem maritus verecundiam adhibere debet, sentiens et thalamum scholam esse aut modestiæ aut impudicitie.*—PLUTARCHI *Præcepta Conjugialia*. "Neither in any place ought a husband more strictly to observe the rules of modesty than when he is in the company of his wife; as, according to his own behaviour, the nuptial chamber will become either a school of modesty, or one of impudent lewdness."—EDIT.

they make that ordinance, which is the remedy of impure affections, to be the nurse and exciter of them.* They must not think that their relation doth legitimate every folly which they can perpetrate, or that inordinate or immoderate pleasures can ever agree with the "bed undefiled."† A man may be a wicked drunkard with his own drink, and a wretched beast in his own marriage-bed. I might here bring-in divines of late, fathers of old, yea, philosophers themselves, agreeing in their censures of these extravagances, and telling us that the pleasures of marriage should be serious, circumspect, and mixed with severity,‡ and that an intemperate man in wedlock differs little from an adulterer.§

Let all married persons, therefore, remember, that the holy eye of God is upon them; that their bodies are the "temples of the Holy Ghost;" and that they must render a strict account unto the Lord of every secret thing. There is need, even in a married estate, to "crucify our fleshly lusts;" and to deny our natural and lawful desires at such times as natural modesty or religion command abstinence, and so make them unlawful.|| Keep, therefore, an inviolable decorum in your converse together; show reverence to God, bear reverence to one another, reverence yourselves.¶ Be assured of this, that true love "behaves not itself unseemly," and that modesty is the best preserver of nuptial chastity.

8. *Mutual care of each other's health, wealth, credit, and contentment.*—This the nature of their relation, and the ordinance of God, and the sameness of their interests, require from them. They ought to be tender of each other's health, and sick in one another's sickness.** The husband must improve all his skill and strength to procure a competence of estate, and the wife all hers to help and further it. The reputation of the wife the husband must tender as the apple of his eye, and the wife must every way advance the good name of her husband. And, in short, the Holy Ghost hath determined, that "he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife; and she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband." †† (1 Cor. vii. 33, 34.)

* *Ut quod sanis possit esse officium, sit aegrotis remedium.*—AUGUSTINUS *De Genesi ad Litteram*, lib. ix. cap. 7. "That the act in which it may be the duty of the healthy to indulge, may also become a remedy to those who are sickly and incontinent."—EDIT. † See Bolton's "General Directions," p. 243, at large. ‡ *Sapiens judicio amat conjugem, non affectu.*—LOMBARDUS *ex* HIERONYMO. "A wise man loves his wife with judgment, not with passion."—EDIT.

§ *Adulter est uxoris propria amator ardentior.*—SEXTUS, *Pythag.* "He who too ardently loves his own wife is a real adulterer."—EDIT. ¶ *Quamvis munda sint conjugia, tamen etiam a licitis abstinendum est, ut facilius ad effectum deducatur oratio.*—AMBROSIUS, tom. v. "Though purity may attend the performance of connubial rites, yet we must abstain even from lawful gratifications, that our prayers may the more readily be brought to a happy result."—EDIT.

¶ *Πάντων δε μάλιστα ἀσχυροσ σάυτων.*—PYTHAGOR. *Aur. Carmina*, 12.

¶ Above all witnesses thy conscience fear,

And more than all mankind THYSELF revere."—FITZGERALD'S Translation.

** *Quòd si unus estis homo, non duo, aegrotare ille non potest, quin tu aegrotas: nec illa esse pauper, te divite: quodque inter amicos contingere non potest, quomòdò in tantò amoris et animorum copulà continget?*—LUDOV. VIVES *De Off. Mariti*. "But if you be really one, and not two, the husband cannot be sick without the wife also partaking in his sickness; neither can the wife be in a state of penury while her husband is in affluence. How can this want of sympathy, which is fatal to the existence even of common friendships, find any place in that more powerful bond of the affections and feelings which unites together husband and wife?"—EDIT.

†† *Circa ejus lectum sunt sacra omnia: ibi ara, ibi Deus, ubi pax et concordia et charitas. Deum facile tibi amicum reddes si hominem*

This will bring honour to religion, comfort to their lives, and a blessing on all they have. This will make them digest all the pains and troubles of that condition, seeing they find two to be better than one, and do never miss of a sweet and constant friend in their bosom.* Without this care, the one will be a perpetual burden to the other, and a daily torment. When the one is unconcerned in the other's trials; when the one gathers and the other scatters; when the one blasts the other's reputation; when one perpetually crosseth and vexeth the other; there follows a hell of disquiet in the mind, ordinarily a blast upon the estate, besides guilt and shame unspeakable.

Think, therefore, often, "God hath made us one: if my wife be sick, I am not half well; if my husband be poor, I cannot be rich; if he be discontent, how can I be content? We will laugh and weep together; nothing but death shall separate our affections or interests."

9. *Mutual prayer.*—Hence the apostle Peter advises, that "their prayers be not hindered;" (1 Peter iii. 7;) which implies that they should pray for and with one another. Thus Isaac is said to "multiply prayers with," or "before, his wife;" † (Gen. xxv. 21;) and it follows how prevalent these prayers were. This common debt we owe to all, much more to them that are so nearly united to us. The purest love is written in prayer. This duty must constantly be done *for*, and frequently *with*, each other. No better preservative of real love and peace than praying together. There they must bewail their failings in their conjugal relations, the pollutions that cleave to the marriage-bed.‡ There they should beg the blessing of children, and blessings upon their children, a blessing upon their estates, and especially "all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ" upon their souls. Who knows but that God may touch the heart of the wife, when the husband is pouring-out prayers for her? Certainly they are in the discharge of their duty, to which God hath annexed a promise.

And it will be the wisdom of them both to espy fit times for their joint prayers, if they cannot keep pace with holy Mr. Bolton, who prayed twice daily alone, twice with his wife, and twice with his family. And herein consider, what particular grace or mercy your relation wants; what sin and temptation they are most liable to; and press God with an humble importunity in the case, till your prayer be answered. You owe each other a spiritual as well as a matrimonial love; and if you only eat and drink together, "what do you more than others?" Do not the beasts of the field so? If your love reach only to the body and the things of this life, do not the publicans the same? But if you love one

reddideris.—LUD. VIVES *De Christianâ Fœminâ*, p. 710. "Around his couch all things are sacred. *There* stand the domestic altars, and *there* is the Divine Presence, *where* peace, and concord, and charity have their abode. God will readily become thy Friend, if thou be on friendly terms with thy husband."—EDIT.

* *Summus autem amicitie gradus est fœdus conjugale.*—MELANCTHONIS *Loci Communes*. "But the highest degree of friendship exists in the marriage-covenant."—EDIT.

† עֵתָר לְנֹכַח *Verba fudit magnâ copîâ, ante, e regione, ante oculos.* ‡ *Cùm verò non amor procreandæ sobolis, sed voluptas dominatur in opere commixtionis, habeant conjuges etiam de commixtione suâ quod desinant.*—LOMBARDUS, lib. iv. dist. 31. "In their intercourse together, when procreation ceases to be the ruling desire, and its place is usurped by voluptuousness, the consequence may be such as will furnish both of them with bitter regrets."—EDIT.

another's souls, and be restless after the salvation thereof, you do more than others, and "your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord."

And thus you have heard a plain breviare of these common duties which husbands and wives should discharge toward each other. I follow now the order of my text, to declare, in the second place, the special duty of the husband in this position; namely,—

HUSBANDS' DUTIES.

II. *The great duty of every husband is to love his own wife.*

This is the foundation of all the rest; this must be mixed with all the rest; this is the epitome of all the rest of his duty. And hence this is expressly mentioned four times in this chapter, (verses 25, 28, 33,) as being the great wheel which by its motion carries-about all the other wheels of the affections that are within us, and the actions that are without us. Fix but this blessed habit in the heart, and it will teach a man, yea, it will enforce a man, to all that tenderness, honour, care, and kindness, that is required of him. These are but the beams from that sun; they are but the fruits from that root of real love that is within. "Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not, is not puffed up, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, beareth all things." (1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5, 7.)

It is here as it is in love to God, which, you know, doth both instruct and thrust a man on to the utmost of his duty, excluding those wary fears wherewith hypocrites abound, lest they should do too much. Even so love to a man's wife suggests all fit expressions thereof, and carries a man to perform the highest effects of it; whenas the want of this causes him to dispute every inch of God's command, and to be jealous of every prescription.

I shall trace this comprehensive grace or duty,—

(I.) *In its nature and property.*

(II.) *In its pattern.*

(III.) *In its effects;* which done, you will see that the greatest part, if not all, the husband's duty is contained in "loving his wife as himself."

(I.) For the first, *the nature and property of this love.*—It is conjugal, true, and genuine, such as is peculiar to this relation: not that fondness which is proper in children, nor the brutish lust which is peculiar to beasts; but that which is right and true.

1. *For the ground of it.*—Which is the near relation which God's ordinance hath now brought him into, and his will revealed in his word. Such was the love of Isaac to Rebekah: "She became his wife; and he loved her." (Gen. xxiv. 67.) The ordinance of God hath made her one flesh with me,* and the law of nature obligeth me to love my own flesh; and therefore, though her beauty be decayed, her portion spent, her weaknesses great, and her usefulness small, yet she is a piece of myself, and here the wise God hath determined my affection. And when all is said, this is the only sure foundation, and holds perpetually.

2. This love must be right *for the extent of it.*—I mean, it reaches the whole person, both soul and body. Every man should choose such

* "Not only by original creation, so she is part of his flesh; but by nuptial conjunction, so she is one flesh."—GATAKER'S "Sermons," p. 200.

an one, whose outward features and proportion he can highly esteem and affect; and it speaks the admirable wisdom of God to frame such variety of fancies to answer the variety of persons; and there being such choice, it is sottish folly to choose where a man cannot love, and the greatest injury possible to the wife, to ensnare her heart, and bind her to one that shall afterwards say, he cannot love her. But, besides this, true conjugal love to a wife reaches her soul; so as to see an amiableness in her mind and disposition, so as to study how to polish her soul more and more with wisdom and piety, and to endeavour that her soul may prosper as her body prospers.

3. Right *for the degree of it*.—It must be transcendent, above your love to parents: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife." (Gen. ii. 24.) The husband must honour his parents; but he must love his wife as himself, and must (yet with all prudence) prefer her in his respects, whenever they come in competition; and those parents have forgotten the relation and duty of a husband that expect other from their children when they are married: "and so he must prefer her in his affection before his children, and rather love them for her sake, than her for theirs," and before all others in the world.* In short, he must so love her, as to delight in her company above all others. "Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love." (Prov. v. 19.)

4. The husband's love must be right *for the duration of it*.—And the last-named scripture clears that: "Be thou ravished *always* with her love." Not only kind before other folk, and then cold in private, but *always*; not for a week, or month, or the first year, but while life lasts. Yea, as he hath experience of her virtue and sweetness, his love should daily increase, as you know we love any creature the more by how much the longer we have had them; and nothing more betrays the baseness of a man's spirit, than to neglect his wife when his sensual appetite is once cloyed.† For you have had her beauty and strength; why should you not also have her wrinkles and infirmities, yea, and give the more respect to her tried fidelity? However, this is certain: still you are one flesh; and every man continues kind to his own flesh, how infirm and noisome soever it be. And if there be less comeliness in the body, yet usually there is more beauty in the mind, more wisdom, humility, and fear of the Lord; so that still there are sufficient arguments in her, or arguments in the Bible, to perpetuate your conjugal affection.

(II.) Let us trace the husband's love to his wife *in its pattern*, laid down in the scripture, and particularly in the context and words which I am handling. And,

* Και αυτα δε (viz. τεκνα) δια ταυτην φιλεισθω παρα σου.—CHRYSOSTOMUS in *Ephes. v.*

† *Ubi uxorem magis fueris expertus, tenerius est amanda. Illud verò, ubi uxore ad satieta-tem fueris potitus, refrigescere amorem, quem ardor (ut videtur) libidinis accenderit, hominum est spurcorum et abjectissimorum, imò verò non hominum sed belluarum.*—LUDOV. VIVES *De Officio Mariti*. "When thou hast had further experience of thy wife, thou must love her still more tenderly. But when thou hast enjoyed her even to satiety, and thy love has become cold, it is apparent that thy affection was nothing more than a transient flame, kindled by the torch of lewd desire. Such is the conduct only of the vilest, filthiest, and most abject of our species; nay, they who act in this manner are not men, but degraded brutes."—EDIT.

1. *The husband ought to love his wife, as our Saviour Christ loveth his church.*—"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church." (Verse 25.) He must "nourish and cherish her, even as the Lord the church." (Verse 29.) Now these texts direct us to the *quality* of our love, though we cannot reach to an *equality* with Christ herein.

How, then, doth Jesus Christ love his church? I shall search no farther into this depth, than so far as it is proposed in this context for a pattern, surely, to all husbands in their love. And this his love is represented here to be,—

(1.) *Heartly, without dissimulation.*—He "loved the church, and gave himself for it." (Verse 25.) His love was real; for he died of it. The husband must write after this copy. Not to love his wife in word and tongue only, but in deed and in truth; that if his heart were opened, her name might be found written there. Some vain, complimentary persons there are, that do outstrip in their overt addresses many sincere and true-hearted husbands; but neither doth God, nor should a discreet wife, look only at the appearance, but at the heart.

(2.) *Free, without being prevented before, or likely to be rewarded after.*—For he gave himself, that he might cleanse his church; (verse 26;) which implies that she was in ill plight, when he began his motions. She was no beauty; no, "we loved him, because he loved us first." The husband must precede, and by his love draw-out the love of his wife; for love is the whetstone of love.* And if she appear weak, as their sex by constitution is, both in wisdom, strength, and courage, or prove unlovely, and negligent of her duty; † yet he must love her; for "love seeketh not her own." True love doth more study to better the object beloved, than to advantage the subject that loveth. And to love a wife only in hopes of some advantages by her, is unworthy the heart of a husband, and no way like the example of Christ.

(3.) *Holy, without impurity.*—For he "loved the church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word;" (verses 25, 26;) that is, by the use of the word and sacraments. The husband cannot have a better copy; and is taught hereby to endeavour, at any cost and pains whatsoever, to further the sanctification and salvation of his wife: of which before.

(4.) *Great, without comparison.*—For "greater love hath no man than this, to lay down his life for his friend;" and so did our Saviour: he gave himself for his church. ‡ (Verse 25.) He took not on him the "nature of angels," but preferred "the seed of Abraham." The husband must herein imitate his Lord and Master, by preserving a singular and superlative respect for his wife, because she is a member "of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." But of this also before.

* *Ego tibi monstrabo amatorium sine medicamento, sine herbâ: Si vis amari, ama.*—HECATON in SENECAE Ep. 9. "Saith Hecaton, 'I will disclose to you an excellent philter without the use of love-powder, herb, or bewitching charm: Love, that you may be beloved!'"—DR. MORELL'S Translation. † *Τι οὐκ ἀνὴρ φοβηταί, φησὶν, ἢ γυνή, σὺ ἀγαπᾷ, τὸ σώτην ἄλλου.*—CHRYSOSTOMUS in Ephes. v. homil. xx. "The apostle says, 'Even if thy wife does not manifest due reverence, do thou still love her, and thus fulfil thy duty.'"—EDIT. ‡ *Ἡγάπησε affectum indicat: παρεδωκεν effectum amoris demonstrat.*

—DAVENANTIUS in Coloss. p. 340. "The Greek word, 'he loved,' indicates the strength of his affection; 'he gave himself,' demonstrates the effect of his love."—EDIT.

(5.) *Constant, without alteration.*—Even until he “present his church a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle.” (Verse 27.) Many a weary day hath he, and many an unkind put-off; yet he doth not cast her off. Here is a copy for husbands. They must not for every fault repent their bargain, and curse the time of their meeting; they must not be meditating a change upon any dislike,* but bear and forbear, and “overcome evil with good.”

(6.) *His is an active and fruitful love.*—For “he nourisheth and cherisheth his church.” (Verse 29.) His poor church is always wanting, he supplies her; she is in trouble, he protects her; she is ready to sink, but he awakes to save her. Such must be a husband’s love. He must spare no cost, no pains, to do his wife good; she now leans only upon him, he must not fail her; she hath left all her friends for him, he must not leave her; she hath a succession of many infirmities, pains, and perils, he must nourish her.† No nurse like a good husband; he must cherish her; no cordial or comforter like a wise and loving husband. Thus the husband must love his wife, as “Christ loveth his church.” And, again:—

2. *The husband ought to love his wife as himself.*—So saith my text. The apostle had said, “So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies;” (verse 28;) and, lest that should not be sufficient, he goes on in my text, and says, “Let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself.” And whereas it might be said, “Why, so we are to love all the world: ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;’” now, saith the apostle, “He that loveth his wife loveth himself:” (verse 28;) which is more than *as himself*. Now, though this love to a man’s self is less than that of Christ to his church, yet it is more plain and sensible to us; for, as was said at first, he that doth not know with what manner of love Christ doth love his church, yet knows with what love he loves himself. And that is, beside what was last instanced in,—

(1.) *Tenderly.*—No one can touch or handle a man’s sores and griefs so tenderly as himself: “No man ever yet hated his own flesh,” how unlovely soever; “but nourisheth and cherisheth it.”‡ (Verse 29.) Such

* לכל יש תמורה חוץ מאשה נעורים. —BUXTORFIUS, *ex. Sanked*. “In every thing changes may be made, except in the wife of thy youth.”—EDIT.

† *Quæ molestia per singulos menses, cum velut sentina uteri purgatur! quæ prægnantium fastidia! quàm præsentia enituntium discrimina! quanta enitarum jam et puerperarum! quàm illinc discedunt fractæ! quot casibus et periculis obnoxie! ut mirandum sit, sanam ullam illarum unquam vivere. Universa autem vita quid aliud, quàm serviunt nobis, sive virgines parentibus, sive nuptæ maritis, sive liberis matres?*—LUDOVICUS VIVES *De Officio Mariti et Fæminæ*. “What uneasiness of the system, when, in each month, they are subject to the natural courses! What squeamishness and loathing do they feel during the time of pregnancy! What imminent dangers accompany child-bearing! How difficult is the skilful treatment of women after their delivery! How many escape from this great peril crippled and crooked! To what a fearful number of accidents and dangers are they liable at such seasons! so that it is one of the greatest wonders for any woman to outlive all of them! But what is the entire life of a woman, except that of a servant to us? While unmarried, do not they serve their parents? When married, do not they render the most important services to their husbands? And as mothers, are they not almost slaves to their children?”—EDIT.

‡ *Innumera eveniunt cusque nostrâum a corpore suo incommoda; nemo, tamen, corpus suum odit, aut non diligit, non indulget, quantum potest; et si aliquando illi irascitur, continuo post, tamen, redit cum illo in gratiam.*—Idem, *ibid*. “Each of us suffers innumerable inconveniences from his

ought the husband's love to be toward his wife, accompanied with the greatest tenderness; for they are like crystal glasses, soon broken, if not tenderly handled. Their constitutions are such as inevitably make them liable to fears and passions and griefs innumerable; * and therefore the husband must deal as tenderly with his wife as a man would deal with himself.

(2.) *Cheerfully*.—No man is so ready to help a man as himself. His best friends sometimes falter, and are weary at length; but every man is next to himself. Let the business be never so hard or hazardous, a man will venture when it is for himself. So must the husband most readily and cheerfully assist, comfort, and help his wife. If a cloud arise between them, yet the husband's love must dissolve it quickly; for no man is long angry with himself. In a word, she should need, she should use, no mediator to her husband in any case; for he should have his ear open, his hand, his heart, ready to pity, help, and gratify her, even as he is ready to help himself.

(III.) And this brings us to the *effects* of the husband's love to his wife, which is the third thing to be described. And they are, 1. *In word*; 2. *In deed*.

1. *In word*; and this more principally,—

(1.) *By diligent instruction of his wife, wherein she is ignorant*.—He ought to “dwell with his wife according to knowledge.” (1 Peter iii. 7.) And she ought to “ask her husband at home,” when she would learn, and not “speak in the church.” (1 Cor. xiv. 35.) Yea, the Heathen could tell the husband, that he must gather, like a bee, wisdom and knowledge abroad, and then communicate it to his wife at home.† For this the husband hath excellent opportunity; and woe to him if he want will or skill! They should strive, whether she should be more ready to ask him questions, or he to offer the occasion. This is certain, if he can do her soul good, he lays an eternal obligation upon her to love and honour him;‡ and if he neglect his endeavours, she will be like to curse him for ever in hell.

body; yet no one hates his own body, or ceases to love it, or refrains from indulging it, as much as he lawfully may; and if at any time it excites his anger, it is not long in regaining his favour.”—EDIT.

* *Est etiam meticulosa, quandoquidem calor animosos facit; avara, metu ne desit, et tacito natura admonitu infirmam et invalidam se esse, cui multa sint opus. Suspicias ex metu, querula, invida. Loquacitas illis partim ex varietate cogitationum affectionumque proficiscitur, partim ex suspicione, et metu.*—Idem, *ibid.* “She is also timorous and fearful; whereas the native heat of men renders them animated and courageous. She is parsimonious and saving, through the fear of being brought to a state of destitution, as well as from the secret suggestion of nature that she is a weak and helpless creature, requiring many little comforts. Through fear she becomes suspicious, querulous, and inclined to envy. Talkativeness in women proceeds partly from the vast variety of their thoughts and affections, and partly from fear and suspicion.”—EDIT. † PLUTARCH, in his *Conjugiatica Præcepta*, who gives this reason out of Homer:—

[Ἐκτορ, ἀπὸρ σὺ μοι εἶσι πάτερ καὶ πότνια μήτηρ,
ἦδὲ κασιγνήτος.—HOMER *Ilias*, lib. vi. 429.]

Namque es mi pater, et frater, venerandaque mater.

“Yet while my Hector still survives, I see

My father, mother, brethren, all in thee.”—POPE'S Translation.

‡ *Hoc maximum est veri amoris indicium, curare ut uxor una secum ritè colat Deum in hac vitâ, quò una frui Deo possint in futurâ.*—DAVENANTIIUS in *Coloss.* p. 341. “A man can show no greater mark of true love to his wife, than to take care that she, with himself, worship God aright in this life, in order that they may together enjoy God in the life to come.”—EDIT.

(2.) The husband demonstrates his love *by gentle reproof of his wife, when she doeth amiss*.—He must indeed overlook many infirmities; for “love covereth a multitude of sins.” And as he that is always using his sword, will make it dull at length; so he that is continually reproofing shall have the less regard given to his reproofs. But yet he cannot love her, if he do not, when need is, reprove her; but then, let it be with all the wisdom and tenderness imaginable; not before strangers, and rarely before the family; not for natural defects, seldom for inadvertencies; and when he does it, let him make way for his reproof by commending in her what is good; and when he hath done, back it with a reason.* He must be sure to mingle the oil of kindness with the myrrh of reproof; for if he give her this potion too hot, the operation is hindered, and his labour worse than lost. Admirable was the carriage of Job, when his wife had highly offended him with her words; yet hear how mildly he rebukes her. • Not, “Thou wicked caitiff,” but, “Thou speakest as one of the foolish women.” (Job ii. 10.) Sooner or later, if she be not brutish, she will be thankful, and amend.

(3.) The husband’s love must be demonstrated *by ready encouragement of his wife, when she doeth well*.—“Her husband also, and he praiseth her.” (Prov. xxxi. 28.) He that is discreet and faithful herein, perhaps taketh the readiest way to do her good. For such is the weakness of many, that they ever think that reproof proceeds either from an ill opinion or want of affection in the husband; but when they shall find that he is as ready to encourage them when they do well, they are convinced and reformed.

(4.) The husband’s love is seen *by seasonable comforting his wife in affliction, whether it be in mind or body*.—So did Elkanah Hannah: “Why weepst thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? am not I better to thee than ten sons?” (1 Sam. i. 8.) And this brought her to her meat, as you may see in the next verse. And generally a kind word from a husband’s mouth doeth good like a medicine; and that husband is worse than a tiger, that supports not his poor wife at such a time. In her troubles of mind, he must be her casuist; in weakness of body, he must be her comforter.

2. The effects of a husband’s love to his wife must be *in deed* also. And that,

(1.) *By making provision for her, both of what is necessary, and also of what is convenient, for her, according to his ability*.—“Her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish.” (Exod. xxi. 10.) Not that she hath any privilege to be maintained in idleness, or, like a drone, live upon the industry of her husband, without adding her helping hand. But the main care hereof must lie upon her husband. And this is probably concluded to be at least a part of that “honour” due to the wife “as the weaker vessel;” † (1 Peter iii. 7.); the best kind of honour, to wit, maintenance; so that word is frequently taken: (Matt. xv. 6; 1 Tim. v. 3:) and the reason added carries it this way;

* *Brevem oportet esse mariti reprehensionem, et velut ictui procercleri simillimum: addenda et reprehensionis ratio, &c.*—LUDOVICUS VIVES *De Officio Mariti et Femina*. “The reprehension of a wife by her husband should be but short, resembling a very swift and slight stroke. He should also show her the reason of his reprimand.”—EDIT. † So GATAKER and HAMMOND.

namely, she is "the weaker vessel," not able to support herself, but depends upon her husband, who must therefore give her "honour," that is, maintenance, as "the weaker vessel." She hath not that wisdom, forecast, or strength for such purposes as he hath; and therefore, as he hath the strongest obligation upon him, and the greatest advantages, he must lay about him, by all lawful means, to support and provide for her. And that not only for her maintenance while he lives; but he ought to make provision for her, as far as he is able, after his departure hence: for so did Jesus Christ for his church.

And the husband ought to show his love herein by the freedom and cheerfulness of his supplies to the wants of his wife; neither doing it grudgingly nor niggardly; but rather, if he be able, intrusting her with some pittance in her own disposal, that she may have occasion to exercise her charity, and to encourage her children or servants in their duty.

(2.) This conjugal love is to be showed *in the tenderness of the husband towards the wife*.—And this duty is incumbent on him, as he is the head of the wife: "The head of the woman is the man." (1 Cor. xi. 3.) And hence the husband is bound to protect his wife from dangers, and to sympathize with her in them. Thus Abraham was "a covering" to Sarah, not only to confine her eye, but to defend her person. (Gen. xx. 16.) And upon this account he must protect her soul from temptation, her body from harm, her name from reproach, and her person from contempt either of children, servants, or others; forasmuch as she hath forsaken all her friends, and cast herself upon his care and kindness; and it would be unpardonable cruelty in him to desert or betray her. And then he ought to sympathize with her in her troubles; but of this before. In short, his whole carriage to her should be full of tenderness, and composed of love and pity.

(3.) The husband's love is showed to his wife *in giving her a good example*.—Namely, of piety, gravity, charity, wisdom, and goodness, which will be the most constant and effectual lecture that he can read unto her. The philosopher could say, that "a well-bred wife, as soon as she is married, accounts the way and course of her husband as a law prescribed to her by God himself."* The good or evil example of a magistrate, minister, or husband, hath a more real, though insensible, influence upon the actions of their inferiors than all their laws and precepts.† And as for the husband, he is called "the guide of her youth." (Prov. ii. 17.) If he be holy, quiet, and industrious, she cannot, for shame, be wicked, froward, and idle. His discourses will direct hers; his prayers will teach her to pray; his justice, temperance, and charity will be a law, a rule, a motive to make her just, and sober, and charitable. If he be an atheist, an epicure, a Pharisee, it undoes her. He is to go before her; and usually she follows him either to hell or heaven.

(4.) A husband's love is to be showed *in his yielding to the reasonable requests of his wife*.—So did David to Bathsheba. (1 Kings i. 15—31.)

* Ἡ δὲ εὐτακτοῦ γυνῆ, τὰ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἦδη παραδειγμα τοῦ ἑαυτῆς βίου, καὶ νόμον αὐτῆ διὰ τῆς συνύψιας τοῦ γάμου καὶ κοινωρίας ἐπιχειμενον ἀπὸ Θεοῦ, νομοθετεῖ δικαίως.—ARISTOTELUS *De Curâ Rei Familiaris*, lib. 1. † *Homines amplius oculis quàm auribus credunt: longum iter est per præcepta, breve et efficax per exempla*.—SENECÆ *Epist.* vi. "Men give greater credit to their eyes than to their ears: the way of precept is long, whereas that of example is short and powerful."—DR. MORELL'S Translation.

So did Isaac to Rebekah. (Gen. xxvii. 46 ; xxviii. 1.) So did Abraham to Sarah, though the thing itself was grievous to him. (Gen. xvi. 6.) So did Jesus Christ daily to his church. He that loves, gives and grants, and that readily. And the husband should rather prevent his wife, and give before she asks, than be difficult or hard to be entreated : she is to take care that her requests be reasonable, and then she needs no intercessor for her. Famous is that instance in story of Cleopatra, who after that her husband Meleager's father, mother, neighbours, had all in vain solicited his help to defend their city, they having disobliged him before, at length his wife runs to him, when the enemy was entering, and cries, "Help, good husband ! else we are lost : " * and this charmed and roused him to their rescue. One word from her prevailed more with him than the cries and arguments of all the rest. And to this may be referred his taking her counsel in divers cases. So did Elkanah ; (1 Sam. i. 23 ;) so did Abraham. (Gen. xxi. 12.) For though you may not always perceive judgment in her counsel, yet you may be always sure to find affection ; and that her aim in shooting her bolt is right, though her arm be not always with the strongest.

(5.) The husband's love is to be showed *in trusting his wife in domestic affairs*.—"The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her ;" (Prov. xxxi. 11 ;) especially she having, as she ought to have, a competent judgment to guide them. It is below the gravity of a husband to intermeddle with managing household provisions, maid-servants, and such-like affairs ; but [he] should leave them to the discretion of his wife ; unless she at fit times do discreetly choose to advise with him, that so, if the event should not answer his expectation, she may be free from blame. But generally he ought to move in his own sphere, and encourage her to move in hers. He must fetch-in honey, and she must work it in the hive ; for seldom doth the estate prosper, where the husband busies himself within doors, and the wife without.

(6.) The effects of a husband's love to his wife are to be seen *in his behaviour towards her ; that is, in the mild use of his authority*.—This God hath, in his wisdom, invested him withal at his creation, (Gen. ii. 23,) and not divested him at his fall. (Gen. iii. 16.) The light of nature gives it to him ; (Esther i. 22 ;) and the gospel hath nowhere repealed, but confirmed, the same. (1 Cor. xi. 3.) And none but proud and ignorant women will ever dispute it. But herein lies an act of the husband's love : (i.) Wisely to keep ; (ii.) Mildly to use, this authority. (i.) He must *keep it* by a religious, grave, and manly carriage : this will be his chiefest fort and buttress to support it. It will be hard for her, though doubtless her duty, to reverence him, who himself hath forgotten to reverence his God. If his behaviour be light, she will be apt to set lightly by him. If he be weak and effeminate, it loses him. But he ought to answer his name ; to be a head for judgment and excellency of spirit, and to be truly religious. This will maintain his authority. But then, (ii.) Herein shines his love, *to use the same* with all sweetness, remembering that though he be superior to his wife, yet that their souls are equal ; that she is to be treated as his companion ; that he is not to rule her as a

* *Succurre, quæso, mi vir : occidimus, nisi succurris.*—PLUTARCHUS.

king doth his subjects, but as the head doth the body; * that though she was not taken out of Adam's head, so neither out of his foot, but out of his side near his heart. And therefore his countenance must be friendly, his ordinary language to her mild and sweet, † his behaviour obliging, his commands sparing and respectful, and his reproofs gentle. He must neither be abject nor magisterial. If his rule be too imperious, his love is destroyed; if his love be not discreetly expressed, his sceptre is lost, and then he is disabled from doing God service, or his family good. He should never imagine that a rude insolency, or perpetual bitterness, is either the way to keep or use his authority aright. Yea, the Spirit of God expressly saith, "Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them." (Col. iii. 19.) If meekness of wisdom will not prevail with thy wife, thou art undone in this world, and she in the world to come.

And so much for the heads of the husband's duty to his wife: I now proceed to the THIRD thing, namely, to declare the duty of the wife in this position.

WIVES' DUTIES.

III. *The great duty of every wife is to reverence her own husband.*—She stands obliged to many other duties, as you have heard, which lie common between them; but she is still signalized by this, this is her peculiar qualification as she is a wife. Let her have never so much wisdom, learning, grace; yet if she do not reverence her husband, she cannot be a good wife.

Look to her *creation*: she was made after man; he has some honour by his seniority. "For Adam was first formed, then Eve." (1 Tim. ii. 13.) She was made out of man; he was the rock whence she was hewn. "For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man." (1 Cor. xi. 8.) She was made for man. "Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man." (1 Cor. xi. 9.) So that it is not man that hath set this order, but God himself. Look again to the *fall*; and there you hear what God saith: "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." (Gen. iii. 16.) See, in the New Testament, lest Christ's being "made of a woman" should seem to alter this inviolable law: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord." (Col. iii. 18.) "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands." (1 Peter iii. 1.) "Your chaste conversation" must be "coupled with fear." (Verse 2.) "The holy women of old adorned themselves in subjection to their own husbands."

* *Ἄλλα γυναῖκος μὲν πολιτικῶς, τεκνῶν δὲ βασιλικῶς: id est, ἀρχῆ.*—ARISTOTELES *De Cursu Rei Familiaris*, lib. i. "A man should govern his wife as a republic is governed,—mildly; but his children he should rule as a king."—EDIT. *Imperare maritus mulieri debet, non ut dominus rei quam possidet, sed ut animus corpori.*—LUDOVICUS VIVES *De Officio Mariti et Femine*. "The husband ought to govern his wife, not as a master lords it over his rightful possessions, but as the head regulates and guides the body."—EDIT. *Non es dominus, sed maritus: non ancillam sortitus es, sed uxorem. Redde studio vicem, redde anori gratiam.*—AMBROSII *Oper.* tom. iv. p. 55. "Thou art not her lord, but her husband: in her thou hast obtained, not a servant, but a wife. Repay her devoted attachment, graciously requite her fervent love."—EDIT. † *Παιδικότερα γὰρ αὐτῆς ἢ διανοία ἐστὶ καὶ λέγει, Τα ἐμα, εἶπε, Πάντα σα ἐστὶ, καὶ ἐγὼ σοῦ.*—CHRYSOSTOMUS in *Ephes.* hom. xx. "For the understanding of a woman is more childlike than that of a man. If, therefore, thy wife say to thee, 'These possessions are mine;' reply, 'They are all thine, and I am thine.'"—EDIT.

(Verse 5.) And so in my text. Let her be never so great, never so good; and though her husband be never so mean, and never so bad; yet this is her indispensable duty to reverence her husband. And this principle must first be fixed in her heart, that she is an inferior;* that her husband is a degree above her; that it is neither agreeable to nature nor decency to set the head below, or no higher than, the rib. And when she is resolved in this, then will she with much delight and ease go through her duty. A wise God hath ordered it thus; and therefore it is best.

Now I shall open this duty according to my former method:—

(I.) *In its nature.*

(II.) *In its pattern.*

(III.) *In its effects.*

(I.) For the first, *the nature* of this reverence; it is a true, cordial, and conjugal reverence, such as is peculiar to a good woman. And I conceive it is made up of, 1. *Estimation*, 2. *Love*, and, 3. *Fear*.

1. The wife ought to *honour and esteem* her husband.—“All the wives shall give to their husbands honour, both to great and small.” (Esther i. 20.) And to this end, she ought to contemplate all the *excellencies of his person*, whether of body or mind, and to set a due value upon them,† and not to think meanly of every thing in her husband. Thus, when the wife of Tigranes was asked by her husband, after a great solemnity, what she thought of Cyrus, whom every one did commend as the most excellent person in all that company, she answered roundly, “Truly, I looked at nobody there but at you, my husband.” ‡ And if the husband be but meanly accomplished, yet she ought highly to value the *excellency of his place*, seeing the Holy Ghost hath in this very respect styled him “the image and glory of God.” (1 Cor. xi. 7.) So that whatever he is in himself or to others, yet to the wife he is a none-such. Such you esteemed him, when you chose him, and so you ought still to esteem him.§ And you are to remember the sin and punishment of Michal: “She despised her husband in her heart; and she had no child unto the day of her death.” (2 Sam. vi. 16, 23.) The wife ought to consider, that her honour and respect among her family and neighbours doth very much rise and fall according to that which she bears to her husband; so that in honouring him she honours herself.

2. This reverence is made-up of *love*.||—Which though it be most

* *Non modò mores majorum et instituta, sed leges omnes humanæ ac divinæ, ipsa etiam natura clamat, mulierem debere esse subditam viro, ac ei parere.*—LUDOVICUS VIVES *De Christ. Fem.* p. 704. “Not only do the customs and institutions of our ancestors, but likewise all laws human and divine, declare, nay, even nature herself proclaims, that the woman ought to be subject to her husband, and to obey his commands.”—EDIT. † *Sic Cornelia, irata plerisque, qui, honoris gratiâ, Scipionis cognominabant, maluit Cornelia Gracchi nominari.*—Idem. “Thus Cornelia was angry with several persons, who, desirous of honouring her, accosted her as ‘the daughter of Scipio:’ she much preferred the appellation of ‘the wife of Gracchus.’”—EDIT. ‡ *Ita me dii ament ut toto convivio nunquam abs te ad alium virum deflexerim oculos.*

§ *Sed horridus et incultus est. Semel placuit. Nunquid vir frequenter eligendus? Compararem suam et bos eligit, et equus diligit; et si muletur alius, trahere jugum nescit compar alterius, et se non totum putat.*—AMBROSII *Oper.* tom. iv. p. 55. “But he is horrid and uncouth. He was pleasing to thee once. Is a husband to be chosen frequently? The bull and the horse select their own mates, and display great love towards them; and if another be substituted in the place of their companion, they know not how to drag the yoke along, and seem to consider themselves incomplete.”—EDIT. || *Timet virum suum et adultera, verùm non ideo quòd illum amet, sed quòd sibi ipsi conscia est admissi delicti: timet verùm usor virum suum fidelis et honesta, non es*

pressed upon the husband, yet is also the duty of the wife: "Teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children." (Titus ii. 4.) Thus Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel left parents, friends, and country, out of their entire love to their husbands. Thus those excellent women being besieged together with their husbands in the castle of Winsberg, having liberty for themselves to go out and carry what they could with them, took up each their husband, and so delivered them. But above all comparisons is the instance that L. Vives gives us of a generous young woman, by name Clara Cerventa, well-known to him, that was married to one Valdaura, that proved to be full of diseases and loathsome sores, whom yet she attended with that care, cost, and love, dressing his sores, which nobody else would touch, selling all her attire and jewels to maintain him; and after ten long years of languishment, when he was dead, and her friends came rather to congratulate than condole her loss, she with great trouble told them, that she could be willing to purchase her dear Valdaura again with the loss of her five children.* It is not fond, doting love, but such love as this, which begets reverence in the heart of the wife to her own husband. And indeed there is no better means to increase the husband's love than the wife's reverence, and *that* alone will make *this* sweet and easy.†

3. *Fear* is the third ingredient into the reverence which the wife owes unto her husband.—And this, I told you, was the proper import of this word in my text.‡ And this is required, 1 Peter iii. 2: "A chaste conversation coupled with fear;" the one is not sufficient without the other. And this the philosopher saw and acknowledged, and thereupon distinguisheth between a servile dread, and an ingenuous fear; exploding the former as unsuitable to the nearness and dearness of that relation, and exacting the latter; § which is no more than a cautious diligence to please him, and care lest she should offend him. || A wife must not sit down and say, "If he be pleased, so it is; if not, let him help himself how he can." No; but, "I will do my utmost to

malè conscientiâ, sed ex conjugali dilectione.—MUSCULUS *in loc.* "The adulteress fears her husband, not from love to him, but because she is conscious of having sinned against him. The faithful and virtuous wife, on the contrary, fears her husband, not from a bad conscience, but from her deep conjugal affection."—EDIT.

* *Si deformis est maritus, amandus animus, cui nupsisti.*—LUDOVICUS VIVES, who gives a large narration hereof, *De Christ. Fem.* p. 706. "If thy husband is outwardly deformed, let his mind be the object of thy love, to which thou art as surely wedded as to his body."—EDIT.

† *Δια τουτο σοι υπεταξεν αυτην, ινα μαλλον φιληται: δια τουτο σε φιλεισθαι εποικησεν, ω γυναι, ινα ευκολως φερης το υποταξαυται.*—CHRYSOSTOMUS *in Coloss.* hom. x. "On this account, O man, has God placed thy wife in subjection to thee, that thou mightest display the greater affection toward her. On this account, O woman, has thy Creator made thee to be loved, that thou mightest cheerfully bear subordination to thy husband."—EDIT.

‡ *Quo verbo talem intelligit timorem, qui ex amore et reverentiâ erga maritum proficiiscitur.*—ZANCHIUS *in loc.* "By the word in the text the apostle designs to express such a fear as proceeds from a wife's love and reverence for her husband."—EDIT.
§ *Uxor autem honesta suum virum, ita ut æquum est, pudicè φιλειντε και φοβεισθαι δεβει.*—ARISTOTELES, *ubi supra.* "A virtuous wife ought 'both to love and to fear' her husband in a becoming manner, as is just and right."—EDIT.

|| *Subjectio ista consistit in hoc, ut mulier tanquam inferior virum tanquam caput reverentur, observet, caveat ne offendant, sed ejus mandata lato animo præstet.*—ZANCHIUS *in loc.* "The subjection here spoken of consists in this: that the woman, as an inferior member, reverence her husband as the head, respectfully obey him, beware lest she offend him, and perform his commands with cheerful readiness."—EDIT.

give my husband contentment; for though I do not fear his hand, yet I fear his frown. Better I should displease all the world, than my own husband." She ought rather to deny herself, than make her head, her dear head, to ache.

(II.) And now let us trace this reverence of the wife to her husband in *its pattern*, laid before her in the context of these words. And here I affirm these two things:—

1. *That the wife ought to reverence her husband, as the church doth Jesus Christ.*—So, verse 22: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord;" and, verse 24: "Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing." Examples are prevalent, especially of wise and good people. Here is the example of all the wise and godly people in the world to persuade the wife to reverence her husband; and the apostle seems to say, that it is as much a duty in the wife to be subject to the husband, as it is in the church to be subject to Christ.*

In pursuance of this I shall not expatiate, but keep near my text. Two things proclaim the reverence that the church bears to Christ:—

(1.) *The matter of her subjection; and that is in every thing.*—She doth not yield in great matters, and stick at small; nor yield in small things, and deny in great: she doth not yield to him only so far as her interest or appetite permits her; but when he requires it, denies them both. So saith the apostle: "Let the wives be subject to their own husbands in every thing;" (verse 24;) that is, in every thing that is not forbidden by a higher power, even the law of God. Indeed, if a thing be only inconvenient, the wife may mildly reason and show the inexpediency of it; but if she cannot convince and satisfy her husband, she must, if there be no sin in the case, submit her reason and her will to his.

(2.) *The manner of her subjection speaks her reverence; and that is free, willing, cheerful.*—Thus the church yields-up herself to the will of her husband; insomuch as it is made a kind of proverbial pattern: "With good-will doing service, as to the Lord;" (Eph. vi. 7;) implying that the subjection and service that we perform to the Lord is with a good-will. And such ought to be the subjection of the wife, most free and willing; so, as if there were but one will in two breasts.† Thus Leah and Rachel followed Jacob like his shadow; when he makes a motion, they consent; if he will go, they will follow him. (Gen. xxxi. 16, &c.) And was not Sarah's reverence cordial,‡ when "within herself," in her heart, she called her husband "lord." (Gen. xviii. 12.) And therefore a contradicting or grudging spirit is very unsuitable to the religious wife, and ever leaves a sting in his heart and guilt in hers; for usually it

* *Truncus est vir et planè mortuus, cujus caput non est Christus: demens et temeraria est mulier, cui vir non preest.*—LUDOVICUS VIVES *De Christ. Fem.* p. 704. "That man is as a mutilated corpse, whose head is not Christ; that woman is void of understanding and prudence, over whom her husband does not rule and preside."—EDIT. † *Nam quæ ita vivit, ut se ac maritum rem prorsus unam esse arbitretur, hæc absolvit numeros omnes sanctæ uxoris.*—IDGM, p. 678. "For that wife alone discharges all the duties of the marriage-state who so conducts herself that she and her husband may be thought to have but one heart and one interest."—EDIT. ‡ "This submission must not be for worldly respects, or for fear of wrath; but religious and for conscience' sake."—GATAKER'S "Sermons," p. 198.

is a sign of unmortified pride and self-conceit, and entails the curse of unquietness upon the family, and writes a dangerous example to inferiors. If the husband's government be too heavy, yet it is better for you to leave him to answer for his severity, than for you to answer for your contempt.*

2. *The wife ought to reverence her husband, as the members do the head.*—So, Eph. v. 23: "For the husband is the head of the wife." He is a head for influence and sympathy: that is her privilege. He is a head for eminence and rule: that is his. And how should she expect benefit from her head, if she do not honour her head? To dishonour a man's head is always ranked among unnatural sins. (1 Cor. xi. 4) All the members are sensible of what use the head is for their good. There are continual cares and projects for the sustenance and comfort of the body; and therefore they are willing to give the head its due honour. The hand will submit to a wound to save the head. If the head resolve to rise-up to work or pray, the whole body is up presently; if the head design a journey, never so long, never so dangerous, the body says not, "Nay," but obeys as long as possibly it can. Why, so should the wife show honour to her head; she ought to honour him next unto her Maker; she must be afraid by her frowardness or sullenness to break her own head; she must not cross the purposes of her head; it is preposterous for the head to go one way, and the rib another.† She must readily follow the directions and counsels of her head; for the members must not teach the head which way to go: they support it, but they do not direct it. Indeed, it is said that the "virtuous woman is a crown to her husband;" (Prov. xii. 4;) but yet there is more worth in the head than in the crown.‡ So that still (except always cases wherein the head is crazed or notoriously distempered §) it will be the wisdom and duty of the wife to be subject to the husband as unto her head.

(III.) And this hath brought us to the *third* thing, by which the reverence of the wife is described; and that is by *the effects* thereof. And they also are either, 1. *In word*, or, 2. *In deed*.

1. *In word.*—"For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." (Matt. xii. 34.) And if there be that inward fear and respect in the heart, which God requires, it will be legible in the words of their mouths. The same law that binds the heart in this case, doth also govern the tongue. "In her tongue is the law of kindness." (Prov. xxxi. 26.) And here certainly "a wholesome tongue is a tree of life," whereas "perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit." (Prov. xv. 4.)

Now this reverence in the wife is showed,—

(1.) *In her words or her husband.*—Which should always be composed of respect and honour. Thus Sarah is brought-in by the apostle: "Even

* "She owes her duty, not only or principally to her husband, but to the Lord; so that his neglect will not excuse her."—GATAKER'S "Sermons," p. 199. † *Non secus ac miles suo imperatori imperare si postulet, aut luna soli prasse, aut brachium capiti.*—LUDOVICUS VIVES, *ubi supra*. "For a woman to disobey her husband, is as if a common soldier should attempt to command his general, or as if the moon should affect superiority over the sun, or the arm over the head."—EDIT. ‡ *Uxor coruscet radiis mariti.*—JUSTINIANUS. "A wife derives her lustre from the splendour reflected on her by her husband."—EDIT. § "The man hath government in the house, except he be *verbum anomalum*; that is, a fool."—LUTHER.

as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord : whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well." (1 Peter iii. 6.) And this was the language of her heart, as you heard before out of Gen. xviii. 12. And no wife is too great or good to imitate her example in the main, by giving respectful titles and expressions of her husband ; whereas, on the contrary, it is observed of the naughty woman, she only affords her husband, in his absence, [the title of *the man*,] "The man" (for so it is in the Hebrew) "is not at home." (Prov. vii. 19.) And it were well if this were the worst title and character which many wives do give their husbands behind their backs. Whereas all the reproach and ignominy that they pour-out on their husbands doth infallibly redound to their own shame ; their honour and respect standing and falling together.*

(2.) *The words of the wife to her husband ought to be full of reverence.*—And therefore she should beware, (i.) *Of an excess in the quantity*, not preposterously interrupting her husband while he is speaking, nor answering ten words for one. For silence doth more commend the wisdom of a woman, than speech ; † and she that is wise spareth her words : and though she seem to be religious, yet if she do not bridle her tongue, her religion is vain. And, (ii.) She must beware of *a defect in the quality of them* ; namely, of meekness and respect. For the great study of the wife should be to get a "meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God," yea, and of man too, "is of great price." (1 Peter iii. 4.) When the heart is once meekened by the grace of God, then her words will savour of it ; and not till then. And though they may think that this will invite and further the insolency of an unkind husband ; yet they may rest assured, that that which is most pleasing to God shall not tend to their prejudice any way. For hath not God said, that "a soft tongue breaketh the bone?" (Prov. xxv. 15;) which is more than any virulent tongue can do.

Let every godly woman, therefore, so frame the matter and manner of their words to their husbands, as knowing that God stands by ; to whom they "must give account of every idle word," much more of every irreverent and contemptuous word, "in the day of judgment." (Matt. xii. 36.) It will be an unspeakable comfort at death and judgment to reflect upon the victories which their patience hath gotten ; and how oft their quiet silence and mild answers have kept the peace. In conjugal contests, though each should be slow to passion, and swift to peace, yet where one must yield, ‡ it is most reasonably to be expected from the inferior. § No woman gets honour by the last word. Some will say,

* *Nam et vir uxoris majestatem amore et benevolentia tuetur, et mulier viri cultu et obedientia. Nihil genus, nihil opes, nihil fortuna proderunt ; honore carere, si caruerit vir.*—LUDOVICUS VIVES, *ubi supra*. "For, a man views the dignified excellence of his wife with love and benevolence ; and a woman looks upon that of her husband with reverence and obedience. O woman! the nobility of thy descent, the extent of thy riches, and thy good fortune, will profit thee nothing : if thy husband be devoid of honour, thou wilt thyself be unhonoured."—EDIT. † *Uxorium est ornamentum aut cum marito aut per maritum loqui.*—Idem, *ibid.* "It is the ornament of a wife to speak either to or through her husband."—EDIT.

‡ *Sin ceperit excandescere, noli contra ire, et ex uno insano duos facere, te et illum.*—LUDOVICUS VIVES *De Christ. Fem.* p. 709. "If the anger of thy husband begins to be inflamed, forbear to strive against him ; and do not, of one mad person, make two,—thyself and thy consort."—EDIT. § "The wife is bound rather to seek reconciliation, as is implied in that, 1 Cor. vii. 11 : 'Let her be reconciled to her husband.'"—GATAKER'S "Sermons," p. 188.

their tongue is their only weapon: but the wise do know, that their tongues are not their own; that when they "are set on fire of hell," they "set on fire the course of nature;" (James iii. 6;) and that by one's very "words they may be condemned." Look into the scripture, and dress yourselves by that glass. What did Rachael get by her passionate terms? "Give me children, or else I die:" (Gen. xxx. 1;) and as soon as ever she had children, lo, "she died." (Gen. xxxv. 18.) Whereas, on the contrary, the discreet and mild behaviour of Abigail to her husband, though he were a churl, gained her both quiet, comfort, and honour. This is certain, if meekness and respect will not prevail, anger and passion never can.* If duty work not our quiet, how should sin?

2. The effects of a wife's reverence to her husband must be in deed also. And that,—

(1.) *By obedience to his directions and restraints.*—If he be to "rule over her," (Gen. iii. 16,) then she is to obey. And the apostle tells us that "Sara obeyed Abraham." (1 Peter iii. 6.) He bids her "make ready quickly three measures of meal," &c., (Gen. xviii. 6,) and it was done presently, though she knew not what guests her husband had brought. And the apostle Paul saith, it must be "in every thing;" (Eph. v. 24;) which he both urges and explains by this: "As it is fit in the Lord." (Col. iii. 18.) So that "the wife is bound in conscience to obey her husband in every thing that is not contrary to the will of God."† Indeed, if he command her to do any thing that is sinful by the law of God, (as if he should bid her tell a lie, bear false witness, or the like,) she must modestly and resolvedly refuse it. If he forbid her to do any thing, that is by God's command made an indispensable duty unto her, (as if he should absolutely forbid her to pray, to read the scripture, to sanctify the Lord's day, or the like,) then she must "rather obey God than man." But in all other cases, though she may respectfully persuade with him, yet if he insist upon it, her obedience will be her best sacrifice, and her compliance will be the means to make her yoke the more easy. If the husband will have her to stay at home, she must not run abroad without his consent; but as that good Shunammite, 2 Kings iv. 22: "She called unto her husband, and said, Send me, I pray thee, one of the young men, and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God, and come again." And indeed the house is her proper place; for she is "the beauty of the house;" ‡ there her business lies, there she is safe. The ancients' painting them with a snail under their feet, and the Egyptians' denying their women shoes, § and the Scythians' burning the bride's chariot axle-tree at her door, when she was brought to her husband's house, and the angel's asking Abraham where Sarah was, (though he knew well enough,) that it might be observed, she was

* "As the captains of Cyrus commanded their soldiers to receive their shouting enemy with silence, and when they had ended, then to set up a shout; so husband and wife must agree not to shout together."—PLUTARCH. † *Sic placeat uxor voluntati conjugis, ut non displiceat voluntati Conditoris.*—DAVENANTIIUS ex Gregorio.

‡ "She that tarried at home:" (Psalm lxxviii. 12;) Hebrew בַּיִת נִרְתָּ דַעֲוֵי הַבַּיִת, *decus domus*. § *Ægyptiæ mulieres majorum instituto calcæis non utebantur, ut domi meminissent tempus exigendum.*—PLUTARCHI *Præcepta Conjugalia*. "In accordance with the custom of their ancestors, the Egyptian women were not allowed to wear shoes, that they might be reminded of the propriety of spending their time in their own houses."—EDIT.

“in the tent.”* (Gen. xviii. 9,) do all intimate, that, by the law of nature, and by the rules of religion, the wife ought to keep at home,† unless urgent necessity do call her abroad. When sun and moon both disappear, the sky is dark; and when both husband and wife are abroad, many disorders breed at home; and you know whose character it is: “She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house,” &c. (Prov. vii. 11.)

So also where the husband judges most convenient to dwell, there the wife must cheerfully consent to dwell with him, though it may be, either in respect of her friends or of his, more uncomfortable to her. Thus when Jacob was resolved to carry his wives from their friends to his country, they readily yielded. (Gen. xxxi. 16.) Thus when Ahasuerus sent for Vashti, (Esther i. 10—12,) though his command seemed inconvenient, yet she had been truer to her duty, as well as to her interest, had she come to him; for the husband is the head of his wife, and she must obey him. He that appoints them to “love their husbands,” (Titus ii. 4,) doth in the next verse enjoin them to be “discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.” For though even good women be put to silence, yet good works never can.

(2.) Her real reverence is required and showed in *asking and hearkening to his counsels and reproofs*.—The husband hath been taught wisdom in his counsels, and mildness in his reproofs; and the wife must be taught to express her reverence in hearkening to them.‡ *In the disposal of children*: Rebekah would not send Jacob to her brother Laban without consulting Isaac. (Gen. xxvii. 46.) So Hannah in the case of Samuel. (1 Sam. i. 11.) *In the disposal of a servant*: Sarah would not discard Hagar without consulting Abraham. (Gen. xxi. 10.) *In entertaining strangers*: The Shunammite would not receive a prophet into the house, without advising with her husband. (2 Kings iv. 10.) *In disposing of her husband's goods*, we find still the man's hand in it: the propriety is in him, and the use is to her. So that unless there be a notorious impotency in him, or some tacit or general consent, or some case of present and absolute necessity, as in the case of Abigail, she ought not to dispose [of] her husband's goods. Indeed, he ought, according to the general obligation of their relation, and according to the particular discretion of his wife, [to] intrust her in the ordinary affairs of her sphere, and by his bounty enable her to do good, where there is need, and not to put her by his penuriousness upon the temptation of purloining from him. But if he do forget his duty, let not her forget hers, which is to “do him good and not evil all the days of her life.” (Prov. xxxi. 12.)

* *Ante tabernaculum vir hospitum explorat adventus: intra tabernaculum Sara tuetur femine verecundiam, et opera muliebricia tuto exercet pudore. Foris maritus invitat; intus Sara convivium adornat.*—AMBROSII *Oper.* tom. iv. p. 180. “Before the tent-door, the husband awaits the arrival of stranger-guests: inside the tent, Sarah preserves the modesty of the woman, and occupies herself in feminine employments with guarded decency. Without, the husband invites to partake of his hospitality: within, Sarah prepares the feast.”—EDIT. † “The apostle joineth chastity and home-keeping together. (Titus ii. 5.)”—GATAKER'S “*Sermons*,” p. 195. ‡ *Æquum autem, ut deinceps uxor auscultet marito, quia maritus peritii auscultando usori.*—DAVENANTIUS in *Coloss.* p. 538. “It is right that henceforth the wife should listen to her husband, and obey him, because the husband (Adam) formerly fell by hearkening to his wife.”—EDIT.

But her hardest task is in the loving and thankful bearing of reproof, which is a bitter pill to flesh and blood, especially when there is a proud and contentious spirit. But herein she ought to consider, that she is not without infirmities; which as none hath so much opportunity to see, so none is so much obliged to represent unto her, as her husband. And to answer him with a froward tongue, or a cloudy brow, or a careless negligence, is the greatest ingratitude and discouragement in the world. But if her heart be full of reverence to him, and especially if she believe his heart to be full of love to her, this pill will be well digested, and, by the blessing of God, work a real amendment in her.

(3.) The real effects of the wife's reverence to her husband are seen in her behaviour towards him, which ought always to be cheerful and respectful.—She must not allow or nourish that crossness of humour, to be sullen or dumpish, when he is pleasant; or, on the contrary, contemptuously frolic, when he is sad; but must compose her carriage, her garments, her converse, to give him content, and to increase his delight in her.* For if his heart be once estranged from her, unless the fear of God withhold him, he may quickly render her condition unspeakably miserable. She ought therefore always to express contentedness in her estate, and that will help and move him to be content in his. She must entertain him into his house with a cheerful countenance, that he may delight to be at home; † and study the arts how to pacify him, if aught have provoked him; or how to convince and reform him, if aught have ensnared him. She must observe when and how his meals, his clothes, his lodging do please him, and show the greatness of her respect in these lesser things. For even about such things arise the most frequent and sharp contests; which a discreet and godly woman will labour to prevent, not only because disquiets do alienate the heart, ‡ but because she cannot live under his frown, nor eat nor sleep contentedly while he is angry. And notwithstanding the freedom and familiarity of their converse together, yet she must still behave herself with all respect towards him, and that familiarity must not beget contempt. His love must not make her to forget her duty, nor his fondness her respect.§ The more he condescends to her, the more she must descend into her place, and thus oblige him by her demeanour. She must consider, that it is better to obey a wise man than to rule a fool, as it is better to follow a skilful guide than to lead one that is blind. || Few husbands [are] so

* *Omnes illius vultus sumet; ridenti arridebit, mæsto se præbebit mæstam; servatq; semper autoritate matronalis integritatis et virtutis; ut magis illa ex amico proveniant animo quàm adulterino.*—LUDOVICUS VIVES, ubi supra. “A good wife will sympathize with all the changes of her husband's countenance: she will smile when he smiles, and show herself sad when he is sorrowful; always preserving, however, the dignity of matronly integrity and virtue, so that her kind attentions may be seen to arise from the affection of a friend, and not from that of an adulteress.”—EDIT. † *Magna amaritudo est in domo usor tristis.*—AMBROSII Oper. tom. v. p. 265. “A sad and discontented wife is a great bitterness in a house.”—EDIT.

‡ *Nec aliquid est, quod ita alienet virum ab uxore, ut crebra rixa et usoris lingua amarulenta.* [“Nothing will so soon alienate a man from his wife, as her acrimonious tongue and frequent wranglings,” that are] compared to “a continual dropping,” which drives a man out of his house. (Prov. xxvii. 16.)—LUDOVICUS VIVES, ubi supra.

§ *Μητε και του ανδρος φιλια την γυναικα εκαυρω, μητε η της γυναικος υποταγη φυσικω τον ανδρα.*—CHRYSOSTOMUS in Coloss. hom. x. “Neither let her husband's love immoderately elevate the wife, nor let the subjection of his wife inflate the husband with pride.”—EDIT.

|| *Quæ malunt fatuis imperare viris quàm obtemperare prudentibus, eorum sunt similes, qui in viâ cæcos ducere malunt, quàm videntes et itineris peritos sequi.*—PLUTARCHI *Præcepta Conjugalia*. “Those wives who would rather com-

bad, but the discretion and respect of a wife would reform them ; and few wives [are] so ill-tempered, but the wisdom and affection of a husband would make them better.

And so much for their particular duties to each other.

I know that many will turn-off all this by saying, "We all fall short of our duty in these things ; we ever did, and ever shall : " and so they neither grieve for their miscarriages past, nor seriously endeavour to reform them ; and so leave the cure desperate, because the disease is common.

But a just and holy God will not be so mocked. He gives not his sacred laws to be so lightly put-off. If we make not conscience here, we make a conscience nowhere ; yea, though the best will fail, unless we study with all our skill, and strive with all our strength, to be faithful in all these things, our other duties will be abhorred. He that regards not all, regards not at all in God's account. And if divine vengeance do not meet with them in this life, as it often doth ; yet, without doubt, it waits for them in another. "But I hope better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though I thus speak."

DIRECTIONS.

IV. I come at last, in the *fourth* place, to present you with some *directions how to accomplish these duties, that so husbands and wives may most certainly be blessings to each other.*—And they are these :—

1. *Maintain purity in soul and body in single age.*—This will greatly dispose you for the duties of a married life ; and also lay-up a blessing for it. Let "every one of you know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour." (1 Thess. iv. 4.) He that gives the reins to his vicious affections before marriage, will find them as impetuous after marriage. For "marriage," as one well saith,* "is like salt, which will keep sweet that which is untainted, but restores not that which is already unsavoury." A chaste and honest heart will, with the blessing of God, by marriage be preserved ; but a filthy heart will find occasion to be naught in any condition. Beware, therefore, of the beginnings of lust, flee them like poison ; forbear such company and discourse as debauch the heart ; † avoid speculative uncleanness, and keep the heart stored with religious thoughts, and the body employed in a constant calling. Consider that the greatest flames begin with a spark, and therefore tamper not with the pleasant motions of original concupiscence. Subject not the soul of a man to the pleasures of a brute : this is sure, that they "perish in the using," and leave nothing but a sting behind ; and "foolish is that pleasure, where that which delights instantly vanishes, and that which remains perpetually torments." ‡ If you have been overtaken with these faults, O cleanse your hearts and hands by the merits of Christ's blood, in the use of fasting and prayer ; that God may not visit upon you your old sins by giving you up to new ones, or by

mand foolish husbands, than obey such as are prudent, are like persons who would rather themselves be leaders to the blind in a difficult path, than follow the guidance of those who have the use of their eyes, and are well acquainted with the road."—EDIT.

* MR. WHATELY. † *Lacena quædam marita juveni rem fœdum roganti, Darem, inquit, si meum peteres : nam quod petis, patris erat, dum essem virgo ; nunc mariti, postquam nupsi.*—LUDOVICUS VIVES *De Christ. Fem.* p. 699. ‡ *Verum nimium miseranda et plangenda conditio est, ubi citò præterit quod delectat, et permanet sine fine quod cruciat.*—Idem, p. 725.

bringing some signal curse upon you, in husband, wife, or children. And get a blessed taste of those more firm, safe, and ravishing delights, which are to be found in the favour and promises of God, in the pardon of sin, and assured hopes of life and immortality. These will sufficiently disgrace those gross and base absurdities, and make you to take no delight in the muddy stream, that have drunk of the spring.

2. *Be considerate in your choice.**—You see how severe the rules of that condition are, when you are once engaged in it; and therefore, when you find that you are called to it, be sure to recommend it earnestly to God by prayer,† as Abraham's servant did. (Gen. xxiv. 12.) In this way be sure to "acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." No business so critical, none so weighty; and therefore no business so calls for solemn and earnest prayer.‡ And let reason and judgment have some stroke in your choice.§ Do not first love, and then consider; but first consider, and then love. Chiefly fix your observation on the soul of the party: many marry to lay lands to lands, or money to money; but see you that his or her soul lie well for yours.¶ For no beauty,¶ friends, or portion,** will settle upon you a comfortable life, if pride, passion, or any other lust predominate in the soul. And why will ye espouse a perpetual cross for some present profit or delight?

It concerns therefore the man, and especially the woman, to endeavour to marry a member of Christ, a religious person; where they may most rationally expect the conscionable discharge of their respective duties. If such be not the best husbands and wives, it is not by reason of their piety, but their defect of it. Add to this a discovery of the natural tempers of those you mean to marry.†† If they be proud and imperious to others, ten to one they will be so to you; if they be choleric, sour, or sullen, you will hardly find an heaven upon earth. And you ought to deal plainly with one another, both concerning your natural defects, concerning your moral dispositions, and concerning your civil condition; that you may not give, and that Satan may not take, an advantage, whereby to cause disquiet or repinings afterwards. You count it a cheat to have an unsound, ill-conditioned, decrepit beast put upon you, for a sound, young, and towardly one. Certainly it is the greatest injury in the world to defraud one whom you pretend to love, and to wrong them in that wherein you can never make them reparation.

3. *Study the duties of marriage before you enter into it.*—Leap not

* חָפֵץ וּבִין אֲרַעַט מַחֲוֹן נָסִיב אִי תַחֲמָ: *Festina, eme agrum: specta, ducturus uxorem.*—BUXTORFIUS, *ex Jeram.* "In the purchase of land, use dispatch; but in marrying a wife, be in no such haste."—EDIT. † Γυναῖκα ζητῶν ἐπὶ τὸν Θεὸν καταθύνη· οὐκ ἐπαισχύνεται σου γενεσθαὶ νυμφαγωγός.—CHRYSOSTOMUS *De Uxore ducendâ.* "When thou art in search of a wife, flee to God; for he is not ashamed to act as thy bridegroom."—EDIT. ‡ Ὅταν περιεργάζῃ καὶ ζητῆς τὸν ἀνδρα, εὐχόν· εἶπε τῷ Θεῷ, Ὅν ἀνδρα, σὺ οἰκονομήσον.—Idem, in *Coloss.* "When thou art anxiously employed in seeking a husband, pray to God, and say, 'Lord, do thou bestow me as thou wilt, and on whom thou wilt.'"—EDIT. § "For, fitness in special, as well as goodness in general, must be one main ground of our choice."—GATAKER'S "Sermons," p. 176. ¶ In the Life of the Lady Falkland. ¶ *Florem decoris singuli carpunt dies.*—SENECA. "The flower of beauty is cropped every day."—EDIT. ** *Quicumque ducit uxorem propter divitias, ei erunt liberi non probi.*—BUXTORFIUS *ex Prov. in Kiddusch.* "Whoever chooses a wife for her riches, need not expect to have virtuous children."—EDIT. †† "If thou wert to take a house, thou wouldst inquire what commodities or inconveniences, what neighbours, &c.; and yet that thou mayest sell upon a dislike. How much more," &c.—CHRYSOSTOMI *Oper. tom. viii. De Uxore ducendâ.*

into this solemn condition at adventures. There are crosses to be borne, there are snares to be avoided, there are duties to be done; and do you make no provision? Hence flow the frequent miscarriages in that honourable estate; hence that repentance that is both too soon and too late. The husband knows not how to rule, and the wife knows not how to obey: both ignorant, both conceited, and both miserable.

And therefore parents ought to teach their children the duties of wedlock, before they enter into the state of wedlock: neither can *they* be ever acquitted before God *that* hurry young people, ready or unready, willing or unwilling,* yea, sometimes very children,† for secular advantages, into this relation: a course that hath been signalized by infinite disastrous consequences. And most people step into that estate merely to obtain pleasure and gain, but as ignorant of their duty as the beasts that perish; and so families that should be the nurseries of the church and commonwealth, prove to be the very seed-plots of disorder and debauchery.

Endeavour, therefore, to read-over, besides the scripture, which is the book of all books, Dr. Gouge's treatise of "Domestic Duties," or Mr. Bolton, or Mr. Gataker, or Mr. Whately, on the same subject; and the learned will lose no labour in reading LUDOVICUS VIVES *De Officio Mariti, et De Christianâ Femina*; from each of whose garden I have made up this small posy; and wherein you will find, especially in the first and last, a more full and clear stating and proving these things than can be expected from so simple a man in so small a time.

4. *Resign-up yourselves, both of you, unfeignedly unto God, and to his will.*—Until you be savingly regenerated and sanctified, you cannot please God, nor be entire blessings to one another.‡ You may indeed live together like civil Pagans; but what is this to the life of Christians? Religion will most firmly bind you to God, religion will most firmly bind you to one another. A good temper may do much; but a new nature superadded to it will do more. The husband that truly, I say *that truly*, fears God, dares not be bitter to his wife; the wife that truly fears God, dares not be cross with her husband. A Bible placed between you will take-up many a difference, comfort you under many a cross and pang, guide you in many a strait, wherein flesh and blood will be confounded and at a loss. And then in those critical cases wherein duty and passion strive for mastery, resolve with yourselves, that it is much better for either of you to obey God's will, than to have your own; that as there is the highest reason in his commands, so there is the greatest sweetness in obeying them. Set off before you that golden rule, Matt. vii. 12; and calmly consider whether you behave yourself to your yoke-fellow,

* *Hostis uxor est, ubi invita ad virum venit.*—PLAUTUS. "The man who marries a wife against her will, will find that he has taken an enemy into his house."—EDIT. † *Hoc etiam sciendum est quod pueri ante tredecim annos et puellæ ante duodecim annos secundum leges matrimonium inire nequeant. Quod si ante prædicta tempora copulam inierint, separari possunt, quamvis assensu parentum juncti fuerunt.*—LOMBARDUS, lib. iv. dist. 36. "It is necessary to be known, that boys under thirteen, and girls under twelve years of age, cannot lawfully enter into the state of matrimony. But if they shall have entered into wedlock before the time above specified, they may be separated, even though they have been joined with their parents' assent."—EDIT. ‡ "If he be pleased, he will turn thy water into wine; if he be displeased, he will turn thy wine into vinegar."—GATAKER'S "Sermons," p. 141.

as you yourself would be dealt with, if you were in their condition. And though you be never so just and good other ways, yet believe that he or she "that keeps the whole law, and yet offends" knowingly and commonly "in one point, is guilty of all." (James ii. 10.) Your righteousness abroad will not excuse your crossness at home, nor her zeal in prayer make any amends for her heat in passion. But when you are both resolved to study your own duties, and sincerely to do them, how hard soever, you will live together as "heirs of the grace of life," and as heirs "of the life of glory."

5. *Settle your affections well at the beginning.*—It was a wise and true observation, that vessels which are compacted of divers parts, or glued together of divers pieces, at first will easily with every bruise or fall be broken in pieces; but when they are strengthened by tract of time, it will be very hard, yea, scarce possible, to separate them: so it is in marriage: * at first the union is raw and green; an unkindness, then a cross word or look, will quickly alienate; but when time and experience have consolidated this new-sprung affection, then it will be much harder to dissolve it.

And being once assured of a conjugal love in each other, give no way to cursed jealousy, which very often hath no other ground than the weakness or wickedness of them that are sick of it; and, to be sure, when once it is admitted, all the joy and comfort of this life is gone; it is a bitter-sweet poison; and miserable are they that either give or take occasion for it. Stop your ears, therefore, and knit your brow, upon tale-bearers and whisperers, that, under pretence of great love and secrecy, tell you just nothing; and remember that "love thinketh no evil," but puts the best interpretation possible upon the doubtful words, looks, and carriage of a stranger, much more of so near a relation. † And this I mention here, because most commonly jealousy takes place there, where true affection was never fixed and rooted in the beginning.

6. Lastly, to speak all in one: *Pray for wisdom, humility, and uprightness.*

(1.) *Wisdom.*—For we owe many of our domestic distempers to our weakness and indiscretion, not wisely preventing or removing things that cause offence. How easily would a wise man avoid distasting words or looks or actions! How easily might he keep his authority, and never forfeit it, and she submit, and never dispute it! Wisdom would pick and choose the fittest opportunities to instruct, advise, reprove, and comfort; and would direct to the best manner and method wherein to do it. Wisdom will consider, that either party might have found the same or greater crosses in another condition as in this, or in another person as in this; and therefore things are well in that they are not worse; and, however, that marriage which is God's ordinance must not be charged with their disquiets, but themselves. And,

* PLUTARCHI *Præcepta Conjugalìa.* † *Liberiores sunt viri, quàm femine, viles totius ratione. Viris curanda esse multa, feminis solam pudicitiam. Claudenda aures iis, qui sinistrum quid de marito volunt deferre.*—LUDOVICUS VIVES *De Christ. Fem.* p. 720. "Men are less circumscribed with regard to the entire course of life, than women. Men have many cares; women should have but one,—to preserve their modesty. A wife should shut her ears against those who wish to insinuate any thing contrary to the good fame of her husband."—EDIT.

(2.) *Humility*.—That is a singular help for them both, in the discharging of their duties. This will keep the husband from the intemperate use of his power, and the wife in a ready subjection to her husband ; for “only by pride cometh contention : but with the well-advised is wisdom.” (Prov. xiii. 10.) A proud spirit could not agree with an angel ; but the humble will agree with any body. This also will greatly help them to contentment in their condition ; for, says humility, “My husband, my wife, is a great deal too good for such a sinful creature as I am. My condition is too good for me. These straits and troubles are great ; but I deserve greater. This was a sharp reproof ; but, alas ! I deserve hell ; and what is a harsh word to hell ?” *That man or woman will sit down quietly with great trials, that know they are “not worthy the least of mercies.”* And, besides, humility will suggest such a carriage and behaviour in word and deed, as will infallibly oblige each other, and force respect from them. And,

(3.) Lastly, *uprightness* is necessary to the doing of these duties well ; for there is written a conclusive law in an upright heart to do the whole will of God, whether it appear to be with them or against them : it will teach them rather to obey than to dispute ; and, in obedience, to do each more than their part, rather than less. In doubtful cases the upright heart will choose the safest course, though it prove the hardest ; and resolves to suffer the greatest injury, rather than offer the least. An upright heart watches against sinful self, which is the great root of injuries and mischiefs in every relation, and prompts us to keep-on in the way of our duty, notwithstanding all discouragements. In a word : the upright husband and wife do chiefly study each their own duty in their relations, and are most severe against their own particular failings.*

SERMON XVII.

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WHAT ARE THE DUTIES OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN ; AND HOW ARE THEY TO BE MANAGED ACCORDING TO SCRIPTURE ?

Children, obey your parents in all things : for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.—Colossians iii. 20, 21.

My business is not to discuss the entity of relations in their foundation and terms, which the philosopher is conversant about ; but to dis-

* Το μὲν οὖν ἀγαπᾶν τῶν ἀνδρῶν ἐστὶ, τὸ δὲ εὐκείν ἐκείνων ἕαν οὖν ἕκαστος τὸ ἑαυτοῦ εἰσανεγκῆ, ἵσθηκε πάντα βεβαία.—CHRYSOSTOMUS in *Coloss.* hom. x. “It is the part of the husbands to love, but that of wives to yield and obey : if, then, they severally perform their proper duties, every thing around them acquires firmness and stability.”—EDIT.

course [on] the efficacy of the chiefest in Christian practice ; * that is, to inquire into the nature and management of those reciprocal offices betwixt parents and children, which, if well discharged according to the sense of the divine oracles, do contribute most to the happiness of human society, and give reputation to the communion of saints. The subject, I know, is common, and the scriptures copious upon it, which some (who, it may be, are not the most accurate in their own relative station) think a very easy task to treat on : but to do it distinctly and fully, within the time allotted to this exercise, is a thing of greater difficulty to me than such easy undertakers are aware of ; and really to perform all the duties I am to inquire into, in a manner well-pleasing to our heavenly Father, will cost them and us all more pains than only to read or preach an hour or two upon them, which yet might lead into many important concerns of government and obedience. Believe it : herein we have ALL need enough of serious and frequent teaching again and again for our conduct in the relations whereunto God hath cast us. (Heb. v. 12.) In order, then, both to my preaching at present, and all our future practice, as a ground for the resolution of this question,—*What are the duties of parents and children ; and how are they to be managed according to scripture ?* I am directed to the words read : wherein we have the mutual OFFICES of children and parents required, and virtually at least prescribed, with annexed REASONS to enforce them severally upon each relation ; which afford this proposition, *that God's pleasure and children's encouragement should move Christian children to obedience, and parents to a moderate government, in all things.*

Here is a large theme ; but I shall endeavour, as nigh as I can, to speak much in a little, hoping I shall obtain your pardon, though I let slip some considerable particulars, if by some general anticipations and cautions I do in a sermon decline those numerous special cases, which in a larger treatise on this subject might fairly step-in, and lay claim to some special satisfaction. It were an excursion for me now to speak of children and parents in any other than the most famous signification of the words, † taken, not figuratively, but properly ; not for those in a political, but natural, relation ; yet as under the Christian institution, where we are ever to have regard to our blessed Lord and Master.

Indeed, τα τέκνα, “children,” comprehend both sons and daughters, the fruit of the body, (not excluding grand-children,) of what age or quality soever, as indissolubly bound in duty “to those who begot and brought them forth,” τοις γονευσι, of both sexes, father and mother, the parents of their flesh, from whom they were originally derived. (Gen. xlv. 29 ; Prov. xxiii. 22 ; Heb. xii. 9.) And that the apostle doth here direct the command to inferiors before superiors, as in verse 18 and elsewhere, (Eph. v. 22 ; vi. 1, 5,) to children before parents, is not that children and their duties are first in order of nature or time ; for there are offices, σπογγης φυσικης, of “inbred parental love and care,” before they can be known or observed by children : but writing chiefly to children come to

* *Relationes, etsi minima entitatis, sunt maxima efficacia.* “Relations, though small in regard to their entity, are of the greatest efficacy.”—EDIT. † *Analogum per se positum stat pro famosiore analogo.* “A figurative expression, placed by itself, must be understood with respect to the most important thing signified.”—EDIT.

the use of reason, he begins with them who are subject, and ought first to perform duty; the anticipation of time here connoting the honour due to superiors. He doth in the first place put those in mind of their duty, who are to obey, as usually more defective, rather than those that have authority over them in this economical conjunction; either in that this office of obedience is less easy and pleasing to our nature than that of parental love, which is allured to exert itself readily by the right discharge of the former; or in that the subjection of children is the foundation on which the good government of parents doth depend, and a means to make themselves ready for that authority, which else they will be unfit for: as Antoninus lays down the axiom which many of the moralists used, namely, "You cannot well govern others, unless first governed." *

For my method, then, in answering the complicated inquiry before me, whilst I follow the apostle in my text, I shall need no apology to insist on,

I. *The duty of children, with the extent thereof, urged from that which is most cogent to persuade to it, and dissuade from the neglect of it.*

II. *The office of parents, enforced from the special consideration of that [which] the apostle suggests to move to it.*

III. *The manner and means of managing both offices, or discharging both duties, more generally and particularly, according to the mind of God in his word.*

The two former may be looked upon as THE EXPLICATION of my text and proposition, and AN EXHORTATION pressed with reasons or motives to the duties: and the last, as DIRECTIONS to perform them.

I. *The duty of children, with the extent thereof, urged from that which is most cogent to persuade to it, and dissuade from the neglect of it.*—This is expressed and implied in the former of the verses I have read to you: wherein we have three particulars to be spoken to: (I.) *The duty*: (II.) *Extent or latitude of it*: (III.) *Motive to it.*

(I.) *The duty of children from the precept, "Children, obey your parents."*—The word *ὑπακούετε* imports an humble subjection to their authority and government, with a ready performance of what they require; it being an explanation of that which in the law is engraven with God's own hand, כבוד "honour;" (Exod. xx. 12;) importing how highly they are to be valued, and not lightly esteemed. In another place it is, "Ye shall fear," יראתו "every man his mother, and his father;" (Lev. xix. 3, 14;) awful fear being no other than a deep veneration; both which are to be fairly read in the acts of genuine obedience: for that doth flow-forth from a compound disposition of love and fear mixed in an ingenuous child, who is readily moved to obey, in contemplation of that authority and affection implanted in the parent toward it.

To speak more distinctly: this obedience to parents may contain in it these four things: 1. *Reverence*: 2. *Obedience*: 3. *Pious regards*: 4. *Submission*. The three first of these may be reducible to active, and the last to passive, obedience.

1. *Reverence.*—Which is a due and awful estimation of their persons, as to this relation, placed in eminency above their children, to acknowledge them from God himself, the supreme Parent of us all, (Acts xvii.

* Ου προτερον αρεϊς πριν αρχθης.

28.) the authors, preservers, and governors of their lives ; and upon that account to honour them in their hearts, speeches, and behaviours, from an honest desire to please, and filial fear to offend, them whose children they are, of what rank soever they now appear in the world ; and therefore to comport themselves so in all the actions of their lives before God and men, that they render themselves acceptable to their parents. Yea, to both of them : the law requires "reverence" to the mother as well as the father ; the word which is in one verse "fear," is in another translated "reverence ;" (Lev. xix. 3, 30 ;) to the claim of which the mother there seems to be favoured with some kind of priority ; because children, who have most needed their mothers in their tender years, are apt many times to despise them, as more subject to infirmities, and as looking for less of respect from their hands : so that really to give them honour, is a fuller evidence of cordial performance. The Lord is pleased to begin there, where the duty is most tried : "Reverence thy mother, and thy father." Both are to be had in a just veneration. Plato and Aristotle could by nature's light teach thus : Βουλου πρατιστον γονεις εν τιμαις εχειν.* This, as the prime law of nature, the Spartans, and generally all nations of old, did, and the Chinese at this day do, maintain with admirable care.† Now, doing reverence to the "fathers of our flesh" in scripture, (Heb. xii. 9.) may comprehend what children owe to their parents, both with reference to their *speech* and *behaviour*.

(1.) *With respect to their speech.*—That it be seasonable, and agreeable to the relation, graced "with humility" and modesty, (1 Peter v. 5,) in all converse with them in presence, and discourse of them in absence. They should give them honourable titles ; as those of "father" and "mother" do connote dignity ; (Jer. xxxi. 9 ; Gal. iv. 6 ;) and so, Κυριε, "sir," or "lord." (Matt. xxi. 30.) Thus we have good children in the book of God saluting their parents : as Isaac, his father Abraham ; (Gen. xxii. 7 ;) Jacob, Isaac ; (Gen. xxvii. 18 ;) David, Saul his father-in-law ; (1 Sam. xxiv. 8 ;) Solomon, Bathsheba, "My mother ;" (1 Kings ii. 20 ;) Rachel, Laban, making her apology, "My lord ;" (Gen. xxxi. 35 ;) David again, Saul. (1 Sam. xxvi. 18.) And that with all meekness, at a fit season, in a few words, with freedom and readiness, (Gen. xxii. 7 ; xxvii. 1.) giving pleasing answers when spoken to, in a becoming civility, (1 Sam. iii. 3, 4, 16, 18,) waiting with contentment to hear them speak first, (Prov. iv. 1.) laying their hands on their mouths, and refraining to talk in their presence without just occasion. (Job xxix. 9, 10, 21 ; xxxii. 4—7.) And in their absence by speaking so of them amongst those [with whom] they do converse, that, by the commendable reports they make of them, or prudent apologies for them, it may be understood what venerable respects they have for their parents. Thus it is said of the children of the prudent mother, They "arise up," as those who speak pathetically, "and call her blessed," in that laudable discourse they have of her, Prov. xxxi. 28. Hereby children will prove themselves to be of a virtuous temper, and not like that elder brother of the

* PLATO *De Legibus*, lib. iv. ARISTOTELIS *Ethic*. lib. ix. tom. 2. "Let it be thy first and especial care to honour thy parents."—EDIT. † SPIZELIUS *De Re literaria Sinensium*, p. 243.

penitent prodigal, who spake indecently, in a surly manner, to his father ; (Luke xv. 29, 30 ;) and sometime some of Jacob's sons to theirs, (Gen. xxxiv. 31,) and such like ; who by their rude and malapert prating disparage and aggrieve their parents. (Gen. xxvi. 35 ; xxvii. 46.) Yet of a more untoward generation are they whom the wise man took notice of, that curse their father, and do not bless their mother : but, saith he, " Their lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness." (Prov. xx. 20.) Neither can there be a better end of those who are, under the Almighty's curse, devoted to death ; (Lev. xx. 9 ; Exod. xxi. 17 ;) neither can they who do any way " set light by their father or mother," avoid a much easier censure, since by interpretation it is a dishonour to God himself. (Deut. xxvii. 16.) Plato, in his " Commonwealth," orders that children should in their words through their whole life revere their parents, there being a great punishment imminent for light and idle discourse.*

(2.) Further : *the behaviour and carriage of children should ever be significative and expressive of reverence to their parents in all their addresses.*—The countenance so composed in their presence, as may argue awfulness and respect ; the deportment lowly, rising up before those they honour for relation, as well as those venerable for age ; (Lev. xix. 32 ;) and at meeting. Thus Solomon, though a king, did to his mother Bathsheba ; (1 Kings ii. 19 ;) hasting to attend them in a lowly posture ; thus Joseph, who lived as a prince, " made ready to meet, and presented himself unto, his father," whom he had maintained ; (Gen. xlvi. 29 ;) so Achsah, Caleb's daughter, who was married to her cousin-german, when she addressed herself to her father, she alighted from her beast before she spoke to him ; (Judges i. 14, 15 ;) and again, Joseph thought it no disparagement to prostrate himself to his aged father Jacob, whose eyes were then dim, that he could not see his behaviour ; when he also gave his own children an example in praying for his father's blessing, (Gen. xlviii. 12,) which Esau, though he came tardily, did passionately beg for. (Gen. xxvii. 20, 34.) And though parents now have not a prophetic spirit as the patriarchs had, yet it seems still very equitable, that Christian children, considering their parents' superiority in the Lord, should frequently, upon occasion, in an humble manner crave their parents' prayers for God's blessing. (Heb. vii. 7 ; Mark x. 16.) The rude and haughty looks, which are in many children before their parents, cannot comport with this duty, which discards a dogged and supercilious countenance, that betokens scorn and derision, opposite to this filial reverence. The wise man makes a smart remark upon such odious, insolent behaviour, which might deter any of understanding from it, when he saith, " The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it." (Prov. xxx. 17.) Here is a signal retaliation to those who in speech or behaviour deride the persons, or despise the counsels, of their parents, whether yet alive or deceased. It were to be wished it had been better studied by some children in this generation ; I mean, some late and present preachers of our age ; who do not *parentare manibus*, [" appease the manes of their ancestors,"] but indeed upbraid the ghosts of their reverend and pious parents, (who

* Lib. xlv. *De Republicâ.*

warmly argued the necessity of regeneration,) either by reckoning them amongst the herd of divines, or with an harangue of lame sequels perch- up to vent their callow notions, and bespatter their own nest in complacency with the lax humour of the times; when many, for the bags, cry, "Hail, Master;" but "betray the Son of Man with a kiss." (Matt. xxvi. 49; Luke xxii. 48.) Yet I would hope there are but a few of this feather. I proceed to mind children of another duty, and that is,

2. *Observance.*—Whereby their parents' pleasure with fit subjection is performed, out of a real desire to promote their honour; which is more than in countenance and ceremonies to express obedience. (Matt. xxi. 30.) It is very requisite Christian children should with an heedful circumspection observe the holy and wise prescripts and practices of their parents, by acknowledging subjection to their government. Our blessed Lord himself set a pattern herein; for "he went down with" his mother and her husband, "and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them." (Luke ii. 51.) *Quis quibus? Deus hominibus, &c.*, saith Bernard.* He to whom angels are subject, whom principalities and powers do obey, was observant of his mother Mary and her espoused husband Joseph, yea, most likely in the business of Joseph's calling. (Mark vi. 3; Matt. xiii. 55; John vi. 42.) More particularly, this filial observance shows itself in, (1.) *Attending to their instructions*: (2.) *Executing their commands*: (3.) *Depending on their counsels*: and, (4.) *Following their examples*.

(1.) *We ought to attend seriously to our parents' instructions.*—And learn what they teach us for good; receiving their dictates with humility, and laying them up in our hearts, those especially of spiritual advantage, out of a love to wisdom and our parents' joys. (Prov. xxix. 3; x. 1.) Solomon bids, from his own experience, "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother." (Prov. i. 8.) Again: "Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old." (Prov. xxiii. 22.) And then, that daughters might not think themselves exempted: "Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding and good doctrine;" which, if heedfully observed, makes a wise child, when the contrary bewrays folly, (Prov. iv. 1—3; xiii. 1,) which is a grief and discouragement to the father; as was that of Eli's sons, (1 Sam. ii. 25,) and Lot's sons-in-law, (Gen. xix. 14,) who slighted their father's documents; as the prodigal also did his, before he felt the smart of it, and came to his wits again. (Luke xv. 12, 13, 17.) Yet this is dissonant to the voice of nature, which hath taught the very chickens to hearken unto the clocking of the hen; hath been ever distasteful to the wiser Heathens; and would bring a disparagement upon the Christian institution: so that Christian children should be very heedful of their parents' teachings, especially in the concerns of their souls. Hence,

(2.) *Children should execute their parents' commands.*—And dispatch readily what they order them to do, without whartling disputes. This is the most special duty required in my text: the extent of it will come under consideration anon. They should be as those under the cen-

* *Homilia i. Super missus est.* "Who was subject? and to whom? God to men."—
EDIT.

turion's authority,—“go” and “come” and “do” at his command. (Matt. viii. 9.) Samuel came at the supposed call of his pro-parent once and again; (1 Sam. iii. 5—8;) David, when his father Jesse had sent for him out of the field, ere he knew what it was for, and so went as he commanded him. (1 Sam. xvi. 12; xvii. 17, 20.) So Jacob, when Isaac sent him; and Joseph, when Jacob sent him; yea, the other ten sons also upon their father's order. (Gen. xxviii. 5; xxxvii. 14; xlii. 2, 3.) Isaac attended in carrying the wood, when the servants were free from the burden, at his father's pleasure. (Gen. xxii. 6.) Joseph and the Rechabites are famous instances of observing faithfully the charge of their parents, even when they were dead and gone, out of conscience, in a respectful manner, with reference to the divine authority. (Gen. l. 17—21; Jer. xxxv. 8—19.) Abraham's children walked in the way of the Lord, as their father commanded them. (Gen. xviii. 19.) Solomon did not only command his own son, (Prov. vi. 20,) though he proved disobedient; but he observed his father David's charge to walk in the Lord's statutes, (though drawn aside after with temptations,) and to build the temple. (1 Kings ii. 3; iii. 3; 1 Chron. xxii. 11; 2 Chron. v., vi.) God takes it for granted, a good child will serve his father; (Mal. iii. 17;) yea, and when put to pain, in things not only necessary, but of no reputation, supposing, in things purely indifferent both in their nature and use, their parents to be more judicious to determine what is expedient and decent; yet not without the use of their own discerning faculty, nor without any examination, in a blind, irrational obsequiousness; (Prov. xiv. 15;) like the brutish obedience of the Jesuits' novices.* For though I should grant that parents have in some sort a power over the consciences of their children, while they are as in God's stead, (1 Sam. ii. 30,) swaying their apprehensions in their tenderest years, before they come to the use of their ripened reason; yet when there is a judgment of discerning betwixt good and evil, their obedience ought to be “reasonable,” such as God requires to his own service, λογικη, (απο του λογου,) “such as is according to his word,” not merely childish, though the obedience of children, but “acceptable” and “well-pleasing unto” him, as in my text, and in the fear of God. (Rom. xii. 1; Col. iii. 20—22.)

Again: (3.) *Children ought to depend upon their parents' counsels.*—And take their good and wholesome advice; giving them the honour of being, in an ordinary course, more prudent and sagacious than themselves, as having greater experience, ability, and a call to govern in affairs of importance. For to disregard them herein, were to slight the paternal authority which God would have kept in reputation. He was a prodigal, who would not be advised, till he was bitten with the ill effect of that extravagant course, which grieved his father: (Luke xv. 12, 13;) but the docile child who is righteous and wise, rejoiceth the heart of both his parents. (Prov. xxiii. 22, 24, 25; xv. 20.) Here I might enter on particulars, to show that children have no power, being under government, to dispose of their parents' goods, without their

* *Ne pecorum ritu sequamur antecedentium gregem, pergentes non quã eundum est, sed quã iter.*—SENeca. “Let us not follow the footsteps of those who go before us in the manner of sheep, that proceed, not where they should, but where the rest lead.”—EDIT.

advice or allowance, (Gal. iv. 1, 2; Gen. xxxi. 19, 32, 36, 37; Prov. xxviii. 24; xix. 26.) by faultiness here is aggravated by the relation; nor to choose their company disagreeable to their parents' minds; (Prov. i. 10, 15; 1 Cor. v. 9;) but to take their advice, and be content with that suitable dress their parents do order them to appear in, and not in "strange apparel." (Gen. xxvii. 15; xxxvii. 3; 2 Sam. xiii. 18; Zeph. i. 8.) But I shall only suggest two more eminent instances, wherein children are more especially to consult their parents, and observe their advice, namely, as to a *particular calling*, and *marriage*.

(i.) It is fit to be advised by parents in the choice of a *calling*, or lasting course of life.—Jacob and David moved and lived according to their parents' disposal, as was hinted before; and so did Jonadab's children: (Gen. xxviii. 2; 1 Sam. xvi. 11, 19; xvii. 17; Jer. xxxv. 6, 7;) it being unfit they should carve for themselves without leave; but follow the parental conduct, unless that leads them into an unlawful calling. The pretension of religion in a monastic life, which the Papists urge to cajole their votaries into their unscriptural orders, as the Pharisees did Corban, (Mark vii. 11—13,) saying, "It is a gift" devoted to God, (which hypocritical allegation our Saviour disproved, because they vacated the commandments of God for their own traditions,) can be no warrant to invade the rights of parents; for religion toward God doth not interfere with the necessary duties of our relation; and to do that (under a notion of religion) not enjoined by God, against that, too, which he hath required, is impious; and to offer that to him which is another's, he likes not. He is for equity, and not for division or confusion. Charlemagne made a decree against this dishonour to parents under the veil and disguise of religion.

(ii.) In the great business of *marriage*, it is very requisite to observe their counsel and advice.—Parents certainly should sway much in this weighty matter, as they did in Isaac's matching with Rebekah, and Jacob's with Laban's daughter. (Gen. xxiv. 6, 7, 63—67; xxviii. 1—3; xxix. 11, 18, 19.) Ruth, though a daughter-in-law, was willing to be disposed of by Naomi in the change of her condition, observing her orders in that affair. (Ruth ii. 21—23; iii. 1—6, 18.) Yea, even Ishmael would take his mother's advice for a wife; and Samson moved for his parents' consent. (Gen. xxi. 21; Judges xiv. 2.) Tamar's words in striving with her lustful brother, imply the gaining of her father's consent requisite; and Shechem's words to his father, when he had wickedly deflowered Dinah, whom he met-with in her idling visit, do import he was convinced it was equitable to have her father's consent to marry her. (2 Sam. xiii. 13; Gen. xxxiv. 11, 12.) For children ought in reason to think their parents wiser, and better able for the most part to provide for them, than they themselves are; because likely, as they have more experimental knowledge, so, if parents be not cankered with the love of this world, their affections are more governable, and not so easily biassed from moving in the fairest way, as children's often are in their youthful and sprightly age, when their inward emotions are apt to be more turbulent, unless sanctified with grace, and moderated with virtue. And further, here it may be considered that parents, who brought-forth and bred-up their children, should by no

means be bereft of them without their consent ; since they are so much their goods and possessions, that it were a kind of purloining to give themselves away without their parents' leave. The maid, under the law, that had made a vow out of her father's cognizance, could not perform it without his consent. (Num. xxx. 3—5.) In the comedian * it was accounted a disparagement to take a wife against the will of her father. So that compliance with parents' advice here is a business of great effect. As one saith ingeniously, "The child in this case bowls best at the mark of his own contentment, who, beside the aim of his own eye, is directed by his father, who is to give the ground." † To which may correspond a passage of Cyrus ; who, when a match was proposed to him, said, "I like the lady, her dowry, and her family : but I must have these agree with my parents, and then I will marry her." He belike thought it injurious, in finally bestowing himself, to neglect his parents, and disregard their counsel in the main business of his life.

EXCEPTION. But if children except, and say, "What, if, after our real desires to take their counsel, they urge us to marry such as we cannot affect ?"

ANSWER. I confess your circumstances may be such in this instance, as may render the case very intricate, and it would require a discourse by itself to give satisfaction to it. All I shall say now is, First, Be sure your non-affection or aversion to the person proposed be not without reason. Remember you are unexperienced ; suspect your own judgment ; and take heed lest some impotent passion, or amorous inclination to another person, discompose you from attaining to a right opinion of things. Persuade yourselves, that, as your parents have experience, likely their affections lead them to be careful for your welfare. Be therefore earnest in prayer with God, who turns the heart at his pleasure, (Prov. xxi. 1,) that he would incline your affection to the party proposed, all the while there is no disallowance from above, and you can see no just cause to the contrary, having only the mere plea that you cannot love ; ‡ and be importunate with Him to rectify such untowardness of mind, (lest you at least seem wilful,) as leads you without good reason to reject an offer of his providence to you, for the promoting of your temporal welfare, in a hopeful prospect of the divine blessing. But if, after this humble and unfeigned address to God, you still find your heart altogether averse, you may in a reverent way entreat your parents not to press that match, and think of some other, wherein you may be better satisfied. For my part, I do not conceive you are obliged to marry those you cannot really affect ; unless I could see how you might with a good conscience, in the presence of God, enter into a solemn covenant of love, (Mal. ii. 14,) with a party you cannot but upon deliberation at the same instant dislike. My reason is, not only because it would be an utter frustration of the end of marriage, which should be mutual satisfaction ; but also the beginning of that estate in a kind of perjury, or at least with a doubting conscience. (Rom. xiv. 13, 23.) Since,

* TERENTIUS.

† MR. FULLER.

‡ *Non amo te, Sabidi, nec possum dicere quare :*

Hoc tantum possum dicere, non amo te.—MARTIALIS *Epigram.* lib. i. ep. 33.

"I love thee not, but *why* I cannot tell :

Yet that I love thee not, I know full well."—EDIT,

as Quintilian * observed, *Affectus nostri nobis non serviunt*, "We cannot still keep our affections in a subserviency to our own," be sure not to another's, "reason." My wife is to dwell with me for ever, the half of my lasting joy or my lasting sorrow; and if I do not love her, we cannot live comfortably together, &c.

Secondly. If parents should counsel you to join yourself to an ungodly person, and enforce you to fix there; the best casuists of our own † will easily resolve you, that in such a case you have a negative voice, and may humbly refuse to comply with such a motion: for though you have not a judgment of positive decision, to determine whom you would have; yet you have a judgment of discretion, and you may, with all reverence to your parents' proposing, refuse an unworthy person, who is likely to make your life either sinful or miserable. This may be further cleared, in considering the extent of children's obedience. There is another particular yet, which concerns children in this duty of observance; and that is,

(4.) *To follow their good examples.*—We should take notice of those fair copies they have set us, and imitate whatsoever is good, commendable, and virtuous in our parents. This the wise man gave his son in charge, that he should with all his heart set his eyes to observe his ways; (Prov. xxiii. 26;) that is, take him for his pattern in all those practices which were consonant to the pleasure of his heavenly Father. We should follow them as they do our Lord and Master: (1 Cor. xi. 1:) but not in their errors and miscarriages, for fear of Jeroboam's dreadful entail; which some choose, rather than leave the crooked paths of their progenitors; as the idolatrous Jews of old, and the Papists at this day. (1 Kings xxii. 52; 2 Kings iii. 3; 2 Chron. xxii. 3, 4; Jer. xlv. 17.) For Mark Antonine the emperor, as the learned Gataker expounds him, could teach us, that "we should not be so childish as to do any thing without consideration," *κατα ψιλόν*, "upon the mere account of tradition, as we had it from our parents." ‡ When Frederick IV., elector palatine of the Rhine, was by a certain prince advised to follow the example of his father Lewis, he answered well: "In the business of religion, we must not follow the examples of parents and ancestors, but only as they are agreeable to the will of God." § God himself stated this case to the Jewish children in the wilderness by the prophet Ezekiel; (Ezek. xx. 18, 19;) and the apostle Peter showeth [that] Christian children should behave themselves as those who are "redeemed from a vain conversation." (1 Peter i. 18.) But the good carriage of parents in their piety toward God, righteousness and charity toward man, should have a great influence upon those that descend from them. Solomon is commended for his dutifulness, so far as he walked in the good ways of David his father, expressing the like good qualities and actions in that which was right; (1 Kings iii. 3; 2 Kings xxii. 2;) and so Asa, raising-up monuments of David's piety, honesty, and virtue. (1 Kings xv. 11.) It is reported [that] Justin Martyr became Christian,

* *Declamations*, p. 376. † BISHOPS HALL, SANDERSON, TAYLOR, and MR. BAXTER. ‡ MARCI ANTONINI *Meditationes*, lib. iv. sect. 46. *Id quod ORIGENES, Adversus Celsum*, lib. i.: *Κατα ψιλόν πιστην και αλογον*. "Origen uses a similar expression in his book against Celsum: 'On account of traditionary and irrational belief?'"—EDIT. § *In religione non parentum, non majorum exempla sequenda, sed tantum voluntas Dei.*

by following the good examples of the primitive fathers.* The famous emperor but now praised, determined, when in the empire, not to follow the Cæsarean mode which then obtained at the imperial court, but to do all *ὡς Αντωνίνου μαθητής*, “as a disciple of Pious Antonine,”† to be dressed by his father’s glass; as Julius Capitolinus notes, “to act, and speak, and think, as his father did;” or, as he tells us himself, “to imitate his constant tenor in things well-managed, his evenness of temper in all things, the cheerfulness of his countenance, his courteousness, contempt of vain-glory, and studiousness to find out things.” He had set before himself the virtues of both his parents and pro-parents, yea, his adoptive father, and copied-out the most singular things in them all.‡ Which may the more incite us Christians, as Paul did Timothy from the remembrance of the faith in his grandmother Lois and mother Eunice, (2 Tim. i. 5,) to learn that parents’ good actions should make impressions on their children, as the seal upon the wax, that they may represent them both while living and dead. There cannot be a better resemblance of a child to a good father than in this observance, (Prov. xxvii. 10, 11,) which I have touched on in these four particulars, hastening to the next duty; namely,

3. *Pious regards*.—Christian children owe their parents both in respect of their *benevolence* and *indigence*; from a real desire of humble thankfulness, if it were possible, to make some kind of compensation unto them by whom, under God, they subsist.

(1.) With respect to their *benevolence*.—A grateful resentment of their kindnesses, which ought to be manifested in an affectionate acknowledgment of their parental love and care. This is so good and acceptable unto God, that to requite our parents, in Paul’s language, is “to show piety” and kindness “at home:” *Και αμοιβας αποδιδοναι τοις προγονοις* [“and to requite their parents;”] (1 Tim. v. 4;) when by way of commutation we are solicitous to take our turn, as it were, in a sort of retaliation, to make some kind of retribution to those who begat us, either immediately or mediately. This ingenuous skill the apostle would have learned, as a commendable Christian art, by an exercise in such grateful offices as may prove children do delight to be much in those services which express the esteem they have of their parents’ good-will to them. (Mal. iii. 17; Phil. ii. 22.) Hence we should with great complaisance entertain all our parents’ favours, as ingenuous servants, waiting to express the sense of our love readily and “heartily;” (Eph. vi. 7; Col. iii. 23;) since our most pathetic acknowledgments of parental love and care are but easy returns for their invaluable kindnesses; so that, without this resentment, children cannot indeed be pious. For, as Cicero in an oration argues, “When I shall desire that I may be affected with all the virtues, then there is nothing I more wish, than that I may *be* thankful, and *seem* to be so: for this one virtue is not only the greatest, but the mother of all the rest. What is piety, but a grateful will towards our parents?” &c. “Who of us,” saith he, “is liberally educated, but thinks of our educators, &c., with a thankful remembrance?”§ Which may

* EUSEBII *Historia Ecclesiastica*, lib. iv. cap. 4. † Lib. vi. sect. 30. *Edii. Gataker.*
 ‡ Lib. i. cap. i. sect. 1, 2, 16. § *Cum omnibus virtutibus me affectum esse cupio, tum nihil est quod malim, quàm me et gratum esse et videri. Hæc est enim una virtus*

be by treasuring-up their good speeches and wise sayings of remark ; (Job xv. 18 ; Psalm xlv. 1, 2 ; lxxviii. 3 ;) rehearsing with delight their praiseworthy acts ; (Prov. xxxi. 28 ;) expounding all they do candidly, as Ruth did Naomi's carriage, honouring all that was honourable in her, choosing her religion, and admiring all her virtues : " Thy God shall be my God," said she, " and thy people my people ;" comforting them under every providence, and providing as much as may be for them. (Ruth i. 16 ; iv. 15 ; Gen. v. 29 ; Joshua ii. 13.) Hence,

(2.) With respect to their *indigence*.—Be it what it will, either in regard to internal or external defects, natural, moral, or providential ; both living and dead, children are to show themselves concerned ; by covering or bearing their infirmities, supplying their necessities, defending their persons and honour against the rude and injurious attacks of those who would disparage and defame them. Noah and Lot, Isaac and Jacob, had their infirmities under temptations, and their children covered them. (Gen. ix. 21—23 ; xxvii. 12 ; xxviii. 5 ; xxxvii. 10.) So did Jonathan his father Saul's. (1 Sam. xxxi. 2.) Mary was inconsiderate in speaking to our Lord ; yet " he went down with" her and Joseph. (Luke ii. 51.) Love will cover many faults : (1 Peter iv. 8 :) Isaac was blind, yet Jacob religiously paid respects to him : (Gen. xxvii. 1 ; Lev. xix. 14 :) Naomi was poor, yet her daughter-in-law continued child-like obedience : (Ruth i. 16, 17 :) when Jacob and his family were poor and in straits, Joseph did support and comfort them, ministering to their necessities. (Gen. xlvi. 1 ; xxxvii. 35 ; xlii. 3 ; xlvii. 12.) Yea, and pious children should have a special regard to supply their parents' spiritual necessities, for the good estate of their souls. In case they are unacquainted with the great business of religion, or negligent about the concerns of another world, then with all humility and prudence to insinuate such things as by the influence of heaven may be effectual to work a real change in them by whom they themselves came into this world, or to revive that which is ready to die, will greatly adorn the part of Christian children ; since we are to pray for political, much more for natural, parents, because of the goodness and acceptableness of it in the sight of God and our Saviour. (1 Tim. ii. 2.) All that the best can do, in one respect and another, will be recompence little enough for parents' care, love, and kindness. Ruth took pains to supply her mother-in-law's necessities : (Ruth ii. 18 :) David in perils was solicitous for his parents' safety. (1 Sam. xxii. 3, 4.) And if children are taken away before their parents, they are obliged, after Christ's example in taking care of his mother, to endeavour [that] provision may be made for them. (John xix. 26, 27.)

When their parents are dead, they should see to the honourable interment of their bodies, in a decent Christian manner, agreeable to the port and quality of both in the world, and the laudable custom of the place ; as Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph did. (Acts viii. 2 ; Gen. xxv. 9 ; xxxv. 29 ; l. 7, 8.) So to the preservation of their good name and reputation, by paying of their debts in due circumstances, (especially if justly con-

non solum maxima, sed etiam mater virtutum omnium reliquarum. Quid est pietas, nisi voluntas grata in parentes? Quis est nostrum liberaliter educatus, cui non educatores, &c., cum gratâ recordatione in mente versentur?—CICERONIS Oratio pro Cneio Plancio.

tracted for the children's sake,) according to abilities: for they are "the wicked" who "borrow and pay not again;" (Psalm xxxvii. 21;) good Christians are charged to "owe no man any thing but love." (Rom. xiii. 8.) And [children should see] to the vindicating of them from unjust aspersions, yet without malice or revenge, but with justice, so far as lies within the compass of the children's calls and places. (Matt. v. 39; Rom. xii. 17—19.) So did Amaziah. (2 Kings xiv. 5.) What Solomon did in this regard was only the public execution of justice, not [an] act of private revenge. (1 Kings ii. 8, 9; 2 Sam. iii. 39; xix. 23.) But still, in paying honour to our deceased parents, we must ever avoid the superstition of the Heathens and Papists, and take care we go on in all our parents' good ways, as did Solomon, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah. (1 Kings iii. 3; Prov. iv. 3, 4; xxxi. 1, 2; 1 Kings xv. 11; 2 Kings xxii. 2.) Quite contrary hereunto was the impious practice of Ham, odious to God and man: (Gen. ix. 22, 25;) so of Absalom, Jeroboam's race, and the greedy Pharisees; (2 Sam. xv. 3; xviii. 9; 2 Kings iii. 3; Mark vii. 11—13;) with others, who had no compassion, or none in proportion to their indigent parents' necessity and superiority, when yet they are amply provided for. (1 John iii. 17.) Whereas this grateful recompence of parents is required and celebrated amongst the Heathens of old, as appears by their proverbial expression, *αντιπελαργειν*, ["to rival the stork in the manifestation of filial gratitude."] Whence their *Lex Pelargica*. "Because," saith Philo, "the old storks, disabled to fly abroad, stay in their nest, till those of their brood do fly over sea and land, and bring food to their dams;"* though possibly some may have been observed to degenerate.† "And so we birds," saith Aristophanes, pleasantly, "should return our parents thanks in all offices of endearing kindness," &c. Æneas was denominated Pious, from that heroic act of saving his decrepit father out of flaming Troy, and the hands of raging enemies, by carrying^d him out on his shoulders. And the children of Catania of old, in a sudden eruption of Ætna, for the exportation of their aged parents, were celebrated with much honour.‡ What they of the same place did in the late one, I have not heard.

They who would see among the Heathens greater variety of instances for pious regards and impious ingratitude, may consult Valerius Maximus.§ I will only mind you of two of the former sort: one, which Pliny || counts most remarkable, of a woman giving suck; who, when her mother was condemned by the prætor, had got from the keeper liberty to visit her in prison, upon daily search made to see she brought no victuals to her; whom the keeper thought to have famished, but found alive after many days, sustained by her affectionate daughter's milk; which so affected the governors, that they spared the mother's life, and raised a monument of the daughter's ingenuous piety. The other of one Pero, (for that seems to be her name,) who in the same manner relieved her father Cimon, and renewed his age the same way, in the same case; which, it seems, was so taking, that it was represented in a picture when the historian wrote, and that in Tiberius's time; so ancient was that table

* *των πελαργων οι μεν γεραιοι καταμενουσιν εν ταις νεοτταις, αδυνατουντες ιπτασθα: οι δε τωτων παιδες, &c.*—PHILO *De Decalogo*, p. 761, *mih*. † NEANDER in FRANZII *Historiâ Animal.*

‡ PAUSANIE *Græciæ Descriptio*, lib. x.

§ Lib. v. cap. 4.

|| *Nat. Hist.* lib. vii.

which our modern painters copy. And this was the more notable, because this now old Cimón did by his own bonds purchase his father's freedom. The Chinese, in their natural religion, do to this day pay their gratitude to their parents with the greatest strictness; as I learn from Spizelius in a late learned tract,* wherein he shows, they persuade themselves [that] the perfection of man doth consist in this, both in respect to the surviving parents and the deceased, for whom they are longer in solemn mourning than any other people. Before I leave this head, I cannot pass-over a prodigious instance of the contrary vice; I mean, monstrous ingratitude to parents. It is the unthankful son of a more kind father, who had made-over his estate to all his sons, with a reserve of a right by turns to come and take his diet at their tables. This unnatural wretch, being at dinner, and having a goose before him, espied his father coming, and set the goose underneath the table, till his father was gone again; then, as is related, going to take-up the hidden goose, found it wonderfully turned into a great toad, which leaped upon his face, and, notwithstanding all his striving, could not be removed, till it had stifled him.† Let children learn hence, to take heed of being ungrateful to their parents, for fear of the dreadful consequence thereof. Thus we have seen three particulars of children's active obedience: there is yet another, which is more passive; and that is,

4. *Submission or subjection to parental discipline.*—With all “lowliness of mind,” (Phil. ii. 3.) acknowledging their coercive authority. And therefore are children obliged with patience to bear their parents' rebukes, whether verbal or real, considering in charity they design good. The ignorance, imperfection, and corrupt inclinations of children, born in sin, require parents' animadversion, and the children's submission both to their *admonitions* and *corrections*.

(1.) Their *admonitions*.—When in their watchful inspection they give check unto exorbitant behaviour, and lay restraints upon their children, who should indeed stand in great awe of those reproofs and threats, which do arise from parents' displeasure. When Jonadab's posterity were tempted to act in complaisance with others, their father's forewarning kept them in awe, that they did not violate his appointment. (Jer. xxxv. 6.) And so, upon doing amiss, an ingenuous child will amend. There should be shame, upon a father's frown and discountenance. (Num. xii. 14.) Yea, though parents should be out in the matter, as well as manner, and be too quick in their rebukes, as it should seem Jacob was with Joseph for his dreams, not considering what signal motion of God was in them; yet the children should bear it as Joseph did, and as Jonathan did his father's unkind exprobration. (Gen. xxxvii. 10; 1 Sam. xx. 30, 31.) It is true, Jesus took-up his mother in one instance; but it was in his heavenly Father's cause, which he was concerned-in as God-Man. (Luke ii. 49.) Yet in other cases, they should not only bear, but amend upon, admonition; as Moses did upon his father-in-law's dislike of that task he took upon himself alone: (Exod. xviii. 13—24 :) whereas, on the other hand, Eli's sons slighted their father's reproof; (1 Sam. ii. 25;) and such others there are who scorn to be told of their

* *De Re literatid Sinensium*, p. 243.

† *LUTHERI Loci Communes, de Amore erga Parentes, cum aliis.*

faults, though they lose God's favour by it, and are accounted "fools" by him who is never out in his censure; when the submiss are "prudent," going on in the way of life. (Prov. xiii. 1; iii. 23, 34, 35; xv. 5.) Many children are impatient of just restraints in their meats, drinks, apparel, and recreations, not considering the advantage of self-denial and patience learned betimes; whereas others can say experimentally, they had been undone if they had not been early curbed. Monica, Austin's mother, having in her minority been educated to temperance, when growing up and getting from under that severer tuition, by the insinuation of a jocund companion, was drawn to drink her whole draughts; till, upon the upbraiding of her associate, she reformed herself, and observed her former rules of temperance.* Reverend Mr. Greenham used to say, "Be most moderate in those things which thine appetite liketh best, and check thy too much greediness of them." And another said well,† "That he had rather be infirm than delicate; since weakness only can hurt the body alone, but delicacies may at once corrupt both body and mind, and, more than that, may also render any one unjust, by reason they make him covetous to get that which may maintain them, and also dull and regardless of the word of God, and the service of his friends and country." I have in my own observation seen children prove well, who have submitted to the prudent restraints and admonitions of their watchful parents and guides as to these things; and others ruined, who, when they have been told of their faults, have swelled and raged against those that have loved them best; yea, in a most unchristian manner. So necessary it is to submit to parents' admonitions. So also to,

(2.) Their *corrections* or real chastisements.—Whether by stripes or other punishments inflicted; since we should imagine [that] parents come to this sharp and unpleasant work, out of a principle of love, with an aim at their children's good; and it is looked upon in scripture a ruled case, that reverence with submission is paid to the parents of our flesh, when under their rod, which we are to bear, and, upon the feeling of it, to amend what is amiss, as some kind of satisfaction; whereas disdain and stubbornness spoils all, and, if it be persisted in, may sometimes occasion parents to call in the *posse magistratús*.‡ (Prov. xiii. 24; xxii. 15; xxix. 17; Heb. xii. 9; Deut. xxi. 18—21.) The Greek word *εὐσεβειομενία* in the Epistle to the Hebrews, translated, "We gave them reverence," doth import that we children, when faulty, under our fathers' frowns and stripes, turned our faces with shame and blushing at our unworthy acts, not able to look them in the face; as the prodigal upon his return; (Luke xv. 21; Titus ii. 8;) which accords, as some have noted,§ to the Hebrew word, *יָצַב* which is in this case "to submit with humility" to them in this relation: because, though we cannot bear that others should beat and scourge us, yet our parents,—as having power upon a just cause to punish by virtue of their superiority and our dependence upon them, whose end is, or should be, their children's reformation, and therefore is in mercy to prevent further sin and misery,—in compliance with God's

* AUGUSTINI *Confessiones*, lib. i. cap. 9.
 esse, &c.—CITANTO STEPHANO GUAZZIO *De*
 † "The power of the magistrates."—EDIT.

† *Maluisse se infirmum, quàm delicatum
 mutud et civili Conversatione*, p. 376.
 § LAWSON on the Hebrews.

command they correct their offspring, to save it from hell; though many an inconsiderate child may at present conceive the father correcting to be a severe judge, when, as to intended amendment, he is indeed a loving father; so that, though it seem to be jarring and harsh music, disagreeable to the faulty patient, yet it will sound sweeter to the judicious ear, than the melody of a luscious and disorderly indulgence. Ingenuous children have acknowledged the benefit of paternal correction, especially after they have sought to God by prayer, that God would sanctify the rod to their good. That was a good practical answer of one of Zeno's scholars,* who to his father asking what wisdom he had learned by being so long abroad, said, he was able to show it at any time; which he did to the purpose not long after, when his father chastising him with strokes, he took it quietly and patiently, showing that he could sustain the displeasure of his parent without any untoward repartees. In short, children should in all these duties deport themselves with piety toward their parents, being [seeing] in that relation they bear the image of God, as Creator, Upholder, and Governor of the world: so that resistance, yea, surly and rude replies, are a token of ill behaviour under government, and do disguise children of the most comely structure in the world. Thus of the first general in children's duties.

(II.) The second is concerning *the latitude and extent of children's obedience*: "in all things," *κατα πάντα, in my text*.—We cannot imagine this is so universal and absolute as obedience to God; or that the obligation lies in any thing beside the mind of the supreme Governor of heaven and earth, or dissonant to the holy will of our Lord; for only that obedience is required which is well-pleasing and grateful unto him: so that the power demanding it must have a warrant from him. Unless we should embrace the horrid opinion of the daring atheist in his Leviathan,† who impiously affirms, that "if a Christian be commanded by his lawful prince or sovereign," whose authority was first paternal, "to say he doth not believe in Christ, it is lawful to obey:" which atheistical tenet doth either postpone the command of God to the command of man, which is most abominable; or, without further inquiry, doth account it a divine precept, which would prefer a hellish error to the heavenly verity, overturn the whole Christian institution, and set-up diabolical adoration.‡ It would introduce an infallible spirit in all civil, as the Papists pretend to have in their ecclesiastical, government, yea, quite exterminate all regards of conscience, and raze-out the common notions of good and evil: whereas all subjection which is "not of faith," that is, agrees not with the judgment of conscience, propounding its dictates under the reason of the divine will, "is sin." (Rom. xiii. 1, 4, 5; xiv. 23.) God is the only arbitrary and absolute Lawgiver. (James iv. 12.) And as Constantius, the father of Constantine the emperor, affirmed *they* could not be faithful subjects unto him, *who* easily contemned God and their conscience; neither children be truly obedient to their parents, who do so. Our obedience, then, ought to be only in all things acceptable to our supreme Lord and Master. And therefore the apostle hath elsewhere expressed the command to "obey in the Lord," which is the same as "unto the

* *Citante* STEPHANO GUAZZIO *De mutuâ et civili Conversatione.* † Chap. xlii. p. 234. ‡ DR. TEMPLAR, *Idea Theol. Leviath.* pp. 96, 97, 101, 102, 251.

Lord," and "unto Christ," "fearing God," in opposition to the pleasing of men. (Eph. vi. 1, 5, 6; Col. iii. 22, 23.) This doth moderate the commands of parents, and regulate the obedience of children, wives, and servants. It is true, had parents kept their original rectitude, their commands would never have been other than consonant to the divine pleasure and law of nature; but the fall, *that* disordered that harmonious and happy constitution; and now their precepts do often thwart or jar with the will of Him who is sovereign Lord, whom to please is the determination or limit, as well as motive, to children's obedience. This agrees with the sense of archbishop Anselm, five hundred and eighty years ago expounding my text. How it will relish now with those of his order in an hypothesis of theirs, I determine not: but he saith, that natural and ecclesiastical, carnal and spiritual, parents are to be obeyed in all things only in the Lord: "That is," saith he, "in those things only which are not beside," or "do not exceed, the precept of the Lord; because it is pleasing unto God, that in such a manner we should obey them."* It should seem he held then according to truth, that if a superior should exceed his commission by imposing any preter-evangelical canon for doctrine or practice, the inferiors' non-conformity thereunto was no transgression; for in obeying the commands of a subordinate power we are primarily to take care, that the rights of the absolute Sovereign remain inviolable. (Acts iv. 19; v. 29; Exod. i. 17.) Seeing God gave the parent that authority he hath, in requiring that which is displeasing to God he hath none: and as the child is to obey him, so he is to obey God, without whose warrant his child is not obliged to active obedience, but passive, or submission by suffering the penalty with cheerfulness: that is pleasing to God in such a case. For the truth is, "This is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully:" *Τοῦτο χάρις παρὰ Θεοῦ*. "This is acceptable with God," whatever acceptance it find among men; "there is a *grace* in this behaviour before God." (1 Peter ii. 19, 20.) Now the great thing children are to look at in their obedience to parents is, that it be "well-pleasing" to God; (so saith my text;) and if they obey without his warrant, who can secure them they shall do what is acceptable with him? God is to have an affection predominant to that we have for our parents: (Matt. x. 37; Luke xiv. 26; ix. 59—62:) we must not dishonour him in pretension to honour them.

In things impious or dishonest, parents have no authority: herein disobedience would be just, and obacquioussness criminal. Hence we find Acrotatus commended amongst the ancients, because, when his parents had required of him to do an unjust thing, he answered, "I know you are willing I should do that which is just, for so you taught me to do: I will therefore do that which you *desire* I should, but what you *bid* me I will not do." A denial in this case is to be expressed in all humble language. Hierocles, though no Christian, hath notable things about the extent of children's obedience: for he, arguing in this case, *Πειθόμενοι δε πάντα γονευσί, &c.*: "If in all things we must obey our parents, how shall we go astray from piety, and other virtues, if, through the pravity of their manners, they lead us into those things which are not altogether

* *In his tantummodo quæ præceptum Domini non excedunt, &c.*—*Comment. in Coloss.*"

honest and commendable? if sometime their will be not consonant to the divine laws?" he gives this answer, amongst others: "If indeed the divine law draw you to one thing, and your parents to another, in this disagreement of wills it is more excellent to choose those things which are better, and in those only to be inobservant of the commands of parents, wherein even they themselves obey not the divine laws; for it cannot be, that he who is resolved to observe the rules of virtue, can consent to them by whom they are neglected: but in all other things we ought, as much as we can, to honour our parents; namely, in bodily observance, and a most ready and free supply of things necessary, since they have right to use those they have brought-forth and nourished," &c.* Neither will the parents' unkindness be enough to discharge the child from obedience, which is to be yielded in all the circumstances of their lives: and that considering,

(III.) *The great reason to engage in the duties of children's obedience in the Lord*, is undoubtedly the most cogent motive [that] can be urged to the performance of all generous actions; namely, *because it is well-pleasing to the Lord*.—So it is express: God himself in covenant is taken with it, with this chain on a child's neck, (as I may allude to that of Christ to his spouse, Canticles iv. 9,) because it sets-forth the beauty and loveliness of a child, as a child. The Lord hath given it in charge to all Christian children here in my text, and elsewhere, (Eph. vi. 1,) as a vigorous enforcement of the fifth commandment. The supreme authority of our heavenly Father, who hath an uncontrollable dominion over us, makes any duties which he requires highly reasonable. But He who is a "rewarder of them that diligently seek him," (Heb. xi. 6,) assures the dutiful, he takes much pleasure in these relative duties; that they are not only pleasing, but "well-pleasing," to him. Certainly it should hugely raise the spirits of all ingenuous children to be most solicitous in filling-up their relation. Dear children, I am hemmed-in, as it were, by what I am yet to say for parents' duties, that I cannot here dilate myself by descending into particulars to persuade the embracing of an exhortation to these duties: but if you be Christians indeed who understand your interest, I can give you the quintessence of all motives within the bounds of my text. Consider it well, I beseech you; it is this: By your accurateness in these duties you do that which is *ευαρεστον τω Κυριω*, "well-pleasing to the Lord," to your and my Lord and Master. Do this, please the Lord, and you do all: "this is right," *δικαιον*. (Eph. vi. 1.) Whether present or absent, that you "may be accepted of him," or "well-pleasing to him," *ευαρεστοι αυτω ειναι*, (2 Cor. v. 9,) is the highest you can attain to.

What can I, what need I, say more? I could tell you, In pleasing of God you do that which doth or should please your parents, and will be most pleasant to yourselves; and then you must needs be happy, when God and you are pleased. As in the keeping all God's commandments there is an "exceeding great reward;" (Psalm xix. 11; Gen. xv. 1;) so this hath a primacy in the promise. (Eph. vi. 1; Prov. iv. 10, 22.) Upon that account it is profitable and beneficial, yea, it is

* *Ει δε προς αλλο μεν ο θεος νομος, προς αλλο δε οι γονεις φεροιεν, &c.*—*HIEROCLEIS Comment. in aur. Pythag. Carm. p 53.*

“ honest and honourable before God,” *καλον και αποδεκτον*, (1 Tim. v. 4,) every way right, agreeable to God’s positive law, the law of nature, and the law of nations. It is the parents’ due as in the place of God : they bear his image in their parental authority and relation ; (Mal. i. 6 ; 1 Sam. ii. 30 ;) they deserve it, we owe it to them as a debt. So that disobedience to parents is against scripture, the light of nature, the common equity of all nations, and renders such persons unworthy the Christian name, and worse than infidels and brutes. Such were Hophni and Phinehas, Absalom, and Adonijah. (1 Sam. ii. 25, 34 ; 2 Sam. xviii. 9 ; 1 Kings ii. 25.) Have you then, my beloved children, any respect to God, his good pleasure, or displeasure ? to your parents, their right or wrong, their blessing or cursing ? to yourselves, looking for recompence, or fearing vengeance ? Consider, then, I pray you, what you have to do. It is no arbitrary thing I am persuading to, but that which is required by an eternal, indispensable law, fortified with the most signal rewards and punishments ; yea, even in this state, as you may find in the annals of most dominions. Yet further : you Christian children are now taken into a covenant-relation with God, as the Jewish children were under that pedagogy. (Rom. ix. 4 ; Deut. iv. 2 ; Eph. vi. i. 2 ; Micah vii. 20 ; Deut. xxxii. 7—9 ; 2 Chron. i. 9—11 ; Psalm lxxviii. 5, 6.) Consider, I beseech you, how much you are indebted to your parents for pleading the covenant and promises on your behalf. (Psalm cxii. 1, 2 ; cxv. 13, 14 ; Prov. xx. 7 ; Gen. xlix. 26.) This obedience to parents is commended in scripture ; you will get a lasting reputation by it ; God and men honour the obedient graced with this ornament. (Ruth iv. 15, 16 ; 1 Sam. ii. 30 ; Prov. i. 9 ; xiii. 18 ; Jer. xxxv. 18, 19.) The examples of Shem and Japheth, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, &c., are in scripture recorded to their perpetual honour. In heathen story, the piety of Æneas to his aged father, and the obedience of others, are celebrated. This is the way to have the good things of this and a better life entailed upon posterity. (Gen. ix. 23, 26, 27.) It is equity [that] you should do as you would have them to do to you in the like circumstances. The philosopher* thought none could ever give parents honour answerable to their merit ; that there is no equalizing their descending, growing love. They were the instruments of children’s having affections, because of their being. They may then claim your best affections and actions. Upon which account it is that want of natural affection, as it is the most monstrous,† so it is the most dreadfully punished by God. (1 Sam. iv. 11 ; Deut. xxi. 20, 21.) Yea, and for parricides the old Romans had a strange and unusual punishment, *in culeum dejicere*, “ to put them ” alive “ into a great leathern sack,” made of an ox-hide, with a live dog, a cock, a viper, and an ape ; (at first it was with serpents ;) after the murderers of parents had been made bloody with scourging, [they were] then sowed up close, and cast into Tiber, or the next river ; that, whilst alive, they might begin to want the use of all the elements, not having the benefit of the heavens while they lived, nor the burial of the earth when dead.‡ This shows how odious this

* ARISTOTELIS *Ethica*, lib. viii. cap. 16, sect. 14.
lib. v. cont. 4, *in fine*. *Instit.* vi. *De publico Judicio*.
on this subject in Vol. I. of “ the Morning Exercises,” p. 38, 8vo edition, 1844.—EDIT.

† SENECA, *Controversiarum*
‡ See more copious remarks

crime was in the height of it to mere heathen men also. Be sure, the beginning of it in the want of natural affection is very displeasing to God; (Gen. vi. 3; Judges xiv. 3;) but the obedience I have been describing is very amiable to his eye. It keeps from evil, and disposeth to reverence God himself. (Lev. xix. 2—4.) It helps to be good subjects, and conduceth to the welfare of our country. God makes choice discoveries of himself to obedient ones in filial duties, as he did eminently to Jacob; being peculiarly present with them who do “choose the things that please” him, and lay “hold of” his “covenant,” as those children do who obey their parents in all things in the Lord. (Gen. xxviii. 7, 10—15; Isai. lvi. 4.) All encouragement lies in this,—obedience is “well-pleasing unto the Lord.” But it is more than time, now I have put children upon their duties, following the apostle, that I come to,

II. My next general proposed, which is *the office of parents, enforced from the special consideration of that [which] the apostle suggests to move to it.*—I shall, (I.) Speak to *the office*; and then, (II.) A little to *the enforcement of it* here.

(I.) Concerning *the office*.—We may, by an affection of a trope, (*μειωσις*;) so expound the provocation in my text forbidden Christian parents, that in a short manner of speech the negative doth emphatically intend more than is expressed, as including the positive, wherein the office of parents’ provident care and well-treating of their children, being of great weight and extent, is connoted to us. The charge which the apostle gives here to all “the fathers of our flesh” from “the Father of mercies,” according to the original word, *επειζητε*, is not to “irritate” their children; which is somewhat different from the prohibition to the Ephesians, *Μη παροργιζητε*, “Provoke not your children to wrath;” (Eph. vi. 4;) this in my text seeming to deny more generally. So that he allows not of any kind of abuse of the paternal authority, which may justly irritate or provoke the passions of children,—an ill effect produced in their hearts, and proceeding from any mal-administration of the father’s power, which in rigour is more apt to exceed its bounds than the mother’s, either in subtracting a fit allowance for nourishment and nurture, not a usual fault, which yet the apostle taxeth, (1 Tim. v. 8,) and Quinctilian complained of,* or loading them with impious and inhuman commands without necessity, compelling to sordid and servile works, not fit for ingenuous children, but slaves; or treating them, for not just hitting their humour, with contumelious words, pouring-forth curses out of that mouth that should bless, since the name of father breathes sweetness and benignity; (Matt. xiv. 8; 1 Sam. xx. 30, 31;) bitter words, and the language of a barbarous enemy, will be apt to exasperate. When upon any little enormities a father shows himself morose and sharp; it may be, beating his children to gratify his own lust and rage, or inflicting other penalties no way proportioned to the fault, if any; chastening not “with the rod of men,” or “the stripes of the children of men,” that is, not in a humane way, with gentleness and moderation; (1 Sam. xx. 33; 2 Sam. vii. 14; Deut. xxv. 1, 2;) or by imperiousness for some self-respects, as worldlings impose upon their children in the great concern of changing their condition, &c.; be sure

* *De Institut. Orat. lib. i. cap. 2.*

it is contrary to the prohibition, which imports that the parents' conduct should be moderated betwixt the extremes of an unwarrantable indulgence and rigour, that it may tend to their children's benefit, and their own satisfaction. They should so deport themselves in this good government, that their children may both love and honour their presence; not being too fond, lest their children should not fear them; nor too stern, lest they should fear them too much.

The moving principle to be premised, which influenceth parents, and inclineth them effectually to exert a provident care in all the branches of it, is an inbred natural affection of love, which did act Abraham, Isaac, and Rebekah in the Old Testament, and is called-forth in the New, as the fundamental requisite to sway parents in the exercise of their authority, and a due performance of their relative office in all the severals of it, so that they may indeed adorn the gospel. (Gen. xxii. 2; xxv. 28; Titus ii. 3; Rom. i. 31.)

Out of this inward principle arise DUES from parents to their children, MORE GENERAL, namely, 1. *Prayer*, and, 2. *Good behaviour*; and MORE PARTICULAR, with respect to the, 1. *Birth*, 2. *Nourishment*, 3. *Education*, 4. *Disposal*, and, 5. *Maintenance of their children*; and, 6. *Their own departure from them*: all according to the dictates of human and Christian prudence.

1. *The more general and previous duties, wherein parents are concerned for the sake of their children as well as themselves, are prayer and good behaviour.*—Which give success to all the following particular ones respectively, and without which they will not be well discharged, so as they should be, by a Christian parent, who is obliged to “rule his own house well, having his children in subjection with all honesty,” *μετα πασης σεμνοτητος*, or, as we render it, “with all gravity.” (1 Tim. iii. 4, 5.) I know not well how to omit, yet can but touch on, these.

(1.) *Prayer.*—Parents are to make their requests known to God “without ceasing,” (1 Thess. v. 17,) upon all occasions, for all things, throughout the whole course of their children's lives; they are concerned to be daily orators at the throne of grace, that God would make *their* children *his* children, and confer upon them all temporal and spiritual blessings. This is requisite to the having of children, and the having of them good. It is a mercy to have them, as Isaac, Hannah, and others had, as a return to prayer; which is also a means to have them good; since the sincere parent's prayer may reach his child in every particle of its life; in the womb, as Rebekah's did hers; and in the world, at the ingress with Zachariah's, progress with Job's, and egress with David's, who made his petition more fervent with fasting; and when the parent is leaving his children, as Isaac. (Gen. xvii. 18—20; xxv. 21, 22; xxvii. 4, 27; 1 Sam. i. 10; 1 Chron. xxii. 12; xxix. 12; Psalm lxxii.; Luke i. 64; Job i. 5; 2 Sam. xii. 16.) All which show the benefit of paternal requests for the fruit of their bodies. Monica, Augustine's mother, was very earnest, frequent, and pathetic in her addresses to God for her husband and son; and she had gracious returns for both. How wicked, then, are those parents, who follow their children, yea, without provocation too, with imprecations and direful curses instead of prayers!

(2.) *Good behaviour before God and man, in love to their children.*—To

follow prayer in upright walking, is the best course parents can take to entail a blessing upon their children, and make them good indeed. The seed of "the just" or merciful "man," who "walketh in his integrity, shall be blessed after him." (Prov. xx. 7; iii. 22.) The generation of the righteous have certainly the surest deed of entail for inheriting of blessings that can be made, since God hath given promises thereof unto gracious persons, who really walk with him and before him according to his holy statutes. (1 Kings xi. 12; Psalm cxii. 2; Deut. iv. 8, 9; v. 29; Gen. xvii. 1, 7; Acts ii. 39.) It is the Lord's usual way to confer his favours in this channel; so that parents are concerned to carry themselves well upon this account. And what influence their good behaviour hath on their children, as they set fair patterns to them, may be touched on afterwards. I hasten to speak to,

2. *The more particular duties of parents, with their several respects;* as,

(1.) *To the birth of the child.*—Whilst it is yet but an embryo, there is not only requisite prayer, (which was presupposed,) with thanksgiving, for the sanctifying the fruit of the body, as Jeremiah and John were; (1 Tim. iv. 4, 5; Jer. i. 5; Luke i. 15;) but also a tender care for the preservation of life. Both parents are concerned, in order to a better observance of the fifth commandment, to have regard to what is implied and required in the sixth and seventh commandment. When God hath "curiously made" the babe "in secret, in the lowest parts of the earth," it is to be regarded, even before it see the light. (Psalm cxxxix. 13, 15.) Manoah's wife had a positive order in this case for the safety of herself and child, when it was conceived; and her good husband was desirous, as appears by his inquiry, to be assistant to her therein. (Judges xiii. 4, 11, 12.) The rule given her by the angel of the Lord respected temperance; forbearance of wine was ordered both for her own and the child's good. Upon such an account the philosopher determined in his "Politics," that pregnant women should be careful as to their aliment: and elsewhere particularly commends milk, and not wine, as more fit nourishment for many bodies, wherein he conceits the latter may occasion diseases.* As for nourishment, the mother should be prudently careful; and the father, in special case of a real longing appetite, should endeavour seasonable supplies: so there should be a joint care for a provision of things necessary and convenient to entertain the babe into the world, when brought forth. Though the virgin Mary was in a low estate, and necessitated to travel at the emperor's command, yet she was not unprovided of "swaddling clothes." (Luke ii. 7.) All this gives check to those mothers, who without a call frisk and jangle about anyhow at their pleasure, and are intemperate; yea, against the apostle's charge, and to the disparagement of their Christian profession, for he would have the matrons by good example to "teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands and their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good," &c. (Titus ii. 4, 5.) And this is more especially requisite for child-bearing women; since the Romans observed that Coriolanus's niece miscarried, by being too strait-laced; the sister of Curius, by much dancing; and the sister

* Ἡ τοῦ γαλακτοῦ πληθουσα τροφή μαλιστα οικεια τοις σωμασιν, αἰνουτερα δε δια τα νοσηματα.—ARISTOTELIS *Politica*, lib. vii.; et *de Republica*, lib. viii. cap. 17.

of Caius Duilius, by immoderate eating of various dainties. It is indeed granted, that carelessness of making provision of necessaries for clothing their new-born infants is the fault of a few in our age; wherein, under the notion of clouts, or cloth-trenchers, things of the greatest value by some of mean quality are found out, to such a height of curiosity sometimes, as appears not very consonant to the simplicity and humility of the gospel. It were, I confess, ostrich-like to suffer these sure pledges of nature to be without conveniences, or to expose them, (like some of the ancient Greeks,) as they are sometimes in this great city, at the doors in the street; but to make them, peacock-like, to surpass in finery above their rank, can be no symptom of humility; and then, too, when the parents would have it thought, they engage them to forsake all the pomps and vanities of the world. But this may respect the next duty, namely,

(2.) *To give the child nourishment, when it appears in the world, for the preservation of its natural life, and to seek that it may be spiritually alive, parents should use the best means nature and grace do prompt to them.*—For the former, that breast-milk is ordinarily the most proper aliment, nature teacheth; as also, for the most part, that the mother's is most agreeable: likewise that she is obliged to nurse her own babe, (whatever softnesses many delicate dames do now cherish,) the scriptures, as well as principles of reason, do evince. Unless she be excused in some few instances; as in case of necessity, or greater charity; namely, when the impediment to her giving suck is natural disability, a really great weakness, or an affliction with a disease, which might be transmitted with the milk; or in case of the public concerns of a kingdom, for securing of succession in the royal throne; or, &c. For natural instinct—which is seen in these springing fontinels, the breasts, (Canticles iv. 5.) unto this end, for giving that food better digested unto the child, when come out, with which it was fed in the womb—hath reason super-added in man: as marriage to him (especially under the Christian constitution) becomes an ordinance of God, which in the mixture of other creatures is merely natural.* Now, to pervert the end and designation of nature, with the necessities thereof, is in effect to violate those reasonable inducements which do oblige conscience in that which is comely, and not to correspond with the design of justice, charity, and sobriety: a matter certainly very unaccountable for those who are bound seriously to think on, so as to do, “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;” or “if there be any” other “virtue.” (Phil. iv. 8.) Certainly, the thing can be no disparagement to them of the best quality, but a credit, only because it agrees not with the modern mode of the Italian and French; amongst whom, the great ones often suckle their children upon vile women, and sometimes upon strumpets, whose manners are drawn-in with their milk. Chrysostom thought it a reproach that any women should blush to be nurses,† who were become mothers. The Spartan law was, that the noblest, even the kings' wives, should nurse the first child. Historians show [that] queens have

* DR. JEREMY TAYLOR'S "Great Exemplar," p. 1, sect. 3. † Homil. in Psalmos,

done it.* The noblest amongst the ancient Romans and Germans did it : and one of the Cæsars thought it a prodigy in those days, that a Roman lady refused to suckle her own infant, and yet gave suck to a puppy, that her milk might be more artificially dried-up.

But I fear, the wantonness and pride of some mothers, and the ill-nature of some fathers, who love their ease and quiet, may render this discourse displeasing to them : yet, had I time to enlarge, for that reason it would be the more necessary in the cases not excepted. However, the blessed Virgin giving Jesus milk from the bottles of his own filling, may commend it with reputation enough to any Christian mother, who seriously desires to practise the choice lesson of self-denial. For the scriptures, consonant to the common principles of right reason, do either take this duty for granted (where no just exceptions) of mothers' nursing their own children for a ruled case ; as in the father-of-the-faithful's wife, Sarah, who was a very honourable woman, and others ; (Gen. xxi. 7 ;) or else they give us examples of mothers who were commendable patterns, as were Hannah, the Virgin Mary, David's mother, and that affectionate one who stood before Solomon to plead for her child ; (Psalm xxii. 9 ; Canticles viii. 1 ; Luke i. 28 ; xi. 27 ; 1 Sam. i. 22 ; 1 Kings iii. 21 ;) or afford us such texts as by consequence do infer it, as in Jacob's blessing, and a contrary curse on others, the charge to Manoah's wife to avoid things hurtful to her milk, considering her constitution and the climate she lived in. (Gen. xlix. 25 ; Hosea ix. 14 ; Judges xiii. 4.) The apostle gives it as the character of good women that they have "nursed up children," *ετακνυροφησεν* (1 Tim. v. 10 ;) as Moses's mother did him, awaiting Providence to perform this natural office to her own child ; and was not, as the weeping prophet laments some in his time, worse than "sea-monsters, like the ostriches in the wilderness." (Lam. iv. 3.) I do not remember in holy writ that any mother put-forth her own child to suck : and though there be mention made of Rebekah's nurse, and others, (Gen. xxiv. 59 ; xxxv. 8 ; 2 Sam. iv. 4 ; 2 Kings xi. 2,) yet in all probability they were common dry-nurses, or nurse-keeping women, such as had skill to be about child-bearing women, fit to advise and attend them. Be sure, Rebekah had no child till about twenty years after she was married : and if she, or any, had milch-nurses, it may be, their own mothers might die in child-bed, or not be able to perform their office. But Naomi, when old and past child-bearing, became a dry-nurse unto Ruth's child, being assistant to her daughter at her lying-in. (Ruth i. 12 ; iv. 16.) When, though there be some pain in suckling, (however, less I suppose in following the natural way of laying the child to,) yet there is also a pleasure and benefit, which may well sweeten, and usually compensate in ordinary cases.

The careful father should contribute his endeavours to promote all this, and accommodate his wife in the nursery with all convenient requisites to preserve the temporal life of the child. But then, there is also a care with reference to the spiritual life of the child to attend this, which Christian parents are obliged-to by dedicating of their infant seed unto the Lord, according to his appointment for the solemn enrolling of his disciples ; (Matt. xxviii. 19 ; Acts xxi. 5, 6 ; xvi. 33 ; x. 47 ;) which

* HERODOTUS, &c.

matriculation of a child should not be unseasonably delayed, but performed in a due Christian manner; since obedience in the Lord will be required of it, as soon as it is able to do any thing; (Eph. vi. 1;) which implies that, as Hannah dedicated her Samuel to the Lord in covenant under the Old-Testament dispensation, so it is to be devoted to the Lord, and consecrated to his use, as he hath instituted under the New-Testament dispensation; and that is a solemn enrolment by baptism amongst Christians, who by this rite are signally declared to be in covenant with him, his disciples, and members of his spiritual household, who in that relation are to yield obedience unto their parents, in him, and as unto him. (1 Sam. i. 28; Gal. iii. 27; Rom. vi. 3, 4; 1 Cor. xii. 13; John iv. 1, 2; Deut. xxix. 10—12; Acts xvi. 33.) How else can we so easily imagine that Christian children should be obliged to obey their parents in the Lord, but as they are by their parents, who have most right to them, devoted to his service? I confess I cannot understand. Now, it is highly reasonable that they who have been instruments to bring a stain upon their children, should also be as instrumental as they can, even as believers under the Old Testament were, to bring them unto God in the use of the means he hath now prescribed, to get them washed with the blood of sprinkling, by giving them unto God in the covenant, as they then did. (Rom. v. 12, 16, 17; xi. 17, 20; Eph. ii. 1, 2; Gen. xvii. 10—13; Matt. xviii. 13, 14; xix. 13, 14; Luke xviii. 15, 16; Titus iii. 5.) For, undoubtedly, under this gracious dispensation there is no abridgment of any privilege to the infant-seed of believers, which they before enjoyed, so that they should not now be brought to the Lord, that he may own and bless them, and the promises be pleaded on *their* behalf *whose* parents are heirs; * forasmuch as the father's right to the promises gives the children some kind of right to the same inheritance, yea, the promise and precept do answer each other as a deed and its counterpart. (Gal. iii. 14, 27, 29; 1 Cor. vii. 14; Acts ii. 38, 39; Matt. xxviii. 19; 1 Cor. i. 16; Col. ii. 12, 13; Gen. xvii. 10, 11; Jer. xxxii. 39; Isai. xlv. 3.) There was no need of particularizing every subject to be baptized, any other than those who were "discipled;" it being so well known who had the covenant-seal by the common practice of the Jews under the former dispensation of the covenant. And now the Lord Jesus Christ, in commissioning his ministers to "disciple" and "baptize all nations," (then all in them discipled,) chiefly designed to instruct them, in what manner and form they should baptize those that belong to his kingdom, namely, "into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," which had not been before used, but now, upon the discharging of circumcision, was every where to be observed. Thus Christian parents are at first to contribute their endeavours toward their children's spiritual life. And for this temporal life, further they are also to provide food and raiment; and to allow fit and honest recreation for their children, to keep them in health, and physic, when they are sick, (equity and necessity oblige to it,) with a solicitous care to preserve their lives from dangers, as much as may be in their power, and to see, according to their quality and calling, that they be accommodated with conveniences for body and mind. (Gen. xxi. 15; xxxvii. 3; xlii. 2; Exod,

* *Favores sunt ampliandi.* "Still greater favours are to be bestowed."—EDIT.

ii. 2, 3; xiii. 3: Matt. vii. 9—11; Zech. viii. 5; 1 Kings xiv. 1, 2; 2 Kings iv. 22; John iv. 47; Matt. xvii. 15; Deut. i. 31.)

(3.) Hence another particular of parental care is *education of their children*.—Which is a very comprehensive duty, begins early, and lasts till their children be emancipated. Our apostle, in another epistle, (Eph. vi. 4,) reduceth this to two heads: the **FIRST**, *Nurture*, and, the **SECOND**, *Admonition of the Lord*. Some conceive the former doth more respect manners or civility; the latter, doctrine or piety; though it is not necessary to take them so restrictively.

FIRST. Christian parents are charged to educate or bring-up their children in *nurture*.—*Παιδεία*, that is, such a kind of domestic learning as befitteth a child; according to that of the wise man, “Train up a child in the way he should go.”* (Prov. xxii. 6.) Sow the seed, and then expect the fruit: the first impressions are likely to abide, though at the very first not understood. The rule, it seems, is, Teach a child. “Neither can any one learn that perfectly, which he begins late to learn,” said the orator.† Parents should timely inure their children to good behaviour, before they degenerate more; they should consult their temper, observe their ingenuity and humour, to find-out their inclinations, and fit them for the service of their generation in such a particular calling as may be found most suitable to them.

And this nurturing of them is to be effected by giving them, (i.) *Teaching examples*, (ii.) *Rules of morality*, and, (iii.) *Moderate chastisements*.

(i.) *Teaching examples*.—By which, those who converse much with little ones may perceive, they are capable of receiving good or harm before they are able to understand other instructions.‡ Christian parents should be wary, then, as to their own deportment before their little ones, that it may not be as a spotted, but a clear, glass. When they daily observe their parents to perform actions “decently” and with a grace, it hath a great force to form their manners. (Rom. xiii. 13; 1 Thess. iv. 12; Phil. iv. 8.) Seeing their parents in all family-duties to express reverence by their countenance, gesture, and pronounciation, every one taking their place according to their quality and degree, these doth early instil a silent deportment and a kind of devotion into these little ones, before they can reach the reason of it. So that really Christian parents are concerned for this purpose to stand in awe § as much of their little children as of any in the world; lest, because of that love these bear to those from whom they do descend, judging what *they* do to be right, they should come to have their judgment perverted by their ill precedents. Hence it was, that the ancient Romans did, with the greatest diligence possible, take care to manage all their affairs in the presence of their children with all modesty and discretion; and it became a proverbial saying, that “the temperance of the parent was the greatest precept to the children.” And indeed after, when they come to further use of reason, (I must pack-up things together,) good or bad examples of

* *A teneris assuescere multum*.—VIRGILII *Georgic.* lib. ii. 272. For a translation of this passage see p. 217.—EDIT.

† *Nec perfectè illud quisquam discet, quod serò discere incipit.* ‡ *Plus docent exempla quàm præcepta.* “Examples are of greater efficacy than precepts in teaching.”—EDIT.

§ *Maxima reverentia debetur pueris*.—JUVENALIS *Satyra*, sat. xiv. 44. For a translation see p. 125.—EDIT.

parents have a very powerful influence upon children, as well as others, to breed them to a good or bad behaviour. The young cock crows as he hears the old one. In blessing or cursing, playing and blaspheming, we may perceive children, even before they can speak perfectly or go strongly, forward enough to learn somewhat agreeable to what they hear and see. As Titus then was in all things to "show himself a pattern of good works," (Titus ii. 7,) so should parents in their families. (1 Tim. iii. 4; 2 Tim. i. 5.)

We find in scripture that a decorum in actions hath greatly affected lookers-on; (1 Kings x. 5; Job xxxii. 4—6; Gen. xxiii. 7; xliii. 33;) which evinceth that in the eye of their children parents ought to be very cautious, not only in refraining sinful words and actions, but also such things as are indifferent in their own nature, yet prove stumbling-blocks, being in some circumstances in a tendency to sin; or such as have at least an appearance of evil in them to their children's weaker apprehensions in such a conjuncture. So likewise they should forbear the repetition of their own youthful failings with any kind of delight; and take special heed they do not so much as seem to "make a mock at sin" in table-talk and company: (Prov. xiv. 9:) yea, and they should beware of making promises to others, or to their children, which they never intend to perform, or at least neglect to make good in due circumstances; for, let me tell you, though it be but in light and trivial matters, (wherein yet a child may have as strong affections, as a plodding man to gain a great estate,) it will interpretatively be a teaching them to lie, or be unfaithful, which natural pravity will easily promote. Not only speeches, but gestures, fashions, and all kinds of habits, are soon learned by example, because man is of all creatures the most mimical, or apt to imitate, especially what affects him in those he esteems; this being a kind of adjunct to reason. We know, the little children had learned to mock the prophet to their cost: "Go up, thou bald-pate; go up, thou bald-pate." (2 Kings ii. 23, 24.) As many men are known by their associates [whom] they much converse-with and delight-in, who yet carry it so smoothly [that] they are not otherwise discovered; * and so are the ill-manners of some parents by some of their children. Wherefore all should observe a good decorum, lest they should give occasion to any of their children to say, as that evil one who told his father, † "If I have done ill, I learned it of you." It much behoves parents to do all things so, that they may not make themselves cheap and despicable; (Titus ii. 15;) and [it] cannot but be advantageous to a child's education, to have his parents keep a good port in all things: which put Pliny into that pathetic exclamation in one of his epistles, "O, you are a happy young man, who have him above all to imitate to whom nature would have you be most like!" ‡

(ii.) *Rules of morality.*—Or necessary documents of civility, which teach due respect to every one. § These are requisite to the formation and culture of manners, that children may learn how to behave themselves to domestics, to those that are elder and younger, to

* *Dignoscitur socio, qui non noscitur e se.* † *Si malè feci, a te didici.* ‡ *O te beatum adolescentem! qui eum potissimum imitandum habes, cui natura te simillimum esse voluit.*—Lib. viii. epist. 13.

§ *BODIUS in Eph.*

ministers of the gospel, to schoolmasters, to equals, acquaintance, friends, strangers; in all places, on all occasions; at home, abroad, in the school, in the church; business, recreations; company, solitude; in secret, public; in mourning, joy; under benefits, injuries; in praise, dispraise; flatteries, reproaches; jests, serious matters; various and uncertain changes of affairs, wherein special rules cannot be prescribed to reach every case, but general precepts which may engage evermore to things lawful and honest, and instruct them with their distance and relation. For all which, humility is most to be commended to children, as the great ornament of those in a state of subjection, though they be unacquainted with special modes and punctilios. (1 Peter iii. 1, 4—6.) Hence it is good to teach that rule of our Saviour, when he observed persons, without any consideration of their own rank, to choose-out the chief places at entertainment; namely, "Sit not down in the highest room, lest it be the place of one more honourable;" (Luke xiv. 7, 8;) agreeing with the old law, "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God;" (Lev. xix. 32;) and those of the wise man, "Stand not in the place of great men: for it is better that it be said unto thee, Come up hither, than that thou shouldest be put lower." Be not contentious; disclose not secrets; speak as becometh; boast not; be temperate in diet; weary not thy neighbour with thy company; be not rude and foolish before those in mourning; be charitable, &c. To that purpose Solomon, Prov. xxv. 6—20. It is expected that parents give prudent precepts, to inform their children how to speak and act in a decent, orderly manner, with a becoming grace in their circumstances; (1 Cor. xiv. 40;) to use words and titles of respect and honour to their superiors and equals; as he in the gospel, "I go, sir;" (Matt. xxi. 30;) and likewise a decent silence, suitable gestures, attention, modest looks, and bowing, which though they may seem trivial, yet the neglect of them will argue much rudeness, irreverence, and indecency; whereas Christian children should learn to "do all things well;" yea, and to outdo any mere moralists in such civilities as are really material, decent, and not fantastical. (Job xxix. 9—11; Mark vii. 37; Matt. v. 47.) Parents should further give their children such rudiments early, as are indeed instructive to prepare them for a particular vocation, or course of life, agreeable to their temper and quality. Here somewhat might be said of that, since "man is born unto trouble," or "labour," in some special service, as they in the scriptures have done. (Job v. 7; Gen. iii. 19; iv. 2; xxxvii. 2; Exod. xxix. 9; ii. 16.)

But I must not stay; yet shall touch of parents' placing their children into employments anon. The late books about the Gentleman's Calling, and the Lady's Calling and Education, will show, after and with others,* the benefit of these for those children of the best, as well as meanest, condition, whether males or females: where it may be observed, that different rules in some particulars for the education of boys and girls are to be given by discreet parents.† God, who is severe against idleness, expects [that] all should employ their talents in such a professed way of life as he will approve of. In order hereunto, and for the attaining of

* BISHOP SANDERSON, MR. BAXTER'S "Christ. Ethics," &c. *mutuæ et civili Conversationse.*

† GUAZZIUS *De*

“the best gifts,” (1 Cor. xii. 31,) great care is to be taken, and ingenious devices may be used, to get children imbued with the principles of learning, and abilities to read, write, &c.

But I must haste on. Yet here I cannot but disallow the indoctrinating of children with superstitious notions, which nuzzle them up in vulgar errors that lead unto unbelief; the affrighting of them with silly tales of bugbears, stories of hobgoblins and fairies, &c., “profane and old wives’ fables,” not tending to godliness, (1 Tim. i. 4, 6; iv. 7,) which occasion needless and groundless fears, that afterwards, when they should have more brains, are not easily corrected, or not without great difficulty removed. And, in my opinion, the teaching of children to beat inanimate creatures is not to be allowed; both because it disposeth their weak understandings to misapprehensions of things, and also teacheth them to inflict punishment in some instances, when ordinarily they themselves do rather in some little proportion deserve it; and then it stirs-up in them a spirit of revenge; whereas God hath appropriated vengeance to himself as universal Judge. (Deut. xxxii. 35; Rom. xii. 19; Heb. x. 30; Psalm xciv. 1.) And we smile at a little dog for snarling at a stone, yet see not the evil of making level and distorted conceptions in children, which may occasion a “spiteful heart,” a disposition very displeasing to God. (Ezek. xxv. 15.)

(iii.) *Moderate chastisements.*—To accompany the notices of good carriage. Correction in a due manner, and also suitable rewards for well-doing, are necessary to check rudeness, and encourage an ingenuous deportment. As good documents do put-in wisdom, so due corrections do drive-out folly. A child is not to be left to himself, lest he bring the parent to shame; when a “rod and reproof may give wisdom” to prevent it. Therefore God bids, “Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.” Elsewhere: “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. xxii. 6, 15; xxix. 15, 17; xxiii. 13, 14.) Here is not only a precept, but promise of good fruit upon discharge of the duty in a right manner: but it should be sued-out by prayer, the rather because the neglect of this duty is very dangerous to root and branch, parent and child; (2 Sam. vii. 27, 28; 1 Sam. iii. 13; 1 Kings i. 6;) yea, and the greater need there is of parents’ prayer here, lest they should fall into the extreme which my text emphatically forbids. Christian parents, whose children are to “obey them in the Lord,” are concerned to chastise in the fear of God, and therefore to seek that this appointment of his may be sanctified, being joined with instruction; that it may be prevalent by the blessing of God in Christ, whom the heathen philosophers have no regard to. (1 Tim. iv. 5; Micah vi. 9.) And here, further, parents are concerned to use much Christian prudence, that their children may understand,—

First. That they are, from a principle of love for their children’s amendment and welfare, necessitated to this sharp work which God hath enjoined them in just circumstances, as he himself “chasteneth whom he loveth.” (Rev. iii. 19; Heb. xii. 6—8; Deut. viii. 5.) And therefore, if they should spare the rod through fondness, God, who knows the heart

and affections best, might censure them for hating their children ; whom they would not have been so severe with, if they could have reformed them at a cheaper rate. (Prov. xiii. 24 ; iii. 12.) Hence,

Secondly. That it is their children's folly, not their own passion, which hath engaged them in this smarting exercise, wherein overmuch heat would be like an over-hot medicine, that scalds rather than cures. Some parents are apt to go beyond just measures, and to chastise for their own pleasure ; but they must learn of God to aim at their children's profit, and not correct them but upon good reason. (Heb. xii. 10.) Even Plutarch could determine that punishment should never be inflicted for flesh-pleasing. Parents should not take the rod to vent their own anger, but to subdue their children's sin ; which a man may not suffer upon his neighbour, without rebuke, lest he be guilty of hating him in his heart ; (Lev. xix. 17 ;) then certainly not upon his child, whom he is obliged, not only to admonish verbally, but chastise really.

Thirdly. But first he should do as God did with our first parents, convict him of his nakedness ; (Gen. iii. 11—13 ;) that is, show him the evil of his lying, railing, idleness, or other faults [which] he is chargeable with, as opposite to the word of God, and prejudicial to his own soul ; (Prov. xii. 22 ; viii. 36 ;) and that he is made to smart for the cure of this evil ; which parents may let their children know they dare not suffer to remain longer uncorrected, since delays may prove dangerous to the patient if the rod be withheld. The festering wound may rankle, and come to a gangrene, if not lanced in due time. Parents' love is seen in chastening "betimes," both in respect of the age of the child, and of its fault. (Prov. xxiii. 13 ; xiii. 24.) If it be not too soon for children to sin, it should not be thought too soon for parents to correct, and that seasonably, before the sin grow strong, get head, and sprout forth. The child should be taken "while there is hope." (Prov. xix, 18.) The twig may be bent whilst it is young, and the sin mortified if nipped in the bud. God, we find, hath been very severe in remarking the first violations of his statutes ; as for gathering sticks on the sabbath day, and Aaron's sons' offering strange fire : (Num. xv. 25 ; Lev. x. 2 :) so parents should timely curb the first exorbitances of their children.

Hence, Fourthly. They should let them see they are resolved, after serious deliberation, not to be diverted by the pulings and passions of their unhumiliated children from inflicting due punishment, since the wise man chargeth, "Let not thy soul spare for his crying," (Prov. xix. 18,) so that they may not remain fearless : yet it must then be in compassion, that they may conceive, as the Father of heaven is afflicted in the affliction of his, so are they in the affliction of their children ; and as the Lord doth it "in measure," though he will not suffer them to go unpunished, so do they. (Isai. lxiii. 9 ; Jer. xxx. 11.) My text bounds the correction, that it may not exceed a just proportion to the discouraging of children, whose different tempers, as well as different faults, are to be considered, so as no more be laid upon them than they are able to bear. (1 Cor. x. 13.) There should therefore be a special care taken that the chastisement be no other than what is meet. Physicians endeavour to appportion the dose [which] they give, to the strength of the patient, and the peccant humour they would correct. There must be a

rational consideration of the age, sex, and disposition of the child, the nature and circumstances of the fault, and what satisfaction is offered by the delinquent upon ingenuous confession, or possibly some interposition of another; so that the offended parent may keep-up his authority, be victorious in his chastisements, and come-off with honour and good hopes of the child's amendment. For a parent should be ever ready to forgive, and to connive often at smaller failings, wherein there is no manifest sin against God, in confidence of gaining the child's affections, by tenderness and kind forbearance, toward the things that are most desirable. This pleasing policy is, they say, much in request at this day in Japan,* where parents do educate their children with a great deal of softness, very rarely punishing them with stripes, though they follow their diligent informations with frequent admonitions. And they tell us, among the Grecians, the best means the mother used, if a boy was stubborn in committing a fault, to persuade him to leave it, was to show him her breasts, "as the most powerful motive she had."† But the fathers, it seems, amongst them, were more sharp: and therefore Prometheus in Menander is said "to be tied" like a boy to the racks, *προσπεπαταλευμενον*, where he prettily pleads his cause, as if his punishment had not been proportioned to his fault, but he had been too hardly dealt with. Be sure, our apostle, both in my text, and to the Ephesians, is altogether against any discouraging chastisement, and requires moderation. Thus for nurture, the first branch of education.

The SECOND is in *the admonition of the Lord*.—Without which the former will not be effectually prosperous. This, according to the notation of the original word, *νουθεσια*, (Eph. vi. 4; 1 Cor. x. 11; Titus iii. 10,) is "a putting of things into their children's minds," an informing of the judgment in, and pressing upon the will and affections, the principles of the Christian institution, warning them to take heed of deviating from these principles, which they are obliged to live up to; and is the principal thing in the educating of Christian children. So that parents are mostly concerned to get the fear of God planted in their children's tender souls, that they may know and love, trust-in and obey, their Maker, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, and have timely preservatives against the corruptions of an untoward generation.

Under this, we may speak of *parental instruction*, and *watchfulness*.

(i.) *Instruction*.—Which is a timely instilling of conscientious principles, and seeds of religion, into children, taking them apart, and engaging them to receive the most necessary points, as it were, drop by drop, "here a little, and there a little," (Isai. xxviii. 10,) according to their narrow capacities, in a free and familiar conference; by putting questions to them, and teaching them how to give answers, and by putting them upon asking questions, and returning short and clear answers thereunto, not only concerning the word, but works of God, whose Spirit alone makes all efficacious. The Lord hath most strictly enjoined this by Moses, charging parents to keep their souls diligently, and not to let the things God hath done to slip-out of their hearts all their days; but teach their sons and *their* sons, (Deut. iv. 9,) who in after-time did

* *Varenii Descriptio Regni Japoniæ*, cap. xv.
Schol. in Scrip.

† ὄσει κραιστας ἰκετηρίας.—

thankfully acknowledge the benefit of this instruction: "We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old." (Psalm xlv. 1, 2.) And for the words and ordinances of God, they are commanded not only to have them in their own hearts, but to teach them diligently unto their children, (as one who whets and sharpens a thing that is blunt,) by talking of them, when they sit down in their house, when they walk by the way, when they lie down, and when they rise up, and elsewhere; (Deut. vi. 6, 7; xi. 19; Eccles. x. 10; Psalm lxxviii. 5—7; Prov. xxii. 6, 20, 21;) nor only so, but by rites, and setting-up visible and extraordinary monuments, whereby children might take occasion to ask the meaning of them, and so parents might acquaint them with the ordinances of God. (Exod. xii. 26; xiii. 14; Joshua iv. 6, 7, 21; Deut. vi. 20, 21.)

No doubt but religious parents have been careful to observe this, for the transmitting of pure religion. Adam had taught his sons to sacrifice, as well as trained them up to business, though one of them did not worship God in an acceptable manner. (Gen. iv. 3—6; Heb. xi. 4.) He had acquainted them, it seems, with the fundamental promise concerning remission of sin, which the apostle saith could not be "without shedding of blood," (Heb. ix. 22,) represented in the instituted sacrifice, which Cain wanted faith to offer acceptably, as Abel did, giving credit to the divine institution, and behaving himself sincerely in this solemn worship, as he was instructed. Noah also taught his children, though one of them did not observe the instructions. (Gen. ix. 8, 22.) But we have Abraham, the father of the faithful, expressly commended with a special approbation of God for effectually instructing, that is, training or catechising, his children and servants after his example to "keep the way of the Lord." (Gen. xviii. 19; xiv. 14.) And therefore they are called his "initiated ones," or *κατηχουμενοι*, whom, the Rabbins say, he did no less instruct in the divine precepts and their observation, than train up to war.* Other memorable instances we have: Of David, who seems kindly to call children apart, to teach them the fear of the Lord, which Obadiah learned from his youth. (Prov. iv. 3, 4; Psalm lxxii. title; xxxiv. 11; 1 Kings xviii. 12.) So of his wife Bathsheba, and those good women in the New Testament, Lois and Eunice. (Prov. xxxi. 1—9; 2 Tim. i. 5.) And other persons there were, who did "catechise in all good things," *τον λογον τω κατηχουντι*, (Gal. vi. 6,) that is, the rudiments of the gospel; wherein the most excellent Theophilus was catechised or instructed, as the Jewish children had been catechised in the law. (Luke i. 4; Rom. ii. 18.)

But this part of education, namely, catechising, being handled at this exercise in another distinct query by one well versed in the practic part of this necessary duty, may fairly give me, who have so much on mine hands, a *supersedeas* from enlarging now upon it. Only let it be remembered, that since "man is born like a wild ass's colt," and "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," parents are concerned to be industrious, and not be discouraged from teaching their offspring the words and terms of goodness, in confidence they will afterwards comprehend the sense, and practically "hold fast the form of sound words,"

* ALTINGII *Hist. Acad. Hebr.* pp. 18, 19.

(the little Bibles, as Luther used to call orthodox catechisms,) gathered-up from the holy scripture, which, it seems, Timothy had known "from a child," *απο βρεφους*, "a little one," indeed; yea, and we have some late considerable examples of such little ones.* (Job xi. 12; Prov. i. 7; Psalm cxi. 10; 2 Tim. i. 13; iii. 15.) And therefore, parents themselves, according to their different calls and abilities, taking-in convenient help, and all to forward the pastor's work, should not, through humour, indisposition, laziness, or an over-eager minding of worldly business, neglect this affair of so great importance to the welfare of their children; but be solicitous to get the seeds sown in their tender hearts, before the weeds of the world grow-up therein, and canker the soil. Even according to nature's dictates, Diotima timely instilled such notions of prudence into Socrates, which rendered him famous. And Cato, though he kept a tutor for his son, yet was frequent himself in teaching and examining of him in learning and natural religion. Much more should Christians; as Theodosius the Great, who was diligent in catechising his sons Arcadius and Honorius, with the assistance of Arsenius. A notable means was catechising to propagate the Reformed religion, notwithstanding the contagion of Popery, as Sir Edwin Sandys well observed; † and it will be so, to preserve it; especially if instruction be followed with a second particular in education, and that is,—

(ii.) *Watchfulness or inspection*.—Which is a daily putting children on exercise, to practise the things wherein they have been instructed, by a prudent oversight of their behaviour. This domestic episcopacy, or family discipline, is of singular use for the edification of children. Governors especially should "watch in all things." (2 Tim. iv. 5.) This is the most proper means to preserve the good seed which is sown from being stolen away, and to guard it, lest the enemy come slyly, and sow tares amongst the wheat; which he lays wait to do, if he can take parents asleep or inobservant, when they should be awake in this good government, and intent upon it in their household; taking special care that in practice their children be found faithful, and not chargeable with riot and unruliness. (Matt. xiii. 25; 1 Tim. iii. 4; Psalm ci. 6, 7; Titus i. 6.)

It is not enough to teach children the rudiments of faith, worship, and obedience, but to bring them where the ark is, to the acts of solemn worship, both in the family and congregation. Our Saviour's parents brought him, though he was born without sin, and had not need upon that account, as others have: (Luke ii. 41, 42, 48, 49 :) much more should others, who now are not required to go so far, bring theirs to worship God, according to his appointment; see to their reverend deportment there, examine them afterward, and observe their proficiency; carry a jealous eye and hand over them, as Job did over his; (Job i. 5 :) and take care there be no connivance at palpable faults, but a seasonable discountenancing of every sin, in the dearest of them; no allowance of any practice dissonant to that which is right, but a solicitous care that they do not decline and apostatize, or be not seduced from the pure worship of the holy God, and the good ways they have acquainted them

* [JANEWAY'S] "Token," and "Little Book for Children." † "Survey of Religion in Europe, A. D. 1593," p. 113, *infra*.

with. (Gen. xlix. 6 ; Deut. xxxiii. 9 ; xiii. 6 ; Exod. xxxii. 28 ; Zech. xiii. 6 ; Joshua xxii. 27—30 ; Gen. xxiv. 6, 7.) We know, Abraham, that father of blessed memory, commanded his children, as was noted before ; (Gen. xviii. 19 ;) and there was a positive law after to command children, upon their lives, to observe and do what God enjoined. (Deut. xxxii. 46, 47.)

This belongs to the training-up of youth to a good habit, which will not easily be removed. They that handle this matter wisely, will find good in their children ; and to do it so as to avoid undue lenity and severity, is great prudence. For it requires an insinuation into their affections, to engage children to love and delight in their duties, by “the sweetness of the lips,” to increase their learning, and encourage their honest endeavours with suitable rewards ; (Prov. xxii. 6 ; xvi. 20, 21 ;) and, on the other hand, seasonable admonitions and remembrances in case of failures ; a frowning on their laziness, and neglects of those offices wherein they should be employed, which will keep them in awe. Though this must be done with great skill and wariness, lest it produce a slavish fear, which slothful, disingenuous, and low spirits are apt to fall into, and then absurdly to plead ; (Matt. xxv. 24—26 ;) yet of the two it is better to fail on this hand, than for a Christian parent to omit warning of their children, because both law and gospel require, as was partly hinted before, [that] we should not let sin, either of omission or commission, rest on our neighbour, but should warn a brother, much more a child, and set him in joint with a “spirit of meekness.” (Lev. xix. 17 ; Gal. vi. 1.) I grant, this duty of daily inspection is very difficult ; but it is amiable and excellent. It is of great latitude ; for parents are evermore concerned to be eyeing of their children, to see they do that which is necessary and comely, both in religious and moral practice, according to what is really best esteemed in civil behaviour. They must continually be watching them, as to their praying, reading, hearing, eating, drinking, playing, visiting, studying, working, sleeping, &c., to see they be not vain or idle, because commonly there is but a little distance in time betwixt doing of nothing and doing of ill.

Children should be exercised with variety ; taught to sing psalms, (Deut. xxxi. 19, 21 ; Psalm cxlviii. 12, 13,) as those good children were, who made that short prayer to our Saviour, “Hosanna,” in Greek, out of Psalm cxviii. 25, *הוֹשִׁיעָנוּ* “Save, O Lord, I beseech thee,” namely, “Blessed Messiah ;” to pray in secret sometimes by and for themselves ; to be constant, timely, and reverent at family-duties ; to be charitable, respectful to the ambassadors of Christ ; to be attentive to the reading of chapters, and hearing of sermons ; and thereupon to put questions, and give some account of their understanding of things, and be not as parrots that chatter without knowledge ; to be observant of the Lord’s day, not left to themselves, to play and do what they list ; for, as Solomon observeth, “A child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame ;” (Prov. xxix. 15 ;) she being either more indulgent in suffering him to get head, or more affected with it, when she seeth the evil of his idleness, especially on the Lord’s days. But on other days, at fit seasons, such honest sports and recreations, agreeing with the children’s temper, are to be allowed, as do not alienate their minds from duty, but promote health

and cheerfulness; admit they be not with ungodly play-fellows, from whom ribaldry and profaneness are easily learned, but nothing that is good. The philosopher* did advise the educators of children to take heed they did not permit them to accompany with such, of whom they would learn bad words, hear smutty fables, or be brought to look upon indecent and deformed pictures; and that they did converse as little as may be with servants. And in eating and drinking, parents should with discretion lay restraints upon children's appetites, both as to the quantity and quality of food, consonant to the rules of right reason, that they transgress not the wholesome laws of temperance, for the preservation of strength, and activity of body and mind. So for their studying and working, &c., a continued inspection is requisite, that they do not neglect their time, or mis-spend their talents; which that they may not do, will usually need the parents' best skill and utmost diligence, because of inbred pravity and untractableness. Yet, as one hath well observed,† there be certain handles to take hold of these little souls, in their tender years, since most of them are apt to be shamefaced, fearful, curious, and credulous; which dispositions are to be attended by vigilant parents with discretion, and laid hold-on to lead to virtue. As, on the other hand, those hinderances to good things, which soon bewray themselves in little ones, are to be watched-over and curbed; such as pride, wilfulness, lying, and intemperance. That these evil inclinations may not be predominant, shame is to be managed to dissuade from things dishonest; fear, to keep in awe, from consideration of punishment, or loss of reward; curiosity, to form in the mind right notions of things; and credulity, to gain the consent to things honest and good, and to make a right tincture which may abide. Then, on the other side, vicious inclinations are to be timely curbed; as pride, arising from corrupt self-love, to plant in young minds humility; wilfulness, to engage unto teachableness; lying, to make way for justice and fidelity; and intemperance, for the love of truth and sobriety, that the understanding may rule the appetite. Upon which account the same person suggests, we should not promise children junkets, as the reward of their obedience, but honour and praise, which they should be made to love; which is the great thing they of Japan "use to implant in the tender minds of their little ones," proposing glory as the strong motive to persuade them unto obedience and good carriage. †

I should not have insisted so long upon this, but that I dare be bold to say, it is through default of this part of education, (I mean, for want of watchfulness,) that the children of many parents amongst us fall so much short of the instructions received. Their passions grow strong, and the things that gratify sense lascivious; their parents heed not; and so the hopeful fruit is blasted and spoiled for want of fence: or, as in some gardens, where there be fine buds and fruits coming-on, that have been raised with great pains and charges, they suffer snails and caterpillars to increase, which in a short time devour that [which] the master's and gardener's eye and hand might easily at first have prevented, by taking away the

* ARISTOTELES *De Republicâ*, lib. viii. cap. 17. † PETER DU MOULIN. ‡ *Gloria studium et cupiditatem teneris animis impluntare consueverunt, &c.*—VARENIUS *De Regno Japoniæ*, p. 102.

caterpillars' eggs, and killing of the snails ; so you may see in some families, where there were great hopes of children, as of the pleasant fruits on a fair tree ripening, all lost for want of parents' and governors' narrow inspection ; or through a tender mother's unlimited indulgence, where she should keep a strict watch ;* and through the connivance or misplaced kindnesses of some affectionate servants, who, to ingratiate [themselves] with their young masters or mistresses, take upon them to be wiser than those that love them best, and secretly humour them with those things that may gratify their sensual appetites, though never so prejudicial in the consequence, and in the present judgments of their superiors, who would have their children disciplined to self-denial and temperance, which the gospel sets a great value upon. (Matt. xvi. 24 ; Luke xxi. 34 ; 1 Cor. ix. 25.) I speak this from my own and others' certain experience of what I have seen and heard, both in families of the gentry and others in the country, and those of the best rank in the city. O, what cause, then, have some of us with heartiest thankfulness to adore our heavenly Father, that our dear parents have not only taught us the rudiments of goodness, but called upon us to exercise self-denial and temperance, and to inure ourselves to hardship, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ ! (2 Tim. ii. 3 :)—so the apostle enjoined, agreeable to the philosopher, who determined it “ best to accustom children in their tender years unto colds, as most advantageous to good health and warlike actions ;” †—and to bless God that they kept a watchful eye upon us in our minority, giving check to our inordinate appetites, [so] that we can now, in this luxurious and delicate age, in the midst of fulness, curb ourselves, and not hanker after every dainty and fine fashion we see, or repine when it passeth by us, whose souls are made for better attainments !

But I forget myself in this business of education, being yet to speak to the remaining offices of parents ; the next of which is,

4. *Disposal or elocation of children, growing-up or adult, either into some particular employment, or marriage.*

(1.) *Into some fit way of employment, or particular calling.*—Christian parents are concerned not only to train-up their children for business in the world, but to do what they can to provide an honest, fit, and useful calling or profession, wherein they may serve their own generation according to the will of God, (Acts xiii. 36,) and the abilities he hath bestowed on them, and the inclinations he hath implanted in them, whereby they may mostly promote the kingdom of Christ. (Matt. vi. 33.) To find-out natural capacities in the obsequious part of age, requires

* *Imberbis juvenis, tandem custode remoto,
Gaudet equis, canibusque, et aprici gramine campi, &c.*

HORATIUS, *De Arte Poetica*, l. 161.

“ The youth whose will no froward tutor bounds,
Joys in the sunny field, his horse and hounds ;
Yielding like wax, the' 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.”—DR. FRANCIS'S Translation.

† Συμφερεί δε εὐθὺς καὶ πρὸς τὰ ψυχὴ συνθεῖξεν ἐκ μικρῶν παιδῶν· τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ πρὸς ὑγιαν καὶ πρὸς πολεμικὰς πράξεις εὐχρηστοτάτων.—ARISTOTELES *De Republica*, lib. viii. cap. 17.

the diligent consideration of a sagacious mind: so that parents herein have really need of the skill (were it attainable) of the boasting Spaniard, who, in his Trial of Wits, pretended to know what complexion was fittest for every profession. For "all dispositions and inclinations are not equally fit for every affair."* Some, according to the temperament of the body and culture of the mind, are for more ingenuous and liberal, others more mechanic, arts; some in a more public, others more private, station. Upon discerning of which, parents should strain hard, proportionable to their estates, to choose such honest and advantageous callings, as their children are fittest for, so nigh as they can judge.

Daniel and his companions were for liberal sciences; and so was Moses before them, and Paul after them. (Dan. i. 17; Acts vii. 22; xxii. 3.) These God made use of as eminent instruments of his honour in their generation; one of them a prophet, another a prophet and magistrate, the third an apostle; and all of them witnesses to the truth. Paul doth gratefully commemorate his parents' love in educating him at the best school and university, under the best tutor, living far from the city of his birth: nor without reason; for God's raising-up sons unto parents for prophets, and placing them in the ministry, however despised in this decrepit age, was accounted a singular privilege. (Amos ii. 9—11; 1 Tim. i. 12; Eph. iv. 8, 11—16; 2 Cor. v. 20.) Others in their circumstances were disposed into other callings, which their parents thought them fit for. In the morning of the world, the two first children, Cain and Abel, were put into different employments; so were Isaac's sons into the like; and Samuel's sons into another, though they very much misbehaved themselves in it; Jacob's sons, Laban's and Reuel's daughters were employed about cattle. (Gen. iv. 2; xxv. 27; xxxvii. 12; xxix. 9; 1 Sam. viii. 1—3; Exod. ii. 16.) None should be left to live idly; but, if not disabled, all should be ordinarily in some stated employ, wherein they have a heavenly guard, (Psalm xci. 12,) for the public good, and the honour of God, who, where he gives most, will not be content with the least, but requires either corporeal or mental employment from all. And therefore, parents, having consulted their children's inclinations, and considered what breeding they have given them for the bettering of their parts and improvement of their gifts, should not fail to dispose of them so, that they may be able to maintain themselves, (2 Thess. iii. 6, 10, 12,) or use what they have honestly provided for them, to the doing of good in the church and state, and the training-up of others in succeeding generations; according as God hath distributed gifts to every one for his calling, wherein he is to abide, till more clearly called to another; (1 Cor. vii. 17;) whether for husbandry or handicrafts, in more substantial or more curious works, or yet more laudable employments; whereunto they are not to be intruded, but orderly called. (Gen. xlvii. 6; 1 Kings v. 6; Exod. xxxv. 30—35; Jer. xvii. 16.) All which gives check to such parents who are negligent herein after primeve education, and those who either put their children into unfit callings, or enter them not into fit ones in a fair way, but by some indirect means.

(2.) There is another disposal and placing-out of children, wherein good parents ought to be greatly concerned; and that is, *into the honourable*

* *E quolibet ligno non fit Mercurius.*—ERASMI Adag. p. 525.

estate of marriage, (Héb. xiii. 4,) *when at a competent age*.—Considering the temper and inclinations of the children, upon a due expense* of circumstances, in all Christian prudence, sooner or later, to avoid temptations on one hand and another; by endeavouring to provide such matches, as they may have a good ground to hope for God's blessing upon; which they may then do, when they are "in the Lord." (1 Cor. vii. 39, 22.) Because that is the great canon for the regulation of Christian marriages, and should be the principal ponderation in this greatest affair of parents and children,—that the persons marrying "be not unequally yoked," and that they do it "in the Lord;" as the obedience of wives and children is required to be, and to please the Lord, in my text. (2 Cor. vi. 13, 14; Eph. vi. 1; v. 8.) Yea, this of marriage is to be only "in the Lord." (Col. iii. 18.) For, not to please him by marrying in him, is by consequence to incur the displeasure of Him in whom alone a blessing is to be had. Wherefore, professing parents, who are charged by the prophet in the name of the Lord, to take wives to their sons, and give their daughters to husbands, (Jer. xxix. 6; 1 Cor. vii. 36,) should with a good and serious conscience, without carnal glosses, study this prime canon, as they really design the promotion and spiritual advancement of their offspring.

Thus Abraham, so famous in his parental government, was very careful with respect to the Lord in covenant, for the matching of his son Isaac; that, in a matter of so great importance, lest he should be tempted to a failure in his trust, he took a most solemn oath, "by the Lord God of heaven and earth," from his faithful steward Eliezer, upon serious seeking of God by prayer, that he should take a wife for him out of a religious family, and by no means yield that Isaac should be brought into a relation, communion, and residence, with any of those who might be an occasion to alienate his affections from the service of the true God in a true manner: (Gen. xviii. 19; xxiv. 2—9:) which had an excellent effect, since Isaac and Rebekah were the most chaste pair of all those patriarchal worthies, their affections being entirely united. And Isaac, at his wife Rebekah's motion, when almost dead for fear of an ungodly wife, followed his father's example in the disposal of his son Jacob. (Gen. xxvii. 46; xxviii. 2.)

We, indeed, live in an age wherein there is much complaint by many wealthy parents, that though they like well of this grand rule, yet they know not where to have suitable matches for their children, especially of the female sex. I confess there is too much ground for this lamentation: the Lord remove it! Yet I may, with submission, not being solicitous "to please men," but my Lord and Master, (Gal. i. 10; Eph. vi. 6,) put these complainants in mind of what hath been observed by another before me: †—That persons of quality and estate, likely, have in one respect a greater advantage than others, in that they have a greater latitude of choice amongst those who are in estate below them; so that, of religious, prudent, and suitable persons, they may choose almost whom they please. But the truth is, many parents who sit at the upper end of the world, though they profess religion, they are too often so biassed with the love of this world, that marrying to the very height of their

* In the meaning of "weighing" or "consideration."—EDIT.

† MR. WHITE.

estate hath the casting vote; and so they bestow their pious, hopeful children upon persons in whom they have no probable positive evidence of real godliness and sobriety, or on such who are not comparably so virtuous as others they might have, more religious, prudent, and desirable, who, upon conjuncture of estates, would be abundantly well accommodated for a comfortable and cheerful livelihood; when, alas! some of them are so swayed by carnal motives, that, as one saith,* "they marry" their children to "a swine, for a golden trough;" they prefer temporals to spirituals and eternal; riches and honour, or comeliness, to virtue and godliness; and take one that is at enmity with God into the nearest and strictest league of amity with those [whom] they are obliged to love best. (Rom. viii. 7, 8.) And thence it comes to pass that in succeeding generations, by unequal mixture of the holy seed with the profane, (Ezra ix. 2—4,) there is such a decay of piety, as at this day, amongst those sprung on one side from worthy progenitors; being much like those of the old world, who defiled the face of the earth with an unblest generation, which so grieved the Almighty, that, after he had given the inhabitants fair warning by the "preacher of righteousness," he swept them all away but eight persons with an universal deluge. (Gen. vi. 2—4; xxvi. 34, 35; xxxiv. 14; xxxviii. 2, 7—10.)

I know, upon the hearing of this, some professing parents of our age will be touched to the quick, though they do thereby a little shake their own title to the best inheritance; but it concerns a watchman, when called to "give them warning from" the Lord, (Ezek. iii. 17,) to deal faithfully: upon the remembrance of which, and an affecting apprehension of this growing epidemical distemper, I do, in the name of the Lord, put all Christian parents in mind not too vehemently to seek after great things to themselves, (Jer. xlv. 5,) in bestowing of their children richly; but labour to link them with gracious and suitable persons, where there may be mutual kindness and hearty liking of each other, and with whom they may live religiously and contentedly: for the truth is, without this mutual complacency and loving contentment each in other, which the scripture calls for, (Prov. v. 19; Gen. xx. 16; Ezek. xxiv. 16; 18,) upon a good foundation, there cannot be a happy match. Wherefore, in this great office of parents,—which is a comfortable one for their children, if well done; but most uncomfortable, if otherwise,—they are mostly concerned to look after the fear of the Lord. For the wise man, by the Spirit of God, hath so determined upon weighing of things, saying, "Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised:" and so shall the man also. (Prov. xxxi. 30; xix. 23.) If things be tried at God's balance, religion will weigh most. "House and riches are the inheritance of fathers: but a prudent wife is from the Lord:" (Prov. xix. 14:) and so is a prudent husband too. Either is to be valued as a more blessed gift than any temporal portion left by parents, who may, and ought to, be provident. But there is a more special finger of God, who gives wisdom, and unites hearts, in every happy match: wherein good-nature, or, as we now speak, good-humour, doth much sweeten society in a human way; but I pray you, what doeth it in a Christian way, wherein the married couple should live "as being

* MR. BAXTER'S "Christian Politics," p. 484.

heirs together of the grace of life; that their prayers be not hindered?'' (1 Peter iii. 7.) Alas, my friends! as to this, a good nature, as one saith,* is but "like the white of an egg, which as it offends not, so it relisheth not." There may be a tolerable conversation as to temporals on the week day; but what is pleasant in it as to spirituals, especially on the Lord's day, and at other seasons, when the soul hath need of quickening, direction, and comfort, or a companion in heavenly joys? Then real grace, with all its faults, will be better than refined nature, as light than darkness. (Eccles. ii. 13.) Discretion will set a lustre on religion, and is to be looked after; else how troublesome will it be for wisdom to be subject to folly! No one can live lovingly and comfortably with a fool.

Next an ungodly, an unworthy yoke-fellow, especially if in husbands, is to be feared. And next to a religious and prudent, a pleasing person should be chosen: amiableness helps to root and settle amity, which gains reputation by an inheritance. (Eccles. vii. 11.) But in these things, especially the last, without regard to the former, parents should take heed of exercising tyranny; and when God hath given them children, how they give them away; be careful herein they do not, contrary to my text, discourage their dutiful children by pressing them to marry where they cannot love. Because herein one † characters the good parent to be such, as "draws arguments from his children's good, rather than his own authority; accounting it a style too princely herein to will and command, he rather chooseth to will and desire;" remembering [that] the parental power is for edification, not destruction, and should not be exerted to cast a child against its mind upon a disaffected, much less an unworthy, match.

In the treaty of marriage betwixt Isaac and Rebekah, when there was a good agreement betwixt Abraham's steward and her father and brother, they would not come to a conclusion, till the maid was called and asked as to her affection and consent. ‡ (Gen. xxiv. 57.) All was but compliment, till that was gained. Parents herein are to persuade upon good reason; but it is too harsh to attempt the compelling of love. Some rigorous ones are apt, for their own worldly advantage, to use their awful § authority in matching, to constrain their obedient children contrary to their affections and dispositions; but they should rather learn of their heavenly Father, who disposeth all things sweetly, and would have them to do so too. In the disposal of their children, he would have them do more with the sway of love than power; and to be rather affectionate than imperious in their government. Grave and prudent Dr. Harris || condescended to his sons, saying, "When you are youths, choose your callings; when men, choose your wives; only take me along with you: it may be, old men may see farther than you." Be sure, then, they see well, when they aim chiefly at piety. As an ancient hermit relates, ¶ in his own Life, the consultation of a principal inhabitant of Constantinople with his lady, about the disposal of their only child, who was a daugh-

* MR. THOMAS'S "Counsel to Married Couples." † MR. FULLER'S "Holy State."
 ‡ *Hostis est uxor invita quæ ad maritum nupta datur.*—PLAUTUS. For a translation of this passage, see p. 301.—EDIT. § This is the author's own word in all the impressions; and not *lawful*.—EDIT. || In his Life. ¶ *In Prælo spirituali.*

ter: the result whereof was, not to look at greatness and riches, lest, marrying her to a vicious person, they should make her miserable; but rather to one of a lower rank fearing God, who, from conscience of his duty, would love and make much of her, and so render her condition comfortable. In prosecution whereof, they found-out and bestowed her upon the honest son of a very charitable father, who had a small estate, but great virtue, with whom she lived very happily. But my discourse swells, and I must shorten what remains.

5. *Maintenance is another part of the parents' office toward their children, unto whom they are to allow a competency, according to their quality and estates, to live upon.*—A just allowance for subsistence is presupposed requisite to the right discharge of the precedent duties from parents to children, both in their minority, and when come to maturity, for the accommodating of them with necessaries according to their birth. The neglect of which temporal provision would argue Christian parents worse than infidels, who are not so enormous; (1 Tim. v. 8;) since, amongst the barbarous people, they spare not cost to provide suitably for the fruit of their bodies, till at least they are able to carve for themselves. Our blessed Saviour takes for granted, amongst the common notions of mankind, that earthly parents will give good gifts unto their needy children, which are most proper for them. (Matt. vii. 9—11; Luke xi. 11—13.)

But as a superaddition unto this general provision, there is also somewhat more particular, which even nature itself teacheth, upon the disposal of children, and Christian institution requires and commends; namely, parents, as God hath blessed them, should lay-up for their children: (2 Cor. xii. 14:) yea, so, as that when they are placed in callings and married, they may, by some stock or competent portion, be able to lay-up for themselves, and be really serviceable to God's glory and others' welfare "with their substance." (Prov. iii. 9; xxix. 3.) Abraham is commended for this devising of his estate; and so Jacob, in providing for his. (Gen. xxiv. 36; xxv. 5, 6; xxx. 30.) God did under the law direct to a double portion, real or personal, unto the eldest, as an acknowledgment of the right of primogeniture; supposing no manifest forfeiture by disobedience: (Deut. xxi. 16, 17; 1 Chron. v. 2; Gen. xlix. 3; Exod. xiii. 2; Lev. xxvii. 26:) for in the exercise of parental authority, there may be some special consideration and rational regards had to the most dutiful, but still according to equity. Daughters, according to that constitution, were to be co-partners, and share as co-heirs, in the inheritance. (Num. xxxvi. 8.) And how parents, without valuable reasons, can now disinherit them, considering the prohibition in my text, is not easy to conceive.

But, in laying-up for and apportioning their children, parents should have a care,

(1.) *That they be not dilatory.*—As those who unseasonably put-off the supplies of their children with that [which] God hath given them, till they themselves be dead, or so long till it hath occasioned an abatement of affections in their children, which is not to be excused in them: but the parents should not tempt them, or put them upon any sharking tricks, to supply necessities, by keeping all the patrimony in their own hands,

above a handsome reserve of conveniences for their own food and raiment ; (being of a different temper from that prince's father,* who, coming into his son's closet, and seeing there all the gold and silver plate he had a long time before given to him, said, "I see, you have not a generous mind enough ; for with all the gifts you had from me, you have not known hitherto how to make yourself one friend ;") or, in any other respect, by any avaricious detention of what is requisite to be bestowed on their children, lay them under the discouragement which parents are in my text obliged to avoid, as that which is displeasing to God. (Psalm cxix. 60.)

(2.) *They should be sure they came honestly by the portions they leave their children.*—That they are goods well-gotten, and well-used. For if they be treasures of iniquity, they will not long abide, having a curse attending them. (Prov. x. 2 ; Joshua vii. 24.) Yea, a little ill-gotten will be as a little leaven, that will sour the whole lump ; or as the coal, which the eagle carried with the flesh she took from the altar, that fired all. But if they are well-gotten, then, as one said of a small portion, they will wear like steel. And though they have been justly gained, yet if they have been niggardly hoarded-up, and not put to good uses, but parents have lived miserably and basely, only to increase riches, they will prove not good, but rusty, though lawful money ; and they are kept to their owners' disquiet and hurt, and to their children's disappointment in the proof. (Eccles. v. 12, 13.) After an age, [it is] likely, they find nothing, or nothing with the blessing of God ; for that is entailed, not on the miser's seed, but on his that "is all the day merciful ;" (Prov. x. 22 ; xvi. 8 ; xx. 7 ; Psalm xxxvii. 26 ;) when either the urgent necessities of the poor, or the interest of the church and state, require a proportion ; the defrauding of which, under a pretext of raising a portion for children, were to cause a canker in what is raised.

Thus of parents' office whilst there be promising hopes of staying with their children upon earth. There remains somewhat yet :

6. *At their departure.*—When they are admonished to be thoughtful of leaving them, and have some pre-notice of death approaching to arrest and carry them to their long home ; then parents should "set their house in order," (2 Kings xx. 1,) by giving or leaving such lessons of wisdom to their children as, by God's blessing, will make a deeper impression, being uttered by dying persons. (Gen. xlvi. 16.) Thus did Isaac and Jacob. (Gen. xxviii. 1—4 ; xlix. 1, 2.) It is true, there was something of an extraordinary prophetic spirit in some of them ; but those things of ordinary use, which they gave in charge, will be sufficient proof for our purpose : as Isaac's sending Jacob to Laban with his blessing ; David's advice to Solomon, and Jacob's about his funeral ; (1 Chron. xxix. 19 ; 1 Kings ii. 2—4 ; Gen. i. 16 ;) and others' making a will or testament, bequeathing and devising their estate ; (Gen. xxv. 5 ; Gal. iii. 15 ; Lev. xxv. 23 ; 1 Kings xxi. 3 ; Heb. ix. 16, 17 ;) seconding all with solemn parental warnings, and prayer to God for a blessing, and advising them after their death to consult such friends upon emergencies, whom they have obliged to their assistance, as David did. (Gen. xxiv. 60 ; xlvi. 15, 16 ; 1 Chron. xxii. 17 ; xxviii. 1—8.) The reverend Mr.

* GUAZZIUS *De nutu et civili Conversatione*, p. 390.

Robert Bolton,* and others, gave notable instances of this last duty. The above-mentioned Dr. Robert Harris referred his dear wife and children, after several heavenly and savoury speeches, to the advice and counsel he had annexed to his will, made by him about twenty-two years before his departure. Therein he left his children excellent instructions for their souls, their bodies, their callings, both as to the choice and use of them ; for their company, for their marriages, for their children, for themselves within themselves, for their estates, and for the public : things really worth the reading and observing, both by parents and children. In imitation of which, but not published, I have likewise with delight read very good advice left by a serious citizen,† (as it should appear, lying sick of a consumption, whereof he died,) to be given to his only son and child, then a little one, when he should come to the use of his reason ; which I doubt not but is faithfully performed by his executor.‡

It might be of great advantage to their posterity, if parents would have more regard in due circumstances to this last office of theirs, which is much slighted by many in our days, who seem unconcerned what shall become of their posterity, when they are gone, as to the best of enjoyments. It is true, there be, on another hand, parents over-solicitous to leave great estates to their children, when they themselves leave the world, being loath to part with them before : they think they never can make their children rich enough in the world, without any regard to the riches of grace ; never considering that conveniency is really more eligible than abundance, (Prov. xxx. 8,) and where there is much wealth, more grace and wisdom are needful to enjoy it well. For if children have not their " hearts established with grace," (Heb. xiii. 9,) or want prudence to manage an estate, they are but like a ship that hath more sail than ballast, which is ready to be overset with any gust of wind. A great estate without virtue is but strong poison without an antidote ; and earthly-minded parents in this respect do with their children as the ostrich with her eggs ; [she] leaves them in the dust, but takes no further care of them ; so they leave them rich in temporals, but for their spiritual and eternal welfare they are little or nothing concerned. That they may " eat, drink, be merry," and clothed with the best, they provide by setting their nest on high, and making their seed great on the earth ; (Hab. ii. 9, 10 ;) when, alas ! they do but consult shame to their house, and wrong their own souls ; they do but " observe lying vanities," and " forsake their own mercy ;" (Jonah ii. 8 ;) since God usually turns the wheel, and disappoints them. When the riches " of the sinner are laid-up for the just," others become masters of their children's estate : whereas the " good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children," (Prov. xiii. 22,) who in after-ages reap the benefit of an estate consecrated and blessed by their pious parents' prayers, the gracious answer whereunto they are still receiving. It is more than time [that] I should speak to,

II. *The enforcement of these great and important offices, mentioned in my text, which is, the Father of heaven's prohibition of provocation to the discouragement of children. "Provoke not your children,"* ἰνα μὴ

* In his Life.

† Mr. R. B., May 9th, 1662.

‡ Mr. T. H.

ἀθυμωσιν, "that they be not discouraged."—Now, as I showed [that] the positive injunction of the Lord was a sufficient reason to enforce the duties of children; so this inhibition or negative precept is of equal strength to move parents unto theirs; since it plainly shows the will of Him who hath an uncontrollable dominion, that parents' conduct should be moderated according to those equitable positive, as well as negative, precepts that have been produced in the enumeration of the foregoing particulars. And the special one in my text carries with it a reason drawn from the end: "Lest the children should be consumed with sorrows," saith the Syriac Version; others: "Lest they become pusillanimous and dispirited, pining away with grief;" which may be by any neglect or abuse of parental authority, either in defect or excess; by omitting the duties required, or committing what God hath inhibited, and so falling into either extremes. Now, what can be more cogent with affectionate parents to engage them unto the good government of those [whom] God hath put into subjection to them, than a care they be not disheartened by any mal-administration of theirs? Certainly, to give any just occasion of discouragement to the hopeful fruit of their own body, must needs be very evil and unnatural. This puts them in ἀθυμιαν, either such a stupid "dejection of spirit," as makes them fearful, dull, and unfit for any work, so that they are like members stupified with narcotics; or [in] such strong dolours of mind as even break their hearts, which bring diseases and immature death; or else, as a sad and usual consequent, a certain desperate contumacy: when they find themselves under an incapacity, through their parents' unusual indulgence or severity,* of doing that which is right, or of pleasing in their relation, they take the wretched boldness of doing wrong and displeasing; yea, many times they become like restive colts and wincing jades, which fling and kick; they do all the mischief they can, and make-head oftentimes to irritate their parents' passions; which is the height of impiety in children, who, when come to this, seldom take-up till they have destroyed them from whom they descended, and ruined themselves, soul and body.

It is most plain, if "God hath graciously given children unto his servants," (Gen. xxxiii. 5,) you Christian parents, who profess to be such, are obliged, in gratitude to his heavenly Majesty for those favours, to do your utmost so to order and manage these his gifts as he hath directed, that they may indeed be fitted for the Donor's use and service. They are not born with Bibles in their hands, neither are the contents in their heads or hearts, neither can they put-forth to sea without card or compass; but you are by your relation obliged to indoctrinate them, to acquaint them with God and themselves, to supply their wants as you can every way, and no way to discountenance them; for this is in effect to disparage the divine favours, and trample upon the Almighty's blessings. It is to expose the tokens of his bounty, and put them to the vilest uses; to make them instruments of sin, and subjects of wrath, and bring shame to yourselves. (Lev. xix. 29; Judges xix. 23, 24; Gen. xix. 8, 33, 34.) Believe it, parents, to neglect the duties I have been insisting-on, is to throw away your "crown and glory," to pull down the

* Both the first and second editions have *serenity*, instead of "severity."—EDIT.

stars in your own orb, (Prov. xvii. 6; Gen. xxxvii. 9, 10,) to despoil "your own heritage," and burn-up the "olive-plants" about your own table, to unfeather the "arrows" in your own quiver, to cast into the rubbish the "polished stones" of your own palace, to rob yourselves of that [which] should give you rest, and [to] bereave your own souls of "delight." (Psalm cxxvii. 4, 5; cxliv. 12; Prov. xxix. 17.) Nay, it is to rob God; for your children are more his than your own; they stand in a federal relation unto him, and you may not carry yourselves toward them as you list. (Ezek. xvi. 20, 21; Matt. xxviii. 19.) So that your own interest in them, who are part of yourselves, your interest in their virtues, God's interest in them, as well as his will and pleasure, should forcibly impel you to mind your office, and fill-up your relation; the unconscionable neglect of which will be as a bloody dagger stuck up to the hilt in your own hearts. Wherefore, I beseech you, endeavour all you can, that your conduct of your children be just and temperate, with all gravity and prudence, that it may be like the children's obedience which the scripture calls for, "well-pleasing unto the Lord;" so, as they, you yourselves likewise may expect a blessed prolongation of your days. (Deut. xxxii. 46, 47.) I have at length dispatched what I intend to say concerning the duties themselves; yet there remains something to be said to,

III. The third general proposed, in answer to the complex query, namely, *The manner or means of managing the duties of both relations.*—And this both *more generally and particularly*, according to the mind of God in his word.

1. *More generally.*—Wherein that hath been already, implicitly at least, suggested, which now will require only a brief intimation. My beloved, many, we know, are apt to be solicitous enough, and too much, as to their conversation in this world, to observe the modes which obtain most at the court. It concerns us all, certainly much more children and parents, to discharge their duties after that mode which gains approbation in the court of heaven; and therefore to take good heed to those helps for their direction concerning the manner of performance which we have in the evangelical institutes, recorded in his heavenly Majesty's imperial court. Therein both the relatives are taught to perform the duties I have been discoursing of, from a principle of mutual love, with a design to please God, and comfort each other respectively, in such a way as may "adorn the gospel," (Col. iii. 20; Eph. vi. 1; Phil. i. 27; Titus ii. 10,) and maintain that "charity" which in this relation should eminently proceed "out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." (1 Tim. i. 5.) This "charity," or love, the apostle tells us in this chapter a little before my text, "is the bond of perfectness," or "perfect bond;" (Col. iii. 14;) and here, if any where, it is to meet at both ends, yea, bud-forth and flourish in reciprocal delights and endearments. (Matt. xvii. 15; Gen. xlv. 10; xlvii. 29, 30; Ezek. xxiv. 25; Luke xv. 20, 22, 32.) Christian parents and children, as much as may be, should still be joining in concert to keep-up a mutual harmony; yea, and, upon better principles, endeavour to equal the most refined moralists celebrated for this charity; as Pomponius Atticus and his mother, who never fell-out in sixty-seven years, as he himself tells the story. To

promote this, there should be a free and frequent communication of secrets, a giving and taking of loving warnings,—yea, parents in some circumstances should be willing to hearken to the submissive and prudent good advice of their children; (1 Sam. xix. 6; Gen. xi. 31; xii. 1; Joshua xxiv. 2;)—and, in a daily address to the throne of grace, a mutual pleading in faith the covenant and promises, for each other's interests. (2 Chron. i. 9—11; Psalm lxxxvi. 16; Rom. ix. 3; x. 1.) Thus more generally.

2. *More particularly.*—Some things may be said to the management of these duties according to scripture, still following the method of my text,—severally to *children*, then to *parents*.

(1.) *To children.*—Such directions as these following may be profitable for the well-management of their duties: namely,

(i.) *Be thoroughly sensible of the mischief of disobedience, and the benefit of obedience.*—And therefore really believe the severe punishment of the former, and the gracious rewards of the latter. Be sure, so much as there is of disobedience, so much is wanting in some kind of natural affection; and *that* usually hath monstrous attendants, *which* direful judgments follow. (Rom. i. 28—32; 2 Tim. iii. 2; Deut. xxi. 20, 21; xxvii. 16; Lev. xx. 9; Exod. xxi. 17.) On the other side, obedience qualifies for the best society, and entitles to the promises. Here is the special promise of life annexed, as was hinted above;—which must needs contain some peculiar benefits, which God doth graciously confer, to show what an estimate he hath of children's obedience;—that the use of a comfortable life should be lengthened-out to them who, according to godliness, give due honour to them who are, under Him, the authors of their lives. (Eph. vi. 2, 3.) So for the most part; and when it is otherwise, that good children do early depart hence, being sooner ripe, they do enter into a better life. Besides, we are not to take our measures of a long life in this state from the course of times or decrepit age,* but partly from the manner of living, and divine good things received in life, and partly from attaining the end of it. As, if one in three months pass-over as much way as another in three years, and come to the same mark with him, length is to be reckoned from the travelling, rather than the way; and he is long-lived, whom God, by revealing his end, hath brought nigh to himself: as David at seventy was said to die “in a good old age;” (1 Chron. xxix. 28; Psalm xc. 10;) as well as Isaac, who had lived a hundred and eighty. There is as much perfection in a little circle as a larger, in David's seventy as Lamech's seven hundred seventy and seven years. (Gen. v. 31.) It is not so much from the number of days, but the filling them up, that life is to be reckoned long.† (Job v. 26; Isai. lxxv. 20; Luke ii. 25—30.) Truly obedient children have this benefit of the promise, that, as they say of figs and lemons, they never die before they are ripe for salvation. Whereas the disobedient are in a sense dead; though they stay long here, they may be reckoned short-lived, when they do not answer the end of living. If Christian children would but seriously contemplate these things, and

* *BODIUS in Eph.* † *Sat vixit diu quem nec pudet vixisse, nec piget mori.* “He has lived sufficiently long, who is neither ashamed of his past life, nor is sorry at the approach of death.”—EDIT.

allow God a reserve by prerogative-royal in the performance of temporal promises, and then heedfully observe the different practices and issues of other children in divine and human story; take often into consideration the instances of both sorts, and mark the ends of each, as Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, yea, above all, the blessed Jesus himself; and, on the contrary, of Ham, Absalom, Adonijah, &c.; they would find it a good means to perform their duties acceptably, and, as he said, "live perfecting all offices." *

(ii.) *Remove all the tendencies to the dishonour of parents, and set a value upon their instructions.*—It is good to be circumspect, and banish those inordinate affections which alienate the heart from duty; as self-conceitdness in Absalom and the prodigal; the one thought he could sway the sceptre, and the other manage his portion, better than his father; so likewise high thoughts of merit, which the prodigal's elder brother had; (2 Sam. xv. 3—7; Luke xv. 12, 13, 29, 30;) also ambition, which did so swell Adonijah; (1 Kings i. 5, 6;) and curiosity, as in Solomon's young man, who followed "the sight of his eyes." (Eccles. xi. 9.) Hence children should take heed of associating with misguiding and misleading companions, and be afraid of whisperers, who secretly suggest things which may tend to make parents cheap. (Prov. xix. 27; xiii. 20.) Shem and Japheth would not listen unto Ham's tale in their ears, nor see too narrowly into their father's failings, lest this should cause a disesteem. (Gen. ix. 23, 24.) Whereas children should appreciate their parents' respects, be afraid of their reproofs, and set a high rate upon their good advice. (Prov. iv. 3, 4; Psalm xxxvii. 30.) When it is right, it is then to be valued; otherwise, it should not be approved, no more than Terah's idol-worship was by his son Abraham when called. (Psalm xlix. 13; Jer. vii. 18; Ezek. xviii. 14; Joshua xxiv. 2, 3.) Certainly Ahaziah sinned greatly, and so did the daughter of Herodias, in following their mother's counsel; (2 Chron. xxii. 3; Matt. xiv. 8;) for if it be evil, the circumstances may be such that obedient children must testify against it, as Asa and Levi did; (1 Kings xv. 13; Deut. xxxii. 9;) yea, disclose the wickedness of it, as Jonathan and Michal commendably did. (1 Sam. xx. 3, 4; xix. 11, 12.) But yet, in such a case, it should, if possible, be with so much caution, as may prove there is no slighting of the relation, but a desire to keep-up the honour of that, by a hearty sorrow for the failure. The Stoics used to say, that "a wise man would make it his business to perform all things rightly," even to the "putting-forth of the finger."† Be sure Christians should be careful, that they do not, so much as by an unwarrantable motion of that, disparage their parents, or despise those chosen by them to give instructions.

(iii.) *Perform all with sincerity, and equality or impartiality to both parents.*—As the great requisite to the due management of these duties, Solomon saith, "My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways." (Prov. xxiii. 26.) He would not have him look asquint, or come with by-ends in a feigned observance, as Absalom; (2 Sam. xiv.

* Παντα τα καθηκοντα επιτελουντα ζην. † Παντα εν ποιειν τον σοφον.—STOΒΕΙ
Loc. Com.

Nil tibi concessit ratio: digitum eerre, peccas.—PERSII Satyra, v. 11.

"Yes, unless reason be thy constant rule,

Wag but a finger, we decry the fool."—BREWSTER'S Translation.

32; xvi. 7, 10;) or not real, only verbal, like him in the gospel, who pretended to "go, and went not;" (Matt. xxi. 28, 30;) his obedience ended in a compliment, and no more. But if servants are to do their duties heartily in absence and presence, "as to the Lord, and not unto men," in the verse following my text; then much more are children, who likewise are greatly concerned to behave themselves impartially with equal respects to both parents, as well as cordially. (Phil. ii. 22.) The law mentions "father and mother" expressly, which might have been included in one word, "parent;" and Jacob is commended upon record for his obedience to his father and mother. (Gen. xxviii. 7.) Solomon many times in the Proverbs calls for obedience to both. Whatever inequality may be betwixt a man and his wife, who is obliged to be subject to her husband, yet in relation to their children they are both as one, and deserve equal honour. Indeed, if in a purely indifferent thing they differ in their peremptory commands, which are contrary, then the father's is to have the precedency; yet with a very great respect to the mother, when in that instant the child is necessitated to decline hers; though if the father's command were unlawful, and the mother's lawful, then the mother were to be obeyed; (Lev. xix. 3;) but with hearty sorrow [that] the father should require what God disallows, and he for that reason doth modestly refuse. And this sincere obedience is to be given to both, whether rich or poor in the world, whether "good and gentle," or "froward," (Luke ii. 51; 1 Peter ii. 18,) in all that is well-pleasing to God, whose honour is the end ingenuous children should aim at by just and honest means in the exercise of their duties, keeping themselves from their iniquities, that is, those which their own turbulent passions are apt to hurry them into. (1 Tim. v. 22.) If we did more reverence ourselves, we should carry better towards our superiors. Pythagoras's advice is very wholesome: "Let a man be the greatest shame to himself," keep his own heart in awe, by a secret blush upon his own extravagancies in their first risings; and so he will have his keeper every where with him. "Then," as he saith further, "let him follow that which is just not only in words but in deeds."* He that is duly affected with shame for himself, will be careful to pay just respects in all due circumstances unto those he is mostly obliged to honour.

(iv.) *Set about all your duties to your parents willingly and readily.*—Not with grudging or disdain, but with a holy warmth of heart, lifting up yourselves to, and following hard after, whatever God requires, in all affectionate expressions of a free and cheerful spirit, since all is to be "in the Lord," who loves readiness. (Judges v. 9; 2 Cor. ix. 7.) This manner of performance will be the more easy, if children timely learn the great lesson of self-denial, and do really exercise that and love. They will then, without boggling, go through the most unpleasant, uneasy, and mean employments they are called unto, and concerned to manage for their parents; as Jacob's sons did for their father, after as well as before their

* ——— Παντων δε μαλιστα' αισχυνεο σαιτον.

Ειτα δικαιοσυνη ασκειν εργη τε λογη τε.—*Aur. Carm. Pythag. 12, 13.*

"Above all witnesses thy conscience fear,

And more than all mankind thyself revere.

One way let all thy words and actions tend,

Reason their constant guide, and truth their end."—FITZGERALD'S Translation.

marriage; and in his straits Judah expressed great readiness to comfort his father. (Gen. xxxvii. 13, 14, 35; xlii. 1—3; xliii. 15; xlvi. 1—3; xlv. 30—34.) Ruth, as was noted before, was very exemplary in this manner of obedience; (Ruth i. 15, 16;) but Isaac's readiness was the most singular, till Christ himself, whom he typified, came. (Gen. xxii. 9, 10.) Then saith he to his Father, "I delight to do thy will, O my God: thy law is within my heart." (Psalm xl. 8.) Believe it, willingness puts a great acceptableness upon duties: children are bound "always to will, though not always to act;" * they should readily embrace all opportunities. It is said, "Amasiah the son of Zichri willingly offered himself unto the Lord;" (2 Chron. xvii. 16;) and so should ingenuous children be ever ready, as Paul was in Christ, for their parents' service. (Acts xxi. 13.) Somewhat of this was hinted before; and I shall only add what Hierocles saith in this case: "It is fit we should not withdraw ourselves from performing with our own hands what our parents require, as occasion serves; but by how much the more mean and servile the offices, by so much should children think them the more honest and laudable; and not to be avoided because expensive, but to be done with a ready and cheerful mind for their use, and with joy [that] we are put to those pains and expenses for their sakes." †

(v.) *Persevere in all, and be constant with diligence unto the end, whatever temptations you meet with.*—Let not the instructions you have received according to godliness "depart from your heart all the days of your life." (Deut. iv. 9.) Be not fickle or inconstant; but hold-out in all circumstances, though your parents be aged and decayed, so long as they and you co-exist in this world, and the relation remains. (Prov. xxiii. 22.) Be like constant Ruth, (Ruth i. 15, 16; iv. 15,) and holy Joseph, when advanced: he continued his obedience to the very last moment of his dear father's life, and after; (Gen. xlvi. 29; xlvii. 31; xlviii. 12;) a virtue wherein, it seems, Samuel's sons were defective; but Jonadab's were praiseworthy, (as well as others after their parents' decease,) when tempted to the contrary; yea, though it was in a business unpleasing to flesh and blood. (1 Sam. viii. 5; Jer. xxxv. 5, 6.) They did, as physicians prescribe to their patients,—receive their father's documents *cum debita custodia*, ["with dutiful regard,"] so as not to indulge their appetites in that he forbade them, but persevere in observing his injunction. This is praiseworthy. Nay, though our parents shall not submit to the yoke of Christ, we should not withdraw our neck from their yoke, nor desist from obedience to them, so far as it hinders not our obedience to Christ; but should hold-out, that none take our crown. As Antoninus said, "Remember well, you ought to be a good man; and that which the nature of man requires of you, this do constantly:" ‡ so that which the nature of your relation calls-for, do it with all your might, and never suffer yourself to be diverted or recalled from it. Having found the true way of obedience, go on in it, and be not turned back again, remembering what our blessed Lord and Master saith, "He that shall endure unto the end,

* *Ad semper velle, non ad semper agere.*

† ΑΛΛ' ἔκοντων αὐτοῖς ὑποταττομένων

εἰς πάντα τὰ τοιαῦτα, &c.—HIEROCLIS *Comment. in Aur. Carn. Pythag.* pp. 54, 57, *mili.*

‡ Καὶ συμμιμημονεύσας, ὅτι ἀγαθὸν σε ἀνθρώπου εἶναι δεῖ, καὶ τι τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἢ φύσιν ἀπαιτεῖ, πρᾶξον τούτο ἀμεταστρεπτικῶς.—MARCI ANTONINI *Meditationes*, lib. viii. sect. 5.

the same shall be saved." (Matt. xxiv. 13.) After these particulars to children, I must crave leave, before I shut up,

(2.) To say somewhat in particular *unto parents*, to direct and help them likewise to manage their office in an evangelical manner.

(i.) *Be sure that you yourselves do keep-up the life and power of godliness in your own domestic practice.*—That hereby your children may be kept from corruption in a bad air, and encouraged in a holy conversation. I have already hinted something of this, concerning the exemplariness of parents, and in the premised general duty of their good behaviour; and therefore shall not need to enlarge much upon it here: only suggest this, that you are to walk in your integrity, as for your own, so for your posterity's, comfort, in the family-exercise of religion, by behaving yourself wisely in an upright way, and walking within your house with an upright heart, showing yourselves "in all things patterns of good works," (Psalm ci. 2; cxii. 2; Prov. xx. 7; Titus ii. 7,) and putting persons and things into their proper places, to prevent confusion, which else will arise, and much obstruct you in your most important offices. This will gain a reputation to your government, and facilitate the management of particular duties. When your children see what a gloss you put upon holiness by your sincere, cheerful, and grave Christian deportment, they begin to discern the pleasantness of the ways of wisdom, the excellency of the life of faith, and the odiousness of flesh-pleasing courses; and so come to esteem your instructions, which are very legible and easy to be understood by such a practical commentary. The holy life of John the Baptist had some influence upon Herod's affections for a time, to gain honour and respect from him. (Mark vi. 20.) And Solomon saith, "A gracious woman retaineth honour;" (Prov. xi. 16;) and a gracious man too: both of them, in the relation of parents; where debauchery, though never so secret and blanch'd with subtilty, but discern'd by nearest relations, proves as poison to the souls of their children; teaching them only with a fair outside to imitate a politic religion, which hath no spirit in it, but is flat and insipid, such as God will not relish. Whereas real and internal godliness, truly exercised by parents, doth greatly quicken their children, and powerfully help both parents and children in all relative duties, which by their means will not be grievous, but delightful. But if parents be insincere, and have not their hearts right with God, and carry not themselves blamelessly, having blots in their own conversation, they will find the duties I have been speaking of to be very difficult and unsuccessful: as we may learn from the apologue of the mother crab,* "who bade her son go straight forward, since it was indecent to crawl sideling, awry, and backwards: who answered, 'I will do it, mother, if I shall first see you yourself doing so before me.'" Unholy parents do indeed by their unholy contradict that hearty reverence they require from their children, and render the means of their education unprofitable.

Those parents, who would prosper in their conduct, should, like that worthy bishop of Antioch,† by a good conversation commend their in-

* *Cum dixisset mater indecens esse non rectâ viâ incedere, sed obliquos intorquere gressus: Faciam, inquit ille, mea mater, si te idem facientem prius videro.* † THEODORITI *Eccles. Hist. lib. iii. cap. 6.*

structions: *Λογῶ παιδεύων, καὶ βεβαίων τῶ βίῳ τὸν λόγον* "Teaching with words, and confirming the words with a holy life." They themselves should, as the elders said to Boaz, "do worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem;" (Ruth iv. 11;) "put iniquity far" from their "hands, and let" it "not dwell in their tabernacles;" (Job xi. 14;) lest, notwithstanding they otherwise be at pains for the education and maintenance of their children, "the Lord shall have no joy in them," and never suffer them to be renowned. (Isai. ix. 13, 17; xiv. 20.) And as you are to put away all iniquity, so particularly that of "flattery to friends," lest "the eyes of your children should fail." (Job xvii. 5.) Be persuaded, then, Christian parents, to take his advice who said, "Where, wheresoever thou shalt be, live to God, who is the Donor of thy life: live to thy conscience, which is the life of thy life: live to thy good name, which is a life after this life," and then, I may add, will flourish most in thy posterity.*

(ii.) *Maintain your parental authority, and assert the dignity of your relation.*—Yet not with lordly rigour, but still with love and mildness. It is good not to lose the power God hath given you in superiority over your children, through any neglect of using it, or by making yourself cheap in any unbecoming familiarity. But then take care that you exercise it in equity, with all gentleness and gravity: "Let none despise you." (Titus ii. 15.) Thus Abraham being in God's stead, he would "command" for God, and he is commended for it, as we have heard. (Gen. xviii. 19; xvii. 23, 24.) If a father's honour belong to you, you should not suffer it to be trampled upon, or lightly esteemed. (Deut. xxxii. 46; 1 Sam. ii. 30.) If you let-go the reins of your government, you cannot rule well; when the master of the ship lets-go the helm, his vessel is driven before the wind and tide. Those parents who live according to the former direction, will be the better able to observe this: for justice and holiness are venerable both in man and woman, as was noted there. (Mark vi. 20; Prov. xi. 16.) These will gain respects to persons in a family, though they have not authority, to restrain others from evil, keep them in a kind of awe, and gain at least a formal approbation of virtuous actions; much more when they are eminent in those vested with authority, as parents are, who, as a holy man † lately directed, "should take care their children be neither too bold with them, nor yet too strange or fearful." They are not to be treated as servants, but as the fruits of your own bodies. Too much familiarity will over-embolden them, and too little countenance will discourage them.

Endeavour to attain the good skill of upholding, and using well, the pre-eminence of your station and relation. Some parents do not only abuse their authority in putting their children upon things unlawful, as Laban, Saul, Herodias; (Gen. xxix. 23; 1 Sam. xxv. 44; Matt. xiv. 8;) but also by their own disobedience to God, and their sinful indulgence. David himself, it seems, under a temptation, did disparage himself, and lessen his own authority, which gave occasion to his son Absalom's rebellion against him. (2 Sam. xii. 9; xiii. 19, 29, 30.) A virtuous management of power, with an unaffected, amiable gravity, is necessary

* *Ubi, ubi fueris, vive Deo, qui est Dator vitæ tuæ; vive conscientie, quæ est vita vitæ tuæ; vive famæ, quæ est vita post vitam tuam.* † MR. BAXTER in his "Cases," p. 543.

to keep a superior from being slighted. In commanding of virtue and restraining of vice in your children, you are concerned to see [that] your pleasure be executed; but then your injunctions must be founded in love, and designed for good. Hence you are obliged, as Salvia hath determined, to see that what you resolve upon “be with judgment and good discretion,” as you expect good success.* When your orders are thus circumstantiated, you will do well to see them performed, and not to connive at your children’s disobedience, “nor to please their peccant humour, lest,” saith Euripides, “you afterwards weep when it is too late.”†

(iii.) *Sweeten all with pathetic expressions of endearing kindness, to insinuate the more into their affections; but still with Christian prudence.*—This will make your government much more easy and acceptable. Solomon gives us an account of the affectionateness of his father and the tenderness of his mother to him, when engaging him to duty. (Prov. iv. 3, 4; xxxi. 1—3.) Bathsheba useth an abrupt kind of speech, which importeth abundance of affection: “What, my son? and what, the son of my womb? and what, the son of my vows?” implying more of kindness than she was able to express, to stir him up, “as one whom his mother comforteth.” (Isai. lxvi. 13.) “Nothing doth more cheer-up and is more sweet and pleasing to children, than the due commendation of the parent.” ‡ So, in our history of martyrs, William Hunter’s mother cheered-up her son in that great duty of bearing testimony to Jesus Christ; saying, “William, I think thee as well bestowed as ever any child that I bare in my womb.” Thus Jacob did in a holy wile get, as it were, into Joseph’s heart, by insinuating the special kindness he had for his dear Rachel, Joseph’s mother. (Gen. xlviii. 7.) If you gain your children’s hearts, then they will give ear to you, so as to observe what you would have done. (Prov. xxiii. 26.) Hence it is that our heavenly Father in scripture is so abundant in satisfying us of his love, that he may gain our hearts and affections. (Prov. iii. 12; Deut. viii. 3—5.) Your converse, then, with your children in all parental offices should, in all decent manner, be still expressive of love. Thus much is peculiarly implied in my text, which inhibits discouragement.

From love and tender “bowels,” if tears or compassionate expressions be mingled with instructions, this will help much to win and commend children unto goodness. (Phil. i. 8.) Suitable gifts and rewards, prudently and seasonably bestowed, will allure them. Upon which account it is that Tertullian saith, “The name of piety is more grateful than that of power; yea, they are called *fathers*, rather than *lords*, of the family.” § Hence also Pliny was taken with a similitude of Homer’s, which he useth once and again, to show that a prince should be moderate in his government: “Even as a father is gentle in ruling of his children.” || So the people esteemed Joseph under Pharaoh, when he

* *Regimen esse non potest, nisi fuerit jugiter in rectore judicium.*—*De Gubernatione Dei*, lib. 1.

† *Τίψ και θυγατρι μη προσμειδιασης, να μη δατερον δακρυσης.*

‡ *Ουκ εστ’ ακουσμα ηδιον η ηθηεις λογος*

§ *Πατρος προς υιον περιεχων εγκωμιον.*—EURIPIDES.

|| *Gratius est nomen pietatis quam potestatis; etiam familie magis Patres, quam Domini, vocantur.*—TERTULLIANI *Apoloq.* cap. 34.

v. 12. PLINII *Epist.* lib. v. ep. 19.

had power in Egypt; when he procured such hearty obeisance, that some render that word, אָבִירֵךְ “Tender father,” (as in the margin,) which in our translation is, “Bow the knee.” (Gen. xli. 43.) Certainly, the great friendship betwixt parents and children requires all expressions of endearment; as “in the tongue” of the prudent woman, there should ever be “the law of kindness.” (Prov. xxxi. 26.) For as Maximus Tyrius observes in another case, so here, “If once the power of friendship be enervated, there is nothing but it may easily move relatives to anger, and disturb them; even as, by taking the rudder from a ship, it is very soon tossed any way.”* And here I think it very advisable, that parents, who have their infirmities, should encourage their honest children, by giving a favourable ear unto their humble and discreet monitions, and good advice for their honour and spiritual welfare; even as Saul did, being convicted with reason, “hearken unto the voice of Jonathan” his son; (1 Sam. xix. 6;) and as Terah, upon the discovery which his son Abraham did from the Lord make to him, complied with his advice for the removing of himself and family. (Gen. xi. 31; xii. 1.)

(iv.) *Labour to carry it with all evenness and impartiality to every child, according to a rational proportion.*—So that it may be evident, you account all that descend from you “dear” or beloved “children,” as God himself doth his; (Eph. v. 1; 1 Peter i. 3; James i. 18;) for you are really concerned in all. It is true, you should very distinctly observe the different carriage of your children towards God, yourself, and others, to approve virtue, and disapprove vice: but yet you are to cherish, as near as may be, an equal desire of doing them all good alike; not hugging one, and hunching another, out of some partial respect or distorted apprehension. A good parent, as one † ingeniously notes, should “observe a species of gavel-kind in dividing his affections to his children,” to prevent envying amongst them; (Gen. xxxvii. 4;) and if the expression thereof be different, it should be with equity and discretion, that they in their own consciences may plainly read the reasons of it. Though there is no necessity to make an equal distribution of estate, wherein the right of primogeniture may seem from scripture, as above-said, to claim a greater proportion, unless some kind of rebellion put-in a demurrer. (Gen. xlix. 3; Exod. xiii. 2; Deut. xxi. 15, 16; 1 Chron. v. 2.) For, however a prudent parent should, like a well-drawn picture, cast an eye equally upon all his children, in point of *affection*; yet, when he makes a distribution of his estate in point of *justice*, it can be no disparagement to him to encourage the obedient with a reward; when by an equitable abatement he may suffer the disobedient justly to feel the smart of his misbehaviour. But yet he is concerned to be indifferent and impartial, the same to every child in the same circumstances. It is, I confess, rare to find a parent indeed of this excellent temper amongst the sons of men: but a truly Christian parent should strive to resemble God in it, since as every child came from his own substance, so he is to give an equal account to God of all; and therefore should labour to over-

* Οἷς γὰρ ὡς τὸ φιλεῖν τῆς γνώμης ἐκπέση, πάντα ἢδὲ ἀξιοχρεὰ κινεῖν ὀργῆν καὶ ταπεινῶν καθάπερ κοίλην ναῦν ἀφαιρεθῆσαν τοῦ ἑρματος, βραχέαι ῥοταὶ σαλευουσί τε καὶ ἀπερρεπουσί.—MAXIMUS TYRIUS, *Dissert.* xxxvi. p. 323.

† MR. FULLER.

come sense with reason, and in very deed exhibit himself, upon a due expense * of circumstances, one and the same to all. So that they, who upon by and undue respects do prefer one child to another, whilst led by a partial affection, cannot manage parental duties in a manner well-pleasing to God. It is said Scipio Africanus was so afraid of being unkind to his child, as too many are, for a natural defect, that he rather showed most affection to his son that was a fool, saying, "He was most worthy of commiseration, whom nature did favour least." †

(v.) And, last of all, *advise with your faithful pastors and spiritual guides, especially in more intricate circumstances; yea, and study well your office.*—Which that you may perform acceptably, it is good also to get what assistance you can from others, to help you in the management thereof. As Manoah did not only seek the Lord, but consulted the angel, concerning his son Samson, how they should "order" him, and how they should "do unto him;" (Judges xiii. 8—14;) so should parents endeavour to inform themselves, and get the best counsel they can from those God hath set over them in the ministration of ordinances, (Eph. iv. 11, 12,) since now under the gospel they are as spiritual fathers appointed for the feeding of Christ's "sheep" and his "lambs," (John xxi. 15—17,) which are directed to find pasture "by the shepherds' tents," and there get waters and balm for healing. (Canticles i. 7, 8; Ezek. xlvi. 8—10; Jer. viii. 22.) Monica, Augustine's mother, repaired to them for aid to reduce her son; ‡ and, indeed, theirs is, as John Baptist's ministry was, to bring all to rights betwixt parents and children, according to the prophet's prediction: "He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." (Mal. iv. 6; Matt. xvii. 12.) Of so great advantage is the right and hearty discharge of these relative duties [which] I have been treating on, for the saving of nations and particular churches from ruin and desolation! Yea, and so greatly instrumental are the ministers of Christ for helping them in their duties, that it concerns honest parents, as to consult those who are holy and able in the ministry, for their children's good, so to commend such faithful ministers to them as are worthy of their respect, and to warn their children to avoid such persons as are likely to draw them off from goodness. Yea, and particularly in disposing of their children, especially into a calling of public consequence, it will be very requisite to consult those who are most able to judge in their own profession, as in divinity, physic, or law; that they may be tried by the faithful and skilful of that profession, whether qualified for that [for which] they are designed; "lest you attempt that which cannot be effected," as Quintilian observes, "by putting them upon what they are unapt for, or hinder them from that [which] they have a genius to, and wherein they would be most serviceable." § And it will be good to take advice in choosing fit educators and tutors, according to your abilities. David had such learned ones as tutors with his sons, to see them instructed, as became the princes of Israel. (1 Chron. xxvii. 32.)

* See the note in page 340.—EDIT. † *Dignus commiseratione magis est, cui natura favet minus.* ‡ AUGUSTINI Confessiones. § *Ne tentes quod effici non potest; nec ab eo quod quis optime facit, in aliud cui minus est idoneus, eum transferas.*

But here parents should be very careful unto whose conduct they commit their children, or whom they take-in to assist them, that they be religious, orthodox, discreet, humble, courteous, skilful, and not covetous, nor careless, but diligent. It was the great concern of reverend Claviger, to have those that feared God about him, to do what he could [that] his wife and children might be such ; and then he thought them well provided for. Luther kept one within his house to teach his children, that he might see them well-principled and ordered, as well as learned. And the above-named Quinctilian from nature's light could say, "If any one in choosing a tutor for his son did not shun manifest wickedness, hence let him know that other things, also, which we endeavour to compose for the profit of youth, prove useless and ineffectual, this being neglected." * *This* Constantius was well aware of, when he was solicitous his cousin Julian should not have or hear ethnic tutors, lest, considering his temper, he should decline to the abomination of Gentilism. But notwithstanding his care, Julian privately got the writings of Libanius, an heathen philosopher, and, after that, of Maximus, who under-hand laboured to pervert him, in hopes he would come to the empire : and, to hide this instilled poison from Constantius, Julian counterfeited for a time a monastic life ; then openly in pretence read the Bible, but secretly studied in earnest the ethnic doctrines, which made him a most bitter enemy to the Christians, when advanced to the empire, as the ancient church experienced. It is dangerous to commit a lamb to the conduct of a wolf. On the other hand, Theodosius Junior was, from his cradle, by his dying father intrusted with his excellent and pious sister Pulcheria ; (then but fifteen years old, and having two younger sisters, Arcadia and Marina ;) who got him instructed by such tutors, especially in the true religion, accustoming him to prayer, and diligently to frequent the assemblies, that he had in great esteem the faithful ministers and other godly men who were lovers of religion ; and so proved very instrumental for the orthodox faith, and the advancement of piety.† In our own land, and nearer our times, we have a notable instance of Sir John Cheke, who, being tutor to king Edward VI., was a special instrument of raising-up and promoting the Reformed religion amongst us : for he was not only instrumental to sow the seeds of that doctrine in the prince's heart, which afterwards grew-up to a general Reformation, when he came to be king ; but by his means the same saving truth was gently instilled into the lady Elizabeth by those who, by his procurement, were admitted to be the guides of her younger studies.‡

It is of great concern, therefore, to get good advice and assistance in the education of children, and for their encouragement to reward those well who are profitably employed in this work, according to the parents' abilities and *their* deserts ; and for my own part, I should account it better to spare in other matters, than in this,—for good assistance to train-up children. Thus I have, as I could in my circumstances, dispatched what I proposed. And now I dare upon the whole matter

* *Si quis in eligendo filii præceptore manifesta flagitia non vitet, jam hinc sciat cætera quoque, quæ ad utilitatem juventutis componere conemur, esse sibi, hac parte omisâ, supervacua.*—QUINCTILIANI *Instit.* lib. ii. cap. 2. † SOCRATIS *Eccles. Hist.* lib. iii. cap. 1. SOZOMENI *Eccles. Hist.* lib. ii. cap. 2 ; lib. ix. cap. 1. ‡ DR. LANGBAINE in Sir John Cheke's Life.

affirm, that I have laid-down nothing in all this discourse, but what I hope is, at least for the main, agreeable to the mind of God ; and what, by his assistance, I myself should desire, and really endeavour to practise, either in the relation of parent or child : which is all the apology I shall make for my plain-dealing ; but shall conclude with those precatory expressions in the Psalms, a very little varied, with respect to those parents who heartily embrace the word of exhortation : “ Let thy work,” O Lord, “ appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon them ;” (Psalm xc. 16, 17 ;) “ that their sons may be as plants grown up in their youth ; that their daughters may be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace :” (Psalm cxliv. 12 :) considering what the Lord hath promised for the encouragement of his faithful servants ; namely, “ Their children shall continue, and their seed shall be established before” him. (Psalm cii. 28.)

SERMON XVIII.

BY THE REV. JAMES JANEWAY, M.A.,

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DUTIES OF MASTERS AND SERVANTS.

Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers ; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart ; with good-will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men : knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening : knowing that your Master also is in heaven ; neither is there respect of persons with him.—Ephesians vi. 5—9.

THE question proposed to me to answer at this time is this :—

What are the duties of masters and servants, and how both must eye their Master which is in heaven ?

Before I come to the direct answer to this question, I shall make way to it by laying down a preliminary consideration or two.

1. *That God did in infinite wisdom make all things, though of a far different nature.*—Some beings he made more excellent, and endowed them with noble faculties, fitted for communion with himself ; and some of these he hath placed in a higher, and some in a lower, orb ; and yet all making the glory of infinite wisdom shine more clearly. He sets one creature higher, and another lower ; one to rule, and the other to be ruled. And of the same kind he advanceth one above another ; and yet with no injustice or wrong to any, but for the mutual help one of another, the beauty and harmony of the whole universe, and the more visible dis-

playing of his own unsearchable wisdom. (Psalm civ. 24 ; Gen. i. 31.) If all the stars were suns, how intolerable would their heat and light be ! If the whole body were eyes, how much of its use and excellency would it lose ! What a chaos and heap of confusion would the world be without government ! And how can government be without superiority and inferiority ? It was not without good reason that the philosopher said, that “ there was a method of perfect wisdom in the making of all things ; and it was not by chance that they are what they are, but the contrivance of the most excellent counsel.”* Who could have mended what God hath made ? What could be better ordered than what Infinite Goodness hath done ? And who but a fool would desire that things should be otherwise than Wisdom itself hath determined ? † O, what cause hath every one to adore God in every thing, who hath made “ every thing beautiful ” in its place and season ! (Eccles. iii. 11.) What cause have all to sit down content and thankful in that place where God hath fixed them ! How unreasonable and blasphemous are the repinings of some, that are ready to quarrel with their Maker, and to impeach him, as guilty of partiality, cruelty, and injustice, that hath not advanced them to a higher, richer, and more honourable condition than they are in ! “ Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus ? ” (Rom. ix. 20.) What diabolical pride and arrogance is this, for the creature to accuse and condemn his Creator ! Shall folly itself indict wisdom ? Must God come to his creatures’ bar ? Must he give thee an account of his actings ? Art thou able to bear his pleadings ? And canst thou, without sinking into nothing, stand before his glory ? What obligation didst thou lay upon God to bring thee out of nothing into something ? Did he stand in any need of thy being ? What was there in thee that should commend thee to God, to advance thee above a toad or a dog ? I could here expatiate, were it not a little beside my design. To conclude : I think it would be far better for us all, to learn of that excellent moralist, ‡ who said, that “ though he was lame, and almost blind, and none of the richest ; yet because he was partaker of reason, he had cause to magnify the distinguishing goodness of his Maker, and could wish that all men would more adore and admire God ; and as for his part, it should be his work, while he had a being ; and he did call all to join in concert to His praise who hath made all things in so excellent an order and harmony.” § Did we all consider what God is, and what we are, methinks it should effectually silence discontent, and leave no room for any thing but love, praise, and gratitude. O, would to God there were a little of that order, harmony, and wisdom in our actions, that is in God’s ; and that we could act “ like them that study to imitate their Maker ! ” || O that, with Paul, we could learn still to be content in whatsoever condition we are in ; and if we have spoken or thought any thing derogatory to the Infinite Wisdom, to “ repent and abhor ourselves in dust and ashes,” and turn our murmurings against God, that it is no better with us, into admiration that we are not worse ! Every state on this side eternal misery

* HIEROCLES *Comment. in Aur. Carn. Pythag.* † ARRIANI *Diatriba in Epicetum*, lib. ii. cap. 7. ANTONINI *Meditationes*, lib. vii. *ex Platone.* ‡ EPICETUS. § Kai ὕμας ἐπὶ τὴν αὐτὴν ταύτην φωνὴν παρακαλεῖται.—ARRIANI *Diat. in Epict.* lib. i. cap. 1. || Ὅς Θεοῦ ζηλωτὴν τὰ πάντα καὶ ποιεῖν καὶ λέγειν.—Idem, lib. ii. cap. 14.

is advancement above what we deserve, and a mercy we can never be thankful enough for.

2. As God did in infinite wisdom make every thing, and placed every thing in that sphere that was most fit for it, *so it is the highest excellency of the creature to shine in his orb, and be regular in his motion.*—I mean, it is every one's duty and excellency to fill-up that place and relation, that God hath set him in, with duty. The whole world is a great army, and God is the General of this army; and he appoints every one their station and rank; and in keeping of it exactly is security, honour, and reward. God makes one a king, another a subject; one a master, another a servant; one rich, another poor; and *he* is really most excellent *that* is so in the faithful discharge of the state and relation he is in. A good servant is far better than a bad master; a good subject, than a wicked prince: he that is not relatively good, is not really good. He that breaks his rank, to get a higher and safe place, may be likelier to meet with destruction than promotion. Adam's loss of Paradise, and the angels' loss of heaven, are sufficient demonstrations of this truth. The world is a stage, saith the Stoic; and in it every one hath his part to act; and it is our commendation and wisdom to act our part well, whether it be a prince or a beggar, a father or a child, a master or a servant. This was holy David's care and resolution: he would "behave himself wisely in a perfect way;" and how shall that be done better than "by walking before God in his house with a perfect heart?" (Psalm ci. 1, 2.) What was Abraham commended for more than his faithfulness? And was this the least act of his faithfulness, to instruct his family, and teach them the fear of God? Joshua was a man of great gallantry and resolution; but I am ready to think he never acted both more bravely than when he said, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Joshua xxiv. 15.) Socrates laughed at them for fools, that endeavoured to persuade him to leave instructing the youth: "God," saith he, "hath set me in this station; and how can I leave it?" * O how few Christians exceed this Heathen! Nay, who almost comes near him, if he lived as well as he spake? It is too true a proof, that there is but little wisdom and religion worth calling so in the world, in that so few (blessed be God, some there are!) are good in their relations. Where are magistrates to be found that are God's vicegerents in their places? Where are the masters that command and direct in wisdom, so as their service is rather a privilege than a toil, a pleasure than a vassalage? (Isai. iii. 5.) Where are the servants that "obey in singleness of heart, as unto Christ?" What a strange disorder and confusion is there in the world, in kingdoms, corporations, and families! And who may be thanked for it but men's lusts, and their not faithfully filling-up that relation God hath set them in? Most are governed by the law of corrupt nature and hell; (James iv. 1;) but few, too few, have that respect to the law of God which should be.† How excellently doth that imperial philosopher declaim against those that are unfaithful in their places, and do not willingly submit to, and order their lives according to, the direction of the most good, wise, and just lawgiver of the world! Hear his words: "He is an apostome of the world, who,

* Ὁ Θεὸς ἐν τινὶ χωρῇ καταστροφήν κατατετακε ταύτην ὃ εγκαταλιπεῖν δεῖ ἡμᾶς;—
EPICTETUS.

† ARRIANI *Diat. in Epict.* lib. 1. cap. 13.

being unfaithful in his place, doth, as it were, apostatize and separate himself from God's rational administration." * O that men were wise, and understood their true interest, and were faithful to it! O that every one would labour to rectify that ataxy and disorder that is in himself, and then in his family! Then, O then, how happy would our kingdom, cities, families be! It was no small commendation of the Grecian commander, that he reckoned it none of the best qualifications of a man to be able to play well upon a harp, but to be able to govern himself and others well; and if a city were put into his hands poor, dismantled, undisciplined, to be able quickly to make it rich, strong, orderly.† To fill-up our relations with religion, is the divine precept, our true wisdom, our peace, profit: it is honest; I had almost said, it is one of the fairest fruits of real Christianity. Would we could all, as one man, engage to do our best for the putting this in execution; and then "Holiness to the Lord" might quickly be written upon our door, our city might be called *Jehovah Shammah*, "The Lord dwells there;" and our land "Hephzibah and Beulah." For this let every honest soul pray; for this let ministers preach. And in the prosecution of this design, I shall, in my poor way, give you advice, by resolving of this question, which I have made way to by this preface:—

What are the duties of masters and servants, and how must both eye their great Master in heaven?

In the answering of this question the more fully, I shall do these things:—

I. Show you *what is meant by master and servant.*

II. Show you *how both are to eye their great Master in heaven.*

III. I shall show you *what is the master's duty, exhort him to it, and give him helps for the performance of it.*

IV. I shall show *what is the duty of servants, press them to it, and give them some helps for the performance of it.*

I. I shall show *what is meant by master and servant.*

By *master* here is meant either master or mistress, such a one as hath the power of himself, and upon whose government and command another dependeth.

Now, in an *absolute and most proper sense* there is none may be called master but God: he only hath an absolute, independent, unlimited power of himself, and hath all others at his command and direction; and he alone is fit for this despotic monarchy, being infinite in wisdom, goodness, and justice. And this clears the meaning of those words of our Saviour: "Call no man father, master, but God;" (Matt. xxiii. 8—10;) that is, look upon none as absolute, infallible lords of the conscience, but him.

But in a *more limited sense* there are masters, to whom respect and honour must be paid by their servants, and that with all readiness and cheerfulness, so far as they command nothing that is contrary to God's command.

By *servant*, I mean one that is not at his own disposal, but at the command of another, so far as his commands thwart not the commands of God.

* MARCI ANTONINI *Meditationes*, lib. iv. sect. 24; lib. vi. sect. 38. † PLUTARCHUS in *Vita Themistoclis*.

Remember, whatever is spoken of servants, is spoken to maid-servants as well as men-servants.

Now this relation seems, in a word, to rise from *nature, law, or contract*. From *nature*, in that some are of a more strong body, and weaker understanding; others of weaker bodies, but of more judgment and experience; and so one is by nature fit to rule, and the other to be ruled. That relation that riseth from *law*, is when any one, by some flagitious act, hath justly forfeited his liberty, and is condemned to servility either for a time, or during his life. The last and usual foundation of this relation is by *contract*; and that is, where one that is by nature free, subjects himself to another's command for a certain time, upon such and such just considerations.

Now this is that relation that I am principally concerned to show you the duties of.

II. I come now to show you, *how both masters and servants are to eye their great Master in heaven.*

1. They are both to *have an eye to the presence of their great Master who is in heaven*.—God in his nature is a Spirit, that is infinitely immense, filling heaven and earth, and yet not included in either. If men did indeed lie under the lively impressions of God's omniscience and omnipresence, what an awe would it put upon their spirits! how honest would it make them in the dark! This, this would make the master reasonable, just, and merciful; this would make the servant faithful, diligent, and constant in his obedience to his master. What makes men to act like devils, but this,—a hope that God doth not see? What made Abraham so upright, but his walking before God? (Gen. xvii. 1.) What kept David so unmoved, but his setting the Lord always before his eyes? (Psalm xvi. 8.) I am persuaded, the greatest failures in either master or servant have their spring here,—a secret root of atheism, and disbelief of God's eye and observation. What truth in all the Bible more clear than this, and yet what almost less believed? O what do men make of God! How do they rob him of his glory, and themselves of the truest motives of fidelity, activity, and cheerfulness! Sirs, is Psalm cxxxix. canonical scripture, or no? Can any hide any thing from God's eye? (Jer. xxiii. 24.) Do not his eyes behold the good and evil? (Prov. xv. 3.) Doth not he ponder the ways of men? (Prov. v. 21; Psalm xciv. 7, 9.) Do you indeed believe this? What, then, is the meaning of falseness on all hands? It was no unjust complaint of the moralist, when he said, that "many dare not do that, the image of God being present, which they will do, God himself being present," hearing, seeing, and observing exactly all that they do.* The all-seeing eye of God is a good motto: I would this were written upon our doors, counters, counting-houses, studies, over our tables. I shall conclude this with an excellent one of Epictetus's sayings: "When you are at home, and have shut the doors, and are in the dark, remember you never say you are alone; but God is within; and he needs no candle to see what you are doing."†

2. *Both masters and servants must have an eye to the glory of their*

* ABRRIANI *Diat. in Epict.*, lib. ii. cap. viii.

† Μεμνησθε μηδεποτε λεγειν οτι μονοι εστε: αλλ' ο θεος εδωκ εστι: και τις τουτω χρεια φωτος εις το βλεπειν τι ποιειται; — *Idem*, lib. i. cap. 14.

great Master in heaven.—There is not an action in our whole lives, but we should either habitually or actually respect God's glory in it; (1 Cor. x. 31; Rom. vi. 16;) and it is but reasonable that He of whom all things are, and by whom all things are preserved, and from whom are all our hopes of good here and hereafter, should have all glory for ever and ever.

Actions lose their excellency when they have not a right end; and to make any thing our end below God, is little less than idolatry. It was excellent advice given, more than once, by that brave moralist: "Refer all things to God; make him your centre, your end."* I shall conclude with another of that noble emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus's sayings: "Remember always in all things thy relation to God; for without respect to him thou wilt never perform any action aright while thou livest."

3. *Both masters and servants must have an eye to the command of their great Master in heaven.*—Ask David how you shall escape a state and act of shame; and he will tell you, "By having respect unto all God's commands." (Psalm cxix. 6.)

If men would never command any thing but what they have warrant for from the word of God, commands would then be just, and obedience easy; then the poor servant would never be put upon that sad dilemma, whether he should obey his earthly or heavenly Master. (Acts v. 29.) The Pythagoreans were not at all out in that doctrine of theirs, that "man is under an oath of allegiance to God, to be obedient to his laws, and never willingly to transgress them." If the master consult God's commands, then he will "forbear threatening," and not make his servants to serve with rigour; and be faithful, meek, putting on bowels and pity; warning, instructing, and correcting, like a Christian, in love to them, and obedience to God. If the servants had still an eye to their great Master's commands, how singly, uprightly, diligently, and cheerfully would they obey! "To the law, to the testimony!" and "peace will be to them that walk according to this rule, and the whole Israel of God." Both masters and servants, yea, all men in all things, should still be of Epictetus's mind, and still use his petition: "Lead me, O God, whither thou pleasest, I will follow thee cheerfully; and if I be something unwilling, yet, notwithstanding, I am resolved to look to thy command, and obey it."† Let God's word be our counsellor, and we cannot do an unjust and imprudent act.

4. *Both masters and servants must have an eye to the assistance of their great Master in heaven.*—Our heavenly Master is so humble and kind, that he never bids any servant do any work, but he is willing to put his own hand to it; and, to say the truth of it, the best servant of all is so weak and foolish, that he is not able to manage the least piece of work [which] his Master sets him about, except himself be at one end of it, and do the most of it, nay, I had almost said, do all of it himself. (John xv. 4.) And if God stand-by, direct, and assist, how wisely, gently, and piously will masters do their part! and how patiently, diligently, and readily will servants do theirs! Then the masters will not threaten, nor the servants groan or complain. But I may have occasion to speak something of this nature elsewhere.

5. *Both masters and servants must have an eye to the sovereignty,*

* HIEROCLES.

† *Enchiridion.*

power, and justice of their great Master.—He is higher than the highest; he hath us in his hand, as the clay is in the hand of the potter, and none of his ways are unequal; he will do righteously, when men do not; and the day is coming when masters and servants, king and subjects, must stand upon even ground before him, and he will do unto every one according to their works. O that masters would remember that God is infinitely more above them, than they are above the poorest servant! Were this well weighed, how soon would the heat of some masters be cooled, their storms be calmed, and their fury turned into meekness! Remember, man, God can easily, without doing any injury at all, make thee and thy servant change places. O that servants could still remember, that they have a greater and a better Master that must be pleased, whosoever is displeased! The deep sense of God's sovereignty would quickly make the proudest heart stoop: this, this would pull-down the stout, insolent, rebellious spirit of a wicked servant, and make him judge obedience far more tolerable than flames; and if any thing of injury be done him by his master, the thoughts of God's justice and righting will quiet his mind.

III. I come now to the third thing proposed, which was to show you *what is the master's duty, and to exhort him to it.*—And this I shall do by giving him,—

(I.) *Some cautionary directions.*

(II.) *Positive directions.*

(I.) I shall give you some

CAUTIONARY DIRECTIONS.

1. *Let masters take heed of being servants to sin and Satan, and rebels to God.*—A bad man is not likely to be a good master. With what face can any man expect others should obey him, whose commands are usually unreasonable, whilst he disobeyeth God, whose commands are always good and equal? How can a drunken, prayerless, swearing wretch look for better service than he gives to his Master?

By sin man at first forfeited that sovereignty that he had over the creatures; and by a constant habit of sin, especially gross sins, which the light of nature doth condemn, a man prostitutes his reason, debaseth his authority, and looseth that majesty which else he is invested with. How can a drunken master rebuke or punish his servant for tippling? Is an intemperate sensualist a fit person to censure gluttony? Can an unclean person condemn wantonness? Is it likely that the servant should be faithful, who seeth his master cheat and lie every day? If the master be a profuse gamester, and given to his pleasure, is it likely that his servant should be frugal and diligent? Are not lying, and swearing, and cursing, and wickedness, as soon learned of a master as a trade? And is it worth the while for a man to give twenty, forty, a hundred, pounds to teach his child to serve the devil, and a short cut to hell, and a sure way to ruin and misery of body and soul? Is that man fit to govern another that cannot rule himself? Is he that hath drowned his reason capable of instructing one [in] that which requires some wisdom to understand and learn, and more to teach? Are not sots, that cannot speak sense, in a sweet frame to speak to God in prayer, or to read a

chapter? What have such to do to take God's name into their mouths, who hate to be reformed? O that wicked masters would consider that their wickedness doth not only hazard the damnation of a single soul, but even of all that are under their charge! Is it not enough to have your own sins to be laid to your charge? Are all your oaths and lies and wickedness too little to sink you, but you must make your servants' sins yours? Is one damnation too little, but you must seek to double it? Are those flames so cool and tolerable, that you are busy in adding fuel to that terrible fire, to make it burn seven times hotter? What a hell must such a man's house be, in which the name of God is scarce heard, except it be in an oath or a curse! Is there a blessing likely to be in the house on which God's curse rests? Friends, I believe you would be loath your children should have Ham's curse, and be servants to a tyrant and a slave: a wicked man is both. (Prov. iii. 33.) Masters, if you would have your servants obey your commands, you must not break God's.* If you would have them sober, you must not be drunk; if you would have them chaste, you must not be filthy; if you would have them true, you must not be false; if you would have them good, you must not be bad yourselves. Your example signifieth more to them than your precept: do not undo that by your actions and life which you would build-up by your words. O, little do wicked masters think what a plague they are to a city, what a curse to a family, and what inevitable ruin they expose their own and other souls, bodies, and estates to, except Infinite Power and Mercy step-in quickly to prevent it!

2. *Take heed of idleness, carelessness, and trusting your servants too much.*—A master's negligence tempts the servant to unfaithfulness. When masters are idle abroad, usually the servants are so at home. It cannot well be expected, that when the master is spending his time foolishly and unaccountably in the coffee-houses, ale-houses, or taverns, the servant should spend his wisely in the shop; especially where he observes that the master never minds which end goes foremost, never examines his books, nor calls him to any account. O this sin of idleness, that sodomitical, soul-debasing, body-weakening, estate-wasting sin! (Ezek. xvi. 49.) Have we a mind to try whether God will rain such another storm of brimstone upon us, as once he did upon them? O how many persons are very prodigal of that commodity which will shortly be very precious! †

Sirs, do you never take a Bible in your hands? Do you never read how much God is displeas'd with sloth, how oft he forbids it? (Rom. xii. 11.) Can you call your spending three or four hours together, in an idle house, in insignificant chat, redeeming the time? (Prov. xviii. 9.) Is neglecting your servants the way to make them faithful? O think of these things, before it is too late. I know, men have their excuses, and can easily evade what I say. But, believe it, it is one thing to deal with a poor minister, and another thing to deal with God; and a thousand of your pleas, when they are cast into his balance at the day of judgment, will be found light. If men must be judged for idle words, I believe they will scarce be acquitted for idle actions. I wish we that are masters could oft speak to ourselves in that brave emperor's language: "In the morning, when thou findest thyself unwilling to rise, consider with thyself presently, 'It is to go about a man's work that I am stirred-up. Am

* PYTHAGORAS.

† SENECA.

I unwilling to do that for which I was born, and brought into this world? Was I made for this, to lay me down and make much of myself in a warm bed?'"* "O, but this is pleasing." And was it for this that thou wert born, that thou mightest take thy pleasure? Was it not in truth that thou shouldst always be busy and in action? Seest thou not, how every thing is busy in its kind, to perform what belongs to it in its place? &c. And you use to say, "If you keep the shop, the shop will keep you." If you keep not your eye upon your servant, when you hope to find an honest man, you may meet a thief.

3. *Take heed whom you admit into your family.*—One that is born of wicked, debauched parents, and hath had nothing but bad examples, and seldom good precepts; that hath been accustomed to lying and baseness from the cradle; that hath not been taught to read, and knows neither his duty to God nor man; that is ignorant of God, Christ, soul, heaven, hell, and, consequently, is not capable of lying under the force of the most powerful motives to faithfulness. David was hugely cautious in this point: a liar should not dwell in his house. (Psalm ci. 7.) As good servants bring a blessing along with them into the families where they come; (Gen. xxxix. 5;) so sometimes wicked servants bring a curse with them into the house where they come. Little do masters think how much damage a neglect in this may bring upon them: their estate may insensibly be wasted, their other servants infected, their children be corrupted, and provisions laid-in to feed their sorrows all their days. Never talk of what thou shalt have with them; how responsible † their parents be: will this balance the hazard of your children's souls? Sooner take a toad into your bosom, than a wicked servant into your family.

4. *Take heed of putting your servants upon too much work.*—It is the way to alienate their affections, to make them almost incapable of doing their duty as they should to God; it puts them upon cries and groans to him, that hath ever an ear open to the complaints of the oppressed. (Exod. ii. 24.) By this you make them more blockish, and less ingenious; and, consequently, not so fit to carry-on your business so much for your interest, as else they might do. Remember, how contrary this is to humanity. How would you like this in others? Were the Egyptians to be justified for their great burdens wherewith they loaded the Israelites, and the Turks to be commended for the hard vassalage they put poor Christians to? I know, you readily censure both these. And how can you condemn either, when you imitate both? Is your sin less, because against greater light? Except you desire the curse of God and man too, take heed of this sin. You may learn more mercy from an Heathen than you ever practised; for he tells you, that "your servants are the inferior and poor friends, and are to be accounted next to children, and came not into the house for servitude and vassalage, but patronage." ‡

5. *Take heed of letting them have too little employment.*—It is of dangerous consequence to get a habit of idleness. It was none of the least commendations of that worthy woman, that she would suffer none in her house to eat "the bread of idleness." (Prov. xxxi. 27.) As you must give an account of your own time, so must you also of your

* ANTONINI *Meditationes*, lib. v. sect. 1.

† This meaning of the word, almost synonymous with *respectable* and *affluent*, was not unknown to some of our older writers.

—EDIT.

‡ SENECA *De Clementia*.

servants' too, how it is spent. When your servants are idle, the devil is at work. If you have nothing for them to do, remember God hath something. Set them to reading the word, praying, and put them upon using all "diligence in making their calling and election sure." It is far better to have no servant, than to keep one to do nothing but look about him. This, this hath laid the foundation of some young men's ruin: this is unfaithfulness to God and man; by this you wrong body and soul.

6. *Take heed of bitterness and threatening, of cruelty and injustice, of wronging them in meat, drink, clothing, or lodging, and neglecting them when they are sick, and denying them that tendance, physic, and care that is fit for them at such a time.*—Take heed of calling them names, and cursing them, and of correcting them with unreasonable weapons, for slight or no faults, and using them worse than a merciful man would do his beast. Are not your servants of the same metal with yourselves? They have sense and feeling as well as you; their flesh is not iron, nor their bones brass. Would you have God give you such mercy as you give your servants? If he should mark what you do amiss, what would soon become of you? Did you never read the woes that God denounceth against oppressors? And do you think God threatens in jest? Cannot he easily give life and execution to his woes? And where are you, then, man? What, if God should curse when you curse? What, if he should strike as well as you! Are you able to bear the strokes that his hand can lay-on? Can thy heart endure, or thy back bear, what he can inflict? When you are just lifting up your hand, consider a little the nature of the fault, and do as thou wouldst have God do by thee; and then be outrageous and cruel if you can. Remember, your servants are God's servants, and you must not rule them with rigour: read those scriptures which you find quoted in the margin. (Lev. xxv. 42, 43; Deut. xxiv. 14; James v. 4.) Some may wonder that I insist upon this caution so long; but I wish the empty bellies, the thin cheeks, the black and blue skins, of many poor servants did not give me too good reason for what I say. I shall desire such masters to ask themselves sometimes, "Whose soul do I now properly possess,—a tyrant's, a madman's, or a beast's?"* Suppose your servant is not so wise, strong, and active as you would have him; it may be, for this, he more needs pity than blows or curses. But if he be really faulty, were you never so too? And when punishment is due, remember, that religion, reason, and humanity must always measure punishment. Think not they are in your power, and poor and friendless, and that they have none that can or will right them. If this were a good warrant for oppressing another, how many are there who would soon crush you to pieces!

7. *Take heed of neglecting your servants' souls.*—Their souls, as well as their bodies, are your charge; and you must be accountable shortly for them. O how few consider seriously of this! Are not the souls of servants slighted, as if they were little better than the souls of brutes? Sirs, is that which Christ thought worth his blood, not worth your care? The neglect of most masters in this thing is horrible. How seldom do they speak a word of God to their servants! How great a rarity is it for them to pray with them, and read the scriptures before them, and to call

* ANTONINI *Meditationes*, lib. v. sect. 11; lib. vi. sect. 21.

upon them to mind what they read! Who endeavours to convince their servants of the corruption of their nature, and that they are born slaves of sin and Satan? Who commends Christ as the best Master, and commands his servants to obey him? Where is the master to be found, that is frequently and importunately endeavouring to convince all under his charge, of the necessity of faith in Christ, repentance, and a holy life? How little are masters concerned for God's honour and service! Nay, are there not some that are so far from minding the souls of their servants, that if once they perceive a poor servant begins to set his face toward heaven, how are they set against him! What scoffs and jeers shall he then have, and scarce live a quiet life after it! And there are others that put their servants upon sin, that keep them up to work so unreasonably late upon Saturday nights, that they lose half the Lord's day with sleeping. (2 Kings xxi. 11; Isai. xxxvii. 24.) How many that put their servants upon work, and serving of goods, upon the Lord's day! How many do we see keeping their stalls open to sell fruit! O where are our Nehemiahs? Who reproves his servants for neglecting God's service, more than for neglecting of his own? Who observes what company they keep, how the sabbath is spent? Who reproves them for lying and cheating for their profit? Are there not too many that put them upon telling lies to cover their own neglect? Do such masters as these deserve the name of Christians? Do they look like God's servants? Whose fault is it that Moorfields is so full of idle youths, and that the houses and taverns are so frequented on the Lord's day? Whom may we thank for many of our disorders, judgments, and miseries, but careless masters? Whence is it that so many vile women are maintained so high, that bastards are so common, and that we hear so oft of murdered infants? How comes it to pass that prisons are so full, and Tyburn so fruitful? If the matter were well canvassed, we should find that masters' and parents' neglect of catechising, instructing, reproving, and correcting them under their charge, is not the least cause of this and other evils. Sirs, can you prove the Bible to be a lie, and souls and invisibles to be but fancies? O what then do you mean by your strange neglect of these affairs? God hath made you watchmen; and if you be asleep, or give not warning, at whose hand, do you think, must the blood of the souls in your family be required? (Ezek. iii. 17, 18.) The very Heathens have declaimed notably against this sin: "If," saith one, "a friend had but * a dog under your care, you would not starve him, but in some measure proportion your care of him to the love you bear to your friend."† And hath not God put souls under your care, and are they to be neglected? I have been the more large upon this head, because this sin is so common, and of such dismal consequence, and so little care is taken for the redress of it.

(II.) I come now to lay down the *positive duties* of masters; and that I shall do with somewhat more brevity.

POSITIVE DUTIES OF MASTERS.

1. *Let all masters endeavour to be God's servants.*—True religion, and divine principles in the heart, will give a man the best measures

* Is this a misprint for *put*?—EDIT.

† EPICETUS.

of action: the grace of God will teach him to deny his pride, passion, sensuality, and worldly lusts, and to live holily, soberly and righteously, in this present world. Religion in its power,—O how lovely doth it make a man! With what wisdom and prudence doth such an one act! With what sweetness and love, and yet with what majesty! What a brave master was Abraham! And what made him so, but the fear of God? This, this will make a man merciful, patient, meek, heavenly-minded, and yet diligent in his place; (Matt. xi. 29;) this will make him exemplary, and, as much as in him lies, to act like God in his place. And what injury can such a person do? Can *he* be cruel, *that* hath such a Master as Christ? Can *he* find in his heart to be unmerciful, *who* hath obtained mercy? If a man be very holy himself, his example will have a drawing power in it to allure to that which is so good, and be a constant check to that which is bad: such an one is under the promise of God's blessing; and he will teach him, and give him wisdom to discharge the duty of his place: he is made "partaker of the divine nature," (2 Peter i. 4,) and so enabled in some measure to act in a conformity to the divine will.* It was no small commendation which Paul gave of Philemon, when he spake of the "church in his house." (Phil. 2.)

When our first parents were in their pure state, what homage did all the creatures give them, as their visible Lord! And had not man, by his fall, forfeited this prerogative, and by denying God's sovereignty lost their own, they had, no doubt, still kept their dominion over the creatures. And now, the more of holiness is in a man, and the more near God, and like him, the more likely [is he] to get and keep a majesty and dominion in his place. Surely, "great holiness commands respect and reverence;" † and rather choose to have your inferiors reverence than fear you; for admiration and love accompany reverence; but hatred, fear. ‡ O what a noble thing were man, if goodness and purity did always accompany superiority and government! These are, and shall be, honourable, in spite of malice itself. A right worshipping of God is the captain of all virtue; § and when this divine seed is cast into the soul, it lays the foundation of brave and true honour and respect; such a one,—he offers himself a sacrifice to God, and makes a temple for God in himself, and then in his family; and such a master, who would grudge to serve? How sweet must obedience then be, when nothing is commanded but what God commands, and it is interest and profit to obey! (1 Peter v. 1.) O, sirs, little do you think how much power a meek, holy, grave conversation hath. Who that hath the least spark of ingenuity in him will not be restrained, if not conquered, by it? O that masters would but try this way! And if honouring God do not more secure their honour than severity, then let me be counted a deceiver. This, this is the most effectual way to make servants good,—to be good yourselves; this will bring them to a true relish of religion, when it is pressed upon them by precept and example. (1 Sam. i. 21.) I have known some servants that have blessed the day that ever they saw their masters' faces. O let your excellency allure and draw those under you, as the sun doth men's eyes, or as meat and drink doth the hungry. ||

* EPICTETUS. † PYTHAGORAS. ‡ HIEROCLES. § Idem. || ARRIANI *Diat.*
in *Epiet.* ANTONINI *Meditationes*, lib. vi. sect. 27.

2. *Endeavour the good of the souls of those under your charge with all your might : be in travail to see Christ formed in their souls.* (Rom. x. 1.)—Give them no rest till you have prevailed with them to be in good earnest for heaven : allow them time for prayer, reading of the word, hearing of good sermons, and for conversing with good books : commend to them Baxter's "Call to the Unconverted," and Mr. Thomas Vincent's "Explanation of the Assembly's Catechism," &c. ; and observe what company they keep ; and if you know a holy, experienced servant, commend their society and example to them. Keep a constant watch over your servants : remember what temptations they are exposed to ; know how they spend their time ; call them oft to an account, and look well to your books : it will do them no hurt, and you much good : be oft, in meekness and pity, treating with them about their everlasting concerns ; and let your carriage bring full evidence along with it of your dear love to their immortal souls. Labour, as well as you can, to convince them of the corruption of their nature, of the evil of sin, of their lost and undone state, of their impotency and utter inability to save themselves, or to make the least satisfaction to divine justice, or to bear that punishment that is due unto them for every sin ; show them their absolute need of a Christ, and that, without him, there is no salvation ; make them to understand what the new birth is, what kind of change it is, and how necessary ; and warn them of the danger of miscarriage in conversion, and of taking-up with a half-work, and resting in the outward part of religion, and their own righteousness. (Matt. v. 20.) Put them upon labouring to know God in Christ : "This is life eternal, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent." (John xvii. 3.) Do what you can possibly to convince their judgments of the reasonableness, profitableness, and sweetness of religion, where it is in its reality, vigour, and constancy : (Prov. iii. 17 ; Rom. xii. 1 ; Matt. xi. 28—30 ; 1 Tim. iv. 8 :) take-off the imputations and aspersions which the unexperienced, foolish infidel would cast upon Christianity. Never think you can commend Christ too much to them. (Prov. iii. 15.) O, if you could allure their souls, captivate their hearts, and make them in love with Him who is "altogether lovely !" (Canticles v. 16.)

O let them not alone, till you see them deeply affected with these things ! Expostulate the case with them frequently by themselves. Ask them what they think of the estate of their souls, and leave not with their sullen silence. Ask them plainly, how they can eat, or drink, or sleep, without Christ and pardon ; and what they mean, to be so unconcerned. Tell them that death may be nearer them than they imagine ; and that, as death leaveth them, judgment will find them. Tell them that their stupidity is an effect of that deadness their souls lie under ; and that, if they be not awakened quickly, they must be unconceivably and eternally miserable. Ask them what they have to say against the ways of God, and what they have to plead for their neglecting their souls, for sin and for Satan. Tell them, these things are matters of such weight, that they need not much time to determine what must be done ; it is a matter of such vast importance, that it calls for the greatest speed, diligence, and care imaginable ; and that you cannot be satisfied till you see this work done. Catechise and instruct them con-

stantly, at least once a week. Let the word sound daily in their ears, and pray twice a-day with them ; let some time be allowed them for secret duties ; and put them upon the performance of them spiritually and constantly. Keep them not too long at work, or in the shop, on Saturday night. The Jews had their preparation for the sabbath ; and the ancient Christians did not fall short of them in their preparation for the Lord's day. Let the sabbath be carefully spent in secret, family, and public duties ; and, for the better direction in your duties upon that day, I refer you to that excellent piece, Mr. Wells's " Practical Sabbatarian ;" a book it is pity any great family should want. Cause your servants to bear you company to hear the most powerful preacher you can ; require an account of what they hear, and let the sermons be repeated in your family ; and ask them what it was that did most affect their hearts, and labour to press things home afresh upon their souls. And if you perceive any good inclinations in them, encourage them greatly, and improve them all you can ; and if you do not see what you would presently, be not quite discouraged, and cast them off as hopeless. " Exhort them daily, while it is called to-day ;" (Heb. iii. 13 ;) and if you see them still dull, hard-hearted, and under a spirit of slumber, be yet the more earnest : who knows but a little more patience and compassion and zeal may prevail ? But if, after long using the fore-mentioned means, you find them still refractory, stubborn, and to slight your counsel, and run-on in sin, and to grow worse and worse, you must add sharp reproofs ; (Prov. xxix. 19 ;) and if they do no good, but they make a mock at them, and endeavour to jeer their fellow-servants out of their duty too, then you must add blows to your words. Stripes are fit for the back of a fool ; (Prov. xxvi. 3 ;) and if neither exhortations, reproofs, nor corrections will prevail, but they continue still like sons of Belial, rebellious to God and you ; then remember your duty is to ease your house of them. (Psalm ci. 4.) Consider well what danger there is of their infecting the rest of your servants and children ; consult your own peace, honour, and profit. Let not a liar, a company-keeper, a vile person, dwell in your house, when you have used all possible means for his reclaiming : " What fellowship should light have with darkness ?" (2 Cor. vi. 14.) Remember that God hath made you a prophet, a priest, and a king in your own family.

3. Another duty of masters is, *diligently and faithfully to instruct their servants in their calling.*—Conceal nothing of the mystery of your art from them : I mean, of what is lawful ; for if you are skilled in the art of cheating, you must unlearn that yourselves, and never teach them that which will hazard their ruin. Some masters are ready to hide the most profitable and ingenious part of their trade from their servants. Remember, sirs, that law and nature, reason and religion, all command you to be faithful in this thing. Their parents or friends put them to you to teach them an honest calling ; and you promised you would do it ; and it is dishonesty in the highest degree to fail in this.

4. *Be just, compassionate, and loving.*—Be as ready to commend and encourage them for doing their duty, as to reprove them for the neglect of it. Let them want nothing that is fitting for them in the place they are in. Let their food be wholesome, seasonable, and sufficient ; (Prov.

xxi. 15;) let their clothing be warm, sweet, and decent; let their lodging be warm, and sweet, and wholesome; not too far from your eye and ear. Let them have rest sufficient to recruit nature, and to fit them for God's service and yours. And in case of sickness, let them have such tendance, physic, and diet as they need. You cannot imagine what obligations you may by this lay upon your servants to fidelity; how acceptable this is to God, and how much reputation it will get you among men. See an excellent example in the centurion. (Matt. viii. 5, 9.) "Give unto your servants that which is just and equal." (Col. iv. 1.) It was Job's commendation, "that he did not despise the cause of his hand-maid." (Job xxxi. 13.) Use your tongues to sweetness: a soft word sooner prevails than a hard blow or curse.

Be punctually faithful to your contract with them; pay them their wages to the full: it is better to do more, than less, than your bargain. In a word, "as the elect of God, put-on bowels of pity, and put-off all these, anger, wrath, malice, cursing:" remember "the wrath of man works not the righteousness of God." (Col. iii. 12; James i. 20; Eph. iv. 26.) Be angry for nothing but sin. Remember, a Christ-like gospel-spirit is a spirit of love and peace, meekness and faithfulness; with these things God and man are well pleased. (Gal. v. 22.)

5. *Discharge your servants with sweetness and love, and do not grudge that they should have a livelihood as well as you.*—Send them out of your family with the counsel, the good-will of a father, and reckon, one that was a faithful servant to you seven years deserves to be esteemed next a child ever after. To this end it would not be amiss, if you give him as good a report as he deserves, to raise his reputation and credit; and if you help him as far as you are well able in his setting-up, you will not repent it upon a death-bed, nor at the day of judgment. In old time God did require, that when a servant served six years, he should not be sent away empty; "but," saith the text, "thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy wine-press: and that wherewith the Lord thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him." (Deut. xv. 13, 14.) And I know not why this may not be practised still, where the master is wealthy and able, and the servant poor and deserving: neither do I know where the gospel gives us a discharge from the works of charity and mercy. (Col. iii. 13; Rom. xiii. 9, 10; 1 Thess. iv. 9.)

I come now to *exhort masters to this work*, to perform their duty. And this I shall press with a few

MOTIVES.

1. *Consider, what a Master God is to his servants.*—He is most just and righteous in all his dealings: who can accuse him of the least unrighteousness? Who can say, he hath done him wrong, and that he is a hard Master? Come, let any testify against God, and make good their charge if they can. Is not he full of pity, and ready to forgive? How ready to moderate his anger when he is highly provoked! It is not without good reason that the prophet saith, "Who is a God like unto our God?" And he is ready to teach his servants, and to help their infirmities; and if their work be hard, he doth bear the heavier part of it. He is ready

to keep them company, to succour and encourage and comfort them. He provides all things needful for them : he delights in the prosperity of his servants, and loves to see his servants thrive : he gives them many a token of his love here : but, O, "what great things hath he laid up for them ! Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive it." Their reward is exceeding great, sure, and eternal. (Isai. xlv. 21 ; Psalm xcii. 15 ; James v. 3—8 ; Psalm ciii. 14 ; Mal. iii. 17 ; Micah vii. 18 ; Exod. xxxiv. 6 ; Psalm xxv. 4 ; Job xxxvi. 22 ; Isai. xxviii. 26 ; Rom. viii. 26 ; Psalm xxxii. 8 ; Isai. xliii. 2 ; Dan. iii. 25 ; Psalm xxiii. 1 ; xxxiv. 10 ; xix. 11 ; xxxi. 19, 20.) O, what harm would it do you to be like God ? Do not your servants deserve more kindness from you than you or any other doth from God ?

2. *Consider, what need your servants have of your utmost care in the fore-mentioned particulars.*—They are young, unexperienced, heady, nay, naturally ignorant, proud, dead ; children of wrath, enemies to God ; every moment in danger of miscarrying. And at whose hand will their blood be required, think you, if you do not your duty to warn, reprove, correct them ?

3. *Consider, how much it will be for your honour.*—How high an esteem will all good men have for you ! How great a value must wise magistrates set on you ! What reason hath the city and corporation to rise-up and call such "blessed !" How great and how common a good such are, is scarce to be expressed. Such shall have a good report, in spite of wickedness ; your servants cannot but look upon you as their counsellor, master, father, and give you suitable respect and honour.

4. *Consider, how pleasing and acceptable this is to God.*—Such the Lord is nigh to ; his eyes behold [them] with delight. It is not he that observes his great sacrifices, it is not he that makes many prayers, it is not he that makes the greatest show of religion outwardly, that is accepted ; * but it is he that gives-up his heart first to God, as a warm sacrifice full of love, and then his house unto the Lord : (Joshua xxiv. 15 :) this, this is the man that God will visit, comfort, bless ; (Psalm i. 3 ;) this is he that, ere long, shall hear his great Master's commendation, and have a welcome to glory. (Matt. xxv. 34.)

5. *Consider, how much profit and pleasure you shall have here.*—By your diligence and care, you may be enriched ; there is God's promise for your security. (Prov. xxviii. 20 ; x. 6.) By this your trade is likely to thrive, your credit rise greatly, your custom increase ; and when the careless master makes haste to poverty, a wise, diligent, and faithful [master] is in the most likely way to get, improve, and keep an estate. I might say, what pleasure and comfort a man cannot but take in his family, when every one acts regularly in their place !

6. *Consider, how much good your faithfulness may do others.*—Your servants may, for aught that I know, call you their spiritual fathers, and bless God for ever for your examples, exhortations, prayers ; and your servants may instruct your children, and be frequently instilling one good thing or other into them, and influence them more than you are aware

* HIEROCLES.

of. You are a mighty help to poor ministers; you help to plough-up the ground, and make it fit for the divine seed; you pull-out the stones; you weed-up the roots of bitterness, or at least keep them from thriving and growing-up; you harrow-in the good seed, you water it with your tears, and God will make it fruitful; you pluck-up the darnel and the tares. Of all the persons living, we ministers are most beholden to good masters and good parents: we beseech you, if you have any love for us, or our Master either, be faithful in this thing. O make us glad, when so many thousands are making us sad with their wickedness. I might add, your examples draw others, and make bad citizens good.*

7. *Consider the danger of your neglect, if you be unfaithful.*—You expose body, soul, estate, wife, children, servants, and all, to sin, ruin, shame, and the curse of God for ever; you break the rules of equity and humanity; you forfeit your reputation; you go the likeliest way to work to bring upon you dismal calamities in your life, worse at death, and worst of all after death. O consider this, you that forget God and your duty; and read that scripture often [which] you see quoted in the margin. (Matt. xxv. 26; xxiv. 48—51.)

I shall now crave leave to *expostulate the case with masters about their duty*; for I am loath to leave you, till I have prevailed with you to set to your work like Christians. Sirs, you have heard your duty; and what have you to object against it? Can you prove that that which I have desired of you is not required by God himself? Have I not proved what I have said by plain scriptures? And doth not reason and humanity, as well as Christianity, oblige you to the putting these duties in practice? Have I not laid-down many motives to press you to your duty? Have I not told you what a Master God is to his servants, and put you upon being followers of him as dear children? Would it be any disparagement to you to follow so perfect and unerring an example? Doth not he teach, direct, help, encourage, and reward his servants? Is not he faithful to his promise, tender, pitiful, and easy to be reconciled, and ready to forgive? And are you not very well pleased with these properties in God? And if this be amiable in God, why should it not be lovely in you? God humbleth himself to look upon what is done on earth; and is it below you to look upon and take care of your servants? What great difference is there, I pray, between you and them? Are they not of the same mould? And shortly your bones and skulls will not be distinguished. Why did you take them into your family, if you intended to take no more care of them than of a dog? Was it not a piece of base falsehood in you to promise and engage what you never intended to perform? Methinks I have a mind to debate this matter fairly with you, so as to leave you resolved for your duty, or without any reason or excuse for the neglect of it. Sirs, is there any thing of dishonesty in what I have been persuading you to? Is it a dishonest thing to pray in your families? to instruct them in the things of God? to be holy, diligent, and faithful? What harm is there in all this? Would it do you or yours any injury? Would it hinder either your profit or pleasure? Can "godliness," which hath "the promise of this life, and that which is to come," undo you?

* EPICTETUS.

Should that which pleaseth God displease you? Is it an unpleasant thing to see the beauty of holiness in your family, and to have yours serving God and you faithfully? Is it an unpleasant thing to have God's commendation and peace, and to have good hopes that all yours are God's, and shall be delivered from the wrath to come, and be heirs of a crown of glory? If you talk of pleasure, no pleasure like them that are in duty, and at the end of duty. Well, now, what have you to say against your duty? You cry, "Pish! this is the way to be a slave, a mope, a fool." Is it true, indeed, that to be enlarged for God in one's place is a slavery? How come such to be so full of peace and joy? Is that the state of slaves? Nobody is about to debar you of moderate liberty and recreation. But will you call nothing liberty and recreation, but that which exposes you and yours to ruin? "But if you take this course, you shall be poor; if you and your servants may not lie, cheat, break sabbaths, you shall never be able to live." How, then, come so many honest men, that would not do any of all these things for a world, to live so well? Were Abraham, Joshua, David, Cornelius, all such poor men? If diligence, honesty, and holiness undo men, what will make them? I hope you will not say, that cursing, lying, fraud, idleness, sensuality, and carelessness, are better ways of thriving. Well, once more, what have you yet to say against what I have been persuading you to? Will you now without delay bewail your former neglect, and in good earnest set to your work, like a man that in some measure knows the power of divine precepts, the worth of souls, and the greatness of that charge that lieth upon you? O that there were in you such a heart! O that all masters of families were resolved for that which humanity, reason, interest, reputation, and their comfort call for, as well as the law of God and men oblige them to! What blessed families then should we have! what noble corporations! what glorious cities! Might not *Jehovah-Shammah* be written then upon our gates, and "Holiness to the Lord" upon every door? O when shall it once be?

Now, in hopes that some honest hearts are affected with what hath been spoken, and are desirous to engage with all their might in their duties, I shall briefly add a few

HELPS FOR THE BETTER PERFORMANCE OF THEIR DUTY.

1. *Get a heart inflamed with love to God.*—This will make you much more concerned for his honour than your own; this will cause you to promote his interest with vigour, and remove whatsoever may be prejudicial to it. Love will break through difficulties, and make duty easy; love will engage you, body, soul, estate, head, tongue, hand, heart, all for God: then you cannot live without prayer, and instructing your servants. If the love of God dwell in you, I never fear the disputing your duty.

2. *Get a deep sense of the worth of souls upon your spirits.*—Remember, He that made them values them highly; He that bought them and paid dearly for them, judged them worth his heart-blood. They that are wise, believe that their utmost care for them is not too much; their loss is an irreparable loss; and if they are saved and secured, all losses are tolerable, light, inconsiderable. A due sense of the worth of a soul would

make you wonderfully careful to prevent its miscarriage, greatly solicitous to make sure its happiness.

3. *Beg of God a spirit of wisdom and government, that you may know how to go in and out before your house, like a man of prudence and religion.* (1 Kings iii. 9.)—You know whence “every good and perfect gift” comes; and if any man lack wisdom, they must ask of Him that is ready to answer such requests, who will give liberally and not upbraid. (James i. 5, 17.) Beg of God the gift of grace and prayer and utterance; beg experience and knowledge; and use and improve fruitfully what talent God hath given you already. A wise man instructed of God is a priest of God, and the only man fit to do his work.*

4. *Study the scriptures much.*—Attend upon a conscientious, powerful ministry, and read some practical books: there you will find the most excellent precepts; there you will meet with the most commendable precedents; there you have the most powerful motives to your duty, the most successful helps; in a word, there you will meet with the assistance of God’s Spirit: by them you will be kept from any unrighteous thing. (Psalm cxix. 11.)

5. *Do as you would be done by.*—Remember, “what measure you mete to another, shall be measured to you again.” (Matt. vii. 2.) I believe David would scarce have been so ready to pass such a sentence as he did, if he had well considered who was at the bar; (2 Sam. xii. 1—7;) and it is likely a less punishment than burning might have been pronounced against Tamar, if Judah had remembered who was the father of her child. (Gen. xxxviii. 18, 24.)

6. *Take heed of pride, selfishness, and sensuality.*—These are the great make-bates; these make the world so full of confusion and trouble; from hence come war and fightings; (James iv. 1;) this brings such disorder, misery, and sorrow unto kingdoms, cities, houses. If, instead of these, we had humility, public-spiritedness, temperance, the world would be quickly well-mended with us. (Prov. iii. 10.)

7. *Think much upon your account, death, judgment, heaven, hell, and eternity.*—I had almost said, Believe this truly, and think of it frequently, and be unfaithful if you can. I am persuaded, that every wilful omission of a known duty, and commission of known sin, hath much of atheism and unbelief in it. It is but yet a little while, and master and servant must be equal; death knows no difference; the worms and rottenness will seize as soon on the one as the other; and this might a little teach us humanity and moderation. Consider that account that must be given of our opportunities of service, and every talent we are intrusted with. Suppose God’s messenger were just ready to knock at your door, and you were surely to appear before God before to-morrow morning; what meekness, diligence, faithfulness, would you then exercise, and how hardly brought to do any thing to hazard God’s displeasure! how full of good counsel to every body! Why, how knowest thou, O man, but this hour may be thy last? (Luke xvi. 2; Heb. ix. 27.) This was that which did not a little prevail with Job to do his duty, and not to despise the cause of his hand-maid: “What then,” said he, “should I do, when God shall rise up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer

* HERODES.

him?" (Job xxxi. 14.) Let death, when he comes, find you doing the best work, and faithful in your place. I shall conclude this with the advice of that gallant emperor: "Let it be thy earnest care constantly to perform every thing thou art about with justice to every one; which you may well do, if you go about every act as your last." *

IV. I am now come to the last thing which I promised to do, and that is, to show *what is the duty of servants*. And that I shall perform in the same method as I did before:—

(I.) By giving them some *cautionary directions*.

(II.) Some *positive directions*, and pressing these with some *motives*; and give them some *helps*, for the better performance of their duty.

(I.) I shall give servants some

CAUTIONARY DIRECTIONS.

1. *Let servants take heed of pride*.—This was the sin of the angels, this made them devils; (1 Tim. iii. 6;) this was the sin of our first parents, this made them rebellious to God. A humble heart is ready for any work or state that God in his providence calls him to; any thing but sin will down with a humble man. Remember, pride unfits for the service of God and man, makes one think himself fitter to command than to be commanded: that makes one go on heavily with their work, impatient of reproof, ready to answer again, malapert, saucy, ready to commit other sins to gratify their pride. A proud servant will scorn to be catechised, called to an account, or be kept under those bonds that reason and religion set. Humility doeth nobody any harm, brings no dishonour or inconveniency; but is as good a security to reputation, comfort, and profit, as any thing I know.

2. *Take heed of disobedience to the lawful commands of your master*.—Think not that your arrogance, bigness, and parentage will bear you out. It may be, you think scorn that your master should correct you; and you say in your mind that you will give him as good as he brings: know this, that if you have a master that may be low-spirited, weak, or poor, and, it may be, such an one that is loath to deal with you as law and religion give him leave, yet are you too strong for God? Is he afraid of your swelling and big looks? Will he count you innocent? Are not your rebellion and disobedience to your master disobedience and rebellion against God? And can his purity suffer long, or his justice bear such impurity always, without some signification of his displeasure? Must the great ones of the world that break his laws feel his power? and shall such a despicable wretch as thou go unpunished? Remember, what is said of disobedience to the lawful commands of magistrates holds here: "Whosoever resisteth shall receive to himself damnation." (Rom. xiii. 2.)

3. *Take heed of negligence, idleness, carelessness*.—By this you rob your master of what in honesty you should and might have got for him; by this you secretly waste your master, and answer not that trust that is put in you, and is justly expected from you; by this you give just occasion of displeasure to your master; by this you break your promise made

* ANTONINI *Meditationes*, lib. ii. sect. 2. ARRIANI *Diat. in Epict.* lib. iii. cap. 15.

to your master, and provoke God highly. Remember what a sentence the wicked, slothful servant must shortly hear. (Matt. xxv. 26, &c.)

4. *Take heed of mere eye-service.* (Col. iii. 22.)—Is the eye of God nothing to you, and his warnings insignificant? Doth not he in plain words forbid this? O how many such servants be there, that, when their master is by, are very diligent, but when his back is turned, then how lazy, how wanton, how careless! Would you be served thus yourselves, if you were masters? Doth God take no notice at all? And if he do, how do you think he liketh such doings? Is it a small matter to make light of his presence? And if it be so, you shall shortly find, to your cost, that his eye was, more than your master's, upon you; and if you will not believe his knowledge, observation, and eye, his hand shall shortly give you such a demonstration of both, as you shall not be able to slight.

5. *Take heed of lying.*—By a lie you deny God's knowledge; you make one fault two; you make yourself an enemy to human society: that is a sin which is hateful to every honest man, and abominable to the Lord: the liar shall be shut out of heaven, and have his portion in that lake that burns for ever. (Prov. vi. 17; Rev. xxi. 8.) I spare to speak how it spoils a man's credit, and feeds jealousies in a master, and maketh him scarce believe you when you speak truth. O, little do servants think what folly they are guilty of, by covering their faults with a lie: little do they think how dear that sin must cost them, either here by deep repentance, or hereafter by intolerable torments.

6. *Take heed of purloining or embezzling any part of your master's goods for your own use.* (Titus ii. 10; Luke xvi. 6.)—Meddle with nothing but what is your own, and is allowed you: you would be loath any one should call you a thief. I pray, then, take care of that which will make you deserve such a name: do not consent to any that are in the least guilty in that kind; be not partners with a thief, and make not yourself an accessory to another's wickedness by concealing any unfaithfulness of that nature in your fellow-servants, after you have roundly warned them yourself; eat not of the junkets that sensuality, wantonness, and theft have provided. If you would know what such doings tend to, in a word I may tell you: they pamper lust, many times end in uncleanness, murder, a prison, a halter. And, if that were all, it were not so bad in comparison: by this you wrong God and man, sear your conscience, and make way for a world of other sins, and bring speedy and sure damnation, except a thorough repentance prevent it.

7. *Take heed of bad companions.* “*Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.*”—O how many hopeful youths are blasted by wicked company! I am not ignorant of the high pretences of love that such may have, and what excuses they may palliate their wickedness with; but please none, to displease God; never count *him* your friend, nor one that will do you a kindness, *that* would lead you to sin, the devil, damnation.

8. *Take heed of disclosing your master's secrets.*—Do not speak any thing that may wound his reputation; make no mention of his faults without you are called to it lawfully, and then not without deep regret and trouble, upon the account of God's honour and his soul. Some servants make nothing of prating against their masters and mistresses

behind their backs, little considering that this is a sin that God will not overlook. Is this ingenuous? Is this likely to mend him, and do him any good? Can you design God's glory by it? How do you think your master will like it, if it should come to his ears? This is neither pleasing to God nor man.

9. *Take heed of murmuring, discontent, and repining.*—Some servants are of such a temper, nothing will please them: their food is not dainty enough, their clothes not fine enough, and nothing contents them. The truth of it is, if you be of this proud, peevish, discontented humour, let me tell you, take it how you will, the worst bit you eat is too good for you: your betters are thankful and fruitful with a great deal coarse diet. If your food be wholesome and sufficient, your clothing warm and decent, remember that you have reason to bless God. Consider well what you deserve, and how glad some of your betters would be of your leavings. And, suppose you be wronged, use lawful means for your redress: blessed be God, this city hath excellent laws, and an injured servant may be heard and helped. But if that may not be, and you be really injured; suppose you do your duty, and cannot have a good word; nay, instead thereof, many a heavy curse, many a causeless blow; suppose you are beaten for that for which you should be commended; remember that patience, nay, thankfulness, would much better become you than murmuring; for if "when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps." (Matt. v. 10—12; 1 Peter ii. 20, 21.)

10. *Lastly. Take heed of sinning to please your master.*—If a master command one thing, and God another, you need not be long a-determining which you should obey. If your master or mistress should be so wicked as to put you upon sinning, let Joseph's answer be yours: "How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Gen. xxxix. 9.) If your master put you upon telling of lies, cheating, using of false weights or measures, breaking the sabbath, or any thing that is clearly against God's honour and your souls, you must first, with all the humility and meekness you can for your soul, plead with him, urge the commands of God, the fear that you are in of displeasing of him, and wounding your own conscience; and if you cannot by such means pacify him, tell him meekly of his danger in putting you upon sin, and that, come on it what will, you neither can nor will obey him. (Dan. iii. 18.)

(II.) I come now to lay down

SERVANTS' DUTY POSITIVELY.

1. *Honour your masters.*—Labour to get and keep a true valuation of them in your hearts. To this end, observe what is excellent in them; remember your relation to them, their care over you: let this put you upon praying for them, and being affectionately concerned for them; let your words be always humble, meek, and obliging; let your behaviour be with all the respect and sweetness you can. Remember what counsel the apostle gives you in this thing: "Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour." (1 Tim. vi. 1;

1 Peter ii. 18.) Be very loath to displease them ; fear to offend, lest in so doing you either offend God yourself, or cause them to do it. I have sometimes thought that carriage of Naaman's servants towards their peevish and unreasonable master very well worth others' imitation : the text saith, " His servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it ? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean ?" (2 Kings v. 13.) Love, fear, and honour your masters : in so doing, you please God and them too.

2. *Obey your masters sincerely, cheerfully, universally, and constantly, as long as you stand in that relation to them.*—You must do what you do for your masters, as you would do it for yourself : your masters' concerns must be looked upon as your own. Yea, " whatsoever you do, you must do it heartily, as to the Lord," (Col. iii. 23,) out of conscience and respect to God's command and honour. A flattering outside service, without the heart, love, and good-will, is neither acceptable to God nor man. Let your obedience also be cheerful ; go not about your work with an ill-will. Cheerfulness would not be a little helpful to yourself ; your work and time would then seem nothing in comparison. (Eph. vi. 7.) God loves a cheerful giver, a cheerful worker, a cheerful sufferer ; and I believe no master but reckons himself better served by him that goes cheerfully and nimbly about his business, than one that doth obey but with a sour, discontented look, and a heavy countenance.

By this you cannot but win upon your masters, and even compel them to love you, speak well of you, and do well by you. Let your obedience also be universal ; that is, in all things that God gives you leave. (Col. iii. 22.) It is not for you to pick and choose, nor dispute and grumble. Some servants are for easy, pleasant, and more honourable works ; and here they may be commanded : but if they be at any time set about what liketh not their proud, lazy, ungodly humour, they are ready to put it off upon another ; it may be, to excuse it with a lie ; perhaps, like rebels, flatly to deny obedience. If a master put him upon strict observation of the Lord's day, upon learning his catechism, and minding his soul, then his base heart beginneth to rise, as if his master did undervalue him, when he put him upon the service of God ; as if he judged it a liberty and privilege to serve the devil ; and as if it were an unsufferable injury to be commanded to escape the wrath to come, and a drudgery to be called-upon to look diligently after the securing of holiness and happiness : such as these look as if they were ripe for hell, and would not be long before they would come thither. O that none of you that hear and read these lines may be found in this number ! Think nothing below you but sin : your disobedience cannot be without sin, if your master command not a sin. Lastly, let your obedience be constant : it must begin and end with your relation to your master.

3. Another duty of the servant towards his master is *faithfulness*. (Titus ii. 10.)—Ingenuity calls for it : he is unworthy of trust that doth not answer it. The master reposeth much confidence in his servant ; and that should oblige him to the greatest fidelity. You must be faithful in word and deed. Speak well of your master behind his back, and keep-up his reputation and credit ; and if you cannot do that without

falseness to God, if you can say no good by him, say no harm, except lawfully called to it ; and if you do perceive your master's carelessness and wickedness make him go down the wind, and neglect his duty, it may be faithfulness in you humbly to advise him in some such language as this : " Sir, I entreat you, give me leave in a few words to express my true affection, respect, and faithfulness to you ; and, for God's sake, take it not unkindly at the hands of your poor servant, if I acquaint you with that which I have with regret of heart observed too long in you. Many a good customer we lose for want of your presence in the shop ; your frequent absence makes us have little to do ; your credit (to my sorrow, God knows, I speak it !) begins to grow much lower than it was wont to be ; my mistress takes-on heavily ; we have but few choice wares, and no cash, and little credit to fetch more ; and we cannot hold long at this rate. I beseech you, sir, leave off your company-keeping, and look into your books, and consider how things be. O how loath am I to see you or yours do otherwise than well ! Sir, I beseech you, be not angry. I come not to teach you, but to entreat you, and humbly to desire your serious consideration of what I shall further crave leave to speak. Sir, I beseech you, forget not us, your poor servants : we want your help in your family ; your instructions, your prayers, your holy examples would be no small comfort to us. In thus doing, I am persuaded, God would bless you, your trade and credit might soon be recovered, we should serve you with joy, and bless God for you, and you and yours fare the better for ever." Now, who but a madman, or incarnate devil, could choose but relish such sweet counsel as this, though from a servant ? Then you must be faithful in your deeds. Give nothing away without your master's leave. (Zech. v. 2, 3.) If you will be giving, give what is your own ; give where and when God commands you, and spare not. Labour to preserve and increase your master's estate all you can by good and lawful means ; for this is that which is commanded by Christ in the parable, hath his gracious approbation and plentiful reward : " Well done, good and faithful servant : thou hast been faithful in a little : enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Your faithfulness must be further expressed by endeavouring, all you can, the good of your master's children. Labour to instil into them good principles, encourage them in the learning their books and catechism, and obedience to their parents. Do what you can to prejudice them against sin, and by your sweet examples to be in love with God and godliness betimes. I might add also, it is no small expression of faithfulness to do all the good you can for your fellow-servants : (Titus ii. 10 :) give them good counsel, pray for them, help them all you may, and carry it so before them, that they may easily discern an excellency in you, and that you have a loving design upon them, and mean no more harm by all you speak or do, but God's glory, your master's profit and comfort, and their souls' salvation.

4. *Be very diligent in your master's business.*—Dispatch what he sets you about with what speed and expedition you can. A slothful servant is a wicked servant : by idleness and carelessness you may do your master more wrong in a day, than you may make-up in a twelvemonth. Besides, you must remember your strength and time is your master's,

and all of it must be improved for him, except so much as God calls for, or your master giveth you.

I come now to *exhort servants to the performance of these duties*; and, that I may (if possible) prevail, I shall lay before them a few

MOTIVES TO ENFORCE THIS DUTY.

1. *Consider, if you do conscientiously perform the fore-mentioned duties, you will bring no little honour to your great Master who is in heaven.*—You will show the power of his precepts, the beauty and excellency of his laws, and make religion to be thought well of: by this you will leave a strange conviction of the worth of grace upon the conscience of your master. Whereas, if you should be faulty in any of the fore-mentioned particulars, if you make any kind of profession, it is ten to one if God and religion do not presently suffer for your fault: “Is this your saintship?” and, it may be, all the people of God may be railed-at and wounded for your sake. For God’s sake, be faithful in the performance of your duty; and in so doing you will put to silence those that may condemn you, and cause them to “glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

2. *Consult your own interest here; it will be more in your way than you, it may be, at first imagine.*—I might tell you what respect and love it must needs beget in the heart of your master; and when he hath opportunity, he cannot but speak well of you: it will bring you in a more considerable revenue of peace and content: by this you discharge your duty, and your conscience may have peace in it; you draw others’ eyes and love, and make you a lasting interest, which in time may signify more than at present you are aware of.

3. *Consider, your time is but short.*—Suppose you suffer a little hardship, seven years will not last always: yet a little while and you must have your liberty, and then you and your master may be companions. Methinks the thoughts of your time being out should make you the more patient and faithful. Remember that the longest time is but short, and ere long it must be furled together; and then it will be nothing, who is master and who is servant, but who is faithful.

4. *Consider, that reason, honesty, and ingenuity, do all call upon you to be faithful, and perform your duty.*—Why should your master give you meat, drink, clothing, wages, or a calling, for nothing? Do not honesty and common justice require that there should be some proportion between what he gives you, and you him? Did you not promise and engage to be a faithful servant? Do not your indentures bind you to it? Doth not ingenuity oblige you to be faithful to him, who hath been ready to take care of you in sickness and in health, and to tender you next a child? I might add, The command of God requires it; but because I hinted that in the beginning, I shall not here repeat it.

5. *Consider, how great a reward you shall have in the other world.*—Your “labour shall not be in vain in the Lord:” there shall be a sure reward to the righteous. Suppose your master give you not that encouragement that your fidelity doth deserve; yet be not disheartened; you have a Master who is more ready to take notice of a little good in you, than a great deal of bad; I mean the great God. Therefore, be of

good cheer, "knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ." (Col. iii. 24.) Yet a little while, and he will right the wronged, recompense the diligent, reward the faithful. You shall, ere long, know you served a Master that was most kind, generous, and noble. Shortly you shall not be called servants, but friends; not friends only, but children; not children only, but heirs, joint-heirs with the Lord Jesus. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive," what wages our great Master will give to all that make it their business to have always "a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man," and that do faithfully fill-up their relation to their earthly and heavenly Master with duty.

6. *Consider the danger of not performing of your duty as a servant.*—By this you declare clearly, that you have no true grace in your hearts. As I said in the beginning, I say again, He that is not relatively good, is not really good; a bad servant is never a good Christian: by this you give us just reason to fear that you are servants of the devil. I spare to speak of your reputation; for I am ready to think, that, if all other arguments and motives have lost their cogency, that cannot have much power. Know this, if you be not faithful to your master, God will judge you as unfaithful to himself; and woe be to that servant whom God himself shall call "wicked and slothful:" what follows, but,—"Take him, bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness: there shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth!"

And now, sirs, what will you do? Are you resolved for your duty, or no? Have I been all this while beating the air? Have I not showed you what the Lord your God requireth of you? Have I desired any thing of you but what I have given you scripture-warrant for? And is scripture nothing with you? Can you prove that I am mistaken, and lay heavier burdens than God lays upon you? Why, then, be at the trouble to turn to the scriptures you see quoted in the margin. I dare not charge any thing upon you but what I have received of the Lord. And are you angry with God's commands? Dare you impeach your Maker of injustice? What harm is there in any thing that he enjoins you? Could you mend his laws, and make them better? Which of his prohibitions can you find fault with? Are you displeased that God forbids pride and arrogance? Would you indeed have leave to be like the devil? Do you desire liberty to damn yourself, and bring confusion into the house where you dwell? What a sweet world should we have, if every proud fool might have his will! What should masters do with servants, if their commands should have no power upon them? Who but a madman will judge idleness, carelessness, and prodigality, commendable qualities in a servant? Is it so unreasonable a thing for a master to expect something to be done when his back is turned, as well as when he is present? What commerce could be carried on between man and man without truth? Are you desirous that God should give you leave to lie, and are you willing to have it known that you are of this mind? Is it a slavery to have your hands tied from picking and stealing? Would you have a licence to steal, and a badge of your privilege that every one might read? Are wicked, profligate wretches

the best companions? Can you desire their company in the other world? Is backbiting threatened by God in his word, and shall it be excused in you? How would you like one that were always grumbling, and never content nor pleased? Is this temper hateful in another, and lovely in you? Is there any wrong done you, when God bids you have a care of hazarding your soul to get your master a groat? Which of all the cautions that I have given you are really prejudicial to your true credit, pleasure, or profit? * Well, I perceive you have nothing, nay, I am sure you can have nothing, justly to object against them. And dare you now venture still to be proud, disobedient, idle? Do sinners venture on still, in spite of master, minister, and the divine prohibitions? But be it upon thy peril; for, as sure as God lives, he will call you to judgment. Will half an hour's junketing make amends for the loss of a soul for ever? What is there in all the duties that are commanded, that you have any thing to object against? Are you troubled that your master must be honoured? Should we not have sweet doings, if masters and servants were fellows? If you yourself should ever live to be a master, tell me plainly, how would you like it to be slighted by your servant? Is "obedience" a word you mislike? What is a servant good for without obedience? what is he but a burden to the earth, worse than the dung itself? Are faithfulness and diligence displeasing to you? And, I pray, who is pleased with unfaithfulness and idleness, but wicked ones, fools, and the devil? And are such as these to be pleased, rather than God, parents, masters? Well, once more: what have you to say against your duty, why it may not be practised speedily? Have you weightier arguments against it, than I have for it? Come, produce your strong reason, and show yourself a man. Are the precepts of the mighty God nothing? Are his injunctions of no validity at all? Are you not at all concerned for his honour? Is the gratifying a cursed lust a matter of greater importance and necessity than God's glory? So little, he will take care of himself, and raise him honour out of your shame and ruin, if you regard not God. Have you no respect to yourself? Will your peace, reputation, and profit prevail nothing with you? Is the quiet of the family, the glory of a city, the prosperity and safety of a kingdom, a small matter with you? Why, all this seems in some measure wrapped-up in servants' fidelity. Have the promises and rewards of the great Master little efficacy? Is heaven, glory, and eternal happiness, worth nothing? The truth of it is, if all this be nothing, I know not what is something. But what do you think of judgment, wrath, and hell? If the former motives signify little, doth this so too? Then I must confess, I know not what to add more; but you must take your course, and take what follows; but know this, that you were warned, and counselled, and pleaded with, till you had nothing to say, or, if you had, I am sure nothing to purpose, and that shortly you will be silenced. But God forbid that all servants should be of this mind; some, yea, many, I hope better of, though I thus speak; but the general complaint that sounds in our ears, makes us judge such reasonings as these not altogether needless.

And now, for the sakes of some that I hope resolve for duty, I shall add

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a help or two for the performance of their duty; and so I shall conclude.

HELPS.

1. If you would be good servants, *labour to be Christ's free-men.* (1 Cor. vii. 22; Rom. vi. 18.)—Cast-off the service of Satan, and be no longer commanded by him: remember how cruel, how false, how unreasonable a master he is; consider, what can he pay his servants in at last? and know, it is impossible to serve two contrary masters at once. Be not servants to your lusts; cast them off as things that will not profit; and, instead thereof, “yield yourselves to the Lord,” and “serve him with all your might;” and so “be holy, as he is holy, in all manner of conversation,” and “the grace of God will teach you to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live holily, righteously, and soberly in this present world;” that will teach you to reverence, obey, to be faithful and diligent to your earthly master, as knowing your “labours shall not be in vain in the Lord.” If the fear of God be but in your hearts, it will teach you wisdom, make you hate every evil way, and to do that which is honest and just to your master. A good Christian cannot be a bad servant.

2. *Be not a stranger to the Bible.*—When others are foolishly squandering away their time, do you solace yourself with the word of God; let that be much read by you, and labour to lie under the powerful impression of the prohibitions, precepts, promises, threatenings, and examples that are there; and then you cannot do amiss. I remember, it was the advice of an excellent moralist, that we should oft in our actions think what Socrates, Zeno, Plato, or some wise philosopher, would do in such a case.* I had rather you would think oft, “What would such an one as Eliezer, the servant of Abraham, do in such a case?” Read how he carried himself; how naturally he was concerned for his master's interest; how diligently, faithfully, and prudently he goes to work; how importunately he addresses himself to God; and how heartily he prays for prosperity and success in his master's business; how much he advanceth his master's credit; and how naturally [is] concerned for his master's son; and with what integrity and expedition he dispatcheth his business. Go you and do likewise. The example of Joseph and Obadiah, who were good in bad houses, are well worth your consideration. I might add the example of the centurion's servant, whom his master giveth this character of,—that he was as ready to obey as *he* was to command. (Matt. viii. 9.) I shall add an example or two more: though you find them not in the scripture, yet they are according to the scripture; one of them I knew well: a certain servant, that it is probable was converted by the father, was so faithful, diligent, lively, full of spiritual discourse and importunate prayers for the children and family, that it proved a means of the conversion of some of them. Here is a servant worth gold. Another servant I knew, good for earth and heaven too, that, after other endeavours upon a fellow-servant, spent some time at midnight to pray for him; and, being very importunate, the voice was heard into the next chamber, where he lay; at which, out of curiosity, he rose in his

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shirt to listen, and heard one pray for him, by which prayer he was converted. Study, therefore, the scriptures, and present the examples you find there to your imitation.

3. *Get a strong love to your master.*—Love will put you upon any work : love will set head, hand, and feet a-working, and tongue a-going : love makes heavy things light, hard things easy : love is a mighty engine ; it can do any thing ; love will make you forget length of time. In a word, love is like to make one faithful, obedient, and diligent.

4. *Be humble, meek, and patient.*—The humble man thinks nothing below him which is his duty : and if to do his duty be to be vile, he will yet be viler still. The humble, God will guide, exalt, and save. (Matt. xviii. 4 ; 1 Peter v. 6.) Humility displeaseth none but the devil.

5. *Be much in good company, and hearken to their advice.*—Be constant in prayer, and beg of God to make you faithful ; and be conscientious in your attendance upon a powerful, faithful ministry. In a word, live much in the thought of your great account ; and in thus doing, I question not but you will find grace to be faithful to God and man, and be accepted of your master here, and rewarded by God hereafter.

Thus I have, according to my poor ability, set the duty of masters and servants before them. O that there were a general resolution in both to put these duties into practice ! O then what a blessed reformation should we soon have ! How soon would our great troubles cease ! How soon would our complaints be silenced, and our sorrows be turned into joy ! O that all sorts and degrees of men would but reform *one*, and fill-up their particular places and relations with duty ! Then O what happy times, what happy days, should we yet enjoy ! Christians, let us join in our prayers and utmost endeavours for the promoting of this glorious work ; and then our God would bless us, and we should bless him for ever.

SERMON XIX.

BY THE REV. STEPHEN CHARNOCK, B.D.,

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THE SINFULNESS AND CURE OF THOUGHTS.

And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.—Genesis vi. 5.

I KNOW not a more lively description in the whole book of God of the natural corruption derived from our first parents, than these words ; wherein you have the ground of that grief, which lay so close to God's heart, (verse 6,) and the resolve thereupon to destroy man, and whatsoever was serviceable to that ungrateful creature. That must be highly offensive which moved God to repent of a fabric so pleasing to him at the creation ; every stone in the building being at the first laying pro-

nounced "good" by him; and upon a review, at the finishing the whole, he left it the same character with an emphasis, "*very good*." (Gen. i. 31.) There was not a pin in the whole frame but was very "beautiful;" (Eccles. iii. 11;) and being wrought by Infinite "Wisdom," it was "a very comely piece of art."* (Psalm civ. 24.) "What, then, should provoke him to repent of so excellent a work?" "The wickedness of man," which "was great in the earth." "How came it to pass that man's wickedness should swell so high? Whence did it spring?" From the "imagination." "Though these might be sinful imaginations, might not the superior faculty preserve itself untainted?" Alas! that was defiled; the "imagination of the thoughts was evil." "But though running thoughts might wheel-about in his mind, yet they might leave no stamp or impression upon the will and affections." Yes, they did: the "imagination of the thoughts of his heart was evil." "Surely all could not be under such a blemish: were there not now and then some pure flashes of the mind?" No, not one: "Every imagination." "But granting that they were evil, might there not be some fleeting good mixed with them, as a poisonous toad hath something useful?" No: "Only evil!" "Well, but there might be some intervals of thinking; and though there was no good thought, yet evil ones were not always rolling there." Yes, they were "continually;" not a moment of time that man was free from them. One would scarce imagine such an inward nest of wickedness; but God hath affirmed it; and if any man should deny it, his own heart would give him the lie.

Let us now consider the words by themselves:—

יָצַר "Imagination," properly signifies *figmentum*, of יָצַר "to afflict, press, or form a thing by way of compression." And thus it is a metaphor taken from a potter's framing a vessel, and extends to "whatsoever is framed" inwardly in the heart, or outwardly in the work. It is usually taken by the Jews for that fountain of sin within us. Mercer tells us, it is always used in an evil sense.† But there are two places, if no more, wherein it is taken in a good sense: Isai. xxvi. 3: יָצַר קַמּוֹךְ "Whose mind is stayed;" and 1 Chron. xxix. 18, where David prays, that a disposition to offer willingly to the Lord might be preserved "in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of the people." Indeed, for the most part it is taken for "the evil imaginations" of the heart, as Deut. xxxi. 21; Psalm lxxxi. 12, &c. The Jews make a double "figment," a good and bad; and fancy two angels assigned to man, one bad, another good; which Maimonides interprets to be nothing else but natural corruption and reason.‡ This word "imagination" being joined with "thoughts," implies not only the complete thoughts, but the first motion or formation of them, to be evil.

The word "heart" is taken variously in scripture. It signifies properly that inward member which is the seat of the vital spirits: but sometimes it signifies, 1. The *understanding and mind*.—Psalm xii. 2: "With a double heart do they speak;" that is, with a double mind. See also Prov. viii. 5. 2. For the *will*.—2 Kings x. 30: "All that is

* Περικαλλες τεχνουργημα.—EUSEBII *Præpar. Evang.* † *Alii rectius dicunt non esse יָצַר nisi in malum.*—MERCERUS *in loc.* ‡ יָצַר הַרְעוּ יָצַר הַטּוֹב:—MAIMONIDES *More Nevochim*, pars iii. cap. 22. AMAMÆ *Censura, in loc.*

in my heart," that is, in my will and purpose. 3. For the *affections*.—As, Deut. vi. 5 : "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart;" that is, with all thy affections. 4. For *conscience*.—2 Sam. xxiv. 10 : "David's heart smote him;" that is, his conscience checked him. But "heart" here is used for the whole soul, because—according to Pareus's note—the soul is chiefly seated in the heart, especially the will, and the affections, her attendants; because, when any affection stirs, the chief motion of it is felt in the heart. So that, by the "imagination of the thoughts of the heart" are here meant all the inward operations of the soul, which play their part principally in the heart; whether they be the acts of the understanding, the resolutions of the will, or the blusterings of the affections.

Only evil—The Vulgar mentions not the exclusive particle קִי, and so enervates the sense of the place. But our neighbour-translations either express it as we do, "only;" or to that sense, that they were "certainly," or, "no other than, evil."

Continually—The Hebrew, כָּל־יְמֵי־הַיּוֹם "all the day," or, "every day." Some translations express it *verbatim* as the Hebrew. Not a moment of a man's life wherein our hereditary corruption doth not belch-out its froth, even "from his youth," (as God expounds it, Gen. viii. 21,) to the end of his life.

Whether we shall refer the general wickedness of the heart in the text to that age, as some of the Jesuits do, because after the deluge God doth not seem so severely to censure it; (Gen. viii. 21;) or rather take the exposition [which] the learned Rivet gives of it, referring the first part of the verse ("And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth") to those times; and the second part to the universal corruption of man's nature, and the root of all sin in the world; * the Jesuits' argument will not be very valid, for the extenuation of original corruption, from Gen. viii. 21. For if man's imaginations be "evil from his youth," what is it but in another phrase to say they were so "continually?" But, suppose it be understood of the iniquity of that age, may it not be applied to all ages of the world? David complains of the wickedness of his own time, Psalm xiv. 3; v. 9; yet St. Paul applies it to all mankind, Rom. iii. 12, 13. Indeed it seems to be a description of man's natural pravity, by God's words after the deluge, Gen. viii. 21, which are the same in sense, to show that man's nature, after that destroying judgment, was no better than before. Every word is emphatical, exaggerating man's defilement: wherein consider the universality, 1. Of the *subject*: "Every man." 2. Of the *act*: "Every thought." 3. Of the *qualification of the act*: "Only evil." 4. Of the *time*: "Continually."

The words thus opened afford us this proposition:

"That the thoughts and inward operations of the souls of men are naturally, universally evil and highly provoking."

Some by "cogitation" mean not only the acts of the understanding, but those of the will, yea, and the sense too. But indeed that which we call "cogitation," or "thought," is the work of the mind; "imagination," of the fancy.† It is not properly thought, till it be wrought by the understanding; because the fancy was not a power designed for

* RIVETUS in *Gen. exercit.* 51.

† CARTESII *Princip. Philos.* pars i. sect. 9.

thinking, but only to receive the images impressed upon the sense, and concoct them, that they might be fit matter for thoughts; and so it is the exchequer, wherein all the acquisitions of sense are deposited, and from thence received by the intellectual faculty. So that thoughts are *inchoativè* in the fancy, *consummativè* in the understanding, *terminativè* in all the other faculties. Thought first engenders opinion in the mind; thought spurs the will to consent or dissent; it is thought also which spirits the affections.

I will not spend time to acquaint you with the methods of their generation. Every man knows he hath a thinking faculty, and some inward conceptions, which he calls "thoughts;" he knows that he thinks, and what he thinks; though he be not able to describe the manner of their formation in the womb, or remember it any more than the species of his own face in a glass.

In this discourse let us first see what kind of thoughts are sins.

I. **NEGATIVELY.** *A simple apprehension of sin is not sinful.*—Thoughts receive not a sinfulness barely from the object: *that may be unlawful to be acted which is not unlawful to be thought-of.* Though the will cannot will sin without guilt, yet the understanding may apprehend sin without guilt; for that doth no more contract a pollution by the bare apprehension, than the eye doth by the reception of the species of a loathsome object. Thoughts are morally evil, when they have a bad principle, want a due end, and converse with the object in a wrong manner. Angels cannot but understand the offence which displaced the apostate stars from heaven; but they know not sin *cognitione practica* ["with a practical cognizance"]. Glorified saints may consider their former sins, to enhance their admirations of pardoning mercy. Christ himself must needs understand the matter of the devil's temptation; yet Satan's suggestions to his thoughts were as the vapours of a jakes mixed with the sun-beams, without a defilement of them. Yea, God himself, who is infinite purity, knows the object of his own acts, which are conversant about sin: as his holiness in forbidding it, wisdom in permitting, mercy in pardoning, and justice in punishing. But thoughts of sin in Christ, angels, and glorified saints, are accompanied with an abhorreny of it, without any combustible matter in them to be kindled by it. As our thoughts of a divine object are not gracious, unless we love and delight in it; so a bare apprehension of sin is not positively criminal, unless we delight in the object apprehended. As a sinful object doth not render our thoughts evil, so a divine object doth not render them good; because we may think of it with undue circumstances, as unseasonably, coldly, &c. And thus there is an imperfection in the best thought a regenerate man hath; for though I will suppose he may have a sudden ejaculation without the mixture of any positive impurity, and a simple apprehension of sin with a detestation of it, yet there is a defect in each of them; because it is not with that raised affection to God, or intense abhorreny of sin, as is due from us to such objects, and whereof we were capable in our primitive state.

II. **POSITIVELY.** Our thoughts may be branched into *first motions*, or *such that are more voluntary* :—

1. *First motions.*—Those unfledged thoughts and single threads, before

a multitude of them come to be twisted and woven into a discourse ; such as skip-up from our natural corruption, and sink down again, as fish in a river. These are sins, though we consent not to them ; because, though they are without our will, they are not against our nature ; but spring from an inordinate frame, of a different hue from what God implanted in us. How can the first sprouts be good, if the root be evil ? Not only the thought formed, but the very formation, or first imagination, is evil. Voluntariness is not necessary to the essence of a sin, though it be to the aggravation of it. It is not my will or knowledge which doth make an act sinful, but God's prohibition. Lot's incest was not ushered by any deliberate consent of his will ; yet who will deny it to be a sin ? since he should have exercised a severer command over himself than to be overtaken with drunkenness, which was the occasion of it. (Gen. xix. 33—35.) Original sin is not *effectivè* voluntary in infants, because no act of the will is exerted in an infant about it ; yet it is voluntary *subjectivè*, because it doth *inhæreere voluntati* [“inhere in the will”]. These motions may be said to be voluntary negatively, because the will doth not set bounds to them, and exercise that sovereign dominion over the operations of the soul which it ought to do, and wherewith it was at its first creation invested. Besides, though the will doth not immediately consent to them, yet it consents to the occasions which administer such motions ; and therefore, according to the rule that *causa causæ est causa causati*,* may be justly charged upon our score.†

2. *Voluntary thoughts*.—Which are the blossoms of these motions ; such that have no lawful object, no right end, not governed by reason, eccentric, disorderly in their motions, and like the jarring strings of an untuned instrument. The meanest of these floating fancies are sins, because we act not, in the production of them, as rational creatures ; and what we do without reason, we do against the law of our creation, which appointed reason for our guide, and the understanding to be το ἡγεμονικόν, “the governing power” in our souls.

These may be reduced to three heads : I. *In regard of God*. II. *Of ourselves*. III. *Of others*.

I. *In regard of God*.

1. *Cold thoughts of God*.—When no affection is raised in us by them ; when we delight not in God, the object of those thoughts, but in the thought itself, and operation of our mind about him, consisting of some quaint notion of God of our own conceiving ; this is to delight in the act or manner of thinking, not in the object thought-of : and thus these thoughts have a folly and vanity in them. They are also sinful in a regenerate man, in respect of the faintness of the understanding, not acting with that vigour and sprightliness, nor with those raised and spiritual affections, which the worth of such an object doth require.

2. *Debasing conceptions unworthy of God*.—Such are called in the Heathen “vain imaginations ;” (Rom. i. 21 ;) *διαλογισμοίς*, their “reasonings about” God ; who as they glorified not God as God, so they did not think of God as God, according to the dignity of a Deity. Such a mental idolatry may be found in us, when we dress-up a God according

* “The cause of a cause is also the cause of that which is subsequently caused.”—EDIT.

† This entire sentence was added by the author in the second edition.—EDIT.

to our own humours, humanize him, and ascribe to him what is grateful to us, though never so base :—Psalm l. 21 : “Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself :” —which is a grosser degrading of the Deity, than any representation of him by material images, because it is directly against his holiness, which is his glory, applauded chiefly by the angels, and an attribute which he swears by, as having the greatest regard to the honour of it. (Exod. xv. 11 ; Isai. vi. 3 ; Psalm lxxxix. 35.) Such an imagination Adam seemed to have, conceiting God to be so mean a being that he, a creature not of a day’s standing, could mount to an equality of knowledge with him.

3. *Accusing thoughts of God.*—Either of his mercy, as in despair ; or of his justice, as too severe, as in Cain. (Gen. iv. 13.) Of his providence : Adam conceited, yea, and charged God’s providence to be an occasion of his crime : “The woman whom thou gavest to be with me.” (Gen. iii. 12.) His posterity are no juster to God, when they accuse him as a negligent governor of the world. Psalm xciv. 11 : “The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity.” “What thoughts ?” Injurious thoughts of his providence, (verse 7,) as though God were ignorant of men’s actions, or, at best, but an idle spectator of all the unrighteousness done in the world, not to “regard it,” though he did “see” it. And they in the prophet were of the same stamp, “that said in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil.” (Zeph. i. 12.) From such kind of thoughts most of the injuries from oppressors, and murmurings in the oppressed, do arise.

4. *Curious thoughts about things too high for us.*—It is the frequent business of men’s minds to flutter about things without the bounds of God’s revelation. Not to be content with what God hath published, is to accuse him, in the same manner as the serpent did to our first parents, of envying us an intellectual happiness : “God doth know that your eyes shall be opened.” (Gen. iii. 5.) Yet how do all Adam’s posterity long after this forbidden fruit !

II. *In regard of ourselves.*—Our thoughts are proud, self-confident, self-applauding, foolish, covetous, anxious, unclean, and what not ?

1. *Ambitious.*—The aspiring thought of the first man runs in the veins of his posterity. God took notice of such strains in the king of Babylon, when he said in his heart, “I will exalt my throne above the stars of God : I will ascend above the heights of the clouds ; I will be like the Most High.” (Isai. xiv. 13, 14.) No less a charge will they stand under that settle themselves upon their own bottom, “establish their own righteousness,” and will “not submit themselves unto the righteousness of God’s” appointment. (Rom. x. 3.) The most forlorn beggar hath sometimes thoughts vast enough to grasp an empire.

2. *Self-confident.*—Edom’s thoughts swelled him into a vain confidence of a perpetual prosperity. Obad. 3 : “That saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground ?” And David sometimes said, in the like state, that he should never be moved.

3. *Self-applauding.*—Either in the vain remembrances of our former prosperity, or ascribing our present happiness to the dexterity of our own wit. Such flaunting thoughts had Nebuchadnezzar at the consideration of his settling Babylon, the head and metropolis of so great an empire.

Dan. iv. 30 : "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom?" &c. Nothing more ordinary among men than overweening reflections upon their own parts, and thinking of themselves above what they ought to think. (Rom. xii. 3.)

4. *Ungrounded imaginations of the events of things, either present or future.*—Such wild conceits, like meteors bred of a few vapours, do often frisk in our minds. (1.) *Of things present.*—It is likely Eve foolishly imagined she had brought-forth the Messiah, when she brought-forth a murderer. Gen. iv. 1 : "I have gotten a man the Lord;" as in the Hebrew, אִישׁ אֶת־יְהוָה believing, as some interpret, that she had brought-forth the promised seed. And such a brisk conceit Lamech seems to have had of Noah. (Gen. v. 29.) (2.) *Of things to come.*—Either in bespeaking false hopes, or antedating improbable griefs. Such are the *jolly thoughts* we have of a happy estate in reversion, which yet we may fall short of. Haman's heart leaped at the king's question, "What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour?" (Esther vi. 6 ;) fancying himself the mark of his prince's favour, without thinking that a halter should soon choke his ambition. Or *perplexing thoughts* at the fear of some trouble, which is not yet fallen upon us, and perhaps never may. How did David torture his soul by his unbelieving fears, that he should "perish one day by the hand of Saul!" (1 Sam. xxvii. 1.) These forestalling thoughts do really affect us : we often feel caperings in our spirits upon imaginary hopes, and shiverings upon conceited fears. These pleasing impostures, and self-afflicting suppositions, are signs either of an idle or indigent mind, that hath no will to work, or only rotten materials to work upon.

5. *Immoderate thoughts about lawful things.*—When we exercise our minds too thick, and with a fierceness of affection above their merit ; not in subserviency to God, or mixing our cares with dependencies on him. Worldly concerns may quarter in our thoughts ; but they must not possess all the room, and thrust Christ into a manger ; neither must they be of that value with us, as the law was with David, "sweeter than the honey or the honey-comb."

III. *In regard of others.*—All thoughts of our neighbour against the rule of charity. Such that "imagine evil in their hearts," God "hates." (Zech. viii. 17.) These principally are, 1. *Envious.*—When we torment ourselves with others' fortunes. Such a thought in Cain, upon God's acceptance of his brother's sacrifice, was the prologue to, and foundation of, that cursed murder. (Gen. iv. 5.) 2. *Censorious.*—Stigmatizing every freckle in our brother's conversation. (1 Tim. vi. 4.) 3. *Jealous and evil surmises.*—Contrary to charity, which "thinketh no evil." (1 Cor. xiii. 5.) 4. *Revengeful.*—Such made Haman take little content in his preferments, as long as Mordecai refused to court him. (Esther v. 13.) And Esau thought of "the days of mourning" for his father, that he might be revenged for his brother's deceits. (Gen. xxvii. 41.)

There is no sin committed in the world, but is hatched in one or other of these thoughts. But, beside these, there are a multitude of other volatile conceits, like swarms of gnats, buzzing about us, and preying upon us, and as frequent in their successions as the curlings of the water upon a small breath of wind, one following another close at the heels.

The mind is no more satisfied with thoughts than the first matter is with forms; continually shifting one for another, and many times the nobler for the baser; as when, upon the putrefaction of a human body, part of the matter is endued with the form of vermin. Such changeable things are our minds, in leaving that which is good for that which is worse, when they are inveigled by an active fancy and Bedlam affections. This "madness is in the heart of men while they live," (Eccles. ix. 3,) and starts a thousand frenzies in a day. At the best, our fancy is like a carrier's bag, stuffed with a world of letters, having no dependence upon one another; some containing business, and others nothing but froth.

In all these thoughts there is a further guilt in three respects; namely, 1. *Delight*; 2. *Contrivance*; 3. *Re-acting*.

1. *Delight in them*.—The very tickling of our fancy by a sinful motion, though without a formal consent, is a sin, because it is a degree of complacency in an unlawful object; when the mind is pleased with the subject of the thought, as it hath a tendency to some sensual pleasure, and not simply in the thought itself, as it may enrich the understanding with some degree of knowledge. The thought indeed of an evil thing may be without any delight in the evil of it. As philosophers delight in making experiments of poisonous creatures, without delighting in the poison as it is a noxious quality; we may delightfully think of sin without guilt, not delighting in it as sin, but as God, by his wise providential ordering, extracts glory to himself, and good to his creature. In this case, though a sinful act be the material object of this pleasure, yet it is not the formal object; because the delight is not terminated in the sin, but in God's ordering the event of it to his own glory. But an inclination to a sinful motion, as it gratifies a corrupt affection, is sin; because every inclination is a malignant tincture upon the affections, including in its own nature an aversion from God, and testifying sin to be an agreeable object. And, without question, there can be no inclination to any thing, without some degree of pleasure in it; because it is impossible we can incline to that which we have a perfect abhorrency of. Hence it follows, that every inclination to a sinful motion is *consensus inchoatus*, or a "consent in embryo;" though the act may prove abortive. If we think of any unlawful thing with pleasure, and imagine it either in *feri* or *facto esse*,* it brings a guilt upon us, as if it were really acted. As when upon the consideration of such a man's being my enemy, I fancy robbers rifling his goods, and cutting his throat, and rejoice in this revengeful thought, as if it were really done, it is a great sin; because it testifies an approbation of such a butchery, if any man had will and opportunity to commit it; and though it be a supposition, yet the act of the mind is really the same [as] it would be if the sinful act I think of were performed. Or, when a man conditionally thinks with himself, "I would steal such a man's goods, or kill such a person, if I could escape the punishment attending it," it is as if he did rob and murder him; because there is no impediment in his will to the commission of it, but only in the outward circumstances. Nay, though it be a mere *ens intentionale*, or *rationis*,† which is the object of the thought; yet the act of the mind is real, and as significant of the

* "Either as existing only in the fancy, or as an act previously performed."—EDIT.
 † "A creature of the intention or of the reason."—EDIT.

inclination of the soul, as if the object were real too: as, if a man hath an unclean motion at the sight of a picture, which is only a composition of well-mixed and well-ordered colours, or at the appearance of the idea of a beauty framed in his own fancy; it is as much uncleanness as if it were terminated in some suitable object, the hinderance being not in the will, but in the insufficiency of the object to concur in such an act. Now, as the more delight there is in any holy service, the more precious it is in itself and more grateful to God; so, the more pleasure there is in any sinful motion, the more malignity there is in it.

2. *Contrivance*.—When the delight in the thought grows up to the contrivance of the act, which is still the work of the thinking faculty; when the mind doth brood upon a sinful motion to hatch it up, and invents methods for performance, which the wise man calls “artificial inventions,” חֲשֵׁבֹתָי (Eccles. vii. 29.) So a learned man interprets *διαλογισμοὶ πονηροὶ*, (Matt. xv. 19,) of “contrivances of murder, adultery,” &c.* And the word signifies properly “reasonings;” when men’s wits play the devils in their souls, in inventing sophistical reasons for the commission and justification of their crimes, with a mighty jollity at their own craft. Such plots are the trade of a wicked man’s heart. A covetous man will be working in his inward shop from morning till night, to study new methods for gain: (2 Peter ii. 14: *Καρδιαν γογγυμασμενην ταῖς πλεονεξίαις*: “A heart exercised with covetous practices:”) and voluptuous and ambitious persons will draw schemes and models in their fancy of what they would outwardly accomplish: “They conceive mischief, and bring forth vanity, and their belly prepareth deceit.” (Job xv. 35.) Hence the thoughts are called “the counsels” and “devices of the heart;” (1 Cor. iv. 5; Isai. xxxii. 7, 8;) when the heart summons the head, and all the thoughts of it, to sit in debate, as a private junto, about a sinful motion.

3. *Re-acting sin after it is outwardly committed*.—Though the individual action be transient, and cannot be committed again; yet the idea and image of it, remaining in the memory, may, by the help of an apish fancy, be repeated a thousand times over with a rarified pleasure: as both the features of our friends, and the agreeable conversations we have had with them, may with a fresh relish be represented in our fancies, though the persons were rotten many years ago.

Having thus declared the nature of our thoughts, and the degrees of their guilt, the next thing is, to prove that they are sins.

The Jews did not acknowledge them to be sins, unless they were blasphemous, and immediately against God himself.† Some Heathens were more orthodox, and among the rest Ovid, whose amorous pleasures, one would think, should have smothered such sentiments in him.‡ “The

* DR. HAMMOND on Matt. xv. 19. † KIMCHI in Psalm lxvi. as quoted by GROTIUS in Matt. v. 20. ‡ *Ut jam servaris bene corpus, adultera mens est:*

Nec custodiri, ni velit, illa potest.

Nec mentem servare potes, licet omnia claudas;

Omnibus oclusis, intus adulter erit.

OVIDII *Amorum*. lib. iii. Eleg. iv. 5.

“Though thou may’st watch the body, yet the mind,
Against her will, can never be confined.
She will the adulteress act, spite of thy guard,
E’en though all entrance seems to be barr’d:
For when the doors are closed with anxious care,
The heart is free, and hides the adulterer there.”—EDIT.

Lord," whose knowledge is infallible, "knoweth the thoughts of men, that they are vanity;" (Psalm xciv. 11;) yea, and of the wisest men, too, according to the apostle's interpretation, 1 Cor. iii. 20. And who were they that "became vain in their imaginations," but the wisest men the carnal world yielded? (Rom. i. 21;) the Grecians, the greatest philosophers; the Egyptians, their tutors; and the Romans, their apes. The elaborate operations of an unregenerate mind are fleshly. (Rom. viii. 5—7.) If the whole web be so, needs must every thread. "The thought of foolishness is sin," that is, a foolish thought; not objectively a thought of folly, but one formally so; yea, "an abomination to the Lord." (Prov. xxiv. 9; xv. 26.) As good thoughts and purposes are acts in God's account, so are bad ones. Abraham's intention to offer Isaac is accounted as an actual sacrifice: that the stroke was not given, was not from any reluctance of Abraham's will, but the gracious indulgence of God. (Heb. xi. 17; James ii. 21.) Sarah had a deriding thought; and God chargeth it as if it were an outward laughter and a scornful word. (Gen. xviii. 12, 15.)* Thoughts are the words of the mind, and as real in God's account as if they were expressed with the tongue.

There are three reasons for the proof of this, that they are sins:—

1. *They are contrary to the law.*—Which doth forbid the first foamings and belchings of the heart; because they arise from an habitual corruption, and testify a defect of something which the law requires to be in us, to correct the excursions of our minds. Rom. vii. 7: "I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." Doth not the law oblige man as a rational creature? Shall it then leave that part which doth constitute him rational, to fleeting and giddy fancies? No; it binds the soul as the principal agent, the body only as the instrument. For if it were given only for the sensitive part, without any respect to the rational, it would concern brutes as well as men, which are as capable of a rational command and a voluntary obedience, as man without the conduct of a rational soul. It exacts a conformity of the whole man to God, and prohibits a difformity; and therefore engageth chiefly the inward part, which is most the man. It must, then, extend to all the acts of the man; consequently to his thoughts, they being more the acts of the man than the motions of the body. Holiness is the prime excellency of the law, a title ascribed to it twice in one verse. Rom. vii. 12: "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." Could it be "holy," if it indulged looseness in the more noble part of the creature? Could it be "just," if it favoured inward unrighteousness? Could it be "good," and useful to man, which did not enjoin a suitable conformity to God, wherein the creature's excellency lies? Can that deserve the title of a *spiritual* law, that should only regulate the brutish part, and leave the spiritual to an unbounded licentiousness? (Rom. vii. 14; James i. 25.) Can perfection be ascribed to that law, which doth countenance the unsavoury breathings of the spirit, and lay no stricter an obligation upon us than the laws of men? (Matt. v. 28.) Must not God's laws be as suitable to his sovereignty, as men's laws are to theirs? Must they not then be as extensive as God's dominion, and reach even to

* "Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying," &c. בְּסִטְעָהּ *In visceribus suis.*—Targum. ["In her heart."]

the privatest closets of the heart? It is not for the honour of God's holiness, righteousness, goodness, to let the spirit, which bears more flourishing characters of his image than the body, range wildly about without a legal curb.

2. *They are contrary to the order of nature, and the design of our creation.*—Whatsoever is a swerving from our primitive nature is sin, or at least a consequent of it. But all inclinations to sin are contrary to that righteousness wherewith man was first endued. Eccles. vii. 29: "God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." Man was created both with a disposition and ability for holy contemplations of God; the first glances of his soul were pure; he came every way complete out of the mint of his infinitely wise and good Creator; and when God pronounced all his creatures "good," he pronounced man "very good" amongst the rest. But man is not now as God created him; he is off from his end; his understanding is filled with lightness and vanity. This disorder never proceeded from the God of order; Infinite Goodness could never produce such an evil frame; none of these loose "inventions" were of God's planting, but of man's seeking. No; God never created the intellective, no, nor the sensitive, part, to play Domitian's game, and sport itself in the catching of flies. "Man that is in honour, and understandeth not" that which he ought to understand, and thinks not that which he ought to think, "is like the beasts that perish." (Psalm xlix. 20.) He plays the beast, because he acts contrary to the nature of a rational and immortal soul. And such brutes we all naturally are, since the first woman believed her sense, her fancy, her affection, in their directions for the attainment of wisdom, without consulting God's law, or her own reason. (Gen. iii. 6.) The fancy was bound by the right of nature to serve the understanding: it is then a slighting [of] God's wisdom to invert this order, in making *that* our governor *which* he made our subject. It is injustice to the dignity of our own souls to degrade the nobler part to a sordid slavery, in making the brute have dominion over the man; as if the horse were fittest to govern the rider. It is a falseness to God, and a breach of trust, to let our minds be imposed upon by our fancy in giving it only feathers to dandle, and chaff to feed on, instead of those braver objects it was made to converse withal.

3. *We are accountable to God and punishable for thoughts.*—Acts viii. 22: "If perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee." Nothing is the meritorious cause of God's wrath, but sin. The text tells us, that they were once the keys which opened the flood-gates of divine vengeance, and broached both the upper and nether cisterns to overflow the world. If they need a pardon, (as certainly they do,) then if mercy doth not pardon them, justice will condemn them. And it is absolutely said, that "a man of wicked devices," or "thoughts," God "will condemn." (Prov. xii. 2.) אִישׁ מְזֻמֵּי תְּוֹמֹת "A man of thoughts," that is, "evil thoughts;" the word being usually taken in an ill sense. It is God's prerogative, often mentioned in scripture, to "search the heart." To what purpose, if the acts of it did not fall under his censure, as well as his cognizance? He "weigheth the spirits," (Prov. xvi. 2,) in the balance of his sanctuary and by the weights of his law, to sentence

them, if they be found too light. The word doth discover, and judge them ; it " divides asunder the soul and spirit," the sensitive part—the affections ; and the rational—the understanding and will ; both which it doth dissect and open, and judge the acts of them, even " the thoughts and intents," *ενθυμησεων και εννοιων*, " whatsoever is within the *Συμος*, and whatsoever is within the *νους*," the one referring to " the soul," the other to " the spirit." These it passeth a judgment upon ; as " a critic," *κριτικος*, censures the errata even to syllables and letters, in an old manuscript. (Heb. iv. 12, 13.) These we are " to render an account of," as the Syriac renders those words, (verse 13,) " With whom we have to do." " Of what ?" Of the first bubblings of the heart,— " the notions and intents " of it. The least speck and atom of dust in every chink of this little world is known and censured by God. If our thoughts be not judged, God would not be a righteous Judge. He would not judge according to the merit of the cause, if outward actions were only scanned, without regarding the intents, wherein the principle and end of every action lies, which either swell or diminish the malignity of it. Actions, in kind the same, may have different circumstances in the thoughts, to heighten the one above the other ; and if *they* were only judged, the most painted hypocrite might commence a blessed spirit at last, as well as the exactest saint. It is necessary also for the glory of God's omniscience. It is hereby chiefly that the extensiveness of God's knowledge is discovered, and that in order to " the praise " or dispraise of men ; namely, to their justification or condemnation. (1 Cor. iv. 5.) Those very thoughts will accuse thee before God's tribunal, which accuse thee here before conscience, his deputy. Rom. ii. 15, 16 : " Their thoughts the mean while " (that is, in this life, while conscience bears witness) " accusing or else excusing one another ; in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men ; " that is,—and also at the day of judgment, when conscience shall give-in its final testimony, upon God's examination of the secret counsels. This place is properly meant of those reasonings concerning good and evil in men's consciences, agreeable to the law of nature imprinted on them, which shall " excuse " them, if they practise accordingly, or " accuse " them, if they behave themselves contrary thereunto. But it will hold in this case ; for if those inward approbations of the notions of good and evil will accuse us for our contrary practices, they will also accuse us for our contrary thoughts. Our good thoughts will be our accusers for not observing them, and our bad thoughts will be indictments against us for complying with them. It is probable, the soul may be bound-over to answer chiefly for these at the last day ;* for the apostle chargeth Simon's guilt upon his " thought," not his word ; and tells him, pardon must be principally granted for that. (Acts viii. 22.) The tongue was only an instrument to express what his heart did think, and would have been wholly innocent, had not his thoughts been first criminal. What, therefore, is the principal subject of pardon, would be so of punishment ; as the first incendiaries in a rebellion are most severely dealt with. And if, as some think, the fallen angels were stripped of their primitive glory only

* *Non solum opus, sed mali operis cogitatio, pœnas luet.* —*HIERONYMUS in Hos. vii.*
 " Not only every evil work, but every thought of wickedness, will receive its due award of punishment."—EDIT.

for a conceived thought, how heinous must that be which hath enrolled them in a remediless misery!*

Having proved that there is a sinfulness in our thoughts, let us now see what provocation there is in them; which in some respects is greater than that of our actions. But we must take actions here *in sensu diviso*, as distinguished from the inward preparations to them. In the one, there is more of scandal; in the other, more of odiousness to God. God indeed doth not punish thoughts so visibly, because, as he is Governor of the world, his judgments are shot against those sins that disturb human society; but he hath secret and spiritual judgments for these, suitable to the nature of the sins.

Now thoughts are greater,

1. *In respect of fruitfulness.*—"The wickedness" that "God saw great in the earth" was the fruit of "imagination." They are the immediate causes of all sin. No cockatrice but was first an egg. It was a thought to be "as God," that was the first breeder of all that sin under which the world groans at this day; for Eve's mind was first "beguiled" in the alteration of her thought. (Gen. iii. 5; 2 Cor. xi. 3.) Since that, the lake of inward malignity acts all its evil by these smoking steams. "Evil thoughts" lead the van in our Saviour's catalogue, (Matt. xv. 19,) as that which spirits all the black regiment which march behind. As good motions, cherished, will spring-up in good actions; so loose thoughts, favoured, will break-out in visible plague-sores, and put fire unto all that wickedness which lies habitually in the heart, as a spark may to a whole stock of gunpowder. The "vain babblings" of the soul, as well as those of the tongue, "will increase unto more ungodliness." (2 Tim. ii. 16.) Being thus the cause, they include virtually in them all that is in the effect; as a seed contains in its little body the leaves, fruit, colour, scent, which afterward appear in the plant. The seed includes all; but the colour doth not virtually include the scent, or the scent the colour, or the leaves the fruit: so it is here, one act doth not include the formal obliquity of another; but the thought which causeth it doth seminally include both the formal and final obliquity of every action; both that which is in the nature of it, and in the end to which it tends. As, when a tradesman cherisheth immoderate thoughts of gain, and, in the attaining [of] it, runs "into many foolish and hurtful lusts;" (1 Tim. vi. 9;) there is cheating, lying, swearing, to put-off the commodity; all these several acts have a particular sinfulness in the nature of the acts themselves, beside the tendency they have to the satisfying an inordinate affection; all which are the spawn of those first immoderate thoughts stirring-up greedy desires.

2. *In respect of quantity.*—"Imagination" are said to be "continually evil." There is an infinite variety of conceptions—as the Psalmist speaks of the sea: "Wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great;" (Psalm civ. 25;) and a constant generation of whole shoals of them;—that you may as well number the fish in the sea, or the atoms in the sun-beams, as recount them.

There is a greater number in regard of the *acts*, and in regard of the *objects*.

* This last sentence is not found in the first edition; between which and the second many other variations occur, much in favour of the latter.—EDIT.

1. *In regard of the acts of the mind* :—

(1.) *Antecedent acts*.—How many preparatory motions of the mind are there to one wicked external act! Yea, how many sinful thoughts are twisted together to produce one deliberate sinful word! All which have a distinct guilt, and, if weighed together, would outweigh the guilt of the action abstractedly considered. How many repeated complacencies in the first motion, degrees of consent, resolved broodings, secret plottings, proposals of various methods, smothering contrary checks, vehement longings, delightful hopes, and forestalled pleasures, in the design! * all which are but thoughts assenting or dissenting in order to the act intended. Upon a dissection of all these secret motions by the critical power of the word, we should find a more monstrous guilt than would be apparent in the single action for whose sake all these spirits were raised. There may be no sin in a material act, considered in itself, when there is a provoking guilt in the mental motion. A hypocrite's religious services are materially good, but poisoned by the imagination skulking in the heart, that gave birth unto them. It is "the wicked mind" or "thought" [that] makes the "sacrifice" (a commanding duty) "much more an abomination" to the Lord. (Prov. xxi. 27 : בְּרָמָה "With a wicked thought.")

(2.) *Consequent acts*.—When a man's fancy is pregnant with the delightful remembrance of the sin that is past, he draws-down a fresh guilt upon himself, (as they did in the prophet, Ezek. xxiii. 3, 19 : "Yet she multiplied her whoredoms, in calling to remembrance the days of her youth," &c. Verse 21 : "the lewdness of thy youth,") in reviving the concurrence of the will to the act committed, making the sensual pleasure to commence spiritual, and, if ever there were an aching heart for it, revoking his former grief by a renewed approbation of his darling lust. Thus the sin of thoughts is greater in regard of duration. A man hath neither strength nor opportunity always to act ; but he may always think, and imagination can supply the place of action. Or if the mind be tired with sucking one object, it can, with the bee, presently fasten upon another. Senses are weary, till they have a new recruit of spirits ; as the poor horse may sink under his burden, when the rider is as violent as ever. Thus old men may change their outward profaneness into mental wickedness ; and as the Psalmist remembered his old songs, (Psalm lxxvii. 5, 6,) so they their calcined sins in the night, with an equal pleasure. So that, you see, there may be a thousand thoughts as ushers and lacqueys to one act, as numerous as the sparks of a new-lighted fire.

2. *In regard of the objects [which] the mind is conversant about*.—Such thoughts there are, and attended with a heavy guilt, which cannot probably, no, nor possibly, descend into outward acts. A man may, in a complacent thought, commit fornication with a woman in Spain ; in a covetous thought, rob another in the Indies ; and in a revengeful thought, stab a third in America ; and that while he is in this congregation. An unclean person may commit a mental folly with every beauty he meets.

* Αν δε σαπτον ερδοθεν ανοιξης, ω ανθρωπε, ποικιλον και πολυπαδες ταμειον κακων ευρησεις και θησαυρισμα, &c.—ΠΛΥΤΑΡΧΗ *Moralia*, p. 500, *nihil*. "Wert thou, O man, to unlock the door of thy heart, thou wouldst find it to be a chequered storehouse and treasury of ills, and the seat of numberless passions."—EDIT.

A covetous man cannot plunder a whole kingdom, but in one twinkling of a thought he may wish himself the possessor of all the estates in it. A Timon, a *μισανθρωπος*, ["misanthrope,"] cannot cut the throats of all the world ; but, like Nero, with one glance of his heart he may chop-off the heads of all mankind at a blow. Ambitious men's practices are confined to a small spot of land ; but with a cast of his mind he may grasp an empire as large as the four monarchies. A beggar cannot ascend a throne ; but in his thoughts he may pass the guards, murder his prince, and usurp the government. Nay, further : an atheist may think "there is no God," (Psalm xiv. 1,) that is, as some interpret it, wish there were no God, and thus in thought undeify God himself ; though he may sooner dash heaven and earth in pieces than accomplish it. The body is confined to one object, and *that* narrow and proportionable to its nature ; but the mind can wing itself to various objects in all parts of the earth. Where it finds none, it can make one ; for fancy can compact several objects together, coin an image, colour a picture, and commit folly with it, when it hath done ; it can nestle itself in cobwebs spun out of its own bowels.

3. *In respect of strength.*—Imaginations of the heart are "only," that is, purely, "evil." The nearer any thing is in union with the root, the more radical strength it hath. The first ebullitions of light and heat from the sun are more vigorous than the remoter beams ; and the steams of a dunghill more noisome next that putrified body, than when they are dilated in the air. Grace is stronger in the heart-operations than in the outward streams ; and sin more foul in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart, than in the act. In the text, the outward wickedness of the world is passed-over with a short expression ; but the Holy Ghost dwells upon the description of the wicked "imagination," because *there* lay the mass. Man's "inward part is very wickednesses," קִרְבַּם קְרוּיָה (Psalm v. 9,) a whole nest of vipers. Thoughts are the immediate spawn of the original corruption, and therefore partake more of the strength and nature of it. Acts are more distant, being the children of our thoughts, but the grandchildren of our natural pravity. Besides, they lie nearest to that wickedness in the inward part, sucking the breast of that poisonous dam that bred them. The strength of our thoughts is also reinforced by being kept-in, for want of opportunity to act them ; as liquors in close glasses ferment and increase their sprightliness. "Musing," either carnal or spiritual, makes "the fire burn" the hotter ; (Psalm xxxix. 3 :) as the fury of fire is doubled by being pent in a furnace. Outward acts are but the sprouts ; the sap and juice lie in the wicked imagination or contrivance, which hath a strength in it to produce a thousand fruits as poisonous as the former. "The members" are the "instruments," or "weapons," *όπλα*, "of unrighteousness ;" (Rom. vi. 13 :) now, the whole strength which doth manage the weapon lies in the arm that wields it ; the weapon of itself could do no hurt without a force impressed. Let me add this too, that sin in thoughts is more simply sin. In acts there may be some occasional good to others ; for a good man will make use of the sight of sin committed by others to increase his hatred of it ; but in our sinful thoughts there is no occasion of good to others, they lying locked-up from the view of man.

4. *In respect of alliance.*—In these we have the nearest communion with the devil. The understanding of man is so tainted, that his “wisdom,” the chiefest flower in it, is not only “earthly” and “sensual,” (it were well if it were no worse!) but “devilish” too. (James iii. 15.) If the flower be so rank, what are the weeds? Satan’s “devices” and our “thoughts” are of the same nature, and sometimes in scripture expressed by the same word, *νοηματα*. (2 Cor. ii. 11; x. 5.) As he hath his devices, so have we, against the authority of God’s law, the power of the gospel, and the kingdom of Christ. The devils are called “spiritual wickednesses,” (Eph. vi. 12,) because they are not capable of carnal sins. Profaneness is an uniformity with the world, and intellectual sins are an uniformity with the god of it. (Eph. ii. 2, 3.) In verse 3 there is a double walking, answerable to a double pattern in verse 2: “Fulfilling the desires of the flesh” is a walking “according to the course of this world,” or making the world our copy; and fulfilling the desires of the mind” is a walking “according to the prince of the power of the air,” or a making the devil our pattern. In carnal sins Satan is a tempter, in mental an actor. Therefore, in the one, we are conformed to his will; in the other, we are transformed into his likeness. In outward, we evidence more of obedience to his laws; in inward, more of affection to his person, as all imitations of others are. Therefore there is more of enmity to God, because more of similitude and love to the devil; a nearer approach to the diabolical nature implying a greater distance from the divine. Christ never gave so black a character as that of “the devil’s children” to the profane world, but to the Pharisees, who had left the sins of men, to take-up those of devils, and were most guilty of those “high imaginations” which ought to be brought “into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”

5. *In respect of contrariety and odiousness to God.*—“Imaginations” were “only evil;” and so most directly contrary to God, who is only good. Our natural “enmity against God” is seated in “the mind.” (Rom. viii. 7.) The sensitive part aims at its own gratification, and in men’s serving their lusts they serve their pleasures: (“Serving divers lusts and pleasures;” Titus iii. 3:) but the *το ἡγεμονικον*, “the prince” in man is possessed with principles of a more direct contrariety; whence it must follow, that all the thoughts and counsels of it are tinctured with this hatred. They are, indeed, a defilement of the higher part of the soul, and that which belongs more peculiarly to God; and the nearer any part doth approach to God, the more abominable is a spot upon it; as to cast dirt upon a prince’s house, is not so heinous as to deface his image. The understanding, the seat of thoughts, is more excellent than the will; both because we know and judge before we will, and we will, or ought to will, only so much as the understanding thinks fit to be willed; and because God hath bestowed the highest gifts upon it, adorning it with more lively lineaments of his own image. Col. iii. 10: “Renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him;” implying that there was more of the image of God at the first creation bestowed upon the understanding, the seat of knowledge, than on any other part, yea, than on all the bodies of men distilled together. “Father of spirits” is one of God’s titles: (Heb. xii. 9:) to bespatter his children, then, so near a

relation, the jewel that he is choice of, must needs be more heinous. He being "the Father of spirits," this "spiritual wickedness" of nourishing evil thoughts is a cashiering all child-like likeness to him. The traitorous acts of the mind are most offensive to God; as it is a greater despite for a son to whom the father hath given the greater portion, to shut him out of his house, only to revel in it with a company of roisters and strumpets, than in a child who never was so much the subject of his father's favour. And it is more heinous and odious, if these thoughts which possess our souls be at any time conversant about some idea of our own framing. It were not altogether so bad, if we loved something of God's creating, which had a physical goodness and a real usefulness in it to allure us; but to run wildly to embrace an *ens rationis*, to prefer "a thing of" no existence but what is coloured by our own "imagination," of no virtue, no usefulness, a thing that God never created nor pronounced good,—is a greater enmity and a higher slight of God.

6. *In respect of connaturalness and voluntariness.*—They are "the imaginations of the thoughts of the heart," and they are "continually evil." They are as natural as the estuations of the sea, the bubblings of a fountain,* or the twinklings of the stars. The more natural any motion is, ordinarily the quicker it is. Time is requisite to action; but "thoughts have an instantaneous motion." The body is a heavy piece of clay; but "the mind can start-out on every occasion."† Actions have their stated times and places; but *these* solicit us and are entertained by us at all seasons. Neither day nor night, street nor closet, exchange nor temple, can privilege us from them: we meet them at every turn, and they strike upon our souls as often as light upon our eyes. There is no restraint for them: the laws of men, the constitution of the body, the interest of profit or credit, are mighty bars in the way of outward profaneness; but nothing lays the reins upon thoughts, but "the law of God;" and *this* man "is not subject to, neither can be." (Rom. viii. 7.) Besides, the natural atheism in man is a special friend and nurse of these, few firmly believing either the omniscience of God, or his government of the world; which the scripture speaks of frequently, as the cause of most sins among the sons of men. (Isai. xxix. 15; Ezek. ix. 9; Job xxii. 13, 14.) Actions are done with some reluctance, and nips of natural conscience. Conscience will start at a gross temptation; but it is not frightened at thoughts. Men may commit speculative folly, and their conscience look on, without so much as a nod against it: men may tear out their neighbours' bowels in secret wishes, and their conscience never interpose to part the fray. Conscience, indeed, cannot take notice of all of them; they are too subtle in their nature, and too quick for the observation of a finite principle. They are many: "There are many devices in a man's heart," (Prov. xix. 21,) and they are nimble too; like the bubblings of a boiling pot, or the rising of a wave, that presently slides into its level; and, as Florus saith of the Ligurians, "the difficulty is more to find, than conquer, them."‡ They are secret sins, and are no more discerned than motes in the air, without a spiritual sun-beam; whence David cries out, "Cleanse thou me from secret sins;"

* *Αυτοχθονας πηγας της κακιας.*—PLUTARCHI *Moralia*. "The indigenous fountains of evil."—EDIT.

† *Ταχιστον μεν νους δια παντος γαρ τρεχει.*—THALES, in his Life by DIOGENES LAERTIUS.

‡ *Major aliquantū labor erat invenire, quā̄m vincere.*—FLORUS, lib. ii. cap. 3.

(Psalm xix. 12 ;) which some explain of sins of thoughts, that were like sudden and frequent flashes of lightning, too quick for his notice, and unknown to himself. There is also more delight in them. There is less of temptation in them, and so more of election ; and consequently more of the heart and pleasure in them, when they lodge with us. Acts of sin are troublesome ; there is danger as well as pleasure in many of them : but there is no outward danger in thoughts ; therefore the complacency is more compact and free from distraction. The delight is more unmixed, too, as intellectual pleasures are more refined than sensual. All these considerations will enhance the guilt of these inward operations.

USES.

The uses shall be two, though many inferences might be drawn from the point.

USE I. REPROOF.

What a mass of vanity should we find in our minds, if we could bring our thoughts in the space of one day, yea, but one hour, to an account ! How many foolish thoughts with our wisdom, ignorant with our knowledge, worldly with our heavenliness, hypocritical with our religion, and proud with our humiliations ! Our hearts would be like a grot, furnished with monstrous and ridiculous pictures ; or as the wall in Ezekiel's vision, "portrayed" with "every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts ;" a greater abomination than "the image of jealousy at the outward gate of the altar." (Ezek. viii. 5, 10.) Were our inwards opened, how should we stand gazing both with scorn and wonder at our being such a pack of fools ! Well may we cry out, with Agur, "We have not the understandings of men : " (Prov. xxx. 2 :) we make not the use of them, as is requisite for rational creatures ; because we degrade them to attendances on a brutish fancy. I make no question, but were we able to know the fancies of some irrational creatures, we should find them more noble, heroic, and generous, *in suo genere*, than the thoughts of most men ; more agreeable to their natures, and suited to the law of their creation. How little is God in any of our thoughts, according to his excellency ! Psalm x. 4 : "God is not in all his thoughts." No ; our shops, our rents, our backs, and bellies usurp God's room. If any thoughts of God do start-up in us, how many covetous, ambitious, wanton, revengeful thoughts are jumbled together with them ! Is it not a monstrous absurdity to place our friend with a crew of vipers, to lodge a king in a sty, and entertain him with the fumes of a jakes and dunghill ? "The tongue of the just is as choice silver ; the heart of the wicked is little worth ;" (Prov. x. 20 ;) all the peddling wares and works in his inward shop are not valuable* with one silver drop from a gracious man's lips. It was an invincible argument of the primitive Christians for the purity of the Christian religion above all others in the world, that it did prohibit evil thoughts : † and is it not as unanswerable an argument that we are no Christians, if we give liberty to them ? What is our moral conversation outwardly, but only a bare abstinence from sin,—not a disaffection ? Were we really and altogether Christians, would not that which is the

* "Not to be estimated in worth."—EDIT. † *Apud nos et cogitare peccare est.*—MINUCIUS FELIX. "Among us, even vain thoughts are considered to be culpable and sinful."—EDIT.

chiefest purity of Christianity be our pleasure? and would we any more wrong God in our secret hearts than in the open streets? Is not thought a beam of the mind? and shall it be enamoured only on a dunghill? Is not the understanding the eye of the soul? and shall it behold only gilded nothings? It is "the flower of the spirit:"* shall we let every caterpillar suck it? It is the queen in us: shall every ruffian deflower it? It is as the sun in our heaven: and shall we besmear it with misty fancies? It was created, surely, for better purposes than to catch a thousand weight of spiders, as Heliogabalus employed his servants.† It was not intended to be made the common sewer of filthiness, or ranked among those ζῶα ἀμφογά, ["gluttonous animals,"] which eat not only fruit and flesh, but flies, worms, dung, and all sorts of loathsome materials.‡ Let not, therefore, our minds wallow in a sink of fantastical follies, whereby to rob God of his due, and our souls of their happiness.

USE II. EXHORTATION.

We must take care for the suppression of them. All vice doth arise from imagination.§ Upon what stock doth ambition and revenge grow, but upon a false conceit of the nature of honour? What engenders covetousness, but a mistaken fancy of the excellency of wealth? "Thoughts" must be forsaken, as well as our "way;" we cannot else have an evidence of a true conversion: (Isai. lv. 7: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts," &c;) and if we do not discard them, we are not likely to have an "abundant pardon;" and what will the issue of that be, but an abundant punishment? Mortification must extend to these: "affections" must be "crucified," (Gal. v. 24,) and all the little brats of thoughts which beget them or are begotten by them. Shall we nourish that which brought down the wrath of God upon the old world, as though there had not been already sufficient experiments of the mischief they have done? Is it not our highest excellency to be conformed to God in holiness, in as full a measure as our finite natures are capable? And is not God holy in his counsels and inward operations, as well as in his works? Hath God any thoughts but what are righteous and just? Therefore, the more foolish and vain our imaginations are, the more are we "alienated from the life of God." The Gentiles were so, because they "walked in the vanity of their mind;" (Eph. iv. 17, 18;) and we shall be so, if vanity walk and dwell in ours. As the tenth commandment forbids all unlawful thoughts and desires, so it obligeth us to all thoughts and desires that may make us agreeable to the divine will, and like to God himself. We shall find great advantage by suppressing them: we can more easily resist temptations without, if we conquer motions within. Thoughts are the mutineers in the soul, which set open the gates for Satan; he hath held a secret intelligence with them (so far as he knows them) ever since the fall; and they are his spies, to assist him in the execution of his devices. They prepare the tinder, and the next fiery dart sets all on a flame. Can we cherish these, if we consider that Christ died for them? He shed his blood for that which put the world out of order; which was accomplished by the

* Ἄρθος τῆς ψυχῆς.—PLATO. † LAMPRIIDIUS. ‡ ARISTOTELIS *Histor. Animal.* lib. viii. § MIRANDULA *De Imaginatione*, cap. vii.

sinful imagination of the first man, and continued by those imaginations mentioned in the text. He died to restore God to his right, and man to his happiness: neither of which can be perfectly attained, till those be thrown out of the possession of the heart.

That we may do this, let us consider these following directions; which may be branched into these heads: 1. *For the raising [of] good thoughts.* 2. *Preventing bad.* 3. *Ordering bad, when they do intrude.* 4. *Ordering good, when they appear in us.*

1. *For raising good thoughts.*

(1.) *Get renewed hearts.*—The fountain must be cleansed which breeds the vermin. Pure vapours can never ascend from a filthy quagmire. What issue can there be of a vain heart, but vain imaginations? Thoughts will not “become new,” till a “man is in Christ.” (2 Cor. v. 17.) We must be holy, before we can think holily. Sanctification is necessary for the dislodging of vain thoughts, and the introducing of good. “Wash thy heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?” (Jer. iv. 14.) A sanctified reason would both discover and shame our natural follies. As all animal operations, so all the spiritual motions of our heads, depend upon the life of our hearts, as the *principium originis* [“the originating principle”]. (Prov. iv. 23.) As there is a “law in our members to bring us into captivity to the law of sin,” (Rom. vii. 23,) so there must be a law in our minds to “bring our thoughts into captivity to the obedience of Christ.” (2 Cor. x. 5.) We must “be renewed in the spirit of our minds,” (Eph. iv. 23,) in our reasonings and thoughts, which are the “spirits” whereby the understanding acts, as the animal spirits are the instruments of corporeal motion. Till the understanding be born of the Spirit, it will delight in, and think of, nothing but things suitable to its fleshly original: but when it is spiritual, it receives new impressions, new reasonings and motions, suitable to the Holy Ghost, of whom it is born. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” (John iii. 6.) A stone, if thrown upward a thousand times, will fall backward, because it is a forced motion; but if the nature of this stone were changed into that of fire, it would mount as naturally upward as before it sank downward. You may force some thoughts toward heaven sometimes; but they will not be natural, till nature be changed. Grace only gives stability, and prevents fluctuation, by fixing the soul upon God, as its chief end: “It is a good thing that the heart be established with grace:” (Heb. xiii. 9;) and what is our end will not only be first in our intentions, but most frequent in our considerations. Hence a sanctified heart is called in scripture “a steadfast heart.” There must be an enmity against Satan put into our hearts, according to the first promise, before we can have an enmity against his imps, or any thing that is like him.

(2.) *Study scripture.*—Original corruption stuffs us with bad thoughts, and scripture-knowledge would stock us with good ones; for it proposeth things in such terms as exceedingly suit our imaginative faculty, as well as strengthen our understanding. Judicious knowledge would make us “approve things that are excellent;” (Phil. i. 9, 10;) and where such things are approved, toys cannot be welcome. Fulness is the cause of steadfastness: the cause of an intent and piercing eye is

the multitude of animal spirits. Without this skill in the word we shall have as foolish conceits of divine things, as ignorant men without the rules of art have of the sun and stars, or things in other countries which they never saw. The word is called "a lamp to our feet," that is, the affections; "a light to our eyes," that is, the understanding. (Psalm cxix. 105; xix. 8.) It will direct the glances of our minds, and the motions of our affections. It "enlightens the eyes," and makes us have a new prospect of things; as a scholar, [who has] newly entered into logic, and studied the predicaments, &c., looks upon every thing with a new eye and more rational thoughts, and is mightily delighted with every thing he sees, because he eyes them as clothed with those notions he hath newly studied. The devil had not his engines so ready to assault Christ, as Christ from his knowledge had scripture-precepts to oppose him. As our Saviour by this means stifled thoughts offered, so by the same we may be able to smother thoughts arising in us. Converse therefore often with the scripture, transcribe it in your heart, and turn it in *succum et sanguinem*, ["into nutritious moisture and blood,"] whereby a vigour will be derived into every part of your soul, as there is, by what you eat, to every member of your body. Thus you will make your mind Christ's library, as Jerome speaks of Nepotianus.*

(3.) *Reflect often upon the frame of your mind at your first conversion.*—None have more settled and more pleasant thoughts of divine things than new converts, when they first clasp about Christ; partly because of the novelty of their state, and partly because God puts a full stock into them; and diligent tradesmen at their first setting-up have their minds intent upon improving their stock. Endeavour to put your mind in the same posture [in which] it was then. Or if you cannot tell the time when you did first close with Christ, recollect those seasons wherein you have found your affections most fervent, your thoughts most united, and your mind most elevated; as when you renewed repentance upon any fall, or had some notable cheerings from God; and consider what matter it was which carried your heart upward, what employment you were engaged in, when good thoughts did fill your soul; and try the same experiment again. Asaph would oppose God's ancient works to his murmuring thoughts: he would remember his "song in the night," that is, the matter of his song, and read over the records of God's kindness. (Psalm lxxvii. 6—12.) David too would "never forget," that is, frequently renew the remembrance of, those precepts whereby God had particularly quickened him. (Psalm cxix. 93.) Yea, he would reflect upon the places, too, where he had formerly conversed with God, to rescue himself from dejecting thoughts: "Therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar." (Psalm xlii. 6.) Some elevations surely David had felt in those places, the remembrance whereof would sweeten the sharpness of his present grief. When our former sins visit our minds, pleading to be speculatively re-acted, let us remember the holy dispositions we had in our repentance for them, and the thankful frames when God pardoned

* *Lectione assidua et meditatione diuturna pectus suam bibliothecam Christi fecerat.*—*HIERONYMI Epist. iii.* "By assiduous reading and continued meditation, he had made his breast the library of Christ."—*EDIT.*

them. The disciples, at Christ's second appearance, reflected upon their own warm temper at his first discourse with them in a disguise, to confirm their faith, and expel their unbelieving conceits: "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.) Strive to recollect truths, precepts, promises, with the same affection which possessed your souls when they first appeared in their glory and sweetness to you.

(4.) *Ballast your heart with a love to God.*—David thought "all the day" of God's law, as other men do of their lusts, because he unexpressibly loved it: "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day." (Psalm cxix. 97.) This was the successful means he used to stifle vain thoughts, and excite his hatred of them: "I hate vain thoughts; but thy law do I love." (Verse 113.) It is the property of love to think no evil: (1 Cor. xiii. 5:) it thinks good and delightful thoughts of God, friendly and useful thoughts of others. It fixeth the image of our beloved object in our minds, [so] that it is not in the power of other fancies to displace it.* The beauty of an object will fasten a rolling eye: it is difficult to divorce our hearts and thoughts from that which appears lovely and glorious in our minds, whether it be God or the world. Love will, by a pleasing violence,† bind-down our thoughts, and hunt-away other affections: if it doth not establish our minds, they will be like a cork, which, with a light breath, and a short curl of water, shall be tossed up and down from its station. Scholars that love learning will be continually hammering upon some notion or other which may further their progress, and as greedily clasp it as the iron will its beloved loadstone. He that is "winged with a divine love" to Christ will have frequent glances and flights toward him,‡ and will start-out from his worldly business several times in a day to give him a visit. Love, in the very working, is a settling grace; it increaseth our delight in God, partly by the sight of his amiableness, which is cleared to us in the very act of loving, and partly by the recompences he gives to the affectionate carriage of his creature; both which will stake down the heart from vagaries, or giving entertainment to such loose companions as evil thoughts are. Well, then, if we had this heavenly affection strong in us, it would not suffer unwholesome weeds to grow up so near it; either our love would consume those weeds, or those weeds will choke our love.

(5.) *Exercise faith.*—As the habit of faith is attended with habitual sanctification, so the acts of faith are accompanied with a progress in the degrees of it. That faith which brings Christ to dwell in our souls, will make us often think of our inmate. Faith doth realize divine things, and make absent objects as present; and so furnisheth fancy with richer streams to bathe itself in than any other principle in the world. As there is a necessity of the use of fancy while the soul is linked to the body, so there is also a necessity of a corrective for it. Reason doth in

* *Æneas oculis semper vigilantis inhaeret:*

Ænean animo noxque diesque refert.—OVIDII *Heroid.* ep. vii. 25.

† *Æneas is my thoughts' perpetual theme,*

Their daily longing, and their nightly dream.—DRYDEN'S Translation.

‡ *Ὁ θεὸς ἐπὶ βίαιον τὴν ἐσθίαν.*—LUCIANI *Dialogi.* "Love is a certain violent affection."—EDIT.

‡ *Ἡ περιωβείσα οὐρανὸν ἐστὶν.*—CHRYSOSTOMUS.

part regulate it ; but it is too weak to do it perfectly, because fancy in most men is stronger than reason : man being the highest of imaginative beings, and the lowest of intelligent, fancy is in its exaltation more than in creatures beneath him, and reason in its detriment more than in creatures above him ; and therefore the imagination needs a more skilful guide than reason.* Fancy is like fire, “ a good servant, but a bad master ;” if it march under the conduct of faith, it may be highly serviceable, and, by putting lively colours upon divine truth, may steal away our affections to it. “ Faith is the evidence of things not seen,” namely, not by a corporeal, but intellectual, eye ; and so it will supply the office of sense. It is “ the substance of things hoped for ;” (Heb. xi. 1 ;) and if hope be an attendant on faith, our thoughts will surely follow our expectations. The remedy David used, when he was almost stifled with disquieting thoughts, was to excite his soul to a hope and confidence in God : “ Why art thou cast down, O my soul ? and why art thou disquieted in me ? Hope thou in God :” (Psalm xlii. 5 :) and when they returned upon him, he useth the same diversion. (Verse 11.) “ The peace of God,” that is, the reconciliation made by a Mediator between God and us, believingly apprehended, will “ keep,” or “ garrison,” our “ hearts and minds,” or “ thoughts,” *φρουρησει τα νοηματα υμων*, against all anxious assaults both from within and without. (Phil. iv. 6, 7.) When any vain conceit creeps-up in you, act faith on the intercession of Christ ; and consider, “ Is Christ thinking of me now in heaven, and pleading for me ? and shall I squander away my thoughts on trifles, which will cost me both tears and blushes ?” Believingly meditate on the promises ; they are a means to cleanse us from the filthiness of the spirit, as well as that of the flesh : “ Having therefore these promises, let us cleanse ourselves,” &c. (2 Cor. vii. 1.) If the having them be a motive, the using them will be a means, to attain this end. “ Looking at the things which are not seen,” preserves us from fainting, and renews the “ inward man day by day.” (2 Cor. iv. 16, 18.) These invisible things could not well keep our hearts from fainting, if faith did not first keep the thoughts from wandering from them.

(6.) *Accustom yourself to a serious meditation every morning.*—Fresh airing our souls in heaven will engender in us purer spirits and nobler thoughts. A morning seasoning would secure us for all the day. Though other necessary thoughts about our callings will and must come-in, yet when we have dispatched them, let us attend our morning theme as our chief companion.† As a man that is going with another about some considerable business, (suppose, to Westminster,) though he meets with several friends in the way, and salutes some, and [with] others with whom he hath some affairs he spends a little time, yet he quickly returns to his companion, and both together go their intended stage : do thus in the present case. Our minds are active, and will be doing something, though to little purpose ; and if they be not fixed upon some noble object, they will, like madmen and fools, be mightily pleased in playing with straws. The thoughts of God were the first visitors David had in the morning ; God and his heart met together as soon as

* MIRANDULA *De Imaginatione*, cap. 11, 12.

† *Intus existens prohibet alienum.*

“ That which exists internally forbids the entrance of any thing else from without.”—EDIT.

he was awake, and kept company all the day after. (Psalm cxxxix. 17, 18.)

In this meditation look both to *the matter and manner*.

First. *Look to the matter of your meditation.*—Let it be some truth which will assist you in reviving some languishing grace, or fortify you against some triumphing corruption; for it is our darling sin which doth most envenom our thoughts: “As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.” (Prov. xxiii. 7.) As, if you have a thirst for honour, let your fancy represent the honour of being a child of God and heir of heaven: if you are inclined to covetousness, think of the riches stored up in a Saviour, and dispensed by him; if to voluptuousness, fancy the pleasures in the ways of wisdom here, and at God’s right hand hereafter. This is to deal with our hearts as Paul with his hearers, to catch them with guile. Stake your soul down to some serious and profitable mystery of religion; as the majesty of God, some particular attribute, his condescension in Christ, the love of our Redeemer, the value of his sufferings, the virtue of his blood, the end of his ascension, the work of the Spirit, the excellency of the soul, beauty of holiness, certainty of death, terror of judgment, torments of hell, and joys of heaven. The heads of the catechism might be taken in order, which would both increase and actuate our knowledge. Why may not that which was the subject of God’s innumerable thoughts be the subject of ours? (Psalm xl. 5.) God’s thoughts and counsels were concerning Christ, the end of his coming, his death, his precepts of holiness, and promises of life; and that not only speculatively, but with an infinite pleasure in his own glory, and the creature’s good, to be accomplished by him. Would it not be work enough for our thoughts all the day, to travel over the length, breadth, height, and depth of the love of Christ? Would the greatness of the journey give us leisure to make any starts out of the way? Having settled the theme for all the day, we shall find occasional assistances even from worldly businesses; as scholars, who have some exercise to make, find helps in their own course of reading, though the book hath no designed respect to their proper theme. Thus, by employing our minds about one thing chiefly, we shall not only hinder them from vain excursions, but make even common objects to be oil to our good thoughts, which otherwise would have been fuel for our bad. Such generous liquor would scent our minds and conversations all the day, [so] that whatsoever motion came into our hearts, would be tintured with this spirit, and savour of our morning thoughts; as vessels, having been filled with a rich wine, communicate a relish of it to the liquors afterward put into them. We might also more steadily go about our worldly business, if we carry God in our minds; as one foot of the compass will more regularly move about the circumference, when the other remains firm in the centre.

Secondly. *Look to the manner of it.*

(i.) *Let it be intent.*—Transitory thoughts are like the glances of the eye,—soon on and soon off; they make no clear discovery, and consequently raise no sprightly affections. Let it be one principal subject, and without flitting from it; for if our thoughts be unsteady, we shall find but little warmth; a burning-glass often shifted fires nothing. We

must σκοπουρω, "look," "at the things which are not seen," as wistly as men do at a mark they shoot at. (2 Cor. iv. 18.) Such an intent meditation would "change us into the image," and cast us into the mould, of those truths we think of; (2 Cor. iii. 18;) it would make our minds more busy about them all the day, as a glaring upon the sun fills our eyes for some time after with the image of it. To this purpose look upon yourselves as deeply concerned in the things you think of. Our minds dwell upon that whereof we apprehend an absolute necessity. A condemned person would scarce think of any thing but procuring a reprieve, and his earnestness for this would bar the door against other intruders.

(ii.) *Let it be affectionate and practical.*—Meditation should excite a spiritual delight in God, as it did in the Psalmist: "My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord:" (Psalm civ. 34:) and a divine delight would keep-up good thoughts, and keep-out impertinencies. A bare speculation will tire the soul, and, without application and pressing upon the will and affections, will rather chill than warm devotion. It is only by this means that we shall have the efficacy of truth in our wills, and the sweetness in our affections, as well as the notion of it in our understandings. The more operative any truth is in this manner upon us, the less power will other thoughts have to interrupt, and the more disdainfully will the heart look upon them, if they dare be impudent. Never, therefore, leave thinking of a spiritual subject, till your heart be affected with it. If you think of the evil of sin, leave not till your heart loathe it; if of God, cease not till it mount up in admirations of him. If you think of his mercy, melt for abusing it; if of his sovereignty, awe your heart into obedient resolutions; if of his presence, double your watch over yourself. If you meditate on Christ, make no end till your hearts love him; if of his death, plead the value of it for the justification of your persons, and apply the virtue of it for the sanctification of your natures. Without this practical stamp upon our affections, we shall have light spirits, while we have opportunity to converse with the most serious objects. We often hear foolish thoughts breathing out themselves in a house of mourning, in the midst of coffins and trophies of death, as if men were confident they should never die; whereas none are so ridiculous as to assert they shall live for ever. By this instance in a truth so certainly assented to, we may judge of the necessity of this direction in truths more doubtfully believed.

(7.) *Draw spiritual inferences from occasional objects.*—David did but wistly "consider the heavens;" and he breaks-out in self-abasement and humble admirations of God. (Psalm viii. 3, 4.) Glean matter of instruction to yourselves, and praise to your Maker, from every thing you see: it will be a degree of restoration to a state of innocence, since this was Adam's task in Paradise. Dwell not upon any created object only as a virtuoso, to gratify your rational curiosity; but, as a Christian, call religion to the feast, and make a spiritual improvement. No creature can meet our eyes but affords us lessons worthy our thoughts, beside the general notices of the power and wisdom of the Creator. Thus may the sheep read us a lecture of patience, the dove of innocence, the ant and bee raise blushes in us for our sluggishness, and the stupid ox and

dull ass correct and shame our ungrateful ignorance. (Isai. i. 3.) And since our Saviour did set-forth his own excellency in a sensible dress, the consideration of those metaphors by an acute fancy would garnish-out divine truths more deliciously, and conduct us into a more inward knowledge of the mysteries of the gospel. He whose eyes are open cannot want an instructor, unless he wants a heart. Thus may a tradesman spiritualize the matter he works upon, and make his commodities serve in wholesome meditations to his mind, and at once enrich both his soul and his coffers; yea, and in part restore the creatures to the happiness of answering a great end of their creation, which man deprived them of, when he subjected them to vanity. Such a view of spiritual truths in sensible pictures would clear our knowledge, purify our fancies, animate our affections, encourage our graces, disgrace our vices, and both argue and shame us into duty; and thus take away all the causes of our wild, wandering thoughts at once. And a frequent exercise of this method would beget and support a habit of thinking well, and weaken, if not expel, a habit of thinking ill.

2. The second sort of directions are *for the preventing* [of] *bad thoughts*. And to this purpose,

(1.) *Exercise frequent humiliations*.—Pride exposeth us to impatient and disquieting thoughts; whereas humility clears-up a calm and serenity in the soul. It is Agur's advice, to be humbled particularly for evil thoughts. (Prov. xxx. 32.) Frequent humiliations will dead the fire within, and make the sparks the fewer. The deeper the plough sinks, the more the weeds are killed, and the ground fitted for good grain. Men do not easily fall into those sins for which they have been deeply humbled. Vain conceits love to reside most in jolly hearts; but "by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better." (Eccles. vii. 3, 4.) There is more of wisdom, or wise consideration, in a composed and graciously mournful spirit; whereas carnal mirth and sports cause the heart to evaporate into lightness and folly. The more we are humbled for them, the more our hatred of them will be fomented, and, consequently, the more prepared shall we be to give them a repulse upon any bold intrusion.

(2.) *Avoid entangling yourselves with the world*.—This clay will clog our minds, and "a dirty happiness" will engender but dirty thoughts.* Who were so foolish to have "inward thoughts that their houses should continue for ever," but those "that trusted in their riches?" (Psalm xlix. 6, 11.) If the world possess our souls, it will breed carking thoughts: much business meets with crosses, and then it breeds murmuring thoughts; and sometimes it is crowned with success, and then it starts proud and self-applauding thoughts. "They that will be rich fall into many foolish and hurtful lusts;" (1 Tim. vi. 9;) such lusts that make men fools; and one part of folly is to have wild and senseless fancies. Mists and fogs are in the lower region near the earth, but reach not that next the heavens. Were we free from earthly affections, these gross vapours could not so easily disturb our minds; but if the world once settle in our hearts, we shall never want the fumes of it to fill our heads. And as covetous desires will stuff us with foolish imaginations,

* *Lutea felicitas*.—AUGUSTINUS *De Civitate Dei*, lib. x.

so they will smother any good thought cast into us ; as “ the thorns ” of worldly cares “ choked ” the good seed, and made it “ unfruitful. ” (Matt. xiii. 22.) As we are to rejoice in the world as though we rejoiced not, so, by the same reason, we should think of the world as though we thought not. A conformity with the world in affection is inconsistent with a change of the frame of the mind. (Rom. xii. 2.)

(3.) *Avoid idleness.*—Serious callings do naturally compose men’s spirits ; but too much recreation makes them blaze-out in vanity. Idle souls, as well as idle persons, will be ranging. As idleness in a state is both the mother and nurse of faction, and in the natural body gives birth and increase to many diseases by enfeebling the natural heat ; so it both kindles and foment many light and unprofitable imaginations in the soul, which would be sufficiently diverted, if the active mind were kept intent upon some stated work. So truly may that which was said of the servant, be applied to our nobler part,—that it will be “ wicked, ” if once it degenerates into “ slothfulness ” in its proper charge. (Matt. xxv. 26 : “ Thou wicked and slothful servant. ”) As empty minds are the fittest subjects for extravagant fooleries, so vacant times are the fittest seasons. While we sleep, the importunate “ enemy ” within, as well as the envious adversary without us, will have a successful opportunity to “ sow the tares : ” (Matt. xiii. 25 :) whereas a constant employment frustrates the attempt, and discourageth the devil, because he sees we are not at leisure. Therefore, when any sinful motion steps-in, double thy vigour about thy present business, and the foolish impertinent will sneak out of thy heart at this discountenance. So true is that in this case which Pharaoh falsely imagined in another,—that the more we “ labour, ” the less we shall “ regard vain words. ” (Exod. v. 9.) As Satan is prevented by diligence in our callings, so sometimes the Spirit visits us, and fills us with holy affections, at such seasons ; as Christ appeared to Peter and other disciples, when they were a-fishing ; (John xxi. 3, 4 :) and usually manifested his grace to men, when they were engaged in their useful businesses, or religious services. But these motions, as we may observe by the way, which come from the Spirit, are not to put us out of our way, but to assist us in our walking in it, and further us both in our attendance on, and success in, our duties. To this end, look upon the work of your callings as the work of God, which ought to be done in obedience to Him, as he hath set you to be useful in the community. Thus a holy exercise of our callings would sanctify our minds, and, by prepossessing them with solid business, we should leave little room for any spider to weave its cobwebs.

(4.) *Awe your hearts with the thoughts of God’s omniscience, especially the discovery of it at the last judgment.*—We are very much atheists in the concern of this attribute ; for though it be notionally believed, yet for the most part it is practically denied. God “ understands ” all our “ thoughts afar off ; ” (Psalm cxxxix. 2 :) as he knew every creature which lay hid in the chaos and undigested lump of matter. God is in us all ; (Eph. iv. 6 :) as much in us all, as he is above us all ; yea, in every creek and chink and point of our hearts. Not an atom in the spirits of all men in the world, but is obvious to that all-seeing eye, which knows every one of those things that come into our minds. (Ezek.

xi. 5.) God knows both the order and confusion of them, and can better tell their natures one by one than Adam named the creatures. Fancy, then, that you hear the sound of the last trumpet; that you see God's tribunal set, and his omniscience calling-out singly all the secrets of your heart. Would not the consideration of this allay the heat of all other imaginations? If a foolish thought break-in, consider, "What, if God, who knows this, should presently call me to judgment for this sinful glance?" Say, with the church, "Shall not God search this out?" (Psalm xlv. 21.) Is it fit either for God's glory or our interest, that when he comes to make inquisition in us, he should find such a nasty dunghill, and swarms of Egyptian lice and frogs creeping up and down our chambers? Were our heads and hearts possessed by this substantial truth, we should be ashamed to think what we shall be ashamed to own at the last day.

(5.) *Keep a constant watch over your hearts.*—David desires God to "set a watch before the door of his lips;" (Psalm cxli. 3;) much more should we desire, that God would keep the door of our hearts. We should have grace stand sentinel there especially: for words have an outward bridle; they may disgrace a man, and impair his interest and credit; but thoughts are unknown, if undiscovered by words. If a man knew what time the thief would come to rob him, he would watch. We know, we have thieves within us to steal away our hearts; therefore, when they are so near us, we should watch against a surprise; and the more carefully, because they are so extraordinarily sudden in their rise, and quick in their motion. Our minds are like idle school-boys, that will be frisking from one place to another, if the master's back be turned, and playing instead of learning. Let a strict hand be kept over our affections, those "wild beasts within us,"* because they many times force the understanding to pass a judgment according to their pleasure, not its own sentiment. Young men should be most intent upon their guard, because their fancies gather vigour from their youthful heat, which fires a world of squibs in a day; (which madmen, and those which have hot diseases, are subject to, because of the excessive inflammation of their brains;) and partly because they are not sprung-up to a maturity of knowledge, which would breed and foster better thoughts, and discover the plausible pretences of vain affections. There are particular seasons when we must double our guard; as when incentives are present, that may set some inward corruption on a flame. Timothy's office was to exhort younger, as well as elder, women; and the apostle wisheth him to do it "with all purity," or "chastity," *εν παση αγνητι*, (1 Tim. v. 2,) that a temptation, lying in ambush for him, might not take his thoughts and affections unguarded. Engage thy diligence more at solitary times and in the night, wherein freedom from business gives an opportunity to an unsanctified imagination to conjure up a thousand evil spirits; whence perhaps it is that the Psalmist tells us, God had "tried him in the night," and found him holy. (Psalm xvii. 3.) The solitary cave tainted Lot with incest, who had preserved himself fresh in the midst of the salt lusts of Sodom.† (Gen. xix. 30.) In ill company, wherein we may be

* *Θηρια της ψυχης*.—PLATO. † *Cellularum mearum cogitationum pertimescebam*.—HIRO-NYMUS. "The little chamber of my thoughts kept my fears in constant exercise."—EDIT.

occasionally cast, there is need of an exacter observation of our hearts : lest corrupt steams, which rise from them as vapours from lakes and minerals, being breathed-in by us, may tincture our spirits, or as those *μισματα*, ["distempered particles,"] which, as physicians tell us, exhaling from consumptive persons, do by inspiration steal into our blood, and convey a contagion to us. And though "above all keepings" and watchings we are to keep and watch our hearts, because "out of them are the issues of life;" (Prov. iv. 23;) yet we must walk the rounds about our senses and members of the body, as the wise man there adviseth : *the mouth*, which utters wickedness ; (verse 24;) *the eyes*, which are brokers to make bargains for the heart ; (verse 25;) and *the feet*, which are agents to run on the errands of sin. (Verse 26.) And the rather must we watch over our senses, because we are naturally more ready to follow the motions of them, as having had a longer acquaintance and familiarity with them before we grew up to the use of reason. Besides, most of our thoughts creep-in first at the windows of sense :* the eye and the ear robbed Eve of original righteousness ; and the eye rifled David both of his justice and chastity.† If the "eyes behold strange women," the "heart will utter perverse things ;" (Prov. xxiii. 33;) perverse thoughts will sparkle from a rolling eye. Revel-rout is usual where there is a negligent government. "He that hath no rule over his own spirit, is like a city that is broken down, and without walls," (Prov. xxv. 28,) where any thieves may go in and out at pleasure.

3. The third sort of directions are *for the ordering of evil thoughts*, when they do intrude. And,

(1.) *Examine them*.—Look often into your heart to see what it is doing ; and what thoughts you find dabbling in it, call to an account : inquire what business they have, what their errand and design is, whence they come, and whither they tend. David asked his soul the reason of its troubled thoughts : "Why art thou disquieted, O my soul?" (Psalm xlii. 11:) so ask thy heart the reason why it entertains such ill company, and by what authority they come there ; and leave not chiding, till thou hast put it to the blush. Bring every thought to the test of the word. Asaph had envious thoughts at "the prosperity of the wicked," (Psalm lxxiii. 2, 3,) which had almost tripped him up, and laid him on his back. And these had blown-up atheistical thoughts, that God did not much regard whether his commands were kept or no ; as though God had untied the link between duty and reward, and the breach of his laws were the readiest means to a favourable recompence. Verse 13 : "I have cleansed my heart in vain." But when he weighed things in the balance of the sanctuary, by the holy rules of God's patience and justice, (verse 17,) he sees the brutishness of his former conceits. Verse 22 : "So foolish was I, and ignorant : I was as a beast before thee ;" and, verse 25, he makes an improvement of them, to excite his desire for God, and delight in him. Let us compare our thoughts with scripture-rules. "Comparing spiritual things with spiritual," is the way to understand them ; comparing spiritual sins with spiritual commands, is the

* PLOTINUS describes thought thus : *Των εξω προς τ' ενδον ομοιοτης και κοινωνια*.—*Ennead*. lib. i. "The resemblance and community which exists between outward things and those which are within."—EDIT.

† *Cor et oculi sunt proxenetæ peccati*. "The heart and the eyes are the negotiating agents of sin."—EDIT.

way to know them ; and comparing spiritual vices with spiritual graces, is the way to loathe them. Take not, then, any thing upon trust from a crazy fancy ; nor, without a scrutiny, believe that faculty whereby dogs dream, and animals perform their natural exploits.

(2.) *Check them at the first appearance.*—If they bear upon them a palpable mark of sin, bestow not upon them the honour of an examination. If the leprosy appear in their foreheads, thrust them, as the priests did Uzziah, out of the temple ; or as David answered his wicked solicitors : “ Depart from me, ye evil-doers : for I will keep the commandments of my God.” (Psalm cxix. 115.) Though we cannot hinder them from haunting us, yet we may from lodging in us. The very sparkling of an abominable motion in our hearts is as little to be looked upon, as the colour of wine in a glass by a man inclined to drunkenness. Quench them instantly, as you would do a spark of fire in a heap of straw. We must not treat with them : Paul’s resolve is a good pattern,—not to “ confer with flesh and blood.”* (Gal. i. 16.) We do not debate whether we should shake a viper off our hands. If it be plainly a sinful motion, a treaty with it is a degree of disobedience ; for a putting it to the question, whether we should suckle it, is to question whether God should be obeyed or no. If it “ savour not the things of God,” hear not its reasons, and compliment it with no less indignation than our Saviour did his officious disciple upon his carnal advice : “ Get thee behind me, Satan.” (Matt. xvi. 22, 23.) Excuse it not, because it is little. Small vapours may compact themselves into great clouds, and obstruct our sight of heaven ; a little poison may spread its venom through a great quantity of meat. We know not how big a small motion, like a crocodile’s egg, may grow, and how ravenous the breed may prove : it may, if entertained, force our judgment, drag our will, and make all our affections bedlams.† Besides, since the fancy is that power in us upon which the devil can immediately imprint his suggestions, and that we know not what army he hath to back any sinful motion if once the gate be set open, let us crush the brat betimes, and fling the head over the wall, to discourage the party. Well, then, let us be ashamed to cherish that in our thoughts which we should be ashamed should break-out in our words or actions. Therefore, as soon as you perceive it base, spit it out with detestation, as you do a thing you unexpectedly find ungrateful to your palate.

(3.) *Improve them.*—Poisons may be made medicinal. Let the thoughts of old sins stir-up a commotion of anger and hatred. We feel shiverings in our spirits and a motion in our blood at the very thought of a bitter potion we have formerly taken : why may we not do that spiritually which the very frame and constitution of our bodies doeth naturally, upon the calling a loathsome thing to mind ? The Romans’ sins were transient ; but the shame was renewed every time they reflected

* *Hic Annibal virtute, non morá, frangitur.* “ This Hannibal must be overcome by valour, and not by delay.” An allusion to the retarding stratagems by which Fabius warded-off the destruction impending over Rome from the hands of the consummate general of Carthage, and by which he immortalized himself as “ the Delayer.”—EDIT.
 † *Es hinc nota est infirmitas mea, quia multo facilius irruunt abominandæ phantasie quam discedunt.*—KEMPIS *De Imitatione Christi*, lib. iii. cap. 20. “ By this is my weakness shown, that abominable fancies rush into my mind much more easily than they are expelled.”—EDIT.

on them: ("Whereof ye are now ashamed:" Rom. vi. 21 :) they related a detestation instead of the pleasure; so should the revivings of old sins in our memories be entertained with our sighs, rather than our joy. We should also manage the opportunity so as to promote some further degrees of our conversion: "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies." (Psalm cxix. 59.) There is not the most hellish motion, but we may strike some sparks from it, to kindle our love to God, renew our repentance, raise our thankfulness, or quicken our obedience. Is it a blasphemous motion against God? It gives you a just occasion thence to awe your heart into a deeper reverence of his majesty. Is it a lustful thought? Open the flood-gates of your godly sorrow, and groan for your original sin. Is it a remembrance of your former sin? Let it wind-up your heart in the praises of Him who delivered you from it. Is it to tempt you from duty? Endeavour to be more zealous in the performance of it. Is it to set you at a distance from God? Resolve to be a light shining the clearer in that darkness, and let it excite you to a closer adherence to him. Are they envious thoughts which steal upon you? Let thankfulness be the product, that you enjoy so much as you do, and more than you deserve. Let Satan's fiery darts inflame your love rather than your lust; and, like a skilful pilot, make use of the violence of the winds and raging of the sea to further you in your spiritual voyage. This is to beat the devil and our own hearts with their own weapons, who will have little stomach to fight with those arms wherewith they see themselves wounded. There is not a remembrance of the worst objects but may be improved to humility and thankfulness; as St. Paul never thought of his old persecuting, but he sank-down in humiliation, and mounted-up in admirations of the riches of grace.

(4.) *Continue your resistance, if they still importune thee, and lay not down thy weapons till they wholly shrink from thee.*—As the wise man speaks of a fool's words, so I may, not only of our blacker, but our more ærial, fancies: "The beginning of" them "is foolishness;" but if suffered to gather strength, they may end in "mischievous madness." (Eccles. x. 13.) Therefore, if they do continue or re-assume their arms, we must continue and re-assume our shield: "Above all, taking the shield of faith." (*Αναλαβόντες*, "Taking up again." Eph. vi. 16.) Resistance makes the devil and his imps fly; but forbearance makes them impudent. In a battle, when one party faints and retreats, it adds new spirits to the enemy, that was almost broken before: so will these motions be the more vigorous, if they perceive we begin to flag. That encouraging command, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you," (James iv. 7,) implies not only the beginning a fight, but continuance in it till he doth fly. We must not leave the field, till they cease their importunity; nor increase their courage by our own cowardice.

(5.) *Join supplication with your opposition.*—"Watch and pray," are sometimes linked together. (Matt. xxvi. 41.) The diligence and multitude of our enemies should urge us to watch, that we be not surprised; and our own weakness and proneness to presumption should make us pray, that we may be powerfully assisted. Be as frequent in soliciting God as they are in soliciting you; as they knock at your heart for entrance, so do you knock at heaven for assistance. And take this for

your comfort : as the devil takes their parts, so Christ will take yours at his Father's throne ; he that prayed that the devil might not winnow Peter's faith, will intercede that your own heart may not winnow yours. If the waves come upon you, and you are ready to sink, cry out, with Peter, "Master, I perish ;" and you shall feel his hand raising you, and the winds and waves rebuked into obedience by him. The very motion of your hearts heaven-ward at such a time is a refusal of the thought that presseth upon you, and will be so put upon your account. When any of these buzzing flies discompose you, or more violent hurricanes shake your minds, cry out, with David, "Unite my heart to fear thy name ;" (Psalm lxxvi. 11, 12 ;) and a powerful word will soon silence these disturbing enemies, and settle your souls in a calm and a praising posture.

4. A fourth sort of directions is *concerning good motions* ; whether they spring naturally from a gracious principle, or are peculiarly breathed-in by the Spirit. There are ordinary bubblings of grace in a renewed mind, as there are of sins in an unregenerate heart ; for grace is as active a principle as any, because it is a participation of the divine nature. But there are other thoughts darted-in beyond the ordinary strain of thinking ; which, like the beams of the sun, evidence both themselves and their original. And, as concerning these motions joined together, take these directions in short :—

(1.) *Welcome and entertain them*.—As it is our happiness, as well as our duty, to stifle evil motions, so it is our misery, as well as our sin, to extinguish heavenly. Strange fire should be presently quenched ; but that which descends from heaven upon the altar of a holy soul, must be kept alive by quickening meditation.* When a holy thought lights suddenly upon you which hath no connexion with any antecedent business in your mind, provided it be not unseasonable, nor hinder you from any absolutely necessary duty either of religion or your calling, receive it as a messenger from heaven, and the rather because it is a stranger. You know not but you may entertain an angel, yea, something greater than an angel, even the Holy Ghost. Open all the powers of your souls, like so many organ-pipes, to receive the breath of this Spirit when he blows upon you. It is a sign of an agreeableness between the heart and heaven, when we close-with and preserve spiritual motions. We need not stand long to examine them : they are evident by their holiness, sweetness, and spirituality. We may as easily discern them, as we can exotic plants from those that grow naturally in our own soil, or as a palate at the first taste can distinguish between a rich and generous wine and a rough water. The thoughts instilled by the Spirit of adoption are not violent, tumultuous, full of perturbation ; but, like himself, "gentle" and dove-like solicitings, warm and holy impulses, and, when cherished, leave the soul in a more humble, heavenly, pure, and believing temper than they found it. (Gal. v. 22.) It is a high aggravation of sin to "resist the Holy Ghost." (Acts vii. 51.) Yet we may quench his motions by neglect as well as by opposition, and by that means lose both the profit and pleasure which would have attended the entertainment. Salvation came

* POLYCARP, in *Epist. ad Philip.*, terms holy persons *θυσιαστήρια του Θεου* ["the altars of God"].

both to Zacchæus's house and heart, upon embracing the first motion [which] our Saviour was pleased to make [to] him. Had he slighted *that*, it is uncertain whether another should have been bestowed upon him. The more such sprouts are planted and nourished in us, the less room will stinking weeds have to root themselves, and disperse their influence. And for thy own good thoughts, feed them, and keep them alive, that they may not be like a blaze of straw, which takes birth and expires the same minute. Brood upon them, and kill them not, as some birds do their young ones by too often flying from their nests. David kept-up a staple of sound and good thoughts: he would scarce else have desired God to "try and know" them, had they been only some few weak flashes at uncertain times: "Try me, and know my thoughts." (Psalm cxxxix. 23.)

(2.) *Improve them for those ends to which they naturally tend.*—It is not enough to give them a bare reception, and forbear the smothering of them, but we must consider what affections are proper to be raised by them, either in the search of some truth, or performance of some duty. Those gleams which shoot into us on the sudden have some lesson sealed-up in them, to be opened and learned by us. When Peter, upon the crowing of the cock, called to mind his Master's admonition, "he thought thereon," and "wept:" (Mark xiv. 72 :) he did not only receive the spark, but kindled a suitable affection. A choice graft, though kept very carefully by us, yet if not presently set, will wither, and disappoint our expectation of the desired fruit. No man is without some secret whispers to dissuade him from some alluring and busy sin:—"God speaketh once, yea twice, that he may withdraw man from his purpose;" (Job xxxiii. 14, 17;)—as Cain had by an audible voice, (Gen. iv. 7,) which had he observed to the damping the revengeful motion against his brother, he had prevented his brother's death, his own despair and eternal ruin. Have you any motion to seek God's face, as David had? Let your hearts reply, "Thy face, Lord, will I seek." (Psalm xxvii. 8.) The address will be most acceptable at such a time, when your heart is tuned by One that "searcheth the deep things of God," (1 Cor. ii. 10,) and knows his mind, and what airs are most delightful to Him. Let our motion be quick in any duty which the Spirit doth suggest; and while he heaves our hearts, and oils our wheels, we shall do more in any religious service, and that more pleasantly and successfully, than at another time with all our own art and industry; for his injections are like water poured into a pump to raise-up more; and as Satan's motions are not without a main body to second them, so neither do the Spirit's go unattended, without a sufficient strength to assist the entertainers of them. Well, then, lie not at anchor, when a fresh gale would fill thy sails; but lay hold of the present opportunity. These seasons are often like those influences from certain conjunctions of the planets, which, if not (according to the astrologer's opinion) presently applied, pass away, and return not again in many ages: so the Spirit's breathings are often so determined, that if they be not entertained with suitable affections, the time will be unregainable, and the same gracious opportunities of a sweet intercourse may be for ever lost; for God will not have his Holy Spirit dishonoured in "always strivin" with wilful man. (Gen. vi. 3.) When

Judas neglected our Saviour's advertisement, (John xiii. 21,) the devil quickly enters, and hurries him to the execution of his traitorous project, verse 27; and he never meets with any motion afterwards, but from his new master, and that eternally fatal both to his body and soul.

(3.) *Refer them, if possible, to assist your morning-meditation.*—That, like little brooks arising from several springs, they may meet in one channel, and compose a more useful stream. What straggling good thoughts arise, though they may owe their birth to several occasions, and tend divers ways, yet list them in the service of that truth to which you have committed the government of your mind that day: as constables, in a time of necessary business for the king, take-up men that are going about their honest and lawful occasions, and force them to join in one employ for the public service. Many accidental glances, as was observed before, will serve both to fix and illustrate your morning-proposition. But if it be an extraordinary injection, and cannot be referred to your standing thesis, follow it, and let your thoughts run whither it will lead you: a theme of the Spirit's setting is better than one of our own choosing.

(4.) *Record the choicer of them.*—We may have occasion to look back upon them another time, either as grounds of comfort in some hour of temptation, or directions in some sudden emergency, but constantly as persuasive engagements to our necessary duty. Thus they may lie by us for further use, as money in our purse. Since "Mary kept and pondered" the short sayings of our Saviour "in her heart," (Luke ii. 19, 51,) *συμβαλλουσα*, "committing and fitting" them, as it were, in her commonplace book,* why should not we also preserve the whispers of that Spirit, who receives from the same mouth and hand what he both speaks and shows to us? (John xvi. 13, 14.) It is pity the dust and filings of choicer metals, which may one time be melted-down into a mass, should be lost in a heap of drossy thoughts. If we do not remember them, but, like children, are taken with their novelty more than their substance, and, like John Baptist's hearers, rejoice in their light only "for a season," (John v. 35,) it will discourage the Spirit from sending any more; and then our hearts will be empty; and we know who stands ready to clap-in his hellish swarms and legions. But, howsoever we do, God will record our good thoughts as our excusers, if we improve them; as our accusers, if we reject them: and as he took notice how often he had appeared to Solomon, (1 Kings xi. 9,) so he will take notice how often his Spirit hath appeared to us, and write-down every motion whereby we have been solicited, that they may be witnesses of his endeavours for our good, and our own wilfulness.

(5.) *Back them with ejaculations.*—Let our hearts be ready to attend every injection from heaven with a motion to it, since it is ingratitude to receive a present without returning an acknowledgment to the benefactor. As God turns his thoughts of us into promises, so let us turn our thoughts of him into prayers; and since his regards of us are darted in beams upon us, let them be reflected back upon him in thankfulness for the gift, and earnestness both for the continuance and increase of such impressions; as David prayed that God would not take his Holy

* *Συμβαλλων, συναρμωζων.*—HESEYCHIUS. "The Greek verb here used signifies, 'to fit together.'"—EDIT.

Spirit from him who had inspired him with his penitential resolutions. (Psalm li. 11.) To what purpose doth the Holy Ghost descend upon us, but to declare to us "the things that are freely given to us of God?" (1 Cor. ii. 12.) And is it fit for us to hear such a declaration without a quick suitable reflection? Since the Comforter is to bring to our remembrance what Christ both spake and did, (John xiv. 26,) it must be for the same end for which they were both spoken and acted by him,—which was, to bring us to a near converse with God. Therefore, when the Spirit renews in our minds a gospel-truth, let us turn it into a present plea, and be God's remembrancers of his own promises, as the Spirit is our remembrancer of divine truths. We need not doubt some rich fruit of the application at such a season, since, without question, the impressions [which] the Spirit stamps upon us are as much "according to God's will" as the intercessions he makes for us. (Rom. viii. 27.) Therefore, when any holy thought doth advance itself in our souls, the most grateful reception we can bestow upon it will be to suffer our hearts to be immediately fired by it, and imitate with a glowing devotion the royal prophet, in that form he hath drawn-up to our hands: "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 servant, and prepare my heart unto thee." (1 Chron. xxix. 18.) This will be an encouragement to God to send more such guests into our hearts; and by an affectionate entertainment of them, we shall gain both a habit of thinking well, and a stock too.

SERMON XX.

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HOW MUST WE GOVERN OUR TONGUES ?

Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.—Ephesians iv. 29.

IN these words is a *prohibition*, and [an] *admonition*: every corrupt word is restrained, savoury and useful discourse is enjoined.

For exposition inquire,

1. *What is this corrupt speech that is forbid?*

Some restrain it to filthy, unclean speech; others extend it to all wicked speech; I conceive, it reaches also unto idle, empty, unprofitable discourse; and to this apprehension I am led by the import of the original word, σαπρος, which signifies "rotten;" and am further confirmed by the antithesis in the latter clause of the verse: "But that which is good to the use of edifying;" where he seems to intimate, that, the design of discourse being the edification of one another, as rotten, unsound wood, that will bear no stress, is not put into building, so

neither should sapless words, that have no heart in them, be used in our conversing. Downright evil words may be here condemned eminently; unclean, filthy words especially; but idle, empty words I apprehend also included; as in Eph. v. 4, they are particularly expressed, "Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking."

2. *What is understood by its goodness to the use of edifying?*

In the original it sounds pretty harsh: "To the edifying of use;" which I take to be an Hebraism, and equivalent to "useful edification." Some way or other profitable our discourse should be, to the embettering and not worsening of ourselves or companions; and the goodness here spoken of is its aptness to this end. Though our discourse hath a higher or lower degree of goodness in it, as it promotes and refers to a greater or lesser good; that which refers to the embettering of our souls is eminently good discourse; and that which vulgarly carries the name of it. But we are not confined to this; if the body, the estate, the name, of our brother be industriously promoted, yea, if his mind be innocently cheered, the discourse by this rule seems allowed and approved.

3. *What is that grace that should be still ministered by it?*

Some understand it of grace in the most noble sense, the begetting and strengthening which, by our converse, we should still be endeavouring; but I cannot apprehend this singly meant; nor do I think the apostle here speaks of the adequate scope of our discourse; for *that* he seems more generally to have laid-down in the words last explained. But I conceive he points at a by-end, that will result upon our eyeing the fore-mentioned grand end, intimating, that if our words are so useful, they are likely to be grateful to the hearers, and deservedly procure us grace and favour with them; or else he here directs us so to season our speech, that it may be savoury, and have a good relish with all men; a relish of our wisdom, of our charity, or some such-like gift or grace, that God hath bestowed upon us. And this way the apostle seems to expound himself, Col. iv. 6: "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt." The one is exegetical of the other, if I mistake not: we should not speak as we spit,—what comes next; but have that respect to matter and manner, as no man shall reasonably be disgusted at what we say, whereby he hopes we may be able to answer every one, attaining by this practice the tongue of the learned; the salt there advised is to prevent the putrefaction before-cautioned. This grace of speech Christ was eminent in; whereon it is said of him, "Grace is poured into thy lips." (Psalm. xlv. 2.) And by this as well as other excellences he grew *χαριστι*, "in favour with God and man." (Luke ii. 52.)

From the various expressions in this latter clause I gather,—

1. *That the design of our speech should be always to some good use.*

2. *That ordinarily we should aim at the promoting one another in grace.*

3. *That, accordingly, we should study that there be an aptness and idoneity in our speech to these purposes.*—"The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth," or belcheth, "out foolishness." (Prov. xv. 2.)

But, to wave particulars, I shall only pursue this general observation :—

OBSERVATION. *That our very lips are under God's laws.*

If we would approve ourselves universally Christians, we must look to our words, as well as hearts and deeds. "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, this man's religion is vain." (James i. 26.) The case, then, I would speak to, in answer to a query I may well expect from you, is,—

QUERY. *How we may and should order and govern our tongues, that we may not by them talk-away our religion, but rather evidence and confirm our holy profession ?*

In handling which, I would proceed by these gradations ; showing,—

1. *That there is a great difficulty in governing the tongue.*—It is noted as a very unruly member, beyond other members, yea, beyond every thing else : he speaks even despairingly of our mastering it : "Every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind : but the tongue can no man tame ; it is an unruly evil." (James iii. 7, 8.) We find this by too sad experience : persons that in their actions are blameless are frequently in their words very faulty, and scarce reckon themselves guilty. The double guard that nature hath set over it, (of lips to secure and imprison it, of teeth, as it were, to punish it,) suffices not to restrain it. It breaks through all the bounds of God and nature, and hardly acknowledges any master.

Now the tongue is so ungovernable,

1. *In that it is a proud member.*—Being, with its endowments of rational discourse, peculiar to man ; whereas our other members are generally common to beasts. Hereon we pride ourselves hugely in it. David calls it his "glory ;" (Psalm lvii. 8 ;) and it is certainly an organ of great excellency and use, without which we were incapable of communion and commerce, the chief advantages of human life. All of us have on this account a great opinion of it, are much pleased to hear ourselves talk, promise ourselves great matters from our tongue : *That shall get us favour, that shall get us honour.* When we despair in every thing, we have hope in that ; that can make evil good by its pleadings, and that can make good evil by its reproaches ; that shall revenge us on our enemy that is otherwise too hard for us, and defend us at the bar when aught is objected against us. You cannot imagine what confidence men have in their tongues ; and therefore no wonder they stand up so for the liberty of them. "With our tongue will we prevail ; our lips are our own : who is lord over us ?" (Psalm xii. 4.) Herein lies the impotent man's great power, and hereby he thinks to be even with every one. The hands many times are bound, and can do nothing ; it is a relief and pleasure that we can say what we list, if not before the face, yet behind the back, truly or falsely. The tongue's power lies in its liberty, which makes us so loath to have it abridged. When no way else Jeremiah's enemies could hurt him, by this dart they thought to wound him. (Jer. xx. 10.) They, therefore, that are feeblest, and most destitute of other weapons, are loathest we should blunt or any way restrain them in the use of this.

2. *In that the tongue is an active member, much beyond any others.*—

Opportunity must be waited for their actings, weariness is contracted by their actings; but the tongue is always ready and never weary, that it must be continually watched.

Active this member is *in itself*: [it is] compared therefore to a fire: "The tongue is a fire." (James iii. 6.) Its volatility and activity, as also its impartiality in respect of friend or foe, is hereby noted.

Actuated also it is *by many strong springs within*, that it is hard stopping its motion, or finding-out sometimes whence it has its impression. Pride, anger, envy, malice, hatred, all the wickedness of the heart, seeks its vent by the tongue, and falls-in upon it like streams on a mill-wheel, that of itself is disposed to perpetual motion. How can it but move, and how can it regularly move, that is impelled by such various and vicious principles? "The tongue," says he, "is full of deadly poison;" (James iii. 8;) all the ill humours are gathered to it; hence it is a great difficulty to cure or check the malignity of it.

And yet moreover it is acted and vehemently incited *from without*. The devil is still provoking of it without occasion, and by presenting occasions to show its tricks; so that there is little hope of its lying still, or acting according to God's will. What can be expected from a member that for its own activity is a fire, that is fed with such fuel, that is inflamed by such an incendiary? For so the apostle tells us, that "it is set on fire of hell." (James iii. 6.)

3. *In that it is not aware of its iniquity, what mischief it does, how guilty it is.*—Whereon it is very hard either to prevent it or repent of it. What words did they drop, and yet how do they stand up in the defence of them, as if nothing had been said amiss! "Your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee?" (Mal. iii. 13.) The tongue is never in fault, if we might be judge, and that its own advocate; even they that are severest in censuring others' words, have always something to say for their own. And the insensibleness of tongue-sins may arise,

(1.) *In regard of its sleight and nimbleness in its actings.*—Especially when it acts in an accustomed way, it vastly out-runs our observation, as in your ordinary cursers and swearers you may see. Not one in ten of their horrible execrations is so much as noted by them: they patter them over, as a parrot doth his lesson, without any present sense or after-reflection; and are ready, if hastily charged, to swear they did not swear, and curse themselves if they cursed.

(2.) *In regard of the imperceptible wound it makes.*—It draws no blood, it doth not immediately invade its neighbours' goods, and it cannot see what hurt it does: any wound it makes, it thinks it can lick it well again straight; but therein is a great deceit: it may lick its own lips, and think so, and that ordinarily suffices. Alas! can they not bear one of its lashes? "We did but talk as we heard, as we thought;" and that is nothing till it comes to be our own case.

(3.) *In regard of the pleasure it takes in all it doeth.*—That drowns all sense of evil in it: it cannot be sin that tastes so sweet. Whereas many other sins are not acted without great pains, men draw at them like horses; they proceed out of us, as the devils out of the poor men, tormenting and tearing of us, that we are sensible of the evil of them;

these sins of the tongue are vented with ease: we are not wasted, nor any way wearied, by them; yea, they ease us in their venting, we were big to be delivered of them, that some pleasure comes that way to us; and several things in us are mainly tickled by them: now pride, on a conceit of wit; then profaneness, in our very boldness; again, malice and revenge, that it hath wreaked itself with such easiness: one devil or other is still set on laughing in us, and thus these sins go down merrily with us, and are little suspected or censured by us, they look too pleasantly to mean any harm to us. Thus you find some tickled by those speeches, through which others were damned. "Spots they are and blemishes," *μωμοί*, "sporting themselves with their own deceivings." (2 Peter ii. 13.)

(4.) *In regard of the applause it ordinarily hath.*—Whisperers and tale-bearers, how welcome are they to a great many for their story's sake! They procure oftentimes favour to themselves, while they are breaking the most entire friendship. The profanest scoffers, even at religion itself, for some spark of wit in that their greatest folly, are entertained commonly by laughter: one corruption or other in hearers cries-up every thing that is ill said, and many things purely for being ill said; and these prating fools are hardened in their sin, in that these laughing "fools make a mock of it." (Prov. xiv. 9.) Upon these accounts, then, it appears no small difficulty to govern the tongue; the more pains is to be taken with it, the severer watch is to be set over it.

II. *The tongue is a very mischievous outlaw, no member like it, if it get loose.*—What expressions has the apostle of it? "A world of iniquity," he calls it; (James iii. 6;) knowing by nothing greater to set it out, and intimating all sin to be gathered together in it,—uncleanness, injustice, heresy, hard-heartedness, and what not. And yet, as if he had not said enough, he adds, that "it defileth the whole body:" it begins its mischief at home, like a recoiling gun that lays its shooter in a shattered condition on his back, while it wounds his brother at the heart. One cannot bespatter his neighbour but he dirties and daubs himself; the sin is his, and the shame shall be his, whoever may at present suffer by him. Can he charge any further mischief on the tongue? "It setteth on fire the course of nature." All the turbulent motions of these lower spheres are from the petulancy and inordinacy of this little member, that lashes every thing out of its genuine pace: it sows jealousies, it stirs-up heats and animosities, it foments enmities, provokes to injuries, it sets all the world together by the ears, that we had better [have] been without tongues, than that they should be without government. Yet, more particularly,

1. *It lets fly at every one, nobody is secure from it.*—Majesty and innocency, that are fences against most evils, set none beyond the reach of the tongue. The God of heaven, and the greatest and holiest men on earth, do often suffer by it. We are told of some that should "curse their king and their God," (Isai. viii. 21,) and "are not afraid to speak evil of dignities." (2 Peter ii. 10.) It is a meddling member that will let nobody alone; a very wasp that is buzzing about in every corner, if its wings be not clipped; another Ishmael, its hands are against every one: very extensive it is, then, in its offence.

2. *It lets fly every way, in a way of detracting, reviling, flattering,*

lying, &c.—No member has so many and such contrary ways of offending, that it never lacks opportunity of doing mischief, be it in good humour or in bad: either by its glozing it deceives us, or by its roving it tires us, or by its levity it deadens us, or by its ribaldry it daubs us, or by its insolency it affronts us.

3. *No such wounds as those that are made by it.*—It hits us even where it lists; in our estates, in our lives, in our names. By false witness or privy slander, it may undo us in all that is dear to us at once, especially in a credulous, uncharitable day, as this is: hence you may observe that he which bore all the evils of the world without any flinching, is something moved by what he suffered from the tongue, that commonly touches where we be most tender, its darts sink deepest, and its wounds heal slowest of any other. (Psalm lxi. 19, 21.) And in this respect the tongue may be expressed not only by a rod, by a scourge, by a sword, but by the sting and poison of a serpent, to note the anguish of its biting, and the difficulty of its curing. (Psalm cxl. 3; xlii. 10; Prov. xiv. 3.)

Can we infer nothing from all this? Sure, we may conclude,

(1.) *That in all reason and righteousness such a member should be strictly kept-in, even as an ox that is wont to going.* Or,

(2.) *That if we keep it not in, God will cut it out.*—His righteousness requires one, if our righteousness fail of the other. If our tongue must take its course, and go uncontrolled, it shall not go unpunished. The first signal judgments in the primitive times were for the sins of the tongue. Ananias and Sapphira for their lie are struck dead; (Acts v. 1—10;) and Herod for his vanity and vain-glory in his speech is eaten-up with worms, while alive. (Acts xii. 23.) And doth not the scorched tongue of the rich man in hell tell us, that tongue-sins shall be severely required of us? (Luke xvi. 24.)

III. *That the tongue, when reduced into order, is an excellent subject.*—No member so able, so active as that: it is the same for good as it was for evil: when rightly set, none is more useful or ornamental to religion than that. You hear what a value God sets upon it; the very hearts of others are not to be compared to it. “The tongue of the just is as choice silver: the heart of the wicked is little worth.” (Prov. x. 20.)

To show particularly what a good subject it is, such as none like it, note,

1. *That it is a faithful intelligencer to God, and to that purpose holds a continual correspondence with him, betraying its bosom-friends that it finds enemies to him, and discovering all plots that are against him.*

—Not a sin shall stir in our own hearts, but God shall hear of it, that he may timely suppress it; not a sinner shall tumultuate in the world, but it shall notice him thereof with a sharp zeal for his honour and interest. “It is time for thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void thy law.” (Psalm cxix. 126.) “Arise, O God, plead thine own cause: remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee daily. Forget not the voice of thine enemies: the tumult of those that rise up against thee increaseth continually.” (Psalm lxxiv. 22, 23.) This office advanceth the tongue unto no small capacity in the kingdom of God: not that God needs it, but he likes and requires it; and with a communication of like secrets that concern us he ordinarily requites it.

2. *It pays a continual and considerable tribute to him of praise and thanksgiving.*—Yea, it doth not only pay its own share, but would willingly collect it of others for its great and greatly-beloved Prince. “My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord, and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever.” (Psalm cxlv. 21.) Its only grudging is, that it hath so scanty an offering, that it can speak no louder, and sing no sweeter, when it hath such a subject as God’s praises: whence is that: “O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.” (Psalm li. 15.)

3. *It busies itself in bringing-in and reconciling rebels to him, seeks every way the enlargement of his kingdom.*—By making advantageous reports of him, as in Canticles v. 10; by beseeching persons to lay aside their enmity to him. (2 Cor. v. 20.) David promises this service to God with some hopes of success: “I will teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.” (Psalm li. 13.) It is needless to tell you how serviceable the tongues of good men have been, and yet are, to this purpose: which work, as it is the glory of God, so, of all works, is the joy of angels. (Luke xv. 10.)

4. *It is also a useful fellow-subject.*—It hath to give, and is ready to give, good advice and counsel to others, by which it is hugely helpful to them. The tongue’s charity and liberality is famous; and, believe it, when it is become a good tongue, it is, as before noted, a silver tongue, and its gifts are beyond those of silver and gold. Two expressions note to this effect: “The lips of the righteous feed many.” (Prov. x. 21.) Their words are others’ bread, and the best bread they can get. But are they drink too? See Prov. x. 11: “The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life;” a well for plenty, for purity; and a well whose waters have a singular encomium,—they are waters of life. To this let me further add what you find, Prov. xii. 18: “The tongue of the wise is health;” whence it may be called the “wholesome tongue.” (Prov. xv. 4.)

Two inferences I would hence make:—

(1.) *That it is worth our while to use our utmost diligence to bring our tongues into order, since they are such excellent organs of God’s honour, and so eminently serviceable unto our brethren, upon their regulation.*

(2.) *That it must needs be God’s great delight to see them in order, and observe them acting in this their glory.*—Now he loves to hear us speak, accordingly he provokes us to it, as if it yielded sweet melody to him: “O my dove, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice.” (Canticles ii. 14.) Elsewhere what a high commendation does he give of it! “Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honey-comb: honey and milk are under thy tongue.” (Canticles iv. 11.) But, above all, we may see this in that of Mal. iii. 16, 17, where they are represented talking, God hearkening, writing, and resolving what he will do for them, and expressing what account he made of them; their words seemed to hang as jewels in his ears, and their persons he will lay as jewels in his royal closet: “They shall be mine in that day that I make up my jewels.”

IV. *That it is the great glory of a man to have a good government over his tongue.*—The bare holding of it in makes a fool seem wise: “Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth

his lips is esteemed a man of understanding." (Prov. xvii. 28.) And the lolling-out of the tongue, both naturally and morally, is reputed a great indication of folly. "He that uttereth a slander, is a fool." (Prov. x. 18.) For what can he propose to himself in it to compensate for what he ventures by it? His brother's credit is wasted; but his own conscience,—it may be wounded, as having transgressed both charity and equity: and two to one, if in the like or a worse kind he be not requited, and go unpitied; yea, should all others spare him, he is even with himself; for whatever he hath said of his neighbour, he hath scarce given him a worse name than he has taken to himself [that] of a slanderer.

But the right ordering of our tongue, as to what is let-out, and what is kept-in, does not only speak a good man, but makes him glorious and eminent among other good men: "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." (James iii. 2.) He must have a measure of his own parts, a command of his own passions, and insight into seasons and occasions. It is a modest expression, that he which can do this is able to command himself; indeed, if we could find the man, he is fit to govern the world.

Whereas, on the other hand, *he* is fit for nothing *that* has a loose and licentious tongue; and it is generally a token of an impotent man. Try what you can make of him: an ill *neighbour*, I will warrant you, he will prove; he must be prattling of every thing, and every one; every thing he sees, every thing he hears, he turns into a story: one would not he should look over one's wall, come into one's house, talk with one's children or servants; he is either fishing out of them, or dropping into them, what is not convenient. His eye, his ear are still propping for fuel to that fire [which] his tongue is inflamed with. His humour is set out, Psalm xli. 6: "If he come to see me, he speaketh vanity: his heart gathereth iniquity to itself; when he goeth abroad, he telleth it." As bad a neighbour as he is, he is yet a worse *friend*: he trifles away our time, he tires our patience, he betrays our trusts: there can be no confidence in him; we must still be upon the watch; one may as well make a whole town our friend as such an one. But yet, too, a much worse *relation* he makes: it is next [to] dwelling in a mill, to dwell with him; his clack is always going, only not in so good tune and order as that we allude to. The wise man could not think of a condition so intolerable as the being yoked with such a relation. "It is better to dwell in the corner of the house-top, than with a brawling woman and in a wide house." (Prov. xxv. 24.) And a brawling man is as very a trouble-house, and in some sense more intolerable, as more preternatural. In sum, a well-governed tongue is not more our glory than an unruly one is our shame; that we are pricked on both sides, by honour and dishonour, to endeavour as much as may be the regulation of this member, as we consult the credit of our whole man. These things that we in general have premised may be improved as motives, and moral helps for the government of the tongue. But, more particularly, in order to its right management we must consider,

- I. *Its just measure.*
- II. *Its due matter.*
- III. *Its proper scope.*

I. *As to the measure.*—And here we must note the *extremes* that are to be avoided, and the *mean* that is to be observed.

1. The first extreme is *over-silence*; a rare fault, but a fault against the very intent of the tongue, and is a burying of that talent: it is justly chargeable with a great deal of evil, and suspicious of much more. And this in some is natural from frigidty and excessive melancholy: they are the easiest pardoned, though not altogether excused, when otherwise duly qualified and called. (Exod. iv. 10—12.)

In some this is contracted by others' iniquity: these are most to be pitied; the violent suffocation of their thoughts is not without great vexation of their hearts: as Lot might be an instance. (2 Peter ii. 2, 8.) And David: "I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, even from good; and my sorrow was stirred. My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned." (Psalm xxxix. 2, 3.)

In others this is affected out of moroseness, doggedness, or design; in these the offence is most aggravated, the silence is most sinful. But, more particularly:

When are we guilty of over-much silence?

(1.) *When justice is obstructed by it.*—My neighbour has suffered wrong; I know it; without my testimony he cannot have right; I conceal it; my secrecy involves me in the iniquity. (Lev. v. 1.) A pretence of peaceableness and good-neighbourhood stops the mouths of several in this case; but peace of conscience, and the cause of righteousness, should be preferred before all peace, and above every other consideration take place, if the matter especially be momentous.

(2.) *When charity is omitted, and is not likely from other hands to be at least so seasonably and advantageously administered.*—There is oft-times great charity in a word; and it is the greatest cruelty imaginable to spare that word; and it is often further heightened from the parties to which it is grudged. For instance: if we are made privy to any thing, the discovery of which is for great public good, and conceal it for private advantage, beyond what is fitting for our private capacity, and a just reward for our ingenuity; we highly transgress against public charity, and are unworthy of the benefits of society: this we learn from the lepers' case, themselves being judges. (2 Kings vii. 8, 9.) Again: if we alone are privy to a brother or friend's fault, wherein he goes on, and is not like of himself to come off, bolstering himself up in the opinion of its secrecy, a word of reproof from thee might save him; and thou art the greatest enemy he has, if thou withholdest it from him. (Lev. xix. 17.)

Further: thy own soul is in a dark and dismal state, thy neighbour or friend is full of light: by one question thou mightest do much to thy own illumination; and yet thou pinest away and perishest for lack of knowledge: where is thy love to thyself in the mean time? Tongue-charity is the cheapest of all charity; and yet many, certainly not without great guilt, let their country's, friends', and own souls starve for lack of it.

(3.) *If our own spirits be soured by it.*—Words kept-in are, many times, like humours struck-in,—go to the heart and offend the vital parts. Maliciousness, censoriousness, are often so fed; vent might give relief in this case, and be the only means for our cure, if moderately and discreetly given. Many can write their *probatum est* to this.

(4.) *If our company, whom we may and ought to please so far as we can, be grieved or offended at it.*—Silence, where we may be free, and have wont to be free, and it is justly expected we should be free, as among friends, relations, &c., *speaks* very cuttingly, and should not causelessly be long kept, lest it be ill interpreted: it intimates anger at them, or contempt of them; it renders you wholly insignificant to them: you had as good send your horse among them, if you will not converse like a man with them.

(5.) *If our calling and commission from God be to speak, we may not be silent, as to any one thing committed to us to speak, in this case.*—You know who said, “We cannot but speak;” (Acts iv. 20;) woe is us, if we do not. Paul no other way could clear himself of their blood, than by protesting “that he had not shunned to declare unto them all the counsel of God.” (Acts xx. 27.) And our Saviour doth mainly comfort himself, as having hid or kept back nothing given in charge to him. “Lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart: I have not concealed thy loving-kindness and thy truth. Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me.” (Psalm xl. 9—11.)

(6.) *If the cause and honour of God call for a public testimony, no one in his way may innocently withhold it, however mean be his capacity.*—Children, therefore, in Christ’s day, were called forth to it, and justified in it. (Matt. xxi. 15, 16.) And when offence was taken on a like occasion, he tells them, that if “those should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.” (Luke xix. 40.)

You see, then, that there is a “time to speak” as well as “keep silence:” (Eccles. iii. 7:) happy he that hits his time; and he that heeds it will hardly miss it, or if he does, shall the more easily be excused it. We commonly say, that “little said is soon amended:” true; but yet for not speaking, as well as not doing, in some cases we may be condemned. It is therefore our duty to rouse our tongue when it is sluggish, as well as hold it in where it is lavish, calling upon it as he, [in] Psalm lvii. 8: “Awake up, my glory;” or, as you have another instance: “Awake, awake, Deborah: awake, awake, utter a song.” (Judges v. 12.)

2. The second extreme to be avoided is *loquacity*, or overmuch speaking; a fault many are incident to, through the levity of their temper, and looseness of their tongues; and it is a very hard task for them to talk much and talk well. He is peremptory, that “in the multitude of words there wanteth not sin.” (Prov. x. 19.) And I suppose he speaks modestly, and that he means that there is a great deal of sin.

But let our query be,—

QUESTION. “When any one may be said to talk too much?”

Some few of many instances take as follows:

(1.) *When talking excludes thinking.*—The tongue outruns the wit: a little of this talk is too much, as being to no purpose but to betray our folly, abuse our brother’s patience, and waste precious time. One may talk to children at this rate to save a needless expense of sense, where there is but little; but it is an intolerable presumption upon men to entertain them with words more crude than our belches, that we fetch not so low as our breath, and that little differ from an ass’s braying.

(2.) *When it will not give way to hearing, especially when wiser and better men be present.*—If they were inferior and weaker, it were meet they should be allowed their turns; every one may be supposed to have brought something wherewith the whole might be edified: in engrossing all the talk to thyself, thou art chargeable with unseemly vaunting, thou art in the ready way to emptying, there is no hope of thy replenishing; go whoop and halloo in the woods, if thou wilt be answered only by thy own echo. Proud men and passionate men are apt so to offend: they have no ears, and so are unlike to edify, and, for any thing they are like to get, had as good keep out of company. Mark advice of one that understood the government of the tongue as well as any other: "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." (James i. 19.) The last direction is to make good the former.

(3.) *When talking shuts-out working either in our common or Christian calling.*—Some men have got such a vein of talking, that it is their great business, and for which they neglect all business, so many hours in a day they snatch from all occasions on purpose to chat: this is more than can be justified; the apostle blames it in the women of his day: "They learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle, but tattlers also and busy-bodies, speaking things which they ought not." (1 Tim. v. 13.) And, sure, it is more to be reprov'd in men, that should be more stayed, and might be much better employed; but the tongue is not only wont to take the hands off of business, but to take upon it the business of the hands; as in the great duty of distributing to the poor, *that* will serve them with good words, when the hands should be ministering good things; the vanity of which he upbraids, James ii. 15, 16. And so it is apt to run all religious offices into mere talk, which is like grain that hath only a stalk.

(4.) *When the whole man is turned into tongue, that, sure, is a talkative man.*—And such there be a great many, that cannot utter half their mind the natural way: whether it be from the fulness or filthiness of the matter they are stuffed with, you may guess; I am apt to think that they are full of filthy matter, that the tongue is even ashamed to utter; or else straitened to vent fast enough, and therefore hands, and feet, and eyes, must speak too for greater riddance. They talk in characters for haste; sometimes you have signs for words, at other times words for sentences; you must guess their meaning. For instance: "He is — I will say no more:" that is their way to brand a man, leaving you to think the worst you can, and at leisure to put it in, reserving hereby a liberty for themselves to creep out, if called in question. This is the greatest talker I know: he speaks when he says nothing, and says most when he utters least: *Hunc tu, Romane, caveto* :* look to this man; I durst almost warrant him a filthy beast, or crafty knave, though, it may be, he only counterfeits one: the wise man doth so represent him. "He walketh with his mouth, and talketh with his feet:" (Prov. vi. 12—14:) what a monster is this man!

* HORATI *Sermonum* lib. ii. sat. iv. 85.

"Of things he never saw who tells the tale,
And friendship's secrets knows not to conceal,
This man is vile. Here, Roman, fix your mark:
His soul is black, as his complexion's dark."—FRANCIS'S Translation.

3. The mean that lies between these two extremes is, *neither to wrap this talent up in a napkin, nor yet lavish it away; but prudently to use it as we see opportunity to improve it, that in the latter day we may give an account of it.*

RULES.

In order to the observance of which mean I would give the following directions :—

RULE I. *Rest not in ignorance.*—That will seal-up thy mouth in silence if thou beest sensible of it, or let loose thy tongue with impudence if thou overlookest it. Open thy eyes, open thy ears, open thy heart, to receive instruction, that thou mayest be fit for pertinent communication; lay-in before thou layest-out; and particularly know thyself, know whereof thou art about to speak, to whom thou dost speak, and thou shalt not be to seek how to speak, whether any thing or nothing, whether much or little, whether interrogatively or dogmatically; the knowledge of thy own measure will be a great help to keep the right measure in this whole matter.

RULE II. *Give not way to idleness.*—Employ thy heart, employ thy hands, charge every part with something, and then this busy member may submit to its share, and go to its burden; but if the whole man be disengaged and unemployed, all the vigour of the man doth ordinarily run to his tongue. He must be doing something, though next to nothing, and falls commonly into a humour of excessive talking, as you may observe in children that are not come to work, and old people that are past it, unless grace or gravity of manners check it. The Athenians were this way tainted, that nothing but news would be digested; and in gathering and spreading that they were perpetually exercised. (Acts xvii. 21.) But business diverts and spends the humour, and something tames and moderates this as well as other members.

RULE III. *Avoid drunkenness.*—That loosens the reins of the whole man, and especially prevents the government of the tongue, and sets it on running and rambling without fear or wit. It makes men spew, that were wont only to spit; it brings-up all that is in our minds as well as stomachs. *In vino veritas*: “All will out when the wine is in.” (Prov. xxiii. 31.) Persons of an airy, light temper may find this inconvenience forthwith, upon a sip or two of wine or strong drink, and for every glass of liquor abate an ounce of wit: they should be more cautious than other men. Wine is indeed proper for them of a sorrowful heart, to raise their dejected spirits to a due temper; (xxxi. 6;) but one that for ordinary is rather touched with too much levity, is quickly overborne with it, and his tongue soon trips, however firm his feet may stand.

RULE IV. *Watch against all passionateness.*—That is a degree of madness, and precipitates wise men into great extravagancies of speech; many can scarce hold their hands, but fewer can hold their tongues, under the transport of it. If ever the teeth are useful to bite-in the tongue, it is when it is inflamed by passion, and has broken in heat from the government of reason. Either refrain anger, or refrain speech altogether when angry, as you would not proclaim your own folly.

RULE V. *Keep-under pride.*—That never keeps a decorum, but puts

you forward beyond what becomes you, in contempt of others that are not inferiors to you ; whereas humility will represent them at least even with you, that you would be awed into a graceful modesty. If we think we have all the wit, we shall next arrogate to ourselves all the talk ; and by thinking ourselves wise make ourselves fools.

RULE VI. *Keep-up charity*, which will secure from the transports of ill-will and envy.

II. *The matter* of our discourse is to be regulated : and here occurs a two-fold consideration of it :—

1. *Something it is our sin to make matter of our discourse.*
2. *Other things it is our duty.*

1. As to *sinful matter*, we must wholly restrain our tongues : “ Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth.” (Eph. iv. 29.) And, again : “ Keep thy tongue from evil.” (Psalm xxxiv. 13.)

The particular evils of the tongue are not to be reckoncd-up in a single sermon.

Some general rules I will therefore lay down, whereto the most considerable may be reduced.

RULES.

RULE I. *Those things are evil, and not to be uttered, whereby God immediately is dishonoured.*—And by this we are admonished to take heed of venting heresies, uttering blasphemies, all rash swearing, forswearing, and taking God’s name in vain ; sins all of a high nature, and committed generally in height of spirit, and [which] look as like presumptuous sins, for which God hath appointed no sacrifice, as most we can reckon-up, in regard of the small temptation to them, and the impudence that is common in them. (Num. xv. 30, 31.)

RULE II. *Those things also our tongue is to be restrained from, whereby our brother is wronged as to his outward man ; whether as to life, estate, or name.*—Unrighteousness is the evil of such speeches, a manifest evil, and is aggravated from the degree wherein he suffers, and from the directness of our intention in bringing it upon him ; though, whether directly or indirectly, of malice and set purpose or out of pure weakness, our brother suffers and we sin, that we were no more tender of him in concerns that are so dear to ourselves, and about which we have been so specially cautioned of God : and of this nature eminently are slander and false testimony.

RULE III. *Those things must more especially be forborne, whereby our brother’s soul is likely to be defiled, and his manners corrupted, in that the greatest charity is here transgressed.*—As, for instance, all unclean speeches, by which lust may be drawn-forth ; provoking speeches, whereby passion may be stirred-up ; all enticements to evil, and encouragements in evil ; any thing whereby our brother’s spirit may be lightened, or his heart hardened.

RULE IV. *Such things whereby the fundamental laws of society are violated, and all confidence in one another destroyed.*—I will instance particularly in three :—

(1.) *Lying.*—That makes words signify just nothing, and cuts-off all communion between one another’s souls, that we can never know each

other's minds : we are hereby at a far greater loss than if we could not speak at all. How detestable this sin is, you may learn by what you read, Rev. xxi. 8 ; xxii. 15.

(2.) *Tale-bearing*.—That is a trade set-up directly against all friendship, and [is] the great bane of love in the world ; which yet has too much countenance from the generality of the world : but God, that is always more than ourselves solicitous for our good, has especially cautioned against it, (Lev. xix. 16,) and warned us of the evil effects of it. (Prov. xviii. 8.)

(3.) *Revealing of secrets*, which destroys all confidence, and breaks the most sacred bonds of friendship. And as to these we may be doubly faulty :

(i.) *In reference to such secrets as are committed to us sub sigillo.**—These every one is convinced he ought to keep so for his truth's sake, and to answer the confidence that was put in him ; though many are never quiet till they have broken this bond, but are rather irritated by their being bound. "A tale-bearer revealeth secrets." (Prov. xi. 13.) Especially,

(ii.) *In reference to such as come to us without such a formal bond, out of weakness or good-nature*.—If there may be wrong to the party confiding in us by divulging what he hath so committed to us, the very matter of the case obligeth us ; in justice, though not in faithfulness, we are bound to be his secretaries, if a far greater good may not come by the discovery. And let me here give a special caution in a case wherein you may be liable to temptation.

Take heed what you do tell to a friend, lest he should after prove an enemy : this is prudence. Take heed you discover not, when an enemy, what was told you as a friend : that is piety.

RULE V. The matter of the discourse is faulty, *when the very ends of it are overlooked, and you fruitlessly and foolishly squander away both time and talents, not considering that idle words are also evil words, and to be reckoned-for another day.* (Matt. xii. 36, 37.)

QUESTION. "How shall we restrain our tongues from all this evil ?"

(1.) *By purging the seeds of it out of our hearts*.—Our Saviour looked upon it as an unnatural thing, and not to be expected, that they that are evil should speak good things, inasmuch as "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." (Matt. xii. 34.) That, therefore, must be first cleansed, that the mouth may be kept clean : while there are filthy thoughts, malicious purposes, impetuous passions, and idle imaginations allowed there, by the tongue, as well as other ways, they will have their vent ; by every member the heart will be discharging itself of its abundance. Whence, again, he observes, that "out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, thefts, false-witness, blasphemies." (Matt. xv. 19.) Mind, therefore, how you are still directed to lay the axe unto the root, and crucify the evil affections of the heart, that you may prevent the extravagancies of the tongue : "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice." (Eph. iv. 31.) He despaired [that] clamour and evil-speaking should be restrained, except wrath and malice were extirpated. And to the same purpose, Col. iii. 8, 9 : "Put off anger,

* "Under the seal" (or charge) of secrecy.—EDIT.

wrath, malice ;” and then he hath some hopes they might also forbear “blasphemy, filthy communication, lying.” Let your first care, then, be of the heart, and its first motions ; for every member thence hath its impressions ; and all pretence of care, without a regard to this, will be but a palliation, and we may expect a more violent eruption.

(2.) *By stopping our ears, and shutting our eyes, against every thing that may feed the fore-mentioned evil humours.*—If they be fermented afresh, they will flow anew. And be aware of remainders of them in the best of you : if we would effectually keep a fire from smoking, we must keep it from burning ; and to secure it from burning, keep it from blowing, and fresh supplies of fuel. We can easily apply this : no refining of the tongue without purging of the heart ; no keeping that pure, if any thing that defiles is suffered to enter there, the ordinary passages into which are by the eye and ear. Avoid, therefore, in prosecution of this direction, all vain, idle, angry, envious, malicious companions, lest they be infusing into thee their venom. Bid adieu to all profane ranters and ribalds, to all tale-bearers and whisperers ; they will kindle the fire of lust or anger, if there be a spark in thee. And, next to them, avoid all books that are stuffed with profane jests, or that gender to excessive heats : these assault us like formed armies, when occasional words are like slight sallies of a small party. And, lastly, beware of vain and filthy sights ; and the more artificial, the more dangerous, as, more affecting the fancy, sinking deeper into the memory, and pressing more importunately into the mouth, they tickle us into the talk of them.

(3.) *By laying the laws against all idle and evil speaking before our eyes, in their reasonableness and rigour.*—Their reasonableness will appear, if we consider them *as for us* : would we [that] any body should abuse us with lies, or load us with reproaches ? No. Why, then, it is well God hath provided by his law that they shall not ; and is it not alike equal thou shouldst not deal by another as thou wouldest not be dealt-by thyself ? The law, then, is good, and the punishment is as great. Thy soul may go for an ill word : consider of it, has an evil word sufficient pleasure to compensate for eternal pain ? Sure, it is wisdom to forbear such words, if we may pay so dear for them.

(4.) *By considering the odiousness of it in others.*—And in them we may see it in its true colours ; things are too near us to be aright discerned by us, when they are observed in ourselves. A liar, a false witness, a backbiter, a tale-bearer,—how do you like such men ? Would you have your child trained-up in such things ? Why, then, will you allow them in yourselves ? How came they to be more tolerable in you than other men ? Is it that it is no matter what becomes of you ? How comes it that you have cast-off all care of and love to self, that you would have every body better than yourself ?

(5.) *By reflecting upon the reproaches we have had from our own hearts for it, and the inconveniences we have suffered, and the damages others have reaped by it, beyond our possible reparation.*—Is it not time, then, to take-up ?

(6.) *By remembering that God observes it, and will judge thee for it.*—A reverend man would awe thee, if there was danger, especially

of the pillory; and how canst thou cast-off the fear of God, to talk before him so loosely? How wilt thou like to have all thy vain and vile words read and aggravated at the last day? It will be one part of that day's work. (Jude 15, 16.)

2. *There is matter that it is our duty to discourse of.*—The general nature of which I shall lay before you; as,

(1.) *Such as, though of a common and inferior nature, as referring to things of this life, yet is of consequence to ourselves or neighbours to be debated, for the right understanding or better managing of our joint or several concerns.*—This, as tending to justice, charity, peace, or the like, by the good use it may be of, is sanctified and becomes our duty, and we may not without sin decline it, when duly provoked to it; for, as mean as these matters seem, God hath concerned himself to make severe laws, that we worst not one another in them; by which we are obliged to improve and embetter each other as we can; and surely most of all when by a word it may be done. How does Job's conscience approve him in his having been a faithful counsellor!—"I was eyes to the blind." (Job xxix. 15.) And what a character does Christ give to the peace-makers!—"They shall be called the children of God." (Matt. v. 9.) And, yet further, the command to worldly business six days in seven does more than allow worldly discourse, especially when it hath a moral use. So that as it is a vain superstition of some not to touch these things, so is it of others to decline necessary profitable talk of them; as if it were a piece of service to God to be useless unto men, while by his providence we are among them. Know, then, where by weakness your brother needs advice, and by a greater stock of wisdom you are able to give it, it is his duty, in order to the prudent management even of his worldly affairs, to ask it, and yours as freely to give it; for you therefore have it, and cannot otherwise give a good account of it.

CAUTION. Let me only caution, that on this pretence you launch not out into discourse of this nature *unseasonably*, as on the Lord's day; *unnecessarily*, for mere talk's sake; *immoderately*, to the burying of all other discourse or hindering more important business of your own or brother's: it should also be carefully avoided, that we intrude not ourselves as busy-bodies into the discourse of others' matters, while we are unconcerned, and to persons unconcerned, for which we are like to go unthanked, whereby our brother may be wronged, and nobody is edified.

(2.) *It may be our duty to discourse of what is done in the world, wherein God's justice, power, wisdom, faithfulness, or goodness is advanced.*—One design of God's marvellous working is to furnish us with fit matter for talking. His signs in Egypt are particularly noted to have had this reference: "That they might tell in the ears of their sons, and sons' sons, what things he had wrought in Egypt, hat they might know that he was the Lord." (Exod. x. 2.) God's works are one of his books, that we should much confer about. David pleases himself to see the whole world as set about a round table, conferring their notes of what they had seen and observed of God in his works, from generation to generation: "I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works. And men shall speak of the might of thy

terrible acts ; and I will declare thy greatness. They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness." (Psalm cxlv. 5—7.)

This seems to be talk for the generality of men, there is something in it peculiarly pleasing to all palates ; and an example often affects, when a precept would be overlooked ; and, I am confident, if we could prudently discourse of the works of God, we might more advantage the profaner sort of men, than by talking to them out of the word ; for they are prejudiced against that, and shut upon it straight, as perceiving whereto that would [tend] ; but they are pleased with story, and lie more open to it, that there is greater hope, ere they be aware, of their being caught with it. (Psalm cvii. 42.)

That this discourse may be profitable, take the following advice :

First. *Make wise observation.*—Look with both eyes on what happens, look into it, look after God in it, and spy what attribute is eminently glorified by it. "Whoso is wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord." (Psalm cvii. 43.)

Secondly. *Make faithful representations.*—Lie not for God. The Romish legends, by their multitude of fables, have greatly minished the veneration of all miracles. One fly spoils a whole pot of ointment : the same does one lie in a most useful history.

Thirdly. *Make charitable interpretations as to persons or parties.*—Be not too severe in censuring them that God makes examples. It was the fault and folly of the Jews. Christ tells us, they were out ; and we, as well as they, may be out : let us be warned by them. (Luke xiii. 1—3.)

Fourthly. *And make pious applications.*—And still put-in yourself as concerned where you note any thing to be learned. (1 Cor. x. 5, 11 ; Psalm xc. 11, 12.) Many profane the providences of God by their slight discourses of them, without regard to God or his glory in them ; but you, on the other hand, by observing rules, may hallow his name and spread his fame.

(3.) *It is yet more especially our duty to be discoursing to one another of what God hath said to the world for our mutual direction, caution, and consolation.*—This is to be our familiar and frequent discourse, wherein we should be most delighted, and whereby we may be most edified. "These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart : and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them 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. 6, 7.) "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom ; teaching and admonishing one another." (Col. iii. 16.)

What will we advise in order to the more easy and profitable management of this duty ?

First. *Furnish yourselves with all variety of pious matter, that you may have a word to adapt every occasion, and bring out of your treasure new or old according to the season.*—Hence you will have a presentness of mind to the work, and there will be a peculiar gratefulness in your words, as savouring neither of force nor affectation : in this sense Christ had "the tongue of the learned," (Isai. l. 4,) and thus he would have every scribe instructed. (Matt. xiii. 52.) This would make our dis-

course still pertinent, that it could not well be rejected. "A word upon the wheels" (Prov. xxv. 11) he calls it, in respect of readiness and regularity.

Secondly. *Affect your heart with what you are about to speak.*—David waited till his heart was hot, and the fire burned, and then he spake. (Psalm xxxix. 3.) And then it is that your words will flow from your mouths, and glow upon your companions' hearts; you seem in earnest, and they know not how to take it in jest.

Thirdly. *Fortify yourselves for such discourse, reckoning you may meet with discouragements.*—But put on the brow of brass; be not dismayed nor ashamed; let iniquity be ashamed and stop its mouth. But, while vanity and all manner of ribaldry pass current in every company, let not good discourse creep into a corner, as if it alone were guilty. Say, as Paul, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ;" and resolve to walk and talk according to it, say the world what they will of thee for it.

Fourthly. *Watch occasions to fall most handsomely upon it.*—Not as putting-by discourse of a lower alloy, but as improving it, ingrafting your good fruit on their crab-stock, as Christ hath given you frequent examples; and assure yourselves, the more natural and insensible your transition is, the easier and better will the discourse be entertained, inasmuch as the company is less affronted than if their discourse was directly put by, and yours preferred.

Fifthly. *Labour to make your good discourse every way as grateful as it may.*—Wisely considering [the] persons you are conversing with, what is to be said, and how every thing may take best that you say. "Because the preacher was wise, he sought to find out acceptable" (as well as profitable) "words;" (Eccles. xii. 10;) and no doubt *acceptable*, that they might be *profitable*. Now there are several things [that] give a grace, and are a great set-off, to our words, some of which commend them to one, and some to others, and some to all.

To begin with those that are more general and adorn all discourse: such are *measure, season, suitableness, sweetness, soundness, &c.* These must be still regarded, or company may justly be offended, as being some way abused; their time seems not valued, their businesses [not] regarded, their passions [not] considered, their persons or parts [not] duly revered, when their ears are impertinently entertained, or perpetually with the same things tired.

And then, more particularly, *modesty* wins much on superiors; *familiarity*, on inferiors; a *pleasant lepor or saltness*, upon equals; *freeness*, on friends; *courteousness*, on strangers; *meekness*, on offenders; *plainness*, on the ignorant. You need take least care to please the wise; for he heeds *the matter*, and can make allowances for *the manner* of the discourse.

QUESTION. "Is that *lepor* or 'saltness' of speech [which] we spoke of allowable in holy discourse?"

The grounds of doubt are, in that the apostle seems to reckon it inconvenient in any discourse; (Eph. v. 4;) and it may look like a transgression of that peculiar gravity that seems proper for our religious discourse.

ANSWER I. It is generally granted that the word *ευτραπεια*, by which this jesting or facetious expressing ourselves, condemned here by the apostle, is noted, is of a good signification, and was of good reputation among the soberest Heathen, and imported, as they deemed, one of the great virtues, or graces of speech, as showing readiness of wit, and sweetness of manners; in which original sense, Calvin says of it, that it is worthy of a free and ingenuous man.

ANS. II. It is as generally supposed, that this *lepor* or "saltness" of speech was ordinarily abused, and under pretence of wit most men played the fools, venting the froth instead of the flower of their brains, which the apostle is thought to have respected in joining together "jesting and foolish talking." And you know that a jester and a fool are even synonymous terms among us, none more idly squandering away their wit, without respect to those chief ends, for which God gave it, and they are obliged to use it; minding only the tickling of the flesh, having no regard to the profiting of the spirit. This abuse of wit, that was even become general, I conceive the apostle lets fly at; as also they apprehended that translated the word by "scurrility," into which this *lepor* was degenerated. Now, our wit may be reckoned to be abused,

(1.) *When we are conceited of it, and use it purely in ostentation of self, and contempt of others.*—Hereby we are injurious to our own souls, nourishing pride, which it should be our great business to pluck down.

(2.) *When we are immoderate in it, and either vainly or extravagantly lavish it.*—Wit should be used like salt,—sparingly: a grain or two does well; a meal surfeits. It speaks vanity in us, and nourishes over-much levity in others; and two to one we run dregs, if we know not when to have done, meddling with every thing and every one.

(3.) *When we are offensive by it, either to God's holy ears by our profaneness, or to our brother's by over-sharpness.*—And we should be especially tender, where there is more than ordinary weakness or plainness; and a greater liberty may be used in this latter kind, where there is great wickedness or conceitedness.

(4.) *When to any base ends we prostitute it.*—As, first, to expose holy things or persons to the scorn of fools, lessening their repute and reverence by our light mentioning of them, or playing upon them,—this is a degree of blasphemy; or, secondly, when we design it only to make sport and raise laughter among those especially whom we should rather provoke to weeping.

From all this it appears that there needs great caution in the use of this gift or faculty. But yet, that it may be both innocently and advantageously used, and Christian gravity maintained, I shall briefly prove from scripture-examples, even in most serious and weighty matters. And I note eminently three occasions, where there may seem needful some more than ordinary strain of speech, or use of salt in it:—

(1.) *If what we say be for food or physic to a sick or weak-stomached person, that may otherwise nauseate it, this salt may be useful to give it a relish, and get it the easier down.*—For which purpose the plain way of speaking was waved by Nathan; (2 Sam. xii. 1, &c.) and, again, by another

prophet; (1 Kings xx. 38, &c. ;) and almost generally by our Saviour: without a parable he scarce spake any thing; there was no coming upon those kinds of persons without circumventing of them. On the like necessity we should endeavour to show like ingenuity, that we may catch persons with guile, that will not otherwise come to hand.

(2.) *If our words be intended for swords, this kind of speech doth set a keenness upon them.*—For which purpose it is most frequently used in scripture; as you may see notable instances, 1 Kings xviii. 27; 2 Kings xvii. 32, 33. The proud fool will not be convinced often by plain reason, [so] that there is almost a necessity of irrision: we must make him ridiculous, that his folly may be conspicuous: when he is thoroughly exposed, he may chance [to] be humbled. I take the wise man as directing us to this method with this sort of men: “Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.” (Prov. xxvi. 5.) *According to his folly*, that is, according as his folly does deserve; answer him sharply, smartly, utterly silence him, that he may take care to speak wiser another time. *Repone illi verbera et virgam*, as one says, “Answer him with words as smart as rods:” the fool’s back requires them. (Prov. xxvi. 3.)

(3.) *If as nails we would drive our words, (to which also they are compared, Eccles. xii. 11,) there is a tendency in this pleasantness of speech to fasten them, and fix them more firmly in the memory.*—Whence I conceive, old dying Jacob gave his last blessing in such harmonious words, as some of them are bearing allusion to his sons’ names, such as Jehudah, Jodudah; Dan, Jadin; Gad, Gedud, &c. The mothers imposed their names for one reason; but something in their future condition the father sees that agrees well enough to their names, whereon he chooseth to read their destinies as it were by them, for the more easy remembrance of them. I would not [that] these examples should be abused; to prevent which, let me only caution, that we gravely, sparingly, and for like necessary ends, do imitate them, or pretend no patronage from them.

To proceed:—

Sixthly. *Naturalize this discourse, if possible, and as far as possible, to you.*—Then, and not till then, you will speak with ease, and speak with a grace; and this facility is chiefly got by frequency. We must in a manner confine ourselves to this dialect, that we may get this excellency in it: for which purpose let your converse be most with those that speak this language, and converse with all that are any way capable in this language; provoke them to it, use them to it, necessitate them to it, if they will converse with you; be as one that could hardly speak any thing but it; from your youths accustom yourselves to it; in your houses and among your familiars, initiate yourselves herein: they will bear with your stammerings, which you might be ashamed of before strangers; and having once got, take heed you do not forget, the language, but inure yourselves daily to it; you may travel through the world with it; it is one of the learned languages, that all scholars that have been bred in Christ’s school understand; you herein have converse with them. And it is no great matter if you are a barbarian to others: if it quits you of their company, it does you a kindness; if this way you can be quit of

vile and vain companions, it is the honourablest way you can be rid of them ; and, so far as separated from them, you have heaven's happiness on earth. Better a great deal they should be angered and estranged from you upon the holiness of your discourse, than you grieved or defiled by the commonness or profaneness of theirs. Though I must also tell you, if once this discourse was habitual to you, it might be better borne in you, and nobody would expect other from you, but, as they had occasions of dealing with you, might probably be awed into a conformity to you.

Further to engage you, so far as may be, in this holy strain of speech, take these

MOTIVES.

MOTIVE I. *No discourse is so proper for you as Christians, it being the language of the country to which you do belong.*—Further, your concerns generally lie in the word, all that are worth speaking of : why should you in a manner talk of any thing else ? It is almost an impertinency for a Christian to talk of this world, wherein he is a stranger, and whereof he can call little his own but a burying-place. This was the utmost I find great Abraham to have grasped after or reckoned of in this world, that he made sure of : " I am a stranger and a sojourner with you : give me a possession of a burying-place. And the field and the cave was made sure unto Abraham for a burying-place." (Gen. xxiii. 4, 20.) Truly this is all we are sure of here below ; [so] that if we talk of any thing in this world, it is most proper to talk of our graves, and our daily readiness to drop into them ; into which discourse David naturally fell when his company would not bear higher : " Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is ; that I may know how frail I am." (Psalm xxxix. 4, &c.) But turn him to the word : he has something there ; God, Christ, men, angels, life, death, things present, things to come, all things are his. Confine [yourselves,] then, to your own matters, especially since you have so large a field. Every one talks of their proper concerns : *Navita de ponto*.* Have you nothing of your own to talk of ? or is it not to compare with what others so much please themselves to prattle about ? For shame, Christians, that you alone should rove and ramble at this rate ! Holy, heavenly discourse is that one would expect from you, and that alone seems pertinent to you.

MOTIVE II. *No discourse is so profitable.*—One may hear a deal of other chat, and be neither the better nor wiser, or at least we are instructed unto some little mean designs ; but when we talk out of the word, we are in the way of learning or teaching what will be for our universal accomplishment ; for, as he says, the scripture is " profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.) Yea, such discourse does not only fit us for the work of this world, the best, the noblest achievements in it ; but it prepares us for, and in a sense enters us into, the work of the other world ; for that, I conceive, lies much in the holy use of the tongue : we hear of no other employment of the saints in glory, but that they night and day

* " A sailor's discourse is usually concerning sea-affairs."—EDIT.

are praising God. He is always in their eyes, he is ever in their mouth. The work of heaven will not be uncouth to them that have been much exercised in holy, heavenly discourse on earth; but for others, that can scarce frame their mouths to a good word on earth, for my part I know not what they will do in heaven, though I think there is no great danger of their coming thither.

MOTIVE III. *No discourse is so pleasant.*—Next to the songs of angels, the pious conference of holy men is the sweetest melody our ears can be entertained with; other things comparatively sound harsh to the things of God, neither at the instant affect the ear with that pleasure, nor afterwards leave it in that composurc. To reflect a little, by way of comparison: and, first, let us listen a little to what the world says; a buzz there is in both ears; but what do we hear? “Such a man hath played the knave, and such a man hath played the fool; such a family is at great discord, or in great distress; such a nation is involved in war, or such a person hath shed the blood of war in peace:” for, ordinarily we hear nothing but what it is a vexation to hear, nothing but what may make our ears to tingle; or if aught seems at present to tickle them, as profane jests and idle stories may for a while do, this tickling ends in torment, the ear is put out of order, and the heart as being defiled is not a little discomposed. He could see so little pleasure in the speeches, that he abhorred the songs, of sinners, as having no harmony in them; their mirth was rather his sorrow: “It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools.” (Eccles. vii. 5.) But, secondly, in listening to holy discourse, we hear of the love of God, the glory of heaven, the graces that do shine in some, the duties that are performed by others; we hear of an end that shall be put to all earthly troubles, whereby the sharpest sufferings are allayed; and, by what we may hear further, death itself comes to be despised. Are the stories we hear on one ear and the other to be compared? We may hearken long enough ere the ear will be satisfied with hearing, except we chance to hear something from heaven; all the good news is in the word of God, and to be heard from good men that bring us stories therefrom.

MOTIVE IV. *By neglecting holy discourse, you may lose opportunities of good both to yourselves and others, that you will wish you had taken.*—First. It may be, *as to yourselves*, you were in company with persons eminent for grace and knowledge: here was an opportunity of doing your own soul good; but, by the stream of your impertinent tattle, all savoury discourse was diverted, that season was neglected: afterwards you see your lack of knowledge, the instrument is removed. “Ah fools!” do we not then cry out of ourselves? “the opportunity is gone, and we are undone!” How must it gall an awakened Jew to think what discourse he had with Jesus Christ!—“Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar?” “Here is a woman caught in adultery.” “Why do not thy disciples fast?” &c. “Ah! had I nothing else to inquire of my Saviour? Would it not have been more pertinent to have asked, ‘What I shall do to be saved?’ But he is gone, and I must die in my sins.” How many persons have we sent away, that have had a word of wisdom in their hearts, having learnt only what o’clock it was, what weather, what news;

forgetting to ask our own hearts, what all this was to us, and inquire of them things worthy of their wisdom and our learning! Secondly. *As to others*, you may rue the opportunities you have lost. Here lay a poor wretch, with one foot in hell: would he not have started back, if he had had light to discover his danger? Well, you are together: something you must say; the same breath would serve for a compassionate admonition as a complacent impertinency, which will redound to neither of your advantages: you part; the man dies in his sins, and in the midst of hell cries out against you, "One word of yours might have saved me! You had me, you might have told me of my danger; you forbore, I hardened. The Lord reward your negligence!" O give not poor souls occasion to rail at you in hell for your sinful silence or impertinent converse with them here on earth!

OBJECTION. You will pretend, it may be, want of matter in excuse for your forbearing holy discourse.

ANSWER. No, friend, it was want of mind; thou art not straitened in thy subject, but in thyself. Religious matter has no end; eternity is not sufficient for it; but thou art resolved also it shall have no beginning.

Well, you know your duty, and do as likes you.

III. In order to the right management of our tongue, especial regard must be had to *its scope*, what is aimed-at in every motion of it, either immediately or ultimately; for, without some scope, it is vain talk, and, according to the goodness or badness of our scope, it is ordinarily good or bad talk: I say *ordinarily*; for some talk is so bad, that it is scarce capable of a good scope, much less of being made good by it, yet less evil it does become: to instance in blasphemy and lying, great moral evils both in their own nature, and no design can destroy the nature of them, in that the word of God allows not, but forbids, the doing of evil that good may come of it; yet speeches materially so have been passed over, the evil as of simplicity pardoned, and the good aimed-at in them as of sincerity rather rewarded. As Paul, Rahab, and the Egyptian midwives might be instances; but let us take heed of making them examples. But ordinarily, as I said before, the scope does much unto the specification of the speech, so much,

1. *That fair speeches become foul, if dirty designs be couched under them, or carried on by them.*—He cries out, therefore, for help against the flatterer, as if he was a murderer: "Help, Lord; for the faithful fail. They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak. The Lord shall cut off all flattering lips." (Psalm xii. 1—3.) "His words are softer than oil, yet are they drawn swords." (Psalm lv. 21.) The like may be said of the fawning woman that entices to vice: "The lips of a strange woman drop as an honey-comb: but her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword." (Prov. v. 3, 4.)

2. *Good speeches become evil to the users of them, if evil be meant by them.*—As, if we couch under them to cover sinful purposes, or colour sinful practices, hereby they are profaned; and the holier they be, the wickeder: "Woe to you! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers." (Matt. xxiii. 14.)

3. *Our most common speeches, that might otherwise seem culpable, are not only allowable, but commendable, as they may be referred unto some good purpose.*—As, First, for the remission of a mind over-bent and burdened with serious matter, that one may return with more vigour to it. Secondly: for the prevention of worse discourse, where better will not be entertained. Thirdly: for insinuation into bad men, that we may gain an opportunity of doing good upon them; and for introduction into better discourse, which abruptly cannot be brought-in.

So much, then, depending upon the scope of our discourse, let me give two cautions hereon.

CAUTION I. *That none pride themselves in the material goodness of their discourse.*—If the design be bad, it is like a fair apple rotten at the core.

CAUTION II. *That we judge none rashly for the seeming commonness of their discourse.*—If it be not their common dialect, and especially if they are among common-spirited people, there may be a pious guile in it, a reason for it, and it is charity to suppose it; but let every one judge himself, who only hath a capacity to know himself; and let us all be cautious, however, that we lay not a stumbling-block before a weak brother.

SERMON XXI.

BY THE REV. MATTHEW POOLE, A. M.,

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HOW MAY DETRACTION BE BEST PREVENTED OR CURED?

He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.—Psalm xv. 3.

AMONG the many sins for which God is contending with England, and especially with the professors of religion in it, I doubt not but one, and that none of the least, is, the gross misgovernment of their tongues. The abuses of the tongue are many, one whereof is the malignity of it. And whereas in David's time a malignant and virulent tongue was the badge and cognizance of an atheist: "Behold, they belch-out with their mouth: swords are in their lips: for who, say they, doth hear?" (Psalm lix. 7;) now, alas! this spot is become the spot of God's children, and high professors of religion. A man can scarce come into any company, but his ears shall be filled with censures, detractions, reproaches; party against party, person against person. Instead of that old Christian love and charity for which the ancient Christians were noted and applauded even by their adversaries, ("Behold," said they, "how the Christians love one another!") men's hearts are generally full of rancour, and their tongues of sharp reflections, contemptuous and reproachful expressions, censures, and slanders, against their absent, and oft-times innocent and more worthy, brethren. This is the disease

which I would endeavour to administer some physic to from these words.

The coherence is plain. David proposeth a question: "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?" (Psalm xv. 1.) By which you may understand either Sion, where the ark then was, or Moriah, where the temple was to be built; and by either of them, the church of God here, and especially the heavenly temple hereafter.

So that it is as if David had said, and asked, "What is the qualification of the true members of God's church, of the citizens of the New Jerusalem? By what properties are they known and distinguished from other men?" To this, David doth not answer, that they are so differenced by their high talks, by their crying-out upon the sins of other men, or the wickedness of the times, by their frequent attendance at God's tabernacle; but by the uprightness of their hearts, by the good government of their tongues, by the holiness of their lives: "He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart." (Verse 2.) And in this third verse that I have now read: "He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour." It is the last clause which I intend to speak to, because it will comprehend the former: "Nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour." The words I shall explain in the handling of the doctrine, which is this:—

DOCTRINE.

It is the duty, and must be the care, of every true Christian, not to take up a reproach against his neighbour.

I shall first explain the point, then prove it, and lastly apply it.

I. For EXPLANATION, three things are to be inquired into:—

QUESTION 1. "Who is my neighbour?"—There are some men of name in the world that will tell you, that, "in the language of the Old Testament, by 'neighbour' is to be understood 'one of the same country and religion,' *popularis Israelita*;" and it is the peculiarity of the gospel, that every man is made my neighbour. But if we examine scripture, we shall find this to be a gross mistake. I need not go farther for the confutation of it than to the Decalogue itself: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." (Exod. xx. 16.) I suppose it will seem a very hard saying to affirm, that it is lawful to bear false witness against a stranger. So when God commands, "Thou shalt not lie carnally with thy neighbour's wife," (Lev. xviii. 20,) I presume these gentlemen would not allow themselves that liberty with the wife of a stranger. If God may be his own interpreter, this controversy will quickly be ended from Lev. xix., where, if you compare two verses,—verse 18, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," with verse 34, "But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself;"—you will not need the help of an artist to form this conclusion, that "the stranger is, in God's account, and ought to be in mine account, my neighbour." To the same purpose you may please to compare two other places of scripture together: Deut. xxii. 4, "Thou shalt not see thy brother's ass nor his ox fall down by the way, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt surely

help him to lift them up again ;” with Exod. xxiii. 4, 5 : “ 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, thou shalt help with him.” He who is my “ brother,” which is nearer than a neighbour, in the one place, is mine “ enemy,” and he that “ hateth me” in another place. And it is further observable to this end, that the Hebrew word *גַּר* and the Greek *πλησιον*, a “ neighbour,” is usually rendered in scripture by *ετερος*, “ another ;” as : “ He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law, for the law saith, “ Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” (Rom. xiii. 8, 9.) Most true therefore is that of St. Augustine, *Proximus est omnis homo homini*, “ Every man is a neighbour to any other man.” Nay, the more intelligent part of the Jews were of this opinion ; and Kimchi upon these words saith, “ He is called my neighbour with whom I have any business.” And the scribe, of whom we read, Luke x., knowing the mistakes of many of his brethren, asks our Saviour this question, “ Who is my neighbour ?” (Verse 29.) And our Saviour gives him an answer, the sum of which is this, that even the Samaritan was to be looked upon as his “ neighbour.”

QUESTION II. “ What is a reproach ?”

I answer, in general,

1. *It is nothing else but an evil report, or an evil speech, unduly uttered concerning another.* Now a report is evil two ways :—

(1.) *When it is evil in itself, a false report.*—When a man belies his neighbour, and bears false witness against him, either in judicial proceedings, or in common conversation. These kinds of evil reports David was exercised with : “ False witnesses did rise up ; they laid to my charge things that I knew not.” (Psalm xxxv. 11.)

(2.) *When it is evil to a man’s neighbour, when your speech tends to your neighbour’s disparagement and defamation.*—And here I must inform you, that a man may be guilty of reproaching men by commendations, as David speaks of his enemy : “ His words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords.” (Psalm lv. 21.) It is the usual practice of some men to smooth the way to a reproach by a commendation, and to raise a man’s reputation, that he may tumble it down with more advantage.

2. *When a man publisheth a neighbour’s secret infirmities or sins.*—This all casuists allow to be a kind of detraction : and good reason ; for though the matter may be true and good, yet the principle from whence this proceeds is evil. It proceeds from want of love to my neighbour, and of the just care that I ought to have of his credit ; and the ends, either of speaker, or of the speech in its own nature, or of both, are evil,—even to bring his neighbour into contempt or disgrace.

3. *When a man aggravates the real or supposed faults of his neighbour either in opinion or in practice.*—Certainly the professors of this age, and this city, are deeply guilty in both these respects.

(1.) *In aggravating other men’s real or supposed errors and mistakes.*—Often-times men call that an error through their own ignorance or prejudicate opinion, which, in the judgment of far wiser and better men than themselves, and in reality, is a precious truth of God ; and the par-

donable mistakes of their neighbour they decry as fundamental and damnable errors, or at least as errors dangerous to salvation. I am far from pleading for errors that are really damnable, or highly dangerous, such as those of the Papists, Socinians, Quakers, and the like; but there are other and lesser differences among Protestants, who, "holding the Head," as the apostle speaks, differ in doctrines of less moment, or in the methods and modes of worship, in rites and ceremonies, which possibly one man thinks to be necessary, another to be lawful and indifferent, another sinful; and by these differing opinions it is lamentable to consider, and, I confess, I cannot think of it without horror and loathing, how Protestants traduce and defame one another. The one is "superstitious, idolatrous, a formalist, a profane person, and one that hath no sense of religion." The other is an "heretic, a schismatic, a fanatic, a licentious, lawless person, that follows his own sensuality, and hath not the fear of God before his eyes." Thus they mutually rail at one another, as if they had neither sense nor conscience. Nay, the disease is grown to that height, that, not content to censure men's opinions, they will also judge of their consciences and secret intentions, as if they maintained such doctrines against the light of their own consciences; a censure which proceeds from deep ignorance of the merits of the cause. It were, I confess, a very desirable thing that all men were of one mind; and Christians indeed are to labour for it, and to pray for it: "I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." (1 Cor. i. 10.) But if a man consider the great weakness of most men's understandings, the infinite variety of their parts and apprehensions, educations, inclinations, interests, or what the scripture hath foretold, "There must be heresies, that they which are approved may be made manifest," (1 Cor. xi. 19,) I think he will conclude, that he who shall expect this absolute harmony and uniformity in this world must either dream or dote. And therefore the Holy Ghost hath directed us what to do in case of such differences of judgment; to wit, to talk charitably toward those that differ from us: "If thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably;" (Rom. xiv. 15;) and to agree with others as far as we can: "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Notwithstanding whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." (Phil. iii. 15, 16.) But for those mutual reproaches and censures one against another, I must take the boldness to charge you all, as you tender your salvation, to have a care of them; for though these points wherein you differ be disputable, yet this is out of all dispute, that you ought to "love your neighbour as yourself," and that you ought not "to take up a reproach against your neighbour." And therefore take heed, lest while you condemn another man for disputable and lesser errors, you do not run into an indisputable crime and fundamental miscarriage.

(2.) *Men are guilty of reproaching their neighbours by aggravating their errors in practice and conversation.*—When men censure and reproach others for things indifferent and of small moment: as, for

example, in their habits and garbs. I am not ignorant that there are great miscarriages in men's habits, and that the bush that hangs at the door doth frequently discover what is within, and tell the pride of men's hearts; and there are certain bounds and limits to be observed, that men's habits be agreeable to their quality, estate, calling, and condition in the world: but yet there is a just latitude in these things; the lawfulness of them doth not consist in a mathematical point; these are to be regulated by the custom of times and places. Now if a man see another that doth a little vary from his fancy or practice, whose garb is a little more ornamental than his, though not much extravagant; if now he judgeth the state of this man, and concludes him to be a profane or carnal person, this is a "reproach." So, again, when a man commits some miscarriage towards his neighbour through carelessness, or forgetfulness, or mistake, it is a common thing for men to charge it as a malicious design, intended for their hurt: this is a "reproach." And you may easily multiply instances in your own thoughts.

QUESTION III. "What is it to take-up a reproach against a man's neighbour?"

I answer: It is a defective manner of expression, and therefore is diversely supplied; but especially and most reasonably two ways: and, accordingly, a man may be guilty of taking-up a reproach against his neighbour two ways:—

1. *When he takes it up into his mouth.*—The Hebrew word is often so used; as Exod. xx. 7: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." *Not take it*; that is, not lift it up upon thy tongue, or not take it into thy mouth. So, Isai. xiv. 4: "Thou shalt take-up this proverb against the king of Babylon;" that is, Thou shalt take it up into thy lips, thou shalt utter and publish it. Thus, Ezek. xxvi. 17: "They shall take-up a lamentation for thee;" which is explained in the following words: "And say to thee, How art thou destroyed!" And therefore, elsewhere, the word "lips" or "mouth" is added; as Psalm xvi. 4: "Their drink-offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips." Psalm l. 16: "What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?" And this phrase of *taking-up* may possibly respect the situation of the mouth above the heart; which, according to the opinion of the Hebrews, is the seat of the understanding. As if he had said: "If there should rise in thy heart an evil thought or device against thy brother, let it die there; let it never come up into thy mouth." Now, in this respect, a man may be guilty of this sin of taking-up a reproach against his neighbour two ways:—

(1.) *When he is the author and first raiser of a reproach.*—Such as Sanballat was: "There are no such things as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thy own heart." (Neh. vi. 8.)

(2.) *When a man is the spreader or promoter of it.*—Suppose it comes from another fountain, if thou art the conduit-pipe by whom it is conveyed to others, thou art guilty of it. "Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people." (Lev. xix. 16.)

2. *When a man takes it into his ear.*—So some expound these words: "Thou shalt not receive, not admit, not endure, a reproach against thy

neighbour." You know, the receiver of stolen goods is as obnoxious to the law as he that takes them away : so then a man may be guilty of this sin, not only by speaking, but also by the hearing of a reproach against his neighbour ; and so he may be three ways :—

(1.) *When a man quietly permits it, and gives no check to it.*—This is certain, the great law of charity commands me not only to do no hurt to my neighbour, but also to suffer no hurt to be done to him which it lies in my power to prevent or remove. If another set his house on fire, I must lend my help to quench it ; I must pull my neighbour's ox out of the pit, though another man hath cast him in ; and, consequently, when the good name of my neighbour is invaded by another, if I patiently bear the reproach, I make myself guilty.

(2.) *When a man hears a reproach against his neighbour greedily, and with delight.*—It is a sin, and that of no small size, for a man to take pleasure in the sins of others ; and therefore the apostle makes it an aggravation of sin : " 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.) " Charity rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." (1 Cor. xiii. 4, 6.) Consider, I beseech you, the commonness of this sin. If a reproach be fastened upon one who is a man's enemy, or of another party, men commonly hear such reproaches with delight ; not considering that this is not only a blemish to his own party, but also a blot to Christianity, a reproach to the Protestant religion, a sin against God and against the gospel, a scandal to men ; and these things should rather call for tears, than laughter and approbation. And therefore, when a man seems to approve another man's reproach, and encourage the reproacher, he involves himself in the guilt of it. It is the saying of a very learned man upon the Proverbs, that " it is not easy to know whether is a greater sinner, or whether is the greater plague to a commonwealth,—he that spreads a reproach, or he that willingly receives it."

(3.) *When a man easily believes a reproach.*—It is said indeed, " Charity believeth all things ;" (1 Cor. xiii. 4, 7 ;) but the object of this belief is the good of my neighbour, and not his evil. Charity readily believes well concerning its neighbour, where there is the least colour or foundation for it ; but it is slow to believe evil concerning him ; and when a man is prone to believe evil concerning another man, it is a great sign of an uncharitable disposition : the reason is, because men do most readily believe those things which comply with their own desires and inclinations ; as, in wars and differing factions, every man is apt to believe good tidings concerning his own party. Good men are the least suspicious, and slowest to believe evil of others ; of which you have a remarkable instance in Gedaliah : when Johanan told him of Ishmael's design to murder him, it is said, he " believed him not." (Jer. xl. 14.) And when it was pressed upon him a second time, and Johanan offered to punish the conspirator, and to prevent the execution of the treason, he said, " Thou shalt not do this thing : for thou speakest falsely concerning Ishmael." (Verse 16.)

You may observe how backward fond parents are to believe any ill report concerning their children : and whence doth this proceed ? Even

from an inordinate love and kindness to them; and therefore, on the contrary, men's credulity unto evil reports concerning their neighbours doth proceed from want of love and affection to them. So much for the explication.

II. The **PROOF** of the doctrine shall consist in the representation of the sinfulness and injury of this practice of censuring, back-biting, and reproaching of others. And that I may more effectually dissuade and affright myself and you from it, I shall discover to you how pregnant a sin this is: there is a complication of injuries in it. It is injurious, First, *to God*; Secondly, *to yourselves*; Thirdly, *to the party censured or reproached*; Fourthly, *to other men*.

(1.) *To God and Christ* in divers particulars.

1. *It is an invasion of God's prerogative.*—You know how dangerous a crime this is, when it is committed against an earthly prince; nor can you in reason think it less criminal and hazardous, when it is committed against Him who “accepteth not the persons of princes,” and who is “greater than the kings of the earth.” And therefore observe how severely God rebukes this sin in Rom. xiv.; when men did censure and reproach one another, either for the observation of days and meats, as guilty of superstition, or for the neglect of them, as proceeding from licentiousness; what saith the apostle? “Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?” (Verse 4.) And, “But why dost thou judge or set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.” (Verse 10.) As if he had said, “Thou dost set thyself in the throne of God, and thou dost take God's work out of his hands.”

2. *This is a manifest breach of the laws of God and of Christ.*—The things, as I said before, which thou dost censure and reproach another for, are oftentimes doubtful and liable to dispute; but the command of God against this sinful practice is evident, and without controversy. He whom thou censurest possibly may sin; but thou that dost reproach him certainly dost sin, and that against clear light; and so thou dost put thyself into the number of those that “rebel against the light,” which is mentioned as a great aggravation of sin. (Job xxiv. 13.) The law of God hath so evidently forbidden this sin, that if thy conscience doth not smite thee for it, if thou canst go on quietly in this sin, it is a sign thou art in a deep sleep, if not “dead in trespasses and sins.” That this practice is so great a breach of the laws of God and of Christ, will appear by these particulars:—

(1.) *It is against particular and express scriptures, forbidding this practice.*—The text is evident: it is not like some places of scripture, which are “hard to be understood,” and soon “wrested;” but it is so plain, that “he that runs may read it:” none shall dwell in God's holy hill that allow themselves in this practice. Again: “Thou shalt not raise a false report” against thy brother. (Exod. xxiii. 1.) *A false report*: either that which thou knowest to be false, then thou art guilty of forgery; or that which in the issue shall be found to be false, in which case thou art guilty of rashness and uncharitableness. In the Hebrew it is “a vain report,” a report that wants the solidity of a thorough information, and of real use to thy neighbour. “Speak not evil one of another. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother,

speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law ;" (James iv. 11 ;) and so, in the grossest sense, is an Antinomian. Ministers must put people in mind "to speak evil of no man." (Titus iii. 2.)

(2.) *This is against the fundamental law of love and charity, which is the chief of the laws of God.*—So great a law, that the rest of the laws of God must give place to it. Sacrifice, sabbaths, the worship and service of God, must frequently give place unto this duty of mercy and charity to men ; by which you may see, as how great a duty this is, so how great a sin the violation of this command is. God accepts no man's person, he regards no service, where this is wanting. Though men pretend, or express, never so much love to God, though they do or suffer never so much for him, yet if they "have not charity, it profiteth nothing." (1 Cor. xiii. 3.) And, "in this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil : whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar : for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen ?" (1 John iii. 10 ; iv. 20.)

But possibly some may ask, "Who, then, is my brother, to the love of whom I am thus obliged ? Possibly he is one of my own party and religion ; and such I do love." No, every man is thy brother in this sense, and the object of thy love. It is true, good men are the principal objects of thy love ; but not the only objects of it. The commands of the gospel in this matter are general : "Honour all men. Love the brotherhood ;" (1 Peter ii. 17 ;) that is, Love them in a more eminent degree. "As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." (Gal. vi. 10.) But now, all persons, yea, even those that censure and reproach others, will pretend they love them : but, be not deceived : if thou dost sincerely love thy neighbour, thou wilt be ready to do all good offices for him, to seek his good, to maintain his credit, to interpret all things in the best sense, to cover his failings. "Charity shall cover the multitude of sins." (1 Peter iv. 8.) Didst thou love thy neighbour, thou wouldest not be so apt to censure him, so greedy to hear, nor so ready to believe, evil reports concerning him. When God shall come at the last day to try men's love to their brethren by the rules and characters of it which he did prescribe in 1 Cor. xiii., I doubt multitudes of persons will be found deeply guilty, that thought themselves in a manner wholly innocent. You should do well to study that chapter, and to labour thoroughly to understand it ; and that I commend to you as an excellent antidote against this wicked practice.

(3.) *This is a sin against that great and royal law of Christ, which even the Heathens have admired, and the emperor Severus did so highly applaud : "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them : for this is the law and the prophets."* (Matt. vii. 12.)—Now, let your own consciences answer the question : Would you be thus dealt with by others ? Would you have all your infirmities sharply censured ? your secret miscarriages published to the world ? the whole course of your lives ripped up, and all your actions severely examined ? No, no ; they that are so forward to censure the real or supposed miscarriages of others, would have their own more tenderly dealt with ; and, generally,

those that are most severe judges of others are most partial to themselves. They that will most freely defame other men, will not endure to be reproved and admonished themselves. They that will turn the edge of the sword to others, would have the back only turned to themselves.

(4.) *It is a sin against the great law of maintaining peace amongst men.*—This is prescribed as a remedy against this very sin: "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." (Rom. xiv. 19.) "Follow peace with all men." (Heb. xii. 14.) "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." (Rom. xii. 18.) He saith indeed, *If it be possible*, because in some cases it is impossible to have peace with wicked men without the neglect of our duty, and without the loss of truth and holiness; but as far as it is possible, we are obliged to promote it. But what peace can there be in the midst of censures and reproaches? The natural offspring of such parents are contentions, divisions, animosities; while peace lies bleeding and languishing.

(5.) *It is against that great command laid upon all Christians, of excelling other men.*—Christ requires more from Christians than he doth from other men: "What do ye more than others?" (Matt. v. 47.) Christians must be free from the vices of other men: "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye walk not as other Gentiles walk." (Eph. iv. 17.) So, Luke xxii. 25, 26: "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship;" they are proud, ambitious, imperious. "But it shall not be so among you;" Christians must be in the world like "lights shining in a dark place." They must have all the virtues that others have, and they must be clean from all the vices and lusts in which others live. Now, the very Heathens have condemned this practice of reproaching and traducing others: detractors were infamous amongst them; and therefore it is a shame this should be practised by Christians.

(6.) *This is a sin against the whole design and scope of the scriptures.*—These are, as I may say, the two poles, upon which the heavenly globe of the scripture turns; the love of God, and the love of our neighbour. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (Matt. xxii. 37, &c.) "Love is the fulfilling of the law;" (Rom. xiii. 10;) and the law is enforced by Christ, John xiii. 34: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another." So, then, all the scripture hath but one neck; and this the detractor cuts off, and so makes himself the greatest anti-scripturist in the world.

3. *This is a great injury to God, because it is a confederacy with God's greatest enemy, the devil.*—God judgeth of men's relations by their works, and not by their talks. "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham." (John viii. 39.) And, verse 44: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." Now this among others is the devil's great work and office, who is hence called "the accuser of the brethren," (Rev. xii. 10,) and from whence he hath his name *diabolus*, which is "a calumniator, a slanderer, a reproacher." And these men, as they do the devil's work, so they are called by the devil's name: "Not slanderers;" in the Greek, *μη διαβολους*, "not devils." (1 Tim. iii. 11.) And as they do the devil's work, so they

serve the devil's great design. "God is love," and therefore his design is to promote love in the world. The devil is a malignant and hateful spirit, and his work is to promote hatred, contention, and strife among men : and that is effectually done by this way.

(II.) *This is an injury to thyself* in these particulars :—

1. *Hereby thou dost contract guilt, the worst of all evils.*—A man's sin may injure another man ; but the greatest and the worst part of it falls upon his own head. "Wickedness," saith Seneca, "drinketh up the greatest part of its own poison." "He that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul." (Prov. viii. 36.) Thou woundest another man's fame ; but thou woundest thy own conscience : which of these is the worst ? He whom thou reproachest gets a blot before men ; and thou dost procure to thyself a blot before God. Thou accusest him before other men ; and thy conscience will accuse thee for it before God.

2. *Hereby thou dost expel or weaken that excellent grace of love, that necessary and fundamental grace, that sweet and amiable grace.*—As all virtue is a reward to itself, so is this in a more special manner. Infinite is the pleasure of the holy soul, in loving God, and loving all men, and loving enemies. O, this is a most delightful work ! And, on the contrary, hatred, and malice, and envy, as they are most sinful, so are they very miserable, works, and a great torment to him that hath them. While the mind of a wicked, malicious man is like "the raging sea," continually "casting up mire and dirt," and is its own tormentor ; the mind of a good man, exercising itself in love, is, as it were, "a sea of glass like unto crystal," calm and serene ; it enjoys God, and itself, and other men, yea, even a man's enemies : by this holy art a man may get comfort out of his enemies, whether they will or no.

3. *Hereby thou dost lay a foundation for thy own reproach.*—"Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged : and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." (Matt. vii. 1, 2.) Methinks this text should strike a terror into all persons who are guilty of this sin. The law of retaliation prescribed by God is frequently inflicted by him also : "He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy." (James ii. 13.) So that thou dost engage the great God against thee, to pour contempt upon thy name, and to make thee a reproach in the world.

(III.) *It is a great injury to the person whom thou dost censure and reproach ;* and that in these particulars :—

1. *Thou dost rob him of the best treasure which he hath in the world.*—"A good name is rather to be chosen than riches ;" (Prov. xxii. 1 ;) and, consequently, thou art more criminal than he that dieth by the hands of justice for taking away another man's goods : thou robbest him of that which thou art not able to give him ; thou robbest him of the most lasting good which he hath, and that which alone will abide after death. So that thy cruelty extends beyond the grave, and tends to this, —to make his name rot above ground, while his body rots in it. And this injury is the greater, because it cannot be prevented : there is no fence against this vice ; it is the arrow that flies by night, which no man can either observe or avoid, and it is an injury which can hardly be repaired. Breaches in men's estates may be made up, liberty lost may be recovered, a conscience wounded may be healed ; but a reputation can

hardly ever be restored. *Calumniare fortiter, aliquid adhærebit*, "Slander a man resolutely, and something, to be sure, will stick."

2. *Hereby thou dost disenable him from getting good, both as to his outward and us to his inward man.*

As to his *outward man* : who knows not the necessity of a good fame for the successful management of a man's worldly concerns? By one act of this sin thou mayest possibly undo a man and all his family.

It hinders him also from receiving *inward good* as to the state of his soul : at least he is not likely to get any good from thee. Whereas it is thy duty to "rebuke thy neighbour, and not to suffer sin to rest upon him;" (Lev. xix. 17;) this is the way to make that work altogether unsuccessful : it stops his ear against thy counsels, it hardens his heart against thy admonitions ; and many times such reproaches make men careless, and by degrees impudent ; and when once they have lost their reputation by thy calumnies, they are not careful to regain it, and, it may be, judge it impossible.

3. *Hereby thou dost hinder him from doing of good in the world.*—It is certain, a good name is of absolute necessity to make a man considerably serviceable in the world : when a man hath once lost this, the very good which he doeth is despised and disregarded. And this reason especially concerns you in the reproaching of three sorts of persons, which I do therefore in a special manner caution you against.

(1.) *In reproaching of magistrates, of kings, and persons in authority.*—Magistrates, though bad in themselves, yet are to be looked upon as great blessings ; and if we had the Persian experiment of absolute anarchy but for a few days, that every man might do that which seemed right in his own eyes, we should all be sensible of this truth. Now, the magistrate's reputation is the great supporter of that majesty and authority which he bears, and the magistrate's authority is the people's benefit. And therefore all persons should be tender in this particular ; they should not expose kings and magistrates to contempt and scorn, nor beget irreverence in people toward them. And therefore they ought to take heed, not only of divulging false reports concerning them, but even such as possibly may be true ; they must take heed of publishing the secret miscarriages of princes ; for this, as I told you, is a sin against any man, but much more against persons in authority.

(2.) *Against ministers.*—Their fame is most necessary for their usefulness in the word. And therefore, when a man defames a minister, beside that injury which is common to other men, he doth this peculiar mischief,—he endeavours to rob the world of all the good which such a person may do in it. I cannot but take this occasion to vent my great grief, and the scandal I justly take, at those ministers and Christians, who, if a man differ from them in some doctrines or rites of less moment, (though otherwise never so eminent,) make it their business to disparage and bespatter him, and think they do God good service, in blasting his reputation, representing him as a Papist, Socinian, time-server, &c. In the fear of God, consider the sinfulness of this practice. Whatsoever good such a person might do in convincing, converting, and building-up of souls, so far as this is hindered by thy means, the blood of such souls will fall upon thy head : nay, which

is more, although good should not be hindered by it, yet thou shalt answer for all that might have been hindered by it. And for this reason Constantine the Great did profess, that if he should know any secret miscarriage of a minister, he would cover it with a mantle.

(3.) *Against good men, or eminent professors of religion.*—Who, I confess, when they are bad, are the vilest of men; and when their sins are known and public, they ought to be used with most severity; and such shall have the hottest place in hell who use religion as a cloak for their villainies: yet, when the sins of such persons are secret and scarce known, we should take heed of spreading of them. “Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon,” not for their sakes, but for the sake of religion, which infinitely suffers by their misdemeanours, and the reproaches which arise from them.

(IV.) *This is a great injury to other men, in these particulars:—*

1. *Thou corruptest others by thy example.*—Especially ministers and eminent professors of religion,—they should, above all others, avoid this sin, because their actions are precedential. They that will not follow your counsel, will imitate your example; and though our Saviour hath cautioned us concerning the Pharisees, “What they bid or teach you, observe and do; but do not after their works;” (Matt. xxiii. 3;) yet, in spite of all that Christ hath said, men will take a contrary course: they will not hear your sermons, but will diligently attend to your conversations. O consider this: every time another hears thee censuring and reproaching thy neighbour, thou dost in effect preach and persuade him to this practice; thou settest a copy which other men may write after, when thou art gone into another world; and no man knows how far the contagion of such an evil example may spread, nor how great a fire a little spark may kindle.

2. *Thou art a disturber of human society, an incendiary in the place where thou dwellest.*—The peace and tranquillity of cities and kingdoms are often disturbed by this means. “Whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even from your lusts that war in your members?” (James iv. 1.) They do not come from men’s lusts as they remain in their own hearts, for so they are secret and unknown to the world; but as they break out, first in their lips, and then in their hands.

3. *Thou art a great enemy to the church of God, however thou mayest seem to thyself or others a zealous friend of it.*—It is not easy for any man to conceive the great mischief which these censures and reproaches produce in the church: they break the peace of it, and fill it with sharp contentions and divisions; yea, they strike at the being of it. You know, “a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand:” they do their part to pull-down the glorious building of the church, so as one stone should not be left upon another. They eclipse the glory of the church, which doth not consist in external splendour, in riches and ornaments, but in love, peace, and unity among themselves. This was Jerusalem’s beauty, that it was “built as a city that is compact together.” (Psalm cxxii. 3.) This hinders the growth and progress of the church and of religion. When persons professing religion allow themselves in such sins which are not only offensive to God, but also odious in the world,

it fills the minds of men with powerful and invincible prejudices against religious men, and against religion itself for their sakes. I must tell you, if the professors of religion would learn the government of their tongues, and the right ordering of their conversations, it would be the likeliest means to propagate religion in the world. And, Christians, if ever you would do this, do it now; never was it more necessary or seasonable to wipe-off those stains and blemishes which at this day lie upon religion for the neglect of this duty by the professors of it. And thrice blessed are all you that contribute to so glorious a work as the restoration of that beauty and glory which religion once had in some of our remembrance. But when the tongues of Christians are exercised in this sinful practice, beside the particular injury to the person reproached, it hinders the conversion and salvation of others. Consider, I beseech you, a little, the greatness of this sin. You think it a great crime (and so it was) in Elymas the sorcerer, who, when Sergius Paulus called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired them to preach to him the word of God, "withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith." (Acts xiii. 8.) He did this by his words, and thou doest it by thy actions. Thou doest the devil's work in stealing the seed of the word of God out of men's hearts, and making it unfruitful. These practices beget in men a mean esteem and contempt of God's word, when they see how little good it doeth to others, and how little power it hath with you that profess it.

Before I come to the application, two questions are to be answered:—

QUESTION I. "May I not speak evil of another person when it is true?"

1. *A man may be faulty in so doing.*—The real secret faults of your neighbour, as I told you, you ought not unnecessarily to publish. And suppose there be no untruth nor injustice in it; yet there is uncharitableness and unkindness in it; and that is a sin. Thou wouldst not have all truth said concerning thyself, nor all thy real faults publicly traduced. "Out of thy own mouth will God judge thee, O thou wicked servant!" Yea, thy own tongue and conscience shall another day condemn thee.

2. *You may speak evil of another person when necessity requires it.*—It may be necessary sometimes for his good; and so you may speak evil of him unto those that can help it; as a man may acquaint parents with the miscarriages of their children, in order to their amendment. Thus Joseph brought to his father the evil report of his brethren. (Gen. xxvii. 2.) Sometimes this may be necessary for the caution of others; as, if I see a man ready to enter into intimate friendship and acquaintance with a person whom I know to be highly vicious and dangerous, I may in such a case caution him against it; for, certainly, if charity commands me, when my neighbour's ox is ready to fall into a pit, to do my endeavour to prevent it, much more am I obliged to prevent the ruin of my brother's soul, when I see him so near destruction. But for a man to do this unnecessarily and unprofitably,—this is the sin I have been speaking of.

3. *If you will speak evil of other persons, do it in the right method.*—Christ hath given us an excellent rule: "If thy brother shall trespass

against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone : if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, take with thee one or two more. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church." (Matt. xviii. 15, 17.) But if men will be preposterous, and will not follow Christ's order, but, instead of private admonishing, will publish men's faults to others, herein they make themselves transgressors.

4. *In doubtful cases, silence is the safest way.*—It is rarely men's duty to speak evil of men ; and when it is not their duty to speak, it is not their sin to be silent. It is seldom that any [one] suffers by my silence, or concealment of his fault ; but great hazards are run, and many persons commonly are made sufferers, by my publication. Now, as charity commands me to pass the most favourable judgment, so wisdom obligeth me to choose the safest course.

QUESTION II. "But what, if that man I speak against be an enemy to God and his people ? May not I in that case speak evil of him ? Doth not that zeal I owe to God engage me to speak evil of such a man as far as I can with truth ?"

This, I believe, is that which induceth many well-meaning persons to this sinful practice of detracting from divers worthy persons, ministers, and others, as supposing them to be enemies to God and to his ways ; and so they think their reproaching and censuring of such persons is nothing but zeal for God.

For answer to this, consider,

1. *There is abundance of sinful zeal in the world and in the church.*—Therefore the apostle gives us a caution : "It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing." (Gal. iv. 18.) Otherwise we know it was from zeal that Paul persecuted the church. (Phil. iii. 6.) Zeal, indeed, is an excellent grace in itself ; but nothing [is] more frequently both pretended where it is not, (and where envy, interest, or malice lie at the bottom,) and abused where it is.

2. *True zeal hath an equal respect to all God's commands, and especially to those that are most plain and most considerable.*—It is at least doubtful, whether the man thou traducest be an enemy to God and his ways ; sure I am, it is so with some ministers and Christians that are highly censured and reproached by those that differ from them ; and it were great impudence to deny it : but this is a certain truth and evident duty : "Thou shalt not take up an evil reproach against thy neighbour."

3. *Consider how easy a mistake is in this case, and how dangerous.*—Peradventure he whom thou callest an enemy to God, will, upon inquiry, be found a friend of God and his ways. But what dost thou mean by "the ways of God ?" Possibly thy own ways or party that thou art engaged in : take heed of that. If you would judge aright, you must distinguish between the circumstantials and the essentials of the ways of God. Suppose a man be an enemy to thy party, and thy way and manner of religious worship and government ; yea, let us suppose that thine is indeed the way of God, wherein yet thou mayest be mistaken ; if, now, this man be an able and zealous assertor of the substantial and fundamental truths of God and ways of holiness, and this be attended

with a holy and exemplary life, who dare say that this man is an enemy to God and his ways? O my soul, come not into the secrets of such persons!

4. *You must not go out of God's way to meet with God's enemies.*—If any man be really an enemy of God and of his truths and ways, I do not persuade you to comply with him, or by sinful silence to betray the cause of God; only let me entreat you to do God's work in God's way: you may apply yourselves to him, and endeavour to convince him; you may speak or write against his doctrine, provided you do it with modesty and moderation, and not with that virulence and venom wherewith too many books are now leavened. But, for this way of detraction and reproach, it is a dishonourable and disingenuous way, it is a sinful and disorderly way, it is an unprofitable and ineffectual way, and no way suitable either to the nature of God whom you serve, or to the rule and example of our blessed Saviour, or to the great principle of love and charity, or to that end which you are to aim-at in all things,—the honour of God, and the good of other men.

III. Now I come to the APPLICATION.

USES.

USE I. *Lamentation for the gross neglect of this duty, or the frequent commission of this sin.*—What tears are sufficient to bewail it? How thick do censures and reproaches fly in all places, at all tables, in all conventions! And this were the more tolerable, if it were only the fault of ungodly men, of strangers and enemies to religion; for so saith the proverb, "Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked." When a man's heart is full of hell, it is not unreasonable to expect that his tongue should be "set on fire of hell;" and it is no wonder to hear such persons reproach good men, yea, even for their goodness. But, alas! the disease doth not rest here: this plague is not only among the Egyptians, but [among the] Israelites too. It is very doleful to consider, how professors sharpen their tongues like swords against professors; and one good man censures and reproaches another, and one minister traduceth another; and who can say, "I am clean from this sin?" O that I could move your pity in this case! For the Lord's sake, pity yourselves, and do not pollute and wound your consciences with this crime. Pity your brethren: let it suffice that godly ministers and Christians are loaded with reproaches by wicked men; there is no need that you should combine with them in this diabolical work; you should support and strengthen their hands against the reproaches of the ungodly world, and not add affliction to the afflicted. O pity the world, and pity the church which Christ hath purchased with his own blood, which, methinks, bespeaks you in those words: "Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me." (Job xix. 21.) Pity the mad and miserable world, and help it against this sin; stop the bloody issue, restrain this wicked practice amongst men as much as possibly you can, and lament it before God; and for what you cannot do yourselves, give God no rest until he shall please to work a cure.

USE II. CAUTION. *Take heed you be not found guilty of this sin.*

—Wherein any of us have been guilty, let us be truly and thoroughly humbled for it; and for the future let us make conscience of abstaining from it. I will suppose what I have said may be sufficient for arguments to convince and for motives to persuade you; and therefore I shall only give you some directions in order to the practice of this duty: and, to assist you against this sin,

DIRECTION I. *Avoid the causes of this sin.*—This is the most natural and regular way to cure a disease, by taking away the cause of it. Particularly take heed of these things as the causes of this sin:—

1. *Take heed of uncharitableness in all its kinds and degrees, malice, envy, hatred.*—Where these diseases are in the heart, they will break-out at the lips. “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” (Matt. xii. 34.)

2. *Take heed of loquacity and multitude of words.*—A man need not seek far for perpetual motion; he may find it in some persons’ restless and incessant tongues. Now, persons of this temper will not want matter of discourse, and therefore pick-up and spread-abroad all sorts of censures and reproaches against others, not so much out of malice against them, as for their own diversion and ease, that their tongues may not want exercise. Take heed of this: it is in itself a sin, an abuse of the tongue, a wasting of time, a reproach to thyself; it makes thee cheap and mean and contemptible in the eyes of others, and especially of wise and good men; and it is also the cause of many other sins.

3. *Take heed of pragmatism, which is, when men are inquisitive and busy about other men’s matters.*—A sin often reprov’d in scripture: “For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all.” (2 Thess. iii. 11.) “Let none of you suffer as an evil-doer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters.” (1 Peter iv. 15.) You may observe how Christ reproveth this in his own dear apostle: “Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.” (John xxi. 21, 22.) As if he had said, “Mind you your own business; do not busy your head about other men.”

4. *Take heed of man-pleasing.*—There are many whose great employment and business it is to spread evil reports concerning others, who are therefore called “tale-bearers;” and this they do to please the humours of persons with whom they converse, unto whom they know such discourse is most acceptable. And thus many persons make themselves guilty in hearing reproaches, and not checking them, because they will comply with the company, they will not displease nor offend their friends. Take heed of this, and remember that severe sentence of the apostle: “If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.” (Gal. i. 10.) He that pleaseth other men, so as to neglect any duty, or to commit any sin, whatsoever he pretends, he is not the servant of Christ.

DIRECT. II. *Learn the government of your tongues.*—Consider the necessity of it. The apostle James lays the stress of all religion upon it: “If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his

tongue, this man's religion is vain." (James i. 26.) And if this be true, I am sure there are many high professors that must be blotted out of the saints' calendar. Consider also the easiness of this government of the tongue. Men have more command of their tongues, and of their outward members, than they have of their inward motions, concupiscences, and passions. If tongues be unruly, God and nature have given you a bridle to restrain them, the *ἔρκος ὀδόντων*, the "fence of the teeth," as the poet speaks.

DIRECT. III. *Learn distrust of reports.*—It is a good rule, *Μεμνησο ἀπιστίαν*, "Learn to disbelieve." Fame hath lost its reputation long since; and I do not know any thing which it hath done in our age to regain it; and therefore it ought not be credited. How few reports are there in any kind, which, when they come to be examined, we do not find to be false! For my part, I reckon, if I believe one report in twenty, I make a very liberal allowance. And especially distrust reproaches and evil reports, because these spread fastest, as being grateful to most persons, who suppose their own reputation never so well grounded as when it is built upon the ruins of other men's.

DIRECT. IV. *Reproach no man for that which you do not thoroughly understand.*—This, I am sure, is highly reasonable; and he that doeth otherwise is altogether inexcusable, because he runs an infinite hazard, lest, while he opposeth a man, he be found to fight against God. And truly, if this rule were practised, some kinds of reproaches would be rare in the world: for persons of true and clear understanding are not apt to reproach others for different opinions in lesser matters; they consider the weakness of human nature, and the necessity of mutual forbearance. It is the weaker sort that are here, as in other things, most querulous; and generally where there is least light there is most heat. Those persons by whose censures and reproaches the church of God among us is most miserably torn and wasted, are generally the more ignorant part of Christians. How many are there that are full of rage one against another for being either for a form of prayer or against it, either for the ceremonies or against them, that never searched into the state of the controversy, and never took pains to examine the arguments on both sides, which in all reason they ought to have done, or else at least to have restrained their tongues from such unreasonable and sinful censures and reproaches! These, I say, are the persons that are most guilty, nay, upon the matter, the only guilty persons, except such whom base lust and interest doth corrupt and work to these animosities.

DIRECT. V. *Converse much with yourselves.*—It is want of business at home in men's own hearts, that makes them ramble so much abroad, and rake into the lives of others. Study yourselves more, and other men less. Did you search your own hearts and lives, you would find so much cause of self-judging and self-abhorring, that you would have little cause to despise others, and much cause of compassion toward others.

DIRECT. VI. *Judge of others as you would do of yourselves and your own actions.*—It is worth our consideration, what a great difference there is between the judgment men pass upon themselves, and [upon] other

men. As for themselves, all their errors are but small mistakes; and all their sins against God, however attended with ugly circumstances of light, of consent of the will, custom, and allowance, yet they are but sins of infirmity, if themselves may be judges in their own cause. Their injuries to men are but small and trivial offences; and they do indeed expect both from God and man a pardon, of course, which if they have not, they judge God to be harsh and severe, men to be cruel and implacable. But when they come to pass judgment upon other men, the tables are turned, some mistakes are damnable delusions, and all their sins against God, which they can observe, are evidences of a naughty heart, and inconsistent with grace; and the offences of others against them are inexcusable and intolerable, great affronts and indignities; whereas, on the contrary, thou shouldst, as it was said of a great man, "Be severe to thyself, and candid to others;" because thou knowest more wickedness by thyself, and more aggravation of thy own sins, than of all the sins that are in the world. But at least all the reason and justice in the world requires this, that thou shouldst weigh thyself and others in the same balance, that thou shouldst try thy own and their actions by the same touchstone; and more need not be done. Thou who art so prone to flatter thyself, wouldest certainly be more indulgent to other men, and pass a more favourable construction upon their actions.

SERMON XXII.

BY THE REV. RICHARD BAXTER.

WHAT LIGHT MUST SHINE IN OUR WORKS?

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.—Matthew v. 16.

THE work designed for this time is, to resolve this practical case: What is that light which must shine before men, in the works of Christ's disciples, for the glorifying of God? But the explication of the text is therein included.

The Sun of Righteousness, Jesus Christ, who "giveth light to every one that cometh into the world," (or, "coming into the world, giveth light to all,") from his fulness hath bespangled the inferior heavens,—his church, with many fulgent stars, appointed freely to communicate the heavenly light which they had freely received. In his corporal presence he prepared them; and his Spirit having moved on the darkened world, he irresistibly said, at the descent of the Holy Ghost, "Let there be light; and there was light;" beginning at Jerusalem, but not fixed to any determinate place. But what he gave them necessarily and antecedently, they were to exercise as free agents, by a command more resistible, which here he gives them. Having told them their office, and given them their names, verse 14: "Ye are the lights of the world;" he next

tells them how they must be useful. They must be conspicuous, 1. Because the church where they are placed is like "a city on a hill," which "cannot be hid." 2. Because it is the end of Him that lighteth them and sets them up, not to put them under a bushel, but on a candlestick, to give light to all his house. And therefore no men's silencing or prohibitions, no difficulties or sufferings, will excuse them from their duty: *lights* they are, and *shine* they must. But lest they should think that it is preaching only which he meaneth, he here, commanding them their duty, lets them know, that the splendour of Christianity is in works as well as words; and thereby giveth us cause to think, that it is all his disciples or Christians that he speaketh to, though first and eminently to the apostles and teachers of the world.

1. By "light," he meaneth both the illuminating knowledge which must be uttered by words, and the splendour or glory of holiness which must be refulgent in their lives.

2. He calls it "*your* light," as being their own in his graces as the subjects, and their own in exercise as the actors; though both under him.

3. It must "shine;" that is, appear in its splendour, for the illumination and conviction of the world.

4. It must "*so* shine" as is fittest to attain these ends: it is not every twinkling that will answer their great obligations.

5. It must be "before men;" that is, both those within, and especially those without, the church, that are but men.

6. It must be a light shining in "good works," and their own works. For that is the grand difference between the disciples of Christ and others. He teacheth them "not only to *know and talk well*, but to *do well*;" and he maketh men such as he teacheth them to be. *Non magna loquimur, sed vivimus*, said Tertullian.

7. "That men may see," doth signify both the necessary refulgent quality of their works, and also the end of God and them.

8. But it is not hypocritical ostentation of what they are not, nor of what they are and have, as for their own glory, to be honoured and praised of men; but for the glorifying of God, who is called "their Father," to show their obligation to him, and to encourage them by the honour and comfort of their relation, and to show why their works will tend to the glorifying of God;—even because they are so nearly related to him. And he is said to be "in heaven," because *there* he appeareth operatively in his glory to the beautifying of holy spirits; as the soul is said to be in the head,—and we look a man in the face when we talk to him, as if *there* principally we saw the man,—because it is in the head that it operateth by reason. So much of the meaning of the words.

Many doctrines the text affordeth us: as,—

1. Christ's disciples are the lights of the world, both in the splendour of wisdom and holiness.

2. Their most eminent and convincing splendour is in their good works.

3. Their light and good works are their own, though by the grace of Christ; and it is no injury to Christ, or his righteousness or grace, to say that they are their own.

4. The splendour of Christians in their good works must be such as may be seen of men.

5. The glorifying of God must be the end of our good works, and of their appearance unto men.

6. As bad as corrupted nature is, there is yet something in mankind which tendeth to the approving of the good works of Christians, and to their glorifying God thereupon.

7. God is glorified even by common men, when they approve of the glory of holiness in believers: it is not only by saints that God is glorified.

8. As contrary as holiness is to corrupted nature, there is such resplendent goodness in true Christians' works, which common men may glorify God for; and so somewhat in them and in Christianity which hath such agreeableness as may tend to further good.

9. The excellency and splendour of the good works of Christians, especially teachers, is a grand means, ordained by God himself for the conviction of the world and the glorifying of God.

But the resolving the question, *What the splendour of these works must be*, is my present undertaken task. God is not glorified by our adding to him, but by our receiving from him; not by our making him greater or better or happier than he is, but by owning him, loving him, and declaring him as he is, that we and others may thereby be wise and good and happy. He is his own glory and ours; and by his own light only we must know both him and all things. We are not called to bring our candle to show the world that there is a sun; but, to persuade them into its light, to open the windows and curtains, to disperse the clouds, and to open the eyes of blinded sinners.

I. The way of doing this and glorifying God, is in the order following:—

1. The first thing that our works must show is, *their own goodness*.—They can never prove the cause good, till it is clear that they are good themselves. Therefore, doubtless, Christ here intendeth, that we must abound especially in those good works which the world is capable of knowing to be good, and not only in those which none but Christians themselves approve. If believers and unbelievers agreed in no common principles, we were not capable of preaching to unbelievers, nor convincing them, nor of conversing with them. There are many excellent things which nature doth approve, and which both parties are agreed to be good. By the advantage of these, as granted principles, we must convince them of the conclusions which they yet deny; and not, as the scandalous Christian, so absurdly affect singularity as to make light of all good which is taken for good by unbelievers, and to seek for eminency in nothing but what the world thinks evil. There is a glory in some good works which all do honour, and which manifesteth itself.

2. And then the goodness of the work doth manifest *the goodness of the doer*.—Every man's work is so far his own, that he is related to it and by it, either as laudable or as culpable; as it is, Gal. vi. 4, 5: "Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden." God himself will "judge men according to their works;" and so

will men ; and so must we (much) do by ourselves ; for it is the rightest judging which is likest God's. This subordinate honour God grants to his servants. If their works were not an honour to them, as the next agents, they could be none to him in their morality, as man's acts ; though they might, as acts in general, ordered to good by his own goodness. If God's natural works of creation,—sun, and moon, and earth, &c., were not praiseworthy in themselves, God would not be praised for them as their Maker. There are works that God is said to be dishonoured by. (Rom. ii. 23, 24.) And what are they, but such as are really bad, and a dishonour to the authors? It is so far from being true that no praise or honour or comfort from good works is to be given to man, that God himself is not likely else to be honoured by them as morally good, if the actors be not honoured by them. The world must first be convinced that Christians are far better than other men, and the "righteous more excellent than his neighbour," before they will glorify God as the author of their goodness. In God's own judgment, "Well done," is the first word ; and, "Good and faithful servant," is the second ; and, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord," is the third.

Two sorts of scandalous persons rob God of his honour in his saints :—

(1.) Those that, professing Christianity, live wickedly, or at least no better than other men ; whose lives tell the world that Christians are but such as they.

(2.) Those that slander and belie true believers, and would hide their goodness, and make them odious to the world.

As for them that say only, *that we have no righteousness in ourselves by which we can be justified*, I shall not differ with them, if they do but grant *that all shall be judged according to their works*, and that he that is accused as an infidel, impenitent, a hypocrite, or an unregenerate, ungodly person, must against that accusation be justified by his own faith, repentance, sincerity, and holiness, or be unjustified for ever.

3. The next thing to the work and the person that is hereby honoured, is *the Christian religion itself, with the Spirit's operations on the souls of Christians*.—The outward doctrine and example of Christ, who *teacheth* his servants to be better than the world ; and the inward sanctification of the Spirit, which *maketh* them better. The air and food are commended which make men healthy, and the medicines are praised which cure the disease : *that* is accounted good, as a means and cause, *which* doeth good, and which maketh men good. If Christians were more commonly and notoriously much better than all other men, the world would believe that the gospel and the Christian religion were the best. But when scandalous Christians appear as bad or worse than infidels, the world thinks that their religion is as bad or worse than theirs.

4. The next ascent of honour is to *the Maker or Author of our religion*.—The world will see that He is good that maketh so good a law and gospel, and that maketh all his true disciples so much to excel all other men. And here the first honour will be to the Holy Spirit, who reneweth souls, and maketh them holy : and the next will be to the Son, our Saviour, who giveth us both the word and Spirit : and the highest or ultimate glory will be to God the Father, who giveth us both his Son and

his Spirit. And thus honour ascendeth to the Highest by these steps, and the world beginneth at that which is nearest to them; and reason will proceed by these degrees: 1. The excellent holy lives of Christians are better than other men's: 2. Therefore Christians are better than other men: 3. Therefore their religion is the best, or the word and work which make them such: 4. Therefore the Spirit is good, who makes them good; the Saviour is good, who giveth them that word and Spirit; and God, the Fountain of all, even the Father of mercies, is the Fountain of all good, and consequently the End of all. And thus God is known and glorified by our works.

II. The works which thus glorify him, are first to be described in general, and then enumerated in special.

First. IN GENERAL. (I.) They must be such as make or show men to be in their places like to God: they must be such as represent the particular perfections of God, which are called his communicable attributes; and such as declare his relations to us; and such as declare his attributes, as so related, and his works.

As, 1. We must so live, that men may see that indeed we take not ourselves to be our own, but God to be our absolute Owner; and that it is not ourselves, but he, that must of right dispose both of us and ours; and that we willingly stand to his disposal. "Ye are not your own." (1 Cor. vi. 19.)

2. We must so live as may declare that we are not lawless, nor the mere servants of men, but the resolved subjects of God, the Sovereign King of all; and that really we are ruled by his laws and will, and not by our own lusts or wills, nor by the wills of any, but as under him; and that we fear not any hurt to the flesh, or them that can but kill the body, in comparison of that "one Lawgiver" and Judge "who is able to save or to destroy" for ever; (Luke xii. 4; James iv. 12; 1 Cor. vii. 23;) and that we are moved more by his promises, than by all that mortal men can give us; and trust wholly to the heavenly reward of glory, and not to the transitory prosperity of this world, believing that God is true and just, and none of his word shall ever fail. 1 Peter i. 3: We are "begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, to an inheritance incorruptible," &c.

3. We must so live as may declare that God is our grand Benefactor, from whom we have all the good that ever we received, and from whom we hope for all that ever we shall possess; and that he is infinitely good, the Original and End of all created good. We must live as those that believe that we are made for God, even to glorify him, and please his blessed will, not by making him beholden to us, but by a willing receiving of his mercies, and a willing improvement of them to our own felicity; and as those that believe that his "love is better than life" itself, and that to know him, and love him, and glorify him for ever, is the ultimate end and happiness of man. (Psalm iv. 7, 8; lxiii. 3; lxxiii. 25, 26, 28; Phil. iii. 7, 8; Matt. vi. 33; 1 Peter i. 5—9; 2 Cor. v. 1.)

(II.) And we must so live in relation to Christ and to his Spirit, as may declare to the world that the mercy of the Father is conveyed to us by the Son, and the grace of the Father and Son by the Spirit; and what wonders of wisdom, goodness and power, truth and justice, holiness and

mercy, are manifested in Christ and his mediation to mankind. (Gal. ii. 20; Eph. iii. 16, 17; Phil. i. 20, 21; John xvii. 10.)

(III.) In sum: the works that glorify God must have these three parts of his likeness upon them:—

1. They must be *works of light*.—Like the light which from “the Father of lights” doth illuminate us. Christians must be much wiser than the men of the world in holy, though not in worldly, things. (Col. i. 9. 28; iii. 16.) Darkness is the state of Satan’s kingdom, and ignorant Christians are scandalous and a dishonour to Christ; not those that are ignorant of unnecessary, unprofitable, or unrevealed things, but those that are ignorant of revealed, necessary, saving truths. (1 Cor. iii. 2; Heb. v. 11, 12.)

2. They must be *works of holy love to God and man*.—Which show that God and goodness have our hearts, and that we would imitate God in doing good to all according to our places and power. (Gal. vi. 10; Rom. xiii. 8—10.)

3. They must be *works of life and power*.—Where serious diligence expresseth zeal, and we set ourselves no lower bounds than with all our heart and mind and might. (2 Tim. i. 7; Rom. xii. 11.) Thus much for the general description of them.

Secondly. The description of a Christian whose works glorify God, according to scripture and experience, may be given you in the following PARTICULARS:—

(I.) *He is one that placeth his saving religion in the practical knowledge of “the only true God, and Jesus Christ,” the Saviour whom he hath sent.* (John xvii. 3.)—He puts no limits to his endeavours after useful knowledge, but what God hath put by his word or providence. He would abound in holy wisdom, and thinks it worth his greatest diligence, and is still upon the increasing hand. He hath so much knowledge of the lesser matters of religion, as to keep him from scandalous miscarriages about them; but it is the knowledge of God, and of a crucified and glorified Christ, in which he taketh wisdom to consist. (John xvii. 3; 1 Cor. ii. 2.) This is the light in which he hath his daily conversation; the light which governeth his will and practice; which feedeth his meditations, his prayers, and his discourse; which repelleth his temptations, which maintaineth his hope, and is his daily work of recreation, his food and feast.

For men will now perceive,

1. That *his religion is not a matter of names and words and trifling controversies*, but hath the greatest and most excellent subject in the world; and as nature teacheth all to reverence God, so it will tell them, that they must reverence that religion; that conversation, and that person, who is most divine, and where the most of God appeareth.

2. And they will see that *his religion consisteth not in uncertainties*, which no man can be sure of, when he hath done his best; but in things so sure as none should doubt of: which will easily bring men over to consent, and shame or silence contradictors.

3. And then they will see that it is *a religion which all sober persons are united in*, and doth not lose its authority or reverence by the divisions, wranglings, and digladiations of sects of different minds; for God

is denied by no sober man, nor the essentials of Christianity by any true Christian.

4. And men will see that our *religion is no matter of indifferency*, which one may do well enough without; but of absolute necessity to salvation, and that which man was made and redeemed for: and a religion of the greatest subject, the greatest certainty, the greatest consent, and the greatest necessity, will honour itself and its Author in the world, if it be rightly represented in the lives of them that do profess it. But when men's over-doing shall pretend that all this is too little, and shall seek to raise it, as to more perfection, by their own inventions, or uncertain opinions in doctrine, worship, church-discipline, or practice, they presently cast it as a foot-ball before the boys in the streets, and make it a matter of doubtful, endless disputations, of multiplied sects, of pernicious contentions, and cruel persecutions: and then the reverence and glory of it is gone; and every philosopher will vie with it in subtilty, and every stranger will presume to censure it, if not to blaspheme it, and deride it. And thus over-doers are the scandals of the world.

(II.) The Christian that will glorify God and his profession, must be conscionable in the smallest matters; but *he must ever describe and open the nature of his religion as consisting in great and certain things, and not talk too much of smaller matters, as if it were those that men were to be saved by.*—Tell men of the necessity of believing, fearing, obeying, trusting, and loving God, and of coming to him by Jesus Christ, the great Mediator between God and man; tell them of the intrinsic evil of sin, and of God's justice, and of man's corruption, and of the nature and excellency of holiness, and of the necessity of being new-born of the Holy Spirit, and of mortifying the desires and deeds of the flesh; and tell them of judgment, heaven, and hell, especially the certainty and excellency of the everlasting promised glory. Persuade them to believe all this, to think much of all this, and to be true to what they know, and to make it the work of life to be always prepared for death. Let this be your discourse with sinners, (as I told you, in the first character, it must be your own religion,) and then men will perceive that religion is a matter that doth indeed concern them, and that they are indeed great and necessary things in which you differ from ungodly men. But the scandalous Christian talketh most of external church-orders and forms and opinions and parties, and thereby maketh the ignorant believe that the difference is but that one will sit, when the other kneeleth; and one will pray by the book, and the other without book; and one is for *this* church-government, and another for *that*; and one for praying in white, and the other in black. And talking too much of such things as these deceiveth the hearers: some it maketh formal hypocrites, who take up this for their religion; and the rest it hardeneth, and maketh them think that such people are only more humorous and self-conceited and giddy and factious than others, but no whit better.

(III.) *The genuine Christian hath an humble and cautelous understanding.*—Sensible, when he knoweth most, how little he knoweth, and how much he is still unacquainted with, in the great mysterious matters of God. His ignorance is his daily grief and burden, and he is still longing and looking for some clearer light; not a new word of revelation

from God, but a clearer understanding of his word. He knoweth how weak and slippery man's understanding is, and he is humbly conscious of the darkness of his own. Therefore he is not conceitedly wise, nor a boaster of his knowledge; but saith, as Paul, 1 Cor. viii. 2, "He that thinketh that he knoweth any thing," that is, is proudly conceited of his own knowledge, "knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know." And hence it is that though he daily grow in the firmer apprehension of necessary truths, yet he is never confident and peremptory about uncertain, doubtful things; and therefore he is not apt to be quarrelsome and contentious, nor yet censorious, against those that differ from him in matters of no greater moment. And hence it is that he runneth not into sects, nor burneth with the feverish dividing zeal, nor yet is scandalously mutable in his opinions; because, as one that is conscious of his ignorance, he doth not rashly receive things which he understands not, but suspendeth his judgment, till evidence make him fit to judge; and joineth with neither of the contending parties, till he is sure, or know indeed, which of them is right. And thus he avoideth that dishonouring of religion which the scandalous Christian is wofully guilty of, who, with an unhumbed understanding, groweth confident upon quick and insufficient information, and judgeth, before he understandeth, the case, and before he hath heard or read and considered what on both sides may be said, and what is necessary to a true understanding; and thus, either by audacious prating of what he never understood, or reviling and censuring men wiser than himself, or by making himself a judge where he hath need to be many years a learner, or making a religion of his own mistakes, and setting-up dividing sects to propagate them, or else by shameful mutability and unsettledness, he becometh a scandal to harden unbelievers, and a disease to the church, and a shame to his profession. Read James iii. Conceited wisdom kindleth a contentious zeal, and is not of God, but from beneath. (Verses 15—17.)

(IV.) The Christian who glorifieth God by his religion, is *one that so liveth that men may perceive that his carnal interest is not the end and ruler of his life; but that God is his end, and to please him is his work and his reward.*—In which he is comforted, though the flesh and world be never so much displeased; and that the perfect light and love of God in the unseen glory of another life is the satisfying sum of all his hopes, for which all the world must be forsaken. To talk much of heaven, and to be as much and as eager for the world as others, is the way by which the scandalous hypocrite doth bring religion into contempt. It is no high nor very honourable work, to *talk* of the vanity of the world, but to *live* above it, and to be out of the power of it; nor is it any great matter to speak honourably of heaven, but to live as believing seekers of it, and as those that have there their treasure and their hearts, (Matt. vi. 20, 21,) and are comforted more by the hopes of the life to come, than by all their possessions or pleasures in the world. If we will glorify God, our lives must persuade men that he will certainly be our everlasting portion, and the sure and plentiful "rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Heb. xi. 6.) It is much of the use of a true Christian's life to convince unbelievers that there is a heaven for saints; and

the scandalous worldling persuadeth them that there is none. (Matt. v. 3, 11, 12; Phil. iii. 20, 21; Col. iii. 1—5.)

(V.) Therefore it glorifieth God and our religion, *when Christians live in greater joy, or at least greater contentedness and peace, than other men.*—When they can answer all the crosses in the world sufficiently with this,—that God is their God, and his love shall be their endless joy; (Psalm lxxiii. 1; lxxiii. 25, 26;) and when they can live “by faith, not by sight,” (2 Cor. v. 7,) and can “rejoice in hope of the glory of God,” (Rom. v. 2, 3, 5,) and can comfort themselves and one another with this, that they shall “for ever be with the Lord,” (1 Thess. iv. 17, 18,) and can trust him to the death who hath said, “I will never fail thee, nor forsake thee.” (Heb. xiii. 5.) If you would have other men honour your God and your religion, and desire to be such as you, you must really show them that you are on safer grounds and in a happier state than they. And *that* you will hardly do, if you be not more comfortable than they, or at least settled in more peace and contentedness of mind, as those that have a certain cure for the fears of death, and the danger that ungodly men are in of the revenging justice of the final Judge.

I confess, it is possible for trembling, troubled, and distressed Christians to be saved. But O, that they knew what a scandal they are to unbelievers, and what a dishonour to God, whom their lives should glorify! What man will fall in love with terrors and unquietness of mind? If you would glorify God by your fears and tears, they must be such as are accompanied with faith and hope; and you must not only show men what would make you happy *if* you could obtain it, but also that it is attainable. Happiness is every man’s desire; and none will come to Christ, unless they believe that it tendeth to their happiness. They take up with the present pleasures of the flesh, because they have no satisfying apprehensions of any better; and if no man show them the first-fruits of any better here, they will hardly believe that they may have better hereafter. It is too hard a talk to put a poor drunkard, fornicator, or a proud and covetous worldling on, to believe that a poor, complaining, comfortless Christian is happier than he, and that so sad and unquiet a life must be preferred before all his temporal contentments and delights. You must show him better, or the signs and fruits of better, before he will part with what he hath. You must show him the bunch of grapes, if you will have him go for the Land of Promise, when he is told of giants that must be overcome. And, O what a blessing is reserved for every Caleb and Joshua, that encourage souls and glorify the promise! and how much do dejected discouragers of sinners dishonour God and displease him! I have known some ungodly men, when they have seen believers rejoicing in God, and triumphantly passing through sufferings in the joyful hopes of glory, to sigh and say, “Would I were such an one,” or “in his case:” but I have seldom heard any say so of a person that is still sad, or crying, or troubling themselves and others with their scruples, crosses, or discontents; unless it be in respect to their blameless living; perhaps, condoling them, they may say, “Would I had no more sin to trouble me than you have.” I confess that some excellent Christians do show no great mirth in the way of their conversation, either because they are of a grave and silent temper, or taken up with severe studies and contempla-

tions, or hindered by bodily pains or weakness; but yet their grave and sober comforts, their peace of conscience, and settled hopes, and trust in God, delivering them from the terrors of death and hell, may convince an unbeliever that this is a far better state than the mirth and laughter of fools in the house of feasting, and in the vanities of a short prosperity. The grave and solid peace and comfort of those that have made their calling and election sure, is more convincing than a lighter kind of mirth. (John xvi. 22.)

(VI.) *The dominion of love in the hearts of Christians, appearing in all the course of their lives, doth much glorify God and their religion.*—I mean a common hearty love to all men, and a special love to holy men, according to their various degrees of loveliness. Love is a thing so agreeable to right reason, and to sociable nature, and to the common interest of all mankind, that all men commend it; and they that have it not for others, would have it from others. Who is it that loveth not to be loved? And who is it that loveth not the man that he is convinced loveth him, better than him that hateth him, or regardeth him not? And do you think that the same course, which maketh men hate yourselves, is like to make them love your religion? Love is the powerful conqueror of the world. By it God conquereth the enmity of man, and reconcileth to himself even malignant sinners; and by it he hath taught us to conquer all the tribulations and persecutions by which the world would separate us from his love; yea, and to be “more than conquerors through Him that loved us,” and thereby did kindle in us our reflecting love; (Rom. viii. 34—38;) and by it he hath instructed us to go on to conquer both *his* enemies and *our own*; yea, to conquer the enmity rather than the enemy, in imitation of himself, who saveth the sinner, and kills the sin; and this is the most noble kind of victory. Every soldier can end a fever or other disease by cutting a man’s throat, and ending his life; but it is the work of the physician to kill the disease, and save the man. The scandalous pastor is for curing heresy in the Roman way, by silencing sound preachers, and tormenting and burning the supposed heretics; or at least to trust for the acceptance and success of his labours to the sword. And if that which will restrain men from crossing the pastor, would restrain them from resisting the Spirit of God, and constrain them to the love of holiness, it were well; then the glory of conversion should be more ascribed to the magistrate and soldier than to the preacher. But the true pastor is armed with a special measure of life, light, and love, that he may be a meet instrument for the regenerating of souls, who by holy life, and light, and love, must be renewed to their Father’s image. Every thing naturally generateth its like, which hath a generative power. And it is the love of God which the preacher is to bring all men to that must be saved; this is his office, this is his work, and this must be his study; he doth little or nothing if he doth not this. Souls are not sanctified till they are wrought up to the love of God and holiness; and, therefore, the furniture and arms which Christ hath left us in his word, are all suited to this work of love. We have the love of God himself to preach to them, and the love of a humbled, dying, and glorified Redeemer; and all the amiable blessings of heaven and earth to open to them, and all the loving promises and invitations of the gospel: and must not our

hearts, our ministry, and our lives, be answerable to all this? Believe it, it must be a preacher whose matter and manner of preaching and living doth show forth a hearty love to God, and love to godliness, and love to all his people's souls, that is the fit instrument to glorify God by convincing and converting sinners. God can work by what means he will; by a scandalous, domineering, self-seeking preacher; but it is not his ordinary way. Foxes and wolves are not nature's instruments to generate sheep. I never knew much good done to souls by any pastors, but such as preached and lived in the power of love, working by clear convincing light, and both managed by a holy, lively seriousness. You must bring fire, if you would kindle fire. Trust not here to the Cartesian philosophy, that mere motion will turn another element into fire. Speak as loud as you will, and make as great a stir as you will, it will be all in vain to win men's love to God and goodness, till their hearts be touched with his love and amiableness, which usually must be done by the instrumentality of the preacher's love. "Let them hate me, so they do but fear me and obey me," is the saying of such as set up for themselves, (and but foolishly for themselves,) and, like Satan, would rule men to damnation. If love be the sum and fulfilling of the law, love must be the sum and fulfilling of our ministry. But yet by "love" I mean not flattery: parents do love as necessarily as any, and yet must correct; and God himself can love, and yet correct; yea, "he chasteneth every son that he receiveth." (Heb. xii. 6, 7.) And his love consisteth with paternal justice, and with hatred of sin, and plain and sharp reproof of sinners: and so must ours; but all, as the various operations of love, as the objects vary.

And what I say of ministers, I say of every Christian in his place. Love is the great and the "new" commandment; that is, the last which Christ would leave, at his departure, to his disciples. O, could we learn of the Lord of love, and Him who calleth himself Love itself, to love our enemies, to bless them that curse us, and to do good to the evil, and pray for them that hurt and persecute us, we should not only prove that we are genuine Christians, the children of our heavenly Father, (Matt. v. 44, 45,) but should heap coals of fire on our enemies' heads, and melt them into compassion and some remorse, if not into a holy love. I tell you, it is the Christian who doth truly love his neighbour as himself; who loveth the godly as his co-heirs of heaven, and loveth the ungodly with a desire to make them truly godly; who loveth a friend as a friend, and an enemy as a man that is capable of holiness and salvation. It is he that liveth, walketh, speaketh, converseth (yea, suffereth, which is the great difficulty) in love, and is, as it were, turned, by the love of God shed abroad upon his heart, into love itself; who doth glorify God in the world, and glorify his religion, and really rebuke the blasphemer that derideth the Spirit in believers, as if it were but a fanatic dream.

And it is *he* that by tyranny, cruelty, contempt of others, and needless proud singularities and separations, magisterially condemning and vilifying all that walk not in his fashion, and pray not in his fashion, and are not of his opinion, where it is like enough he is himself mistaken, *that* is the scandalous Christian; who doeth as much against God, and religion, and the church, and men's souls, as he doeth against love. And though

it be Satan's way, as an angel of light, and his ministers' way, as ministers of righteousness, to destroy Christ's interest by dividing it, and separate things which God will have conjoined, and so to pretend the love of truth, the love of order, or the love of godliness or discipline, against the love of souls, and to use even the name of love itself against love, to justify all their cruelties, or censures, and alienations; yet God will keep up that sacred fire in the hearts of the sound Christians which shall live and conquer these temptations, and they will understand and regard the warning of the Holy Ghost: "I beseech you, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them," in their sinful, dividing, offensive ways. "For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ," though they may confidently think they do, "but their own belly," or carnal interests, though perhaps they will not see it in themselves; "and by good words and fair," or "flattering," "speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple." (Rom. xvi. 17, 18.) The word is τῶν ἀκακῶν, *hominum minime malorum*, "no bad men," or "harmless, well-meaning men;" who, in case it be not to mortal errors, perhaps may be in the main sincere, and may be saved when their stubble is burnt; but whether sincere or not, they are scandals in the world, and great dishonourers of God, and serve Satan, when they little think so, in all that they do contrary to that universal love by which God must be glorified, and sinners overcome.

(VII.) *A public mind that is set upon doing good, as the work of his life, and that with sincere and evident self-denial, doth greatly glorify God in the world.*—As God maketh his goodness known to us by doing good, so also must his children do. Nothing is more communicative than goodness and love; nothing will more certainly make itself known, whenever there is opportunity. That a wordy, barren love, which doth not help and succour and do good, is no true Christian love, St. James hath told us fully in his detection of a dead and barren faith. No man in reason can expect that others should take him for a good man, for something that is known to no one but himself; save only that public converse and communion must be kept-up by the charitable belief of professions, till they are disproved. The tree is know by its fruits, and the fruits best by the taste, though the sight may give some lower degree of commendation. The character of Christ's "purified peculiar people" is, that they "are zealous of good works." (Titus ii. 14.) The scandalous Christian may be zealous against others, and zealous to hurt them, to persecute them, to censure them, to disparage them, and to avoid them; but the genuine Christian is zealous in loving them, and doing them all the good he can. To do a little good upon the by, and from a full table to send an alms to Lazarus at the door; yea, to give to the needy as much as the flesh can spare without any suffering to itself, or any abatement of its grandeur, pomp, and pleasure in the world; will prove you to be men not utterly void of all compassion; but it will never prove you to be Christians, nor better than infidels and Heathens. Look not that men should think you better than your fruits do manifest you to be; nor that they take you to be good, for *saying* that you are good; nor judge you to excel others, any further than your works are better than others': and marvel not if the world ask, "What do you more than others?" when Christ himself

doth ask the same, Matt. v. 47 : "If ye salute your brethren," and those of your own opinion and way, and "if ye love them that love you," and say as ye say, "do not even publicans" and infidels do "the same?" (Verse 46.) Marvel not if men judge you according to your works, when God himself will do so, who knoweth the heart. He that is all for himself, may love himself, and think well of himself, but must not expect much love from others : selfishness is the boil or imposthume of societies, where the blood and spirits have an inordinate afflux, till their corruption torment or gangrene the part.

While men are all *for* themselves, and would draw all *to* themselves, instead of loving their neighbour *as* themselves, and the public good *above* themselves, they do but hurt and destroy themselves ; for they forfeit their communion with the body, and deserve that none should care for *them who* care for none but themselves. To a genuine Christian, another's good rejoiceth him as if it were his own ; (and how much, then, hath such an one continually to feed his joy!) and he is careful to supply another's wants, as if they were his own. But the scandalous, selfish hypocrite doth live quietly, and sleep easily, if he be but well himself, and it go well with his party ; however it go with all his neighbours, or with the church, or with the world. To himself he is fallen, to himself he liveth, himself he loveth, himself he seeketh ; and himself, that is, his temporal prosperity, he will advance and save, if he can, whatever his religion be ; and yet himself he destroyeth, and will lose. It is not well considered in the world, how much of sin consisteth in the narrow contraction of men's love and regard unto their natural selves ; and how much of goodness consisteth in a community of love ; and what a glory it is to the government and laws of God, that he maketh it so noble and necessary a part of every man's duty, to love all men, and to do good to all, as he is able, though with a difference. . God could do us all good enough by himself alone without one another ; but what a mercy is it to the world, that as many persons as there are, so many there are obliged by God to love their neighbours as themselves, and to do good to all about them ! And what a mercy is it to the actor, that God will thus make him the instrument and messenger of his beneficence !

Ministers, and Christians all, would you be thought better than others ? Are you angry with men that think otherwise of you ? What good do you more than others in your places ? What good do you that other men can see, and feel, and taste, and judge of ? Every man loveth himself, and can feel what doeth him good in natural things ; and God, that, by giving you food and other mercies to your bodies, would have you therein taste his love to your souls, would use you just so for your brethren's good. Do you give them good words and counsel ? It is well : but that is not it that they can yet taste and value. You must do that sort of good for them which they can know and relish : not that this will save them, or is any great matter of itself, no more than God's common bodily mercies to you ; but this is the best way to get down better. And he that "seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up the bowels of his compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (1 John iii. 17.) "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him

that would borrow of thee turn not thou away." (Matt. v. 42.) That is, Let not want of charity hinder thee at any time from giving, though want of ability may hinder thee, and prudence may restrain thee, and must guide thee. If you say, "Alas! we have it not to give;" I answer: 1. Do what you can. 2. Show by your compassion, that you would, if you could, take care of your poor brethren. 3. Beg of others for them, and put-on those that can to do it.

Say not, "These carnal people value nothing but carnal things, and cannot perceive a man's love by spiritual benefits:" for it is not grace, but the means and outside of things spiritual, that you can give them; and, for aught I see, the most of us all do very hardly believe God's own love to us, if he deny us bodily mercies. If you languish in poverty, crosses, and painful sickness any thing long, your murmuring showeth that you do not sufficiently taste God's goodness without the help of bodily sense: and can you expect that natural men believe you to be good for your bare words, when you so hardly think well of God himself, though he promise you life eternal, unless he also give you bodily supplies?

(VIII.) He that will glorify his religion and God before men, must be *strictly just in all his dealings*.—Just in governing, just in trading and bargaining; just to superiors and to inferiors, to friends and to enemies; just in performing all his promises, and in giving every man his right. He that in love must part with his own right for his neighbour's greater good, must not deprive another of his right; for charity includeth justice, as a lower virtue is included in a higher and more perfect. He must not be unjust for himself, for riches or any worldly ends. He must not be unjust for friends or kindred; he must not be drawn to it by fear or flattery; no price must hire him to do an unrighteous deed. But above all, he must never be unjust as for religion, as if God either needed or discountenanced a lie or any iniquity. No men are more scandalous dishonourers of religion and of God, than they that think it lawful to deceive, or lie, or be perjured, or break covenants, or be rebellious, or use any sinful means to secure or promote religion; as if God were not able to accomplish his ends by righteous means. This cometh from atheism and unbelief, when men think that God will lose his cause, unless our wits and sinful shifts preserve it; as if we, and not he, were the rulers of the world. "The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God," (1 Cor. vi. 9,) and seldom escape the hatred or contempt of men.

(IX.) He that will glorify God, must *know and observe the order of commands and duties, and that God will have mercy, and not sacrifice; and must prefer the end before the means as such*.—He must not pretend a lesser duty against a greater; nor take the lesser at *that* time for a duty, but for a sin, *when* the greater should take place. God hath made his laws and our duty to be the means of our own good. It is no profaneness, but duty, to omit that which else would be a duty, when a greater is to be preferred. God calls it "the sacrifice of a fool," who knoweth not that he doeth evil under the name of duty, when sacrifice is preferred before an obedient hearing of God's commands. (Eccles. v. 1—3.) It was no want of holy zeal in Christ which made him bid the unreconciled, "Leave thy gift at the altar; and first go and be reconciled to thy

brother, and then come and offer thy gift." (Matt. v. 24.) Some zealous persecutors, censurers, and dividers now would think I spake like an ungodly person, if I should say to them, "Let your liturgy, and your prayers, and your worship stay, till you have confessed and lamented your injuries to your brethren; and then come and offer your service to God, and lift up pure hands to him without wrath and doubting." Yet is it no more than God often calls-for to the hypocritical Jews. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hands, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination to me. When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean. Relieve the oppressed." (Isai. i. 11—13, 15—17.) "Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God. Wherefore have we fasted, and thou seest not? Have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as this day, to make your voice to be heard on high. Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rereward. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am." (Isai. lviii. 2—9.)

It is a point that our Lord Jesus layeth a great stress upon: he purposely healeth on the sabbath-day, and tells the censorious Pharisees, "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath;" (Mark ii. 27;) that is, the end, which is man's good, is to be preferred before the means; nay, it is no means, and so no duty, which is against it. He defendeth his disciples for getting themselves food as they passed in the corn-fields; and he teacheth them the lawfulness of the priest's labour on the sabbath, and of David's eating of the show-bread; and at two several times doth tell them, that God "will have mercy, and not sacrifice;" and biddeth them "go learn what that meaneth." (Matt. ix. 13; xii. 7.) And it is not only Pharisees, but many better men, who have need to go learn the meaning of that sentence. The meaning is this, that, *ceteris paribus*, ["other circumstances being equal,"] the great duties of the law of nature are to take place before the positive institutions. God's institutions are for man's good; whatever is a duty is also a means to the happiness of man, and pleasing of God, which is the end of all: love to God and man are greater than all the instituted means

of them as such : therefore, that is no duty which is no means, or is against the Institutor's end. Preaching and prayer must be omitted for some works of love and human good. Discipline is a duty, when it is a means to the end for which it is ordained ; but when it would hinder or destroy that end,—the reputation of religion, and the glory of God's holiness, and the church's good,—it is no duty, but a sin. To omit a sacrament, to break the rest of the Lord's day, to forbear the sacred assemblies, may be a duty, when the good of men requireth them. Ordination is a duty, when it is a means to its proper end ; but if it were pleaded against those ends, and order set against the thing ordered, even the work of the ministry, the case would be altered.

When men mistake, and mismeasure, and misplace God's institutions, to the excluding of the great moral duties which are their end, and persuade men to that as a part of religion which would certainly do more hurt than good, they scandalously drive men away from religion. Thus imprudent, scandalous professors can backbite and reproach others, and make them odious, and destroy Christian love, and peace, and concord, on pretence of zeal for order, government, ceremonies, forms, or for this or that mode of discipline or worship ; not having learned what this meaneth, " I will have mercy, and not sacrifice ;" nor that forms and external institutions were made for man, and not man for them. And yet I know, that this will not justify the Familist or hypocrite, who thinks that he may do any thing to save his flesh.

Do you think it is not a scandal to Turks or other infidels, tempting them to deride or hate Christianity, to find the Papists placing their merits in hurtful pilgrimages, which *waste* that time which should be *spent*, and in a multitude of unprofitable ceremonies, and in unwholesome food and injuries to health, under the names of " abstinence and mortification ?" By this rule they may next persuade us, that it will please God, if men famish or hang themselves ; and consequently, if they do so by others : for we must love our neighbour but as ourselves. God himself hath made all our religion so suitable to our good, that he expecteth not that we should take any thing for our duty but what he giveth us evidence in the thing, or security by his promise, shall be our gain. He that worketh upon self-love, and winneth man by a Saviour and a glorious reward, and proveth the goodness of all his word and ways as to our happiness, hath instituted none of his ordinances to our hurt. The apostles had their power only " to edification and not to destruction" or hurt of souls. (2 Cor. x. 8 ; xiii. 10.) " Let all things be done unto edifying," (1 Cor. xiv. 26,) is a word of greater comprehension and use than many do conceive : when it is against edification, it is not acceptable to God. One would think Christ had broken his own law of discipline, when he did familiarly eat with publicans and sinners : and yet, that very act of his is one of those which he justifieth by the aforesaid rule, " I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." (Matt. ix. 11—13.) Learn this lesson of preferring mercy before sacrifice, if ever you will glorify God.

(X.) *The right manner of worshipping God* is of great moment to the honour of him and of our religion before the world.—That we give no false descriptions of God, or dishonourable attributes ; that we teach

no dishonourable doctrine as his, especially of his own will and counsels, and of his government, laws, and judgment; that we neither take down the glory of the gospel-mysteries by reducing them to the rank of common providence, nor yet be deceived by Satan or his ministers, as the promoters of "light and righteousness," (2 Cor. xi. 15,) to abuse and dishonour them by over-doing; that we seek not to glorify God by our lies, or by our own mistaken interpretations or inventions. God must be worshipped as a Spirit in spirit and truth, and not with Popish toys and fopperies, which make others think, that our religion is but like a poppet-play and ludicrous device to keep the people in servitude to the priests by a blind devotion. God must be worshipped rationally, and with all holy wisdom; and not with childish shadows and trifles, nor with slovenly and imprudent words, which tend to breed in the hearers derision or contempt. Neither the cantings or scenical actions, or affected repetitions of the Papists, nor the rude, disorderly, incongruous expressions of unskilful men, are fit to be offered to the glorious God: prudence and holiness and seriousness and reverence must appear in that worship which must honour God. O, with what holiness should we hear from, and speak to, the holy, holy, holy God, who will be sanctified in all that draw near him, (Lev. x. 3,) and will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain! They that will do it acceptably, must serve him "with reverence and godly fear," as knowing that he "is a consuming fire;" (Heb. xii. 28, 29;) and yet with alacrity, love, and delight, as knowing that in his favour is life, and that he is the infinitely amiable Good, the Hope and only Portion of believers.

(XI.) *The humility, meekness, and patience of Christians*, are greatly necessary to their glorifying of God.—I join all three together for brevity's sake.

1. It is a thing very amiable in the eyes of all, when men have *not too high thoughts of themselves*, and seek not to be over-valued by others, either as great or wise or good.—When they seek not precedence, preferment, or honour, but take the lowest place; and envy not the precedence or honour of others, but take another's honour as their own, and take another to be fitter, *ceteris paribus*,* for places of power, trust, or eminency, than themselves; when they do, according to the measure of their worth, "honour all men," (1 Peter ii. 17,) and are "kindly-affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another." (Rom. xii. 10.) Not dissemblingly and complimentally saying, "Your servant, sir!" while they would fain have others below them, and to be obedient to their wills; but really to think meanly of their own worth and wisdom. "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." (Rom. xii. 3.) Not "thinking himself something, when he is nothing;" (Gal. vi. 3;) nor to be more learned or wise or pious than he is. We must be indeed *his* disciples *who* "humbled himself, and made himself of no reputation," (Phil. ii. 7, 8,) and washed and wiped the feet of his disciples, to teach them what to be and do to one another; who hath

* "Other things being equal."—EDIT.

taught us the necessity of cross-bearing and self-denial, and to humble ourselves as little children, if ever we will enter into the kingdom of heaven; (Matt. xvi. 24; xviii. 3, 4;) and hath decreed and foretold us, that "whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted;" and therefore the greatness which his ministers must seek must be to be the servants of the rest. (Matt. xxiii. 10—12.) "Honour shall uphold the humble in spirit," but "a man's pride shall bring him low." (Prov. xxix. 23.) "Better is it to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud." (Prov. xvi. 19.) He that will honour his religion must "put on, as the elect of God, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind," (not of tongue only,) "meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any." (Col. iii. 12, 13.) He must not set-out himself like the richest, and desire to seem high or notable to others, nor set up himself with his superiors, nor swell or grudge if he be not regarded or taken notice of; no, nor if he be reproved or dishonoured: but must learn of an humbled Christ to be "meek and lowly," (Matt. xi. 29,) and must "not mind," or desire "high things, but condescend to men of low estate; and not be wise in his own conceit." (Rom. xii. 16.) "I beseech you, therefore, that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love." (Eph. iv. 1, 2.) "Let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." (Phil. ii. 3.) What man loveth not such a spirit and conversation? O that it were more common and eminent among us! and then we should find that the disaffection of the ignorant would be much abated, and that when a man's ways thus please God, "his enemies" will be the more "at peace with him." (Prov. xvi. 7.) But when they are proud, and we are proud, and we cannot yield nor bow, nor give place to the wrathful, but must jostle and contend with them for our place and honour, we lose our Christian honour by seeking carnal honour, and appear to be but like other men; and even the proud themselves will disdain the proud.

2. And though we may be angry and not sin, and must be plain and zealous against sin and for God, though guilty, galled sinners be displeased by it; yet *meekness* must be our temperature.—For a turbulent, rough, unquiet spirit is displeasing both to God and man; such persons have seldom peace with others or themselves. "A meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price." (1 Peter iii. 4.) "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth:" they shall speed better than others, even in this world. (Matt. v. 5.) "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits." (James iii. 17.) Paul tells us what the good works are, which we must be always "ready to:"—"to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness to all men." (Titus iii. 1, 2.) The scripture speaks more of this than I have leisure to recite. See Gal. v. 23; vi. 1; 1 Tim. vi. 11; 2 Tim. ii. 25; 1 Peter iii. 15; James iii. 13; Zeph. ii. 3; Isai. xxix. 19; Psalm cxlix. 4; lxxvi. 9; cxlvii. 6; xxxvii. 11.

3. And *patience*, both towards God and man, is a necessary companion of humility and meekness.—This greatly differeth from natural dulness and an insensible temperature. When a man's soul is partly so much awed by God's authority and presence, and partly so much taken-up with the great matters of his service, and partly so much contented with his favour and grace and the hopes of glory, as to make light of all the interests of the flesh as such, and therefore to bear patiently such losses and crosses and wants and sufferings as touch the flesh, as taking it for no great matter to lose all the world, if we save our souls; this is true patience, by which God is glorified: for by this men will see that Christians have indeed such great things in their hopes as set them quite above the transitory things of the flesh and world. But when they are much troubled at every cross and loss; and whine and complain as if they were undone, if they live in poverty or reproach; and are at their wit's end in every danger; and fret and storm at every ill word, or every one that wrongeth them; they are the shame of their profession, and scandals to the world. It is not a sudden anger which is the great sin of impatience, but an impotent disability to suffer in the flesh, in estate, or name, and a repining under every want, which showeth a fleshly, worldly mind, and a want of true believing the heavenly felicity: though I confess that pity must make some excuse for many poor women, whose natural temper maketh their passions, troubles, and fears, invincible. He that said, "In your patience possess ye your souls," (Luke xxi. 19,) doth intimate, that we have lost ourselves, and the government, order, and peace of our souls, when we have lost our patience. See Eccles. vii. 8; James v. 7, 8; 1 Peter ii. 20; 1 Thess. v. 14: "Be patient towards all men;" 1 Tim. vi. 11; Col. i. 11. Whatever zeal you seem to have in prayer, in preaching, and for purity of worship, if you can bear wants and sickness, and the loss of all the world, no better than others, you will appear no better in their eyes; for "if you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small." (Prov. xxiv. 10.)

(XII.) And as a special fruit of humility, *an easy and thankful bearing of reproof, and readiness to confess a fault upon due conviction*, is a necessary duty to the honouring of God.—It will show men that you are enemies to sin indeed, and that you are not hypocrites, who weed only their neighbours' fields, and see the mote in another's eye, and not the beam which is in your own. If the righteous smite us by reproofs, it must be taken as a kindness, and as a precious balsam, which doth not break our head, but heal us. (Psalm cxli. 5.) Not that we are bound to belie ourselves in compliance with every man's censorious humour that will accuse us; but we must be readier to censure ourselves than others, and readier to confess a fault than to expect a confession from others whom we reprove. Sincerity and serious repentance will be honourable in that person who is most careful to avoid sin, and most ready penitently to confess it when he hath been overcome, and truly thankful to those that call him to repentance; as being more desirous that God and his laws and religion [should] have the glory of their holiness, than that he himself should have the undue glory of innocence, and escape the deserved shame of his sin.

It is one of the most dangerous diseases of professors and greatest scandals of this age, that persons taken for eminently religious are more impatient of plain, though just, reproof, than many a drunkard, swearer, or fornicator; and when they have spent hours or days in the seeming earnest confession of their sin, and lament before God and man that they cannot do it with more grief and tears, yet they take it for a heinous injury in another that will say half so much against them, and take him for a malignant enemy of the godly who will call them as they call themselves. They look that the chief business of a preacher should be to praise them, and set them above the rest, as the only people of God; and they take *him* for an enemy *that* will tell them the truth. But the scandal is greatest in those preachers themselves who cannot endure to hear that they are sinners. So tender and impatient of reproof are some,—yea, some that, for their learning, and preaching, and piety, are ranked in the highest form, or expect to be so,—that almost nothing but flattery or praise can please them; and they can hardly bear the gentlest reproof, no, nor a contradiction of any of their opinions: but they seem to tell men that it is their part and privilege to be the reprovers of others, and to have no reprove; and to tell other men of sin, and be themselves accounted innocent; and to call other men to repentance for particular sins, while they themselves must have no other repentance than in general to say that they are sinners; and to proclaim to all, that their public confessions are formalities, and that it is a Christ to heal the souls of others that they preach, while they acknowledge but little work for his remedies on themselves. But “he that refuseth reproof doth err, and he that hateth it is brutish,” how learned or reverend or pious soever he would be accounted. (Prov. x. 17; xii. 1.) “He that regardeth reproof is prudent; and he that hateth it shall die.” (Prov. xv. 5, 10.) As ready, humble, penitent confession of sin doth tend to our pardon from God, so doth it tend to our acceptation with man: when God and man will condemn the Pharisee, that justifies himself, till confession be extorted from him.

(XIII.) It is another very honourable fruit of humility to have a *learning disposition*, and *not to be magisterial*; and to “be swift to hear, and slow to speak.”—All Christ’s disciples must be “as little children,” (Matt. xviii. 3, 4,) especially in a learning, teachable disposition. A child doth not use to set his wit against his master’s, or any other that will teach him, nor to rise up against instruction, as a disputer that must have the better, and be accounted the wisest; but his daily business is submissively to learn. A genuine Christian is indeed communicative, and willing that others should partake with him in the wisdom and happiness which God hath revealed to him; but he is ready first to learn himself, and knoweth that he must receive before he can communicate. And there is none so far below him, but he is willing to hear and learn of; but especially among his equals he is readier to hear and learn than to teach, because he is still conscious of his ignorance, and honoureth the gifts of God in others, which the proud despise. (James iii. 1; i. 19.)

But the scandalous Christian is so wise in his own eyes that he is ever

of a teaching humour ; and those please him best that will sit and hear, and reverence him as an oracle, and magnify every word that drops from his lips. He is so full of himself that he hath scarce the patience to observe well what another speaks or writeth, and so valueth his own conceptions that he thinks they should be valued by the hearers ; and so scandalous is the teaching humour of some learned men, that they have not the common good manners or civility to suffer another to speak to the end, but they must needs interrupt him, that *they* may speak, as being more worthy. They take other men's speeches to be so tedious, that their patience cannot hold out the length of them. I mean not, that a wise man is bound to lose his time in hearing every self-conceited person talk ; but when men are engaged in conference or disputes, for a man to have such list to speak that he cannot stay till another, though long, come to the end, it is scandalous incivility. Yea, some can scarce stay till two or three sentences be uttered, but their haste must tell you, that they take themselves to be much the wiser, and to be fitter to teach than to hear and learn ; and they are so overladen with their own conceited wisdom, that they can carry it no longer without some vent ; and so full of their own, that they have no room to receive any more from others ; and being all masters, they receive from God and man the greater condemnation. (James iii. 1 ; Prov. xxii. 17 ; i. 5 ; xviii. 13.)

(XIV.) The genuine Christian *hateth backbiting and disgraceful reports of others, and yet can bear it from others to himself.*—He hath learned to love all, and to “ speak evil of no man,” nor to receive or vend ill reports of others. He knoweth that this is the work of the devil, the mortal enemy of love. He modestly rebuketh the backbiting tongue, and “ with an angry countenance driveth it away.” (Psalm xv. 3 ; Titus iii. 2 ; Prov. xxv. 23.) Backbiters tell us that they are haters of men ; and the apostle joins them with “ haters of God.” (Rom. i. 30.) “ Debates, backbitings, whisperings, envyings,” are the scandalous Christian's work. (2 Cor. xii. 20.) He that heareth them will either distaste them, or catch the disease, and be as bad as they ; and he that heareth that he is calumniated or reproached by them behind his back, is tempted to abhor both them and their profession. But to deal with men as faithful friends, and in plainness, but with prudence and love, to tell them secretly of their defects and faults,—this tendeth to good, and to reconcile the minds of men at last, and to the honour of the Christian way. (Matt. xviii. 15, 16 ; Lev. xix. 17 ; Prov. ix. 8 ; xxiv. 25 ; xxvii. 5 ; xxviii. 23 ; Eccles. vii. 5.) But yet when we are belied and reproached ourselves, though by Christians or teachers or superiors, it beseemeth us not to make too great a matter of it, as being tender of our own reputation ; but only to be sorry for the slanderer's or backbiter's sin and misery. For men's corruption will have vent ; the angry and malicious and envious will speak from the abundance of their hearts ; and the guilty will be tender ; and children will cry and quarrel ; and proud contenders will be impatient : and how small a matter is it, as to *us*, to be judged of man, *who* must all be shortly judged of the Lord ?

(XV.) He is *one that would keep open, to the notice of all, the great difference between the godly and the wicked, and aspireth after the highest degrees of holiness.*—As knowing the corruptions and calamities of the

weak, and how much of heaven is in holiness itself. And yet he loveth, honoureth, and cherisheth the least spark of grace in the weakest Christian; and is none of them that censoriously despise such, nor that tyrannically tread them down, or cast them injuriously out of the church.

1. To make men believe that there is little difference between the holy and the profane, is to bring all religion into contempt, and is a wickedness which God's laws throughout condemn, and his judgment shall publicly confute. (Matt. iii. 12; 2 Thess. i. 6—11; Jude 15; Matt. xiii. 25—50.)

2. To take-up with a little goodness, which consisteth with scandalous corruptions, is to be a scald in the church.

3. And yet to be supercilious, and to disdain the weak, or shut-out any as ungodly whom Christ hath not warranted us to shut-out, and to make stricter rules of trial and church-communion than he hath made,—this is justly displeasing both to God and man. It tempteth men to abhor that religion which tendeth more to men's reproach than to their cure, and causeth professors to set themselves higher above the weak, and at a greater distance from their neighbours, than God would have them. Christ is tender of little ones, and would not have them scandalized: his own apostles were very low in knowledge all the time that he was with them on earth. It is not mere want of words, that will warrant us to take men for ungodly; even he "that is weak in the faith" must be received, "but not to doubtful disputations." (Rom. xiv. 1.) To cull-out a few that have learned to speak better than the rest, and shut-out with the dogs all the infant Christians who must be fed with milk, because they want expressions, is one of Satan's ways of over-doing, by which he would banish religion out of the world.

(XVI.) He that will glorify God by his good works, must be *zealous and diligent in them, and make them the serious business of his life.*—He must live so, that men may see that indeed he doth believe and hope for heaven. That which a man coldly speaks of, and coldly seeketh, men will think he coldly desireth, and therefore that he doth but doubtfully believe it. A cold, slothful Christian proclaims his unbelief to others, and so inviteth them to the like. When Christians bestir themselves, as for their lives, and ply God's work with greatest diligence, and redeem their lives, as knowing that all is short enough to prepare for an endless life; this wakeneth others to life and thoughtfulness, to inquire into the matter of our hopes.

(XVII.) He that will glorify God must be *wise and watchful, to see and take the opportunities of good before they are passed-by, and to avoid temptations to error and iniquity, and especially temerity in matters of great and public consequence.*

1. *Good works have their season.*—You lose them, if you take them not in their time; that may be done now, which, if you pass this time, you can never do.

2. *Temptations also have their season.*—And must just then be resisted, lest many a year repair not an hour's loss. And they are very many: and narrow-sighted, careless persons, who avoid two and fall into the third, or avoid nineteen and are conquered by the twentieth, are always scandalous.

3. *And rash adventures on any opinions or actions, but especially of public consequence, are usually most scandalous and pernicious to the church.*—As in military affairs, and in physic, *ubi non licet bis errare*,* men's lives must pay for our temerity and error, and all the world cannot remedy the effects of one mistake; so in matters of religion, if we mistake by our rash conceitedness, and take not time for necessary trial, and proceed not, as a man on the ice or among quick-sands, with great care and deliberation, the shaking of kingdoms, the ruin of churches, the silencing of ministers, the corruption of doctrine, worship, and discipline, and the sin and damnation of many souls, may be the effect of our proud presumption and temerity. But the humble, self-suspecting man, that suspendeth his judgment and practice, till he hath thoroughly proved all, doth preserve the honour of religion, and avoid such late and dear repentance.

(XVIII.) The man whose works shall glorify God, must be *devoted to the unity and concord of believers, and be greatly averse to dividing and love-killing opinions, words, and practices.*—And, “as much as in him lies,” he must “live peaceably with all men.” (Rom. xii. 18; xvi. 17; 1 Cor. i. 10; Phil. ii. 1—3; Eph. iv. 3, 4, 14—16; 1 Thes. v. 13; John xvii. 24.) When Paul saith, that dividers serve not the Lord Jesus, but their own bellies, he intimateth to us, that though truth and purity be in their mouths, and really intended by them, as they take it, yet there is usually a secret self-interest that is carried on, that biasseth the judgment; and when he telleth them, that of their “own selves should men arise, speaking perverse things,” (Acts xx. 30.) which they called, and it is likely believed to be, the truth, yet self-interest lay at the bottom, to be somebody in “drawing disciples after them.” For it is so notorious a truth, that unity and concord are indispensably necessary to the church,—as it is to our body, to families, to kingdoms,—that men could not do so destructive a thing as dividing is, if some sin had not first caused the error of their minds. It greatly honoureth Christ and religion in the world, when believers live in love and unity; and their discords and divisions have in all ages been the scandal of the world, and the great reproach and dishonour of the church. When Christ's disciples are one in him, it is the way to the infidel-world's conversion,—that they “may believe that the Father sent” him. (John xvii. 21.)

And here the devil hath two sorts of servants: 1. *The true schismatic or heretic*, who fearlessly and blindly divideth the churches. 2. *The over-doing Papist and church-tyrant*, who will have a greater unity than Christ will here give us, that so we may have none; and when Christ prays that we may be one in him, the Pope saith that we shall also be one in him, or we shall be accounted schismatics, and destroyed as such. And *when* the ancient church, according to Christ's institution, united all in the baptismal covenant, explained in the Creed; and [*when*] Paul numbereth the necessary terms of unity, Eph. iv. 4—6: 1. *One body*, or church of Christ, into which we are baptized; 2. *One Spirit* of holiness in all; 3. *One hope* of the glorious reward; 4. *One Lord*, by whom we do attain it; 5. *One faith*, even the Christian verity; 6. *One baptism*, or covenant of Christianity; 7. And *one God and Father of all*; and in these God would

* “Where a man cannot err twice in the same case.”—EDIT.

have all his servants to be "one:" then come in these over-doers, and they must have us to be all one in all their papal policy, and all the decrees of their Popes and councils *de fide*, ["concerning the faith,"] and in their multitude of corruptions and ceremonious impositions; which is as much as to say, "You shall have no unity." For he that saith to all the city or kingdom, "You shall be destroyed for discord, or reproached as dividers, if you are not all of one complexion, or have not all the same appetite, age, or bodily stature," doth pronounce reproach or destruction on them absolutely: so is it with all others that put their self-devised terms on their brethren as necessary to unity and peace, on how pious or fair pretences soever: impossible conditions make the thing impossible. These are the church-tearing scandals; these are the snares by which Satan hath made the church a scorn, and our religion a stumbling-block, to Turks and Heathens. But had the peace-makers been heard, who learned of the Holy Ghost to impose nothing on the brethren but necessary things, (Acts xv.) and who have laboured to revive love, and shame emulations and divisions; God had been more glorified by men, and the reproach of the churches and solemn assemblies taken away. When all sects and parties have bustled and raised a dust in the world, to foul the church and blind each other; if ever the church's glory be restored, and our shame taken away, it will be by men of love and peace, by healing, uniting, reconciling principles and means.

(XIX.) He that will glorify God, *must live in and to the will of God, and seek to reduce his own will wholly into God's, and to destroy in himself all will that striveth against God's will.*

1. *The disposing will of God our Owner* must be absolutely submitted to, and *the bounteous will of God our Benefactor* thankfully and joyfully acknowledged.

2. *The ruling will of God our Lawgiver* must be with daily study and care obeyed, and his punishing and rewarding justice glorified.

3. *The final felicitating will and love of God our ultimate End and Object*,—that we may please him, and be everlastingly pleased in him, love him, and be loved by him,—must be totally desired and sought, as the only and perfect rest of souls.

O! *that* is the holy, the joyful, the honourable Christian, *who* daily laboureth,—and in some good measure doth prevail,—to have no will but the will of God, and that which wholly is resolved into it; who looketh no further to know what he should do, but to know by his word what is the law or will of God; who believeth that all that God willeth is good, and had rather have his life and health and wealth and friends at God's will and disposal, than his own; who knoweth that God's will is love itself, and that to please him is the end of all the world, and the only felicity of men and angels; and resteth wholly in the pleasing of that will. What can be more wise and just, than to have the same will, objectively, with Him who is infinitely wise and just? What can be more honourable, than to have the same will as God himself, and, so far as his children, to be like our Father? What can be more orderly and harmonious, than for the will of the creature to move according to the Creator's will, and to be duly subservient to it, and accurately compliant with it? What can be more holy, nay, what else is holiness, but a will and life devoted

and conformed to the will of God? What can be more safe, or what else can be safe at all, but to will the same things which the most perfect Wisdom doth direct to, and infinite Love itself doth choose? And what can be more easy and quieting to the soul, than to rest in that Will which is always good, which never was misguided, and never chose amiss, and never was frustrated, or missed of its decreed ends? If we have no will but what is, objectively, the same with God's, that is, if we wholly comply with and follow his will as our guide, and rest in his will as our ultimate end, our wills will never be disordered, sinful, misled, or frustrate. God hath all that he willeth absolutely, and is never disappointed; and so should we, if we could will nothing but what he willeth. And would you not take *him* unquestionably for a happy man, *who* hath whatsoever he would have? yea, and would have nothing but what is more just and good? There is no way to this happiness, but making the will of God *our* will. God will not mutably change his will to bring it to ours: should Holiness itself be conformed to sinners, and Perfection to imperfection? But we must, by grace, bring over our wills to God's, and then they are in joint; and then only will they find content and rest. O, what would I beg more earnestly in the world, than a will conformed wholly to God's will, and cast into that mould, and desiring nothing but what God willeth?

But, contrarily, what can be more foolish than for such infants and ignorant souls as we, to will that which Infinite Wisdom is against? What more dishonourable, than to be even at the very heart so contrary or unlike to God? What can be more irregular and unjust, than for a created worm to set his will against his Maker's? What else is sin, but a will and life that is cross to the regulating will of God? What can be more perilous and pernicious, than to forsake a perfect, unerring Guide, and to follow such ignorant judgments as our own, in matters of eternal consequence? What can *that* soul expect, but a restless state in an uncomfortable wilderness, yea, perpetual self-vexation and despair, *who* forsakes God's will to follow his own, and hath a will that doth go cross to God's? Poor self-tormenting sinners, consider, that your own wills are your idols, which you set up against the will of God; and your own wills are the tyrants to which you are in bondage; your own wills are your prison, and the executioners that torment you with fear and grief and disappointments. What is it that you are afraid of, but lest you miss of your own wills? For, sure, you fear not, lest God's will should be overcome and frustrate. What are your cares about, but this? What are your sighs and groans and tears for? And what is it else that you complain of, but that your own wills are not fulfilled? It is not that God hath not his will. What is it that you are so impatient of, but the crossing of your own wills? This person crosseth them, and that accident crosseth them, and God crosseth them, and you cross them yourselves; and crossed they will be while they are cross to the will of God: for all this while, they are as a bone out of joint; there is no ease till it be set right. In a word, a will that is contrary to God's will, and striveth and struggleth against it, is the offspring of the devil, the sum of all sin, and a foretaste of hell, even a restless self-tormentor; and to will nothing but what God willeth, and to love his will, and study to please

him, and rest therein, is the rectitude and only rest of souls; and he that cannot rest contentedly in the will of God, must be for ever restless.

And when such a holy will and contentment appeareth in you, mankind will reverence it, and see that your natures are divine; and as they dare not reproach the will of God, so they will fear to speak evil of yours. When they see that you choose but what God first chooseth for you, and your wills do but follow the will of God, men will be afraid of provoking God against them as blasphemers, if they should scorn, deride, or vilify you. And could we convince all men that our course is but the same which God commandeth, it would do much to stop their reproach and persecution; and if they see that we can joyfully suffer reproach or poverty or pains or death, and joyfully pass away to God, when he shall call us, and live and die in a contented complacency in the will of God, they will see that you have a beginning of heaven on earth, which no tyrant, no loss or cross or suffering, can deprive you of; while you can joyfully say, "The will of the Lord be done." (Acts xxi. 14.)

OBJECTION. "But if it be God's will for sin to punish me, or forsake me, should I contentedly rest in that revenging will?"

ANSWER I. That sin of ours which maketh us incapable objects of the complacential will of God, is evil and to be hated; but that will of God which is terminated on such an object, according to the nature of it, by just hatred, is good, and should be loved; and punishment is hurtful to us, but God's will and justice is good and amiable.

ANSWER II. If you will close with God's will, you need not fear his will. If your will be unfeignedly to obey his commanding will, and to be and do what he would have you, his will is not to condemn or punish you: but if God's will prescribe you a holy life, and your will rebel and be against it, no wonder if God's will be to punish you, when your wills would not be punished. (John i. 13; vii. 17; Heb. x. 10; Luke xii. 47.)

(XX.) It glorifieth God and religion in the world, when Christians are *faithful in all their relations, and diligently endeavour the sanctifying and happiness of all the societies which they are members of.*

1. *Holy families well-ordered* do much glorify God, and keep-up religion in the world:—

(1.) When *husbands* live with their wives in wisdom, holiness, and love; and *wives* are pious, obedient, meek, and peaceable; (Eph. v. 22, 25; Col. iii. 18, 19;) yea, unto such husbands as "obey not the word, that without the word they may be won by the conversation of the wives:" (1 Peter iii. 1, 2:)

(2.) When *parents* make it their great and constant care and labour, with all holy skill, and love, and diligence, to educate their children in the fear of God and the love of goodness and the practice of a holy life; and to save them from sin, and the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil; and have more tender care of their souls than of their bodies, that so the church may have a succession of saints: and when *children* love, honour, and obey their parents, and comfort them by their forwardness to all that is good, and their avoiding the ways and company of the ungodly: (Eph. vi. 1; Col. iii. 20; Psalm i. 1, 2:)

(3.) When *masters* rule their servants as the servants of God; and *servants* willingly obey their masters, and serve them with cheerful dili-

gence and trust, and are as careful and faithful about all their goods and business as if it were their own: (Eph. vi. 5, 9; Col. iii. 22; iv. 1; 1 Peter ii. 18:)

(4.) When the *houses* of Christians are societies of saints and churches of God, and live in love and concord together, and all are laborious and faithful in their callings, abhorring idleness, gluttony, drunkenness, pride, contention, and evil-speaking, and dealing justly with all their neighbours, and denying their own right for love and peace:

This is the way to glorify religion in the world.

2. *Well-ordered churches* are the second sort of societies which must glorify God, and propagate religion in the world.

(1.) When the *pastors* are learned in the holy scriptures and skilful in all their sacred work, and far excel all the people in the light of faith and knowledge, and in love to goodness and to men's souls, and in lively, zealous diligence for God and for men's salvation, thinking no labour, cost, or suffering, too dear a price for the people's good; when no sufferings or reproaches move them, nor "account they their lives dear to them, that they may but finish their course and ministry with joy;" when their public preaching hath convincing light and clearness, and powerful, affectionate application; and their private oversight is performed with impartiality, humility, and unwearied diligence; and they are able to resolve the people's cases of conscience solidly, and to exhort them earnestly, with powerful reason and melting love:—this honoureth religion, and winneth souls.

(2.) When they envy not one another, nor strive who shall be greatest or uppermost, but, contrariwise, who shall be most serviceable to his brethren and to the people's souls; when they "oversee and feed the flock of God which is among them, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock;" (1 Peter v. 1—4;) and, seeking not theirs, but them, are willing to spend and be spent for their sakes; yea, though the more they love them, the less they are beloved; "not minding high things, but condescending to men of low estate:"—this is the way for ministers to glorify God. (2 Tim. ii. 14, 15; iv. 1—3; 1 Tim. iv. 10; Heb. ii. 11, 13; Acts xx. 24; 1 Thess. ii. 8; Luke xxii. 24—26; 2 Cor. xii. 14, 15; Rom. xii. 16.)

(3.) When ministers are above all worldly interest, and so teach and live that the people may see that they seek not the honour which is of men, but only that which is of God, and lay not up a treasure on earth, but in heaven, and trade all for another world, and are further from pride than the lowest of their flock; when they have not only the clothing of sheep, but their harmless, profitable nature, and not the ravenousness or bloody jaws of destroying wolves; when they use not carnal weapons in their warfare, but by an eminency of light and love and life endeavour to work the same in others; when they are of more public spirits than the people, and more self-denying, and above all private interests and envyings and revenge, and are more patient in suffering than the people, through the power of stronger faith and hope and love; when they are wholly addicted to holiness and peace, and are zealous for the love and unity of believers, and become all things to all men, to win some; in meekness

instructing opposers, abhorring contention, doing nothing in strife or vain-glory, but preferring others before themselves; not preaching Christ in pride or envy, nor seeking their own praise, but thirsting after men's conversion, edification, and salvation:—thus must Christ be honoured by his ministers in the world.

(4.) When they speak the same things, being of one mind and judgment, uniting in the common faith, and contending for that against infidels and heretics; and, so far as they “have attained, walk by the same rule, and mind the same things;” and, where they are differently minded or opinioned, wait in meekness and love till God reveal to them reconciling truth; when they study more to narrow controversies than to widen them, and are skilful in detecting those ambiguous words and verbal and notional differences which to the unskilful seem material; when they are as surgeons, and not as soldiers, as skilful to heal differences as the proud and ignorant are ready to make them, and can plainly show the dark contenders wherein they agree, and do not know it; when they live in that sweet and amicable concord, which may tell the world that they love one another, and are of one faith and heart, being one in Christ:—this is the way for ministers to glorify God in the world. And with thankfulness to God I acknowledge, that such for many years I had my conversation with, of whom the world that now despiseth them is not worthy. (Phil. ii. 21; Matt. vi. 19—21; John v. 44; xvii. 21; 2 Cor. x. 4; 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26; 1 Cor. i. 10; ix. 19—22; x. 33; Phil. ii. 1—3; iii. 15—17; 1 Tim. vi. 3, 4; James iii. 14—18; 2 Tim. ii. 14, 24; Eph. iv. 3—6.)

(5.) And the maintaining of sound doctrine, spiritual, reasonable, and reverent worship, without ludicrous and unreverent trifling, or rudeness or ignorance or superstition or needless singularity, much honoureth God, as is aforesaid. And so doth the exercise of holy discipline in the churches; such discipline whereby the precious may be separated from the vile, and the holy from the profane, by authority and order, and not by popular usurpation, disorder, or unjust presumptions; where the cause is fairly tried and judged, before men are cast out, or denied the privileges of the church; where charity appears, in embracing the weakest, and turning away none that turn not away from Christ, and condemning none without just proof; and justice and holiness appear in purging-out the dangerous leaven, and in trying and rejecting the obstinately impenitent heretic and gross sinner “after the first and second admonition,” and disowning them that will not “hear the church.” (Matt. xviii. 15—17; Titus iii. 10; 1 Cor. v. 11.) When the neglect of discipline doth leave the church as polluted a society as the infidel world, and Christians that are owned in the public communion are as vicious, sensual, and ungodly, as Heathens and Mahometans, it is one of the greatest injuries to Christ and our religion in the world; for it is by the purifying of “a peculiar people, zealous of good works,” that Christ is known to be really the Saviour of the world; and by making his followers better than others, that he and his doctrine and religion are known to be the best. Travellers tell me that nothing so much hindereth the conversion of the Mahometans, as their daily experience that the lives of the Greek Christians and others that live among them are too ordinarily worse than theirs.

More drunkenness, and more falsehood, lying, deceit, it is said, are among those Christians than among the Turks. If that be true, those are no true Christians; but woe be to them, by whom such offence cometh!

I have oft heard those soldiers justly censured as profane who turn churches into stables, without great necessity; but how much more hurtfully profane are they who for carnal ends confound the world and the church, and keep the multitude of the most sensual, ungodly persons in their communion, without ever calling them personally to repentance, and use the church-keys but to revenge themselves on those that differ from them in some opinions, or that cross their interest and wills, or that seem too smart and zealous in the dislike of their carnality, sloth, and church-pollutions! When the churches are as full of scandalous sinners as the assemblies of infidels and Heathens, the world will hardly ever believe that infidelity and Heathenism is not as good as the Christian faith. It is more by persons than by precepts, that the world will judge of Christ and Christianity. And what men on earth do more scandalize the world, more expose Christianity to reproach, more harden infidels, more injure Christ, and serve the devil, than they that fill the church with impious, carnal pastors, as in the church of Rome, and then with impious, carnal people, maintained constantly in her communion, without any open disowning by a distinguishing, reforming discipline? When such pastors are no better than the soberer sort of Heathens, save only in their opinion and formal words, and when their ordinary communicants are no better, it is no thanks to them, if all turn not infidels that know them, and if Christianity be contemned and decay out of the world! and it is long of * such, that disorderly separations attempt that discipline and distinguishing of the godly and the notoriously wicked, which such ungodly pastors will not attempt. See Lev. xix. 17; Matt. xviii. 15, 16; 1 Cor. v.; Titus iii. 10; Jer. xv. 19; Psalm xv. 4; 2 Thess. iii. 6—15; Rom. xvi. 17; 2 Tim. iii. 4, 5.

3. But, O, how great an honour is it to God and to religion, when *kings, princes, and states* do zealously devote their power to God, from whom they do receive it, and labour to make their kingdoms holy! When truth, sobriety, and piety have the countenance of human powers, and rulers wholly set themselves to further the faithful preaching and practising of the holy faith, and to unite and strengthen the ministers and churches, and to suppress iniquity, and be a terror to evil-doers, it taketh Satan's great advantage out of his hand, and worketh on carnal men by such means as they can feel and understand. Not that God needs the help of man, but that he hath settled officers and a natural order, by which he usually worketh in the world. And as it cannot be expected that an unholy parent and master should have a holy family, or an unholy pastor a holy church, unless by extraordinary mercy; no more can we expect that ungodly magistrates should have a godly kingdom or commonwealth; of which the sacred history of the Jewish and Israelitish kings doth give you a full confirmation. But this I must now say no more of. And thus I have told you in twenty particulars, what are those good works in which the light of Christians must shine before men to the glorifying of God.

* For an explanation of this phrase, see the note in page 258.

OBJECTION. "Doth not Matt. v. 10—12 contradict all this?—'Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil things against you falsely, for my sake.'"

ANSWER. No : you must here distinguish, 1. Of *men* : 2. Of *righteousness and good works*.

1. *The men* that we have to do with are, (1.) Ordinary natural men, corrupted by original sin ; but yet not hardened to serpentine malignity, as some are. (2.) Or they are men that by sinning against nature and common light are forsaken and given up to malignant minds.

2. *The good works* which natural light and human interest can discern and commend, do differ from those which are merely evangelical, of supernatural revelation.

(1.) *Malignant persons*, hardened in enmity, will scorn and persecute holiness itself, and even that good which reason justifies ; and therefore are called "unreasonable, wicked men." (2 Thess. iii. 2.) Good works with these men make us odious, unless they are such as gratify their lusts.

(2.) But there are *natural men*, not yet so hardened and forsaken, who are usually they that the gospel doth convert. And these have not yet so blinded nature, nor lost all sense of good and evil, but that they honour him that doeth good in all the twenty particulars which I have named, and think ill of those that do the contrary ; though yet they relish not the Christian righteousness, and things of supernatural revelation, for want of faith.

Let us briefly now apply it.

USES.

USE I. This informs us what an honourable state Christianity and true godliness is ; when God hath made us to be the lights of the world, to shine before men to the glory of his holiness, as the sun and stars do to the glory of his power. No wonder if in glory we shall shine as stars in the firmament of our Father, if we do so here. (Dan. xii. 3 ; Matt. xiii. 43 ; Phil. ii. 15.) This must not make us proud, but thankful ; for our pride is our shame, and our humility is our glory.

USE II. And what wonder if all the powers of darkness do bend their endeavours to obscure this sacred light ? The prince of darkness is the enemy of the "Father of lights ;" and this is the great war between Christ and Satan in the world :—Christ is "the Light of the world," and setteth-up ministerial lights for the world, and for his house ; his work is to send them forth, to teach them, and defend them, and to send his Spirit to work in and by them, to bring men to the everlasting Light : and Satan's work is to stir-up all that he can against them, high and low, learned and unlearned ; and to put Christ's lights, both ministers and people, under a bushel ; and to make the world believe that they are their enemies and come to hurt them, that they may be hated as the scorn and offscouring of the world ; and to keep-up ignorance in ministers themselves, that, the church's eyes being dark, the darkness may be great. But let us pray that God would "forgive our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers, and turn their hearts ;" and that he would "open our lips, that our mouths may show forth his praise ;" and, though his ministers and people have their faulty weaknesses, that he would "be merciful to

our infirmities, and grant that those things which the craft and subtilty of the devil or man worketh against us, may be brought to nought, and by the providence of his goodness may be dispersed; that we his servants, being hindered by no persecution, may give thanks to him in his holy church, and serve him in holiness and pureness of life, to his glory; through Jesus Christ."

USE III. You may see hence how much those men are mistaken, who talk of the good works or lives of Christians, as that which must have no honour, lest it dishonour God; as if all the honour were taken from Christ which is given to good works, and the patient's health were the dishonour of the physician; when we are redeemed and purified to be "zealous of good works," and "created for them in Christ Jesus;" (as Titus ii. 14; Eph. ii. 10;) yea, and shall be judged according to our works.

USE IV. This informeth you, that the good works or lives of Christians is a great means ordained by Christ for the convincing of sinners, and the glorifying of God in the world. Preaching doeth much, but it is not appointed to do all. The *lives* of preachers must also be a convincing light; and all true Christians, men and women, are called to preach to the world by their good works; and a holy, righteous, and sober life is the great ordinance of God, appointed for the saving of yourselves and others. O that the Lord would bring this close to all our hearts! Christians, if you abhor dumb teachers, because they starve and betray souls, take heed lest you condemn yourselves; you owe men the convincing helps of a holy, fruitful life, as well as the preacher owes them his ministry. Preach by well-doing, shine-out in good works; or else you are no lights of Christ, but betrayers of men's souls: you rob all about you of a great ordinance of God, a great means appointed by him for men's salvation. The world will judge of the scriptures by your lives, and of religion by your lives, and of Christ himself by your lives! If your lives are such as tend to persuade men, that Christians are but like other men, yea, that they are but self-conceited sinners, as carnal, sensual, uncharitable, proud, self-seeking, worldly, envious, as others, and so that Christianity is but such; this is a horrid blaspheming of Christ, how highly soever your tongues may speak of him, and how low soever your knees may bow to him. O that you knew how much of God's great work of salvation in the world is to be done by Christians' lives! Your lives must teach men to believe that there is a heaven to be won, and a hell to be escaped: your lives must help men to believe that Christ and his word are true: your lives must tell men what holiness is, and convince them of the need of regeneration, and that the Spirit of sanctification is no fancy, but the Witness of Jesus Christ in the world: your lives must tell men by repentance and obedience that sin is the greatest evil, and must show them the difference between the righteous and the wicked: yea, the holiness of God must be glorified by your lives: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the scripture, the church, and heaven itself, must be known much by our lives. And may not I say, then, with the apostle? 2 Peter iii. 11: "What manner of persons, then, ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness," when "the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us to deny ungod-

liness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world?" (Titus ii. 11, 12.)

USE v. But, alas! what suitable and plentiful matter doth this offer us for our humiliation and lamentation on such a day as this! A flood of tears is not too much to lament the scandals of the Christian world. With what wounded hearts should we think of the state of the churches in Armenia, Syria, Egypt, Abassia, and all the oppressed Greeks, and all the poor deceived and oppressed Papists, and all the ignorant, carnal Protestants! O, how unlike are your lives to your Christian faith, and to the pattern left them by their Lord! Doth a worldly, proud, and fleshly, and contentious clergy glorify God? Doth an ignorant ministry glorify him, who understand not the message which they should deliver? Will the world turn Christians by seeing Christians seek the blood and ruin of each other, and hearing even preachers reproach each other, or seeing them silence or persecute each other? or by seeing the people run into many sects, and separate from one another, as unworthy of Christian communion? Will proud, ignorant, censorious, fleshly, worldly professors of religion ever draw the world to love religion? or will peevish, self-willed, impatient, discontented souls, that are still wrangling, crying, and repining, make men believe that their religion rejoiceth, blesseth, and satisfieth the soul, and maketh men far happier than all others in the world? Alas! what wonder that so small a part of the world are Christians, and so few converted to the love of holiness, when the great means is denied them by you, which God hath appointed for their conversion, and the world hath not one helper for a hundred or thousand that it should have? You cry out of those that put-out the church-lights under pretence of snuffing them, while yourselves are darkness or as a stinking snuff.

O brethren and Christians all! I beseech you, let us now and often closely ask ourselves, "What do we more than an Antonine, a Seneca, or a Cicero, or a Socrates did, beyond opinions, words, and formalities?" What do you which is like to convert the world, to convince an infidel, or glorify God? Nay, do not some among us think that it is the height, or part, of their religion, to live so contrary to the world, as to be singular from others, even in lawful or indifferent things, and to do little or nothing which the world thinks well of? As if crossing and displeasing men needlessly were their winning conversation. O, when once we go as far beyond them in love, humility, meekness, patience, fruitfulness, mortification, self-denial, and heavenliness, as we do in opinions, profession, and self-esteem, *then* we shall win souls, and glorify God, and he will also glorify us!

USE vi. And here we see the wonderful mercy of God to the world, who hath appointed them so much means for their conviction and salvation. So many Christians as there be in the world, so many practical preachers and helps to men's conversion are there appointed by God. And let the blame and shame lie on us, where it is due, and not on God, if yet the world remain in darkness. It is God's will that every Christian in the world should be as a star, to shine to sinners in their darkness; and, O, then how gloriously would the world be bespangled and enlightened! If you say, "Why then doth

not God make Christians better?" that is a question which cannot be well answered without a larger opening of the methods of grace than we can now have leisure for, and therefore must be done in its proper season.

USE VII. Those that honour God, he will honour; and therefore let us also give them that honour which is their due. The barren professors, who honour themselves by over-valuing their poor knowledge, gifts, and grace, and affecting too great a distance from their brethren, and censuring others as unworthy of their communion without proof, are not the men that honour God, and can lay claim to no great honour from men. But God hath among us a prudent, holy, humble, laborious, patient ministry, that glorify him by their works and patience; and he hath among us a meek and humble, a blameless, and a loving, and fruitful, sort of Christians, who imitate the purity, charity, and simplicity, yea, and concord, of the primitive church. These tell the world to their sight and experience, that religion is better than ignorance and carnality: these tell the world, that Christ and his holy word are true, while he doeth that in renewing and sanctifying souls which none else in the world can do. These show the world, that faith and holiness and self-denial and the hopes of immortality are no deceits: these glorify God, and are the great benefactors of the world. I most solemnly profess, that, did I not know such a people in the world, who, notwithstanding their infirmities, do manifest a holy and heavenly disposition in their lives, I should want, myself, so great a help to my faith in Christ, and the promise of life eternal, that, I fear, without it my faith would fail. And had I never known a holier ministry and people than those that live but a common life, and excel Heathens in nothing but their belief or opinions and church-orders and formalities, I should find my faith assaulted with so great temptations, as, I doubt, I should not well withstand. No talk will persuade men that he is the best physician that healeth no more nor worse diseases than others do; nor would Christ be taken for the Saviour of the world, if he did not save men; and he saveth them not, if he make them not holier and better than other men.

O, then, how much do we owe to Christ for sending his Spirit into his saints, and for exemplifying his holy word on holy souls, and for giving us as many visible proofs of his holiness, power, and truth, as there are holy Christians in the world! We must not flatter them, nor excuse their faults, nor puff them up; but because the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour, we must accordingly love and honour them, and Christ in them: for Christ telleth us, that he is "glorified in them" here, (John xvii. 10,) and that what is done to them, his brethren, even the least, is taken as done to him; (Matt. xxv. 40;) and he will "be glorified and admired in them," when he cometh in his glory at the last; (2 Thess. i. 8—10;) and he will glorify their very works before all the world with a "Well done, good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

SERMON XXIII.

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

SOMETIME CANON OF CHRIST CHURCH, AND MARGARET PROFESSOR OF
DIVINITY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.WHAT IS IT TO DO ALL WE DO IN THE NAME OF CHRIST? AND
HOW MAY WE DO SO?*And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord
Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.—Colossians iii. 17.*

THERE have been, and still are, many great and famous names in the world into which men have been baptized, according to which they have been called, and also walked in the world: *Όνοματα ανθρωπων* [“Names of men”]. (Rev. xi. 13.) “Men of great name,” or “men of renown.” (Gen. vi. 4.) What a renowned name had the beast in the earth, that “the world wondered after the beast, and worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast?” (Rev. xiii. 3, 4.) Pharaoh was a great name amongst the kings of Egypt, who were so called from their famous predecessors: so the kings of the Amalekites were called Agag, and of Tyre Hiram, and of Lycia Antiochus, of Pontus Mithridates, of the emperors of Rome Cæsars. And in the church, professors have affected to be called by the name of some eminent persons. (1 Cor. iii. 4, 5.) Some cried-up Paul, others Peter; and this was a growing evil in the church. (1 Cor. i. 12—14.) They ambitiously affected to be denominated from some eminent persons among them; as the Lutherans and Calvinists, and many others at this day, have been called and denominated from some great persons that have been famous in their generation.

But here is a name in my text [that] is above all names in heaven and earth; and all Christians are called by this name, and call on this name. (Jer. xiv. 9; Amos ix. 12.) This name you must trust in, and boast in, beyond and above all names whatsoever. “Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength: and in the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.” (Isai. xlv. 24, 25.) See what a name is given to Christ, Isai. ix. 6, and bow to it: “His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor;” and consider every letter of his name, and adore it. The apostle, according to his usual manner, in this epistle having spoken of the doctrine of the gospel, and how they received it, and the influence it had on them; (Col. i. 12, 13;) and concerning Christ, in whom they had redemption; (verses 14—19;) and of the excellency of his person, and of the riches of the glory of his grace, revealed in it; (verse 27;) then, chap. ii., he stirs them up to live such lives as becometh the gospel, and to beware of seducers. (Verses 16—19.) Then, chap. iii., he puts them in mind of several duties, throughout the chapter. He

lays-down some general exhortations, with reference to the gospel, and their living suitably to it, from verses 1 to 17. Then he proceeds to particular duties in our place and relations; (verses 18—25;) and in this verse 17, having laid down something, he gathers up all into one sum,—how to carry themselves in the whole course of their lives in their thoughts, words, and works.

DOCTRINE.

We may observe from the general scope, *that the doctrine of the gospel carrieth the highest and strictest obligations upon all such to whom it is revealed to duty and service in their places and relations to God and man.*

In the words we have, 1. *A rule laid down.* 2. *The things that are under the rule.*—Words, works, and thoughts, and secret motions of the heart; which works also are well known to God, and so they come under rule. 3. Here is *the universality of the rule* in its extent and full compass. It fetcheth-in all words and works without exception, and all persons: for this “you” takes-in all persons, of what rank or degree soever. 4. Here is *the manner how they must be done*, so as to answer the mind of God in the name of Christ. 5. Here is *a further rule*, or rather a part of the general rule,—that we should give thanks, &c. (1.) Here is *the duty itself.*—Thanksgiving. (2.) *The object of it.*—God, &c. (3.) *How it must be managed.*—By Christ, or through Christ.

OBSERVATION I. All our actions, thoughts, words, and works, must be done in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

OBSERV. II. All praises and thanksgivings, as they are only due to God, so they must be performed by us to him by Jesus Christ, that they may be accepted of him.

All thanks are due to God the Father, who is the Father of Christ, and in him our God and Father; and therefore this work is to be done only in, by, and through Jesus Christ: “Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Eph. v. 20.) All glory [is to] be given by the church to Christ: (Heb. xiii. 21:) and Rom. xvi. 27 [informs us] how this great duty is to be performed: “To God, through Christ Jesus.”

OBSERV. III. Praises and thanksgivings are the great duty of our lives; for if we do all things in the name of Jesus Christ, then whatever we do in his name is special matter of thanksgiving. “In every thing give thanks:” if we think a good thought, or do a good work, it is of God; and therefore be thankful; and it is a sacrifice to be tendered to God every day. (Heb. xiii. 15.)

As to the first doctrine, consider,

I. What it is to “do all in the name of the Lord Jesus” Christ.

II. Why we must do all in that name.

III. How shall we come to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ?

IV. Some uses.

I. *What is it to do all in the name of Christ?*

1. *It is to go to him as a Mediator, or to go to God by him.*—For we

must upon all occasions go to God in a way of prayer by Christ, if we will be accepted. God's Spirit tells us, that he is a God hearing prayer; therefore unto him "shall all flesh come" and appear; (Psalm lxx. 2;) not come to God in prayer, but by Christ as Mediator. Beza sets it out, *Invocato Christi nomine*, ["Having called upon the name of Christ,"] we must go to God; *quod autem addit, δι' αὐτοῦ, diligenter notandum est, ut sciamus Deum frustra coli nisi Christus Mediator interveniat*: "We must go to God 'by him:' we must take special notice of that word; for we do in vain make our addresses to God, but by the intercession of our Mediator." All our supplications are to be put in the name of Christ, as he bids us, John xv. 3, 16; and he tells them, Whatsoever they shall ask the Father in his name, &c. "At that day," that is, after his ascension and giving the Spirit, "ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you," &c. (John xvi. 23, 26.) He speaks this by way of encouragement unto them,—that they should go in his name, and then they should certainly speed. He gives as loving friends sometimes do, when they certainly intend to do some special good for a friend; they say, "I will not tell you what I will do for you;" intimating thereby, they will do what they can for them.

2. *It is to do all by his authority, power, and command.*—Matt. xviii. 18—20, Christ tells them, that whatever they did "bind or loose on earth" in his "name," that is, by his authority and command, should "be bound in heaven:" for when two or three are gathered together in his "name," that is, by virtue of his command, he would be in the midst of them. All power and authority is given of the Father to Christ; and "therefore go in the name of the Father," &c. (Matt. xxviii. 18—20.) Laws and proclamations which go forth in the name of the king,—they go forth in his authority. All our actions come under His command; He "is our King and our Lawgiver." (Isai. xxxiii. 22.) Though "other lords beside" Christ "have had dominion over us; but by him only will we make mention of his name." (Isai. xxvi. 13.) By virtue of his command and authority, "we will make mention of thy name;" we will admire and praise thee. He is a Sovereign Lord who commands and doth impose laws on the consciences of men. His laws reach the inward as well as the outward man; else all that we do cannot be done in his name, and by virtue of some authority from him, who is "King of kings and Lord of lords," (Rev. xix. 16,) and "the only Potentate." (1 Tim. vi. 15.)

3. *It is to do all in his strength and power.*—This is to do all in his name. Thus, Annas and Caiaphas, &c., asked Peter and John, "by what power, or by what name," they had done this. (Acts iv. 6, 7.) Peter told them that in the name of Jesus Christ did that man stand whole before them. (Verse 10.) Thus did they come in the power of Christ. To go about a work in the name of Christ, is to go about it and do it in his strength and power. David went against Goliath "in the name of the Lord of hosts." (1 Sam. xvii. 45.) So David said, that "in the name of the Lord he would destroy them," that is, in the strength and power of the Lord. (Psalm cxviii. 10, 11.) Paul "can do all things through Christ who strengthens" him. (Phil. iv. 13.) His grace was sufficient for him. (2 Cor. xii. 9.) No man in the strength of his own parts

or gifts can do any thing so as to be accepted. "Without me ye can do nothing:" (John xv. 5 :) he doth not say, that "you may do something," or that "you can do but little," but, "You can do nothing without me." He "worketh all our works for us," (Isai. xxvi. 12,) even the will and the deed. (Phil. ii. 13.) Paul "laboured more abundantly than they all;" but he presently corrected himself: "Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." (1 Cor. xv. 10.)

4. *For his glory.* 1 Cor. x. 31.—So that as he is the Author, so he is the End of all we do. (Rom. xi. 36.) All people must "honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." (John v. 23.) Christ is the Alpha and Omega of all. (Rev. i. 8.) All glory and honour is due to Christ, as is due to the Father. Rev. iv. 9—11, they "give glory to him that sits upon the throne;" and, Rev. v. 12, 13, there is all honour given "unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." They who do all for the glory of God, do all their actions to the honour of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; so that when God doeth any thing for us, he doeth it for his name's sake; and therefore, when David begged of God, that for his name's sake he would lead him, (Psalm xxxi. 3,) he means, for his glory. We should have an eye at the glory of Christ.

5. To do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, is *to live a life of faith for a supply of all things for life and godliness.*—As the apostle speaks, 2 Peter i. 2, 3. He tells us, we have "all things;" that is, we that have "like precious faith," spoken of in verse 1, and that live in the exercise of it upon Christ, as Paul did. (Gal. ii. 20.) This faith in Christ's name, being exercised in a way of prayer, is the way to obtain whatever we ask. (John xvi. 23.) Every believer doth live a life of faith, (Heb. xi. 33,) in all conditions, and at all times, in the whole course of his life; so that what Peter said of the healing of the cripple, may in a sort be said of a believer in the course of his life: "By faith in Christ's name he does all."

6. To do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, it is *to walk in the religion of the Lord Jesus.*—According to his rule, for doctrine, worship, and practice of life. The people of God do say, "We will walk in the name of the Lord our God." (Micah iv. 5.) The Heathens did own and honour the names of their gods, especially in the religion, worship, and institutions of their gods; and so the people of God, that walk in the name of the Lord Jesus, keep close to the religion of Christ. He "that nameth the name of Christ must depart from iniquity." (2 Tim. ii. 19.) It is on this account that the servants of Christ are hated and persecuted,—for his religion which they professed. (Matt. x. 22; Luke xxi. 17.) So, Rev. ii. 3, they are said for his name's sake to have laboured, &c.; verse 13, to hold fast his name; and, Rev. iii. 8, not to deny his name. All people join in communion with their God and one another, that trust in the name of their God. The primitive Christians did walk and "continue in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship;" (Acts ii. 42, 43;) and they about the throne, at the sea of ordinances appointed by Christ, (Rev. xv. 2,) worshipping of him in a way of visible communion with all such as are joined to "the God of Abraham." (Psalm xlvi. 9.) All that walk in the name of Christ walk in all the ways and ordinances of Christ: "In all his ways," (Deut. viii. 6; xi. 22,) and in no other.

Matt. xxviii. 19, 20 : "Observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

7. It is to follow his example.—The examples of persons who have had great names in the world, have prevailed much for doing and suffering. All such as are professedly the disciples of Christ, his name is upon them in a special manner, and therefore they should follow his example. Matt. xvi. 24 : "And follow me." We must walk as Christ walked. (1 John ii. 6.) We must follow his example ; for his life was exemplary. (1 Peter ii. 21—23.) He presseth his own example for meekness and lowliness, Matt. xi. 29 ; and, John xiii. 15 : "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." It was an example of the greatest condescension in the eleven offices of love. In Eph. v. 25, husbands have Christ propounded as an example of love to their wives. Persons of eminency and dignity have great names, and carry many followers ; and many walk according to their example, and upon that account are called by their names ; for examples prevail more than precepts.

II. The second thing proposed was, *the reasons why we must do all in the name of Christ.*

1. *Because all we have, are, or can do, is of Christ.* (1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.)—All grace and strength to us is from him ; (1 Cor. i. 30 ;) so that he is a believer's "all, and in all." (Col. iii. 11.) All that God gives to us is through him, and by him only. (Eph. i. 3, &c.) Adoption is by him ; (verse 5 ;) the seal of the Spirit, and the earnest of our inheritance, are by him. (Verses 13, 14.) "We are created unto good works in" him. (Eph. ii. 10.) Reconciliation and peace are by him : (2 Cor. v. 18 ;) all our actual supplies are by him. (Phil. iv. 19.) His "grace is exceeding abundant in" him : (1 Tim. i. 14, 15 ;) for he is a super-excellent person, and hath the pre-eminence above all things, a name above every name ; in him all things subsist ; in him all fulness dwells ; as the apostle shows, Col. i. 16—19 ; and therefore it pleaseth the Father that we should receive all "grace for grace" through him.

2. *Because the Father hath exalted Christ, and given him a name above every name.*—That he who was so much despised and rejected, and whose name was a reproach and scorn to all ; (Isai. liii. 2—4 ;) *that* name, so much abased, the Father hath appointed that it shall be exalted "above every name," (Phil. ii. 8—10,) and all other names shall vanish and be as nothing before this name, there being no other name in heaven or in earth by which we shall be saved. (Acts iv. 12.) Therefore all must "honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." (John v. 23.) Upon this account all people shall be beholden to him for all the good that ever they do, or have, or are.

3. *Because we cannot be accepted, either as to our persons or performances, but by him.*—"Accepted in the Beloved." (Eph. i. 6.) In Him alone He is well pleased ; (Matt. iii. 17 ;) so that all that goes to God from us is by his hand, it must be presented by his hand, and perfumed with his incense. (Rev. viii. 3, 4.) Abel's sacrifice found acceptance by faith in the Messiah, when he presented it to God. (Heb. xi. 4.) We have our Lord Christ, Rev. v. 6, "in the midst of the throne," to negotiate between "Him that sits upon the throne," and the saints that are

about the throne ; so that nothing comes from heaven to us in a way of blessing, but what comes through his hand ; and nothing goes from us to heaven in a way of duty, so as to be accepted, but only by his hand. (John xvi. 23.) So that his name is the only prevailing name with God, he having satisfied the justice of God, pacified the wrath of God, and removed the curse of God from us ; so that all sacrifices whatever that find the way to heaven, and find acceptance there, must of necessity be in his name. (Heb. xiii. 15 ; v. 1.)

4. *Because all that comes from God to us must be by his hand.*—He is the Jacob's ladder spoken of, Gen. xxviii. 12. God acts toward us as a God in a covenant of grace and peace with us only in Christ ; (Heb. xiii. 20, 21 ; 1 Peter v. 10 ;) and therefore the apostolical benedictions and prayers for "grace, mercy, and peace," are "from God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. i. 7 ; 1 Cor. i. 3, 4 ; 2 Cor. i. 2 ; Eph. i. 2, 3.) 1 Peter i. 2, 3, he calls them "elect," &c., by "God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, and blood of Jesus." Verse 3, we are said to be "blessed" by "the Father, and begotten," &c., "through Christ ;" and therefore, since God doth act as a God of all grace and peace, we must do all in his name, by which the Father is propitiated toward us, he being "made sin for us," (2 Cor. v. 21,) and "a curse." (Gal. iii. 13.)

QUESTION. But here comes in a question : "How they can be said to do any thing in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that are not one with him ? though yet they pretend to do all in his name, but are not owned by him." (Matt. vii. 22, 23.)

ANSWER. I answer, 1. It is one thing to pretend to do a thing in the name of Christ, another thing to do it indeed ; that is, by true faith in his name, by which they are made one with him.

2. There was in that age a faith of miracles, which though it were an extraordinary gift, and common both to believers and reprobates, they might be said to do those great things in Christ's name ; that is, by a power derived from him, though they were not in Christ, neither did own him as their Saviour, nor were owned by him.

3. What is done properly in his name in the sense of the text must take into its compass all the foregoing particulars mentioned ; else it will not be accepted : * it must be done in the name of Christ as Mediator. Many things may be done in the name of Christ, even mountains may be removed, (1 Cor. xiii. 2,) and yet not be done by faith in his name, as has been said.

III. The third thing propounded was, *How we may come to do all in the name of our Lord Jesus.* And this may be instead of a USE OR DIRECTION to us.

1. We must be supposed to be in Christ before we can do any thing in Christ's name.—According to that in John xv. 4, 5, where he tells us, that, except we abide in him, (that supposeth that they are in him first,) we can do nothing ; for, verse 5, he compares our being in him to that of a branch in the vine, which cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide

* *Bonum non nisi ex integrâ causâ, malum ex quolibet defectu.* "A truly good action is never performed except from a pure and perfect cause ; a bad one, always from some defect." —EDIT.

in the vine. Luther, inquiring into the reason why so many ordinary things done by the saints are set down in scripture with a mark of honour upon them, and yet the moral virtues and famous deeds of the great philosophers and others are passed by, answers, that the reason is, because their persons are not in Christ, and therefore their actions are not accepted; and saith, *Si vel Cicero vel Socrates sanguinem sudasset, tamen propterea non placeret Deo*: "If Socrates or Cicero had sweat drops of blood, their actions had not pleased God." (*Comment. in Gen. xxix.*)

2. Supposing we are one with Christ, we must *exercise faith upon him*, and have constant recourse to him, in all that ever we do, *for the supplies of his grace and Spirit*.—By faith resigning all to him, casting all our burdens and cares upon him, committing ourselves and all our affairs to him, and fetching-in all our strength from him. (1 Peter ii. 20; v. 7.) Christ tells us, Whatever we ask the Father in his name shall be given to us; (John xv. 16; xvi. 23, 26;) for whatever we "ask in prayer, believing, we shall receive." (Matt. xxi. 22; James v. 15.) So that if we would be enabled to do all in the name of Christ, we must exercise faith in his name in prayer to God for all things; for he is in office in heaven for this purpose: "For he ever liveth to make intercession for us." (Heb. vii. 25.) The hand of faith put forth in prayer, though but in ejaculatory prayer, draws virtue from heaven: as we read, when He was on earth, those that did but touch him drew virtue from him. (Luke vi. 19; viii. 46.)

3. *Living [in] close and secret communion with the Lord Jesus in the use of all his ordinances*.—By and through which he communicates himself in the fulness and freeness of life, light, love, and grace to our souls; for they be the golden pipes spoken of, Zech. iv. 12, by which the golden oil is conveyed to our souls; for his name is an "ointment poured forth" in days of holy communion. (Canticles i. 3.) By this means we come to have further acquaintance with him and peace from him, to see his power and glory, and our souls to "be satisfied as with marrow and fatness;" (Psalm lxiii. 5;) and to be changed into his image, (2 Cor. iii. 18,) and to be refreshed with fuller tastes of his love, which is better than wine.

4. *Exercise your thoughts much upon him, and be much taken-up with him in the course of your lives*.—But in a special manner upon singular occasions. The Psalmist saith, "I am continually with thee;" (Psalm lxiii. 23;) that was, in his heart and thoughts. Let your thoughts be taken-up much in the consideration how to manage your affairs so as may be according to the mind of Christ, by strength derived from him, and for his honour, that we may be accepted in our works.

OBJECTION. Perhaps you will object, that "it is impossible we should in every business of our lives have actual thoughts of Christ and his glory, or go actually to him for assistance and guidance in every particular business."

I ANSWER, 1. There may and must be an habitual, gracious, holy frame of heart in us, wrought by the Spirit, by which we may be strongly inclined to the Lord Christ, and his word as our rule, and his glory as our end; so that we do, in the full purpose of our hearts, resolve to trust

in him, and commit ourselves to him, and rest upon him for help, assistance, guidance, acceptance, and success in all things. What David prayed for, for himself and people, when they were in a good frame of heart, is the desire and endeavour of every believer; namely, that the Lord would "keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of their heart, and prepare their heart unto him." (1 Chron. xxix. 18.) This is the habitual preparation of the heart for God; this frame of heart is the new creature in us.

2. When we have especial and particular work to do for Christ, then there ought to be an actual preparation of our hearts for him, and stirring up the grace that is in us, an actual making-out after him, and laying hold on him for strength and grace from him "in time of need." (Heb. iv. 16.) This is especially to be done upon more solemn and momentous occasions; *then* we must in an especial manner think upon that word that was spoken to Israel: "Prepare to meet thy God." (Amos iv. 12.) We read, Exod. xl. 30, 31, there was a laver before the altar, in which they were to wash before they went into the congregation for service. We cannot sanctify God in an ordinance, except we prepare for him; which is all one with sanctifying of God. (Lev. x. 3.) Samuel, when he came to sacrifice to the Lord, said to the elders of Bethlehem, "Sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice." (1 Sam. xvi. 5.)

3. The more frequent actual thoughts we have of Christ and his word, and our eye upon the rule, and his glory as our end, it is the better ever. Therefore we should often call upon ourselves as Deborah did: "Awake, Deborah, awake," &c. (Judges v. 12.) There must be an actual excitation of ourselves, and exercising of our graces, when we have some special duty to perform. It is said of Samson, that he went out and shook himself, "as at other times." (Judges xvi. 20.) It seems to have been his manner, when he went about any great work. We should stir-up our hearts, and send-up frequent ejaculatory prayers, though we cannot engage in a solemn way of duty to God; and much work is done that way. Moses sent up an ejaculation upon a great exigent, which reached heaven; yet there was not a word spoken by him: yet saith God, "Wherefore criest thou unto me?" (Exod. xiv. 15.) We should often cast the eye of faith up toward God, (Isai. xlv. 22,) as they looked up to the brasen serpent, and were healed. The people of God looked to the temple, when they could not come near to it; and the temple was a type of Christ. (1 Kings viii. 29, 30, 35; Jonah ii. 4.)

This which hath been laid down by way of direction, I would press by way of EXHORTATION:—In a word, to have frequent recourse to the Lord Jesus Christ, since he doth so frequently press us to this very thing. The oftener we visit him, the more enlarged we are in our desires toward him; the more we receive from him, and the better welcome we are to him, and the Father for his sake. He bids us open our mouths wide, and he will fill them; and takes it very ill at our hands, when we are straitened in our hearts toward him. (Psalm lxxxi. 13—16.) We cannot go to God as a Father in Christ, in Christ's name, but we must needs speed; (Heb. iv. 16;) and we cannot speed but by him, and upon his account; for, 1. We have *admittance and access to the Father* only by Christ. (Eph. iii. 12.) 2. We have *assistance* only through

him. (John xv. 5 ; Phil. iv. 13.) 3. In regard of *acceptance*, which is only in and through him. (Eph. i. 3, 6.) 4. In regard of *recompence* ; (Rev. xxii. 12 ;) our reward is only by him. (Matt. v. 11, 12.) That is a great reward for Christ's sake, "eternal life ;" the greatest reward is by Christ. (Rom. vi. 23.)

IV. The fourth thing propounded was some uses ; that since we must do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, hence may be inferred,

First. That all our actions, as they must be done in his strength and for his glory, (1 Cor. x. 31,) so by his authority and according to his rule and word.—It is not in our power, nor at our liberty, to act as we please, according to our own fancy, or for our own ends : "None of us liveth to himself ;" (Rom. xiv. 7, 8 ;) as if he should say, "We are none of our own : therefore, living and dying, we are the Lord's ; and so in neither at our own disposing." He had spoken before of their eating or forbearing to eat, how they ought to eat, or not to eat, according to the will of God : it must be to the Lord's glory ; especially considering that He who requires we should do all in his strength and name and for his glory, hath such a title to us, to lay laws upon us, as none else hath. (1 Cor. vi. 20.) So that all our actions must come under some rules general, if not particular, 1. Of piety to God. 2. Of charity to men. 3. Of sobriety to ourselves. And all this the gospel teacheth us : "The grace of God that hath appeared to all men teacheth us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." (Titus ii. 11, 12.) There is the rule of the new creature, by which a saint doth walk in his general and particular calling "in all holy conversation and godliness." (Gal. vi. 16 ; 2 Peter iii. 11.) They are a proud generation that say as they in Psalm xii. 4 : "Our lips are our own, who is lord over us ?" We will not be bounded by any laws, nor walk by any rule, nor be controlled by any whatever." But we have not so learned Christ ; we have our bounds and limits set us, not only in sacred but civil things. Therefore bishop Davenant, upon Col. iii. 17, speaks fully to our purpose : *Fallitur vulgus, cum iudicat licere sibi uti victu, vestitu, sermone, aut quocunque adiaphorâ, suo arbitrio : nam hæc omnia ad regulam adhibenda sunt ; alioquin, licet ipsâ re nullum sit vitium, erit tamen in utente :* "The vulgar sort are much mistaken, who judge it lawful for them to use their liberty wholly in eating, drinking, clothing, speaking, or any other indifferent things, according to their own wills and pleasure : for all these things are to be brought under rule ; otherwise, what is lawful in itself, may be unlawful to him that useth it.

*INFERENCE II. That they are very bold and saucy wretches, who presume to entitle Christ to their impious and wicked courses :—In nomine Domini incipit omne malum.** How many do justify themselves in their superstitious practices by the word of God ! How many be like Satan, who, when he tempted Christ, produced scripture to enforce his temptations. (Matt. iv. 2—10.) So, too many cite scripture for their false worship, and for their false doctrines and wicked lives ; "but wisdom is justified of her children." (Matt. xi. 19.) It was a profanation of God's

* "Every kind of wickedness is commenced with a profane invocation, in the name of the Lord."—EDIT.

name, when the Israelites proclaimed a feast to the Lord, which was to their idols. (Exod. xxxii. 5.) We find the false apostles pretend as much to the name of Christ as the apostle Paul did, and to preach in his name, though they preached false doctrine; (2 Cor. xi. 13;) and anti-Christ himself pretends to be like the lamb, when he speaks like a dragon. (Rev. xiii. 11.)

INFER. III. Hence we infer, *that we cannot expect God's blessing upon any thing which is not done in the name of Christ.*—What we undertake, and not in the fear of the dreadful name of the Lord Jehovah, not for his honour and according to his word, we cannot expect his blessing: none can expect God's guidance, assistance, or success in that which cannot be warranted by the word of Christ, all blessings being wholly and only in his name. (Eph. i. 3.) We have all things in Christ in a way of blessing. (1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.) Whilst we are with him, he will be with us; (2 Chron. xv. 2;) while we are with him in a way of duty, he will be with us in a way of blessing.

INFER. IV. Hence it follows, *that it is not in the power of any person, by natural or acquired parts, to do any thing according to the rule of Christ, or for his glory, which is not done in his strength.*—And therefore Paul, who could “do all things through Christ which strengthened him,” (Phil. iv. 13,) could not so much as think a good thought without him. (2 Cor. iii. 5.) And this our Lord Christ puts-out of question, where he tells us, “Without me ye can do nothing.” (John xv. 5.) It is not in the name of the most excellent parts or gifts or grace whatever, that we can do any thing acceptable or well-pleasing to God.

INFER. V. *Whatever excellency there is in any action or worthy achievement, so as to commend it to God, it is from Christ, through faith in his name.*—Though the action may be a common action in itself, or perhaps some base, servile, low employment, yet being done in the name of Christ, with faith in him, with care and conscience to please him, such an action far surpasseth the great and noble exploit of Alexander the Great, of Pompey, or Cæsar, or of any of the renowned heroes in the world, who, in the name of parts or gifts or any acquired excellences, have done great things in the world. There may be a great difference betwixt persons and their employments, as betwixt a prince and a peasant in their places; and yet a poor peasant doing some common work in an ordinary way, it may be, a piece of drudgery, yet his work being done by faith in Christ's name, it doth as much surpass the person and actions of a prince in a worth and excellency, who doth not manage his public and weighty affairs of state in the name of Christ, as the prince doth surpass him in place. They have great advantage above all others, *who* go about their common employments in the name of Christ and for the honour of Christ,—above all others who act in their own name; as it was with David and Goliath. (1 Sam. xvii. 45.) The lowest actions, done by faith, have a very great honour put upon them by the Spirit of God above all others. The harlot Rahab, receiving the spies by faith, is put among the worthies upon that account. (Heb. xi. 31.) Civil and natural actions, done in the name of Christ, are raised to a very great height, to have the name of “religious” put upon them: thus doth faith in Christ's name turn brass and copper into gold.

Luther saith, that if he might have his option, he would rather choose the lowest and basest employment of a poor rustic or maid-servant, doing their work in faith, before all the victories and triumphs of Alexander the Great or Julius Cæsar. "Why?" Because *hic est Deus, illic est diabolus : hæc est differentia essentialis : hoc non omnes possunt cernere, neque Erasmus quidem vidit* ; that is, "Because with a poor saint God is, and the devil with *them* : and this is an essential difference betwixt them ; every one does not see it ; Erasmus himself did not perceive it." By this name the most contemptible persons in the world are come to be renowned in the church. (Heb. xi. 2, 38, 39.) Those that lived by faith on that name, had a great and good report in heaven ; and though they were despised by the world, yet "the world was not worthy of" them. God never speaks such a word of all the men of great name in the world, as he does of the poorest saint on earth,—that "the world is not worthy of" them. Sure I am that many of those great men of the world were not worthy to live in the world : the world was weary of them, and the worse for them.

INFER. VI. *If all we do well in the world, is to be done in Christ's name and through his strength, it is very fit that we should give him the glory of all.*—Since all we can do is of him, and from him, all must be "to him." (Rom. xi. 36.) We find in Rev. v. 8—14, that the saints and angels fell down and gave glory to God and to the Lamb. The Lord is very jealous of his honour, when men take the glory that is due to him to themselves, and sacrifice to their own acts ; and as God is jealous of his honour, and will endure to have no co-partners with him, (Isai. xlii. 8,) so the servants of Christ are also jealous of themselves, lest, when they have done worthily, they should rob him of his honour ; and therefore the apostle Paul, when he had said, "I laboured more abundantly than they all," seems presently to correct himself : "Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." (1 Cor. xv. 10.)

INFER. VII. Hence it will follow, *that whatever service or worship is done in any [other] name to God, than that of Christ, it is rejected ; or what is done in his name, but not according to his mind, is abhorred of God.*—Though he may do that which is commanded by God, which for substance may be the same that a believer doeth ; yet being not done in the name of Christ, God abhors it. Though they did sacrifice such things as God commanded, yet being not done in the name of the Lord, for his glory, and according to his word, it is rejected of God. (Isai. lviii. 1—3 ; lvi. 3.) Their incense, which was appointed for expiation, was an abomination to God. (Isai. i. 10—14.) So that all the worship of the Jewish synagogue was abhorred of God, because the name of Christ is abhorred by them ; and all the services of Papists, who are of the synagogue of Satan, which are tendered in the name of saints or angels, or of their own merit or righteousness, are rejected with greatest detestation ; all the service of the whole nations of Turks, what are done in the name of Mahomet and their Alcoran, are an abomination to God.

INFER. VIII. Hence learn, *that there is no honouring of God but in the name of his Son.* (John v. 23.)—There can be no true praise given to God in any work by any person, but in and through Christ. "We are created in Christ Jesus unto good works ;" (Eph. ii. 10 ;) so as they

must be a new-created people through Christ, which are a people to his praise. (Psalm cii. 18.) The lowest, meanest work, done by faith in Christ, as it brings great honour to God, so it is greatly honoured by God. A cup of cold water, given upon the account of Christ, has a great reward from him. Salvian speaks to this point very notably: *Non perdidit mercedem suam.* (Matt. x. 42.) *Etiam eam rem in futuro habituram præmium esse dicit, quæ in præsentem pretium non dabit; tantum honoris cultori suo tribuit, ut aliquid esset per fidem, quod hic omnino nihil esset per servilitatem.* “ ‘He shall not lose his reward,’ says he: in the world to come, he shall have a great reward, which perhaps in the present life he may miss of; so great an honour is God pleased to put upon an action done in faith, however mean and inconsiderable, and which by reason of its vileness in the eyes of men is nothing.” A visit of a poor member of Christ, sick or in prison, or an alms given to feed or clothe them, what an honour is put upon these at the last day! (Matt. xxv. 34—36.) But what shall we think of Cyrus and Darius and others, who did so great things for the church of God? (Isai. xlv. 1—4;) and of the king of Tyrus, who, upon account of the protection that the people of God had from him, is called “the anointed cherub that covereth?” (Ezek. xxviii. 14, 16.) To this I answer, that as for Cyrus, though God made great use of him, yet the Lord says expressly of him, that he knew him not; and therefore, as for all those actions they did for the church of God, though God did gain honour by them, yet they did not honour God, nor were they accepted of him, because they were not in Christ.

USE OF EXHORTATION. *To study the name of the Lord Jesus.*—For by how much the more we know of his name, by so much the more we shall trust in him. (Psalm ix. 10.) It is the “name which is above every name.” (Phil. ii. 9.) His name is as sweet, precious “ointment poured forth:” (Canticles i. 3;) the richest treasures of grace are laid up in that name of Christ. (John i. 16.) Study it, that you “may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of it; that you may be filled with all the fulness of God.” (Eph. iii. 18, 19.) There is a surpassing excellency, as in that name, so in the knowledge of it; (Phil. iii. 8;) for by this knowledge we come to the fairest and clearest discoveries of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; the Lord shines into the hearts of such students, and communicates a glorious light unto them. We come by this knowledge, as to see into the treasuries of grace in him, so to possess and enjoy them; and this knowledge carries eternal life with it. (John xvii. 3.)

The next USE IS OF REPROOF.

1. *Too many, of great parts, learning, and worth, yet have ambitiously affected a great name in the church and in the world, to gain followers and make a party, and to be cried up as teaching men.*—This was it which Christ saw was a very prevailing evil among the scribes and Pharisees, and utterly decried it, saying, “Be not ye called Rabbi, Rabbi;” (Matt. xxiii. 8—10;) that is, “Do not affect to be so called, or through pride and ambition delight in these titles.” Augustine was a person of great piety and parts, and he abhorred this spiritual pre-eminency, which

he took notice of in many in his time, who took-up their religion and faith upon trust, and upon the credit of some men of great name in the church. *Non ad hominis nomen ambulo*, said he, *Christi nomen teneo: perirem si essem de parte Pauli; quomodo non perirem si essem ex parte Donati? Recedant omnia humana nomina*: "I walk not according to the names and titles of men: I keep to the name of Christ: I should perish if I took up under the name of Paul, much more under the name of Donatus. Away with all human names!" And the same Augustine, in *Soliloquio*, speaking of Christ, saith, *Vocasti me nomine tuo, signasti me sanguine tuo, unxisti me oleo tuo, de quo unctus fuisti, ut a te Christo dicerer Christianus*: "Thou hast signed me with thy blood, thou hast called me by thy name, I have been anointed with thee, and from Christ I am a Christian." And Luther (tom. ii. *Witten.*) saith, *Primum oro, nomen meum taceatur, et nemo Lutheranus, sed Christianus, appelletur. Quid est Lutherus? Atqui doctrina non est mea, nec pro quopiam sum crucifixus. Unde mihi putido vermium sacco accideret, ut filii Christi a meo vilissimo nomine denominentur? Absit, amici: deleamus schismatica nomina, et denominemur a Christo, cujus doctrinam habemus*: "I desire first, that my name may be concealed, and that none should be called 'a Lutheran,' but 'a Christian.' What is Luther? My doctrine is not mine, but Christ's; I was not crucified for any. How comes it to pass that I, who am but a filthy, stinking bag of worms,—that any of the sons of Christ should be denominated from my name? Away with these schismatical names! let us be denominated from Christ, from whom alone we have our doctrine."

This very thing of affectation of a name and fame in the church hath been very pernicious. The greatest heresies have been owned propagated, and maintained upon this account; as — (lib. i. cap. 20) tells us, the Simonians from Simon Magus; and Justin Martyr, in his Dialogue, saith, some have been called Marcionites, others Valentinians, others Basilidians;—some by one name, some by another, from their first founders. But Lactantius tells us, (*De verâ Sapientiâ*, lib. iv.) when once men come under such denominations, *Christiani esse desierunt, qui, Christi nomine amisso, humana et externa vocabula induerunt*: "they cease to be Christians, when they come under human names and titles in matters of religion." And therefore Paul would have none follow him further than he followed Christ. (1 Cor. xi. 1.) He rejects the honours which some would have put upon him with an indignation. Some affected to be called by his and other great names in the church; some said they were of Paul, &c.; but when he comes to speak as to himself, he speaks with an abhorrence that any should set up his name with Christ's: "What! 'was Paul crucified for you? or were you baptized into the name of Paul?' (1 Cor. i. 12, 13.) God forbid that any should be guilty of so great a sin, as to come under that denomination!"

2. *Others are to be blamed, even the generality of professors, that, having taken the name of Christ upon them, and are called by his name, are a reproach to this high and holy name.*—Who are so far from doing all things in the name of Christ, as they do nothing in his name, but do live against that name; they do not "depart from iniquity," as every Christian upon that account ought to do. (2 Tim. ii. 19.) How many

say they are Christians, but are not! Rev. iii. 9, he calls it blasphemy in them that said they were Jews, that is, Christians, but were not: they pretended indeed to be true Christians, but held such doctrines, and lived in such lewd, sinful practices, as were opposite to Christ. Such persons profane the sacred name of Christ, who live in such a way as [to] cast a blot and imputation upon him. Christians, as such, should be so far from the practice even of such sins as many have very light thoughts of, that they must not so much as name them: "fornication, uncleanness, and covetousness," must not so much as be named by them. (Eph. v. 3, 4.) The Lord Christ and his gospel suffer more by Christians that bear his name, than by others that despise him: they open the mouths of the enemy to blaspheme the holy name of Christ, and the religion of Christ: "they blaspheme that worthy name by which they are called." (James ii. 7.) He had spoken before (verses 1, 2) of some professors who had the faith of the Lord Jesus with respect of persons, and (verse 6) proud rich ones that did oppress others; such men by their wicked practices did blaspheme the name of Christ, by such practices they did cast a blot and scandal upon the religion which they did profess, and by that means caused others to blaspheme the name of Christ.

To the like purpose Paul speaks concerning the Jews, who were high pretenders to the law, yet lived in the continual breach of it. Through them "the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles." (Rom. ii. 24.) So, 2 Peter ii. 1, 2, he had spoken of some, who by their doctrines denied the Lord Christ "that bought them; by reason of whom the way of truth was evil spoken of." By the false doctrines and flagitious lives of professors, the name and religion of Christ is rent and torn in pieces, and brought into contempt among the worst of men; and therefore we find, that when professors are pressed to walk as becometh the gospel, one great argument is taken from the great reproach that else will follow. 1 Tim. vi. 1, he presseth servants to account their masters worthy of double "honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed." The like argument we have upon wives, that "they be discreet," &c., "obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed;" (Titus ii. 4, 5;) that the way of religion, in which they profess to serve God, be not made vile and contemptible in the eyes of such as have little regard to any religion at all. Averroes was most taken with "the Christians' sect," as he called it; but when he saw the Christians do what he thought was a great offence against the God whom they served or worshipped, he said, *Moriatur anima mea cum philosophis*, "Let me die among the philosophers," and not among the Christians. It is reported of one Hathway, an Indian, as blind as he was, [that he was] so possessed with prejudice against the Christian religion by the cruelty of the Spaniards, that he refused to be baptized, because of their vile carriage, and said he would not go to the same heaven with them.

Of all persons, Christians have cause to walk most wisely and uprightly, in reference to that honourable name which they bear, lest otherwise they expose it to contempt. Let us do as the primitive saints did, of whom it is said, they "walked in the fear of the Lord; and the churches had rest." (Acts ix. 31.) They were in the midst of persecuting, bloody enemies, who seeing them walk in the fear of the Lord, and

according to the rules of the Christian religion, which did strike such an awe into them of the majesty of their religion, which did shine forth in their holy, heavenly conversation, as brought their enemies under so great convictions, as they durst not at that present attempt them, or hinder their peace. A saint sanctifies the name of the Lord in the course of his life, while he walks in the fear of the Lord. (Isai. viii. 13.) This was a great argument which prevailed with Nehemiah; and he propounded it to the people: "To walk in the fear of the Lord, because of the reproach of the enemy." (Neh. v. 9.) It is not the Jew who denieth the name of Christ, or the Turk who defieth it, or the Pagan dragon who persecuteth the name of Christ, (Rev. xii. 2—4,) that casts so foul a blot and reproach upon the name of Christ, as he who takes upon him the name of Christ, and under a form of godliness lives in the practice of those foul abominations spoken of, 2 Tim. iii. 1—5; from which "turn away."

SERMON XXIV.

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HOW WE MAY STEER AN EVEN COURSE BETWEEN PRESUMPTION
AND DESPAIR.

As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth.—Luke iii. 4, 5.

THIS chapter begins with the ministry of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ: in which you have,

1. *The time of his ministry*, when it began, set down and ascertained by some particular and very memorable remarks upon it, from the names of those who were then in authority, chief governors and rulers both in church and state, whose several offices and commands bore the same date with John's preaching. (Verses 1, 2.) The reason of this I shall not now trouble you with.

2. *His call unto this office*.—Verse 2: "The word of God came unto John."

3. *The subject-matter of his preaching*.—Namely, "The baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." (Verse 3.)

4. *The occasion that prompted him to this subject, and made him fix his thoughts upon it*.—Which was an ancient prophecy out of Isaiah, chap. xl. 3; the Holy Ghost bringing this into his mind, telling him it was now to be fulfilled by his preaching, and therefore no doubt directed

him to pitch upon such a subject as might tend most to the accomplishment of that prophecy.

The prophecy or promise (for it is both) you have in the words of my text, and in the last clause of the succeeding verse.

I shall not insist upon the several metaphors in the text, but in short give you the general sense of the whole.

By "mountains and valleys" I understand all sorts of men, high and low, rich and poor; who, considered in their natural condition, whether convinced or unconvinced, do all stand in a direct opposition to Jesus Christ, are exceeding averse from, and unprepared for, the doctrine of the gospel, will not submit to the law of faith, some upon one account, and some upon another, till God by a further work of the Spirit doth open their eyes, and draw their hearts to Christ. Now the words of the text do contain this preparatory work of the gospel upon poor sinners, in order to due reception of Christ, and a right application of him by faith unto the soul. It consists of two parts: 1. Pulling-down mountains: 2. Filling-up valleys; both very difficult work. John had to do with some who were puffed-up with a conceit of their own righteousness, and would be their own saviours, and not be beholden to Christ and free grace for any thing, thinking themselves to be something, when indeed they were nothing. (Gal. vi. 3; Rev. iii. 16, 17.) These were the proud Pharisees, boasting of their own righteousness; and beside these there are also a company of profane, atheistical Sadducees, who gloried in their sins, and, denying the resurrection of the body and the immortality of the soul, ran out into all licentiousness.

Others again were so convinced of sin and of the dangerous consequence of it, that they were ready to sink into despair, knew not what to do, fearing their sins were greater than could be forgiven. These are the "mountains and valleys" in the text. Presumption on the one hand, and despair on the other, *that* rises too high, *this* sinks too low; *that* inclines too much one way, *this* too much the other; and there is a crookedness and obliquity in both, which must be rectified and straightened by the preaching of repentance in order to the remission of sins. This John doth; First, urging the necessity of repentance upon the proud Pharisees, who thought they needed no repentance; (Luke xv. 7;) Secondly, urging the great gospel-privilege that Christ hath purchased for believers upon their repentance, namely, remission of sins, upon poor dejected sinners; that both the one and the other might see the right way of salvation by Jesus Christ: for though the light of nature, by which we are convinced of the equity and righteousness of the moral law, do bind us to repentance when we act against it, yet it cannot promise that we shall get any thing by our repentance, being altogether ignorant of the mystery of the gospel. Thus we see the mountains must be brought low, and the valleys filled up, and both reduced to such an exact level, evenness, and plainness, that Christ may sit close upon the soul without the least interposition of any thing between him and us, or the least remaining vacuity or emptiness in ourselves, into which his fulness doth not descend, making-up whatsoever is wanting in us; and when it is so, there is a thorough, perfect closure with Christ in the greatest nearness, in the strictest and most intimate union that can be.

But you will say, "How shall we come to this? How shall we walk thus between the mountain and the valley in a straight, direct line of faith and hope to Jesus Christ?" Which brings me to the case or QUESTION now to be spoken to from the text, which is this, namely, *How may we steer an even course between presumption and despair?*

The true state of this question depends upon a clear discovery of the real difference that is between the grace of hope and both these extremes, —presumption and despair. Therefore,

I. *I shall distinguish between presumption and hope.*—The difference between hope and despair is more apparent; but we are too, too apt to confound presumption and hope, there being a greater affinity between these than the other. As in morality some virtues come nearer to one extreme than to the other; so here, there is something of the general nature of hope in presumption. *Præsumptio non excludit spem, sed rectitudinem spei.** Therefore we must be the more accurate and strict in distinguishing between the grace of hope, and the sin of presumption, which, *fallente quâdam specie*,† resembles the grace of hope; and those who are guilty of this sin do always put the specious name of hope upon it. They are not sensible of any presumption, as others are of despair; and therefore their case is more dangerous: *Ed magis desperati quod minus desperantes*; ‡ and where one despairs, thousands do presume.

Before I come to particulars, I must distinguish of a double presumption: 1. *Of ourselves and our own merits.* 2. *Of God and his mercy.* Both stand in a direct opposition to the true grace of hope; and I shall show you where the difference lies. I begin with,

1. *The first sort of presumption: which is of ourselves.*—This is a proud, arrogant presumption, arising from a vain conceit of our own supposed worth and righteousness. We think to stand upon our own legs, insisting not upon what Christ is to us or hath done for us, but upon what we are in and to ourselves, and have done for Christ: "We have prophesied in thy name," &c. (Matt. vii. 22.) "We are not as this publican; we have done thus and thus, and ought to be considered for our good works; and we doubt not but we shall." It is not the promises of free-grace, but the law and their strict observance of that, which these men ground their hope upon. But the true grace of hope is always grounded upon faith in the promises, and is all along fed, nourished, maintained, and strengthened by those believing persuasions that it hath of the truth of those promises which at first produced and begat this hope in the soul: and in the continual exercise of this grace, in its daily actings, it eyes the promises, hath daily recourse to them for its further confirmation; it is bottomed upon them, takes its rise from thence, and bears up the soul upon the credit of them. (Rom. xv. 4; Psalm cxix. 74.) This is "the hope of the gospel," (Col. i. 23,) that carries us out of ourselves. A Christian's hope is hope in another, and not in himself. The right notion of hope, as it is an evangelical grace, implies our sole dependence upon God, as the only author and fountain of all that good which we desire and look for; which doth sufficiently

* ZANCHIUS. "Presumption does not exclude hope, but the uprightness of hope."—EDIT. † AQUINAS. "By a certain deceitful appearance."—EDIT. ‡ AMESIUS *De Conscientiâ*. "The less they despair, the more desperate is their condition."—EDIT.

difference it from that false hope or self-presumption that I have been speaking of, and which was principally aimed at by John in the text, being a presumption more peculiar to those times and persons here spoken of, who lived under the law, and were much in doing, but understood not the end of their moral or ceremonial works, but trusted in them, and made saviours of them; and at the first entrance of the gospel they opposed the doctrine of free grace, would hear neither John nor Christ himself, but "rejected the counsel of God against themselves." (Luke vii. 30, 33, 34.) See what a character Paul gives of them, and of all others throughout the world who should entertain the least thought of salvation out of Christ: "Destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known." (Rom. iii. 16, 17.) This one scripture, if well weighed, is enough to shake the confidence of the most presumptuous self-justiciary that is, and to convince him and all the world of their need of Christ. In Psalm xiv., which Paul quotes in this chapter, God is brought-in taking a strict survey of mankind, before he sent his Son into the world, to see if there were any that stood in no need of him; as if he had said, "If there be any such, let him come forth and show himself." David answers for himself, verse 7: "Not I, Lord, not I, Lord; I wait for Christ, I long for Christ. 'O that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion!' O that Christ were come! that the free grace and mercy of God were more clearly revealed! Then 'Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad;' this will be good news indeed." So Jer. xvii. 5—7. The result of all is this: true hope eyes God in Christ, and argues from him; this presumption now spoken of eyes self, and argues from thence in all its actings.

2. *The second sort of presumption to be distinguished from hope is that by which we presume upon God and his mercy.*—This is grown-up since the preaching of the gospel: there is, indeed, too great a spice of the former presumption among professors; and as that wears off, this succeeds; nay, they unhappily mingle together. If legal presumption cannot altogether shut-out conviction, yet it minces the matter: "It is a little one, and my soul shall live;" and so makes way for this credulous presumption, that brings-in a salvo for all presently: "God is gracious, mercy is promised, Christ has died for sinners, and all will be well; we shall go to heaven of course without any more ado;" and so they sit down in security all their days, till they are surprised with their everlasting doom unawares. This is *infidelis fiducia*,* "a faithless confidence, a fond, credulous presumption," arising from a groundless, over-easy persuasion of the mercy of God toward us. This kind of presumption may be joined with some sense and conviction of sin and the dangerous consequence of it, but presently salves all with the general air and breath of a promise misconstrued and misapplied. The mistakes are these:—

(1.) *This is more fancy than faith or hope.*—It is a vain imagination that deludes men into a belief and expectation of that which they are in no likelihood of, in no capacity for: they promise themselves what God hath never promised, "cry, Peace, peace, when God hath not spoken peace."

* BERNARDUS.

(2.) *Such an one doth not rightly distinguish between the workings of natural affection toward any good propounded, and the rational actings of hope for the obtaining of it in a probable or certain way, in the use of due and proper means.*—Heaven, glory, and eternal life, are good words and better things: at the first mention of them, we naturally desire them, and wish for them. But shall we be carried away with a mere sound of words? Must we needs have all we hear of? We shall quickly bring ourselves into a fools' Paradise this way, dreaming we eat, and yet awake an hungry. There is more ado than so to inherit the promises: we must prove our title first: the promises give us an interest in heaven, but it is Christ that gives us an interest in the promises. He opens the mouth of a promise to speak comfort to us; in him they "are all yea and amen," but out of him they all cry, "No, no; we have nothing for you who are out of Christ." They will deny all the world that come not in his name, and never let out any thing of their treasure to such; no wringing-out of one drop of solid comfort. The bare history or outward relation of the mercy of God in the letter of the word, gives us no interest in the things promised: the carnal Jews, as Paul observes, had the promises, and boasted of them, but got little by them. Christ is the Door of every promise: let us not think to make a forcible entry, to climb up at the windows, like thieves, to steal out mercy, as if we cared not how we came by it. You will find, what is so gotten will thrive accordingly, and quickly come to nothing. What I drive at is this: it is not the report of the worth or amiableness of a thing, but an apprehension of the possibility of it as to us, that causes hope: till we are clear in this, our hope cannot act rationally. If it have no other ground beside our own desires and natural inclinations, raised and kindled in us by the specious appearance and ravishing beauty of some taking objects, this argues rather what we would have, than any likelihood of [the] obtaining of our wishes, which is of the very essence of hope. Earnest desires are very apt to run-out into a forward, presuming hope, we know not well why or wherefore. *Quæ volumus facile credimus.**

(3.) Another mistake in this fond, credulous presumption is, that *it takes-up promises in its own sense, and not in the true sense and meaning of God.*—So the Jews cried, they were "Abraham's seed," &c.; (John viii. 33;) and the promise ran in these very words, "To Abraham and his seed:" therefore, who but they must be included in it? But it was the spiritual seed that God meant, not that after the flesh: "They are not all Israel, which are of Israel." (Rom. ix. 6.) "No," says Christ; "you are the children of the devil, 'of your father the devil.'" (John viii. 44.) And "they took up stones, and threw at him," (verse 59,) being not able to bear any contradiction to their false hopes. So, when we read those promises of salvation to those that come to Christ, believe in him, call upon his name, we must not understand them as if a bare form of godliness, and crying, "Lord, have mercy upon us," would bring us to heaven. No, my brethren; the mystery of religion lies deeper than so. It is the labour of the heart that requires the greatest diligence, intension, and seriousness imaginable, strong workings within,

* "We give ready credence to that which we desire."—EDIT.

great agonies and contentions of spirit, in our dealings with God in any duty. The life of our worship does consist in these inward spiritual motions of the soul toward God: this is that coming, that believing, that praying, to which salvation is promised. The grace of hope inquires after the secrets of the covenant, the real intent and mind of God in every promise; prays for a right understanding of all particulars: "Open mine eyes, that I may see the wonders of thy law." (Psalm cxix. 18.)

Beside the true meaning of a promise, a child of God is very solicitous to know whether God do indeed mean *him*, and speak to *him*, and offer those pearls to *him*; whether *he* be a person rightly qualified, and under all those due circumstances that belong to persons entertaining such a hope. It is a great comfort and satisfaction to a believer, when God does own his hope, and encourage him in it, by some sensible demonstrations of his undoubted interest in such and such promises. He hears God say to him, "Take, eat; this is thy portion, purchased by Christ for thee. Thou art my child; and this is children's bread; it belongeth to thee. While we are musing and praying over a promise, God does sometimes feed us out of that promise himself, and with his own hand puts many a sweet morsel into our mouths. O, this is overcoming kindness! this is a double, a treble welcome, to have such fare, and the master of the feast standing by, and looking on, and carving to us himself, and crying out, as it is, Canticles v. 1: "Eat, O my friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." When we have shut our Bibles, and have done with a promise, and are setting-down the cup of salvation out of our hands, God many times makes us to mend our draught, and go deeper than ever we did: "Drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." But presumption is a bold guest, thrusts-in uninvited, catches at this and that in a rude manner. The word "presumption" notes a "taking beforehand," before it is offered, before it is due. Before he is called, he runs away with a promise, puts his own sense upon it, and deludes himself with vain hopes from it; and, when the King comes to review his guests, shall be "cast out into outer darkness." (Matt. xxii. 11—13.)

(4.) Another error or mistake in presumption is, that *it picks and chooses out some promises, and rejects others.*—The privileges of the saints it catcheth at, freedom from condemnation, eternal life and glory; but the promises of grace, sanctification, and holiness, it minds not. It hopes to see God without holiness, and to go to heaven as well as the best; it is more for the wages than for the work. But the grace of hope fastens upon every promise, gathers honey out of every flower, is as earnest for grace as for glory: "Thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling," &c., and "refrain them from every evil way?" (Psalm lvi. 13; cxix. 101.) "Lord, I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments." (Psalm cxix. 166.) But presumption makes men more remiss and careless in their whole course: it does not quicken our endeavours, and make us more active for God; as hope does, by which we purify ourselves. (1 John iii. 3.) It [hope] puts us upon preparing ourselves for the actual possession of what we hope for, that we may be meet for the kingdom of God, and ready to

enter-in with the Bridegroom : it uses all means to attain its end. If thy hope be not a heart-purifying hope, a life-reforming hope, it is no better than presumption. (1 Peter i. 13 ; Psalm xxxvii. 3.)

(5.) *Those things that presumption counts upon in a careless way, it doth not bring them so close to the soul.*—It doth not give us that lively taste and sense of them as true hope does : they do not work so kindly upon the heart. Presumption apprehends something in gross, in a confused manner, pleasing itself with the names and empty notions of things rather than with the things themselves ; is contented with a negative happiness ; and understands no more by going to heaven and being saved, than that he shall not be damned, and be tormented in hell. A presumptuous person knows not what heaven is, what the blessedness of the saints is ; he studies not those things ; but at all adventures he would exchange hell for heaven, and pleaseth himself with an imaginary happiness. Presumption never makes men heavenly-minded ; for all their high words and confident boastings, yet they are not in earnest for heaven ; they do not savour these things. Something they must say, something they must pretend to, to silence their consciences, and to keep down those fears that otherwise would distract them. There may be an affectation of heaven, where there is no true affection for it. Heaven, glory, and eternal life are gay things, and signify some great good, but *what* they know not. But hope brings things home to the heart : we see the substance of what we hope for. (Heb. xi. 1.) Faith comments upon our hope, discourses of the excellent nature of those things we wait for, tells us many pleasing stories of heaven and Christ and the glory that is above. This mightily heightens hope, ravishes the soul, makes it even leap for joy, that its reward shall be so great in heaven. Faith lifts us up within the veil, gives us a strong taste of the powers of the world to come ; and so feeds and nourishes hope, encourages it to a patient waiting for that which will quit cost at last, and fully answer our expectations.

(6.) *Presumption, as it neglects the use of all means for the attaining its end, (as I said before,) so it is signally guilty of the neglect of prayer.* (Psalm x. 4.)—It is the presumptuous sinner, blessing himself in his wickedness, [whom] David there speaks of. (Verse 3.) But true hope is full of holy breathings and longings after that which it hopes for.* (Rom. viii. 23 ; 2 Cor. v. 2.) That hope may well be suspected, that puts us not upon frequent and earnest prayer : they have little ground for their hope of salvation, *who* call not upon the Lord. (Rom. x. 13.) If thy hope be not a praying hope, it is a presuming hope.

(7.) *Presumption, though it talk much of Christ, as one who must do all for us, and will save us, yet such an one studies not the mystery of Christ, doth not make it his business to search the scripture, to inquire after him, to satisfy himself about him, that he is able to save.*—Herein appears the unreasonableness of this sin,—we trust we know not whom : for a man to commit his greatest concern to an unknown hand, and to rest secure, is very unreasonableness. But true hope is well acquainted with Christ,

* *Omne desiderium post spem impatientius.* “After the indulgence of hope, every desire is the more impatient.”—EUIT.

much in the studies of the mystery of Christ, having reposed so great a trust in him, is very desirous to know him thoroughly, and can never act with confidence till then. "I know," saith Paul, "whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him." (2 Tim. i. 12.) "I dare trust him; he will not fail me." The reason of our hope must be fetched from somewhat in Christ, rendering him sufficient for the work he hath undertaken; else it is unreasonable, nay, it must needs sink and die. "Without Christ, without hope." (Eph. ii. 12.) When God sent Christ into the world to save us, what a high character doth he give of him, purposely to encourage us to trust in him!—"I have laid help upon one that is mighty," (Psalm lxxxix. 19,) "able to save to the uttermost," (Heb. vii. 25,) "mighty to save." (Isai. xlix. 26; lxiii. 1.) Take all the promises of the gospel, nay, all the contents of the Bible, and consider them apart by themselves, not in conjunction with God, nor in relation to him, who is the Author and Owner of them, and the great Undertaker of all things mentioned therein; we shall have little ground to believe them. But "in God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust." (Psalm lvi. 4.) Christ in us is our "hope of glory." (Col. i. 27.) How glad is a believer to hear any thing of the fulness, power, and excellency of Christ! O, his heart leaps within: "This is my God, my Saviour, my Redeemer: what a happy man am I!" (Psalm cxliv. 15.) "This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem!" (Canticles v. 16.) A believer is very proud of Christ, if I may so speak: this enlivens hope, and raises it to a very high pitch. If our thoughts of Christ, and love to him, be not raised and heightened by our hope in him, it is not right. There is nothing more common in the mouths of the ignorant, profane sort than to say, "I hope to be saved by Jesus Christ." But whoever thou art that sayest so of course, not minding what thou sayest, take up those words again, and make common sense of them, if thou canst, to thy own understanding. What! hope to be saved by Christ, whom thou knowest not, hast no acquaintance with, art a mere stranger to! O, lay aside those strange hopes, till thou hast learned Christ; let me enjoin thee never to utter those words more, till thou knowest Christ better. How possible thy salvation may be, I will not now dispute; but I am sure, thy present hopes of it are very unreasonable and groundless.

II. Thus having showed the difference between presumption and hope, I shall in the next place speak something, but more briefly, of *the difference between despair and hope*. As I did before distinguish of a double presumption, so I must in the same terms distinguish of a double despair:—

Despair is either, 1. *Of ourselves*.—Which is an humble, holy, despair, very consistent with hope, and a necessary preparation and introduction to it, a valley never to be filled-up. The gospel doth by no means allow of self-exaltation. "No flesh" must "glory in his presence." (1 Cor. i. 29.) We must still seem vile in our own eyes.

2. *Of God and of his mercy*.—Which is two-fold.

(1.) *Privative*.—Which is a total privation of the habit, root, or principle of true saving hope, as in all unbelievers.

(2.) *Negative*.—A cessation of the acts of hope, which is two-fold. (i.) *A total* cessation, at least as to our sense and discerning, of the actings of hope for a time: this is *temporary despair*. (ii.) *Gradual*, arising from a weakness in the actings of hope; which is *despair in opinion*, counted so by weak, doubting Christians. Both these last-mentioned are incident to true believers, and occasion much sorrow and sadness to them.

But this privation or negation of hope doth not fully set forth the nature of despair; in which there seems to be somewhat positive, *recessus a re desiderata*,* as the Schools speak, an actual withdrawing from Christ. The heart falls off from the promises, doth act against them, puts them from us: despair argues and reasons the soul out of its hope, puts-in a caveat against itself, cannot think that a person under such circumstances can be within the meaning of the promise, and so sinks and faints away. (Job xvii. 15.) This is more than mere privation or negation; there is an evil disposition wrought in the heart by unbelief, which fills the soul with many prejudices against the truth, makes it pertinaciously to adhere unto its own erroneous judgment, so that it can do nothing now but quarrel, dispute, and except against all that may be said on the other side. These things premised, I now come to show the difference between despair and hope.

1. *Despair* is the result of strong legal convictions, urging the sentence of the law against us, without any consideration of gospel-grace for our relief and succour. This works great consternation, fills the soul with amazing fears, shuts it up in a dark dungeon, claps it in irons, binds it hand and foot, and so leaves it under a fearful expectation of fiery indignation to devour it. But *hope* deals in the promises, is begotten by them, and bears up the soul under the condemnation of the law.

2. *Despair* indisposes the soul from hearkening to the free grace of the gospel, when it is offered, because it still retains those strong impressions and dreadful apprehensions which the law hath wrought, and will not be comforted. But *hope* allays these fears, makes the soul willing to debate the matter, to hear what the gospel says, to see what may be done in so dangerous a cause.

3. *Despair* sees more in sin than in Christ, and supposes the wound incurable: "My sin is greater than can be forgiven." But *hope* sees grace superabounding, large enough to cover all our sins.

4. *Despair* is very peremptory and positive in concluding against itself; it is resolved upon nothing but death: "Greater than can be forgiven, a lost undone creature to all eternity; it cannot be otherwise." As in the highest degree of faith and hope there is assurance of salvation, so here there is a dismal, uncomfortable assurance of damnation. But *hope*, though it may be accompanied with many fears and doubts, yet there is some expectation of good, a patient looking for and solicitous waiting, though sometimes with trembling, for salvation. The soul doth not give over its pursuit after life and pardon, but, when it is at the lowest ebb, doth apprehend some possibility of escape through Christ: "It may be, for all this, we shall be hid in the day

* "A receding from the thing desired."—EDIT.

of the Lord's anger;' (Zeph. ii. 3;) 'it may be we shall be delivered from 'the wrath to come.''' Thus hope draws-on the soul to Christ, encouraging it to come forward.

III. DIRECTIONS HOW TO AVOID BOTH EXTREMES.

FIRST. *Against presumption, whether of ourselves, or of God.*

1. *Against that presumption that is of ourselves, take these following directions:—*

(1.) *Take up so much of a sense of sin into the mount of hope as may keep thy hope from swelling into presumption, or from feeding upon any thing in thyself.*

(2.) *Be much in proving thy hope, in giving thyself and others a reason of it.* (1 Peter iii. 15.)—This is the way to keep it right: consider what that reason is, whether it be a true gospel-ground of hope. As natural affections in a man must be guided by reason, so spiritual affections in a Christian must be regulated and influenced by faith: "I believed, and therefore have I spoken;" (2 Cor. iv. 13;) so it holds here: "I believe, and therefore do I hope."

(3.) *Suspect those acts of hope that have their rise from any thing else but Christ and the promises.*—The heart of man is deep and very deceitful: it is no easy matter to understand our hope at all times, and to manage it aright. We are apt to forget ourselves: flesh will be putting-in and contributing something from itself toward the support of our hope; it will be casting-in something into the scale with Christ, to make better weight. This we must carefully watch against, keeping our eye only upon Christ; as David, Psalm lxii. 5, 6. When we find our hearts pleasing themselves with any self-reflections upon our own personal worth in any kind, we should fear lest those thoughts should gather too fast, and puff us up in a vain conceit of ourselves. We should see nothing but meanness, vileness, and unworthiness in ourselves, under the highest actings of our hope in Christ: "Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul." (Job ix. 21.)

(4.) *Begin thy hope with an act of humble, holy despair of thyself.*—That thy hope may be discharged on that hand, forced to quit all expectations from thence, and not be tempted to any sinister aspect that way, upon so poor, empty, insufficient a thing as thou knowest thyself to be. "We know not what to do, but our eyes are upon thee." (2 Chron. xx. 12.) Our hope, though it look never so directly upon Christ, yet it is too, too apt to take-in some collateral encouragements from self, which do cause a further dilation in the heart, and make some secret, and, if we observe our own spirit, some sensible, additions to the joy and complacency [that] we have in our hope. We bless ourselves the more; and though we are pleased with Christ, yet we are pleased with something beside Christ: and this spoils all, it poisons our hope, is like a canker, eats like a gangrene, and is a great blemish to our hope.

(5.) If all this will not do, but still thy proud heart is big with expectation of something from God upon its own account, and thou canst not separate self from Christ in the out-goings of thy hope; then my advice is, *Answer thy foolish heart for once in its folly,*

and take its supposed worth into thy serious consideration.—Weigh it well, prove it, examine all its pretences, that the truth may appear: and that you may do this, consider yourselves out of Christ; it is necessary for believers to do so sometimes. I do not say, you should put-off Christ; that must never be done; but it may be convenient, as the case stands, to let the wedding-garment hang loose about you, that you may see your own poverty and nakedness; and then cover all again, and admire the free grace of God, who hath provided thee a better righteousness than any [which] thou canst see in thyself, to trust in, and to ground thy hope upon. This is the way to correct the exorbitancy of thy immoderate hope, and to keep it within its proper sphere. We never have more lively, heart-ravishing thoughts and apprehensions of free grace, than after fresh and warm apprehensions of our own vileness and wretchedness by nature. Eph. ii. 3: “By nature the children of wrath;” and then he breaks out into a great admiration of the mercy of God. (Verse 4.)

2. Directions *against that kind of presumption that is of God and his mercy*, which I called “a fond, credulous presumption:”—

(1.) *Study the doctrine of election.*—That tells us, that God is the sovereign Lord of the whole world, hath put a vast distinction between man and man;—there are some that he hates, as well as some that he loves; of the same lump of clay, some made vessels unto honour, and some unto dishonour; some “vessels of wrath fitted to destruction,” some “vessels of mercy prepared unto glory;” (Rom. ix. 20—23;) that God is a free, voluntary agent, not necessarily bound to choose thee or me rather than others; no: “He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.” (Verse 18.) Whence is it, then, that men are so confident of the favour of God? You may be in the number of the many that are called, and yet not in the number of those few that are chosen, for all your confidence. Hath electing, redeeming Love set any peculiar mark upon thee, by which thou mayest be known and distinguished from the reprobate world at the last day? If not, it is strange presumption in thee to nourish such vain hopes.

(2.) *Consider the strict limitations and provisoes of the covenant of grace.*—By which all obstinate, impenitent sinners, remaining such, are shut out from mercy. And art not thou such an one? Examine thyself; hath grace taught thee to deny ungodliness? Till then, it will never save thee.

(3.) *Consider the difficulty of salvation.*—It is not so easy a matter to get to heaven as you imagine: “Narrow is the way, strait is the gate, and few there be that find it.” “The righteous are scarcely saved.” (1 Peter iv. 18.) Things that are arduous and difficult are not easily swallowed, will not in reason admit of a rash, credulous hope, but call for serious counsel and debate. There are in such cases many agitations in the mind, *accessus et recessus*; (AQUINAS;) the soul “goes and comes, backward and forward,” off and on, cannot presently fix and settle itself in an even, steadfast, constant hope. Most Christians do pass through such fluctuations and perplexities to a quiet, comfortable hope of salvation.

(4.) Consider this also: *Have the promises [which] thou boastest so*

much of, begot fear in thee, as well as hope?—A Christian's hope is a heedful, careful, solicitous hope. (2 Cor. vii. 1; Heb. iv. 1.) Hope without fear is presumption.

(5.) *Let thy hope be grounded upon some inward experience of the mighty saving power of Christ, put forth upon thy soul.*—"Experience worketh hope." (Rom. v. 4.) "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it." (Phil. i. 6.) "To him that hath, shall be given." (Matt. xiii. 12.) What pledges, then, of divine favour, what love-tokens hast thou by thee? What taste and sight of the goodness and grace of God? We hope for the complement and perfection of that which in some measure we have already attained. When we see God pursuing us with his kindness in any particular expression of his love, this begets hope that we shall have all at last,—those greater things that are promised. God's end, in bestowing lesser mercies upon us, is to quicken and strengthen our hope of greater: it is strange presumption for persons who never received the least token of special grace from God, to expect such great things as heaven and glory. God gives many things before he gives heaven; do not think at first dash to have heaven; there are many preparatory mercies always antecedent to that. The saints are "compassed about with mercy and songs of deliverance;" (Psalm xxxii. 7, 10;) and from those experiences they argue as David did, 1 Sam. xvii. 37: "He will do this and that for us, and not destroy us, after he hath done us so much good." But if thou hast nothing to show as a convincing evidence of God's love and good-will to thee, it looks too much like presumption, to hope for pounds, for the whole sum, before we have received the earnest-penny. Hope is not the first work of the Spirit upon the heart; it is a secondary grace, the natural result of faith, which gives very satisfactory intimations of God's love to us, and so begets hope in us. Consult, therefore, the experiences of God's goodness to you in some measure, before you soar too high in the actings of your hope.

SECONDLY. *Directions against despair.*

1. *To those in Christ who are sometimes liable to these fainting-fits, and find their hope shaken, are to seek of it.*—Being suddenly struck with an amazing sight and sense of sin and wrath, they conclude their case desperate, and cry out as Job did, chap. xiv. 19—22. The devil hath two ways or methods by which he seeks to undermine and overthrow the hope of a Christian. I shall discover both to you, and endeavour to secure you against both.

(1.) *If thy hope be strong and lively, he will slander it with the name of "presumption."*—That he may shake thy confidence, and discourage thee from those eminent actings of thy hope wherein thou hast had so much comfort. He does envy thy happiness: he would fain clip the wings of thy faith and hope, that he may rob thee of the joy of thy salvation, and keep thee at a low ebb all thy days: he would take off thy helmet, that he may knock thee down at one blow. Groundless fears of presumption do exceedingly balk and check our hope, bring it into suspense, which is negative despair. In such conflicts and fierce assaults, gird-up thyself, stand fast, and hope to the

end, hold fast thy confidence; and that you may do this, call in thy faith to maintain and justify thy hope, as rightly grounded upon gospel-promises, and consequently capable of no excess. Let it run in the right channel never so swiftly, and rise never so high, it is so much the better; true grace is not confined to such a scantling or degree; it can never be overgrown, its beauty and comeliness do increase with its stature; the greater, the larger, the fuller, the higher it is, the more conspicuous and glorious. Hence are those commendations of grace, where it is in any eminency: "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." (Matt. viii. 10.) "O woman, great is thy faith." (Matt. xv. 28.) The scriptures do exhort us to grow in every grace. Let "these things be in you, and abound more and more." (2 Peter i. 8; 1 Thess. iv. 1.) We can never have too much: Paul prays that we "may abound in hope." (Rom. xv. 13.) Presumption does not lie in having too high thoughts of the mercy of God in Christ; for that is infinite, beyond all our conceptions; but in a vain expectation of that from God which is inconsistent with his justice and holiness, and contrary to his revealed will. It is not the great hope, but the groundless hope, that is presumption: therefore, tell the devil to his face, thou wilt "hope more and more;" (Psalm lxxi. 14;) that thy hope is a growing hope; so far from being too great, that thou dost judge it yet too little, daily praying for its further increase. This is the way to quench those fiery darts. We may observe that when temptations do work so contrary to the devil's intentions, that, instead of drawing us into evil, they incite us to more watchfulness, and prove occasions of good and provocations to duty, they presently vanish and die. The devil would have it so, and usually it is so, unless God by a special hand do continue us under them for the further exercise of grace.

(2.) *If thy hope be small and weak, the devil will call it "despair."*—He would make thee believe, a little grace is no grace: he will argue from thy weakness in grace to thy total want of it. If under such temptation thou findest thy spirit sinking, ready to faint away, rouse-up thyself, and bespeak thy soul, as David did: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" and take these following DIRECTIONS:—

(i.) *Consider: It is not the degree of grace, but the truth of grace, to which salvation is promised.*

(ii.) *Put a just value and estimate upon the lowest degree of grace.*—That it may not seem contemptible and as nothing in thy sight. It is more worth than the whole world, "a pearl of great price."

(iii.) *Labour to distinguish aright between the weakness of thy grace, and the grace itself that is under that weakness.*—And whilst thou art mourning under one, be sure you rejoice in the other. Do not throw away one corn with the chaff; do not sweep up one groat with the dust behind the door: but light thy candle, and find it out. Do not bury thy talent because it is a single one; but be faithful over a little, and thou shalt be "made ruler over many things." (Matt. xxv. 21.)

(iv.) *Consider the many promises that are made to the lowest degree of grace.*—If there be any good thing in thy heart toward the Lord thy God, he accepts of the will for the deed, of the day of small things. "He will not quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed."

To whom little is given, of them little is required : the widow's mite is a great deal in the account of God. Therefore think and judge of thyself, not according to any thing inherent in thee, be it more or less, but according to the measure of acceptance thou hast with God. It is his kindness that makes thee great ; (2 Sam. xxii. 36 ;) his "favour is better than life." If he hath wrought that in thee which is beautiful in his sight, why should you so much except against his workmanship as to blot all out again, drawing the black lines of dismal despair upon the comely features of true and saving hope, though weak and small for the present ? The high esteem God hath of the lowest degree of true grace in his saints, should make them not to droop so much under it, but rather be better pleased with what God is so well pleased with.

(v.) *Consider how ill God takes it of his children, when they suffer themselves to be persuaded by the devil out of all good liking and esteem of those smaller measures of grace that God hath given them.*—When they are brought out of conceit of themselves and of every thing that God hath done for them, as if their case were now desperate : "Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God ?" (Isai. xl. 27.) Let me speak my thoughts out : My brethren, to deny the least measure of grace in us or to us, against plain demonstrations and evidences brought to convince us of it, is a kind of denying Christ himself, which we would be loath to be guilty of for a thousand worlds ; and yet may not Christ say ?—"I have sent-in provision into such a soul, and have often invited myself to come and sup with him : I have come into my garden to gather my myrrh, and to eat of my pleasant fruits, which my own hand had planted there. (Canticles v. 1.) But I had no entertainment, no welcome ; they would be known of nothing that ever they had from me, plead nothing but poverty and bare walls. And did I not know it to be otherwise,—that I have laid-in a sufficiency of grace, and that there is that in the house which I love and could feed heartily upon,—I should not take it ill that they set nothing before me. But it is great unkindness not to give me of my own, not to entertain me at my own cost ; but to tell me to my face that all my fruit is rotten fruit, all my meat unsavoury meat, all my wine adulterated wine, nothing fit for them or me to feed upon ; all is stark naught ; they are never the better for any thing I have yet done for them ; to seek of every thing : their faith is dead, their hope is presumption, or else quite vanished into despair ; their love is cold and false ; every grace is counterfeit." Christ must needs take this very ill : many of the children of God are greatly guilty in this thing. I would press this consideration upon those who do too, too much indulge themselves in these despondencies, still multiplying objections against themselves, and meditating evasions how to put-off Christ and the promises, how to distinguish themselves out of the favour of God. I know, there is a great deal of pity and commiseration due to such ; but when other means will not prevail, they must not take it ill if we endeavour to fright them out of their fears and doubts, telling them plainly what an offence, what an affront it is to Christ, to have all his kindnesses overlooked and slighted as nothing worth by a froward, habitual, querulous scrupulosity, which is jealous of every thing but itself.

(vi.) When the devil is urging thee to conclude thy weak hope to be downright despair, instead of disputing with the devil about the truth of any grace, labour, through the help of the Spirit, to act it in that degree which thou hast attained.—Then, if it be as a grain of mustard-seed, it will remove mountains. It is not imaginable what great things a little grace will do, when stirred up and acted; the strength of God is in it: “Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings he ordains strength.” (Psalm viii. 2.) The smallest degree of true grace is able to secure itself against the gates of hell, at least so far as to prevent a total overthrow. Nay, let me say further, though with submission, I am persuaded that never any child of God fell before a temptation, under the actual exercise of that measure of grace, be it more or less, that God hath given him to withstand it. I do not Arminianize upon *facienti quod in se est, &c.*; * I speak not of the power of nature; but true grace, acted to the highest degree of attainment: it is that which does great things, and hath the blessing: “He that is faithful in a little, shall be ruler over much.” But if the good man slumber and sleep, no wonder if the enemy break-in upon him. When we are putting-forth ourselves to the utmost in any conflicts with Satan, “God with the temptation will find out a way of escape, that we may be able to bear it.” (1 Cor. x. 13.) “In that very hour it shall be given.” (Mark xiii. 11; Matt. x. 19.) When we seem to be surprised and over-matched by a temptation, God will come-in with more strength, and out of weakness we shall become strong. (Heb. xi. 34.) Thus little David overcomes great Goliath with a sling and a stone: the devil himself flies from the children of God, when they resist him in the strength of that grace they have. “To him that hath, shall be given.” “The weak shall be as David, and David as God,” *vel*, [“or,”] “as the angel of God.” (Zech. xii. 8.)

Many times weak Christians do not put forth that strength which they have. Would they but “lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees,” (Heb. xii. 12,) their spirits would return, and their courage would increase, and something might be done: but, alas! they give way to their fears and despairing thoughts, lie flat upon the ground, and give up all for lost. They do not attend to the actings of their hope whilst it goes by another name; all is “despair;” as good never a whit, as never the better; it is to no purpose for them to do any thing; they are past recovery, undone for ever. O, my brethren, do not give the devil such an advantage against you; but set yourselves to act that grace you have, be it never so little. Look among the ashes, blow up the least sparks you see; you do not know how soon it may break out into a flame: and remember this, that repeated acts of weak grace are equivalent to strong grace, both as to thy success, and God’s acceptance, who requires no more of thee than what is proportionable to that which he hath given to thee.

(vii.) Consider, that all graces are joined with their contraries in this state of imperfection here below.—No faith but is unequally yoked with some unbelief, no hope without some despair and desponding: that which is perfect is not yet come, and that which is imperfect is not yet done away. We are flesh, as well as spirit; and they are two contraries. As there is some kind of hope in presumption, so there may be some

* “To him who does what is in himself,” &c.—EDIT.

kind of despair in hope: no degree of true Christian hope is consistent with the damning sin of final despair; but some degrees of despondency, and that which thou callest "despair," and which in a degree is so, may be consistent with saving hope. And so it holds true in all other graces, from that mixture of corruption wherein the weakness of every grace doth lie; yet grace is grace still, hath all its essential parts, and deserves not that nick-name which thou puttest upon it; all dimness is not stark blindness, every cloud doth not make midnight. What! must you have all, or none? It is indeed a sign of sincerity to covet all grace, and as true a sign of humility and submission to the will of God thankfully to accept of a little, owning those first-fruits of the Spirit, which in due time will be seconded with an after-increase to thy plenary content and satisfaction. Our heavenly Father waters every plant of his own planting, that it may bring forth more fruit: therefore do not call every weak act of hope "despair;" do not call every fit of despair "final despair." What! if the sun be set, must it never rise more? If thou art cast down, art thou utterly forsaken? If mercy is at present gone out of thy sight, must it be clean gone for ever? These are but the breakings-out of those peccant humours that will be predominant sometimes in the best of men.

By what hath been said, we may answer those objections, which the devil makes against our hope from the weakness of it. I have but one thing more to add, by way of direction to weak believers, who are never in more danger of being drawn into despair, than when they are musing upon their sins, examining and judging themselves by the law, charging themselves home with all that guilt that lies upon them, in order to their further humiliation in the sight of God. Then does the devil many times strike-in, and suggest such frightful considerations to them, that make them start back further than God would have them. Therefore I shall now show how we should prepare ourselves for, how we should order and manage ourselves under, a deep and serious consideration of our sins and unworthiness; which we are called to and it is requisite, the swelling temper of our proud hearts requiring it, sometimes to set ourselves apart for this work. (Zech. xii. 12.)

1. The direction is this: *Take down along with thee into the valley of conviction, contrition, and self-aborrancy, so much of a sense of God's love and free grace in Christ, as may keep thee from being overwhelmed, and from sinking into despair.*—Before you set out, be sure you have some hold, at least of the hem, of the garment of Christ's righteousness: you know not what foul weather, what storms and tempests, what thunder and lightning you may meet with before you return. Carry your cordial along with you, though you never smell to it, or taste it, but in a fainting-fit. My meaning is: you should take, at least, some general view of mercy, before you take a strict, particular view of sin: usually they are the deepest and truest humiliations that are occasioned by some previous sense of God's love to us. (Ezek. xvi. 61, 63.)

A man that is to go down into a deep pit, he does not throw himself headlong into it, or leap down at all adventures, but fastens a rope at top upon a cross-beam, or some sure place, and so lets himself down by degrees: so, let thyself down into the consideration of thy sin, hanging

upon Christ; and when thou art gone so low that thou canst endure no longer, but art ready to be overcome with the horror and darkness of thy miserable estate, dwell not too long at the gates of hell, lest the devil pull thee in; but wind thyself up again by renewed acts of faith, and fly for refuge unto the hope that is set before thee; (Heb. vi. 18;) and all the way thou goest, admire the infinite grace and love of God to thee in delivering thee from so great a death. My brethren, there is no entering into the maze and labyrinth of sin without this clue in your hands. Solitary considerations of sin, if we dwell too long upon them, will work too violently: therefore we should make frequent transitions from sin to free grace, from the law to the gospel, from our miserable and wretched selves to our merciful and mighty Redeemer. "But," you will say, "how can this be? To pass from one contrary passion to another, who can make such transitions?" The Schools tell us, it must be *per magnum conatum*, "by some great endeavour," that is, a strain beyond ordinary; and such endeavours we must put forth, counting it as much our duty to rejoice in mercy, as to mourn for sin. And we cannot do both at once: though there be a connexion of divine graces as well as moral virtues, yet this implies rather a successive continuation than any simultaneousness, at least as to the intense actings of different graces. It is true, where there is one grace, there is every grace, that is, *in semine*, "in the seed" or root of it; and it may be able also, as to some weaker, latent, actual influences; yet those particular graces which upon different, distinct considerations do work contrary passions in us,—they cannot be both intensely acted at the same time, *sed per vices et intervalla* ["but by turns and at intervals"]. There is a time to mourn, and a time to rejoice, a time to fear, and a time to hope: particular graces do take their turns in the soul, and act suitably unto the present occasion.

2. *Direction against despair for unbelievers, convinced of sin, but unacquainted with Christ and free grace.*—The distraction, fear, and amazement of spirit that seizes upon such is inexpressible. Till God break-in upon them, and begin with them, speaking peace to them, man can do little; yet means must be used. I shall name a few things:—

(1.) *Look upon this conviction of sin [which] thou liest under rather as a mercy than a judgment.*—As a token for good; inasmuch as God hath given thee timely notice of thy danger, and fair warning to flee from the wrath to come.

(2.) *Look upon thyself now in a far greater capacity for grace and pardon than ever heretofore.*

(3.) *Set thyself with all seriousness to study the doctrine of free grace in Christ.*—Never more need than now. Meditate much upon the great goodness of God, and his "excellent loving-kindness." (Psalm xxxi. 19; xxxvi. 7.) Intense thoughts of sin, and slight, perfunctory thoughts of mercy, drive us to despair.

(4.) *Be persuaded to come to Christ under all thy fears.*—Hast thou been as a dove of the valley, mourning on the mountains for thy iniquity? (Ezek. vii. 16.) Come down from those mountains, those solitary places, and go weeping to the Lord. (Jer. l. 4.) Bemoan thyself at the feet of Christ: he will hear thee. (Jer. xxxi. 18, 19.) Tell God all thou hast to say of thy miserable condition. Complaining to thyself

and to men signifies little; it heightens thy fear: but God sympathizes with thee. (Verse 20.) Put thyself into his hands; he will lead thee; (verse 9;) “refreshing will come from the presence of the Lord;” (Acts iii. 19;) there will be a “lifting-up.” (Job xxii. 29.) Whatever the issue be, thou canst be no worse than thou art in thy own judgment: to sin is *mors animæ*, but to despair is *descendere in infernum*; sin is “death,” and despair is “hell.” Cry out of the belly of that hell to Christ, and see if he do not bring thee forth.

OBJECTIONS.

But, alas! those who are under a spirit of bondage and fear have a thousand objections against this [which] I have been pressing them to. I shall go over some of these, and answer them as I go.

I. *They come to Christ! They will tell us, they cannot come!*

ANSWER. Tell the Lord, then, thou art willing to come, but canst not be persuaded to come as thou canst. Canst thou not go into thy chamber, into thy closet, and shut thy door, and throw thyself down in the dust before the Lord? This is the coming; and this thou canst do, I am sure: do it, then, and call upon the name of the Lord.

II. *“But I cannot pray.”*

ANSWER. It may be, not now at this time; but how canst thou tell what thou mayest do at such a time, when, in obedience to an ordinance of God, thou hast put thyself into a praying posture? In that very hour it may be given, and hath been, I am persuaded, to thousands of God’s children: he will prepare thy heart. (Psalm x. 17.) If thou canst not utter thy mind as thou wouldest, pray as thou canst; and if thou hast nothing to say, if no one savoury expression drops from thee, it may be, it is because the inward sense thou hast of sin is too big for utterance. It may be so sometimes, and it is best when it is so; and then, out of the abundance of thy heart, “weep and mourn-out thy inward meaning:” *Lacrymæ pondera vocis habent.* [“Tears possess all the potency of earnest speech.”] Groan and sigh, and look wishfully toward heaven; and believe that God sees thee, when thou hast no sight of him: this is prayer.

III. *“But I have lived hitherto as without God in the world, neglecting prayer altogether. I am a mere stranger unto Christ; and will he hear such an one as I, who come upon this pinch, just when necessity drives me? Certainly no; he will tell me to my face, (as well he may,) he knows me not, and bid me go to those empty creatures I formerly trusted in.”*

ANSWER. Do not you take upon you to personate Christ in his dealings with sinners: his thoughts are not as your thoughts. What, if you would do thus and thus if you were in Christ’s stead? does it therefore follow that he must do so too? O no; as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his thoughts above thy thoughts. (Isai. lv. 8, 9.) Do you think and say what you will, Christ will act like himself, and do that for thee that never entered into thy heart to conceive of. His ways are “unsearchable and past our finding out;” his “love passeth knowledge;” thou dost not know, thou canst not tell before-hand, what infinite, rich grace is able to do for thee. O, come, then, and make a trial, and know, for thy further encouragement, that poor humble sinners

are always welcome to Christ, but never more welcome than at their first coming. (Luke xv. 22—32.) There are two jubilees kept in heaven,—one at the conversion of a sinner here on earth; (Luke xv. 7;) the other at his glorification in heaven: (Jude 24:) Christ does then “present us to glory with exceeding joy.” How glad is Christ, when he hath brought a sinner safe and sound to heaven, and secured him there to all eternity! I mention this, to show the great delight Christ takes in showing mercy to poor sinners, in opposition to those evil surmises and hard thoughts which thou hast of him.

IV. But yet, it may be, thou repliest: “My case is not the case of common sinners: none so great an offender as I, no sins like mine, capable of such high aggravations. Were there but one man in the whole world to be damned, and to go to hell, I have reason to believe that I am he; and since things are so bad with me, I cannot be comforted.”

ANSWER. This is a sad case indeed: we see objections rise higher and higher, and doubting souls, out of our very answers to one objection, will pick out matter for another. But I am loath to leave thee behind me in the very bottom of the pit; let me, then, reach down a helping-hand to thee once more, let me give thee one lift more; and I hope, in answering this objection, I shall answer all, and silence thy unbelief for ever. Is it so, that thou art the worst of men, the greatest of sinners, under matchless guilt? Be it so; we will admit all this to be true, and take thee under that black character which thou hast now given of thyself; and yet I say, there is hope. My advice to thee in short is this: Come as the greatest sinner that ever was in the world to Christ, and I dare undertake for thy welcome; let that which hath been hitherto thy discouragement, turn now to thy great encouragement. Christ “came not to the whole, but to the sick; not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance,” even the greatest of sinners; and since thou takest thyself to be so, obey this loud call, and come immediately to Christ. “Though thy sins be as scarlet and as crimson, they shall be as white as snow and as wool.” (Isai. i. 18.) “Therefore turn thou to thy God, and wait continually on him,” (Hosea xii. 6,) *etiam cum ad culmen perveneris omnium peccatorum*, (as ZANCHIUS upon the place, *De Religione*, lib. i.,) “when thou art come to the height of all sin and wickedness.” Thus, whoever thou art, O poor, trembling, doubting soul, remember, that God hath once more called thee to come to Christ this day; to come as thou art, in thy rags, in thy poverty, in thy emptiness and insufficiency, that he may be all in all to thee.

Though means and ordinances do not presently take off our doubts, and overcome our fears, and fully satisfy our souls, but still we remain hopeless and heartless and unbelieving; yet if they do so far prevail with us as to put us upon the trial and use of those means [which] we are directed to, compelling us to comply with the counsel that God gives us by his ministers, this may be a sign for good, that God hath taken a secret hold of thy heart, and is drawing thee on in the way wherein he will be found. Go home, then, and say, “Though I am as cloudy and dark as ever, unsatisfied as ever; though I have no heart to come to Christ, no expectation of any success in coming; yet I will come, however, if it be but to satisfy the importunity of others, of the ministers of

the gospel, who in Christ's name and in his stead do so earnestly beseech me once more to make trial of the freeness of his grace." Tell Jesus Christ *who* sent you : we will own it at the last day, and justify our message to you. Tell him, then, what thou hast heard this day, and that thou couldest not make away with thyself, and throw thyself headlong into hell, till thou hast once more exposed thyself to his wonted pity and commiseration to such as thou art. Tell him, thy soul is ready to break for the longing desire it hath for Christ ; cry out and say, " How long, Lord, holy and true ? When wilt thou shine out upon thy poor creature, who is walking in the valley of the shadow of death, and can see no light ? O, make haste to help ! O, arise and save me ! Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly with relief and succour to my poor soul ! "

Offer thyself in this manner to Christ, present thyself thus before the Lord ; and if thou findest thyself " pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that thou despairest even of life," (as 2 Cor. i. 8, 9,) O, then, cast thyself, burden and all, upon Jesus Christ. (Matt. xi. 28.) And when thou canst not gather comfort from any present sensible impressions made upon thy heart, then argue from promises made to thy coming ; take them as an answer from God to thee ; and make thy best of them, as David did, Psalm cxix. 81 : " My soul fainteth for thy salvation : but I hope in thy word." Hath not Christ said ?—" Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." (John vi. 37.) If he should never speak one word more to thee all thy days, here is enough said already to support thee. We say, *Omne præteritum est necessarium* : " That which is past can never be recalled : " Christ will never unsay what is passed out of his lips ; keep thy hold here, and thou art safe to eternity. Nothing but raptures and particular revelations, some strong sensible feelings of comfort, will satisfy some ; whereas, indeed, God hath revealed his whole counsel to us in the scriptures, and has nothing more to say to sinners than what is already expressed in the gospel. The particular answers that God gives his people sometimes, what are they, but inward repetitions of gospel-promises to the heart, sealed up there by the Spirit ?

SERMON XXV.

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HOW A CHRISTIAN MAY GET SUCH A FAITH THAT IS NOT ONLY
SAVING, BUT COMFORTABLE AND JOYFUL AT PRESENT.

Whom having not seen, ye love ; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.—
1 Peter i. 8.

THE question which this text was chosen to resolve is, *How a Christian may get such a faith as is not only saving at the last, but comfort-*

able and joyful at present. This case has two things in it; one it takes for granted, the other it doth suppose may, and sometimes doth, come to pass.

1. It takes, first, for granted, *that joy and comfort arise from faith.*—Namely, “faith unfeigned,” as the apostle speaks, which purifies the heart, and sets love a-work to obey the law; and so the commandment hath the end for which it was made. (1 Tim. i. 5.) And this is very sure; for all comfort must begin in God, and be derived from him. He is “the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort;” (2 Cor. i. 3;) and he “hath given us everlasting consolation through grace.” (2 Thess. ii. 16.) But it is not from God absolute, or without a mediator: alas! there is no comfort in that. What comfort can a malefactor, that hath myriads of indictments against him upon the file, the least whereof must take away his life, expect from a just and righteous judge? The case is thine and mine, infinitely more dreadful than between a malefactor and a magistrate. My sins are innumerable, the least is mortal; God is judge, and hell is the prison; wrath, horror, fire, the worm, and all endless,—that is the punishment. The Judge is, and cannot be otherwise than, most true and righteous; what comfort can I think to find now from God absolute, that is, without relation to Christ? Behold, instead of comfort, a devouring flame, and, instead of joy, a consuming fire. I speak this because of abundance of our people; they say, “God is merciful,” and they do their best; they hope God will be their comfort, and they serve him: and all this while they think not of Jesus Christ. We are all naturally Socinians: those that never heard their names, much less read their books, live in their heretical and blasphemous principles.

O the amazing stupidity of the world called Christian, that we can smile, and laugh, and hug ourselves in deceiving comforts upon the brink of hell! There can be nothing comfortable to us, without the God of all comfort; and no comfort can be to us from God, but by the Lord Jesus; and no Jesus to us without faith. “We rejoice in God,” saith the apostle; but how? “By Jesus Christ.” Why? “By him we have received the atonement;” he hath made it by his blood, and we receive it by faith. (Rom. v. 11.) He is the “salvation” of God, and “the consolation of Israel;” (Luke ii. 25, 30;) he is our comfort by being God’s salvation. That the business of Christ in the world was to teach us no more humbling precepts than Plato or Moses, and then to seal them with his death, there is little comfort. This comfort and joy is the affections; it is wrought by the blessed Spirit: “Joy in,” or by, “the Holy Ghost.” (Rom. xiv. 17.) “The fruit of the Spirit is joy.” (Gal. v. 22.) It is joy in the Father by the Mediator, through the Comforter: this tells that joy and comfort are noble and divine goods; they are not little debonaire, or complacency with some facetious or gentle garb that is but thin and beggarly; nor are they friends to a sour face and cloudy countenance; it was inward comfort that made Stephen’s face to shine as an angel. This joy is not a joy in the face and not in the heart, as some did rejoice, who put-on a good face under the strokes of an angry conscience, and reproached Paul for a frantic. (2 Cor. v. 13.)

Neither is this comfort a floating thing in the mouth: (when persons without good cause are prating their assurance and comfort, it seems to

argue too much froth and lightness. *Res severa, saith Seneca, est verum gaudium* ; [“ Reserve is always a concomitant of true joy ; ”] the richest mines lie deep, and the deepest rivers *minimo labun tur sono*, “ make the least noise : ”) but it is narrow and fatness to the soul : “ The joy of the Lord is your strength.” I cannot express the excellency of it ; the text saith, it is “ joy unspeakable, and full of glory.” The sum is this : a Christian that would live comfortably, must live holily ; if he will live holily, he must live so primarily “ by the faith of the Son of God ; ” and he must endeavour after such a degree of faith, as to say, “ Christ loved me, and gave himself for me.” (Gal. ii. 20.) That comfort in life and to and in death is the joy of faith, the victory of faith, the triumph of faith : “ All joy and peace in believing.” (Rom. xv. 13.) A special application of the righteousness of Christ to a man’s own soul,—*there* is the rise and origin of joy and comfort, if the scripture may take place.

OBJECTION. I see an objection which it will not be unseasonable nor impertinent to refute, namely, “ Here is a noise of faith, faith believing ; and the righteousness of another is the way to drive all good works out of the world.”

ANSWER. The clean contrary is most true : it is the only way to bring all good works and all comfort into the world. A man not sanctified by faith in Christ cannot do a good work, but spoils it in the doing ; neither can he see a comfortable day, while he is such. This objection is hugely irrational : a man may as well argue against marriage, and say that marriage is the ready way to drive all lawful seed out of the world, and bring-in bastards : it is the same case. (Rom. vii. 4.) Or he might as well plead against the rising of the sun, and say it was the way to drive all light out of the world, and to bring-in darkness : it is the same case. (2 Cor. iv. 6.) He may as well say, that eating of bread is the way to drive out all vigour and strength of the body out of the world, the way to bring-in starvedness : it is still the same case. (John vi. 54.) The truth is, children before marriage are spurious, the world without the sun is darkness, and without eating no living : so without union to and interest in Christ Jesus, who is “ Jehovah our righteousness,” there is no holiness or comfort in the world. To set-up any thing for righteousness in the sight of God but the righteousness of Jesus, that is the way indeed to drive the doctrine of the Church of England, and all the Reformed churches with all their most eminent doctrines, out of the world : nay, to drive all good works and all comfort out of the world ; nay, to drive the gospel and Christ and salvation by him out of the world. If the Galatians, that were professed believers, received Paul as an angel, received the Spirit, shall turn aside to their own works, and make them concurrent with Christ, though but as a less principal part ; (which was their case ;) then mark the issue : the grace of the Father is frustrated, the death of Christ is “ in vain,” *frustra, sine fructu* ; (Gal. ii. 21 ;) Christ is of none effect ; they are fallen from grace ; Christ profits them nothing : and all this Paul doth testify with a great deal of vehemence and solemnity, once and again, and with such apostolical majesty as seldom occurs : “ Behold, I Paul testify unto you.” (Gal. v. 2—4.) I suppose that no man that understands Paul will say, that he disputes only against the ceremonial law ; therefore I will leave it, and

conclude this with that, 1 John v. 12 : "He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." And this is written to them that believe, that they might know that they have eternal life; and they that know it cannot altogether want this in my text, "joy unspeakable and glorious."

2. The second thing in the question is supposed; namely, *that a Christian may have faith that is saving in the end, which is not comforting in the way.*

I answer, First, you must not so understand it, as though saving faith and comforting were two kinds of faith; nor, Secondly, as if saving faith in the close were in some believers altogether and always void of all light and comfort; but how a Christian, who is saved when he dies, may live comfortably while he lives. Then the resolution of the case is this,—that that faith which is saving in the end, is also sanctifying in the way, and would be comfortable also, if the Christian did not *ponere obicem*, "hinder" it himself; and therefore, that he may live joyfully, he must remove these hinderances, and use the means proper to the end: of which anon. At present he must do as these believers in the text did, and he shall find comfort as they did, in these four particulars:—

(1.) *They did persist in the simplicity of the gospel, as it is in Christ.* (2 Cor. xi. 3.)—"False apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into" the ministers of Christ, began then. (Verse 13.)—Paul was jealous of the church of Corinth, lest that "chaste virgin" should be corrupted, (verse 2,) as the churches in Galatia were bewitched with these jugglers. (Gal. iii. 1.) The great design of the old serpent from that day to this hath been to adulterate the doctrine of faith in a crucified Redeemer, knowing full well that this is the most effectual course to ruin all true holiness and solid comfort. But these believers received the grace of God in truth, as it was fully and plainly proposed to them. They did not spin-out the high and vital truths into needless disputes, nor darken them with nice distinctions and sub-distinctions: this serves for little else but to distract the mind, and disturb the quiet of men's souls.

(2.) *They did "taste that the Lord," namely, Christ, "is gracious."*—To whom coming as the living stone, they as lively stones were built upon him a spiritual house for God. (1 Peter ii. 4, 5.) They did not content themselves with orthodoxy, to rest satisfied in this, that they were not Simonians, or Ebionites, or Menandrians, or the sectators of them that did destroy Christ's righteousness by dividing it. Let us not only profess Christ, but feel him. "It is one thing to preach Christ, and another thing to feel him," were the last words of Mr. Ash.

(3.) *They minded the mystery of the gospel.*—The eternal deity, grace, and righteousness of our Lord Jesus; as Peter prayed for them, (2 Peter i. 2,) and exhorts them to grow in this. (2 Peter iii. 18.) As for church modes and membership and privileges, they did enjoy them without censuring and animosity; but knowledge of and communion with Jesus Christ, accompanied with love, and obedience, and peace of conscience, was the main business of their life. This is the way to comfort; let us do so. Assure yourselves, there is little joy in a ceremony to a dying man; modes and membership are but sorry comforters.

(4.) Lastly, *As they had faith and love, so they did exercise them.*—They did believe, and they did go on to believe, and so to be acquainted with the “righteousness of God, from faith to faith.” You may observe how the apostle remembers the works of “faith, love, and patience in Christ,” of the Thessalonians; (1 Thess. i. 3;) and in 2 Thess. i. 3, he thanks God, their faith did grow exceedingly. There was but a little time between the writing of these two epistles, this latter being written shortly after the first, to rectify their mistake about the day of Christ. The primitive Christians did not content themselves with habits, and let them be as fire under the ashes, or as seed under the clods; but did stir them up, that they might warm, and they did water them, that they might spring, and blossom like a rose. If a man that hath the power of seeing should walk up and down the streets from morning to night with his eyes shut, without any actual seeing, would you not suspect him to be distempered? What comfort can this man take in the light of the sun? Much like this is a believer that hath faith habitual: he riseth in the morning, and lies down at night, and hath not an act of faith upon, nor a privy thought of blessing, Jesus all the day; how can any comfort be expected in such a strangeness as this is?

So, then, the sum is this: These believers received the gospel of salvation by Christ, pure as it was proposed to them: they gave the apostles this honour,—that they had wisdom enough to express themselves plainly, fully, significantly; and honesty enough, that they would not deal fallaciously or ambiguously; they valued not the tradition of their fathers, nor the fancies of philosophers; they had no vain janglings amongst themselves, but coveted the sincere, unmixed milk of the word, that they might grow thereby. (1 Peter ii. 1, 2.) The gospel came to them “not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance;” assurance of understanding, assurance of faith. Their communion was with the Father, and fellowship with Jesus Christ; that made their joy to be rich and plentiful. Their privileges and ordinances were their delight, but not their confidence; they came to God by them, and waited upon God in them in dangerous times, for the enlarging and confirming of their knowledge, faith, and comfort. Let us be exhorted to do as they did, and doubtless we shall speed as they sped. My business now is to speak something to the text, and then more to the practical case in hand. Only, first, I would crave leave to speak a few words to the context; for this reason,—because, as my text is the true portraiture of *practical* godliness, so the context gives us a system of godliness *doctrinal*.

The epistle is written “to the strangers;” (verse 1;) Jews and Gentiles, say some, but especially Jews scattered in four now Roman provinces, not long before distinct and considerable kingdoms, together with Asia; that is, the Proconsular or Less Asia, yet including also those parts in and about Chaldea. Peter was at this time in or about Babylon, in which parts were many myriads of the Jews, of whom he was the apostle, with James and John. (Gal. ii. 9; 1 Peter v. 13.) That Babylon in the text should mystically be Rome, is a mere conceit, and a groundless fancy; this epistle was written thirty years at least before John had received the Revelation. Grotius and others are quite beside the truth; it is forty to one odds that Peter was never there.

Well, these Jews were effectually called, according to God's election: the *terminus*, or the thing to which, not for which, or upon which, but to which they were chosen and called, is said to be this; namely, "to obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus." The great efficient of this in them is the blessed Spirit: "Through sanctification of the Spirit." (Verse 2.) Being thus sanctified, they had hope: where observe, 1. *The property of this hope*: it was "a lively hope." 2. *The term, or object*: "An inheritance." 3. *The way whereby they obtained this hope*: they were "begotten" of God as a Father to it. 4. *The cause moving God to this*: "His abundant mercy." 5. *The ground of this hope*: it was "the resurrection of Christ from the dead." (Verse 3.) 6. Then *the fruit of it*: which was great joy. And then, 7. Here is their *perseverance*, and how that is effected: they were "kept by the power of God unto salvation." (Verse 5.) No doubt but holiness is loseable: the angels lost theirs, and we lost ours: and the saints at this day would quickly lose theirs totally and finally, if they were left to a stock of grace received, to trade for another world. To grace received, there must be grace supplied: the grounds of perseverance are without us; namely, the promise of the Father, the purchase and intercession of the Lord Jesus, the power and supply of the blessed Spirit; a doctrine full of comfort, but, for certain, as full of grace and humility too; indeed, if the comfort were not sanctifying, it were not sound.

So that here we may see the doctrine of the glorious Trinity, and every Person in his work, according to the most wise and divine economy and propriety in working toward fallen men quite dead in sin and dead in law, and that irrecoverably as to themselves, or any created power in heaven on their behalf. Here is, I say, the Father, electing to life and glory; here is Jesus Christ, dying and rising; here is the blessed Spirit, sanctifying; here the three graces, Faith, Hope, and Love, inseparably accompanied with obedience, cherished with joy and comforts, and crowned with perseverance by the power of God, all arising from the sovereignty of God's will and his rich abundant mercy, to the praise of the riches of his glorious grace, that they that glory should glory in the Lord. Pelagius was the first that set up nature; for which the church of God abhorred him, saith Austin; and the Fathers call it *virus illud Pelagianum*; ["that Pelagian poison;"] the most learned Usher called it *detestandam illam hæresin*; ["that detestable heresy;"] "that pestered the church of Christ" *olim et hodie*, ["formerly and at this day,"] saith that holy man in his *Historia pestiferæ Hæreseos a Pelagio Britanno in Ecclesiam inductæ*.

But, to proceed: these strangers, notwithstanding their holiness, were under "manifest temptations;" (verses 6, 7;) persecutions in a tumultuary way were raised against them by the unbelieving Jews, who were egged thereto by the priests, who did stir up the people against them. There was no imperial edict at this time against the Christians: Nero was the first, he was *dedicator damnationis nostræ* ["the first author of our condemnation"]. I need not quote Tertullian; every lad of the upper form may know this out of Suetonius and Tacitus. God kept the gospel, in the first publishing of it, free from any disturbance

by the civil powers about thirty-four years : that Claudius banished John into Patmos, and that then he had the Revelation, is a mere figment of the learned Grotius, and his Annotations built upon it have neither sap nor sense. Under these persecutions their faith did not only continue, but shine, and their love was evident, and their comforts were so far from abating, that they did "rejoice with joy unspeakable and glorious."

"But," you will say, "what is this to the question?"

I answer, Here are two directions how a Christian may get that faith whereby he may live comfortably, as well as die safely.

1. *"Be clothed with humility."* (1 Peter v. 5).—Ascribe all thy gifts and graces, thy profiting under afflictions, ordinances, thy peace and comfort, wholly to the grace of God by Jesus Christ through the Spirit of holiness. If there be any way in the world to get special faith, and to live comfortably, it is this,—to live humbly; the evangelically humble soul is the serene, cheerful soul. Heart-pride doth not only deprive believers of comfort, but brings vexations, disappointments, and disgusts, which are a torment to pride wherever it is. It is a sin that is very incident, very pleasing to us, very displeasing to God, and very disquieting: it is an easy thing to preach, and hear, and discourse humility; but, believe it, it is not so easy to live it. A man's soul is never so fit to receive the shines of God's love, as when he is nothing in himself. Be sure to crush the sprawlings and motions of this cursed pride: see God in all, bless him for all; see the Lord Jesus the Purchaser of all, and the blessed Spirit the Sanctifier of all. Study this well, and live that text in Rom. xi. 36: God is *principium, efficiens, et finis*: "Of him, through him, and for him, are all things." Give him the glory: reduce this to practice; this is every day practicable, and, were it practised, would make every day comfortable. Envyings and provokings arise from vain-glory. (Gal. v. 26.) *Indè nata sunt schismata, quippe cum dicunt homines, Nos justificamus impios, nos sanctificamus immundos.** We would be somebodies: away with these thoughts! Let God have the glory, and thou wilt have the comfort. In this way God will give faith special; and that is the faith that brings comfort.

2. The way to comfort is to *do as these believers in my text did.*—They did choose rather to forego their earthly comforts than their consciences, made choice of affliction rather than iniquity, esteemed the reproaches of Christ rather than their safety. Prisons are not so terrible as they are imagined; the best men have rejoiced in the honour of suffering; they suffered joyfully the spoiling of their goods: "All patience and long-suffering with joyfulness." (Col. i. 11.) Scripture history, primitive and modern, abounds with instances of all sexes, ages, conditions, in this particular. The noble Galeacius had that joy in Christ at Geneva beyond all the marquisates in Italy or the whole world. In suffering comes assurance; and that is comfort. You will say, "We are not called to suffering;" and I say, "The God of peace give us truth and peace always!" But then, if you would live comfortably, live in religious honesty, choose poverty before knavery, an honest meanness before secretly sinning gains. Conscience is the best friend, next to

* HIERONYMUS. "Hence have schisms arisen,—men say, 'We justify the ungodly; we sanctify the unclean.'"—EDIT.

Jesus Christ. "Our rejoicing is this ;" not that we are preachers,—so was Demas ; nor an apostle,—so was Judas ; but "the testimony of our conscience, that not with fleshly wisdom, but in godly sincerity, by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world." (2 Cor. i. 12.) "Light," that is, comfort, "is sown for the righteous, and" joyful "gladness for the upright." (Psalm xcvi. 11.)

Now I come to my text.

The words contain the essence of Christianity or godliness. The constituent parts of it are faith and love: the necessary consequences are obedience evangelical, and joy unspeakable. Faith in Jesus is the great command of the gospel: (1 John iii. 23 :) it is the work of God: "This is that work." (John vi. 29.) Love is the great command of the law: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul." (Matt. xxii. 37.) Faith acts upon Jesus, and sets love on work: love desires after him and delights in him, and sets obedience on work: divine comfort flows in proportionably. In this is the formal nature of Christianity; and whatever is not this, in truth is but nature. The revelation left in nature tells us that there is a God, that he is to be worshipped, that the soul is immortal, that there is a state of bliss in another world, that righteousness is the way to that bliss. Now as there are but two righteousnesses,—the righteousness of Christ, (of which the whole creation is silent, and nature altogether ignorant, and angels knew it not until it was revealed to them,) and a man's own righteousness; so there are but two religions in the world; namely, Christianity and nature. Call religions by what names you list,—Judaism, Turcism, Paganism, Popery, common Protestantism; it is still but nature. The sea hath many names from the countries and shores; but still it is the same sea. These two righteousnesses cannot be mixed in the business of justification in the sight of God. If it be of Christ, as the scripture saith, it is no more of works: if it be of works, as nature saith, it is no more of Christ: we cannot be justified in his sight partly by the righteousness of Christ's obedience, and partly by our own: "The law is not of faith." (Gal. iii. 12.) "As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." (Verse 10.) "The just shall live by faith;" *ergò*, not by law: this is Paul's logic. (Verse 11.) A man cannot be son of two mothers: "Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman." (Gal. iv. 30.) And a woman cannot be wife to two husbands together. (Rom. vii. 4.) There is but one strait gate, (Matt. vii. 13,) one door, (John x. 9,) one way, (John xiv. 5,) one name. (Acts iv. 12.) Paul is the most lively instance in this great case: while he was alive to the law, he was dead to Christ; and when he was alive to Christ, he was dead to the law; (Gal. ii. 19;) dead to the law as a rule of righteousness, and alive to the law as a rule of obedience; dead to the law in point of dependence, and alive to the law in point of love and practice. His Christianity did ennoble and heighten his morality: he was just and sober and temperate, "blameless," while he was a Pharisee; but when he was a believer, he did the same things from a noble principle, in a spiritual manner, for the right ends. Before, he did act from himself, for himself: now, from Christ and for Christ. The deduction from hence is this:—

If we would live in true comfort, we must be true Christians.—A man may be a Protestant, yet not a Christian indeed; a man may be blameless and Christless, and by consequence Godless. Remember the parable of the foolish virgins: they were not harlots, profane, but “virgins:” they were not persecutors, or blasphemers, or malicious, but “foolish,” that is, supine, careless, negligent: they had lamps in their hands, but no oil in their hearts. [Remember] the parable of the builders, the sandy believers, of the king’s supper, the man that had not on a wedding-garment. Indeed, most of the preaching of the Lord Jesus tends this way; and these parables live to this day, and as much at this day. Let us look to ourselves; the oil of faith and comfort go together, the oil of holiness and the oil of gladness; true Christians are anointed with both. Consider, the man that wanted the wedding-robe was not discerned by any at the table; the Lord espied him quickly. Who would have thought such a professor should go to hell? “Bind him hand and foot.” He did pretend to Christ, and it was but a pretence. I may dispute for, preach-up, Christ’s righteousness, active and passive, and the imputation thereof, according to the scripture and the judgment of the best learned that ever the churches have had; and yet I may go about to establish mine own: I may lift-up Christ to you, and pull him down in mine own heart. The sum is this: *Nullum bonum sine Summo Bono.**

I will expound it thus: “No good work without God,” no God without Christ, no Christ without heart-faith, no faith without love, no love without obedience, no such obedience without comfort more or less.

This brings me to the DOCTRINE: *It is the property and practice of believers to love the Lord Jesus, and to rejoice in him and in the hope of eternal life by him.*

1. First. *It is their property.*—They, and all they, and always, and none but they. There is no man in the world that loves God and the Redeemer Jesus, but a believer; the philosophers were “haters of God,” (Rom. i. 30,) the Gentiles and their wise men; for it is plain that the apostle speaks of them; (not of the Gnostics; that is an idle conceit;) and I am bound to believe Paul’s characters of the Gentiles and their philosophers, before Diogenes Laërtius, Plutarch, or any man else. The Jews hated Jesus Christ; (John xv. 24;) the world hated him. (John vii. 7; Luke xix. 14.) “All gospel atheism,” said that incomparable Dr. Twisse, “is against Jesus Christ.” So for joy: there is never a joyful man alive but a believer. Will you say that men take pleasure in their sins? Why, that is the devil’s joy. Or that they rejoice in full barns and bags? That is the fool’s joy. Or that they rejoice in wine, that is, all dainties that gratify the palate? That is a Bedlam joy. “I have said of mirth, Thou art mad.” Read and believe Eccles. ii. 2; indeed, from verse 1 to 11. The whole book, but especially that chapter, is the divinest philosophy that ever was or will be.

2. *It is their practice.*—They “love the Lord Jesus in incorruption,” or “sincerity.” (Eph. vi. 24.) The church, that is, believers jointly and singly, say of Jesus, that he it is whom their soul loves. (Canticles i. 7.) In the first four verses of Canticles iii. we have it four times, and none

* AUSTIN.

but that: "I sought him whom my soul loveth." (Verse 1.) "I will rise, and seek him whom my soul loveth." (Verse 2.) "I said to the watchmen, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?" (Verse 3.) "After a little while, I found him whom my soul loveth." (Verse 4.) Here is no super-numerary repetition; every believer's soul bears a part in this divine song. So for joy; that is their practice too. We "have no confidence in the flesh," but "rejoice in Christ Jesus;" which joy in him did plainly flow out of their confidence of an interest in him. (Phil. iii. 3.) "As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing." (2 Cor. vi. 10.) "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God;" (Rom. v. 2;) "and we rejoice in God by Jesus Christ." (Verse 11.) With many more texts to the same purpose: there need no more. Only observe, it is, "*We* rejoice;" it is not only Paul or the apostles, but the Philippians, Romans, and so all believers: "*We* rejoice." I shall speak something, I. *For the explication of the doctrine.* II. *For the vindication of the truth.* III. *For the resolution of the case.*

I. FOR EXPLICATION.

These two affections, LOVE and JOY, will be best described by their PROPERTIES, OBJECTS, CAUSES.

(I.) LOVE is the return of a holy affection to Jesus Christ, with desires after him, and delight in him; whose PROPERTIES are these:

(1.) It is a *sovereign* love.—He it is whom the soul loveth; (as before, out of Canticles i. 7;) a *transcendent* love, arising out of some due apprehension of his own excellency, and those most inestimable benefits procured by him. He is "the standard-bearer among ten thousand;" (Canticles v. 10;) "as the apple-tree" for shade and fruit to the weary travellers, above all the trees of the forest. (Canticles ii. 3.) Saints and angels are but shrubs and fruitless things to him; they have fruit for themselves from him, but none for us.

(2.) It is *unsatisfiable* with any thing besides him.—Love is a restless affection, therefore compared to the grave and death. (Canticles viii. 6, 7.) *Amor semper querit nova*; ["Love always seeks fresh objects;"] it cannot say, "I have enough," till it be terminated on Jesus Christ and God by him.

(3.) It is *ardent*.—And therefore it is compared to "coals of fire" in the text, Canticles viii. 6. It is not a flat and faint thing; but it warms and enlarges the heart.

(4.) It is very *chaste*.—It is not to be frightened away by the troubles and affrightments of the world; neither is it to be bribed-off by the blandishments and allurements of it: "Many waters cannot quench" it; and if any would offer all the substance of his house to corrupt it, to withdraw it, "it would utterly be contemned." (Canticles viii. 7.)

(5.) And chiefly it is *obediential*.—What would not a man do or suffer for such a Saviour? for such a salvation as from sin and hell, and such a salvation as into grace and eternal glory? It is "the fulfilling of the law." (Rom. xiii. 10.) A man that loves the Lord Jesus would fulfil every one of his commands: "The law of his God is in his heart;" (Psalm xxxvii. 31;) and his heart is to the law. There is a kind of perfection *secundum intentionem*; ["with respect to intention;"] and he goes on gradually *quoad perfectionem* ["with regard to perfection"]. Love makes the yoke easy: "His commands are not grievous;" that is,

They are precious. "O how love I thy law!" says David. (Psalm cxix. 97.) "I delight in the law of God in my inner man," saith Paul. (Rom. vii. 22.) Try yourselves by this: compare yourselves with that of Christ in his farewell sermon, John xiv. 15, 21, 23. Withal remember and dread that text, 1 Cor. xvi. 22: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus," that is, malign him, oppose him, "let him be accursed till the Lord comes."

2. THE OBJECT OF THIS LOVE.—We have it in the text; namely, the Lord Jesus, and all of him: he is altogether lovely. A believer loves him as King, loves his laws and institutions, and none but his; loves him as Priest, in the holiness of his nature and life, in the suffering of his soul and death: how "precious" is Jesus! (1 Peter ii. 7.) [He] loves him as a Prophet, revealing the mystery of salvation, the glorious mystery of the gospel hidden from generations, hidden from the wise and prudent. Believers love him most intimately as a King for holiness, as a Priest for righteousness, and as a Prophet for wisdom. Lust, like the harlot, divides him; but love, like the true mother, will have him whole,—as well holiness to save from sin, as righteousness to save from hell.

3. THE CAUSE OF IT is the blessed Spirit. "The fruit of the Spirit is love." (Gal. v. 22.) "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart," and cause thee "to love the Lord thy God." (Deut. xxx. 6.) Alas! it is not in corrupt nature, the wisdom of the flesh: the best in that hedge is enmity; not a bare enmity, but "enmity against God:" it is "not subject," that is, ordinarily, regularly subject to his "law, neither can be;" there is a *remotio actûs* and *posse* too:* it is a divine work.

(II.) The other holy affection is JOY: in the text we have the PROPERTIES of it.

(1.) It is "*unspeakable*."—The joy of harvest, rich spoils, great treasures, when they are right, that is, when they are derived from God by Jesus Christ, they have their weight; but what are these to the joy of a pardon to a trembling and condemned man? And what is this to the joy in Christ to a man that understands and is sensible what damnation is, what hell is, what eternity is? The highness, the sweetness, the revivement is indeed ineffable; no man that feels it can find words fully to express it.

(2.) It is "*full of glory*."—That is, say some, "A stander-by cannot judge of it." That is true, but is too short; it is *initium vitæ æternæ*, ["a beginning of life eternal,"] it is *glorificatum gaudium*, ["a glorified joy,"] it is a part of heaven. Austin seems to think, that is too much: our present comfort, saith he, is rather *solatium præsentis miseriæ*, ["the solace of our present misery,"] than *gaudium futuræ beatitudinis*, [the joy of future bliss;] rather a collation or refreshment upon our journey, than a set meal at our journey's end. What, if we should take the word here, "glorious," for strong, "full of glory," full of divine power, a holy joy, a heart-enlarging joy, strong to do, and strong to die? Certainly sin is never more odious, the heart is never more soft, the commandments never more precious, the world never more regardless, Jesus never more glorious, than when we humbly rejoice in the sense of God's love by Jesus Christ, through the witness of the blessed Spirit. If our comforts be not heart-enlarging to love and duty, they may be suspected for unsound.

* "A removal both of its actual exercise and of its possibility."—EDR.

(3.) I will add one property; namely, the joy of believers is *soul-satisfying* joy.—It fills the heart and every chink of it; it is abundantly, nay, victoriously satisfying [to] the soul of itself, without praying-in the help of the creatures. Light all the candles in the world, and they will not, cannot make it day: let the sun arise, and that will do it without their help. Read Hab. iii. 17—19: in our phrase, our manner of speech, it is this: “If no bread in the cupboard, nor money in the purse, nor friend to help; ‘yet I will rejoice in the Lord, and glory in the God of my salvation.’”

2. The OBJECT of this joy is present interest in Jesus, and a lively hope of glory, or glory hoped for.

3. The CAUSE *efficient* is the blessed Spirit: “Joy in the Holy Ghost,” that is, by him. The *inward* instrument is faith, faith special, or assurance: “Christ loved me, and gave himself for me.” (Gal. ii. 20.) The *outward* instrument is the gospel: the angel called it, “Tidings of great joy.” I pray you, try again: where is your joy? whence doth it arise? upon what is it fixed? of what kind is it? what is the power of it? Joy is natural and pleasing; every man seeks it. “Many there be that say, Who will show us any good?” They are for sensible, palpable good,—corn, wine, or oil, riches, honours: here they think to find joy and comfort. Alas! they seek the living among the dead; they suck an empty breast. David had all this, but he sought far higher, he was of a more noble and heavenly temper; “Lift thou up the light of thy countenance;” cause thy face to shine upon thy servant; that will “put gladness into my heart.” (Psalm iv. 6, 7.)

II. The second particular, or VINDICATION.

Out of these premisses we conclude that *Christianity is a glorious thing*: which is the second particular, which I call “a vindication of the truth.” Religion is not a little formality in duties, joined with some morality in life; but it consists in the new creature, or faith working by love. (Gal. v. 6; vi. 15.) It consists in the exercise of repentance, self-loathing, hatred of sin as such, (for these are necessarily implied,) faith actual in Jesus, love to him, obedience before him, communion with God by him, peace and comfort from him, and well-grounded hope of eternal life through him: the smell of his garments, (Psalm xlv. 8,) the savour of his ointment, (Canticles i. 3,) the taste of his preciousness, makes a believer think he can never do enough for Jesus. If his holiness were as an angel’s, and his days as the days of heaven, yet all were too short, too little for such a Saviour; the love of Christ constrains him. He is a debtor to the Spirit, to live after the Spirit; and whatever is not this in truth, (there is a difference in degrees,) is, as you heard before, but nature raised and varnished and modified with distinctions; still it is but nature. Wash and dress a swine as you please, it is a swine still. The Fathers, when the breaking-out of Pelagianism made them more studious in the point of grace, and more wary in their expressions, have left us their judgment in this case. “You bring-in a kind of doctrine,” saith Austin to the Pelagians, “that men do righteousness, and please God, without faith in Christ, by the law of nature: this is that for which the church doth most of all detest you.” *Hoc est undè vos maximè Christiana detestatur ecclesia.* (Lib. iv. cap. 3, *Contra duas Epistolas Pelagianorum ad Bonifacium.*) Again, saith he, “Far be it from us

to think that true virtue should be in any man, unless he were righteous; and far be it from us to think, that any man should be truly righteous, unless he did live by faith; for 'the just shall live by faith.'" *Absit autem ut sit justus verè nisi vivat ex fide.* And again: "Who would say that a man," *diabolo mancipatus*, "a slave to the devil, were a righteous man, though he were Fabricius or Scipio?" "To clothe the naked," saith he, "is not sin, as the fact is considered in itself; but of such a work to glory, and not in the Lord, none but a wicked man but will grant this to be sin." Thus far Austin, with more to the same purpose in the same place: and upon this account he did correct some expressions, lib. i. cap. 3, *Retractionum*. The whole chapter is seasonable; the sum this: Austin had called the Muses "goddesses," had highly advanced the liberal sciences; now corrects it, upon this reason, namely, that many godly men knew them not, and many that did know them were ungodly. The same he doth about Pythagoras's books, "In which," saith he, "are," *plures*, "many errors," *idemque capitales* ["and those capital ones"]. Especially this he recants, that he formerly said, The philosophers, who were not pious, were yet shining in virtue: no faith in Christ, no virtue; it is *spectrum*, it is but *simulacrum*, but *imago virtutis*; it is not virtue; painted fire is not fire. Jerome to the same purpose in *cap. iii. Galat.* "Paul," saith he, "blameless did not live; he was dead while blameless. Paul the Christian was indeed alive. Men speak of temperance and justice without faith; that cannot be; none live without Christ;" *sine quo omnis virtus est in vitio*: "without Christ all virtue is accounted vice." Thus he.

It is most evident, there dwelleth no virtue in the minds of ungodly men: their wisdom is not heavenly, but earthly; not from "the Father of lights;" but from "the prince of darkness;" *ac sic vitium, quod putatur virtus*; "and so that is a vice which is accounted virtue." *Non deo serviunt, sed diabolo*; "They serve the devil, not God." * *Tota vita infidelium est peccatum*; "The whole life of unbelievers is sin." † To the same purpose saith Fulgentius, with others. The scripture is full and clear: "An evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit." "The carnal mind cannot please God." (Rom. viii. 7, 8.) 1 Cor. xiii. 1—3, the apostle doth raise his discourse to the highest strain: "Though I speak with the tongue of angels," which no man doth; "if I had all knowledge," which no man hath; "if I could move mountains," which no man can; "if I give all my goods to feed the poor," the highest beneficence; "and my body to be burned," the greatest suffering; "yet if I have not love, I am nothing." He doth not say, "These things are nothing;" he doth not say, "Knowledge is nothing," or, "Giving to the poor is nothing;" but, "I am nothing; I have no profit, I am a hollow tub, an empty vessel; I make a noise amongst men while I live, and go to hell when I die." And according to scripture and Fathers, the doctrine of our church hath determinated in her thirteenth article thus: "Works done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasing to God, forasmuch as they spring not from faith in Jesus Christ; yea, rather, for that they are not done as God hath commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin." And this is the judgment of the Reformed churches also. Sirs, be sure you get and

* PROSPER, *Contra Collatorem*, cap. 28.

† Idem, *Sentent.* cvi.

exercise this faith unfeigned in Jesus Christ, and love sincere to him. A fair deportment, with great gifts and splendid performances, without Christ, is but a more genteel way to perdition everlasting.

III. THE RESOLUTION OF THE CASE.

I come now to the resolution of the practical case, *how a Christian may get that faith by which he may live comfortably, as well as die safely.*—Where this I think fit to premise: First, he must not only get such a faith, but he must keep it in exercise; for without this there is no living comfortably. Then, this also I premise,—that to get and keep comfort, or that a Christian may have comfort, two things are necessary, namely, proportion and propriety; * *ex parte objecti*, [“on the part of the object,”] it must be a good proportionable; and then *ex parte subjecti*, [“on the part of the subject,”] it must be mine; it must be commensurate and adequate to the soul, and it must be the soul’s own. *Tolle MEUM, et tolle gaudium.* † The comfort and sweetness of the gospel lies in pronouns, as the common saying is; as, for instance, suppose the conquests of Alexander, and triumphs of Pompey, nay, all the world were thine, there is propriety, it is *thine*; but herein would be no comfort at all to thee, because here is no proportion, no suitableness to an immaterial, vast, and immortal soul. On the other side, Christ is proposed to thee, and in him there is proportion; for in him dwelleth all fulness: He is an infinite, spiritual, and eternal good: but what comfort is this without propriety, unless he be *thine*? “My spirit rejoiceth in God *my* Saviour.” (Luke i. 47.) “I will rejoice in the God of *my* salvation.” (Hab. iii. 18.) “Your father Abraham saw my day, and did rejoice to see it:” the plain English is this, Abraham saw Jesus Christ in the promises, to wit, his obedience, and sufferings, and the glory that came by Christ’s righteousness; and did apply it to himself by faith, and was assured of his interest in it, which made him to rejoice in that sight.

Though a prince may have a legal right to a treasure hid in the field, yet, till it be discovered to him, there is no joy: “The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost,” and so we “rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.” (Rom. v. 2, 5.) I will not dispute whether assurance be of the nature of faith: our Reformers were of renown; and other learned men since, at home and abroad, that are for assurance, do not at any hand exclude adherence. Some think that faith is a mixed habit; adherence and assurance are two acts of the same faith, two flowers from the same root. It is true, there may be adherence without assurance; but it is as true, that there cannot be assurance without adherence. If I know and believe that Christ died for me, I should stick to it *in negotio justificationis*, ‡ without taking notice of any inherent holiness either in men or angels: how do the stars disappear at the rising brightness of the sun! yet no disparagement to the stars at all. But I say, I will not dispute; and if I could, it were both unseasonable and needless; for, whether assurance be of the nature of faith, or whether it be an effect of faith, is all one in this case before us; for there must be something of assurance that must bring-in joy and comfort.

* Proprietorship.—EDIT.

† “Remove the word *mine*, and you destroy all my rejoicing.”—EDIT.

‡ “In the business of justification.”—EDIT.

The believers here in my text,—they loved Christ, and in whom after they believed, they did “rejoice with joy unspeakable:” their first acts of faith might be recumbency, afterwards evidence, then joy. So the Ephesians: after they believed in Christ, they “were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise” as an earnest. (Eph. i. 13—15.) The note of the old, learned, and pious Piscator is, *Unusquisque fidelis verus est, not esse potest, or esse debet, but est certus suæ salutis.** I will name but one scripture more; it is Canticles ii. 16: “My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies.” *My beloved is mine*—There is the gospel with its marrow in the heart of a believer; there is assurance. *And I am his*—There is the law in the same heart; there is obedience. *He feedeth among the lilies*—There is joy and comfort: he died for me, and I am his, soul and body for his service. Hence comes joy, and sometimes such that even overwhelms. This for the entrance; now to the DIRECTIONS:—

DIRECTION I. *If you would get faith, comforting in life, as well as saving at death, you must not sit down satisfied with a bare recumbence on Jesus Christ.*—Mistake me not: I do not discourage, and I dare not disparage, it. If it be right, as I take that for granted, it is a grace more precious incomparably than all treasures, and happy is the bosom that wears so inestimable a jewel. But when Christians, sensible of their sin and hell, do attain to this, they rest satisfied here. They are told, (and that is truth,) that their state is safe; there they acquiesce, set-up their staff behind the door, and go no further. They do not press-on for assurance; they will rather argue against it, thus:—

OBJECTION I. That “assurance is not so necessary.”

ANSWER. “So necessary!” what do you mean? Is it not commanded? is it not promised? is it not purchased? is it not attained by the people of God? Sure, it is necessary to the vigour of grace, and to the being of joy and comfort: “Be of good comfort; thy sins are pardoned.”

OBJECT. II. “Yea; but many do live, and die, and do well, without it.”

ANSWER. Who told you so? The scripture saith, “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” (Rom. viii. 16.) “And we know and believe the love that God hath given us;” (1 John iv. 16;) with many, very many, more texts to that purpose. A tempted believer may bear false witness against himself: sure such a position as this, with mercy upon uncertainties, is not the way to comfort him. The sure way were to advise him to see his sins more, and humble his soul more for them, and to study Jesus Christ, and to come to him more, with the like; and God will return and speak peace; “they that sow in tears shall reap in joy.”

OBJECT. III. “But this joy is not so necessary.”

ANSWER. What do you mean again? “So necessary!” why? 1. *It is frequently commanded.*—Take one text: “Rejoice in the Lord,” that is, Christ, “always; and again I say, Rejoice.” (Phil. iv. 4.) 2. *It is frequently promised.*—“I will make them joyful in my house of prayer.” (Isai. lvi. 7.) “I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.” (John xvi. 22.) 3. *It is practised*

* “Every true believer is,” not “may be,” or “ought to be,” but “is certain of his own salvation.”—EDIT.

frequently.—“We rejoice in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. iii. 3.) 4. *It is often prayed for.*—“The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.” (Rom. xv. 13.) 5. *It is Christ’s office “to give the oil of gladness for the spirit of heaviness.”* (Isai. lxi. 3.) 6. *It is the special work of the blessed Spirit.*—Who is therefore “the Comforter.” Take the word Παράκλητος in what notion you will, his work is either comforting or tending to comfort. (7.) Lastly. *It is the privilege of the gospel-ordinances to feast the soul with marrow and fatness, and with wine well refined.*—That is, God hath not given us “the spirit of bondage to fear again,” as formerly; “but the Spirit of adoption, whereby,” or rather, “by whom,” that is, *cujus ope*, [“by whose assistance,] “we cry, Abba, Father.” (Rom. viii. 15.) Surely joy and comfort is necessary for the measures of grace. If you had a child infirm, sickly, hard-favoured; and a friend should say, “This strength, quickness, and comeliness is not so necessary; your child is alive; is it not?” you would think this were hardly suitable, much less comfortable.

OBJECT. IV. “A Christian that doth come to and rely on Christ for righteousness, may have comfort.”

ANSWER. Yes; but then it must be by the way of a practical syllogism: “He that cometh to Christ shall never perish: (John vi. 50—58:) but I do so: therefore,” &c. Here his coming, together with repentance and obedience, which are concomitants, begets evidence, and from thence comfort.

OBJECT. V. “But many good people want this joy and comfort.”

ANSWER. Confessed; but then it is our own fault: did we use the means, especially secret duties, meditation, prayer, which we neglect, it would be otherwise.

OBJECT. VI. Last. “But those that do these yet are in great darkness.”

ANSWER. Yea, for some time. The Holy Spirit teacheth many lessons, excellent ones, in this school; chiefly these three: 1. They learn what dismal creatures they must have been for ever without Jesus Christ. 2. They learn to give a guess, what were the unintelligible amazements and consternations that were upon the soul of Jesus Christ in their room. 3. The blessedness that comes by Jesus Christ. And when they have learned their lessons in this school out of the word by this ever-blessed Tutor, God brings them out with silver, joy, and gold, and comfort.

DIRECT. II. *Make serious use of marks and signs.*—The best search is in a man’s own heart; and there the greatest case of conscience is, whether Christ be in you. (2 Cor. xiii. 5.) One of the best uses the preacher can make, is a use of trial. Skilful ones lay open these marks with much evidence and vehemence, beseech, require, charge that impartial search be made; and Christians hear, and affect, and say it is a home-sermon, but do not seriously upon retirement bring themselves to the truth. The minister may preach his lungs out of his body, and it is not minded. If self-trial were impartially practised, the blessed Spirit in this way would give-in evidence, and by that comfort: for instance, Jesus Christ tells us, he lays down his life for his sheep. (John x.) There he gives the marks of his sheep: as, 1. *They do not follow the voice of strangers.*—That is, strange doctrines, duties, worship; as Socinianism, Popery,

Pelagianism, new or old, Quakerism : they fly from them : "They know not the voice of strangers." (Verse 5.) 2. *They know Christ with a high, appreciating, and obedient knowledge.* (Verse 14.) 3. *They hear his voice, and they follow him, not a stranger.* (Verse 27.) Now if you would try yourselves by these and many, very many, such like, if you would impartially see the complexion of your souls in the glass of the word, this would beget certainty, and that would beget comfort.

DIRECT. III. *Be not slothful in the business of faith.*—Remove away far from you a sluggish frame ; stir up, blow up the coals, exercise thy faith, exert new acts of application of Jesus Christ to thee daily. We want comfort ; and why ? Jesus Christ is not in our serious thoughts all the day. We eat bread daily for life natural, and clothe ourselves daily to cover our nakedness before men : sure, the soul hath as much need of food and raiment as the body. Jesus crucified is the only, the heavenly food and raiment ; stir up thine appetite, *mitte fidem*, ["exert faith,"] put forth thine hand, put him on : repeated acts of recumbency and application will rise up into acquaintance and evidence, and will let-in this precious joy and consolation. Believe it, sirs, it is a sin of a far greater nature than we are aware of, a sin of horrid unkindness, neglect, slighting of our best friends, namely, that we make sure of every thing but Jesus Christ. A little land, a small tenement, a little money,—there we cry, "Fast bind, and fast find ;" there we have a male in the flock, and can defend our diligence very smartly : but in the great concern of our souls, we are at uncertainties and hap-hazard ; there the blind and the lame is for sacrifice. What a noise is there about a civil propriety in mint and cummin : and what a silence and remissness about the soul's propriety in the Son of God ! It is a prodigious and inexcusable indiscretion and folly, and an unspeakable mischief into the bargain.

DIRECT. IV. *Take heed of thy heart.*—Fetch not thy comforts from, and terminate not thy joy upon, any creature : this were clear idolatry ; therefore check thy joy about these things ; cut off the suckers, and the boughs will be laden with fruit ; stop these back ditches, and the stream will be strong. Remember, Job could approve his sincerity by this : that he did not rejoice because his "wealth was great," and because his "hand had gotten much." (Job xxxi. 25.) Remember, our Lord Christ abated his disciples' joy : "Rejoice not in this, that the devils are subject to you ;" a man may cast out devils, and go to hell ; "but rejoice rather in this, that your names are in the book of life." Act faith, to see God the Giver, Christ the Purchaser, of your daily mercies ; and thence fetch your joy into them : my clothes first must have warmth from my body, and then they warm me.

DIRECT. V. If a Christian would attain to that faith, namely, certainty, that will make his life comfortable, he must go on to be more holy in both the parts of it : *he must die to sin more.*—The scripture calls upon us every where to hate, abhor, mortify, crucify, namely, to death, lay-aside as a dead corpse, put-off as filthy rags, cast-away as a plague-sore,—what, all this while ? Why, lusts, filthy lusts, wrath, anger, vain-glory, pride, impatience, filthy, wanton thoughts. You know, the apostle presseth these things as the main use of the doctrine of Jesus ; Paul is abundant in this in his epistles to the churches. Do it then ;

dwell upon these scriptures much; daily let them dwell in you; be doers of the word. Your ministers are afraid, either of the rickets,—the head is big with airy notions, or but notions, and the joints be weak; or childishness,—that people are more taken with a little gaudy trimming than with the substance of the cloth. Study these truths, and look to your hearts; and conform to them; this is the way for to get, and when you have gotten to keep, some assurance, and that will comfort your hearts. “The pure in heart shall see God;” and any glimpse of that is a most comfortable sight. The scripture saith, especially in gospel times, that the people of God should “walk in the light of his countenance:” if thou put away iniquity from thy heart, “thou shalt lift up thy face.” The more conscience, the more sense of love; and the more sense, the more comfort; the less clouds, the more sun. The old Puritans had a great deal of feeling and much serious joy.

DIRECT. VI. Look well to the other part of holiness: *live to righteousness*.—Live in it; live Col. iii. 17; read it over and over. “As many as walk according to this rule, peace shall be upon them.” (Gal. vi. 16.) To such an one Christ will manifest himself; his Father and himself will come to such an one, and will make their abode with him: the “Father will love him;” (John xiv. 21, 23;) it is meant of love manifestative, not initial; he will manifest his love. There is joy indeed to the upright. “I will show the salvation of God;” not, “I will begin to be,” but “I will show.” (Psalm l. 23.) Look to your trades; let there be “Holiness to the Lord” upon your weights and measures; look to your family duties; study well and observe your relation-duties. Family-passions cloud faith, disturb duty, darken comfort.

DIRECT. VII. All this while I take it for granted that thou art a Christian. Why, then, if thou wilt get and keep this faith that will get and keep comfort alive, the seventh direction is, *to be much and frequent in divine meditation*.—Faith is enlarged and grows-up by converse with divine objects. Meditate upon these things:—

1. *Christ's deity*.—Be well stored with scriptural knowledge of this great truth; set thy heart to it, and let it be fixed in the midst of thy heart. Assure yourselves that the eternal Godhead of Jesus is the most practical point in heaven, and will be so while heaven is heaven.

2. Be intimately acquainted with *Christ's righteousness*.—That it is the only righteousness that can present us holy, unreprouable, unblamable, in God's sight; that it was his business in the world to bring-in this everlasting righteousness; that it is done and finished; that he hath nothing to do with this righteousness now in heaven, but to clothe us with, to present us in, [it] before God.

3. Meditate on *God's righteousness*.—That it is not only his will, but his nature, to punish sin. Sin must damn thee, without Christ: there is not only a possibility or probability that sin may ruin, but without an interest in Christ it *must* do so; whet much upon thy heart that *must*. God cannot but hate sin, because he is holy; and he cannot but punish sin, because he is righteous. God must not forego his own nature to gratify our humours.

DIRECT. VIII. *Be well skilled and settled, as it becomes a Christian, in the great article of justification before God*.—Thy faith and duties

and comforts depend might-and-main upon this. Know that no servant of God, be he Abraham, Moses, or Paul, if God enter into judgment with him, can stand justified in his sight. God will not justify us without a righteousness; and that righteousness must be unblamable, and therefore in all numbers perfect: God will not call that "perfect" which is not so; for his "judgment is according to truth." (Rom. ii. 2.) Where shall we find this perfect righteousness, but in Christ? who is "Jehovah our Righteousness," (Jer. xxiii. 6,) and "made of God unto us righteousness." (1 Cor. i. 30.) How shall this become ours, but by imputation? (Rom. iv. 6.) How shall we receive this "gift of righteousness," but by faith? (Rom. v. 17.) Be well skilled in the good old way; go in the footsteps of the flock, and feed beside the shepherds' tents. Believe it, sirs, there is no way but Christ unto the Father; his blood is that "new and living way;" (Heb. x. 19, 20;) there is no standing in God's presence but in him, no acceptance but by him, no comfort but from him. Be wise and wary; there are many adversaries. Only give me leave to say this: I think that the Socinians had never set-up man's obedience for his righteousness, if they had not with wicked hands, *quantum in illis*, ["as much as was in their power,"] first pulled down Christ's Deity; and as they are abhorred for this blasphemy of blasphemies, so I cannot abide them for daubing over man's obedience in this affair so deceitfully and deceivingly, namely, in saying it is not only *causa sine quâ non* in our justification; as if the material cause, or the matter which God imputes for righteousness, were only a poor *causa sine quâ non*: but no more now of this juggling.

DIRECT. IX. *If you would preserve a right understanding of the nature of faith, take heed of advancing it into Christ's place.*—As if God should impute the act of faith for righteousness, or that God should impute faith and obedience as the condition or matter of our righteousness, and not Christ's obedience. For both cannot be imputed: if God imputed Christ's obedience, then not ours; if ours, then not Christ's. The nature of faith consists in coming to Christ for righteousness and pardon: only the man hurt with the fiery sting looks to the brasen serpent for cure. *Fides quæ*, "that faith which" is justifying takes in Christ as Lord, with all the heart; but *quâ justificat*, "in the business of justification," *quâ sic*, it looks only to Christ "as crucified:" this plain old distinction will stand. If the nature of faith did consist in Christianity, I say, if this were true, I believe all believers could be contented to have it so, for any harm they should have by it; for they willingly devote themselves to the obedience of God: only they cannot make this faith or Christianity to be the condition or matter of justification; for this were to fall from grace, to make of none effect the death of Christ, and to drive Christianity and comfort out of the world.

DIRECT. X. *Get and keep this faith, especially by a constant and conscientious living in duty, and living above it.*—Say to the commandments, "You are my rule and love and joy;" to Christ, "Thou art my life." (Col. iii. 4.) It is the height of Christianity to live in duties, and to live above them. It is quickly said; it is an easy matter to distinguish in the Schools or pulpit; but to distinguish in the conscience, practically to distinguish, is not so easy: *Qui novit distinguere inter legem et evan-*

*gelium, sciat se esse edoctum a Deo.** Had I all the holiness of the saints from the beginning to this day, I would bless God for the least, and prize it above all treasures; yet I would lay all aside, and be found in Christ. In the midst of thy duties, ask thy soul the question: "Soul, what is thy title, thy plea? If I were to die this day, what have I to plead? In what shall I stand before God? What have I to plead, why I should not perish in hell?" Ask thyself: "What is thy righteousness?" Ask it solemnly, frequently: "Is it not Christ, and he only?" This would much conduce to confirm thy faith, such a faith that would bring-in comfort. The thoughts of this so affected Dr. Mollius, that he seldom named Jesus with dry eyes.

DIRECT. XI. *Be much in secret prayer, ejaculations.*—This will breed acquaintance, and that comfort: the non-exercise of this breeds a strangeness between God and the soul; and that is uncomfortable. This and meditation who can hinder? The soul is active, breathings and thoughts are quick, it is soon done, it will never hinder your business; and in this way the blessed Spirit causeth us to "know and believe the love that God hath to us," (1 John iv. 16.) and refresheth the soul with joy and comfort in believing. Do not only pray for the comforts and supplies of the Holy Spirit, but pray to him to this purpose: "Blessed Spirit, convince me of my sins more, and convince me more and more of Jesus Christ: Holy Spirit, take of Christ's, and show it unto me;" and the like. To pass-by the profane scoffs of many, and the gross ignorance of more, I take it to be a very great neglect in believers, that they do not glorify the Holy Spirit, as the Lord and Giver of faith and comfort. Remember this: *Qui unum honorat, et omnes*: "He that honoureth one person aright, honoureth every one; and he that doth not honour every person, honoureth none:" *qui non omnes, nec unum.*

DIRECT. XII. *If you would get and keep this special comforting faith, then keep a good conscience in evil times.*—Choose suffering before secular safety; remember who did shrink from the truth, and lost this faith and comfort, even to the gates almost of despair and self-violence, for twelve months together, and never did recover, till, [on] some hints of mercy to him, he began to revive and have some quiet. Spira said, with tears running down his face, that time was when he could have called God "Father," but now he could not.

DIRECT. XIII. *You may and ought to get this special rejoicing faith out of sanctified afflictions.*—Thus: "Whom God doth correct and teach, him he loves, he is blessed: (Psalm xciv. 12; Heb. xii. 6:) but God doeth so to me: *ergò.*" Here are bills and prayers for mercies; but who looks after the issue, the teaching, the holy use? Sanctified affections are very good evidences, and so very comfortable. There are that would not have lost their buffetings, temptations, various temptations, afflictions, for any good. The blessed Spirit hath taught them that way many a divine truth by heart out of the word; they are sensible of it, and from it conclude the love of God in Christ to them; and thence they have joy and comfort,—that joy that angels cannot give, and devils cannot take. Sanctified troubles are tokens of special love.

* "Let him who has the skill to distinguish between the law and the Gospel, know assuredly that he has been taught of God."—EDIT.

DIRECT. xiv. *Give diligent attendance upon the ordinances.*—Set thyself in the sight of God, to hear what God will speak, as Cornelius did; (Acts x. 33;) and rejoice to do it: such “shall walk in the light of God’s countenance.” (Psalm lxxxix. 15.) Take heed of the common humour; we begin to be very squeamish and carnal; one is of Paul, another of Apollos; we attend more the man and his artifice, than God and his word. Mr. Bolton, in his florid but profane wit, thought Perkins was a sneaking fellow; but when God changed his heart, he was of another mind.

DIRECT. xv. Lastly. *Be more intent upon your duty than upon your comfort; and comfort will follow.*—Order your steps in the paths of divine precepts; walk in all relations according to the rule, and be not so earnest after comfort, so solicitous in that behalf. Walk uprightly, and the face of God will behold the upright. You pray for assurance; be sure your ends be right; let it be more for holiness, that the name of Jesus Christ may be glorified by you, than for comfort. I think, some good people are too carnal in their prayers for assurance; they desire it not so much for holiness as for safety. I have known such; take heed, look well to your aims.

I will conclude with Paul’s prayer, 2 Thess. ii. 16, 17: “Now our Lord Jesus, and God our Father, who hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.”

SERMON XXVI.

BY THE REV. THOMAS JACOMBE, D.D.,

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HOW CHRISTIANS MAY LEARN IN EVERY STATE TO BE CONTENT.

For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.—
Philippians iv. 11.

THE OCCASION OF THE WORDS.

OUR apostle makes this profession of his high attainments in the grace of contentation upon a very weighty reason or motive; namely, that he might obviate all misconstructions and bad interpretations which possibly some might put upon what he had said in the foregoing verse, and should further say in verses 14—16. In every [one] of which we have him expressing his great and affectionate resentment of the Philippians’ bounty and liberality to him: “I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again. Ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction,” &c. “No church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.” Now he foresaw, that this his just acknowledgment might have some base and ugly censures put upon it, which therefore he makes it

his business to prevent. And he enters a double *caveat* about them: "Not because I desire a gift." As if he had said, "O Philippians, I have received your gifts, and I am very thankful to you for them; but do not think I do this out of any base spirit, as if I desired thereby to be enriched or advanced in worldly possessions.* No," saith he; "it is not so with me: all that my eye is upon in your kindness to me is this,—'I desire fruit that may abound to your account.'" (Verse 17.) Again: "'Not that I speak in respect of want,' as if I were so exceeding low in the world, that I could not live without your supply; or as if I were a person so tender and delicate, that I could not bear a little want or hardship. No; it is not so with me, neither; for, let my outward condition be what it will, never so low as to outward things, yet I have one reserve always by me,—a contented mind: I cannot have so little but that little shall suffice."† So the text comes in: "Not that I speak in respect of want; for I have learned," &c.

In the words wherein I am concerned, we have,

THE TEXT DIVIDED.

1. A lesson to be learned: "To be content."—A rare and excellent lesson, than which there is scarce any one higher and harder in the whole compass of Christianity!

2. Paul's great proficiency in this lesson: "I have learned in whatsoever state I am," or, as it is in the Greek,‡ "in whatsoever things I am," "therewith to be content."—He had in the course of his life passed through various states; and some of them were bad enough, according to the account which he himself gives of them, 2 Cor. iv. 8—10; vi. 4, 5; xi. 23. But no condition came amiss to him; his spirit was always composed and calm; he lived in the constant practice of divine contentment. "I have learned," saith he, and we may believe him, "in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." What an apt scholar, what an admirable proficient, was this blessed man in this high and difficult piece of practical knowledge! Surely, he that can master such a lesson as this, may well be placed in the highest form of Christ's school.

OF THE SUPERNATURALNESS AND MYSTERIOUSNESS OF CONTENTMENT.

When he saith, he had "learned to be content," two things are implied in that expression,—the *supernaturalness*, the *mysteriousness*, of contentment.

1. The *supernaturalness* of it: "I have learned" it. As if he had said, "It was not a thing known by me from the first; I brought not this frame with me into the world; it was not ingenite or connate with me;

* *Gratam sibi esse testatur eorum beneficentiam, &c.; ita tamen orationem temperans, ut ab omni sordium suspitione se purum esse testetur.*—BEZA. "The apostle declares how grateful their bounty was to him; yet so qualifies his expressions as to evince his entire freedom from any thing that might be construed into a sordid avarice."—EDIT. † *Non quòd penuriam passus sim, id dico; didici enim, ut sufficiat mihi id quod habeo.*—*Versio Syriaca.* ‡ *Ev ois equi In quibus sum; id est, Qualiscunque sit mea conditio, &c.*—CALVINUS. ["In what things I am; that is, 'Whatever may be my condition.'"] It is more than if he had said, *In iis quæ habeo*: ["I have learned to be content with what I possess."] *Vide MUSCULUM in loc.*

I had it not from nature or natural light. No; it was purely adventitious, being in part infused by God, and in part acquired by myself. I was not made with it, but I was taught it." Where and how did he learn it? Not at the feet of Gamaliel, not in the schools of the great philosophers; but in the school of Christ, and by the teachings of the Spirit. He might say of this, what he saith of his office: It was "not of men, nor by man, but of God." (Gal. i. 1.) (1.) He attained unto it, not by the teachings of man's wisdom, but by the teachings of the Holy Ghost, to allude to that, 1 Cor. ii. 13. This blessed Spirit set up a supernatural light in him, wrought a supernatural work in him, gave-in divine and supernatural discoveries to him; and so he arrived at his contentment. (2.) And further, he learned it, in a subordinate sense, by his own prudent observation, Christian experience, daily and constant exercise; * all of which, when sanctified and blessed by God, do contribute much to the making of the heart quiet in every condition.

2. The word notes also the *mysteriousness* of heavenly contentment:—"I have learned" it, saith the apostle, as a great secret, as a thing that lies out of the common road, and is not so easy to be understood.—This notion is not so fully reached by the word here used, *εμαθον*, as it is by another word used in the next verse: "Everywhere and in all things I am instructed," &c. It is *μεμυημαι*, which we render by "instructed," others by "initiated." It implies both initiation and also instruction in things sacred and mysterious, as is commonly observed.† Now, saith Paul, "I am instructed both to be full and

* *Αρα διδασκαλιας εστι το πραγμα, και γυμνασιας, και μελετης ου γαρ ευκαταστατος εστιν, αλλα και σφοδρα δυσκολον και πονον εχον πολυν.*—CHRYSOSTOMI *Homil. 11. in Philip. iv. 11.* "This grace is not to be attained but by instruction, exercise, and care: for it is not all at once firmly established, but is acquired only with great labour and difficulty." *Διδαχης αδρα το πραγμα και ασκησεως.*—ECUMENIUS. "A matter requiring much instruction and practice." *Γεγυμνασμενος ειμι εν πασι.*—PHOTIUS. "I have been trained and exercised in all things." *Dicens, Didici, significat hanc rem esse disciplina et exercitationis, atque hujus rei habitum longo usu se assecutum.*—ESTIUS. "When the apostle says, 'I have learned,' he implies that this virtue is the result of discipline and practice, and is a habit acquired only by long use."—EDIT. † *Initiatus sum.*—BEZA. "I am initiated." *Utitur verbo quod rebus sacris convenit ut significet pios esse ad hac omnia a Spiritu Sancto sanctificatos et consecratos: μεμυηται enim est sacris initiari. Est igitur sacra institutio.*—ZANCHIUS. "St. Paul here uses a word appropriated to sacred subjects, to denote that pious persons are sanctified and consecrated to all these by the Holy Spirit; for the Greek verb signifies 'to be initiated into religious things.' It is, therefore, a holy training and institution."—EDIT. "I am consecrated to this knowledge of contentment in all estates."—DR. SIBBS'S "Saint's Coriial," p. 4. *Est proprie initiari mysteriis.*—ERASMUS. "It is properly 'to initiate in mysteries.'"—EDIT. *Dicit, Institutus sum, ut innuet hanc rationem vite, velut sacrum mysterium, se divinitus eductum esse. Est enim in Græco verbum a quo mysteria dicuntur.*—ESTIUS. "He says, 'I have been instructed,' to intimate that he had been divinely taught this manner of life, as a sacred mystery. For the Greek word here employed is that from which 'mysteries' derive their name."—EDIT. *Initiatus sum, id est, institutus. Non formidavit apostolus vocem Græcæ superstitionis ad meliores usus transferre; nam et μυστηριον vox hinc venit. In Glossario μυσος, initio, imbuo.*—DIODORUS SICULUS: *Μυσει τους ανθρωπους, τουτο δε εστι, διδασκειν τα καλα.*—GROTIUS. "I am initiated,' that is, 'instructed.' St. Paul has not feared to transfer to better uses a word appertaining to Grecian superstition; for it is the root of the term 'mystery.' In the Glossary, it is explained as meaning 'to initiate, to imbue.' Diodorus Siculus says, 'To initiate men, is to teach them virtuous principles.'"—EDIT. *Usurpavit hoc verbum omnium pertinentissimè: nam omnino sacra est hæc disciplina Christianæ scientiæ, &c.; et institutio illius non est simpliciter παιδευσις, sed sacra μυστις.*—MUSCULUS. "He has used this word of all others most appositely: for the knowledge gained in the Christian school is wholly sacred; and tuition in it is not merely 'instruction,' but holy 'initiation.'"—EDIT. *Innuens apostolus hanc vite rationem, velut grande sacrumque mysterium, a Deo divinitus*

to suffer hunger." As if he had said, "This indeed is a very mysterious thing; yet God hath brought me to the knowledge and practice of it." So that contentment is not a facile or common matter, such as is open and obvious to every person; but it is an abstruse, hidden, secret thing; there are mysteries in it which only some few do discern; it carries a holy art and skill in it, which he that hath learned is one of the greatest artists in the world. Paul had arrived at this art, for he had "learned in every," &c.

OBSERVATIONS RAISED.

The observations from the words are four:

OBSERVATION I. *Such who are true disciples of Christ, partakers of the true spirit of Christianity,—they have learned to be content.*

OBSERV. II. *True contentment is a divine and supernatural thing.*—It is a flower which doth not grow in nature's garden, but God plants it in the soul. He only knows and lives it who is taught of God, and who learns it by the teaching of the Spirit. Some of the heathen moralists have spoke much and wrote very well of it;* but yet they, it is to be feared, were great strangers to the practice of it.† It is the sincere Christian only who doth indeed live it. There must be a divine light beamed into the soul, the communication of special grace from Christ, the supernatural workings of God's Spirit in the heart; or else there can be no true contentment.

OBSERV. III. *Christian contentment hath great mysteries wrapped up in it.*—A contented life is a mysterious life. The apostle, speaking of the doctrine of godliness, saith, It is a "great mystery." (1 Tim. iii. 16.) We may say the same of the practical part of godliness, as it lies in contentment: It is a "great mystery." Here is a man that hath very much, and yet he is not contented; here is another that hath little or nothing, and yet he is contented; surely there is a mystery in the case.‡

OBSERV. IV. *Then a man doth truly know and live contentment, when he hath learned in every state and condition therewith to be content.*—Paul's contentment was universal, extending to all occurrences of Providence: "I have learned in every state," &c. "Everywhere and in all things I am instructed," &c. It is not enough in this or that want and cross to be contented; but in *every thing* that befalls us we must be so; and then we have indeed learned this heavenly lesson.

These are the doctrinal truths which the text presents us with: I have named them, but shall not fall upon the prosecution of all or any one of them. It is the duty itself which I am only to speak unto. And concerning that, too, I am not to launch out into the general handling of it, so as to treat upon the several heads which are proper to it, which work is already done fully and profitably by many of our own writers: I am confined to one particular about it, which will be mainly directive; to show, how, and by what means, this blessed contentation may be attained.

accepisse.—VELASQUEZ. "The apostle hints that this course or rule of life was divinely communicated to him, as a great and holy mystery, by God."—EDIT.

* PLUTARCHUS Περὶ Ευθυμίας. SENECA *De Tranquillitate Animi*. † AS AUSTIN speaks of Seneca upon another account: *Libertas, quæ scribenti affuit, viventi deficit.* "The liberty which appears in his writings, he did not enjoy in his life."—EDIT. ‡ See this opened in MR. BURROUGHS "Of Contentment," p. 17, &c.

THE MAIN QUESTION PROPOUNDED AND ANSWERED.

It is a very important question which I am to answer this morning; namely, *What are all Christians to do, that they, with Paul, may learn in every state to be content?*

A THREEFOLD NOTION OF CONTENTMENT.

For the more distinct answering of which, I will consider contentment in a threefold notion; as it consists, I. *In self-sufficiency.* II. *In the bounding of the desires.* III. *In the calmness and quietness of the spirit in every condition.*

HOW IT MAY BE ATTAINED AS IT LIES IN SELF-SUFFICIENCY.

I. As it lies in *self-fulness*, or *self-sufficiency*.—So it is opposed to emptiness, want, indigence, and to that vexation and dissatisfaction of mind which ariseth from that emptiness. Contentment is a blessed autarchy or “self-sufficiency.” When may a man be said to be contented? Why, when his soul is full in his possessing of that good which is commensurate and adequate to all his desires and wants. This is one explification of contentment, and it is that which the *notatio nominis* [“etymology of the word”] directs us unto; for the Greek word by which it is set forth is *αυταρχεια*, rendered by “sufficiency,” 2 Cor. ix. 8; by “contentment,” 1 Tim. vi. 6. It is the word used in my text: “I have learned, in whatsoever state I am,” *αυταρχεις ειναι*, “therewith to be content:” so that Paul’s being contented was, his having a fulness and sufficiency in himself, insomuch that he wanted nothing. And this is the happiness of every believer; he is *αυταρχεις*, “self-sufficient;” and therein lies his contentment, if not formally, yet fundamentally. “A good man shall be satisfied from himself.” (Prov. xiv. 14.) It is very emphatical, that of the apostle in 2 Cor. ix. 8: “That ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.” He is speaking to the Corinthians of God’s supplying of them in temporal blessings, that they might always have a stock by them, and be thereby in a capacity to relieve the poor. I take the expression more generally, and bring it to the thing which I am upon. A godly man hath “sufficiency” in himself, and that too, *εν παντι παντοτε πασαν αυταρχειαν*, “in all things always all sufficiency;” for so full it is in the original.

OBJECTION. It may be objected, “How can this be? Can any creature be self-sufficient? Is not that a thing peculiar to God himself? Are not all here in themselves indigent and necessitous?”

ANSWER. I answer, Original and inherent self-sufficiency belongs only to God; but there is a dependent, derived, and borrowed self-sufficiency, and *that* every gracious person hath. He having God for his God, and he possessing this God, the catholic and universal Good, in and from him he hath all that ever he can desire or need; and so, in a borrowed sense, he is self-sufficient. Jacob told his brother, he had “all;” (Gen. xxxiii. 11;) for so it is in the Hebrew. “As having nothing, and yet possessing all things.” (2 Cor. vi. 10.) “I have all, and abound: I am full,” &c. (Phil. iv. 18.)

QUESTION. Now let us bring the question to contentment in this notion: *How may men come up to this self-sufficiency?*

ANSWER. *By their getting a covenant-interest in God, and then by their improving and living upon that God who is theirs by covenant.*—Till this be done, there is no self-fulness, nothing but want and emptiness; and consequently no contentment or satisfaction. Whatever good is in the creature, it is a finite, scanty, defective good; and therefore that can never fill up all the desires, or answer all the wants, of a soul. We see, even where there is much of that good, yet the heart is restless and unsatisfied: “In the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits.” (Job xx. 22.) But God is a perfect, complete, comprehensive good; all goodness whatsoever centres and concurs in him; and thereupon, when a man is once brought to have and to possess God, he is satisfied, all his desires are answered; in the having of God he hath all, and this must needs content him. This explication of contentment is not so much taken notice of; but it points to that which is the highest and most excellent part of it. O, to be self-sufficient, for the poor creature to have all in himself, he having that God who is All, how near doth this bring him to that which is the incommunicable glory and perfection of God himself! As ever you desire to be partakers of this, follow the direction here given you. We should be contented, that is, quiet and composed, under the *least* of the creature; but men shall never be contented, that is, fully satisfied, under the *all* of the creature. The soul being made by God and for God, nothing can fill it but God.* Let a man enjoy never so much of the world, yet if there be but some petty thing, which his fancy is much set upon, withheld from him, this is the bane of his contentment; as we see in Ahab and Haman. On the other hand, let a child of God enjoy never so little of the world, yet he having and knowing God to be his God, and he by faith living upon this God, his soul is at rest, he hath full contentment and satisfaction.

HOW, AS IT LIES IN THE BOUNDING OF THE DESIRES AFTER
EARTHLY THINGS.

II. Contentment lies in the bounding and moderating of the desires after earthly possessions.—So that the heart is not still craving and desiring more and more, but well contented with the present proportion allotted by God. So it is opposed to covetousness: “Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have.” (Heb. xiii. 5.) A covetous person never thinks he hath enough: like one that is hydropical,—the more he drinks, the more he thirsts; † so it is with the man I am speaking of,—the more he hath, the more he desires to have. He is like the four things spoken of by Solomon, Prov. xxx. 15, 16, “that are never satisfied, that never

* *Non nisi beatitudine animæ indigentia expletur, nec eidem explendæ nisi Deus sufficit.*—AUGUSTINI *Confessiones*, lib. i. cap. 1; et *De Civitate Dei*, lib. xii. cap. 1. “The soul’s want is satisfied with nothing short of bliss, nor is any thing except God sufficient to satiate it.”—EDIT. *Omnis copia, quæ non est Deus meus, mihi est egestas.*—Idem, *Soliloquia*, cap. 13. “All my plenty that does not consist in God, is to me poverty.”—EDIT.

† *Crescit indulgens sibi dirus hydrops, Nec sitim pellit.*—HORATI *Carm.* lib. ii. od. ii. 13.

“The dropsy, by indulgence nursed,
Pursues us with increasing thirst.”—FRANCIS’S Translation.

say, It is enough:" an insatiable greediness of wealth possesseth him, so that his pounds must be hundreds, his hundreds thousands, and so *in infinitum*. Contentment, now, suppresseth these exorbitant and extravagant desires; it makes a person to enjoy with cheerfulness what he hath, and not to be always reaching after more. "O," saith the contented person, "the Lord hath very well provided for me! I have enough for me and mine. God gives me food and raiment; it is enough; I have as much as I need, a great deal more than what I deserve; and had I more, it would be but burdensome. It is very well, God hath made a good choice for me; others may have more, I have that which is sufficient." Here is contentment.

QUESTION. Let us bring the question to it, as thus stated. *How may persons learn to be content with what they have, so as not to be covetously greedy of having more?*

ANSWER. I answer, This must be attained,

1. *By the mortification of that inbred lust or natural corruption from which all these inordinate desires after more wealth do proceed.*

2. *By a deep conviction of the greatness of the sin of covetousness, as also of the greatness of the folly that accompanieth that sin.*

3. *By frequent and serious meditation upon death and the eternity which follows upon it.*

4. *By the getting true notions of the vanity of riches and all things here below.*

5. *By the turning the desires into the right channel, and the placing of them upon their proper objects,—God, and Christ, and spiritual things.*

6. *By considering how well others do, who have but a slender proportion of these things, and how thankful they are for that little which God measures out to them.*

I do not at all enlarge on these things, both because this is not that notion of contentment which I most design, as also because I shall have occasion to speak more to them in what will follow.

HOW, AS IT LIES IN THE QUIETNESS OF THE MIND, &C.

III. Therefore we are to consider contentment, as it imports *a calmness and composedness of mind in every condition, stillness and sedateness of spirit under all occurrences of providence*.—When a man likes whatsoever God doeth to him or with him, doth quietly submit unto and acquiesce in God's disposal of him; this is contentment. And so there is a great affinity, though not a perfect identity, betwixt it and patience; so it is opposed to all vexing, fretting, and murmuring, to all undue perturbations of mind under God's dispensations toward us, though they be never so cross to our natural desires. Unquestionably this was one thing, if not the main, intended by our apostle, when he saith, "I have learned in every state to be content." It is as if he had said, "I am brought to this,—always to think well of God and of every state into which he is pleased to bring me: whatever pleases him, pleaseth me; be it imprisonment, poverty, sickness, reproach, death itself; let but God's will be done, and I am content. I am taught to bear all things with great equanimity, or evenness of spirit."*

* *A Christo omnia æquanimiter ferre sum edoctus.*—HIERONYMUS.

THREE HELPS TO CONTENTMENT.

QUESTION. The question, then, will come to this: *How may we and others get this excellent frame, to have the heart in every state calm and quiet, without being disturbed and discontented under any thing that doth befall us?*—The resolving of this question will be my present work.

ANSWER. For answer to it, I will reduce all to these three helps or means; *consideration, grace or godliness, prayer.* He that would learn and live contentment must be a considering man, a godly man, a praying man. Consideration will do *much*, godliness will do *more*, prayer will do *most* of all. In the former, we have what *reason and judgment* can do; in the second, we have what *a divine principle* can do; in the third, we have what *God himself* can do. In consideration, we have the strength of *the man*; in grace, the strength of *the Christian*; in prayer, the strength of *God*: all of which being united, they must needs do the work effectually.

Now, as to these three directions, it is with me as it sometimes is at the head of a spring, where the stream at first is so narrow, that with ease any may stride over it; but afterwards it doth very much widen and dilate itself, insomuch that the little stream is turned into a vast river. So here: take these three heads in the general, and at the first naming of them, so my work seems to lie in a very small compass; but when I come to make a further and more distinct inquiry into them, truly there is a vast sea before me, where it is hard to find any bounds or limits. I shall go over them with as much brevity as the subject will admit of, and as may best conduce to the great end,—the furtherance of contentment.

OF THE FIRST HELP; NAMELY, CONSIDERATION.

I. The first means is *consideration*.—By which I understand, not only that which is rational and proper to a man, as a man, but that which is religious and divine: both together, but especially the latter, have a great influence upon contentment. Few do live contentation, because few do act consideration: we are passionate, because we are inconsiderate. Were there but more considering doubtless there would be less murmuring. David said in his haste, “All men are liars.” (Psalm cxvi. 11.) Men are hasty and sudden and indeliberate; they do not duly weigh and ponder things, and thereupon passion and discontent prevail over them. It is good advice, that in Eccles. vii. 14: “In the day of adversity consider.” When we meet with any thing which runs cross to our desires, which makes it a “day of adversity,” did we but sit down and “consider” about the matter, this would much tend to the quieting of our spirits. Consideration is an excellent help to contentation. He who is not thoughtful, will never learn the lesson of the text. Discomposures of mind are not to be kept off by any spells or charms, but by solid and judicious consideration.

But we must leave the general, and come to particulars; and now I am going out of the straits, and launching out into the main ocean.

The inquiry is, *How is a Christian to manage consideration in order to his attaining of contentment?*

DIRECTIONS HOW TO MANAGE CONSIDERATION IN ORDER TO CONTENTMENT.

For your direction in this, I will,

(I.) *Set before you that special matter which you are to consider upon for this end.*

(II.) *Instance in some of those common cases wherein contentment or discontent are usually acted, and show what those considerations are which are proper to each, for the promoting of the one, and the preventing of the other.*

(III.) *Speak a little to the manner wherein consideration is to be managed.*

OF THE SPECIAL MATTER OF IT.

(I.) For the first. Would you know *what is that special and proper matter which your consideration is to work upon, to further contentment in every state?* Then bring it to these three heads. Consider,

1. *Who it is that orders the state.*
2. *What there is in the state itself.*
3. *The excellency of a contented frame.*

WHO ORDERS THE STATE, AND HOW IT IS ORDERED.

1. *Who it is that orders the estate.*—Surely, the supreme, sovereign, all-disposing God. “My times are in thy hands.” (Psalm xxxi. 15.) It is so with every man in the world, and with every thing about every man; all is in God’s hands. There is a Hand above, which directs all events here below. He that numbers our hairs, orders our state. Good and evil do not come by chance, or happen in a casual and fortuitous way; but both are disposed by God’s providence, and according to his will. This we seem to give a full assent unto, and yet in practice we do either wholly forget it or flatly deny it. My advice, therefore, is this: When at any time your hearts begin to storm and fret at your condition, pray sit down, and seriously consider, who it is that orders that condition. Let your thoughts dwell upon that, and see if it be not to your advantage, for the suppressing of all undue perturbations of mind. David tells us, while he “was musing, the fire burned;” (Psalm xxxix. 3;) that is, the fire of passion, as many do expound it. There is indeed a musing which tends to heart-disquietment, when all our thoughts are taken-up in poring upon that which troubles us; but that musing which I am now urging hath a quite other effect; it will quench the fire, not kindle it.* Methinks that Christian should not easily be disturbed at what befalls him, who considers, let it be what it will, it is all of God. What! believe and own a providence, as carving out every condition, and yet be discontented? That is very sad! Is it fit for the creature to be angry with God, as Jonah was? (Jonah iv. 9.) Shall man dispute with God? “the clay say to” the potter, “Why hast thou made me thus?” (Isai. xlv. 9; Rom. ix. 20.)

* Vide BOETIUM *De Consolatione Philos.* lib. i. Prosa 6.

Must Providence be arraigned at our tribunal, and our will clash with God's? By no means. There is all the reason in the world, that whatsoever pleaseth God should please the creature. "It is the Lord," saith Eli: "let him do what seemeth him good." (1 Sam. iii. 18.) "I was dumb," saith David, "I opened not my mouth, because thou," Lord, "didst it." (Psalm xxxix. 9.) "The Lord gave," saith Job, "and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." (Job i. 21.) I do not know a more effectual help to stillness of spirit, than the consideration of this, that all is ordered by God: and certainly he that is quiet and composed upon this, that frame demonstrates him to have not only a good, but a great and a noble, spirit. It is an excellent passage, that of Seneca: "It is a great soul which surrenders up itself to God; but that is a poor low soul which contends, and thinks ill of the ordering of the world, and which would rather mend the gods than itself."*

But here in our considering, in order to the having of the heart smooth and calm, it is good to take-in more; namely, not only to employ our thoughts upon the thing, but also upon the modification and circumstances thereof; not only to think of this, that all is ordered by God, but *how and in what manner* all is ordered by him. O, this, if duly weighed and digested, would be of great efficacy to further contentation.

Now, take an account of this in four things:—

(1.) All is ordered by God *irresistibly*.—Isai. xliii. 13: "I will work, and who shall let it?" It is applicable to God's providential dealings with every single person in the world. These are carried on with such a mighty power, that it is a vain thing for any to go about to resist and hinder God in what he will do. If man will be cross, and thwart and control Him, what doth it signify? God's will shall be done for all that; he will do all his pleasure: (Isai. xli. 10:) there is no contending with him. "Should it be according to thy mind? He will recompense it, whether thou refuse, or whether thou choose," &c. (Job xxiv. 33.) Christian, thou passionately desirest such a mercy: thou shalt have it never the sooner for that. If God will bestow it, thou shalt have it; if he will withhold it, all thy earnestness and striving will do no good. Or thou wouldest fain have such an affliction removed: that will not do thy work. If God will take it off from thee, there is an end of it; if he will continue it, thou must bear it still. Humble contentment may do much; but proud contending will do nothing. God knows what he hath to do, and he will not be hindered in what he sees fit to do. Pray, therefore, whenever passion begins to rise in the soul, think of this speedily. If it be thus, that the tide of providence will have its course, that there is no hindering of the almighty and sovereign-acting God; "for he doeth whatsoever pleaseth him," (Eccles. viii. 3,) "and worketh all things after the counsel of his own will;" (Eph. i. 11;) then our reason and judgment will tell us, that it is best to yield and submit to this God, and to comply with that which we cannot alter.

(2.) All is ordered by God *righteously*.—He is righteous, and he doeth

* *Magnus est animus qui se Deo tradidit, pusillus et degener qui oblectatur, et de ordine mundi male existimat, et deos mavult emendare quam se.*—Epist. cvii.

nothing but what is righteous. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. xviii. 25.) "The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works." (Psalm cxlv. 17.) "Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." (Rev. xv. 3.) "Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne." (Psalm cxvii. 2.) "He will not lay upon man more than right; that he should enter into judgment with God." (Job xxxiv. 23.) This is an excellent subject for our thoughts to dwell upon, when any thing troubles us. Well may there be our contentment in every state, when there is God's righteousness in every state. Providence may sometimes be dark and mysterious, yet it is always just and righteous. God may sometimes cross us, but he never wrongs us. He doth not see it good in all our desires to gratify us; but it is good for us in all his dispensations to justify him. (Psalm li. 4; Lam. i. 18.) Doth he remove a mercy which we have not forfeited? Doth he lay on an affliction which we by sin have not deserved? And if so, doth it not become us to be silent before him? "Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?" (Lam. iii. 39.) "O," saith the church, "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him." (Micah vii. 9.) It is a smart passage, that in Prov. xix. 3: "The foolishness of man perverteth his way: and his heart fretteth against the Lord." We provoke God to afflict us, and then we are angry with him; whereas we have reason only to be angry with ourselves, our own sins being the procuring cause of all our miseries. We have often too just grounds of being troubled with our own hearts, because of their pride, carnality, unthankfulness, unbelief, &c.: this is good discontent. But we never have any just grounds of being disturbed at what God doeth, he being in all his actings holy and righteous. Bring it to this in your consideration: "Such a good I want, such an evil I feel; but is God unrighteous in either? Surely, no; for do I deserve the one; and do I not deserve the other? Why, then, should I quarrel or fret against God?" Discontent is a bold impeachment of God's righteousness; and is not that a thing of a very heinous nature, grounded upon the greatest falsehood that is imaginable? O, take heed of it. When you are wronged, *then* complain; but do not do it till then, and then I am sure you will never complain. In a word: let this heart-quieting consideration be much upon your thoughts: All is righteously ordered by God; and therefore all must be contentedly undergone by you.

(3.) All is ordered by God *wisely*.—He is "a God of judgment." (Isai. xxx. 18.) We read of the rings, Ezek. i. 18, that they "were full of eyes." Take the several rounds and windings of providence,—they are all full of wisdom. As God at the first made all things with infinite wisdom, (Psalm civ. 24,) so he doth also dispose and govern all things with infinite wisdom. And this holds true, not only with respect to the whole creation in the general lump and mass thereof, but also with respect to every part and parcel of the creation; especially to man, and to every individual man in the world. Now, if this was believed and considered, it could not but much conduce to make us contented in every condition; for certainly it must be most absurd folly in us to find fault with or dislike that which is done by God in admirable wisdom. In our

worldly affairs, wherein we have to do with men, if we apprehend them to be persons endued with understanding and prudence, we can upon this wholly refer ourselves and our concerns to them, and quietly acquiesce in what they advise and order. The patient likes the physic, though never so nauseous, which his skilful physician prescribes. If the pilot be skilful, the passenger saith, "Let him alone, he knows how to order the vessel." And so in several other instances. And why do not we in all our concerns carry it thus toward God, whose wisdom and faithfulness do infinitely transcend what is in man? Shall we not contentedly rest in what he sees to be fittest and best for us? "Vain man would be wise:" (Job xi. 12 :) he thinks he could order things better than God doth; he will be finding faults in God's disposal of him; but this his wisdom is the highest folly. What a wise choice doth God always make for men! The saints shall see it, when they come to heaven, if not before. May they not, therefore, quietly resign up themselves to him, saying, "Thou shalt choose our inheritance for us?" as it is, Psalm xlvi. 4. On the other hand, what a sad choice do men make for themselves, when in their discontent they will be their own choosers! Rachel must have a child, or she dies; she had her desire, but it cost her her life. Jacob cannot stay God's time for the blessing; by which hastiness, in what a world of troubles did he involve himself! Poor creature, thou needest nothing more to undo thee, than to be left to choose thy own condition. Didst thou but consider this, wouldest thou not be contented when the wise God chooseth for thee? Reason with thyself in secret thus: "Did God know how to make my person, and doth he not know how to order my condition? * He that hath wisdom enough to steer the great vessels of the world and of the church, hath he not wisdom enough to steer my little boat? He that hath by an unerring providence brought so many saints safe to heaven, doth he not know the best way to bring me safe thither also? Shall he mistake, in my case, who never yet in all the works that have passed through his hands, was guilty of the least mistake?" I say, reason thus, and it is to be hoped this will lay all storms of passion. O what a blessed serenity of mind should we have in every state, did we but live in the steady belief and serious consideration of God's unsearchable wisdom!

(4.) All is ordered by God *graciously*.—Psalm xxv. 10: "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies." Is it poverty, pain, sickness, loss of relations, worldly crosses? All is in mercy, or in order to mercy, to God's covenant-people. I do not say, that all is mercy to these formally, as to the things themselves which befall them; but I say, All is mercy, or in order to mercy. Afflictions are not mercy in their formal nature, but they are of mercy *originally*, they coming from God's love, and *for* mercy *finally*, God by them designing good, and nothing but good, to them that love him. This is a thing in special to be thought of by those who belong to God. Others have the sovereignty and righteousness of God to awe them; but saints have the mercy and goodness of God to work their hearts to a quiet submission to his will. And how much is there in this for the furtherance of such a frame of heart in them, could they but by

* *Qui creare noverat, ordinare non noverat?*—AUGUSTINUS.

consideration draw it out and work it home upon the soul! What! a child of God to vex and fret at this or that, when all is intended for his good, and shall be for good to him? according to that great promise, Rom. viii. 28.

God always knows what is best for his, such is his wisdom! and he always doeth what is best for his, such is his mercy! What a heart-composing meditation is this! There is much in the other attributes before-mentioned to suppress inward perturbations; but there is more in that which I am now upon. Is mercy and goodness the ingredient in every condition? Then, be it never so bitter, the sense of this must needs sweeten it. Is all ordered by a Father in love? not to hurt men, but to do them good? O why then should I give way to discontent? The truth is, it is too low for the saints in every state barely to be content; there is something higher that they should come up unto; namely, to "rejoice evermore in the Lord," and "in every thing to be giving thanks." (Phil. iv. 4; 1 Thess. v. 16, 18.)

So much for the first thing that I would have you fix upon, as the special matter of your consideration, in order to the learning of contentment; and, I beseech you, put it in practice. Whenever heart-disquietment begins to rise in you, sit down, consider, pause upon it,—who it is that orders your condition, and how he orders it: "Irresistibly, righteously, wisely, graciously."

CONSIDERATION ABOUT THE STATE ITSELF.

2. Secondly. Act your consideration *upon the state itself in which you are*.—For out of that much may be fetched to further contentment. Paul, our great instance in the text, weighed and considered every state into which he was brought; and by that means he "learned in every state to be content." Let us take the same course, and, through the blessing of God, we shall find the same effect.

It is mixed.

QUESTION. *How is a Christian to manage consideration with respect to his state?*

ANSWER. I answer, (1.) Let him consider that *his state is mixed*.—It is neither purely good, nor purely evil; but there is a mixture of the one with the other. It is sweet and bitter mingled together: it is not all mercy,—that is reserved for heaven; nor all misery,—that is reserved for hell; but something of both,—that is proper to the middle state of earth. "God hath set the one over against the other," prosperity and adversity, comforts and crosses, mercies and afflictions, "to the end that man should find nothing after him," (Eccles. vii. 14,) so as to find fault with what God doeth, or to say, This and that might have been better ordered by him. Now, if men would but let their thoughts dwell upon this, how would it tend to the quieting of their minds in every condition! For, "shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" (Job ii. 10.) Especially when we consider, (i.) *That the good is much more than the evil*; and, (ii.) *That the evil is our desert, the good of mere grace*. We take but a partial view of our condition, eyeing the dark side of it only; and then we vex and repine under it: whereas, did we

view the whole, and think of our mercies as well as of our afflictions, we should not carry it so disingenuously toward God. Hezekiah had a sad message sent to him; but he received it with all submission, because there was a mixture of mercy in it: "Good is the word of the Lord," &c. "For there shall be peace and truth in my days." (Isai. xxxix. 8.) There is no state so sad,* in which a good man may not pick out something to comfort and quiet him: therefore, Christian, deal wisely and faithfully in this; set the good against the bad, and there will be no discontent.

It is common.

(2.) This is to be thought of: be the estate what it will, *it is but common*.—Whatever your troubles are, you have many sharers and companions therein. The prophet fancied he was left alone, which made him the more froward in his condition; but God told him, he had reserved some thousands in Israel, who had not bowed their knees to Baal. (1 Kings xix. 14, 18.) And so some in their trials are apt to think they are alone, their case is singular, none so crossed, so afflicted as they; when, God knows, there are many thousands who drink of the same cup. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man," *οὐ μὴ ἀνθρώπινος*. (1 Cor. x. 13.) "Knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world." (1 Peter v. 9.) If this was but considered by persons under afflictions, their spirits would not be so disturbed as they are. When it is but with me as it is with others, why should not I be content? "Men will quietly submit to that which is the lot of others as well as their own." *Ferre quam sortem patiuntur omnes nemo recusat*. The Greek tragedian brings in one as heightening his misery, and crying out, "Woe is me!" "But why," saith he, "'Woe is me,' when we suffer nothing but what is incident to all mortals?" † Did we but in time of need revive this upon our thoughts, it would much alleviate our grief and obviate all heart-disquietment.

That which is proper to the present life.

(3.) *This state doth but agree and suit with the present life*.—Thou canst not expect it should be much better whilst thou art here below; consider this, and be content. We forget where we are, and look for that here on earth which we cannot have; and this betrays us to impatience and discontent. Did we but remember and urge it upon ourselves, that this life is the time of trials, that we are born to trouble here, that it is vanity to expect rest, and ease, and comfort, and felicity in this world; surely we should not be much disturbed at any trouble that doth befall us. Shall Israel, when in the wilderness, murmur, if there they meet with hardships? Shall they who are at sea be angry, if they meet with storms? Shall the traveller be offended at a little bad way? In the

* *Acquiescendum conditioni suæ, et quàm minimè de illâ querendum; et quicquid hæret circa se commodi apprehendendum est. Nihil tam acerbum est, in quo non æquus animus solutium inveniat.*—SENECA *De Tranquillitate Animi; et Ad Helviam de Consolatione*, cap. 10. "A virtuous man should acquiesce in his condition, and complain of it as little as possible; and he should fully appreciate every advantage of his situation. Nothing is too bitter for a tranquil mind, which draws consolation from every thing."—EDIT. † *Ομοιοι. Τις ὁμοιοι; Θνητα τοι παροσθαμεν.*—EURIPIDES, as quoted by PLUTARCH, *Περὶ Ευθυμίας*, p. 475. (*Ed. Steph.*)

lower region would we have nothing but serenity and calmness? It is a thing no less foolish and absurd, for Christians to be discomposed in their minds, if here troubles and afflictions seize upon them. Alas! these are inseparable from the present life.

It might be worse.

(4.) *No state is so bad as it might be.*—Ponder upon that, and it will teach you “in every state to be content.” It is bad, but it might be worse; yea, it *is* worse with many: their wants are more pinching than thine, their pains more acute than thine, their losses greater than thine, &c. Thou hast cause rather to be thankful than impatient, inasmuch as a lesser evil carries mercy in it. But why do I instance in these lower matters? Thy state is an afflicted state, but it is not a damned estate; it is chastening, but it is not condemning; it is some temporary cross, but it is not the everlasting curse; it is affliction for a moment, but it is not eternal misery. It might be hell, separation from God for ever, burning in that fire which is unquenchable. Thou that art freed from these tremendous things, wilt thou fret because of some petty trials or calamities? O, think of this, and be still. Shall the malefactor fret at his judge for sentencing him to some corporal punishment, when he might have passed the sentence of death upon him? Shall the offending son be angry with his father for correcting him, when he might have disinherited him? O Christian, this is thy case toward God: act thy reason and consideration upon it, to suppress all passion.

CONSIDERATION OF THE FRAME OF CONTENTMENT.

3. The third thing that thoughts must dwell upon and be employed about in order to contentment, is contentment itself; in considering *what a happy and excellent frame that is.*—And indeed the due consideration of what it is to be content, as *e contra* what it is to be discontented, is not only a strong motive, but also a very proper means, to further the exercise and practice of contentment.

As to the large handling of this subject, the excellency of a contented frame, I must not engage therein; for that I refer you to others, who have done it fully. I will but hint a few things for your thoughts to work upon as occasion shall require. Contentment, therefore,

It is a gracious frame.

(1.) *Is a frame that carries much grace in it.*—It is a holy, good, and gracious temper of soul.* It speaks the creature to have a due sense of God in his sovereignty, righteousness, wisdom, goodness, &c. It speaks the creature to have a due sense of what he is in himself,—a poor, vile, worthless nothing, “less than the least of all the mercies” of God. (Gen. xxxii. 10.) It speaks the due subjection of the creature’s will to the will of his Creator, and that he lives in an entire surrender and resignation of himself to the disposal of his Maker. Is not this holy and gracious? Wherein doth grace more show itself, than in such

* *Την αυταρκειαν αγαθον μεγα νομιζομεν.*—DIOGENES LAERTIUS in *Vita Epicuri*.
“Contentment we account a great blessing.”—EDIT.

things as these? Contentment evidenceth much grace, discontentment much sin. The former is a compound of several graces, the latter a compound of several sins. In a contented frame there is humility, faith, hope, patience, heavenly-mindedness, crucifixion to the world, &c.; in a discontented frame, there is pride, unbelief, impatience, carnality, nay, practical atheism itself. The truth is, contentment is better than any comfort which we want, discontent is worse than any evil which we feel: no outward enjoyment is comparable to the good of the one, no outward affliction is comparable to the evil of the other.

Highly pleasing to God.

(2.) *It is a frame highly pleasing to God.*—When a man is once brought to this,—to lay himself and all his concerns at God's feet; to say, “‘It is the Lord, let him do’ with me and mine ‘what seemeth him good:’ I will like well of whatsoever he doeth;” O, this pleaseth God greatly. We are well-pleasing to him, when his providences are well-pleasing to us. The discontented person is angry with God; for which, to be sure, God is angry with him. Nothing provokes God more than a murmuring and fretful spirit; nothing pleases him more than a quiet spirit.

Greatly advantageous to ourselves.

(3.) *The advantages of it to ourselves are very great:*

(i.) *It fills with comfort.*—He never wants comfort that lives contentment. A contented spirit is ever a cheerful spirit. It is a heaven upon earth, as the opposite to it is a hell upon earth. It is the mind at rest in every condition. A contented man hath not only the comfort of what he hath, but also of what he hath not. What he wants in outward possession is made up to him in inward submission.

(ii.) *It fits for duty.*—Lord! when the heart is repining and mutinying against God, how unfit is a man for duty! but when the spirit is still and quiet, all is done well. Passion unfits us for converse with men, much more for converse with God in holy duties. It is sad praying, when discontent prevails.

(iii.) *It always procures that very mercy which we desire, or some other that is better for us.*—Discontent makes us to lose what we have; contentment gets us what we want.* Fretting never removed a cross, nor procured a comfort: quiet submission doth both. The father continues to correct the froward child; but when once it yields and is quiet, he gives it any thing.

(iv.) *It sweetens every bitter cup.*—This ingredient takes off the bitterness of every state, as the wood cast by Moses did the bitterness of the waters. Nothing can come amiss to him that hath learned to be content.

Many such advantages do accrue from contentment: but as to the contrary vice, it is a thing greatly mischievous.

(i.) *It is a sad inlet to sin.*—What will not a man do, when he is under the power of discontent? He will shift for himself, use unlawful

* *Animus æquus optimum est ærumnæ condimentum.*—PLAUTUS. “Equanimity is the best seasoning of grief and trouble.”—EDIT.

means, do any thing to better his condition; if nothing will do this for him, he can even lay violent hands upon himself. O that we had not too many sad examples of this!

(ii.) *It is a sad preparation to all temptations.*—The devil will be sure to be fishing where the waters are troubled: as flies settle upon the galled back, so the Tempter betakes himself to the man that is in pain with his condition.

(iii.) *It deprives of happiness.*—For the discontented person always “thinks himself miserable, and so he can never be happy.”*

(iv.) *It exposes to dreadful judgments.*—What severe punishments did the Israelites’ murmuring bring upon them! Read Num. xiv. through-out; Psalm cvi. 24—27; 1 Cor. x. 10.

Now if these things were but laid to heart and seriously considered by Christians, would not the consideration thereof much conduce to their attaining and living of contentment? Certainly the due fixing and working of the thoughts upon the excellency of this frame, on the sin and evil of the contrary frame, would be of great use, and very effectual toward the composing and quieting of their spirits in every condition. “Suppose it pleaseth the Lord so or so to afflict me, to exercise me with such or such things, which are very cross to my desires; and hereupon I find my heart to begin to be moved; what is now to be done to prevent the further growth of passion? Why, I will retire, and weigh with myself what a gracious temper of soul contentment is, what a sinful and cursed temper of soul discontent is; how much I shall please God and profit myself by the one, how much I shall offend God and prejudice myself by the other. This my thoughts shall stay upon, and I will reason with myself, ‘Why art thou, O my soul, thus disquieted within me?’ (Psalm xlii. 11.) This is the course which I resolve to take in my afflicted condition, to keep my heart still and composed, hoping that God will bless it to the end.” Ay, and so do; for it is a good one, and many by experience have found the benefit of it.

But, to close this head: we are undone for want of consideration; the world groans under the mischievous effects of inconsideracy; which might be made out in several particulars. I shall go no further than that one thing which I am upon. Whence is it that there is amongst men, amongst professors, so little of contentment? that so few have learned in every state to be content? that impatience, repining, quarrelling with God, discontent, are so epidemical? that the most live in the dialike of their condition? I say, Whence is this? I answer, It is in a great measure from the general neglect of consideration. Could we but bring men to this, contentation would not be so rare a thing as now it is. I do not assert this one means to be sufficient, but, believe me, it would go very far. Well, as any of you desire for the time to come to be as here Paul was, whenever any thing troubles you, see that you fall upon consideration; and draw it to these three heads,—who orders your state; how your state is circumstantiated; what the frame itself is.

So much for the First thing in the direction,—the special matter upon which consideration is to be acted in order to contentment.

* *Nemo felix est, qui suo judicio miser est.*—SALVIANUS *De Providentiâ Dei.*

PARTICULAR CASES WHEREIN CONSIDERATION IS TO BE ACTED
IN ORDER TO CONTENTMENT.

(II.) I go on to the Second; namely, *To instance in some of those special cases, unto which contentment doth mainly refer; and to show, how consideration is to be managed to help-on the practice of the duty in each of them.*—I have in what hath gone before seldom made any particular mention of these instances, because I designed to speak particularly and apart to them under this head. To speak to all, and that too according to the copiousness of the subject, would be a vast work. I shall only single out some few of the most usual cases, and be also but very brief upon them.

Heart-inquietude, or discontent, doth too often arise from what is in and about the inner man, and is of a spiritual nature; as, lowness of gifts, weakness of grace, the continuance and strength of sin, temptations by Satan, God's withdrawals, want of assurance and of the comforts of the Spirit, and the like. But most commonly it ariseth from things of a worldly nature, wherein the outward part is concerned; (for that is our tenderest part, and therefore, if we be troubled there, we are most apt to complain;) such as lowness of estate, crosses in relations, bodily infirmities, badness of the times, injuries and bad usages of men, meanness of rank and quality in the world, &c. These are the things which usually disturb and disquiet us. But now for each of them, there is that consideration which is proper for the settling and composing of our minds. I must speak only to the two first:—

(I.) LOWNESS OF ESTATE.

As to lowness of estate.—How is the world filled with discontent about that! Poverty is an affliction which few do with patience undergo: when the belly pines, the back starves, it is hard to keep the heart in a submissive frame. It is an easy matter for them that are full to advise them that are in want to be content; but if they themselves were in wants, they would not find it so easy a matter to follow their own advice. To live faith and patience under straits as to worldly things, is sooner spoken of than done.

THE SEVERAL DISCONTENTS OF SEVERAL MEN ABOUT WORLDLY THINGS.

But, to take-in more than what this head in strictness leads me to, (because I would speak a little to the several discontents of men about their earthly estates,) I will consider them as thus diversified:—

First. *Some are poor indeed*, having little or nothing of this world's goods.

Secondly. *Some have a competency, some have abundance*, but yet they are not satisfied.

Thirdly. *And some lose what once they had.*

Now all of these, though in different circumstances, are to endeavour after contentment. "How?" By consideration.

Such who are in poverty, what they are to consider of in order to contentment.

“How is that to be managed?” Thus:—

First. Is *extreme poverty* the case? Consider, then,

1. “*The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich.*” (1 Sam. ii. 7.)—God measures out to every person his proportion of these things. He makes what dividend and gives what allowance he pleases to every man in the world. Is this considered? I wish we could see it, in the calmness of *their minds who* are under a low estate. The father divides his estate among his children, giving to every one of them his share, more or less, as he thinks meet; and this being his act and will, they all submit and acquiesce therein. And shall your heavenly Father’s allotting to you what he thinks meet signify nothing to the making of you contentedly to rest in his will? May not this great Dispenser of blessings do with his own what he pleaseth?

2. *None so poor but they have more than what they deserve.*—Who can claim or challenge any thing at God’s hands? Surely he that merits nothing must not murmur because he hath but little. (Matt. xx. 15.) Thy apparel is very mean, thy diet is very coarse, thy habitation very uncomfortable: be it so, yet even in these there is mercy; it is from the wisdom of God that thou hast no better, from the mercy of God that thou hast so good.

3. As low as you are in these things, *hitherto the Lord hath provided for you and yours; and assuredly, you being his people, walking in his fear, trusting of him, he will still provide.*—You have in the promise what you want in the visible estate. Discontent is in part founded in distrust; take but this out of the heart, and the other vanisheth. Now, why should God’s poor (I speak only of such) distrust his provision? What abundant assurance hath he given thereof! Read Psalm lxxiii. 3; xxxvii. 25; cxi. 5; cxxiii. 15; Matt. vi. 25, to the end of the chapter; Rom. viii. 32; Heb. xiii. 5; with many other scriptures.

4. *A little with God’s blessing will go very far, and do very well.*—“I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread.” (Psalm cxxxii. 15.) “Ye shall serve the Lord your God, and he shall bless thy bread, and thy water.” (Exod. xxiii. 25.) Daniel and his companions fed upon nothing but pulse and water; and yet “their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat of the portion of the king’s meat.” (Dan. i. 12, 15.) The widow was reduced to a low ebb: there was left but a little oil in the cruse and a little meal in the barrel; yet these held out, and the more she spent of them the more they increased. (1 Kings xvii. 12.) What strange things are done with small pittances, where the blessing of God is!

5. *The saint’s little is better than the sinner’s all.*—“Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith.” (Prov. xv. 16.) “A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.” (Psalm xxxvii. 16.)

6. *No man can judge of God’s love or hatred by these things.* (Eccles. ix. 1.)—For he often “gives riches to those whom he hates, and denies

them to those whom he loves."* It is very usual for those who have most of his love to have least of worldly things. Joseph and Mary themselves could bring but "a pair of turtle-doves," the poor man's offering. (Luke ii. 24.) Nay, how poor was our Lord himself! "The foxes have holes," &c. (Matt. viii. 20; 2 Cor. viii. 9.)

7. God keeps you low in earthly possessions, but *how is it with you in higher and better things?*—You are poor without; are you not rich within?† "There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches." (Prov. xiii. 7.) "I know thy poverty, but thou art rich." (Rev. ii. 9.) No riches like to soul-riches. To be "rich in faith," (James ii. 5,) "in good works," (1 Tim. vi. 18,) "toward God," (Luke xii. 21,) this is to be rich indeed. Mountains of gold are nothing to one dram of true grace in the soul.

8. You think God is strait-handed toward you in temporal, but *is he not abundantly gracious in spiritual and eternal, blessings?*—He denies the pebble, but gives you the pearl; withholds shadows and trifles, but gives you what is solid and substantial. You have not worldly wealth, but you have the pardon of sin, the love of God, adoption, union with Christ, &c. You have no inheritance here, but you are "heirs of the kingdom;"‡ (James ii. 5;) the "inheritance" that is "incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away," (1 Peter i. 4,) is yours; you have little in the stream, but all in the fountain; God is yours, and in him all is yours.§

And are these things true? Certainly; then, you have no reason to complain or to be discontented because of your poverty. Pray, under heart-risings because of this, turn your thoughts upon what hath been hinted, work these and such like considerations home upon your hearts, be intent upon them, weigh them thoroughly; and I hope this will very much settle and quiet your spirits under the lowness of your estates.

Such who have better estates, what are they to consider in order to contentment?

Secondly. *There are some with whom it is much better.*—They have a good allowance from God, a comfortable supply in these things, so that they want nothing convenient or necessary: nay, there are some who abound in wealth; riches flow-in upon them; their coffers are full of silver and gold, their incomes vast and great: and yet neither of these have learned to be content, no, not in their good state. Discontentedness

* *Et iratus dat, et propitius negat.*—AUGUSTINUS.

† *Intus dives, foris pauper; pauper in cellâ, dives in conscientiâ: arcam respicit auro inane, conscientiam respice Deo plenam.*—AUGUSTINUS in *Psalm xxxvi.* "Inwardly thou art rich, though outwardly poor; poor in thy hut, but rich in thy conscience. Thou lookest into a chest empty of gold, but inspect thy conscience, which is filled with God."—EDIT. *In animo divitiæ sunt, non in patrimonio.*—SENECA. "Riches consist of the treasures of the mind, and not of patrimonial possessions."—EDIT. † *Dejectæ mentis est, qui familiaris rei meminit, cum vocatur ad regnum.*—CHRYSOLOGUS, *Serm. 22.* "He must be of a low mind, who bestows a thought upon his private fortune, when he is called to the possession of a kingdom."—EDIT.

§ *Semper est dives Christiana paupertas, quia plus est quod habet, quam quod non habet; nec pavet injusto mundo indigentiam laborare, cui donatum est in omnium rerum Domino omnia possidere.*—LEO MAGNUS, *Serm. 4. De Quadragesimâ.* "Christian poverty is always rich, because its possessions are greater than its privations; nor can it fear to suffer indigence in an unjust world, when to it is given to possess all things in Him who is the Lord of all."—EDIT.

lodges not only in the breasts of them who have nothing, but of some who have a *competency*, yea, of some who have *abundance* of these things: both are dissatisfied with their condition, as thinking they have not enough, and therefore are full of vexatious desires after more. Now if this be your condition without, and your frame within, then it is a most necessary inquiry, how and wherein you are to act consideration, so as thereby to arrive at contentment. For answer to which I shall direct you to a few things: Consider, therefore,

1. *The greatness of the sin of discontent in you above what it is in the persons spoken of before.*—It is in them who want what is necessary very sinful; but in you to whom God is so good and bountiful, it is out of measure sinful. We blame the beggar that is angry, though we give him nothing; but if we give him something, be it never so little, especially if we give liberally to him, and yet he grumbles and repines, this aggravates his crime exceedingly. So here, it is a great sin in the poorest to murmur against the Lord: but in you, to whom he is so liberal, at least to give you enough, the sin is much greater. This speaks you to be guilty of prodigious ingratitude to God, and of very inordinate love to the world; both of which are sins of a crimson tincture.

2. *How contented and thankful would many be, if it was but with them as it is with you!*—Had they but pence for your shillings, shillings for your pounds, and pounds for your hundreds, they would think themselves well provided for, and serve the Lord with joyfulness.* Nay, you yourselves, in your first entrance upon the world, when your beginnings were very low, when, Jacob-like, you had little more than a staff in your hands, (Gen. xxxii. 10,) did not you then think, if you might but have that measure of worldly things which now you have, you would look upon God as dealing very graciously with you? And now he hath answered your expectations and desires, and yet you are not contented!

3. *Christians are to bound their desires after things below, not to seek great things for themselves here.* (Jer. xlv. 5.)—If God will give them but what is necessary, they are not to quarrel for the want of what is superfluous. The covenant-indenture goes no further than food and raiment: therefore, “having food and raiment let us be therewith content.” † (1 Tim. vi. 8.) Jacob went no higher than those. (Gen. xxviii. 20, 21.) Christ directs us to go no further in our prayers than “daily bread.” (Matt. vi. 11.) If we may be supplied with these, we have no reason to be discontented for the withholding of what is more. A competency is all that we can or should expect. The Israelites murmur if they have not quails; manna would not content them. They had their quails; but they had better have been without them.

* *Quam multos esse conjectus qui sese colo proximos arbitrentur, si de fortuna tue reliquis pars iis contingat?*—BOETHIUS *De Consol. Philosoph.* lib. ii. prosa 4. “How many persons dost thou suppose there are, who would think their happiness almost heavenly, if they could only obtain a portion even of the refuse of thy fortune?”—EDIT. † *Τροφήν, ἢ τρυφήν· σκευασματα, ἢ κοσμηματα.*—ISIDORUS. “‘Food,’ not luxurious delicacies; ‘raiment,’ not ornaments.”—EDIT. *Nihil habet dives de divitiis, nisi quod ab illo postulat pauper, victum et vestitum: cetera omnia superflua sunt.*—AUGUSTINUS *De Verbo Domini.* “A man of opulence possesses no riches, except such as one that is poor asks of him,—food and clothing: all other things are superfluities.”—EDIT. *Cibus et potus sunt divitiarum Christianorum.*—HIERONYMUS. “The earthly riches of Christians extend not beyond meat and drink.”—EDIT.

4. *A little sufficeth nature, less sufficeth grace ; but covetousness is never satisfied.*—Was it not for this, how happy might we be, and always say, as to God's allowance, "It is enough!" Nature is content, grace is thankful ; corruption only is ravenous and querulous.*

5. *A great and overgrown estate is not the best estate.*—Which if men did consider, they would not be greedy to have it, or discontented upon the not having of it. As to the truth of this, do but set ambition and avarice aside, and let reason, experience, prudent observation be consulted, and the thing will be unquestionable. There is a middle state, both as to honour and riches, which certainly is the best state.† Agur made a wise choice, when he prayed, "Give me neither poverty nor riches ; feed me with food convenient for me." (Prov. xxx. 8.)

(1.) A full estate is not best for *duty*.—For we often see, through the naughtiness of men's hearts, that they who have most in the way of mercy do least in the way of duty. I deny not but that some who are very rich are also very good, living in all due piety toward God, and doing much good in their places toward men ; and it is pity it should be otherwise : but I fear this conjunction is somewhat rare. The ground that lies lowest usually is most fruitful ; the earth that hath the richest mines in it commonly is most barren. Who serves God less than they who are most wealthy ? To their shame be it spoken. You would have more of this world, and fret that God keeps you so much under. Alas ! you know not what you desire : had you more, it would be hurtful ; if the estate was better, the heart would be worse. (Eccles. v. 13.)

(2.) Again : as it is not best for duty, so neither for *safety*.—Who are exposed to so many dangers as they who swim in earthly treasures ? The higher is the building, the more it is endangered by fierce winds ; great vessels strike where lesser go with safety ; the ship that sails with a full wind, and all its sails up, is more apt to overset ; such who feed high are in most danger of fevers and surfeits.‡ Every condition hath its snares : but the high condition is exceeding full of them.

(3.) And, once more : it is not the best for *comfort*.—The poor envy the rich, when in truth they have more cause to pity them. O the cares,

* *Satis est populis fluviisque Ceresque.*—LUCANUS. "The river and the corn the people's wants supply."—EDIT. *Citò expletur natura necessitas ; frigus et fames simplici vestitu et cibo expelli potest.*—HIERONYMUS in *Jovinum*. "The calls of nature are quickly appeased : cold and hunger may be warded off by simple clothing and food."—EDIT. *Ad manum est quod sat est.*—SENECA. "A bare sufficiency is always within reach."—EDIT. *Parabile et expositum quod natura desiderat.*—Idem. "What nature demands is accessible and easy of acquirement."—EDIT. *Quod natura satis est, homini non est.*—Idem, *Epist.* 119. "Man is not contented with that which satisfies nature."—EDIT.

Discite quàm parvo liceat producere vitam.—LUCANUS.

"Learn with how little life may be prolong'd."—EDIT.

† *Optimus pecunia modus est, qui nec in paupertatem cedit, nec procul a paupertate discedit.*—SENECA *De Tranquillitate Animi*. "That measure of riches is best, which neither approaches very near to poverty, nor yet recedes far from it."—EDIT.

‡ *Sæpius ventis agitatur ingens*

Pinus ; et celsa graviore casu

Decidunt turres ; feriuntque summos

Fulmina montes.—HORATII *Carm.* lib. ii. od. x. 9.

"When high in air the pine ascends,
To every ruder blast it bends ;
The palace, from its airy height,
Falls tumbling down with heavier weight ;
And when from heaven the lightning flies,
It blasts the hills which proudest rise."—FRANCIS'S Translation.

distractions, hurries, that they live under! * In all their great enjoyments, how little do they enjoy either God or themselves! and can any state be comfortable without these? "Take heed of covetousness: for a man's life," that is, the comfort of his life, "consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." (Luke xii. 15.) The easiness of the garment or shoe doth not lie in its bigness, but in its fitness: and so, it is not the greatness of the estate that gives comfort, but the suiting of the mind and of the estate, be it what it will. There often is that serenity of mind in a poor cottage which is not enjoyed in the stately palace; the mean man sleeps better on a hard bed, than he who lies upon his bed of down; and there is a more cheerful spirit where the fare is coarse, than where there are the greatest dainties. You fondly imagine, could you but screw up your estates to such a height, then you should and would live with comfort: but, I pray you, why may you not do so now, under what you have already? as that commander answered Pyrrhus, designing so and so to enlarge his conquests; which when he had done, then he would sit down and be quiet and live merrily. Should you arrive at what you aspire after, you would find yourselves then to be as far from what you promise to yourselves as now you are. It appearing, then, that the great estate is not the best, why should any vex and be disturbed because that is denied to them?

6. *The contented man is never poor, let him have never so little; the discontented man is never rich, let him have never so much.*—He is not rich who possesseth much, but he who desires no more than what God gives him. The way to be rich indeed, is not to increase the wealth, but to lessen the covetings of the heart after more: he that is ever desiring is ever wanting, and he that is ever wanting is ever poor.†

7. *What are these earthly riches, that any should be thus insatiably greedy of them?*—Surely there is but little in them,—fancy, mistakes, ignorance, being laid aside: they are no better than unsatisfying, perish-

* *Pauperes ditioribus eò plerumque lætiores, quò animus eorum in paucioribus distringitur.*—SENECA *Ad Helviam*, cap. 12. "The poor are generally so much the more cheerful and happy than the rich, as fewer cares occupy their attention."—EDIT.

Tantis parta malis, curd majore metuque

Servantur. Misera est magni custodia census.—JUVENALIS *Sat.* xiv. 303.

"Wealth, hardly earn'd, is kept with double pain.

How cursed the guardian of a great domain!"—HODGSON'S Translation.

† *Cui cum paupertate bene convenit, dives est.*—SENECA. "He is a rich man, who is on good terms and contented with his poverty."—EDIT. *Non qui parum habet, sed qui plus cupit, pauper est.*—Idem, *Epist.* 2. "He is not a poor man who has little, but he who covets more than he already possesses."—EDIT. *Nihil interest, utrum non desideres, an habes.*—Idem, *Epist.* 119. "There is little or no difference between thy possessing and thy not desiring it."—EDIT. *Desunt inopia multa, avaritiæ omnia.*—Idem, *Epist.* 108. "Indigence is in want of many things; avarice, of all."—EDIT. *Nunquam porum est quod satis est, nunquam multum est quod satis non est.*—Idem, *Epist.* 119. "That can never be called 'a little' which is sufficient; nor is that rightly said to be 'much' which is insufficient."—EDIT. *Semper inops quicumque cupit.*—CLAUDIUS. "The covetous is always poor."

Multa petentibus

Desunt multa. Bene est cui Deus obtulit

Parcè quod satis est manu.—HORATI *Carm.* lib. iii. od. xvi. 42.

"He that, repining, covets more,
Is ever wanting, ever poor:

But those art bless'd, to whom indulgent Heaven

Enough, but with no lavish hand, has given."—DUNCOMBE'S Translation.

Μη περιω την κτησιν αυξειν, αλλα την επιθυμιαν μειωσαι.—PLATO. "Endeavour not to increase thy possessions, but abate and diminish thy desires."—EDIT.

ing, uncertain things. "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase." (Eccles. v. 10.) Men may fill their bags and chests with silver and gold, but they cannot with them fill their souls: no, the soul is a thing too great to be filled with such little things as these are. Had you all that you desire, you would be but where you are, dissatisfied still; for your desires would still grow as fast as your riches should grow: yet more must be had, and that is the bane of satisfaction.* Alexander could conquer the world, but the world could not satisfy him; he wept because there were no more worlds to conquer.† "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity and vexation." I say, too, They are perishing and uncertain things. That is the epithet of the apostle: "Trust not in uncertain riches." (1 Tim. vi. 17.) "Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away, as an eagle toward heaven." (Prov. xxiii. 5.) This we see verified every day; and if so, doth it become a man, much more a Christian, to be discontented, because he hath but little of such vain things as these are? Methinks, such should scorn to have their generous minds discomposed for such trifles.

8. *As they are dying things, so we are dying persons.*—What, though we be straitened in them? it is not necessary our estates should be very large, when our lives are not likely to be very long. "A little money serves the traveller that hath but a short journey to go:" *Parum vie, quid multum viatici?* Might we either always live, or when we die carry with us into another world what we have laid up in this, then our greediness of these things would be more excusable; but neither of these are to be expected. "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither." (Job i. 21.) "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." (1 Tim. vi. 7.) Grace will accompany us into the other world, but other things must be all left behind. And, which I would further add, is it not stupendous folly for dying men, who yet have never-dying souls, to trouble themselves so much about dying things? Have not they other things to mind? and should not all their solitudes be employed about those things? such as "the things above," "the kingdom of God, and his righteousness," "treasures in heaven," &c. (Col. iii. 1; Matt. vi. 33, 20.) If eternal things and the eternal state were but thought of, every state here would be good enough.

9. *The less any have, the less they are to account for at the great day.*—Every man is accountable to God for what he hath of this world's good; for that is but a trust, and he that is the Lord and Owner of all will reckon with men how this trust is fulfilled; and according to the

* *Auri namque fames parto fit major ab auro.*—PRUDENTIUS. "The thirst for gold increases in proportion to the quantity which is acquired."—EDIT.

*Crescentem sequitur cura pecuniam,
Majorumque fames.*—HORATIUS *Carm. lib. iii. od. xvi. 17.*

"But gloomy care, and thirst of more,
Attend the still-increasing store."—FRANCIS'S Translation.

Instammatur lucro avaritia, non restinguitur.—AMBROSIUS. "Acquisition does not extinguish, but inflame, avarice."—EDIT.

† *Unus Pellæo juveni non sufficit orbis:*

Est aut infelix angusto limite mundi.—JUVENALIS *Sat. x. 168.*

"One world the ambitious youth of Pella found
Too small; and toss'd his feverish limbs around."

GIFFORD'S Translation.

proportion which they are intrusted with, so will the account be taken. They, therefore, who have great estates, and do but little good with them, will have a sad account to make at the great day. Now, how little is this considered! We are always grasping at more, not considering that, the more we have, the more we stand accountable for when we shall be judged. Do we improve what we have? If we do not, it is mercy that the Lord intrusts us with no more. One talent will be too much, if that be not traded for God; why then should we be angry, if we have not five? All would live in large houses; but will they be able to pay the rent that such houses are set at? If not, it is better for them to content themselves with a meaner habitation: and so it is with the thing which I am upon. Many at the great day will rejoice they had no more, whilst many will wish they had not had so much.

10. To conclude this head: *Doth any man better his estate by discontent?*—Is that the way to improve it? Certainly, no. It often makes us to lose what we have, but it never gets us what we want,* as was said before in the general. In the distribution of his blessings, God will not be dealt with in this way. He that will eat or drink more than what is sufficient, often vomits up all; so, he that will have more than what God sees convenient for him, loseth all by this greediness.

I have been large upon this, because of the commonness of discontent in this case, and the exceeding great sinfulness of it. You whom the Lord hath blessed with competent estates, especially you whom the Lord hath blessed with full estates, be sure you learn and live contentment; and whenever the heart begins to be unquiet about the proportion allotted to you, go over in your thoughts what hath been propounded for you to consider of, and I trust you will find good by it.

Consideration to further contentment under losses.

Thirdly. There is a third case; namely, *some have lost what once they had, or God pursues them in the way of their callings with loss upon loss.*—This is a trial under which men's hearts are prone to be inflamed; it is no easy thing to bear it with patience and contentment. Especially when losses come thick, and go very deep; when a considerable part of the estate is taken away, nay, as it often falls out, the whole; O, this is greatly afflictive, and wounds the spirits of men very much. Of the two, we find it by experience an easier matter to be contented under that poverty which a person hath always been in, than under that which he is brought into by some severe interposures of Providence. Former plenty puts more bitterness into present penury; it is a greater affliction to common sense to have an estate and to lose it, than to be without an estate where it was never had; this *fuisse felicem* ["past state of happiness"] is a great aggravation of misery.† But to the thing itself. It

* PLUTARCHUS Περὶ Φιλοπλουτίας. † *Cogitandum est quantum levior dolor sit non habere quàm perdere, et intelligemus paupertati eò minorem tormentorum quò minorem damnorum esse materiam.*—SENECA *De Tranquillitate Animi.* "We must reflect how much lighter an affliction it is, not to possess at all than to lose what we have; and we shall then perceive, that the very little of which poverty can be deprived, is the less in danger of inflicting torments of this description."—EDIT. *Tolerabilius est faciliusque non acquirere, quàm emittere; idèoque lætiores videbis quos nunquam Fortuna respexit, quàm quos deseruit.*—Idem, *ibid.* "The non-acquisition of property is much easier to be borne than its loss; and therefore thou wilt always find those more happy on whom Fortune never smiled, than those whom once she favoured but has deserted."—EDIT.

pleased the Lord lately to lay this city in ashes ; and O, how great, how universal, were the losses then sustained ! Your houses were burnt down, many of your goods consumed by the merciless flames, the great supports of your livelihood removed, and many thousands of you had that wound then given you that you must halt-of all your days. Since that, you feel the sad effects of war, losses at sea, decay of trade, &c., upon which it is not with you as formerly it was ; there is a great diminution in your estates. Now, was and is all this undergone with contentment ? In these dispensations of providences, have you learned contentment ? Would to God it was so ! If it be not so as yet, I would desire you to fall upon consideration ; and I hope, for the future it will be so.

1. How, or wherein, is consideration to be acted, so as that under worldly losses you may be contented ? Why, thus : Consider, *God's hand is in them, and they all issue out of his will.*—Men may be the instruments, but that is all ; they do but accomplish that which God will have to be done. Therefore, whatever thy loss be, for the matter and degree of it, however it befalls thee, eye God in it, see it as ordained and ordered by him ; let thy thoughts fix upon this, and thy heart will not dare to murmur. What are thy losses to those which Job underwent ? All was swept away from him in a moment ; yet he considered the Supreme Agent in all this, and this kept down all passion : “ The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord.” (Job i. 21.) “ O,” saith he, “ it is the Lord, and the Lord who gave ; * I submit.” May not the great Sovereign of the world do with us and ours what he pleaseth ? May not he diminish and withdraw all our blessings as he sees good ? He that gives, may not he take ? Hath not he a greater propriety in what we have than we ourselves ? It being his corn, his wine, his wool, and flax, (Hosea ii. 9,) may not he dispose of it at his pleasure ? Doth it not become us contentedly to return what he sees meet to lend us but for such a time ? † Pray, think of this, or you will never learn in a losing state to be content.

2. *Possibly something is taken away, but all is not.*—More is left than what is taken : He that might have stripped thee to nakedness, hath only cut off a skirt of thy garment. Hast thou any reason to fret against the Lord ? That would be highly base and disingenuous. He to whom all was forfeited takes but a part instead of the whole ; surely thou art not to impeach his justice, but to admire his goodness.

3. Whenever we meet with these rebukes, it would be well to consider, *whether we did not need them.* (1 Peter i. 6.)—A full diet is naught for distempered bodies ; therefore the physician prescribes a more sparing diet. When we are full fed with these comforts, have no losses or crosses in the world, we are apt to grow proud, secure, wanton, to forget God, to cast off duty, to dream of an earthly paradise, to say, “ It is good being here,” to neglect spiritual and divine things. It is high time, therefore, for God by these ways to cut us short, thereby to reduce us to

* *Abstulit, sed et dedit.*—SENECÆ *Epist.* 64. “ He has taken away ; but then, it was he who gave.”—EDIT. † *Quandocunque reddere jubebitur, non queretur cum Fortunâ ; sed dicit, Gratias ago pro eo quod possedi habuique.*—Idem, *De Tranquillitate Animi.* “ When the wise man is commanded to render up his possessions, he will not querulously expostulate with Fortune ; but will say, ‘ I return thee thanks for what I have held and enjoyed.’”—EDIT.

a little better temper of soul. If the sap run out too much into the branches, there is no way to preserve the root but by the cutting off the luxuriant branches. God will have a thousand estates to be lost, rather than that one soul should be lost: the burning of cities is nothing, if that be necessary to the saving of souls.

4. *Suppose all be lost ; in that all we lost but little.*—For the all of this world is but one remove from a mere nothing. *Perdidit infelix totum nil,** is applicable to the losses of the rich as well as of the poor. Is there any thing in this but what might be expected from the nature of the thing? Therefore there should be no disturbance about it. Who will be concerned at the melting of snow? What wise man will be moved for the breaking of a glass? It is strange that a Jonah should be in such a pet for the withering of a gourd. “Riches are not for ever: and doth the crown endure to every generation?” (Prov. xxvii. 24.) “The fashion of this world passeth away.” (1 Cor. vii. 31.) All the estate here is made up of movables: that usual distinction which is good in law is not so in divinity.

5. Again: thou sayest, “All is lost;” but *if thou be a child of God, the best is yet secure.*—God, and Christ, and grace, and heaven are yet thine; and no loss is very considerable, so long as these are safe. O believer, in all thy losses be quiet and cheerful! God, who is thy portion, is the same for ever. Job “lost all he had from God; but God himself he did not lose; and in him he had all that he had lost.” † Never complain, till God be lost. *Fas tibi non est de Fortunâ conqueri, salvo Cæsare,‡* said Seneca to Polybius. Let the stars disappear; if we may have the sun, who will be troubled? Let earthly things vanish; so long as God abides, it is enough. Had we the whole world to lose, one God would abundantly recompense the loss of all of it. Many are inward gainers by their outward losses; by having the less of the creature, they have the more of God. O happy exchange! the worse their condition is without, the better it is within in respect of grace and comfort.

6. *It is an excellent frame of spirit under losses to be patient and contented.*—All the possessions of Job, when he was in the height of them, did not reflect so much glory upon him, as his blessed submission when he was deprived of them. Then God blessed him; now, in another sense, he blessed God. All are convinced they should do this when God gives, but it is very rare for any to do it when God takes away. Micah’s mother had some shekels of silver taken from her, and she falls a-cursing. (Judges xvii. 2.) This precious saint had all taken from him, yet no cursing, as Satan had belied him; no, nothing but blessing God. It is an excellent temper, “comfortably to enjoy outward blessings whilst God shall continue them, contentedly to part with them when God shall remove them.” *Suave est, si quid das; parvus dolor, hoc ubi tollis.* When I see any carrying it thus, I conclude that earthly things are not too fast rivetted in their hearts, (as it is a sign the tooth is loose which is drawn out without much pain,) and that they are duly affected toward God, heaven, and heavenly things.

* “The unhappy wretch has lost his entire nothing.”—EDIT. † *Perdiderat omnia quæ dederat Deus; sed habuit ipsum qui omnia dederat Deum.*—AUGUSTINUS. ‡ “It is not lawful for thee to complain of Fortune, while the emperor is safe.”—EDIT.

These are some of the things the due consideration whereof would much help-on contentment under losses. And so much for the using of this means toward the furtherance of tranquillity of mind, with respect to what may disturb it in and about the estate.

(II.) HOW CONSIDERATION OUGHT TO BE ACTED IN ORDER TO CONTENTMENT UNDER CROSSES IN RELATIONS.

Secondly. I will instance in *relations*; in and about whom there is as much of mercy or affliction, of comfort or discomfort, and consequently of content or discontent, as in any one thing whatsoever. The discontent usually is occasioned and vented in these three cases: 1. *The want of relations much desired.* 2. *The death of relations much beloved.* 3. *The uncomfortableness of relations who are spared.* Now consideration, wisely and faithfully managed, would be of great use to allay all storms, and to keep the heart even and calm, in all these cases: and therefore my next work is to show, what we are, under each of them, to consider, in order to the promoting of this frame. But I must of necessity be briefer under this head than I was under the former, that I may not draw out this discourse to too great a length. Wherefore I will but shortly set the particulars before you that you are to consider of, and leave the enlargement of them to yourselves in your consideration.

1. *How as to the want of relations desired.*

First. *When relations are much desired, but denied and withheld, there is too often discontent.*—As, to instance only in children: what daily iniquities of spirit are there in some, because of the want of these! They have many other comforts, but the not having of this embitters all. Abraham himself was much troubled about it: “Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless? Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.” (Gen. xv. 2, 3.) But Rachel’s passion rose very high: “Give me children,” saith she to her husband, “or else I die.” (Gen. xxx. 1.) Children are very great blessings; they are promised as such, Psalm cxxviii. 3, 4, and in other places; and indeed they are one of the sweetest flowers that grow in the garden of earthly comforts. Hence it is hard for persons contentedly to bear the want of them. But whoever you are upon whom this affliction lies, pray labour after a contented mind under it; and in order thereunto, consider,

(1.) *It is the Lord who withholds this mercy.*—For he gives it, or withholds it, as seems good to him. Providence is not more seen in any of the affairs and concerns of men, than in this of children; that there shall be many or few, some or none, all falls under the good pleasure and disposal of God. When Rachel was so passionate under the want of these, Jacob rebuked her sharply: “Am I in God’s stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?” (Gen. xxx. 2.) “Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.” (Psalm cxxvii. 3.) “He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children.” (Psalm cxiii. 9.) Now if this was duly thought of, would it not quiet the heart? When the thing is ordered by God, shall we dislike and fret at what he doeth?

May not he dispense his blessings where he pleaseth? O, if he will give, we should be thankful in the owning of his goodness; if he will deny, we must be patient in the owning of his sovereignty.

(2.) *Sometimes this mercy is denied, but better are bestowed.*—God doth not give children, but he gives himself; and is not he “better than ten sons?” as Elkanah said of himself to Hannah. (1 Sam. i. 8.) There is “a better name than of sons and of daughters” promised, Isai. lvi. 5; they who have that “better name” have no reason to murmur because they have not that which is worse. They who have God for their Father in heaven may well be content to go childless here on earth. If God will not give me the lesser, yet if he gives me the greater good, have I cause to be angry? Surely, no more than he hath to be angry with me, to whom I deny a brass farthing, and give him a purse of gold.

(3.) *Children sometimes are withheld a long time, but they are given at last.*—Of which we have many instances. The case is never desperate, so long as we can submit and wait; it is to be hoped God designs to give us that comfort, under the want of which we can be contented.

(4.) *If children be given after froward and irregular desires of them, it is to be questioned whether it be done in mercy.*—And it is to be feared, this frame will very much spoil the mercy. What we get by discontent, we seldom enjoy with comfort. How many parents have experienced the truth of this! They were not quiet till they had children, and less quiet after they had them; they proved so undutiful, stubborn, naughty, that there was much more of vexation in the having than there was in the wanting of them.

(5.) *Many wanting the comfort of this relation, it pleaseth God to fill up the comfort of their other relations.*—The husband or the wife are the better because there are no children; and so the Lord recompenses what is denied in one relation by doubling the comfort of another relation.

(6.) *Children are great comforts, but they are but mixed comforts.*—The rose hath its sweetness, but it hath its pricks too; and so it is with children. O the cares, fears, distractions, that parents are filled with about them! They are certain cares, uncertain comforts, as we usually express it. We eye the sweet only of this relation, and that makes us fretful: did we eye the bitter also, we should be more still and calm.

(7.) *Had we this mercy in the height of it filled up in all respects according to our desires and expectations, it is a thousand to one but our hearts would be too much set upon it.*—And that would be of fatal consequence to us upon many accounts; and therefore, God foreseeing this, it is out of kindness and love that he withholds it from us.

These things being considered as to this affliction, methinks they should very much dispose the heart to contentation under it.

2. How as to the loss of relations.

Secondly. *When dear relations are taken away by death, then it is a time of discontent.*—To lose a tender husband, an affectionate wife, a hopeful child, a faithful friend, O! this is a cutting trial, a very smarting rod, under which it is no easy thing to keep the spirit sedate, free from

all passion and discomposures! Yet, as hard as it is, consideration would much facilitate it. Consider, therefore,

(1.) *About the true stating of this affliction.*—It is great to us, because of the greatness of our affection; but otherwise, as to the thing in itself, is it more than the breaking of a pitcher? than the dying or withering of a flower? than the nipping of a blossom? and will any considerate person be much moved at such things as these? The Heathen bore the death of his child very well upon this consideration: when news thereof was brought to him, he was not disturbed; for, said he, "I knew I begot my child mortal." We forget what these comforts are, and then we fret at the loss of them.

(2.) *Think of the commonness of this affliction.*—You think, never was any sorrow like to yours, never did any lose such a husband, or such a wife, or such a child, as you have done! Alas! this is but the fondness and excess of love. Many have lost as dear relations as you have lost, let them be what they will; you are not the first, nor will be the last, who are thus exercised. When a mercy is common in our eye, we set it too low; when an affliction is singular in our eye, we set it too high.

(3.) *It is God himself who makes this rod.*—If a sparrow doth not fall to the ground without him, certainly a dear relation doth not. (Matt. x. 29.) Shall we not be silent before him? He that gave, he hath taken; he that hath a greater right to husband, wife, child, than any of the possessors have, he hath seen good to call back what is his own: shall any vex at this? Dead relations are not lost, but restored to their first Owner;* and though it is our affliction to lose them, yet it is mercy that ever we had them: † both must be put together, and then the heart will be quiet.

(4.) *Is all taken?*—If not, thou hast no reason to complain. The child is taken, but it is but one of many,—but the husband is yet spared. Thou must not be impatient for what is removed, but thankful for what is continued; as Themistocles, when Amyntas took away some of his dishes, bore it contentedly, saying, "He might have taken all!" And pray keep down all passion; for this may make you lose what you have, though it will not regain you what you have lost. "O, but," some will say, "my only child is dead." Is it so? Thy affliction is the greater, but thy contentation must be never the less. He that gave an only son to thee, may take an only child from thee. Isaac was an only son, and yet Abraham willingly offered him up to God.

(5.) *It was high time for God to make a breach upon you.*—It is the wisdom of God to his, he will not let them have long what they overlove: had you loved less, the child might have lived longer. When these comforts are too much in our hearts, they must not be long in our hands. It is infinite mercy that God will secure our love to himself,

* Μηδενοτε επι μηδενος εως οτι Απωλεσα αυτο, αλλ' οτι Απεδεξα. "Never, on any deprivation, say, 'I have lost this;' but rather, 'I have restored it.'"—EDIT. † *Sus-tulisti liberos quos ipse dederas: non contristor quòd recepisti, ago gratias quòd dedisti*—HIERONYMUS *Ad Julianum*. "Thou hast taken away the children which thou didst thyself bestow: I do not grieve that thou hast retaken them; I thank thee that ever thou gavest them."—EDIT. *Non maceremus quòd talcm amisimus, sed gratias agimus quòd habuimus.*—Idem. "We do not lament that we have lost one of such excellence; but we are grateful that we were ever blessed with the possession of him."—EDIT.

and take that away from us which would take off our affections from him.

(6.) *It is that temper of soul which Christianity calls for, quietly and readily to resign up all our comforts to God's disposal.*—Christian, it is a great part of thy religion to be content under these crosses; not to have thy comforts torn from thee as the plaster is from the flesh, but to come off easily as the glove doth from the hand.*

(7.) *Where there is ground of hope that the everlasting state of dead relations is secured,* (as there is for the adult who lived in the fear of God, for children descending from parents in covenant with God,) *there it is mere self-love which must cause discontent.*—For, had we true love to the dead, we should rejoice in their advancement; as Christ saith: “If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I go unto the Father.” (John xiv. 28.) You are troubled because they are not with you; but you should joy in this,—that they are “with Christ, which is far better.” (Phil. i. 23.)

(8.) *Think how others have undergone this trial.*—Aaron had his sons cut off by a dreadful judgment; but it is said of him, he “held his peace.” (Lev. x. 3.) So it was with Job; and yet he “blessed the Lord.” (Job i. 21.) So long as there was hope of the life of the child, David prayed and fasted; but when he saw God's will was done, he rose up, and ate, and afflicted himself no more. (2 Sam. xii. 15—23.) Nay, I might recite several examples of Heathens, who did, to the shame of us Christians, bear the death of dear relations with great equanimity and undisturbedness of spirit.† Well, I hint these several things to you: when any of you are thus tried, I allow you a due and regular grief and sense of God's afflicting hand; but there must be no vexing or discontent under it; which the considering of the forementioned particulars may very much prevent or remove.

3. *How as to uncomfortable relations.*

Thirdly. *When relations continued prove uncomfortable.*—This occasions daily risings of heart and much discontent. O the sad fires of passion which hereby are kindled in many, too many, hearts and houses! The comfort of relations is grounded upon suitableness; where that is not, the rose is turned into a brier or thorn. What is unsuitable is uncomfortable, as the yoke that doth not suit or fit the neck is always uneasy. Now this unsuitableness refers either to the *natural temper*, or to *something of a higher nature*: in both it is very afflictive; but especially in the latter.

(1.) *There is an unsuitableness in respect of the natural temper or disposition.*—I intend in this, principally, husband and wife. The one is loving, mild, gentle, of an even and calm spirit, sweet and obliging in his or her converse: the other is quite contrary, froward, passionate, choleric, hard to be pleased, always quarrelling, &c. Here is a cross, now, and a heavy cross too; but what is to be done by them that bear it, so as that

* *Omnia ista nobis accedant, non hæreant; ut, si abducantur, sine ulla nostri laceratione discedant.*—SENECÆ *Epist.* 74. “These things may approach us, but must not cleave to us; so that, if they be taken from us, they may not wound or lacerate us.”—EDIT. † See VALERIUS MAXIMUS, lib. v. cap. 10.

they may learn contentment under it? Why, let them be often in considering these things :—

(i.) *That God hath a special hand in this affliction.*—It is he who brings persons together in this relation ; he made the match in heaven, before it was made on earth ; and therefore he is to be eyed in all the consequences that attend it. If it be comfort, he is to be blessed for it ; if it be discomfort, he is to be submitted to under it.

(ii.) *Though this be a sharp trial, yet it is for good, where it is sanctified.*—It drives many nearer to God, weans them more from the world, keeps them humble, draws out their graces, gives them experience of supporting mercy, learns them to be more pitiful to others, and the like.

(iii.) *May be, this is the only affliction with which some are exercised.*—In all things else it is mercy ; only in this thing God sees it good to afflict. Surely such have little reason to be discontented. What ! under such variety of signal mercies, canst thou not bear contentedly one signal affliction ?

(iv.) *The cross is heavy, but patience and contentedness will make it lighter.*—*Levis fit patientiâ quod corrigere est nefas.** The more the beast strives, the more the yoke pinches ; the more quiet he is, the less it hurts him : and so it is in that case which I am upon.

(v.) *Possibly more suitable relations were once enjoyed, but forfeited.*—So that if you will be angry, it must be with yourselves, not with God.

(vi.) *Death will soon put an end to this cross.*—And we shall shortly be in that state wherein we shall have nothing unsuitable to us.

(2.) But there is an unsuitableness in *higher things*.—Such as do more immediately concern the honour of God, and the everlasting condition of souls ; as grace and no grace, holiness and sin, godliness and ungodliness. Here now I principally intend parents and children, though other relations may be included also. Here is a parent that fears God, that lives a holy and godly life, that owns the good ways of God, and walks in them, &c. But his child or children are of a quite other spirit, and take a quite other course. O ! they live in sin and wickedness, in open enmity to God, carrying it as the sons of Belial ; they curse, swear, drink, defile their bodies, profane sabbaths, neglect duties, scoff at godliness, puff at all good counsel, discover a spirit obstinately set against God, &c. This is an affliction of a very great stature, taller by the head and shoulders than several that have been spoken unto before ; yet many godly parents groan under it, whose head and hearts are broken by ungodly children ; and never was this affliction more common than now, when youth is so much debauched. I verily believe, many good parents could with much less grief bear the death of their sons, were they but fit for it, than that which they daily undergo through the wickedness of their lives. Truly these are much to be pitied ; yet I would desire them to labour to be contented, and submissively to bear this heavy cross. In order to which frame, let them consider,—

(i.) *That it is no new thing for good parents to have bad children.*—Sometimes it so happens that when the father is bad, the son is good ; but it more frequently happens, (and God suffers it to be so, that the world may see, grace doth not run in a blood,) that when the father is

* “ That which cannot be amended is made more tolerable by patience.”—EDIT.

good, the son is bad. It hath been so from the beginning. Adam had his Cain, Noah his Ham, Abraham his Ishmael, Isaac his Esau, David his Amnon, and so in many others: and it will be so to the end of the world. Pray think of this: though it is a cutting, yet but a common, affliction.

(ii.) *Children are ungodly, yet there is hope at last they may be reclaimed.*—As stubborn as they are, God can make them yield; he can change their hearts, and alter their course: and who knows at what day or hour he will come? So long as there is life, there is hope of their conversion. What a wicked son was Manasseh! Yet God wrought upon him at last. What a sad life did the Prodigal live! Yet he returned to his father at last. God can turn notorious sinners into eminent saints. Wait therefore, but do not fret.

(iii.) *The case is sad, but discontent will do no good in it.*—Earnest prayer and quiet submission may do much, but impatience will do nothing. It troubles me much, when I see gracious parents vexing themselves for their ungracious children. Alas! by this they do but hurt themselves, but do no good to them.

(iv.) *I suppose it to be but your affliction, not your sin.**—You have done your duty in godly education, in setting a good example, in exhorting, reproofing, &c., in praying to God for your children. If, after all this, they will be naught, their blood will be required of themselves; you have freed your souls from their eternal ruin and perdition.

(v.) *God will secure and advance his own glory.*—That is the thing that cuts you, that God should be dishonoured by any that descends from you: but as to that, satisfy yourselves,—He will, even by your sinful relations, one way or other promote his honour. If he be not glorified by them, which we should desire, he will be glorified upon them, which we must submit unto. It is to many divines an unquestionable truth, that, when at the day of judgment the sentence of condemnation shall be pronounced upon wicked children, their godly parents shall so rest in God's will, and be so swallowed up in his glory, that they shall not grieve at this sentence, but rather rejoice at it. Now, then, if God here will harden their hearts, and give them up to their own lusts, though you are not to rejoice at this, yet you ought quietly to submit to it.

(vi.) *It is good to reflect upon the grace of God to yourselves.*—And to consider that it is infinite mercy that you are not as bad as they. Discriminating grace, if duly thought of, would be an excellent antidote against passion in the present trial. But I must say no more of this.

I have, as briefly as I could, for the matter would have admitted of far greater enlargement, gone over two grand cases;—the one referring to the estate, the other to relations; and shown under each, how consideration is to be acted in order to contentment. There is a third,—referring to the body, (1.) With respect to *deformity*; (2.) To *defects*; (3.) To *infirmities, pain, sickness*; an affliction both very common and also very great,† to which I would fain have spoken something; but I must for-

* Εκεως ἁμαρτημα, συν δε ατυχημα.—METROCLEOS to Stίλπο, concerning his bad daughter, in PLUTARCH'S "Morals," p. 468. Ed. Steph. "It is her sin, but thy misfortune."—EDIT. † Των κακων το απευκτοτατον και βαρυστατον.—GREGORII NAZIANZENI Orat. 16. "Of all evils this is the heaviest and most to be deprecated."—EDIT.

bear, lest I should too much exceed the bounds of such a discourse as this is.

HOW CONSIDERATION IS TO BE MANAGED FOR THE MANNER OF IT.

(III.) Only there is a third general which I propounded at the first to say something of, which I will but just touch upon, and so dispatch this first help or means to the learning of contentment. Hitherto I have been directing you as to the *matter* of consideration; now I am to direct you as to the *manner* of it. He that would so consider as thereby to get and keep his heart settled and composed under every trouble,—he must be therein *frequent, speedy, serious*.

1. *Frequent*.—If you be but seldom in the practice of this duty, you will never arrive at being masters of the divine art of contentment. You must consider again and again, by repeated thoughts to work upon your hearts that which is proper for the quieting of them. By much chafing the ointment pierceth into the part affected; and so it gives ease: when the disease is hard to be cured or apt to return, the remedy must be often used. And so it is here: as to the prevention or removal of discontent, the mind must be often in consideration. The fiercest creatures, by frequent converse, become more tame and governable. Dogs bark not at those to whom they are used. The moralist applies it to the passions of the mind, which do in a great measure lose their fierceness, and are more easily brought under command, when a man inures himself to consideration.*

2. *Speedy*.—As soon as ever the hellish fire of discontent begins to kindle in thy heart, presently think of that which may be as water for the quenching of it. If you let it alone, like other fires, it will get such a head that it will be too hard for you. Impatience is the soul in mutiny against God: now mutinies in an army must be suppressed speedily. It is good to take the distemper at the beginning: as soon as there is any commotion in the spirit because of this or that cross, immediately retire, ply the heart with consideration, reason with yourselves: “Is not all of God? Shall not all be for good?” and so on, as hath been directed. Nay, indeed, it would be of great advantage to us to be beforehand with the affliction; not only to see it before it comes, but to lay up heart-quieting thoughts for it against it shall come. How “is an evil lessened by the foresight of it!” *Prævisi mali mollior ictus*. How patiently is it undergone when one hath had some forecast in his thoughts about it! † Few are so fit for consideration after a trouble as they are before it; the fore-game is much easier to be played than the after-game: and its efficacy, too, is the greater when persons are so early at it. Before God strikes the blow, cast with yourselves: “What, if my child, or my estate, should be taken from me, how should I bear such an affliction contentedly? Why, things stand thus or thus; and therefore I must be contented.” What would follow upon this? Why, matters being digested beforehand, the mind would be the more still when the evil shall actually seize upon you.

* PLUTARCHUS Περὶ Εὐθυμίας. † *Res adversas infringit quisquis prior vidit.*—SENECA *De Tranquillitate Animi*. “He who foresees adversity, lessens its force.”—EDIT.

3. *Serious.*—Loose and careless and sudden thoughts signify but little to a froward heart ; but when they are intent and fixed, so as to dwell upon what lies before them, then they have a good effect. The plaster must lie upon the sore, and then it works the cure : when consideration is managed with the utmost intension of the mind, with the staying of the soul upon the proper object, then, and never but then, doth it further contentation. So much for the first help or means.

THE SECOND HELP TO CONTENTMENT ; NAMELY, GODLINESS.

II. The second is *godliness.*—The apostle links them together, 1 Tim. vi. 6 : “Godliness with contentment is great gain.” What may be the reason of this connexion? Not only because they do ever accompany each the other ; or because they, being conjoined, do make the Christian complete,—in godliness he submitting to the preceptive, in contentment to the providential, will of God ; or because godliness gives the highest motives to contentment, and that again reflects a great beauty and lustre upon godliness : but chiefly because godliness issues out in contentment, and causes that blessed frame of heart ; and because without godliness there can be no contentment. He that is not a godly man,—that is, a sanctified and gracious man ; for I shall consider godliness principally in its habitual notion,—cannot be a contented man, in that sense wherein the apostle speaks of it in the text. Many of the old Heathens seemed to go very far in contentment, to have a great mastery over passion, in all occurrences to be very sedate and calm. They notably improved their reason and consideration, if not wholly to suppress discontent, yet, however, to keep it in, so as that others should not perceive it ; and many of them, through the firmness and greatness of their spirits, could and did bear much with great tranquillity of mind ; for “the spirit of a man” may bear “his infirmity.” (Prov. xviii. 14.) But yet, as to true evangelical contentment, they knew nothing of it ; for that necessarily requires a divine principle within, and a divine and special assistance from above,—to both of which they were altogether strangers. And so it is still with all mere moral men, such as are destitute of grace and of the Spirit. So that, as ever you desire to learn in every state to be content, you must look to this,—that ye be renewed and sanctified. All motives without, let them be never so high, all consideration within, let it be never so serious, will not prevail to the keeping of the heart quiet under crosses, unless there be a work of saving grace there. The true and only way to be content, is to be godly ; for indeed contentment is the daughter of godliness.

HOW GODLINESS DOTHS FURTHER CONTENTMENT.

QUESTION. For the better opening of this direction, it will be requisite that we inquire, *How godliness or grace doth produce this effect of contentation.*

ANSWER. It doth it by these ways or methods :—

1. *As it rectifies and works in and upon the several faculties of the soul.*—For this is necessary to be done in order to contentment ; and it being done, contentment cannot but follow upon it. Let me make this out particularly :—

(1.) *Grace rectifies the understanding.*—Which it doth by dispelling its natural darkness, and setting up a clear and saving light in it. Now this light hath a great influence upon contentment; for, the understanding being thus enlightened, fancy and imagination do not carry it in the soul as before they did; and hereupon the heart is brought to a more quiet temper. Our inquietudes of mind are founded in the power and prevalence of fancy: we fancy such and such things to be evil, when in truth they are not so, at leastwise as God sanctifies them; or to be more evil than in truth they are: and upon this, when those things are laid upon us, we fret and vex. Whereas, do but “take away this vanity, and mistake of fancy, there would be no such great evil in what we suffer.” *Nihil admodum atrox passus es, nisi id tu tibi fingis*, as he of old truly said.*

And again: we fancy such and such things to be good, yea, good in a very high degree; and then, upon the want of them, we are disturbed. Whereas, if fancy did not delude us, they have but very little good in themselves, and as to us, in our special circumstances, may be none at all: and therefore, why should we be troubled about them? The winds, then, arising from this point, grace lays them by freeing the person from the power of fond imagination, and instead thereof by setting-up solid judgment in him; so that he shall be able to judge aright of things, and not to perplex himself, one way or another, further than the nature of the thing before him will bear. Men generally are unquiet, because they are injudicious: if sanctifying grace, therefore, by that heavenly light which it brings into the understanding, shall make them more judicious, by doing of this it must also make them more quiet. An enlightened head promotes a submissive heart; when it is right counting about worldly things, then it is contentedness. No wonder that Paul had learned in every estate to be content, he having before learned to “count” all things but “loss for Christ.”

(2.) *Grace rectifies the will.*—Thus: in causing it to comply with, and yield unto, the will of God. Whenever this supernatural habit is infused into a man, there is a melting of his will into God’s will; so that there is but one and the same will between them. Now, by this means it doeth the work which I am speaking of; for when it is thus, certainly there can be nothing but contentment. What can put the spirit into disorder, when it is come to this?—“Not as I will, but as thou wilt.” When wind and tide go contrary ways, then the waters are rough and boisterous; but when they both go the same way, then all is calm and smooth. So here; when God’s will and ours differ, then storms of passion rise; but when they agree, there is nothing then but evenness and stillness in the spirit. O! we are never discontented but it is from the jarring and clashing of our wills with God’s.† As he said, *Cesset voluntas propria, non erit infernum*; so say I, “Let but Christians lay aside their own will, and rest in the will of God; and assuredly there will be no perturbation of mind in them.” Indeed, the duty of universal contentment is

* *Nihil est miserum nisi cum putes.*—BOETHIUS *De Consolatione Philosophiæ*, lib. iii. cap. iii. sect. 8. “Thou art never in a miserable condition, except when thou fanciest thyself so to be.”—EDIT. † *Quod sis, esse velis, nihilque malis.* “Whatever thy condition is, be content with it, and long for no other.”—EDIT.

unpracticable till it come to this; and grace bringing the creature to it, so it works contentment.

(3.) *Grace rectifies the affections.*—In taking away their inordinacy toward earthly things, in keeping of them within their due bounds and limits; and so it works contentment. What is it that causes unquietness in us? For the most part we may resolve it into the unmortifiedness of some affection or other. Lust is the fuel that kindles and feeds this fire, that makes us to quarrel and fall-out with God, because our conditions are so and so. Great vessels must have much water, or else they split themselves. Where the love is too great to earthly things, if much of them be not possessed, there is great danger of discontent; but where it is duly bounded, a little of these things sufficeth, as smaller vessels sail well enough even in shallow waters. The pain in the head proceeds from the foulness of the stomach; purge but that, and the head hath ease. Purge but the heart from its unholy affections, and a man hath ease and comfort in every condition. That which engenders impatience, is the greatness of the affliction. But what puts a greatness into the affliction? Why, the greatness of the affection. If the relation was not over-loved, the loss of him would not amount to such an affliction as it is usually made. "He that over-oves will over-grieve:" *Qui nimis amat nimis dolet*; and he that over-grieves will be apt to murmur. Grace, then, confining the affections to these sublunary things, so it furthers contentment.

(4.) *It makes the conscience good.*—And a good conscience is that ark into which God uses to put the manna of contentment. It carries joy in it; it is "a continual feast." (Prov. xv. 15.) Now he that hath this joy within is not easily or much moved at any trouble without; let the weather be what it will, there is nothing but serenity in his soul. If the part be sore, you cannot touch it but it is in pain; let it be but firm and sound, and it can bear a smart blow without complaining. When conscience is sound and good, a man can bear any thing; but when it is not so, he can bear nothing without being under great anguish of mind.

2. *Godliness works contentment by making a person to have a powerful sense of God's glory, so as always to rest in that as his ultimate end and most desirable good.*—This is that glorious effect which grace produceth in the heart; and thereby it doth effectually further quietness of spirit in every condition. Pray observe it: selfishness and lowness of men's ends is at the bottom of all their discontent; they look no higher than their sensual ease, delight, and satisfaction; and if they be crossed in these, then they storm and are angry. But now, a godly man, living up to his godliness, his eye is upon God's glory, as the thing which he chiefly aims at and mainly centres in; and upon this he is content in every state. "For," saith he, "let my state be what it will, God will glorify himself by it; and it is that state which God did see would most tend to his glory, otherwise he had not put me into it. O! therefore, I will like it, yea, rejoice in it; inasmuch as it is most conducive to that which is better than all my little comforts, namely, the glory of God." Methinks *he* should live in all contentedness *who* knows and minds these two things,—that all occurrences tend to the promoting of God's honour, and then too of his own good. But the knowing and minding of these is proper only to one that is godly: how necessary, therefore, is godliness

to contentment! Take an unregenerate man: these neither do nor can signify any thing to him. For, as to the first,—the advancement of the honour of his Creator,—he being all for self, (for so every one is before conversion,) the honour of God is nothing to him; and so it can have no influence upon him for the quieting of his heart under troubles: and as to the second,—the advancement of his own good,—he, not being in covenant with God, on which the sanctification of all providences doth depend, can have no assurance of this, and therefore cannot from this fetch that which may quiet and comfort him. But both of these have their full power and strength where grace is; and thereupon it becomes an effectual means to contentment.

3. *In the general habit of grace there are contained certain special graces which do very much further contentment.*—I will instance in *humility, faith, repentance, heavenly-mindedness, self-denial.*

(1.) *Humility.*—The humble man is always a contented man; the proud man is always of a contrary temper. Pride puts us upon contending with God, humility upon yielding and submitting to him. Pride makes us think we are wiser than God, can order our conditions better than he; humility dreads this heart-blasphemy. Pride must be at the top of the pinnacle; no condition, no mercy is high enough for it. A proud person cannot bear a low state; he “looks upon himself as wronged, if he be not chief;” as he said to his daughter, *Si non dominaris, injuriam te accipere existimas.** Humility accepts of the lowest condition and the lowest mercy. “O,” saith the humble person, “what can be too low for me who deserve to be in hell? what too little for me who am ‘less than the least of all mercies?’” (Gen. xxxii. 10.) Pride is for charging God; humility is altogether for admiring God: *that* will be finding faults with what God doeth; *this* only finds faults with what we ourselves do. Pride is the heart-disquieting sin; humility is the heart-quieting grace. It is never well enough with the proud; the angels that fell even when they were in heaven, and Adam even in Paradise in all his glory, were guilty of this: it is always very well with the humble. Well, godliness works contentment. “How?” By the rooting-out of pride and planting humility in the soul.

(2.) *Faith.*—That is another grace which doth eminently help-on contentation. How readily, and how aptly, doth it interpose upon all occasions for the keeping-down of all turbulent risings in the heart! Doth the man begin to be froward? “What will become of me and mine?” “Be still,” saith faith; “God will provide for thee and thine.” “O, but such and such blessings are denied me.” “Yet be still,” saith faith; “thou hast all in God; thou mayest say that truly, which the great conqueror once vainly said, when he had Europe and Asia in his eye: *Et hæc et hæc mea sunt*: † ‘These and these blessings, yea, all are mine; for God is mine.’” “But the providences of God toward me are very bitter.” “Yet be still,” saith faith; “there is abundant sweetness in the promise to take-off that bitterness that is in the providence.” “But it is at present very ill with me.” “Yet be still,” saith faith, “wait but a little, and it will be better.” “But what

* SÆTONIUS. † Of the pride and vanity of this speech of Alexander see PHILLO, *Liber de Cherubim*, p. 91.

have I to comfort me?" "Why," saith faith, "enough and enough; the unchangeable love of God, the pardon of all thy sins, the covenant-state, eternal life," &c. "They," saith a holy writer, "never felt God's love or tasted the forgiveness of sin, who are discontented." Thus faith with great readiness and strength answers all objections which tend to the disturbing of the spirit. It is the grace which keeps from fainting and from fretting also. (Psalm xxvii. 13; xlii. 11.)

(3.) *Repentance*.—He that truly mourns for sin doth not easily murmur because of some outward cross. Where sin is heavy, nothing besides, comparatively, is heavy. What light things are afflictions to him who groans under the burden of sin! (2 Cor. iv. 17.) Godliness turns the grief and anger into the right channel; it works contentment by diversions. When the sinner would be grieving and complaining because of poverty, sickness, &c., this makes him to look into the naughtiness of his heart, and to grieve for that pride and passion and unbelief that is within; and so it prevents or puts a stop to inordinate sorrow for what is externally afflictive, as bleeding at the arm stops bleeding at the nose. Where it is repenting, there it is not repining.

(4.) *Heavenly-mindedness*.—The more a man doth mind things above, the less he is concerned about things below: he who hath his heart and conversation in heaven, will not be solicitous or querulous about what befalls him here on earth. (Matt. vi. 21; Phil. iii. 20.) *Nihil sentit crux in nervo, cum animus est in cælo.** (TERTULLIAN.)

(5.) *Self-denial*.—A grace that hath a great tendency to contentment, because it takes men off from their own wisdom, will, and affections, and causeth them wholly to resign-up themselves to the wise and gracious disposal of God. "O," saith the self-denying Christian, "I am not fit to be my own chooser; God shall choose for me. I would not have my condition brought to my mind, but my mind brought to my condition; I would not have God give me what I desire, but I would desire nothing but what God sees good to give me." As that philosopher, when one wished for him that he "might have from the gods whatever he would:" "Nay, rather," saith he, "wish for me, that I may will nothing but what the gods will give me."† Surely, when it is once come to this, it must needs be contentment.

These are some of the ways (others there are, but I must pass them over) by which godliness doth promote and work contentment. So that, as you desire to learn it, you must look to this,—that you be gracious and godly persons. Without grace, in the habit and exercise thereof, it cannot be composedness and tranquillity of spirit in every state. I do not affirm, that he who hath grace is so constant and universal in this frame, as that he is never under discontent; for even such an one hath his infirmities and surprisals, and *pro hic et nunc* ["ever and anon"] corruption may be too hard for grace: but this I say, He, as to the general course, and when he is himself, is contented; and that he is the person who is fitted and qualified to live contentment.

* "Under excruciating bodily sufferings, when the sensibilities of nature are all on the rack, the man whose affections are fixed on heaven remains calm and unruffled."—EDIT.
† Όσα βουλοίς παρα των θεων γερνιτο σοι. Αλλα βουλομην μαλλον οσα μοι παρα των θεων γερνιται.—JAMBlichus in *Vita Pythagoræ*, lib. i. cap. 28.

THE THIRD HELP TO CONTENTMENT; NAMELY, PRAYER.

III. The third and last means is *prayer*.—Without this the two former will be ineffectual. Let a man be never so considerative, yea, never so godly, yet prayer is necessary to his being contented. Humility, faith, repentance, heavenly-mindedness, self-denial, are the heart-quieting graces, and prayer is the heart-quieting duty. He that hath not learned to pray, will not learn to be content. When God is seldom spoken to, he will be often hardly thought of. There must be good striving with God in prayer, or else there will be bad striving with him in the way of discontent. O sirs! are you afflicted? Pray. (James v. 13.) Do you meet with crosses? Pray. Doth the estate decay, the relations die, the body consume by pain and sickness? Pray. The best way to be content in every state is to pray in every state. We study this hard lesson best upon our knees.

Prayer furthers contentment,—

1. *As it gives a vent to the mind under trouble*.—Vessels that are full, if they have not some vent, are apt to burst; and so, when the heart is full of grief, if it hath not a vent, it breaks. “Sorrow kept-in overwhelms the spirit:” *Strangulat inclusus dolor*. Let it be vented a little, and the spirit is much at ease. Now, prayer is the best vent: the poor Christian goes to God, tells him his case, pours-out his heart before him; upon this, his heart, that was ready to break before, is now greatly relieved. When Hannah had prayed under her trouble, she “went away and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad.” (1 Sam. i. 18.) What sad work doth the wind make, where it is pent-up! Whence come the dreadful shakings of the earth, but from its being shut-up in the cavities thereof? And so here, when we keep-in our troubles, do not open them, first to the Lord in prayer, and then to some experienced Christian, what commotions and perturbations of mind is that the occasion of!

2. *As it obtains grace and strength from God, to enable the creature to be contented*.—For it is he, and he only, that can work-up the heart to this excellent frame; he that stills the sea when it rages doth also still the soul in all its passions and discontents. When Paul had spoken thus high of his contentment, lest any should think he ascribed this to himself, or had it from himself, immediately he subjoins: “I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me;” to note, that the quietness of his mind was divine and supernatural.* We read of our Saviour, how, he being at sea, and a great tempest arising, “he rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. But the men marvelled, saying, “What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!” (Matt. viii. 24—27.) Truly the calming of the

* Επειδη εθετο μεγαλα, ειπον, περι εαυτου, φησιν, Ουκ εμον το κατορθωμα, αλλα του την ισχυν δεδωκοτος Χριστου.—THEOPHYLACTUS. “When Paul had thus set forth his own high attainments, he says, ‘My right performance of this duty is not to be attributed to my ability, but to the power of Christ who gives me strength.’”—EDIT. *Quia de marinis rebus gloriatus fuerat, ne superbia id tribueretur, vel ne aliis jactantia occasionem daret, subiicit, hęc fortitudine se a Christo instrui.*—CALVINUS in loc. “Lest his glorying in these great things should be attributed to pride, or lest it should afford to others an occasion for boasting, the apostle subjoins the declaration, that he was endued with this strength by Christ.”—EDIT.

heart in its inward storms is a thing every way as marvellous as what Christ here did, and that which requires as great a power to effect it. If, therefore, you desire to arrive at this even temper of mind in every condition, often go to God and beg it of him. Say, "Lord, I have a peevish, froward, discontented heart, that is ready upon every cross to vex and fret against thee. This, I hope, is my burden: I would fain have it otherwise; but I cannot get victory over my passion, I cannot bring myself to a calm and submissive frame. Wherefore I seek to thee to enable me thereunto. Blessed God, do thou help me; through the power of thy grace, let there be evermore a contented mind in me! Such and such crosses I meet with; but, Lord, under all let me be patient: here is a hard lesson for me to learn; but through the teachings of thy Spirit let me learn it." O, do but thus pray, and in due time God will give you what you pray for.

Thus I have answered this weighty question, *What Christians are to do, that they may learn in every state to be content.*

Now, to close all, I leave it with yourselves to inquire what your attainments are as to this contentment. It is a sad thing that even amongst Christians there is so little of it; that many mere Heathens, who had nothing but reason and the dim light of nature, seem herein to outstrip those who have far greater helps to it. O, this is much to be lamented! Let us bring it down to ourselves. Paul had learned in *every state to be content*; we have scarce learned in *any state to be content*. We are not well either full or fasting: when it is summer, then it is too hot; when it is winter, then it is too cold. Every condition is, more or less, uneasy to us.* If it be mercy, we complain it is not enough; if affliction, we complain it is too much; and so we are always *in statu querulo et moroso*, † as he in Seneca expresseth it. The great God is willing to be pleased with what we do; but how hard are we to be pleased with what he doeth! He finds no fault with our duties, though attended with many defects, if done in sincerity: we will be finding fault with his providences, though there be nothing in them but what speaks infinite wisdom and goodness. The generality of men carry it as if the fretting leprosy was upon them; yea, many even of those who belong to God are too much sick of this disease. Surely if he was not a long-suffering and compassionate Father, he would not bear as he doth with such froward children. The most like their inward state too well, and their outward state too ill. Such who have the world are contented without God; such who have God are not contented without the world.

It being thus, is it not highly necessary that we should, for the time to come, set ourselves with our utmost diligence to get a contented spirit? May be, we dare not let the fire of our passion break forth; but it lies smothering and hid in the heart: when shall it be quite extinguished? O that *that* might be wholly cast out, and that, instead thereof, *sedate-*

* *Nemo facilis cum fortuna sua conditione concordat.*—BOETHIUS *De Consolatione Philosophiæ*, lib. II. prosa 4. "No man is easily contented with his allotted condition."—EDIT. *Quis est tam composita felicitatis, ut non aliquid ex parte cum statu sui qualitate rixetur?*—Idem, *ibid.* "Who is of such a calm and happy disposition, as not to quarrel with the quality of his state on some ground or other?"—EDIT. † "In a state of morosity and querulousness."—EDIT.

ness of mind, submission to God, contentation in every condition, might come-in into the soul? My brethren, will you fall upon the studying of this excellent lesson of contentment? You have learned nothing in Christianity till you have learned this: you are no better than abecedarians in religion, if you have not mastered this great piece of practical knowledge. You have heard much, read much, of contentment; but have you learned it, so as to live in the daily practice of it? Pray take-up with nothing short of that.

The design of this sermon hath been to help you herein, to direct you what you are to do in order to contentment. Now will you make use of the directions that have been given? namely, to be considerative, godly, praying persons. These are the best remedies that I could think of against that spiritual choler that doth so much trouble you. Use them, and, I hope, you will find the virtue and efficacy of them to this end. Look to your state and course, that you be godly; when any thing troubles you, retire for consideration and prayer. Hold on in this way, and in time you also will be able to speak these great words as to yourselves, that you "have learned in" every "state to be content."

* * The variations in this excellent sermon, as well as in the succeeding one, between the first and second editions are considerable, but the readings of the second are generally preferable, being manifest improvements.

SERMON XXVII.

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HOW TO BEAR AFFLICTIONS.

My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him.—Hebrews xii. 5.

THE words are an excellent passage from the Book of the Proverbs; (Prov. iii. 11, 12;) wherein the Supreme Eternal Wisdom is represented giving instruction to the afflicted, how to behave themselves under troubles, so as they may prove beneficial to them. The counsel is, that they should preserve a temperament of spirit between the excess and defect of patience and courage, and neither despising the chastenings of the Lord by a sinful neglect of them, as a small unconcerning matter, nor fainting under them, as a burden so great and oppressing that no deliverance was to be expected. To enforce the exhortation, Wisdom useth the amiable and endearing title, "My son," to signify that God in the quality of a Father afflicts his people; the consideration whereof is very proper to conciliate reverence to his hand, and to encourage their hopes of a blessed issue.

The proposition that ariseth from the words is this: *It is the duty and best wisdom of afflicted Christians to preserve themselves from the vicious extremes of despising the chastenings of the Lord, or fainting under them.*

To illustrate this by a clear method, I shall endeavour to show, I. *What it is to despise the chastenings of the Lord, and the causes of it.* II. *What fainting under his rebukes signifies, and what makes us incident to it.* III. *Prove that it is the duty and best wisdom of the afflicted to avoid these extremes.* IV. *Apply it.*

I. First. To "*despise the chastenings of the Lord,*" *ολιγωρει*, imports the "making no account of them," as unworthy of serious regard, and includes *inconsiderateness of mind, and an insensibleness of heart.*

1. *Inconsiderateness of mind with respect to the Author or end of chastenings.*

(1.) *With respect to the Author.*—When the afflicted looks only downwards, as if the rod of affliction sprang out of the dust, (Job v. 6,) and there were no superior cause that sent it. Thus many apprehend the evils that befall them, either merely as the productions of natural causes, or as casual events, or the effects of the displeasure and injustice of men; but never look on the other side of the veil of the second causes, to that invisible Providence that orders all. If a disease strikes their bodies, they attribute it to the extremity of heat or cold, that distempers their humours; if a loss comes in their estates, it is ascribed to chance, to the carelessness and falseness of some upon whom they depended: but God is concealed from their sight by the nearness of the immediate agent; whereas the principal cause of all temporal evils is the over-ruling providence of God. "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" (Amos iii. 6.) They come not only with his knowledge and will, but by his efficiency. The locusts that infected Egypt were as real an effect of God's wrath as the most miraculous plague, although an east-wind brought them, and a west-wind carried them away. (Exod. x. 13, 19.) The arrow that was shot at a venture, and pierced between the joints of Ahab's armour, was directed by the hand of God for his destruction. (1 Kings xxii. 34.) Shimei's cursing of David, though it was the overflowing of his gall, the effect of his malignity, yet that holy king looked higher, and acknowledged, "The Lord hath bidden him." (2 Sam. xvi. 11.) As the Lord is a God of power, and can inflict what judgments he pleaseth immediately; so he is a God of order, and usually punisheth in this world by subordinate means. Now, wherever he strikes, though his hand is wrapped-up in a cloud, yet if it be not observed, especially if by habitual incogitancy men consider not with whom they have to do in their various troubles, this profane neglect is no less than a despising the chastenings of the Lord.

(2.) *Inconsiderateness of the end of the divine discipline* is a great degree of contempt.—The evils that God inflicts are as real a part of his Providence as the blessings he bestows; as in the course of nature the darkness of the night is by his order, as well as the light of the day: therefore they are always sent for some wise and holy design. Sometimes, though more rarely, they are only for trial, to exercise the faith, humility, patience of eminent saints; for otherwise God would lose in a great measure the honour and renown, and his favourites the reward, of those graces,—afflictions being the sphere of their activity. But for the most part they are castigatory, to bring us to a sight and sense of our state, to render sin more evident and odious to us. They are fitly expressed by "pouring from vessel to vessel;" that discovers the dregs

and sediment, and makes it offensive that before was concealed. The least affliction, even to the godly, is usually an application of the Physician of spirits for some growing distemper; every corrosive is for some proud flesh that must be taken away. In short, they are deliberate dispensations to cause men to reflect upon their works and ways, and break-off their sins by sincere obedience. Therefore we are commanded to hear the voice of "the rod, and who hath appointed it." (Micah vi. 9.) It is a preacher of repentance, to lead us to the knowledge and consideration of ourselves. The distress of Joseph's brethren was to revive their memory of his sorrows caused by their cruelty. Now, when men disregard the embassy of the rod, are unconvincible notwithstanding its lively lessons; when they neither look up to Him that strikes, nor within to the cause that provokes his displeasure; when they are careless to reform their ways, and to comply with his holy will; as if afflictions were only common accidents of this mutable state, the effects of rash fortune or blind fate, without design and judgment, and not sent for their amendment;—this is a prodigious despising of God's hand. For this reason the scripture compares men to the most inobservant creatures, to the "wild ass's colt," (Job xi. 12,) "the deaf adder," (Psalm lviii. 4,) to the "silly dove without heart:" (Hosea vii. 11 :) and the advantage is on the beasts' side; for their inconsideration proceeds merely from the incapacity of matter, of which they are wholly composed, to perform reflex acts; but man's incogitancy is in sole fault of his spirit, that wilfully neglects his duty. The prophet charges this guilt upon the Jews: "Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see." (Isai. xxvi. 11.)

2. *Insensibility of heart* is an eminent degree of despising the Lord's chastenings.—A pensive feeling of judgments is very congruous, whether we consider them in *genere physico* or *moralis*, "either materially as afflictive to nature, or as the signs of divine displeasure:" for the affections were planted in the human nature by the hand of God himself, and are duly exercised in proportion to the quality of their objects; and when grace comes, it softens the breast, and gives a quick and tender sense of God's frown. An eminent instance we have in David; though of heroic courage, yet, in his sad ascent to mount Olivet, he went up weeping, with his head covered and his feet bare, to testify his humble and submissive sense of God's anger against him. (2 Sam. xv. 30.) Now when men are insensible of judgments, either considered as natural or penal evils; if, when they suffer the loss of relations or other troubles, they presently fly to the comforts of the Heathens, that we are all mortal, and what cannot be helped must be endured, without the sense humanity requires; that calm is like that of the Dead Sea,—a real curse: or suppose natural affection works a little, yet there is no apprehension and concernment for God's displeasure, (which should be infinitely more affecting than any outward trouble how sharp soever,) no serious deep humiliation under his hand, no yielding up ourselves to his management; this most justly provokes him. Of this temper were those described by Jeremiah: "Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction." (Jer. v. 3.)

Secondly. *The causes of this despising of God's chastenings are,*

1. *A contracted stupidity of soul, proceeding from a course in sin.*—There is a natural stubbornness and contumacy in the heart against God, a vicious quality derived from rebellious Adam. We are all hewn out of the rock, and digged out of the quarry; and this is one of the worst effects of sin, and a great part of its deceitfulness, that by stealth it increaseth the natural hardness; by degrees it creeps on like a gangrene, and causes an indolency. (Heb. iii. 13.) The practice of sin makes the heart like an adamant, the hardest of stones, that exceeds that of rocks. (Zech. vii. 12.) For, hence proceeds such unteachableness of the mind, that when God speaks and strikes, yet sinners will not be convinced; that briars and thorns are only effectual to teach them; and such untractableness in the will, that when the sinner is stormed by affliction, and some light breaks into the understanding, yet it refuseth to obey God's call.

2. *Carnal diversions* are another cause of slighting God's hand.—The pleasures and cares of the world, as they render men inapprehensive of judgments to come, so regardless of those that are present. (Luke xxi. 34.) Some, whenever they feel the smart of a cross, use all the arts of oblivion to lose the sense of it: the affliction, instead of a leading them to repentance, leads them to vain conversations, to comedies, and other sinful delights, to drive away sorrow. Others, although they do not venture upon forbidden things to relieve their melancholy, yet when God, by short and sensible admonitions, calls upon them, they have presently recourse to temporal comforts, which, although lawful and innocent in themselves, yet are as unproper at that time as the taking of a cordial when a vomit begins to work; for whereas chastisements are sent to awaken and affect us by considering our sins in their bitter fruits, this unseasonable application of sensual comforts wholly defeats God's design. For nothing so much hinders serious consideration as a voluptuous indulging [of] the senses in things pleasing; like opiate medicines, they stupify the conscience, and benumb the heart. It is Solomon's expression: "I said of laughter, It is mad;" for as distraction breaks the connexion of the thoughts, so mirth shuffles our most serious thoughts into disorder, and causes men to pass over their troubles without reflection and remorse. And as the pleasures, so *the business of the world* causes a supine security under judgments. We have an amazing instance of it in Hiel the Bethelite, who laid the foundation of his city in the death of his first-born, and set-up the gates of it in his youngest son; (1 Kings xvi. 34;) yet he was so intent upon his building, that he disregarded the Divine *Nemesis* ["Justice or Vengeance"] that was apparent, fulfilling the terrible threatening prophesied against the builder of Jericho. (Joshua vi. 26.)

3. *An obstinate fierceness of spirit, a diabolical fortitude*, is the cause that sometimes men despise afflicting providences so far as to resist them.—There is a *passive* malignity in all, an unaptness to be wrought on and to receive spiritual and heavenly impressions from God's hand; but in some of the sons of perdition there is an *active* malignity, whereby they furiously repel judgments, as if they could oppose the Almighty. Their hearts are of an anvil-temper, made harder by afflic-

tions, and reverberate the blow; like that Roman emperor, who, instead of humbling and reforming at God's voice in thunder, thundered back again. All judgments that befall them are as strokes given to wild beasts, that, instead of taming them, enrage them to higher degrees of fierceness. The prophet described some of this rank of sinners, who said "in the pride and stoutness of their hearts, The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones: the sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars;" (Isai. ix. 9, 10 :) and thus many, though not explicitly, yet virtually, declare a resolution, notwithstanding the most visible discouragements from heaven, to proceed in their sinful courses with more greediness, and from a sullen, secret atheism are more strongly carried to gratify their lusts again when they are in afflictions.

II. I shall proceed to consider the other extreme, of *fainting under God's rebukes*.

First. 1. The original word, *εκλυου*, signifies "the slackening and relaxing of things that were firmly joined together."—The strength of the body proceeds from the union of the parts, when they are well compacted together; by their disjoining it is enfeebled, and rendered unfit for labour. In this notion, the apostle, in verse 12, exhorts them to "lift up the hands that hang down, and" strengthen "the feeble knees;" that is, to encourage and strengthen their souls by a real belief of the promises made to afflicted Christians.

2. It may respect the *sinking and falling away of the soul like water*, being hopeless of overcoming troubles.—When water is frozen into hard ice, it will bear a great burden; but when it is dissolved and melted, nothing is weaker: so the spirit of a man, confirmed by religious principles, is able to sustain all his infirmities. (Prov. xviii. 14.) *Si fractus illabatur orbis*; * if the weight of the heaviest afflictions fall upon him, yet his mind remains erect and unbroken, and bears them all with courage and constancy. But if, through impatience under tribulation and diffidence in the divine promises, we shrink from our duty, or reject the comforts of God, as if they were small and not proportionable to the evils that oppress us; this is to faint when we are rebuked by him.

Secondly. *The causes of this despondency are usually,*

1. Either *the kind* of the affliction.—When there is a singularity in the case, it increaseth the apprehension of God's displeasure, because it may signify an extraordinary guilt and singular unworthiness in the person that suffers; and upon that account the sorrow swells so high as to overwhelm him.

2. *The number and degrees* of afflictions.—When, like those black clouds which in winter days join together, and quite intercept the beams of the sun, many troubles meet at once, and deprive us of all present comfort. Job lost his children by a sudden, unnatural death; and was tormented in all the parts of his body, and reduced from his rich abundance to the dunghill, and a potsherd to scrape his boils. Indeed, his heroic spirit was supported under those numerous and grievous troubles; but such a weight were enough to sink the most.

3. *The continuance* of afflictions.—When the clouds return after rain,

* HORATI *Carm.* lib. iii. od. iii. 7. "Beneath the crush of worlds, undaunted he appears."—FRANCIS'S Translation.

and the life is a constant scene of sorrows, we are apt to be utterly dejected, and hopeless of good. The Psalmist tells us, "All the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning;" (Psalm lxxiii. 14;) and from thence was strongly tempted to despair.

4. *The comparing their great sufferings with the prosperity of those who are extremely vicious*, inclines some to despair.—For not only their present evils are heightened and more sensibly felt by the comparison, but the prosperous impiety of others tempts them to think there is no just and powerful providence that distributes things below; and, looking no higher than to second causes that are obvious to sense, they judge their state past recovery.

III. The next thing is *to prove that it is the duty and wisdom of the afflicted not to despise the chastenings of the Lord, nor to faint under them.*

1. It is their *duty* carefully to avoid those extremes, *because they are very dishonourable to God.*

(1.) *The contempt of chastisements is a high profanation of God's honour*, who is our Father and Sovereign, and in that quality afflicts us.—It is our apostle's argument: "Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?" (Heb. xii. 9.) It is a principle deeply planted in the human nature, which the most barbarous nations have kept inviolable, to express humble respects to our parents, from whom we derive our life, and by whose tender care we have been preserved and educated, although their discipline be rigorous; but it is infinitely more just and reasonable, that we should reverently submit to "the Father of spirits," who hath the highest right in us. As much as the immortal spirit excels the infirm, corruptible flesh, proportionably should our reverence to God, when he most sharply rebukes us, exceed our respects to our earthly fathers, when they correct us. The manner of the apostle's expression is very significant: "Shall we not much rather?" If there be any vital spark of conscience remaining in our breasts, if reason be not wholly declined to brutishness, we cannot do otherwise.

(2.) *Fainting under chastenings reflects dishonourably upon God.*—It is true in some respects, those who are extremely dejected are not so guilty as the despisers: for usually they acknowledge the order and justice of his providence. But that false conception of the Father of mercies, either that he "willingly afflicts the children of men," or that he hates them, because he afflicts them here, is so contrary to his holy nature, and injurious to his goodness, the special character of his nature, (1 John iv. 9,) that it is an equal provocation with the slighting his sovereignty.

2. *It is the best wisdom not to despise God's chastenings, nor faint under them.*—I will not insist upon the consideration, that it is the counsel of the Supreme Wisdom to us, nor that it is the avoiding [of] the vicious extremes, which is the chiefest point of moral prudence; but it is the only way to prevent the greatest mischiefs that will otherwise befall us. It is said, "He that is wise is profitable to himself;" (Job xxii. 2;) that is, either in obtaining good, or preventing

evils. Now it will appear how pernicious those extremes are, by considering,

(1.) *The contempt of chastenings deprives us of all those benefits which were intended by them.*—God's end in them is to embitter sin to our taste, and make us disrelish that deadly poison; for as, according to the rules of physic, contraries are cured by contraries, so sin, that prevails by pleasure, by something delightful to the carnal part, is mortified by what is afflictive to sense. Repentance is a duty that best complies with affliction; for when the spirit is made sad, and brought to the sobriety of consideration, it will more readily reflect upon the true causes of troubles: when the springs overflow, it is but directing the stream into a right channel, the changing the object of our grief, namely, mourning for sin, instead of sorrowing for outward trouble; and we are in the way to happiness. Sensible sorrow leads to godly sorrow: the natural is first, then the spiritual. Now the despisers of God's hand, that are unaffected with judgments, are incapable of this benefit; for if they do not feel the blow, how shall they take notice of the hand that strikes? If they are not softened with sorrows, how shall they receive the divine impression? If they have no sense of his displeasure, how shall they fear to offend him for the future? If the medicine doth not work, how can it expel noxious humours?

(2.) *The neglect of chastenings doth not only render them unprofitable, but exposes to greater evils.*

(i.) *It provokes God to withdraw his judgments for a time.*—This the sinner desired, and thinks himself happy that he is at ease. Miserable delusion! This respite is the presage of his final ruin. It was the desperate state of Judah, as God expresses it: "Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more:" (Isai. i. 5:) the words of an anxious father that has tried all methods, counsel, kindness, corrections, to reclaim a rebellious, obstinate son; and, finding no answerable effect, gives him over, to follow the pernicious swing of his corrupt desires. No severity is like the suffering him in his licentious courses. Thus when God hath used many gracious ways to reduce the sinner by his word, Spirit, and judgments, but he is inflexible to the calls of the word, impenetrable to the motions of the Spirit, and insensible of afflicting providences; when, after a combat with the rod, sin comes off unwounded, and the rod retires; this calm is more dreadful than the fiercest storm; nothing can be more fatal to the sinner; for by this divine desertion he is given over to a reprobate mind and vile affections, he goes on undisturbed in his sins, and every day increaseth his enmity against God, and provokes God's enmity against him. It is not conceivable that one who is not made pliable to the grace of God by afflictions, should submit when he is in pleasant circumstances, and disposed to enjoy sensual satisfactions. If the whip and spur cannot break and tame the unruly beast, certainly the rich pasture will never make him manageable: so that God's ceasing to punish the sinner at present is so far from being a favour, that it is the effect of his deepest displeasure; for it contributes to his hardening. It was the case of Pharaoh: when any of the plagues were removed, indulgence occasioned his induration. As water, taken from the fire,

freezes sooner and harder, because the thinner parts are evaporated by the former heat; so when men are taken off from the fire of affliction, they are more confirmed in their vicious courses than if they had never been afflicted.

(ii.) *The slighting of lighter strokes provokes God sometimes to bring more dreadful judgments in this life upon sinners.*—No man can endure that his love or anger should be despised. Nebuchadnezzar commanded the furnace to be heated seven times hotter for those who contemned his threatenings. God tells the Israelites, “If ye will not be reformed by me by these things, but will walk contrary unto me; then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times more for your sins.” (Lev. xxvi. 23, 24.) He will change the rods into scorpions, and will scourge them for their continued rebellions. It is the intent of that expostulation: “Shall one take up a snare from the earth, and have taken nothing at all?” (Amos iii. 5.) Shall God remove his judgments while sinners are careless and unreformed, as if they might be final conquerors over them? No; he will multiply and greaten them. It may be, at first God blasts part of the estate, and the sinner is not apprehensive of his hand; then he comes nearer, and snatches away a dear relation; if still the sinner is unaffected, he strikes his body with a lingering or acute disease; if still he be not concerned for God’s displeasure, he wounds his spirit, makes him sink in sense and conscience at the same time, fills him with terror by the reflection upon his wicked ways and the foresight of that dreadful tribunal before which he must appear; so that, although he cannot live, he dare not die; though his earthly tabernacle be ready to fall upon him, he is afraid to go out and meet the Supreme Judge: and if this doth not work a sincere, thorough change, God casts him into hell to the company of the giants,—those bold rebels that fought against God. Briefly: as under the law an incorrigible son that neglected his father’s reproofs was to die without mercy, so an unreformed sinner, who kicks against the pricks, and refuses to submit to God’s corrections, shall be cut off in his obstinacy: (Prov. xxi. 16:)* justice will proceed to excision and acts of vengeance against him.

(3.) *Fainting under chastenings is pernicious to sufferers.*—For it renders them utterly indisposed for the performance of duty, and incapable of receiving the comforts proper for an afflicted state.

(i.) *It renders them utterly indisposed for the performance of duty.*—Hope draws forth all the active powers of the soul; it is the great motive to diligence, and instrument of duty: despair—like extremity of cold, that checks the spring, and binds up the earth, that its fruits cannot appear—hinders the free exercise of reason and grace, and cuts the sinews of obedience. He that is hopeless of a good issue out of troubles, will neither repent nor pray nor reform, but indulges barren tears instead of real duties. Besides, it often falls out, that the same affliction is sent from God’s displeasure upon his people for their sins, and is the effect of the rage of men against them upon the account of their professing his name. Such is the wisdom and goodness of God, that by the same fiery trial he may refine his servants from their dross and impurities, and render the glory of the gospel more conspicuous. The hatred of religion

* Vide MR. MEDE in loc.

and a blind fury may transport men to acts of cruelty against the saints ; but it is by the permission of the universal Sovereign, who hath the hearts of all in his hands, and suffers their rage for holy ends. The enemy designs against their faith ; but God's aim is to make them change their lives. Now if, either through strong fears or the stinging sense of troubles upon the account of religion, our courage fails, we are presently in danger of falling away and denying our Master. The faint-hearted person is usually false-hearted ; and, for want of resolution, being frightened out of his conscience and duty, chooses sin rather than suffering, and thereby justly deprives himself of the crown of life, that is promised only to those who are faithful unto the death. Besides, not only the loss of heaven, but the torments of hell, are threatened against those who withdraw from the service of God to avoid temporal evils. "The fearful and unbelieving" are in the front of those that "shall have part in the lake of fire and brimstone ; which is the second death." (Rev. xxi. 8.) Now what folly is it, when two evils are propounded, to choose the greatest ; that is, eternal death, rather than temporal ! and of two goods, to prefer the less ; a short life with its conveniences on earth, before that which is eternally glorious in heaven ! By which it appears, how much it concerns us to fortify and fix our minds, by a steadfast belief of God's supporting presence with us in all troubles, and of his gracious promise, that "in due time we shall reap, if we faint not in well-doing."

(ii.) *They are incapable of the comforts proper to an afflicted state.*—Those arise *from* the apprehension that God loves whom he chastens ; (Rev. iii. 19 ;) for the least sin is a greater evil than the greatest trouble, and his design is to take that away ; and *from* the expectation of a happy issue. Hope is the anchor within the veil, that, in the midst of storms and the roughest seas, preserves from shipwreck. The character of Christians is, that they are "rejoicing in hope:" (Rom. xii. 12 :) but when the afflicted are under fearful impressions that God is an irreconcilable enemy, and sadly conclude their miseries are past redress, those divine comforts, that are able to sweeten the most bitter sufferings to believers, are of no efficacy ; their deep sorrows are not like the pains of a travailing woman, that end in a joyful birth, but the killing tortures of the stone, that are fruitless to the patient. An obstinate grief, and rejecting the consolations of God, is "the beginning of sorrows," the first payment of that sad arrear of mourning that shall be exacted in another world.

USE.

The use shall be to excite us to those duties that are directly contrary to the extremes forbidden ; namely, *to demean ourselves under the chastenings of the Lord with a deep reverence and humble fear of his displeasure, and with a firm hope and dependence upon him for a blessed issue upon our complying with his holy will.*

USE 1. *With a humble reverence of his hand.*—This temper is absolutely necessary and most congruous with respect to God, upon the account of his sovereignty, justice, and goodness, declared in his chastenings ; and with respect to our frailty, our dependence upon him, our obnoxiousness to his law, and our obligations to him, that he will please to afflict us for our good. This is the reason of that expostulation :

“Will the lion roar in the forest, when he hath no prey?” (Amos iii. 4.) Shall God’s threatenings and judgments have no effect? “Who ever hardened himself against him, and prospered?” “Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy?” the most sensible and severe attribute, when it is incensed: “Are we stronger than he?” (1 Cor. x. 22.) Can we encounter offended Omnipotency? Can we with an army of lusts oppose myriads of mighty angels? It is not courage, but such a prodigious degree of folly and fury, that one would think it were impossible a reasonable creature were capable of it. Yet every sinner unreformed by afflictions is thus desperate: “He stretcheth out his hand against God, and strengtheneth himself against the Almighty. He runneth upon him, even on his neck, upon the thick bosses of his bucklers.” (Job xv. 25, 26.) Such a furious rebel was Ahaz, who “in the time of his distress did trespass yet more against the Lord: this is that king Ahaz.” (2 Chron. xxviii. 22.) But God hath most solemnly declared, that he will be victorious at last over the most fierce, obdurate enemies: “As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me.” His power is infinite; and anger puts an edge upon his power, and makes it more terrible. If our subjection be not voluntary, it must be violent: it is our wisdom to prevent acts of vengeance by humble submissions. The duty of the afflicted is excellently expressed by Elihu: “Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more: that which I see not teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.” (Job xxxiv. 31, 32.) Add further: upon another account reverence is due to God’s chastenings; for when love is the motive that incites one to give us counsel, though it be mixed with reproofs, and his prudence is not great, yet a respect is due to the affection. Now God, who is only wise, chastises men from a desire to make them better and happy; he intends primarily to refine, not to consume, them by afflictions; so that a serious regard to his hand is the most just and necessary duty of the creature. Briefly: every chastisement should leave deep and permanent impressions upon us; the sense of God’s displeasure should make our hearts mournful and mollified, broken and contrite, that his will may be done by us on earth as it is in heaven.

USE 11. *Let us always preserve a humble dependence and firm hope on God for a blessed issue out of all our troubles.*—The support and tranquillity of the soul ariseth from hence. Christian patience “suffers all things,” as well as charity, being encouraged by a continual expectation of good from Him. Patience confirms all other graces, and is to the whole armour of God what the temper is to material weapons, that keeps them from breaking in the combat. Now to maintain a constant hope in affliction, it is necessary to consider the reason of the exhortation, as it is admirably amplified by the apostle.

1. *The relation God sustains when he afflicts believers.*—He is a Judge invested with the quality of a Father. The covenant of grace between God and Jesus Christ, our true David, contains this observable clause: “If thy children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.” (Psalm lxxxix. 30—32.) The love that ariseth from this relation, though

it cannot hate, yet it may be displeased, and chastise them for their follies. Moses tells the Israelites, "Thou shalt consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee." (Deut. viii. 5.) In children reason is not fully discluded; they are not capable to govern themselves, and are only taught with sensible pleasure or pain; so that a father is obliged to join correction with instruction to form them to virtue. This is so far from being inconsistent with paternal affection, that it is inseparable from it. For a parent to suffer a child to go on pleasantly in sin without due punishment, is pure cruelty, disguised under the mask of pity; for by the neglect of discipline he is confirmed in his vicious courses, and exposed to ruin. The apostle therefore adds, "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." As from the severest wrath he sometimes forbearth to strike, so from dearest love he afflicts. Humble believers, through a cloud of tears, may see the light of God's countenance; for, having elected them by special love to a glorious inheritance above, he dispenseth all things here in order to the preparing them for it, and all temporal evils as means are transformed into the nature of the end to which they are subservient; so that the sharpest sufferings are really from God's favour, since they are beneficial for our obtaining real happiness. The devil usually tempts men in a paradise of delights, to precipitate them into hell; God tries them in the furnace of afflictions, to purify and prepare them for heaven.

2. *It is a strong cordial against fainting to consider, that, by virtue of the paternal relation, "He scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."*—For no troubles are more afflictive and stinging, than those that are unexpected. Now when we are assured that there is no son whom the heavenly Father doth not chasten, we are less surprised and less troubled when we meet with crosses. Indeed there is hardly any kind of affliction that may befall us, but we have some instance in scripture of the saints suffering the same. Are we poor and mean in the world? We should consider that poverty with holiness is a divine complexion; Jesus Christ, the holy and beloved Son of God, had not where to lay his head. Are we under bodily distempers? Good Hezekiah was struck with an uncomfortable disease as to the quality of it; and Gaius had a flourishing soul in a languishing body. Are our dear relations taken away? Aaron and David lost some of their sons by terrible strokes. Are our spirits wounded with the sense of God's displeasure? Job and Heman were under strong terrors, yet the favourites of heaven. Briefly: how many, most dear to God, were called forth to extreme and bloody trials for the defence of the truth! How many deaths did they endure in one torment! how many torments in one death! Yet they were so far from fainting, that the more their pains were exasperated, the more their courage and joy were shining and conspicuous; as the face of the heavens is never more serene and clear, than when the sharpest north-wind blows. It is the apostle's inference: "Seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us run with patience the race that is set before us." This is further enforced by the following words: "If ye be without chastening, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons." (Heb. xii. 1, 8.) If God doth not vouchsafe us the mercy of his rod, it is evident we are not part of his fatherly care. The bramble is neglected, while the vine is cut till

it bleeds. It is a miserable privilege to be exempted from divine discipline, and by ease and prosperity to be corrupted and made fit for destruction. St. Austin * represents one expostulating with God: *O Deus, ista est justitia tua, ut mali floreant, et boni laborent?* "O God, is it righteous with thee that the wicked should prosper, and the good suffer?" *Dicis Deo, Ista est justitia tua? et Deus tibi, Ista est fides tua? Hæc enim tibi promisi, ad hoc Christianus factus es, ut in seculo isto flores, et in inferno postea torquereris?* "God replies to him, Is this your faith? Did I promise you temporal prosperity? Were you a Christian for this, that you might flourish in this world, and be miserably tormented in hell?"

3. *The apostle represents the special prerogative of God as "the Father of spirits."* (Verse 9.)—And so [He] hath a nearer claim to us "than the fathers of our flesh;" and that He is not liable to those imperfections that attend the earthly relations. "They for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure:" human love is a troubled, irregular passion, mixed with ignorance, and prone to error in the excess or defect. Sometimes parents are indulgent, and by a cruel compassion spare their children when they are faulty; sometimes they correct without cause; sometimes, when the reason is just, yet they err in the manner or measure of the correction, so that their children are discouraged. But in God there is a perfect union of wisdom and love, of discretion and tenderness; his affection is without the least imperfection, his will is always guided by infinite wisdom. If his children offend, he will chastise them "with the rod of men," (2 Sam. vii. 14,) that is, moderately; for as in scripture things are magnified by the epithet "divine," or "of God," so they are lessened by the epithet "human." Accordingly the apostle declares to the Corinthians, that no temptation had befallen them, but what was "common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (1 Cor. x. 13.) As a prudent physician consults the strength of the patient as well as the quality of the disease, and proportions his medicine; so all the bitter ingredients, their mixture and measure, are dispensed by the wise prescription of God, according to the degrees of strength that are in his people.

4. *The apostle specifies the immediate end of God in his chastenings:* "But he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness." (Verse 10.)—This is the supreme excellency of the divine nature; and our conformity to it is so valuable, that it renders afflictions not only tolerable, but so far desirable as they contribute to it. In the present state our graces are imperfect, and our conformity to the divine purity is like the resemblance of the sun in a watery cloud,—very much beneath the perfection and radiation of that great light. Now, God is pleased to fashion us according to his image by afflictions, as a statue is cut by the artificer, to bring it into a beautiful form. He is pleased to bring us into divers temptations, to try our faith, to work in us patience, to inflame our prayers, to mortify our carnal desires, to break those voluntary bands whereby we are fettered to the earth, that we may

* In Psalm xxxv.

live with those afflictions wherewith others die. And certainly, if we make a true judgment of things, we have not the least cause to suspect the love of God, when he chastises us to take away sin, the only abominable object of his hatred and deep detestation, and to render us partakers of the divine nature; and the present "peaceable fruit of righteousness" is the product in those who are duly exercised by their troubles. It is an allusion to the reward of the conquerors in the Olympic games, who had a crown of olives, the emblem and shadow of peace; but true peace, a divine calm in the conscience, shall be the recompence of all that exercise the graces suitable to an afflicted state. In short, the apostle assures believers, that they are chastened of the Lord, to prevent their condemnation with the world. (1 Cor. xi. 32.) It is this rod that truly delivers them from hell; it is this consideration that changes thorns into roses, and extracts honey out of wormwood. If the way be stony or flowery that leads to blessedness, a Christian should willingly walk in it. To conclude: from the consideration of what the scripture declares concerning temporal evils, let us "lift-up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for our feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed;" that is, in our affliction let us take courage and resolution from the promises, and live in a holy conformity to God's will, that the weak or faint may be restored.

The first and last lesson of pagan philosophy was to support men under the storms to which they are liable in this open state; to render the soul *velut pelagi rupes immota*, "as a rock unshaken by the waves:" but all their directions were unsuccessful, and so could not secure them from impatience or despair. But the gospel, that assures us of the love of God in sending afflictions for our spiritual and eternal good, is alone able to compose the mind; and whenever we faint in troubles, it is either from infidelity or inconsideration. It is impossible a person should be a Christian, and be incapable of comfort in the most afflicted state; for we are really so by the Holy Spirit, who is the Comforter. When we speak sometimes to those we judge infirm, we speak to infidels, who only receive remedy from time, which they ought to receive from faith. They have the name of God only in their mouths, but the world is in their hearts; their passions are strong and obstinate, not subject to sanctified reason. The difficulty they have of being comforted, discovers the necessity of their being afflicted; they need conversion more than consolation. Others, who are sincere in the faith, yet are apt to faint under troubles, from an error like that of the apostles: when their Lord came upon the waters in a stormy, tempestuous night to their assistance, they thought he was a spirit; so *they* look on God as an enemy, when he comes to sanctify and save them. The sovereign remedy of our sorrows is, to correct the judgment of sense by a serious belief of God's promise: thus we shall reconcile the roughness of his hand with the sweetness of his voice. He calls to us from heaven in the darkest night, "It is I; be not afraid:" he corrects us with the heart and hand of a father. A due consideration of these things will produce a glorified joy in the midst of our sufferings: "Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." (Rom. xv. 4.)

SERMON XXVIII.

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HOW WE MAY BRING OUR HEARTS TO BEAR REPROOFS.

Let the righteous smite me ; it shall be a kindness : and let him reprove me ; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head : for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities.—Psalm cxli. 5.

It is generally agreed by expositors, that this psalm, as that foregoing, with two of those that follow, were composed by David in the time of his banishment or flight from the court of Saul. The state wherein he describeth himself to have been, the matter of his pleas and prayers contained in them, with sundry express circumstances regarding that season and his condition therein, do manifest *that* to have been the time of their composure. That the Psalmist was now in some distress, whereof he was deeply sensible, is evident from that vehemency of his spirit, which he expresseth in the re-iteration of his request or supplication ; (verse 1 ;) and by his desire, that his prayer might come before the Lord “ as incense, and the lifting-up of his hands as the evening sacrifice.” (Verse 2.) The Jewish expositors guess, not improbably, that in that allusion he had regard unto his present exclusion from the holy services of the tabernacle, which in other places he deeply complains of.

For the matter of his prayer in this beginning of the psalm, (for I shall not look beyond the text,) it respecteth himself, and his deportment under his present condition ; which he desireth may be harmless and holy, becoming himself and useful unto others. And whereas he was two ways liable to miscarry,—First, by too high an exasperation of spirit against his oppressors and persecutors ; and, Secondly, by a fraudulent and pusillanimous compliance with them in their wicked courses ; which are the two extremes that men are apt sinfully to run into in such conditions,—he prays earnestly to be delivered from them both. The first he hath respect unto, verse 3 : “ Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth ; keep the door of my lips ; ” namely, that he might not, under those great provocations which were given him, break forth into an unseemly intemperance of speech against his unjust oppressors, which sometimes fierce and unreasonable cruelties will wrest from very sedate and moderate spirits. But it was the desire of this holy Psalmist, as in like cases it should be ours, that his heart might be always preserved in such a frame, under the conduct of the Spirit of God, as not to be surprised into an expression of distempered passion in any of his words or sayings. The other he regards in his earnest supplication to be delivered from it, verse 4 : “ Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity : and let me not eat of their dainties.”

There are two parts of his request unto the purpose intended : 1. That, by the power of God's grace influencing his mind and soul, his heart might not be inclined unto any communion or society with his wicked adversaries in their wickedness. 2. That he might be preserved from a liking of, or a longing after, those things which are the baits and allurements whereby men are apt to be drawn into societies and conspiracies with the workers of iniquity : "And let me not eat of their dainties." (See Prov. i. 10—14.) For he here describeth the condition of men prospering for a season in a course of wickedness : they *first* jointly give-up themselves unto the practice of iniquity ; and *then* together solace themselves in those satisfactions of their lusts which their power and interest in the world do furnish them withal. These are "the dainties" of which an impotent longing and desire do betray the minds of unstable persons unto a compliance with ways of sin and folly ; for I look on these "dainties" to comprise whatever "the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, or the pride of life," can afford. All these David prays to be delivered from any inclination unto ; especially when they are made the allurements of a course of sin. In the enjoyment of these "dainties," it is the common practice of wicked men to soothe-up, approve of, and mutually encourage, one another in the way and course wherein they are engaged ; and this completes that goodly felicity which in this world so many aspire unto, and whereof alone they are capable. The whole of it is but a society in perishing, sensual enjoyments, without control, and with mutual applauses from one another.

This the Psalmist had a special regard unto ; who casting his eye toward another communion and society which he longed after, (verse 5,) that in the first place presents itself unto him which is most opposite unto those mutual applauses and rejoicings in one another which are the salt and cement of all evil societies ; namely, rebukes and reproofs for the least miscarriages that shall be observed. Now whereas the dainties which some enjoy in a course of prosperous wickedness, are that alone which seems to have any thing in it amongst them that is desirable, and on the other side rebukes and reproofs are those alone which seem to have any sharpness, or matter of uneasiness and dislike in the society of the godly ; David balanceth that which seemeth to be sharpest in the one society, against that which seems to be sweetest in the other, and, without respect unto other advantages, prefers the one above the other. Hence some read the beginning of the words, "Let the righteous *rather* smite me," with respect unto this comparison and balance.

"Let the righteous smite me ; *it shall be* a kindness : and let him reprove me ; *it shall be* an excellent oil, *which* shall not break my head : for yet my prayer also *shall be* in their calamities." The view of our translation will evidence the words to be elliptical in the original, by the various supplements which we make to fill up the sense of them, and render them coherent ; and this hath put some difficulty on the interpretation of the text, and caused some variety of apprehensions in sober and learned expositors. It is not unto my present purpose to engage into a discussion of all the difficulties of the text, seeing I design to found no other doctrine thereon than what all will acknowledge to be contained in the words and their coherence. I shall

only, therefore, briefly open them, with respect unto our present purpose and its concernment in them.

צַדִּיק—יְחַלְמֵנִי צַדִּיק הָקֵד : “The righteous,” is any one opposed to the workers of iniquity, (verse 4,) any righteous person whatever, any one who is of the society and communion of the righteous ones; for all the world falls under this distribution, as it will one day appear. “Let him smite me:” the word הָקֵד is seldom used in the scripture but to signify a severe stroke which shakes the subject smitten, and causeth it to tremble; see Prov. xxiii. 35; 1 Sam. xiv. 16; Psalm lxxiv. 6; and it is used for the stroke of the hammer on the anvil in fashioning of the iron, Isai. xli. 7. Wherefore the word הָקֵד following may be taken adverbially, as a lenitive of that severity which this word importeth: “Let him smite me, but” *leniter, benignè, misericorditer*, “gently, kindly, friendly, mercifully:” and so some translations read the words: “Let the righteous smite me friendly, or kindly.”

But there is no need to wrest the word to such an unusual sense; for the Psalmist intends to show, that, so he may be delivered from the society of ungodly men, and enjoy the communion of the righteous, he would not deprecate the greatest severities, which according to rule might be exercised in rebuking or reproving of him. And this he doth with so full a satisfaction of mind, with such a high valuation of the advantage he should have thereby, that he says not he would bear it patiently and quietly, but הָקֵד “It will be unto me a benignity, a mercy, a kindness,” as the word imports. And as it seems that some reproofs, at least some regular dealings of righteous persons with us, may come as a stroke that makes us shake and tremble; so it is a good advance in spiritual wisdom, to find out kindness and mercy in those that are so grievous unto our natural spirits, unto flesh and blood.

יְיָ יִכְּרֵמֵנִי “And let him reprove me.” This manifests what he intends by “smiting” in the foregoing words: it is reproofs that he intends; and these he calls “smiting,” in opposition unto the flattering compliance of wicked men with one another in the enjoyment of their “dainties,” and with respect unto that smart unto the mind and affections wherewith some of them are sometimes accompanied. But this word, directly expressing that subject-matter whereof I intend to treat, must be again spoken unto.

שֶׁמֶן רֹאשׁ אֶל־יָדַי רֹאשׁ־י These words have a double interpretation; for they may be either deprecatory of an evil implied, or declaratory of the Psalmist’s sense of the good he desired. Kimchi on the place observes, that his father Joseph divided the words of the text, and began here a new sense, wherein the Psalmist returns unto the close of the fourth verse: “Let me not eat of their dainties; and let not their precious oil,” that is, their flatteries and soothings in sin, “break my head: but let the reproofs of the righteous preserve me.” And this sense is followed by the Vulgar Latin: *Oleum autem peccatorum non impingat caput meum*. But the other construction and sense of the words is more natural: שֶׁמֶן רֹאשׁ *oleum capitis*, “the oil of the head,” we render “an excellent oil;” and countenance may be given unto that interpretation from Exod. xxx. 23, where בְּשֵׂמֵי רֹאשׁ “spices of the head,” is well rendered “principal spices.” But I rather think that שֶׁמֶן עַל רֹאשׁ “oil poured on the

head," which was the manner of all solemn unctions, is intended. This being a great privilege, and the token of the communication of great mercy, the Psalmist compares the rebukes of the righteous thereunto; and therefore he adds אֶל-יְיָ רִאשׁוֹ "It shall not break my head." Considering reproofs in their own nature, he calls them "amittings;" some of them being very sharp, as it is needful they should be, where we are obliged to rebuke *αποτομως*, "in a piercing and cutting manner." (2 Cor. xiii. 10; Titus i. 13.) But with respect unto their use, benefit, and advantage, they are like unto that anointing oil which, being poured on the head, was both gentle and pleasant, and a pledge of the communication of spiritual privileges, whence no inconveniences would ensue.

The last clause of the words belonging not unto our present design, I shall not insist on their explication. Some few things must be further premised unto our principal intention, concerning the nature of those reproofs which are proposed as a matter of such advantage in the text. And,

1. The word יָכַח here used, signifieth "to argue, to dispute, to contend in judgment," as well as "to reprove, rebuke, or reprehend." Its first signification is "to argue, or to plead a cause with arguments." Hence it is used as a common term between God and man, denoting the reasons real or pretended only on the one side and the other. So God himself speaks unto his people וְיִנְבְּחָהּ לְכוּ-נָא וְיִנְבְּחָהּ "Go to now, and let us plead, reason, or argue together;" (Isai. i. 18;) and Job calls his "pleas or argument" in prayer unto God הוֹדָחוֹת "I would fill my mouth with arguments." (Job xxiii. 4.) Wherefore that only hath the true nature of a reproof which is accompanied with reasons and arguments for the evincing of what it tends unto. Rash, groundless, wrathful, precipitate censures and rebukes are evil in themselves, and, in our present case, of no consideration; nor indeed ought any one to engage in the management of reproofs, who is not furnished with rule and argument to evince their necessity, and render them effectual. Sometimes things may be so circumstanced as that a reproof shall so carry its own reason and efficacious conviction along with it as that there will be no need of arguing or pleas to make it useful. So the look of our blessed Saviour on Peter, under the circumstances of his case, was a sufficient reproof, though he spake not one word in its confirmation. But, ordinarily, cogent reasons are the best conveyances of reproofs to the minds of men, be they of what sort they will.

2. *Reproofs do always respect a fault, an evil, a miscarriage, or a sin in them that are reprov'd.*—There may be mutual admonitions and exhortations among Christians with respect unto sundry things in the course of their faith and obedience, without a regard unto any evil or miscarriage. The general nature of a reproof is an admonition or exhortation; but it hath its special nature from its regard unto a fault in course, or particular fact. And hence the word signifies also "to chastise;" wherein is a correction for, and the means of a recovery from, a miscarriage: (2 Sam. vii. 14:) "I will reprove him with the rod of men," that is, "chastise him." This, therefore, is that reproof which we intend,—a warning, admonition, or exhortation given unto any, whereby they are rebuked for and with respect unto some moral evil or sin in their course, way, prac-

tice, or any particular miscarriage, such as may render them obnoxious unto divine displeasure or chastisement ; for it is essential unto a regular reproof, that, in him who gives it, it may be accompanied with, or do proceed from, an apprehension that the person reproved is by the matter of the reproof rendered obnoxious unto the displeasure of God.

3. *It may also be considered, that reproving is not left arbitrarily unto the wills of men.*—Whatever seems to be so, it loseth its nature, if it be not a duty in him who reproves, and will come short of its efficacy. No wise man will reprove, but when it is his duty so to do, unless he design the just reproach of a busy-body for his reward. The command is general with respect unto brother and neighbour, Lev. xix. 17 : “Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart : thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.” But as to the particular discharge of this work as a duty, there must be either an especial office, or an especial relation, or a concurrence of circumstances, for its warranty. God hath in his wisdom and care given rules and bounds unto our engagement unto duties ; without a regulation whereby, we shall wander in them with endless dissatisfactions unto ourselves, and unnecessary provocations unto others. But the duty of reproving, with the love, wisdom, tenderness, and compassion required in the discharge of it, its motives, ends, and circumstances, its proper rules and limitations, fall not under my present consideration ; but these things in general were necessary to be premised unto what do so.

That which the text instructs us in may be comprised in this general observation : *Reproofs, though accompanied with some sharpness, if rightly received and duly improved, are a mercy and advantage incomparably above all the satisfactions which a joint consent with others in sin and pleasures can afford.*

The latter part of the proposition I have mentioned only to express the balance that is proposed by the Psalmist, between the best and most desirable advantages of wicked society on the one hand, and the sharpest or most displeasing severities that accompany the communion of the righteous or godly. But I shall not at all handle the comparison, as designing only some directions how men should behave themselves under reproofs, that they may be a kindness and an excellent oil unto them : or how they may by them obtain spiritual benefit and advantage unto their own souls. And this, however at present the matter may be managed, is of itself of great importance : for as, in the state of weakness and imperfection, of mistakes and miscarriages, wherein we are, there is no outward help or aid of more use and advantage unto us than seasonable reproofs ; so, in the right receiving and improving of them, as high a trial of the spirits of men, as to their interest in wisdom and folly, doth consist, as in any thing that doth befall them, or wherewith they may be exercised. For as “scorners of reproofs,” those that hear them unwillingly, that bear them haughtily and impatiently, with designs of revenge or disdainful retortions, have the characters of pride and folly indelibly fixed on them by the Holy Ghost ; so their due admission and improvement is in the same infallible truth represented as an evident pledge of wisdom, and an effectual means of its increase. This is so much and so frequently insisted on in that great treasure of all wisdom,

spiritual, natural, and political, namely, the Book of Proverbs, that it is altogether needless to call-over any particular testimonies unto that purpose.

Two things we are to inquire into, in compliance with our present design: I. *How reproofs may be duly received.* II. *How they may be duly improved*: whereunto the reasons shall be added *Why they ought so to be.*

I. *That we may receive reproofs in a due manner*, three things are to be considered: (I.) *The general qualification of the reprover*: (II.) *The nature of the reproof*: and, (III.) *The matter of it.*

(I.) *The Psalmist here desires that his reprover may be a righteous man.*—"Let the righteous smite me: let him reprove me." To give and take reproofs is a dictate of the law of nature, whereby every man is obliged to seek the good of others, and to promote it according to their ability and opportunity. The former is directed by that love which is due unto others, the latter by that which is due unto ourselves; which two are the great rules, and give measure to the duties of all societies, whether civil or spiritual. Wherefore it doth not evacuate a reproof, or discharge him who is reprov'd from the duty of attending unto it, that he by whom it is managed is not righteous, yea, is openly wicked; for, the duty itself being an effect of the law of nature, it is the same, for the substance of it, by whomsoever it is performed. Yea, oft-times such moral, or rather immoral, qualifications as render not only the reprover less considerable, but also the reproof itself, until thoroughly weighed and examined, obnoxious unto prejudicate conceptions, do occasion a greater and more signal exercise of grace and wisdom in him that is reprov'd, than would have been stirred up, had all things concurred unto the exact regularity of the reproof. However, it is desirable on many accounts that he who reprov's be himself a righteous person, and be of us esteemed so to be; for as such an one alone will or can have a due sense of the evil reprov'd, with a right principle and end in the discharge of his own duty, so the minds of them that are reprov'd are, by their sense of his integrity, excluded from those insinuations of evasions which prejudices and suggestions of just causes of reflections on their reprover will offer unto them. Especially, without the exercise of singular wisdom and humility, will all the advantages of a just reproof be lost, where the allowed practice of greater sins and evils than that reprov'd is daily chargeable on the reprover. Hence is that reflection of our Saviour on the useless, hypocritical diligence of men in pulling the mote out of their brother's eyes, whilst they have beams in their own. (Matt. vii. 3—5.) The rule in this case is: If the reprover be a righteous person, consider the reprover first, and then the reproof; if he be otherwise, consider the reproof, and the reprover not at all.

(II.) *The nature of a reproof* is also to be considered.—And this is threefold; for every reproof is either *authoritative*, or *fraternal*, or *merely friendly and occasional*.

1. *Authoritative reproofs* are either, (1.) *Ministerial*, or, (2.) *Parental*, or, (3.) *Despotical*.

(1.) There is an especial authority accompanying *ministerial reproofs*, which we ought especially to consider and improve.—Now I understand

not hereby those doctrinal reproofs, when, in the dispensation of that word of grace and truth which is "profitable for correction and reproof," (2 Tim. iii. 16,) they "speak, and exhort, and rebuke" the sins of men "with all authority;" (Titus ii. 15;) but the occasional application of the word unto individual persons, upon their unanswerableness in any thing unto the truth wherein they have been instructed. For every right reproof is but the orderly application of a rule of truth unto any person under his miscarriage, for his healing and recovery. Where, therefore, a minister of the gospel in the preaching of the word doth declare and teach the rule of holy obedience with ministerial authority, if any of the flock committed to his charge shall appear in any thing to walk contrary thereunto, or to have transgressed it in any offensive instance; as it is his duty, the discharge whereof will be required of him at the great day, particularly to apply the truth unto them in the way of private, personal reproof; so he is still therein accompanied with his ministerial authority, which makes his reproof to be of a peculiar nature, and as such to be accounted for. For as he is thus commanded as a minister to exhort, rebuke, admonish, and reprove every one of his charge as occasion shall require, so in the doing of it he doth discharge and exercise his ministerial office and power. And he that is wise will forego no considerations that may give efficacy unto a just and due reproof; especially not such an one as, if it be neglected, will not only be an aggravation of the evil for which he is reprov'd, but will also accumulate his guilt with a contempt of the authority of Jesus Christ. Wherefore the rule here is: The more clear and evident the representation of the authority of Christ is in the reproof, the more diligent ought we to be in our attendance unto it and compliance with it. He is the great Reprover of his church; (Rev. iii. 19;) all the use, power, authority, and efficacy of ecclesiastical reproofs flow originally and are derived from him. In ministerial reproofs there is the most express and immediate application of his authority made unto the minds of men; which if it be carelessly slighted, or proudly despised, or evacuated by perverse cavillings, as is the manner of some in such cases, it is an open evidence of a heart that never yet sincerely took upon it his law and yoke.

These things are spoken of the *personal* reproofs that are given by ministers, principally unto those of their respective flocks, as occasion doth require; wherein I shall pray, that our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of the sheep, would yet make us all more faithful and diligent, as the season wherein we live doth abundantly require it. But, moreover, church-censures, in admonition and excommunication, have the nature and ends of ministerial reproofs. But the handling of their nature and use, with the duties of those persons who justly fall under them, and the benefit which they may reap thereby, is too long and large a subject to be here diverted unto.

(2.) Authoritative reproof is *parental*.—Reproof is indeed one of the greatest and most principal duties of parents toward children, and without which all others for the most part do but pamper them unto slaughter and ruin. Neglect hereof is that which hath filled us with so many Hophnis, Phineases, and Absaloms, whose outrageous wickednesses are directly charged on the sinful lenity and neglect in this matter even of

godly parents. And indeed, whereas some parents are openly vicious and debauched even in the sight of their children, in a sensual neglect and contempt of the light of nature, whereby they lose all their authority in reproof, as well as all care about it; and whereas the most have so little regard unto sin as sin, whilst things are tolerably well in outward concerns, that they neglect the reproof of it as such; and many, through a foolish, contemptible prevalency of fond affection, will take no notice of the sinful follies, extravagancies, and miscarriages of their children, until all things grow desperate with them; but soothe-up and applaud them in such effects of pride, vanity, and wantonness, as ought to be most severely reprov'd in them: the woful and dreadful degeneracy of the age wherein we live owes itself much unto the horrible neglect of parents in this duty. That parental reproof is a duty taught by the law of nature, confirmed in the scripture, enjoined under severe threatenings and penalties, exemplified in instances of blessings and vengeance on its performance or neglect, rendered indispensably necessary by that deprivation of our natures which works in children from the womb, and grows up in strength and efficacy together with them,—I should not need to prove, if it lay directly before me, it being a matter of universal acknowledgment. I shall only say, that whereas there is on many accounts an immediate impress of divine authority on parental reproofs, that which children ought to consider and know for themselves is, that a continuance in the neglect or contempt of them is a token that seldom fails of approaching temporal and eternal destruction. (Prov. xxx. 17.)

(3.) Authoritative reproof is *despotic*.—Namely, that of governors, rulers, and masters of families. This also partakes of the nature of those foregoing; and being a duty founded in the law of nature, as well as enforced by positive divine commands, casts a peculiar obligation to obedience on them that are so reprov'd. And where servants regard not sober and Christian reproofs as the ordinance of God for their good, they lose the advantages of their condition, and may be looked upon as unsanctified sufferers in a state of bondage, which hath an especial character of the first curse upon it.

2. *Reproof is fraternal*.—Or such as is mutual between the members of the same church, by virtue of that especial relation wherein they stand, and the obligation thence arising unto mutual watchfulness over each other, with admonitions, exhortations, and reproofs. As this is peculiarly appointed by our Saviour, (Matt. xviii. 15,) in confirmation of the ordinance in the church of the Jews to that purpose, (Lev. xix. 17,) and confirmed by many precepts and directions in the New Testament; (Rom. xv. 14; 1 Thess. v. 14; Heb. iii. 12, 13; xii. 15, 16;) so the neglect of it is that which hath lost us, not only the benefit, but also the very nature, of church-societies. Wherefore, our improvement of rebukes in this kind depends much on a due consideration of that duty and love from whence they do proceed; for this we are by the royal law of charity obliged unto the belief of, where there is not open evidence unto the contrary. And whereas, it may be, those things for which we may be thus reprov'd, are not of the greatest importance in themselves; who that is wise will, by the neglect of the reproof itself, contract the

open guilt of contemning the wisdom, love, and care of Christ in the institution of this ordinance?

3. And, lastly : *Reproofs are friendly or occasional.*—Such as may be administered and managed by any persons, as reasons and opportunities require, from the common principle of universal love unto mankind, especially toward them that are of the household of faith. These also, having in them the entire nature of reproofs, will fall under all the ensuing directions, which have a general respect thereunto. If, then, we would duly make use of and improve unto our advantage the reproofs that may be given us, we are seriously to consider the nature of them, with respect unto those by whom they are managed ; for all the things we have mentioned are suited to influence our minds unto a regard of them and compliance with them.

(III.) *The matter of a reproof* is duly to be weighed by him who designs any benefit thereby. And the first consideration of it is, whether it be *true* or *false*. I shall not carry them unto more minute distribution, of the substance and circumstances of the matter intended, of the whole or part of it ; but do suppose that, from some principal consideration of it, every reproof, as to its matter, may be denominated and esteemed true or false. And here our own consciences, with due application unto the rule, are the proper judge and umpire. Conscience, if any way enlightened from the word, will give an impartial sentence concerning the guilt or innocence of the person, with respect unto the matter of a reproof ; and there can be no more infallible evidence of a miscarriage in such a condition, than when pride, or passion, or prejudice, or any corrupt affection, can either outbrave or stifle that compliance with a just reproof which conscience will assuredly tender. (Rom. ii. 14, 15.)

1. If a reproof, as to the matter of it, be *false* or unjust, and so judged in an unbiassed conscience, it may be considered *in matter of right*, and *of fact*. In the first case the matter may be true, and yet the reproof formally false and evil. In the latter the matter may be false, and yet the reproof an acceptable duty.

(1.) *A reproof is false in matter of right, or formally, when we are reproofed for that as evil which is indeed our duty to perform.*—So David was fiercely reproofed by his brother Eliab for coming unto the battle against the Philistines, ascribing it to his pride and the naughtiness of his heart : whereunto he only replied, “What have I now done? Is there not a cause?” (1 Sam. xvii. 28, 29.) And Peter rebuked our Lord Jesus Christ himself for declaring the doctrine of the cross. (Mark viii. 32.) And so we may be reproofed for the principal duties that God requireth of us ; and if men were as free in reproofing as they are in reproaching, we should not escape from daily rebukes for whatever we do in the worship of God. Now, though such reproofs generally may be looked on as temptations, and so to be immediately rejected, as they were in the cases instanced in ; yet may they sometimes, where they proceed from love and are managed with moderation, be considered as necessary cautions to look heedfully unto the grounds and reasons we proceed upon in the duties opposed, at which others do take offence.

(2.) *If the reproof be false in matter of fact*, wherein that is charged

on us and reprov'd in us whereof we are no wise guilty, three things are to be considered, that it may not be unuseful unto us :—

First. *The circumstances of the reprover* ; as, (1.) Whether he do proceed on *some probable mistake* ; or, (2.) *Credulity and easiness in taking up reports* ; or, (3.) On *evil, groundless surmises of his own* ; or, (4.) From a *real godly jealousy, which hath been imposed on, as easily it will be, by some appearances of truth*. Without a due consideration of these things, we shall never know how to carry it aright towards them by whom we are reprov'd for that whereof we are not guilty.

Secondly. Consider aright *the difference between a reproof and a reproach*.—For they may be both false alike, and that whereof we are reprov'd have no more truth in it than that wherewith we are reproach'd. Yea, we may be honestly reprov'd for that which is false, and wickedly reproach'd with that which is true ; so Augustine calls the language of the maid unto his mother about drinking of wine *durum convicium*, [“a hard and unjust reproach,”] though the matter of it were true enough. But a reproach is the acting of a mind designing of and rejoicing in evil : unto a reproof it is essential that it spring from love. “Whom I love, I rebuke,” is the absolute rule of these things. Let a man rebuke another, though for that which indeed is false, if it be in love, it is a reproof ; but let him rebuke another, though for that which is true, if it be from a mind delighting in evil, it is a reproach ; and if it be false, it is moreover a calumny.

Thirdly. When a man in such cases is fully justified by the testimony of his own conscience, bearing witness unto his integrity and innocency, yet may he greatly miscarry under the occasion, if he attend not diligently unto his own spirit, which most men judge to be set at the utmost liberty under such injurious provocations as they esteem them. Wherefore, *to keep our minds unto sedate, Christian moderation in such cases, and that we may not lose the advantage of what is befallen us, we ought immediately to apply them unto such other duties as the present occasion doth require : as,*

(i.) *To search our own hearts and ways, whether we have not indeed upon us the guilt of some greater evils than that which is falsely charged on us, or for which we are reprov'd on mistake*.—And if it appear so upon examination, we shall quickly see what little reason we have to tumultuate and rise up with indignation against the charge we suffer under. And may we not thence see much of the wisdom and goodness of God, who suffereth us to be exercised with what we can bear-off with the impenetrable shield of a good conscience, whilst he graciously hides and covers those greater evils of our hearts, with respect whereunto we cannot but condemn ourselves ?

(ii.) *To consider that it is not of ourselves that we are not guilty of the evil suspected and charged*.—No man of sobriety can on any mistake reprove us for any thing, be it never so false, but that it is merely of sovereign grace that we have not indeed contracted the guilt of it ; and humble thankfulness unto God on this occasion for his real preserving grace will abate the edge and take off the fierceness of our indignation against men for their supposed injurious dealings with us.

(iii.) *Such reproofs, if there be not open malice and continued wicked-*

ness manifest in them, are to be looked on as gracious providential warnings to take heed lest at any time we should be truly overtaken with that which at present we are falsely charged withal.—We little know the dangers that continually attend us, the temptations wherewith we may be surprised at unawares, nor how near on their account we may be unto any sin or evil which we judge ourselves most remote from and least obnoxious unto. Neither on the other hand can we readily understand the ways and means whereby the holy, wise God issueth forth those hidden provisions of preventing grace which are continually administered for our preservation; and no wise man, who understands any thing of the deceitfulness of his own heart, with the numberless numbers of invisible occasions of sin wherewith he is encompassed continually, but will readily embrace such reproofs as providential warnings unto watchfulness in those things whereof before he was not aware.

Fourthly. When the mind by these considerations is rendered sedate, and weighed unto Christian moderation, *then ought a man in such cases patiently and peaceably to undertake the defence of his innocency, and his own vindication.*—And herein also there is need of much wisdom and circumspection; it being a matter of no small difficulty for a man duly to manage self and innocency, both which are apt to influence us unto some more than ordinary vehemency of spirit. But the directions which might, and indeed ought to, be given under all these particular heads, would by no means be confined unto the limits fixed to this discourse.

(3.) If the *matter of the reproof be true in fact*, then it is duly to be considered, whether the offence for which any one is reprovèd be *private* or *public*, attended with scandal.

(i.) If it be *private*, then it is to be weighed, whether it was known unto and observed in and by the person himself reprovèd, or no, before he was so reprovèd. If it were *not so known*, (as we may justly be reprovèd for many things, which, through ignorance, or inadvertency, or compliance with the customs of the world, we may have taken no notice of,) and if the reproof bring along light and conviction with it, the first especial improvement of such a peculiar reproof is thankfulness to God for it, as a means of deliverance from any way, or work, or path that was unacceptable in his sight. And hence a great prospect may be taken of the following deportment of the mind under other reproofs; for a readiness to take in light and conviction with respect unto any evil that we are ignorant of, is an evidence of a readiness to submit to the authority of God in any other rebukes that have their convictions going before them. So the heart that is prone to fortify itself by any pleas or pretences against convictions of sin, in what it doth not yet own so to be, will be as prone unto obstinacy under reproofs in what it cannot but acknowledge to be evil. If it were *known before* to the person reprovèd, but not supposed by him to be observed by others, under the covert of which imagination sin often countenanceth itself; that soul will never make a due improvement of a reproof, who is not first sensible of the care and kindness of God in driving him from that retreat and hold where the interest of sin had placèd its chiefest reserve.

(ii.) Sins, so far *public* as to give matter of offence or scandal, are the ordinary subject of all orderly reproofs, and therefore need not in particular to be spoken unto.

II. Having showed the nature of reproofs in general, with such considerations of the matter of them as have afforded occasion unto sundry particular directions relating unto the duty under discussion, it remains only that we farther explain and confirm the two generals comprised in the observation deduced from the text ; namely, (I.) *Why we ought to receive reproofs orderly or regularly given unto us, esteeming of them as a singular privilege* : and, (II.) *How we may duly improve them unto their proper end,—the glory of God, and the spiritual advantage of our own souls.*

(I.) As to the first of these we may observe,

1. *That mutual reproofs for the curing of evil and preventing of danger in one another, are prime dictates of the law of nature and that obligation, which our participation in the same being, offspring, original, and end, to seek the good of each other, doth lay upon us.*—This God designed in our creation, and this the rational constitution of our natures directs us unto. To seek and endeavour for each other all that good whereof we are capable in time or unto eternity, was indelibly implanted upon our natures, and indispensably necessary unto that society among ourselves, with the great end of our joint living unto God, for which we were made. All the mutual evils of mankind, whether of persons or of nations, designed or perpetrated against one another, are effects of our fatal prevarication from the law of our creation. Hence Cain, the first open violent transgressor of the rules and bounds of human society, thought to justify or excuse himself by a renunciation of that principle which God in nature had made the foundation of a political or sociable life with respect unto temporal and eternal ends : “Am I,” saith he, “my brother’s keeper?” (Gen. iv. 9.) Yea, God had made every man the keeper of his brother, so far as that they should in all things, in their opportunities and unto their power, seek their good and deliverance from evil. In those things which are good unto us, those which are spiritual and eternal have the pre-eminence. These nothing can prejudice but sin and mortal evils, whose prevention, therefore, in one another, so far as we are able, is a duty of the law of nature, and the prime effect of that love which we owe unto the whole offspring of that “one blood” whereof God hath made all nations. And one of the most effectual means for that end are the reproofs whereof we treat ; and the obligation is the same on those that give them, and those to whom they are given, with respect unto their several interests in this duty. Wherefore, to neglect, to despise, not thankfully to receive such reproofs as are justly and regularly given unto us at any time, is to contemn the law of our creation, and to trample on the prime effect of fraternal love. Yea, to despise reproofs, and to discountenance the discharge of that duty, is to open a door unto that mutual hatred and dislike which in the sight of God is murder. (See Lev. xix. 17 ; with 1 John iii. 15.) Let us therefore look to ourselves : for there is no greater sign of a degeneracy from the law and all the ends of our creation, than an unwillingness to receive reproofs justly deserved and regularly administered, or not to esteem of them as a blessed effect of the wisdom and goodness of God toward us.

2. *Whereas the light of nature is variously obscured and its directive power debilitated in us, God hath renewed on us an obligation unto this*

duty by particular institutions, both under the Old Testament and the New.—The truth is, the efficacy of the law of creation as unto moral duties being exceedingly impaired by the entrance of sin, and the exercise of original, native love toward mankind being impeded and obstructed by that confusion and disorder whereinto the whole state of mankind was cast by sin; every one thereby being made the enemy of another, (as the apostle declares, Titus iii. 3,) not being cured by that coalescency into civil societies which respects only political and temporal ends; the discharge of this duty was utterly lost, at least beyond that which was merely parental. Wherefore God, in the institution of his church, both under the Old Testament and the New, did mould men into such peculiar societies and relations, as wherein way might be made meet again for the exercise thereof. He hath so disposed of us, that every one may know every one whom he is obliged to reprove, and every one may know every one whom he is obliged to hear. And as he hath hereby cured that confusion we were cast into, which was obstructive of the exercise of this duty; so by the renovation of positive commands, attended with instructions, directions, promises, and threatenings, enforcing the giving and receiving of reproofs with respect unto moral and spiritual ends, he hath relieved us against that obscurity of natural light which we before laboured under. Should I go to express the commands, directions, exhortations, promises, and threatenings, which are given in the scripture to this purpose, it would be a work as endless as I suppose it needless to all that are conversant in the holy writings. It may suffice unto our present purpose, that, there being an express institution of God for the giving and taking of reproofs, and *that* an effect of infinite goodness, benignity, and love toward us; not thankfully to receive reproofs, when it is our lot to deserve them and to have them, is to despise the authority of God over us and his gracious care for us. When, therefore, it befalleth any to be justly and orderly reproved, let him call to mind the authority and love of God therein, which will quickly give him that sense of their worth and excellency as will make him thankful for them, which is the first step unto their due improvement.

3. *A due consideration of the use, benefit, and advantage of them, will give them a ready admission into our minds and affections.*—Who knows how many souls, that are now at rest with God, have been prevented by reproofs, as the outward means, from going down into the pit? Unto how many have they been an occasion of conversion and sincere turning unto God! How many have been recovered by them from a state of backsliding, and awakened from a secure sleep in sin! How many great and bloody sins hath the perpetration of been obviated by them! How many snares of temptations have they been the means to break and cancel! What revivings have they been to grace, what disappointments unto the snares of Satan, who can declare? The advantage which the souls of men do or might receive every day by them, is more to be valued than all earthly treasures whatever; and shall any of us, when it comes to be our concern, through a predominancy of pride, passion, and prejudice, or through cursed sloth and security, the usual means of the defeatment of these advantages, manifest ourselves to have no interest in or valuation of these things, by an unreadiness or unwillingness to receive reproofs,

when tendered unto us in the way and according to the mind of God?

(II.) But now, suppose we are willing to receive them, it will be inquired in the last place, *What considerations may further us in their due improvement? and what directions may be given thereunto?* An answer to this inquiry shall shut up this discourse: and I shall say hereunto,

1. *If there be not open evidence unto the contrary, it is our duty to judge that every reproof is given us in a way of duty.*—This will take off offence with respect unto the reprove, which, unjustly taken, is an assured entrance into a way of losing all benefit and advantage by the reproof. The reason why any man doth regularly reprove another, is because God requireth him so to do, and by his command hath made it his duty toward him that is reprovèd. And do we judge it reasonable that one should neglect their duty toward God and us, and in some degree or other make himself guilty of our sins, for no other cause but lest we should be displeasèd that we are not sufferèd to sin securely, and, it may be, to perish eternally? And if we are convincèd that it is the duty of another to reprove us, we cannot but be convincèd that it is our duty to hearken and attend thereunto; and this will fix the mind unto a due consideration of the present duty that lies before us, and what is our just concernment in the reproof. Besides, if it be done in a way of duty, it is done in love; for all orderly rebukes are effects of love. And if we are convincèd of any one, that he doth reprove in a way of duty, we must be satisfièd that what he doth proceedeth from love, without by-ends or dissimulation; for what doth not so, be it what it will, belongs not to rebuking in a way of duty. And this will remove all obstructing prejudices in all who have the least gracious ingenuity. Ahab despisèd the warning of Micaiah, because he thought they mutually hated one another: he knew how it was with himself, and falsely so judgèd of the prophet by his necessary sharpness toward him. But where there are such surmises, all advantages of reproofs will be assuredly lost. Where, therefore, our minds are satisfièd that any reproof is an effect of love, and given in a way of duty, *dimidium facti*, “we are half-way in the discharge of the duty directed unto.”

2. *Take heed of cherishing habitually such disorders, vices, and distempers of mind, as are contrary unto this duty, and will frustrate the design of it.* Such are, (1.) *Hastiness of spirit.*—Some men’s minds do with such fury apply themselves unto their first apprehension of things, that they cast the whole soul into disorder, and render it incapable of further rational considerations. There may be, it is possible, some failures and mistakes in useful and necessary reproofs, in matter, manner, circumstance, some way or other. This immediately is seizèd on by men of hasty spirits, (a vice and folly sufficiently condemnèd in scripture,) turned unto a provocation, made a matter of strife and dispute, until the whole advantage of the reproof is utterly lost and vanisheth. A quiet, gentle, considerative, sedate frame of spirit is requirèd unto this duty. (2.) *Pride and haughtiness of mind.*—Self-conceit, elation of spirit, which will be inseparably accompanied with the contempt of others, and a scorn that any should think themselves either so much wiser or so much better

than ourselves as to reprove us in any kind, are a fenced wall against any benefit or advantage by reproofs, yea, things that will turn judgment into hemlock, and the most sovereign antidote into poison. No wild beast in a toil doth more rave and tear and rend, than a proud man when he is reprov'd; and therefore he who manifests himself so to be, hath secured himself from being any more troubled by serious reproofs from any wise man whatever. See Prov. ix. 7, 8. (3.) *Prejudices*.—Which are so variously occasioned as it were endless to recount. If now we make it not our constant business to purge our minds from these depraved affections, they will never fail effectually to exert themselves on all occasions to the utter defeatment of all use in or benefit by the most necessary and regular reproofs.

3, *Reckon assuredly, that a fault, a miscarriage, which any one is duly reprov'd for, if the reproof be not received and improv'd as it ought, is not only aggravated, but accumulated with a new crime, and marked with a dangerous token of an incurable evil.*—See Prov. xxix. 1. Let men do what they can, bear themselves high in their expressions, grow angry, passionate, excuse or palliate, unless they are sear'd and profligately obstinate, their own consciences will take part with a just and regular reproof. If hereupon they come not up to amendment, their guilt is increased by the occasional excitation of the light of conscience to give it an especial charge, and there is an additional sin in the contempt of the reproof itself. But that which principally should make men careful and even tremble in this case is, that they are put on a trial whether ever they will forsake the evil of their ways and doings, or no: for he who is orderly reprov'd for any fault, and neglects or despiseth the rebuke, can have no assurance that he shall ever be delivered from the evil rebuked, but hath just cause to fear that he is entering into a course of hardness and impenitency.

4. *It is useful unto the same end immediately to compare the reproof with the word of truth.*—This is the measure, standard, and directory of all duties, whereunto in all dubious cases we should immediately retreat for advice and counsel. And whereas there are two things considerable in a reproof: First, the matter of it; that it be true, and a just cause or reason of a rebuke; and, Secondly, the right which the reprover hath unto this duty, with the rule which he walk'd by therein; if both these, for the substance of them, prove to be justified by the scripture, then have we in such a case no more to do with the reprover nor any of his circumstances, but immediately and directly with God himself; for where he gives express warranty and direction for a duty in his word, his own authority is as directly exerted thereby as if he spoke unto us from heaven. Hereby will the mind be prevented from many wanderings and vain reliefs which foolish imagination will suggest, and be bound up unto its present duty. Let our unwillingness to be reprov'd be what it will, as also our prejudices against our reprover, if we are not at least free to bring the consideration and examination of the one and the other unto the word of truth, it is because our deeds are evil, and therefore we love darkness more than light. No milder nor more gentle censure can be pass'd on any, who is not free to bring any reproof that may be given him unto an impartial trial by the word, whether it be according to the

mind of God, or no. If this be done, and conviction of its truth and necessity do then appear, then let the soul know it hath to do with God himself, and wisely consider what answer he will return, what account he will give unto Him. Wherefore,

5. *The best way to keep our souls in a readiness rightly to receive and duly to improve such reproofs as may regularly be given us by any, is to keep and preserve our souls and spirits in a constant awe and reverence of the reproofs of God which are recorded in his word.*—The neglect or contempt of these reproofs is that which the generality of mankind do split themselves upon, and perish eternally. This is so fully and graphically expressed, Prov. i., that nothing can be added thereunto. And the great means whereby much hardness comes upon others through the deceitfulness of sin, is want of keeping up a due sense or reverence of divine reproofs and threatenings on their souls. When this is done, when our hearts are kept up unto an awful regard of them, exercised with a continual meditation on them, made tender, careful, watchful, by them, any just reproof from any, that falls in compliance with them, will be conscientiously observed and carefully improved.

6. *We shall fail in this duty, unless we are always accompanied with a deep sense of our frailty, weakness, readiness to halt or miscarry, and thereon a necessity of all the ordinances and visitations of God, which are designed to preserve our souls.*—Unless we have due apprehensions of our own state and condition here, we shall never kindly receive warnings beforehand to avoid approaching dangers, nor duly improve rebukes for being overtaken with them. It is the humble soul—that feareth always, and that from a sense of its own weakness, yea, the treacheries and deceitfulness of its heart, with the power of those temptations whereunto it is continually exposed—that is ever likely to make work of the duty here directed unto.

SERMON XXIX.

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WHEREIN DOTH APPEAR THE BLESSEDNESS OF FORGIVENESS? AND
HOW IT MAY BE OBTAINED.

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.—
Psalm xxxii. 1.

OF all the pains or torments that any of the children of men do or can feel in this life, none are comparable to those which proceed from the lashes and wounds of a guilty conscience, under the apprehensions of the anger of a sin-revenging God, and the impression of some scalding drops of his wrath upon the soul. “The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?” (Prov. xviii. 14.) David had ventured to transgress, and that very heinously; and in his breaking

of God's law, he had broken his own peace; in his dishonouring of God's name, he had wounded his own conscience. After his sin, David is shy of God, and keeps silence for a while, maketh no confession. God is highly offended, and hides his face from him; but layeth his hand sorely upon him, making such a deep impression of his displeasure upon his spirit, that he sunk under the weight of it; and it became so very grievous unto him, that he roareth out all the day under the horrible anguish which he felt hereby: yea, he complaineth that his moisture was hereby turned into the drought of summer. In this condition David could find no relief, no ease, or assuagement of his grief, until, upon acknowledgment of his sin, he had obtained forgiveness, and God, through his free grace and tender mercy, had covered his iniquity, as we shall find in the third, fourth, and fifth verses of this psalm; which I take to be the occasion of the joyful acclamation and sweet expression in my text, the first verse of the psalm, concerning the blessedness of remission, or happiness of the man that hath, with him, obtained so great a privilege; which privilege none have a greater sight of, than those that have felt the wounds and smart, and roared under the horror, of an accusing conscience, and been terrified with the furious rebukes of God's angry countenance. And because this was David's case, therefore he might the more feelingly pronounce those to be blessed, whose sins were pardoned: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered."

Blessed—The word בְּרֵכָה in the original signifies *blessedness*; and it is read in the plural number, because, as one saith, "that man is many ways blessed: he is blessed in this world; and in the other world he is most blessed and happy; * so that blessedness seems most properly to be his, and singularly to belong to him." And it is the plural number, "because many good things concur to true blessedness; or to show that such an one is cumulatively happy,—he hath a heap of blessings upon him:" thus our learned Mr. Poole in his *Synopsis*.† The same author observes, that "some take the word *blessed* in the Hebrew to be an interjection, or adverb; and so make this to be a rhetorical, though abrupt, exclamation, or a joyful acclamation, at the happiness of such."‡

Whose transgression is forgiven—There are divers versions of these words. One translates them out of the Hebrew, בְּיִשׁוּבֵי עֲוֹנוֹ "Whose iniquity is remitted."|| Another: "Whose prevarication is forgiven."§ Others, and that nearer the sense of the Hebrew words: "Who is eased of his defection, or unburdened of his transgression."¶ Another: "From whom his transgression is taken away."** Another: "Who is absolved from his crime."†† All which versions agree in the same sense with our translation: "Whose transgression is forgiven." For "remission of iniquity or prevarication," is the same as "the forgiveness

* *Vir ille est multis modis beatus, nempe in hoc mundo, et in altero est beatissimus et felicissimus, ut propria videantur beatitudines et ad eum singulariter pertinere.*—GENEBRARDUS. † *Quia multa bono debent concurrere ad beatitudinem; vel ut ostenderet talem cumulatè beatum esse.*—POLI *Synopsis*. ‡ *Alii בְּרֵכָה est interjectio, sive adverbium: et sic rhetorica exclamatio ex abrupto, vel leta exclamatio, de felicitate ejus: O beate illum!*

—Sic SCHINDLERUS. || *Quibus remissa est iniquitas.*—CALVINUS. § *Condonati prevaricationis, cui demittitur prevaricatio.*—PAGNINUS. ¶ *Qui levatus a defectione, vel qui exoneratus a transgressionem.*—JUNIUS et TREMELLIUS. ** *A quo ablata transgressio.*—PISCATOR. †† *Absolutus a crimine.*—POLUS et GEIERO.

of transgression." "To have the sin taken away, to be eased and unburdened of the transgression," what is it more than "to have the sin forgiven?" forasmuch as the weight and load of guilt is by forgiveness removed, whereby alone the conscience is truly eased; and so "to be absolved from crime" is as much as "to be acquitted from all obligation of punishment;" and this is done in forgiveness of sin.

Whose sin is covered, אֲשֶׁר חָטָא וְיִסְכָּח—He is blessed whose sin is covered; not he whose sins are covered by himself. So, Prov. xxviii. 13: "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper." All ought to acknowledge unto God without hiding any, as in the fifth verse of this psalm: "I acknowledged my sins unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid." But he is blessed whose sin is covered by God: "Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin." (Psalm lxxxv. 2.) Sin is covered, when it is covered *by* God, and when it is covered *from* God. Not as if any sin were or could be covered from the eye and view of his omniscience; but sin is covered *from* him when "it is covered from his angry eye, and his wrathful, revengeful countenance;" * that is, when God ceaseth to be angry for the sin, through his reconciliation to the sinner. Piscator noteth upon the place, that "sin is here compared to filthinesses, which use to be covered, that they may not offend the eye." † When the offence of God's eye is removed, then sin may be said to be covered. And it is observed, that in the Hebrew the same word, which signifieth "a covering," doth signify also "an expiation;" and the covering of the mercy-seat, which here may be alluded unto, which was called "the propitiatory," comes from the same root; which propitiation or covering did cover the tables of the law, "the hand-writing against us;" and this was a type of Christ, our propitiation, who, having appeased his Father's anger, doth cover our sins, that the law shall not accuse or condemn us. ‡ Sin is covered *by* God, when "he hides his face from it;" (Psalm li. 9;) when "he casts it behind his back;" (Isai. xxxviii. 17;) when he throws it "into the depth of the sea." (Micah vii. 19.) So that this *covering of sin* is of the same import as the former expression, namely, *the forgiving of it*.

QUESTION I. "Wherein doth appear the blessedness of forgiveness?"

QUESTION II. "How forgiveness may be obtained?"

QUESTION I. "Wherein the blessedness of forgiveness doth appear?"

To evidence this, I shall give the REASONS why such must needs be blessed whose transgressions are forgiven.

REASON I. *Such must needs be blessed whose transgressions are forgiven, because God doth pronounce them blessed.*—As in the text: "Blessed is he whose iniquities are forgiven, whose sins are covered." David wrote these words not from himself, but as he was inspired by

* *Tectum ab iræ vel ultionis Dei facie.*—POLUS ex GEIERO. † *Peccatum comparatur aordibus, quæ tegi solent, ne oculos offendant.*—PISCATOR. ‡ *Ut operculo illo læs tegebatur per quam cognitio peccati, sic Christus peccata tegit, remittit, et expiat, ne læs ultra accuset et condemnet; placatum Dei Patris iræ per Filium, tectum est (seu opertum) peccatum per Christum, scilicet propitiatorium nostrum.*—MERCERUS in Pasco. "As that covering over-spread the law, by which comes the knowledge of sin; so Christ covers, remits, and expiates sins, that the law may proceed no further in accusing and condemning: the wrath of God the Father is appeased through his Son, and sin is covered or hidden through Christ, who is our propitiation."—EDIT.

the Holy Ghost ; and if any saying in the whole book of the scriptures be the word of God, (as all of them are,) this is his word, and this is his sentence, which is confirmed in the New Testament, the apostle Paul quoting these very words to prove the doctrine of justification by faith without works. (Rom. iv. 7.) God pronounceth such to be blessed whose iniquities are forgiven ; and therefore they must needs be blessed, because God speaketh of things as they are : never did a lie, falsehood, or mistake, proceed out of his mouth. God, who alone giveth the blessing, pronounceth pardoned persons "blessed," and therefore they are blessed. When Isaac gave his fatherly blessing unto Jacob, though it were upon a mistake, he supposing him to have been Esau his first-born son ; yet afterward did not, he would not, retract it, but telleth Esau, who too late sought for it, "I have blessed him, yea, and he shall be blessed." (Gen. xxvii. 33.) Surely then, where God, who never mistaketh, doth pronounce the blessing upon any, he doth not, he will not, retract it ; but they are blessed, and shall be blessed.

REASON II. *Such must needs be blessed whose iniquities are forgiven, because they are delivered from the greatest evil, and that which doth expose them to the greatest misery, and which alone can deprive them of eternal happiness.*—Pardoned persons are delivered from the greatest evil, and that is sin ; which is the greatest evil in itself, because most opposite to the chiefest good, and forasmuch as it is the cause of all other evils that either do or can befall mankind. Beside the miseries of this life, it is sin, and only sin, which exposes unto future miseries, and the vengeance of eternal fire in hell. The curse of the law is for sin, whereby the law is broken : "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." (Gal. iii. 10.) The threatenings of eternal destruction are for sin, especially for sins against the gospel : "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ : who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." (2 Thess. i. 7—9.) Guilt for sin, in the nature of it, is *obligatio ad pœnam*, "an obligation to punishment," not temporal only, but such as may bear proportion to the demands of God's infinite justice, which therefore must be eternal. Such whose iniquities are forgiven, are delivered from the guilt of sin ; they are free from obligation to punishment, and so are no longer exposed thereunto : through Christ they have remission, being by faith interested in his merit and satisfaction ; and God's justice cannot require the satisfaction again of them, which he hath already received of Christ, and accepted for them. Christ is their Surety, who hath paid their debts ; in forgiveness they are discharged, and God will not require the debt any more of them. "Therefore there is no condemnation to them ;" (Rom. viii. 1 ;) Jesus having "delivered them from the wrath to come." (1 Thess. i. 10.) It is sin also which can alone deprive any of eternal happiness. In the first covenant, God promised life and everlasting felicity upon the condition of perfect obedience ; it is only disobedience which doth hinder the fulfilling of this promise. It was sin which threw man at the first

out of Paradise, and which still doth keep men out of heaven. Nothing doth hinder men's happiness here, nothing can deprive them of happiness in the other world, but this evil of evils, sin: hence, then, it will undeniably follow, that pardoned persons, who are delivered from sin, must needs be blessed, there being nothing which can procure their misery or prevent their blessedness, because in the forgiveness of sin their sin is removed with the evil consequences and effects thereof. "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." (Psalm ciii. 12.)

REASON III. *Such men must needs be blessed whose iniquities are forgiven, because they are taken into covenant with God; God is their God, and they are his people.*—The promise of the new covenant, "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more," is coupled with the other promises, "I will be their God, and they shall be my people." (Jer. xxxi. 33, 34.) Wherever God fulfils the one promise, he doth fulfil the other too. God forgiveth iniquity to none, but at the same time he becometh their God, and brings them into the blessed relation of his covenant-people. They are blessed that have the Lord for their God: "Happy is that people that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord." (Psalm cxliv. 15.) "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance." (Psalm xxxiii. 12.) Such as are taken into covenant with God are blessed, because, 1. *They are taken into God's favour.* 2. *They are taken into God's family.* 3. *They are under God's providence.* 4. *They have free access unto God in prayer.* 5. *They have communion with God in all his ordinances: and thus it is with all pardoned persons, and therefore they are blessed.*

1. *Pardoned persons, being taken into covenant, are taken into God's favour.*—Nothing doth hinder God's special favour but unpardoned sin, nothing but that which is the only object of his hatred, and cause of his displeasure; and this is nothing else but sin. Although God's love have many objects, yet his hatred hath but one, and that is sin. God hateth none of his creatures, as they are creatures, but as they are sinful. Never did any thing offend or displease God but sin; nothing else hath power to enkindle God's anger, and to blow it up into a flame. When God forgiveth sin, his hatred ceaseth, his anger is removed, and he receiveth them whom he pardoneth into the arms of his special love. God's favour is the peculiar privilege of God's pardoned people; "Remember me, O Lord, with the favour which thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation." (Psalm cvi. 4.) Therefore all pardoned persons being in God's favour, they are blessed: because his favour is the fountain of blessedness: "In his favour is life." (Psalm xxx. 5.) Yea, "his loving-kindness is better than life." (Psalm lxiii. 3.) The favour of an earthly king is counted a great privilege, but the favour of the King of heaven is really a great blessedness. The God of heaven, who is so powerful, wise, faithful, good, merciful, hath a special favour and kindness for them, and doth love them with an incomparable, incomprehensible, unchangeable, and eternal love; therefore they must needs be the happiest people on the earth.

2. *Pardoned persons, being in covenant, are taken into God's family.*

—Being “reconciled by the cross” of Christ, they “are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.” (Eph. ii. 16, 19.) And being of God’s household, they are God’s children: “I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” (2 Cor. vi. 18.) This is a privilege which rendereth all those, ‘above all others, most blessed who partake of it: “To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.” (John i. 12.) *To them gave he power*—The original word, *ἐξουσία*, signifieth “right or privilege.” It is the greatest privilege in the world to be numbered amongst God’s children; hence it is that John, writing of it in his epistle, doth break forth into an exclamation of joy and wonder: “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” (1 John iii. 1.) He seems to be in an ecstasy of joy at the greatness of this privilege, and the happiness of such as had attained it. If beggars were lifted up from the dunghill to be adopted children of the greatest prince upon the earth, it would not be so great an honour to them, as this honour and dignity which is conferred upon pardoned persons, in their being advanced into the number of the adopted children of the great Jehovah, the Lord of heaven and earth. And will any question whether they are blessed?

3. *Pardoned persons, being in covenant, are under God’s special providence.*—There is a general providence that doth attend all the children of men; but God’s especial providence doth attend his own children, and his peculiar people, who are reconciled unto him by Jesus Christ. Such are under God’s especial providence; “they dwell in the secret place of the Most High, and abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” (Psalm xci. 1.) God’s name is their “strong tower, unto which they run and are safe.” (Prov. xviii. 10.) God is frequently called their Rock, and Fortress, Buckler, Shield, and Deliverer; and hath made many promises unto them of defence and deliverance. They are under God’s special provision. As a father provideth for his children, so God provideth for his people: He provideth for their bodies: when “the young lions lack, and suffer hunger, **THEY** shall not want any good thing.” (Psalm xxxiv. 10.) He promiseth to feed them, and clothe them, and to “withhold no good thing from them:” and if they always have not as much in the world as they wish, they shall be sure to have as much as God seeth they do really need. But more especially he provideth, for their souls, the robes of his Son’s righteousness to clothe them, sweet and precious promises to feed and nourish them, jewels of grace to enrich and adorn them, the guard of angels to attend them, Himself and his Son to be companions to them, the peace and joys of the Holy Ghost to cheer them, and to sweeten their passage through the valley of the world, and the dark entry of death. This is the privilege of pardoned persons; and surely then they are blessed.

4. *Pardoned persons, being in covenant, have free access unto God in prayer.*—“Through him we have access by one Spirit unto the Father.” (Eph. ii. 18.) “In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.” (Eph. iii. 12.) “Let us therefore come boldly to

the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb. iv. 16.) Being pardoned and reconciled through Christ, they may with boldness and confidence come daily to the throne of grace, and there "by prayer and supplication make known their requests unto God;" and they shall be sure to have both acceptance and audience. God who hath given them a pardon, will deny them nothing that is really for their good. Having interest in Christ, who hath such interest in heaven, whatever they ask of the Father in his name, if it is according to his will, they may be assured, because Christ hath faithfully promised it, that he will do it for them. Surely then such persons are happy.

5. *Pardoned persons, being in covenant, have communion with God in all his ordinances.*—Not only in prayer, but hearing of the word, singing, and at the table of the Lord: when others rest in the outside of ordinances, they meet with God there. Sin being removed, which before made a separation, they now attain communion with God, and their hearts close with him as their Chief Good. There is nothing more sweet in the world than communion with God; hence David doth account those most happy that had the liberty of God's house and ordinances, where they did or might enjoy so great a privilege: "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house." (Psalm lxxxiv. 4.) And, Psalm lxxv. 4: "Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: he shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple." Such only are truly blessed that find satisfaction: it is not the enjoyment of creatures [which] will give this. But in the enjoyment of and communion with God in his ordinances, which is "the goodness of God's house," true satisfaction may be found; and therefore pardoned persons, who do attain this, are truly and the only blessed persons.

REASON IV. *Such must needs be blessed whose iniquities are forgiven, because they are in a better state than Adam was in his first creation.*—None will deny, who read and believe the scriptures, that Adam was blessed before he sinned. There was no curse of the law upon man, until the law was broken by him; and as God made all other things good, so man, as he came out of God's hand, was made both good and happy.

The primitive blessedness of Adam consisted chiefly in two things: First. *In the innocency which was in him.* Secondly. *In the image of God which was upon him;* whereby he was capacitated for, and had a nearness of communion and fellowship with, God. In both respects pardoned persons are in a better estate than Adam.

First. *In respect of innocency.*—Although they cannot so properly be called "innocent" in themselves, doubtless they are not so innocent as Adam before his fall; yet, upon their pardon, they are guiltless, they are reputed innocent in the sight of God, and (however God may chastise them for sin here) they shall no more be punished for any sin in the other world, than if they had never offended, than if they had never committed any the least sin from their birth unto their death, but had been as white and clean, as pure and innocent, as the first Adam before his fall, or the second Adam who never fell. And herein their con-

dition is better than that of Adam in innocency, because no guilt shall be charged upon them unto their condemnation; whereas Adam had no such security against condemnation; for afterwards he, falling into sin, would certainly have fallen into hell, had not pardoning mercy prevented it.

Secondly. *In regard of the image of God, that is repaired in all those that are pardoned.*—When God forgiveth their sin, he changeth their nature; and that faith which justifieth the person doth also “purify the heart.” (Acts xv. 9.) Indeed, pardoned persons are renewed but in part; and the inherent righteousness and holiness, which they attain unto in this life, is but imperfect. Yet in this they are in a better condition than Adam was at first; because, although Adam’s inherent righteousness were perfect, yet it was left to his own keeping, and he quickly lost it, and fell quite off from God, putting himself out of God’s favour and out of covenant together; and there was no salvation attainable by him, until God had promised Christ, and made a new covenant of grace with him. But the inherent righteousness of pardoned persons, although it be far short, many degrees, of absolute perfection, yet it is committed to the keeping of Christ by the Spirit in them, who is both able and hath promised to bring it unto perfection: so that they shall never totally fall from grace, but grow-up from one degree of grace unto another, until they arrive unto heaven, where they shall be absolutely perfect both in holiness and happiness; and, in the mean time, they are accepted as complete and perfect in their Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, whose perfect righteousness is through faith imputed unto them, whereby the defects of their righteousness are supplied, and they adopted to eternal life. Pardoned persons are in a better state than Adam, therefore they are blessed.

REASON v. *Such whose iniquities are forgiven are blessed because they shall be blessed.*—The blessedness of pardoned persons is chiefly in hope of future blessedness, without which hope in some circumstance of time, they would be, as the apostle saith, “of all men most miserable;” (1 Cor. xv. 19;) and therefore I shall chiefly speak of the future blessedness of the pardoned; and here, **FIRST.** *Show what the future blessedness is which pardoned persons shall have.* **SECONDLY.** *Prove that pardoned persons shall most assuredly attain this blessedness.* **THIRDLY.** *Show how this future blessedness doth render them blessed at the present;* and this will be a full proof that pardoned persons are blessed.

FIRST. The first thing is, *to show what the future blessedness is which pardoned persons shall have.*—And here I must premise that there is but little of this future blessedness revealed in comparison of what it really is, and what pardoned persons will find it to be. Ministers have preached and written much concerning it; but they have not told one half, no, nor the thousandth part of the glory and excellency thereof: and it must be but little, then, that I have time or room to speak of it in this discourse. Yet something I must say; and it is no difficult thing to set it forth, by scripture-light and in a few words, as far exceeding all outward happiness and earthly felicity. The blessedness which pardoned persons shall have doth lie in three things: 1. *In the blessed and glorious*

place where they shall live. 2. *In the blessed and glorious company which they shall converse withal.* 3. *In the blessed and glorious state which they shall attain to.*

1. *Pardoned persons shall live and take-up their eternal abode in a most blessed and glorious place.*—"Here they have no continuing city, but they seek one to come." (Heb. xiii. 14.) The most strong and flourishing cities in the world may be demolished by the hands of men, or overthrown by earthquakes, or consumed and turned into ashes by the devouring flames of fire. But the city they shall dwell-in cannot be demolished, overthrown, or consumed; that city will abide and continue so long as God shall abide, the maker of it. "They look for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." (Heb. xi. 10.) The foundations of this city are sure and strong, such as shall never be moved. The cities and houses they now dwell-in are made by man, and therefore are but mean; but the city they shall dwell-in is of God's building and making, and therefore is very glorious. It is "the New Jerusalem" which they shall hereafter inhabit, "the Jerusalem which is above;" the walls and gates thereof are pearls, and "the streets thereof pure gold;" as it is described, Rev. xxi., at the latter end of that chapter. But the place is beyond all comparison, and doth exceed in glory whatever description may be made of it.

2. *Pardoned persons shall have most blessed and glorious company to converse withal in heaven.*

(1.) *In heaven pardoned persons will have the company of all the saints.*—There they will find all their godly friends and acquaintance, and that both such as die before them, and those that die after them; in whose society they will have a mutual sweet complacency, and their joy one in another will exceed what tongues can express. There they shall have the company of all those godly ministers, either whom they have known and heard, or whose writings only they have seen and read. And how will the spiritual children delight to see the glory, and live always in the company, of their spiritual fathers, whom God hath made instrumental for their conversion! Then they will rejoice indeed that ever they saw their face, that ever they heard their voice, that ever they believed their report, that ever they were persuaded by them to repent of their sins, and to accept of God's Son, to come into and to keep in God's ways, when they see whither those ways have brought them. There they will meet with all the holy martyrs, so famous in their generations for their courage and constancy; with all the holy prophets and apostles; the penmen of the scriptures, so famous in their time for the large and plentiful effusion of the Spirit of God upon them; with all the good kings and princes, and all the righteous persons whatever, that have lived in all ages and generations, of all kindreds, nations, and languages: they shall then be gathered all into one body under Christ their Head, and join together in blessing, and praising, and singing Hallelujahs unto the Lord for ever.

(2.) *In heaven pardoned persons will have the company of all the glorious angels.*—Here the angels guard them, and are ministering spirits unto them. (Heb. i. 14.) Hereafter they will be their companions, and there will be mutual and most sweet converse between them. Some

delight in the company of nobles, and the great ones which belong to the courts of great princes: they shall have the company and conversation of the glorious angels, who are the nobles of heaven, and courtiers of the King of kings. How the angels and saints will converse together, and communicate their minds one to another, is too high for us to conceive, and too difficult for us to determine; but, surely, the converse will be very sweet and full of love and delight.

(3.) *In heaven pardoned persons will have the company and fellowship of the glorious Spirit, the Holy Ghost.*—Here they have his presence and powerful operations; they feel now, especially at some times, his sweet breathings and powerful operations, which do wonderfully enlighten them, greatly quicken and inflame their hearts with divine love, yea, and fill their hearts with spiritual and heavenly joy. But in heaven they shall have a fuller, sweeter, more powerful and constant presence of the glorious Spirit; they shall there be filled with the Holy Ghost, as full as they can hold, yea, beyond their present capacity; they shall be under the sweet breathings of the Spirit, whereby the flame of divine love will be kept alive in them perpetually in the greatest height and heat of it: and this shall abide to eternity.

(4.) *In heaven pardoned persons shall have the company of the Lord Jesus Christ in his glory.*—Here they have heard of him, there they shall see him. Here they see him with the eye of faith, there they shall see him eye to eye, and face to face. Austin did wish to have seen three things, above all other things that were to be seen in the world,—Rome in its glory, Paul in the pulpit, and Christ in the flesh. The righteous in heaven will see that which is far beyond Austin's wish,—they will see Zion in its glory, Paul in his glory, and Christ in his glory.

They will see Zion in its glory.—Which will far exceed Rome in its greatest splendour, when it was most illustrious for wealth and riches, through the spoils of so many conquered kingdoms which were brought into it; when it was most illustrious for stately houses and sumptuous buildings, for wise and learned men, famous and valiant captains and soldiers. The New Jerusalem, Mount Zion which is above, will outshine Rome in glory, more than the sun doth outshine the smallest star in heaven, or the faint light of a candle here upon earth.

They shall see Paul in his glory.—They shall hear him praising God with triumphant acclamations of joy; which will be far more than to hear him preach in a state of weakness and infirmity.

But chiefly they shall see Christ in his glory.—The sight of Christ in his humiliation was nothing in comparison of a sight of him in his state of exaltation. They shall see him then as he is: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (1 John iii. 2.) Christ was never seen on earth "as he is." His glory was shadowed, his Divinity was veiled, and his humanity was most evident to the view, which had its infirmities. But hereafter his humanity will appear to be lifted up into such glory as doth exceed all created glory of men or angels: and his Divinity will be most illustrious to the view of the saints; at the sight of which they will be

astonished with admiration and love. And O how will they gaze and wonder at his marvellous beauty and shining excellency, when they see him come down from heaven attended by all the holy angels, and when they shall not only see him, but meet with him, be owned and welcomed by him, and be taken to live with him! "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.) It was a great privilege which the apostles had, to live with Christ when he was humbled and vilified here on earth. What a privilege, then, will it be, which all the righteous shall have, to live with Christ when he is glorified in heaven, and that not for a few years, but for ever! What a happiness will it be, to see the glory which Christ had with the Father before the world was, and not only to see it, but to share in it!

(5.) *In heaven pardoned persons shall have the company of the Father.*—They have his *gracious* presence here on earth, they shall have his *glorious* presence in heaven: there they shall have the immediate *beatifical vision* of him, and the full, most *blessed fruition* of him. The sight of God's back-parts, the glimpses and glances of the eye at a distance, the mediate enjoyment of him in and by ordinances, doth sometimes even transport them, and strangely fill them with wonder and delight. But O what soul-ravishing admirations, what transports and ecstasies of joy, will they have, when in heaven they shall behold God's face, be always under the beams of the light of his countenance, and have continual, close, intimate, full enjoyment of him, fellowship and communion with him, and this to abide for ever and ever! In heaven they shall dwell with God, and God will dwell with them: "I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God." (Rev. xxi. 3.) This, this will be happiness indeed, to have God himself to dwell with them, and manifest himself not only in his *grace*, but in his *glory*, unto them: therefore it followeth: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes;" there will be no grief where God's presence is, in his presence there being fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore; "and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither any more pain;" (verse 4;) the full sight of God will cure of all pain and sorrow, and fill with delight and joy; as Herbert, in his poem called "The Glance:"—

"If thy first glance so powerful be,
A mirth but open'd, and seal'd up again;
What wonders shall we feel, when we shall see
Thy full-eyed love!
When thou shalt look us out of pain,
And one aspect of thine spend in delight,
More than ten thousand suns disperse* in light,
In heaven above!"

3. *Pardoned persons shall in heaven attain a blessed and glorious state.*—A state of peace and tranquillity; a state of wealth and plenty;

* "Disburse" is the word in the tenth edition of Herbert, 1674 — EDIT.

a state of honour and dignity ; a state of holiness and purity ; a state of perfect happiness and glory, in soul and body.

(1.) *In heaven pardoned persons shall attain a state of peace, of perfect peace and tranquillity.*—They shall have perfect peace without them, and they shall have perfect peace within them. Here they have wars about them, and rumours of wars ; and when they do not hear of wars, except it be afar off, they have jars near at hand, and that every day : they see men and women fighting, wounding, and murdering one another with the sword of the tongue, and many are the thrusts which they themselves have received on every side ; and howsoever desirous they are of peace, and follow after it, yet they cannot attain it, but are forced to complain, with David, “ My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace. I am for peace : but when I speak, they are for war.” (Psalm cxx. 6, 7.) But in heaven they shall be hid for ever from the wounds and scourge of the tongue. Heaven is a kingdom wherein dwells righteousness, and wherein dwells peace. In heaven they shall be freed from all strife and contention, from all bitterness, clamour, and evil-speaking. No unpeaceable spirit shall be admitted into the New Jerusalem ; and never shall any the least quarrel arise between the inhabitants of that place. And as they shall have perfect peace without them, so they shall have perfect peace within them. Here they are often wounding themselves, and that more deeply and sorely than any man can do ; I mean, they too often wound their consciences by their sins ; and if peace be attained by them, through faith in Christ’s blood, this peace is often interrupted and broken by them through their renewed provocations ; and at the best their peace,—it is but imperfect in this life. But in heaven they shall have perfect peace within, such a calm and serenity, such a quiet and tranquillity of spirit, as shall never have the least disturbance any more. In the upper region of the air there are no storms or tempests ; all that be are in the middle or lower region : and when they are exalted unto the highest heavens, that region which is beyond the stars, they shall be removed beyond all those storms of consciences within, and all those tempests of troubles without, which are common and ordinary in the lower region of this world. There they shall have most sweet rest for their souls for ever in the bosom of God.

(2.) *In heaven pardoned persons shall attain a state of wealth and plenty.*—However poor some of them are as to this world’s riches, yet they shall be rich, yea, they are rich in faith. The riches which they have in hand, or heart rather, are great ; but the riches which they have in their eye or hope are far greater. Their grace is beyond the worldling’s gold ; their peace is beyond the worldling’s jewels ; the privileges which they are here invested with, are far more excellent than the largest earthly possessions which any worldlings have or hope to have. But the riches which they shall have are far more transcendent. Here they have only an earnest-penny ; in heaven they shall have large sums. Here they have the first fruits ; in heaven they shall reap the harvest. Here they have the deeds of conveyance which give them title ; in heaven they shall have possession of the uncorrupted and glorious inheritance. (1 Peter i. 4.) They shall have “ treasures in heaven,” which “ neither moth nor rust can corrupt, nor thieves break through ” to steal them away. (Matt. vi. 20.) In heaven every want will be supplied, every defect removed,

every desire satisfied. In their Father's house there is plenty, and bread enough, which they shall be enriched and filled with, and which they shall live upon to all eternity. When death shall turn others out of their houses, rob them of their estates, and bereave them of all that they have in the world; death will befriend them, and convey them to the place where their treasure and inheritance lies, which they then shall be admitted to the possession of, and never be turned out of possession.

(3.) *In heaven pardoned persons shall attain a state of honour and dignity.*—Here some of them, yea, all of them, are slighted and disesteemed, vilified and “accounted as the filth and offscouring of the world;” and yet they are really and in God's esteem the most honourable: they are the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, as hath been said. But they shall be advanced far higher than they are, not to a high seat upon earth, but a high seat above the earth, yea, above the stars and visible heavens: they shall sit with Christ on his throne. (Rev. iii. 21.) They shall have a crown; not an earthly crown, but a heavenly; not a crown of gold, but “a crown of glory, which fadeth not away.” (1 Peter v. 4.) They shall have a kingdom, in comparison of which all the kingdoms of the world are not worthy to be named: it is the kingdom that is promised to them, Matt. v. 3. At the day of Christ's second appearance they shall be honoured, when they are sent-for by the angels, and caught-up in the clouds to meet their Lord in the air; then he will own and crown them, and take them to live and reign with him for ever in heaven.

(4.) *In heaven pardoned persons shall attain a state of holiness and purity.*—Here they are renewed but in part, and their holiness is imperfect: they find corruption remaining, and feel it daily working in them, which is the greatest grief and trouble to them in the world. But in heaven they shall be made perfect in holiness; they shall have not only perfect peace, but also perfect purity; the being of sin shall be removed, and all the spots and stains of it shall be washed away. In heaven, as they shall sigh no more, so they shall sin no more; as they shall grieve no more, so they shall offend no more; nothing in heaven shall offend them, and in heaven they shall no more offend God; nothing in heaven shall break their peace, and they shall no more break God's laws. In heaven they shall be like the angels, not only without marriage, but without sin; they shall be like to them in holiness and in happiness; and this will be their happiness,—to attain perfection in holiness.

(5.) *In heaven pardoned persons shall attain a state of perfect happiness and glory in soul and body.*—Their souls shall be glorified and their bodies glorified in heaven.

(i.) *In heaven the souls of pardoned persons shall be glorified.*—A shining excellency and marvellous spiritual beauty shall be put upon them; the image of God will then and there be drawn to the life in them. All the faculties of their souls will there be elevated, ennobled, and beautified with wonderful perfections, and filled brim-full with glory, such as doth far exceed their present capacity. They shall have the brightest beams of light in their minds, the purest and sweetest flames of love in their hearts, and that with such heart-ravishing joy as is to us unconceivable, but to them will both be full and everlasting. (Psalm xvi. 11.)

(ii.) *In heaven the bodies of pardoned persons will be glorified.*—Their vile bodies will be fashioned into the likeness of Christ's most beautiful and glorious body. (Phil. iii. 21.) All the defects and deformities which some of their bodies have here will be removed, and they shall shine like the new-burnished heavens. What a rare mixture of colours, what an exact symmetry of parts their bodies shall have, what lovely proportion and feature in their face, what sparkling motions in the eye, what graceful gestures in the whole body there will be,—it is not for us to describe; for the beauty of glorified bodies will be beyond all descriptions. And thus much concerning the future blessedness itself which pardoned persons shall have.

SECONDLY. The second thing is, *to prove that pardoned persons shall assuredly attain this future blessedness.*—This will appear by several scriptures, and several arguments drawn from the scriptures.

The scriptures which prove that pardoned persons shall assuredly attain future blessedness are these: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. In whom also we have obtained an inheritance." (Eph. i. 7, 11.) This inheritance here spoken of can be no other than the heavenly inheritance; and the apostle plainly asserteth, that such who had obtained the forgiveness of sin, they had also obtained the inheritance: "In whom we have obtained," that is, they shall as certainly obtain it as if they had it already in possession. A more full proof is in Rom. viii. 30: "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." This is that golden chain so much spoken of by divines, the links of which are so fast joined together, that all the power of men or devils can never be able to pluck them asunder. As such whom God hath predestinated *before* time shall certainly be called and justified *in* time; so those who are called and justified and so pardoned *in* time shall certainly be glorified *at the end* of time, and when time shall be no more. And the third scripture to prove this is Rom. v. 10: "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Pardoned persons are reconciled persons; and if when they were sinners they were reconciled through Christ's death and satisfaction, surely, when reconciled, taken into favour and become friends, they shall be saved not with a temporal, but with an eternal salvation, by Christ's life and intercession, which hath sufficient efficacy and prevalency to effect this thing for them. Here, beside the apostle's assertion, he doth insinuate an argument for the proof of it. But I shall add some other scripture-arguments to prove, that pardoned persons shall most assuredly attain future blessedness.

ARGUMENT I. The first argument may be drawn from *God's decree of predestination or election.*—Whom God hath predestinated or elected to the blessedness of heaven, they shall most assuredly attain it: But God hath predestinated or elected all pardoned persons to the blessedness of heaven: Therefore they shall certainly attain it. That all such whom God hath predestinated or elected unto the blessedness of heaven shall certainly attain it, is evident to any who impartially do read and weigh the scriptures, which clearly do reveal the eternity of God's decree of

particular predestination or election. "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world: having predestinated us, according to the good pleasure of his will." (Eph. i. 4, 5.) God's decree of predestination or election,—which is to eternal happiness, therefore called "an ordination to eternal life," (Acts xiii. 48,) "an appointment and election to salvation," (1 Thess. v. 9; 2 Thess. ii. 13,)—being eternal, is therefore unchangeable, and therefore shall certainly be accomplished.

If any thing hinder the accomplishment of God's decree, it must be either *something within him, or something without him.*

1. *Nothing within him can hinder its accomplishment.*—Unless he should change his own mind, and alter his decree; and this would infer a changeableness in God, which is against both reason and scripture; and, beside other imperfection, it would infer an imperfection in God's knowledge and wisdom, that he did not foresee or consider those after-reasons which should incline him unto a change from his first determination; and this is inconsistent with his infinite foreknowledge, and eternal counsel of his wisdom, in his willing and decreeing this thing. Men may change their purposes upon this account; but God, so infinitely wise and foreknowing, cannot do it. If he had foreseen reason to have altered the thing, he would never have decreed or determined it.

2. *Nothing without God can hinder the accomplishment of his decree.*—Because of his infinite power to effect what he hath designed; and against infinite power no resistance can be made. The elect whom the apostle Peter writeth unto, as they are chosen "to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them;" so they are sure to be "kept by the power of God to salvation." (1 Peter i. 2, 4, 5.) And, surely, there can be no hindering of the salvation and blessedness of the elect, who are kept for it, or unto it, by the almighty power of God. And thus I think it is very clear, that all whom God hath predestinated or elected to blessedness shall certainly attain it. Hence are the words of the apostle, which may put all out of doubt: "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." (Eph. i. 11.)

That all pardoned persons are predestinated or elected unto the blessedness of heaven, is also evident, because pardon of sin is the effect of predestination: "Whom he hath predestinated, them he also called and justified." (Rom. viii. 30.) Because pardon of sin is the means, and a necessary means, of obtaining the blessedness of heaven, which God doth elect some of the children of men unto; and as wherever God doth elect to the end, he doth elect to the means, without which the end could not be accomplished; so wherever he doth elect to the means, he doth elect to the end, without which the means would be in vain; pardoned persons having therefore obtained the means of blessedness, which is remission of sin, without which they could have no admission into heaven, it is an evident sign that they are chosen to this blessedness of heaven: and, moreover, all pardoned persons are true believers, it being alone through faith that any are justified and pardoned: "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

(Rom. v. 1.) "Whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts x. 43.) And all true believers are elected, true faith being called "the faith of God's elect." (Titus i. 1.) And such are ordained to eternal life: "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." (Acts xiii. 48.) Faith is the fruit of our election; and our Saviour telleth the Jews, they did not believe because they were not of his sheep. (John x. 26.) Therefore all pardoned persons, being true believers, are elected; and therefore they shall certainly be saved, and attain the eternal blessedness of heaven.

ARG. II. The second argument may be drawn from *God's covenant and promise*.—All those to whom God is engaged by covenant, and hath promised to give eternal blessedness, they shall certainly attain eternal blessedness: But God is engaged by covenant, and hath promised to give eternal blessedness unto all pardoned persons: Therefore all pardoned persons shall certainly attain eternal blessedness. That all such to whom God is engaged by covenant, and hath promised to give eternal happiness, shall certainly attain it, is evident, because of God's truth and faithfulness: "He is faithful that hath promised." (Heb. x. 23.) "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: Hath he said it, and will he not do it? Hath he spoken it, and will he not make it good?" (Num. xxiii. 19.) "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised." (Titus i. 2.) "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show to the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation." (Heb. vi. 17, 18.) Therefore God's covenant is called "an everlasting covenant," and the mercies thereof, "sure mercies," because of his faithfulness: "I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." (Isai. lv. 3.) It is clear then, that all those to whom God is engaged by covenant, and hath promised to give eternal blessedness, they shall certainly attain it; because otherwise God would prove unfaithful and a liar; which is impossible. And it is clear that God hath engaged by covenant, and hath promised to give eternal blessedness to all pardoned persons, because they are all taken into covenant, as hath been already proved: God is engaged by covenant to be their God; and as our Saviour doth prove the resurrection of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, because God was their God, so might I, by the same argument, prove the eternal blessedness of all pardoned persons, because God is their God, which relation doth engage him to make them perfectly and eternally happy. But, beside this, God hath expressly promised eternal happiness: "This is the promise which God hath promised us, even eternal life." (1 John ii. 25.) "Whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.) Many other promises there are of the same import, all belonging to the covenant of grace; and all pardoned persons being in this covenant, they belong to them. They are made to believers, and all pardoned persons are believers, therefore God is engaged by covenant, and hath promised to give eternal life and blessedness unto them; and therefore they shall certainly attain it.

ARG. III. The third argument may be drawn from *the union of all pardoned persons unto Christ, and his undertaking for them, to bring*

them unto eternal blessedness.—All those who are united unto Christ, and whom he hath undertaken to bring to eternal blessedness, they shall certainly attain eternal blessedness: But all pardoned persons are united unto Christ, and he hath undertaken to bring them to eternal blessedness: Therefore they shall certainly attain eternal blessedness. All pardoned persons being true believers, are by faith united unto Christ, and so made members of the body, whereof Christ is the Head; and Christ will not suffer any of his members to perish. His body would not be complete in heaven, if he should miss any of his members there: they are espoused unto Christ, and Christ will certainly bring his spouse to his Father's house. The union between Christ and believers is indissoluble; and therefore as certainly as Christ is there, he will bring them thither too in the appointed time. They, by virtue of this union, are said to be already "in heavenly places in Christ Jesus;" (Eph. ii. 6;) they are there in their Head, who hath for them taken possession of those places; and therefore he will surely give them possession. He hath undertaken to do it: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of mine hand." (John x. 27, 28.) And Christ will make good his undertaking. As he hath made good his undertaking in purchasing blessedness for them, so he will make good his undertaking to give them possession of this blessedness; therefore pardoned persons shall certainly attain unto it.

ARG. IV. The fourth argument may be drawn from *the right which pardoned persons have unto eternal blessedness.*—Having a right to it, they shall certainly attain it. God will not, cannot do them that wrong to keep them out of that inheritance, or deny them that blessedness, which they can show a right unto. Pardoned persons have a double right to eternal blessedness: 1. The right of justification. 2. The right of adoption.

1. *They have a right of justification.*—Wherein they are not only acquitted from guilt, but accepted as perfectly righteous in God's sight, through the imputation of Christ's perfect righteousness: and so they have received in the second Adam that right to eternal life, which they lost in the first Adam; and it is a righteous thing with God to give them this eternal life and blessedness, which perfect righteousness doth entitle unto.

2. *They have the right of adoption as believers.*—They are the children of God: "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." (Gal. iii. 26.) And as children they are heirs: "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ;" (Rom. viii. 17;) and as heirs they have right to the eternal inheritance, and they shall certainly attain it.

ARG. V. The fifth argument may be drawn from *the certainty of all pardoned persons' perseverance in grace unto the end.*—All such as persevere in grace unto the end, shall certainly obtain eternal blessedness: "He that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved." (Matt. xxiv. 13.) "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev. ii. 10.) "Who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory

and honour and immortality, eternal life." (Rom. ii. 6, 7.) All pardoned persons shall persevere in grace unto the end: they shall not only persevere through faith, (1 Peter i. 5,) but they shall persevere in it: God will "fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness in believers, and the work of faith with power." (2 Thess. i. 11.) God will keep them in his hand, "out of which none is able to pluck them." (John x. 29.) "He that hath begun a good work in them will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." (Phil. i. 6.) God hath promised them to enable them to persevere: "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. 40.) The scripture is very full and clear in the doctrine of the true believers' perseverance: And, all pardoned persons being believers, as I have already showed, all pardoned persons shall persevere to the end, and therefore shall certainly attain [the] future eternal blessedness of heaven.

THIRDLY. The third particular to be spoken unto is, *to show how this future eternal blessedness of heaven doth render pardoned persons blessed here upon the earth.*—This will appear in these following particulars:—

1. *Pardoned persons have a sight of their future blessedness, and the excellency of it.*

(1.) *They have a sight of the eternal blessedness itself.*—"Christ hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." (2 Tim. i. 10.) The Lord hath made a clear revelation, in his gospel, unto them, of that eternal life and blessedness which he hath laid up in heaven for them. This in former ages and generations was not made known to the sons of men, as now it is made known unto them by the Spirit of Christ in the gospel. Man, by his fall, hath lost his eyes, and cannot find the way unto Paradise; and this is one part of his misery,—that he doth not know what his chief happiness is, nor how it is to be obtained. The heathen philosophers have had several hundred opinions concerning the chief good, and in all mistaken. The heathen poets had foolish and groundless fancies of the Elysian pleasures and delights, which the souls of the virtuous should enjoy in the other world; but they were in the dark as to the true discovery of heaven. The saints themselves had the future happiness of heaven discovered in a dark way, under types, figures, and shadows; the earthly Canaan typifying the heavenly Canaan; the Jerusalem below shadowing forth the Jerusalem which is above; the holy of holies, in the temple made with hands, figuring the holy place made without hands, eternal in the heavens. But now the darkness is past, and the true light shineth, the shadows are fled, the veil before the holiest is rent, and the cloud in the temple removed; so that now with open face, though still in a glass, the glory which is above may be seen. The gospel doth reveal what man's chiefest happiness is, and wherein it doth consist; that it doth not consist in earthly riches, nor worldly honours, nor Epicurean pleasures, nor the Stoic's apathy, nor the Platonist's dark contemplation of ideas, nor the Peripatetic's exercise of moral virtues; but that God is the Chief Good of the children of men: the gospel reveals God in the face of Jesus Christ; and that man's chief happiness doth consist in the vision and fruition of him begun here, and which will be perfected in glory hereafter. The

gospel reveals heaven to pardoned sinners, discovers the holy of holies that is above, and the way to it, as well as the glories that are in it. And pardoned sinners have not only a notional knowledge of the chief happiness hereafter, but,

(2.) *They have a sight of the excellency thereof.*—Which cannot be seen by any carnal eye : and this they have by the eye of faith and the light of the Spirit. By the eye of faith, heaven is realized to them, and made evident to their view in its transcendent excellency ; “ faith being the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.” (Heb. xi. 1.) But this, as the eye of faith, is enlightened by “ the Spirit of wisdom and revelation,” whereby they perceive “ the riches of the glory of his inheritance.” (Eph. i. 17, 18.) When the apostle, speaking of those things which God hath prepared for them that love him, saith, that “ neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him ; ” yet, “ God,” saith he, “ hath revealed these things to us by his Spirit. (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.) This foresight of heaven, and something (although comparatively little) of the glory and excellency thereof, do render pardoned persons blessed even in this world.

2. That which doth further contribute to the present blessedness of pardoned persons, is not only their foresight of future blessedness, but also *their hopes of it, that they shall one day have possession of so great felicity.*—They are blessed now in hopes of what they shall be : they carry about with them in their bosoms the greatest hopes of any in the world ; and their hopes are such as shall “ not make them ashamed.” (Rom. v. 5.) The hopes of worldlings make them ashamed, in that either they fall short of the thing which they hope for, God’s providence oftentimes bringing upon them unthought-of crosses and unexpected disappointments, yea, (that which is quite contrary to their hopes,) disgrace instead of honour, poverty instead of riches, trouble instead of peace, pain instead of pleasure ; yea, sudden death, which cuts off them and their hopes together. Or if they attain the thing which they hoped for, they are ashamed of their hopes, in that they are always disappointed of that satisfaction and contentment which they looked for in the thing. The waters of the cistern cannot quench the thirst of man’s desire ; the creatures cannot give more than they have ; and they who hope for contentment in any thing beneath the Chief Good, must needs meet with a disappointment. Riches may fill the house, gold and silver may fill the bags ; but none of these things can fill the heart. Honour and esteem of men may swell and puff up the mind, but the soul cannot be filled unto satisfaction with air and wind. Sensual delights may cloy the appetite, but the desires of the soul are too high and capacious for such things to fill up. So that worldlings’ hopes must needs one way or other make them ashamed, and so will the hopes of the hypocrite too. But the hopes of pardoned persons, which they have of future blessedness, have an excellency in them beyond the hopes of all others, and they shall never be ashamed of them. The happiness [which] they hope for, they shall certainly have ; none can deprive them of it. Men cannot deprive them : they may take away their earthly inheritance, but they cannot touch their heavenly inheritance. Devils cannot deprive them : they may

attempt it, but they cannot effect it. Death cannot deprive them : death will bereave of whatever riches of the world any of them have ; but it will put them into the possession of their treasures in heaven. None can deprive them but God : and God will not do it, as hath been already proved ; and therefore their hopes are of a certain thing, which they shall not fail of ; and withal they know that the happiness of heaven will exceed all their expectations, even the highest, which ever they have had of satisfaction and contentment there ; that they shall find more sweetness and joy there than ever hath entered into their hearts to conceive ; and therefore their hopes shall not make them ashamed ; yea, in their very hopes of heaven, especially at some times, they find more real satisfaction, than ever was found by any in the fullest and sweetest enjoyment which they have had of the good things of this life.

3. *Pardoned persons have the beginnings of future blessedness here, in this life, in the work of grace, and sometimes foretastes and first-fruits of it, through the witness, seal, and earnest of the Spirit ; and this renders them blessed in this life.*

(1.) *They have the beginnings of heaven in the work of grace upon their hearts.*—Grace is the beginning of glory. Grace is glory in the bud ; glory is grace in the flower : and when the work of grace is carried on, the scripture saith, that they proceed from glory to 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.) They are happy here, as they have some degrees of that holiness and likeness unto God, in the perfection of which hereafter in heaven their perfect happiness doth consist.

(2.) *They have the beginnings of heaven in the first-fruits and foretastes of it through the witness, seal, and earnest of the Spirit.*—God sometimes gives them first-fruits of the heavenly Canaan. He sends in a few bunches of those sweet grapes that are there, and lets them have some foretastes of those soul-ravishing heavenly joys which hereafter will be full and for ever abiding. He sometimes takes them up into the mount, and gives them a Pisgah-sight of the Land of Promise, through the prospective-glass of his ordinances. He brings some even to the gate of the New Jerusalem in their heavenly contemplations, and lets out such beams of that glorious heavenly light, and drops into their hearts such taste of future joys, through the sudden illapses of the Spirit of glory upon them, that they are rapt up into an ecstasy ; and such a sweetness they feel in their spirits as is ineffable, such as words cannot utter, nor the minds of any conceive, but those that have had the like. When God giveth them the witness of his Spirit that they shall assuredly attain eternal life, and sealeth them up by his Spirit to the day of redemption, he doth commonly give the earnest also of the Spirit in some soul-ravishing joys ; in comparison of which, the softest pleasures of the flesh, and the sweetest delights that can arise from any objects of sense, are most vain, thin, empty, and not worthy to be named with them. And thus the eternal blessedness which pardoned persons shall have, doth render them blessed here in this life beyond all others, whatever confluence of good things they be surrounded withal. The foresight, first-fruits, hopes, and sweet foretastes of this future blessedness, do sweeten their life ; but especially

they do sweeten their death,—they knowing that death will be their friend, and prove an outlet to all earthly misery, and an inlet to their heavenly glory ; that death will open the prison-doors of this world unto them, and usher them into the palace of the great King. They know, their death will be like a ship to convey them over sea, as it were, from the far, strange, and enemies' country, unto the heavenly country, where their glorious Jehovah their heavenly Father, where the Lord Jesus Christ their elder Brother and dear Saviour, and where the departed saints their chief kindred, are together ; and where their inheritance doth lie, and where they shall take-up their eternal abode. Where pardoned persons have a clear foresight and strong hope of this, death is no more to them than a sleep : they can as willingly put-off their flesh and go into their graves, as they can put-off their clothes at night to go into their beds ; they can as willingly compose themselves to die, as they can compose themselves to sleep after a weary day.

Thus much for the proof of the blessedness of forgiveness, or of all those persons whose sins are pardoned.

QUESTION II. The second question, wherein I must be more short, is, "How this blessedness of forgiveness may be attained?"

That this blessedness of forgiveness may be attained, there are *some things [which] must be known and believed*, and there are *some things [which] must be done and practised*.

1. *Some things must be believed*.—I shall instance in one or two chief doctrines of the gospel, which all sinners must know and believe, if they would attain forgiveness of sin. The first is, *the doctrine of Christ's satisfaction unto God's justice for the sins of men*. The second is, *the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ*.

(1.) *Sinners must know and believe the doctrine of Christ's satisfaction unto the justice of God for the sins of men*.—To discourse fully of this great doctrine of Christ's satisfaction, would require a treatise which might fill a great volume. But I must comprise it within a little room, who am to speak of it only in the direction of a sermon.

Briefly : (i.) That there is absolute need of satisfaction to God's justice for the sins of men, without which forgiveness of sins would be impossible and utterly unattainable, is evident both from the nature of God's justice, which doth oblige him to punish all sinners eternally without it, and from the truth of God's threatenings, wherein he hath revealed that he will thus punish them without it.

(ii.) That there is need of the satisfaction of Christ is evident, because sinners themselves, being finite, cannot give that satisfaction unto God, which shall bear any proportion to the demands of his infinite justice ; and if any be in a capacity to give it, it must be such an one as is both innocent, and so cannot suffer for his own faults, and whose person is of infinite dignity, that thence may arise [such] an equivalency of merit in his sufferings as may prove satisfactory to God's infinite justice : and because no mere man, being a finite creature, hath this dignity, and God cannot suffer, because this would argue weakness and infirmity, which is infinitely removed from him ; therefore, it is requisite that the person who can satisfy should be God-man, that as in one nature he may be capable of suffering, so the other nature

may put a virtue and efficacy upon it; and such a person was Jesus Christ.

(iii.) That Jesus Christ hath done that which is sufficient to satisfy God's justice for the sins of men, is evident from his death and other sufferings which we have upon record in the gospel: which sufferings were not for himself, he being an innocent person; and it would have argued injustice in God, had he permitted such sufferings to have been laid on his body, especially had he himself inflicted such dreadful inward sufferings on his soul, were it not that he stood in the room of sinners, and endured all these sufferings for their sins, that he might give satisfaction to his justice hereby.

(iv.) That Christ's sufferings have given to God satisfaction, and that he hath accepted of this satisfaction in the behalf of sinners, is evident from the compact and covenant which he made with Christ, that if he would offer-up this sacrifice of himself, he would be well-pleased, and sinners should hereby be justified; from his sending his Son into the world for this very end, and anointing him to the office of High-Priest, that he might first make satisfaction, and then intercession, for the people; from his owning him when here, raising him when dead, receiving him to glory when raised, which he would not have done, had not he accepted his satisfaction; from his covenant [which] he hath through him made with man, and promises therein of remission of sins through his blood; which he would never have made, had not Christ's death given him satisfaction. Moreover, all those places of scripture which speak of Christ's death as a sacrifice, as a ransom, as a punishment, which he endured that sinners might be, and whereby believers are, actually reconciled unto God, do clearly and abundantly prove that Christ hath given satisfaction to God's justice, and which God is well-pleased withal.

(v.) That all sinners must know and believe this doctrine of Christ's satisfaction, that they may attain remission of sins, is evident, because God never did, never will, forgive any sin without respect unto it. This way of remission is the chief thing which he hath revealed in the scriptures. In the Old Testament, it was shadowed under the sacrifices for sin which were offered; in the New Testament, it is the end of the revelation of Christ, this being the chief design of his sufferings and death, to give satisfaction to God's justice, in order to the forgiveness of man's sin. And they that are ignorant hereof, or do not believe this, do not know nor believe in Jesus Christ, and him crucified; and therefore cannot obtain forgiveness by his death.

(2.) *Sinners must know and believe the doctrine of justification by Christ's righteousness, that they may attain remission of sins.*

(i.) They must know the nature of justification itself, that it doth consist in the remission of our sins, and the acceptance of our persons as perfectly righteous in God's sight.

(ii.) They must know that they have no righteousness of their own to present God withal, because guilty of sin, and the least guilt is inconsistent with a perfect righteousness; and therefore if they were, as some are, really holy, yet that they could not be accepted as perfectly righteous in God's sight upon the account of a perfect righteousness of their

own, which none here do attain unto; much less when they are naturally void and empty of all good and real holiness, and polluted all over with sin.

(iii.) They must know that the righteousness of Christ is perfect, and was intended for them, and held forth to them; which they must submit unto, and accept of, if they would be justified in God's sight.

(iv.) That the righteousness of Christ is made theirs by faith, God imputing it and accounting it unto believers, as if it were their own, and they had wrought it out in their own persons. This way of justification by Christ, all must know, and be persuaded of, that would obtain justification, which doth include forgiveness of sin.

2. *Some things must be done and practised by sinners, that they may attain this blessedness of forgiveness.*

(1.) They must get conviction of sin. (2.) They must make confession of sin. (3.) They must by faith make application of Jesus Christ. (4.) They must forsake sin. (5.) They must make supplication and earnest prayer unto God for pardoning mercy. (6.) They must forgive others.

(1.) Sinners, would you attain the blessedness of forgiveness? *Labour to get conviction of sin.*—Get conviction of your original sin, the guilt of Adam's first sin, in which you are involved, your present emptiness of all spiritual good, and the universal depravation of all the powers and faculties of your souls with inherent pollution, which renders you opposite unto all real good, and naturally prone unto nothing but evil. Get conviction of your actual sins, of all your heinous breaches of God's law, whether the first or second table of it;—whether sins against God more immediately, his nature, his worship, his name, his day; or against your neighbour, whether relative sins, or sins against the life or chastity or estate or good name of any;—and get conviction that all inordinate motions that have not the consent of the will, and much more inordinate affections which are influenced by it, are sinful and provoking unto God. Get also convictions of your more heinous disobedience to the gospel,—what an aggravation it is of all your other sins that you have repented of none, when you have so much need, and have been so often called hereunto; what an affront is it unto God, a disparagement unto Christ, that you have neglected your salvation by him, and have been guilty of unbelief in not receiving, yea, refusing Christ, so able and willing to save you, and when you have had such frequent and earnest as well as gracious and free tenders of him! Get conviction of the guilt of your sins, and what an obligation you are under hereby to undergo eternal destruction in the flames of hell-fire for it; and let this awaken you out of your security. Let the thoughts of this pierce and wound your consciences, and make you cry out, with those sinners who were convinced by Peter's sermon: "When they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts ii. 37.) Get conviction also of the horrid baseness and ungratefulness of sin, as it dishonours and displeases that God by whom you were at first created, are continually preserved and maintained; and who, though he could so easily destroy you, and

glorify his justice hereby, yet is both patient with you, and willing also to be reconciled unto you, and sends his ambassadors in his name to tell you that he entreats you that you would be reconciled; and let these considerations affect you with ingenuous grief for sin. Lastly: Get conviction of the defilement of sin, how your souls are stained by it, and hereby degenerated and debased into a lower degree of vileness than is in the beast that perisheth; yea, that hereby you are become, without regeneration, and until your souls are washed, more loathsome in the eyes of God than the most nasty thing in the world is in your eyes.

(2.) *Make confession of sin.*—In some cases it is requisite you should confess some sins unto man; but it is absolutely, universally necessary in order to forgiveness, that you should confess your sins unto God; the promise of pardoning mercy is made to confession: “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.” (Prov. xxviii. 13.) David found by experience the evil of covering and keeping close his sins, and the benefit of acknowledgment and confession: “When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thine hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.” (Psalm xxxii. 3—5.) Sinners, make a full confession of your sins, that you may have a full pardon and discharge. Do not hide any sin as a sweet morsel under your tongue. It is a vain thing to seek and endeavour the hiding of any sin from Him who is omniscient: God hath knowledge of all your iniquities, do you therefore acknowledge all unto him. Make free confession of your sins. Stay not till God force you by his scourges, and even drag you unto it by his cords of affliction; but let it be your voluntary act, and be ingenuous herein; mingle not your confession with excuses and extenuations. Say not, though you are bad, yet you are not so bad as others; that your hearts are good, though your lives have been naught; that such and such gross sins were your slips and failings; that you were overtaken, over-persuaded, and drawn unto such wicked practices by your companions; and so, by transferring your guilt, endeavour to make yourselves as innocent as you can. This is abominable in the sight of God, and a certain sign of sin’s dominion; which is inconsistent with the remission of it, and will shut you out from pardoning mercy. But, in confession of your sins, acknowledge yourselves to have been the chief of sinners. Sinners, take all the blame to yourselves, and set your sins out in the deepest crimson and scarlet colours, and with all their heinous circumstances and aggravations: tell God, that your heart is the worst part, and if there have been some abominations found in your lives, there are a thousandfold more abominations in your hearts. Confess your sins with humility and self-loathing; say, with Agur: “Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man;” (Prov. xxx. 2;) with David, “So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee;” (Psalm lxxiii. 22;) with Job, “I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” (Job xlii. 6.) Confess your sins with

shame, like Ezra : " O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift my face to thee, my God ; for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens." (Ezra ix. 6.) Confess your sins with grief and godly sorrow, like David : " I will declare mine iniquity ; I will be sorry for my sin." (Psalm xxxviii. 18.)

(3.) *Make application of Christ by faith, that you may attain forgiveness.*—" There is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby " you can be pardoned and " saved." (Acts iv. 12.) And " he is able to save " you, and procure a pardon for you in the uttermost extent of your most heinous guilt. (Heb. vii. 25.) And the reason is given in the same verse : " Because he ever liveth to make intercession " for sinners. It is his office as High-Priest, wherein he is most " merciful and faithful," to " make reconciliation for the sins of the people." (Heb. ii. 17.) Christ is near to the Father, being at his right hand in heaven ; and hath great interest in him, being his dearly-beloved Son ; and his intercession for pardon is always accepted, it being for no more than what himself hath purchased, and what his Father hath promised : and therefore you that are the worst of sinners have great encouragement to come unto Christ, and to make application of him. You have his promise, that whosoever cometh unto him, he will in no wise cast out ; (John vi. 37 ;) and if you apply yourselves unto him, and apply unto yourselves his merits and righteousness by believing, you shall certainly attain the forgiveness of all your sins, however numerous and heinous they have been. " To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts x. 43.) And our Saviour himself telleth us : " 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.) And the apostle doth discourse at large, in the former part of his epistle to the Romans, concerning justification, which he proveth by manifold arguments that it cannot be [by] works, that it must be by faith ; therefore by faith make application of Christ and his imputed righteousness, and rest therein only, that you may be justified, that you may be pardoned and saved.

(4.) *Forsake every sin, that you may attain the forgiveness of it.*—" He that confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall have mercy." (Prov. xxviii. 13.) " Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts ; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him ; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon " him. (Isai. lv. 7.) " Wash you, make you clean ; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes ; cease to do evil ; learn to do well ; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord : Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." (Isai. i. 16—18.) You must loathe your sins, that you may be pardoned ; and withal you must leave them, you must cease from doing evil, if you would have God cease from his displeasure : and unless you do forsake your sins, never expect that God should forgive them. There must be a returning to God, that you may be received unto favour ; and this cannot be without a turning from sin.

It would be a dishonour unto God to pardon you whilst that you continue in your rebellions, and wage war still against heaven by going on still in your trespasses.

(5.) *Make your supplication unto God, and be earnest in prayer unto him, that he would forgive you your sins.*—It is against God that your sins have been committed, and it is God's prerogative to remit and pardon; and though he pardon freely for his name's sake, yet he will be inquired after and sought unto for his high favour: "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. Put me in remembrance," &c. (Isai. xliii. 25, 26.) If you would have pardon, you must ask it; if you would find God's favour, you must seek it; if you desire the door of mercy to be opened unto you, you must knock at the door by earnest prayer. (Matt. vii. 7.) Hence are David's earnest cries in prayer for pardoning mercy, in so many of his psalms, especially Psalm li., in the first verse: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions." "Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation," &c. (Verses 9, 14.) Be earnest in prayer at the throne of grace for this blessedness of forgiveness; wrestle with God by importunate supplications, fill your mouths with arguments. Plead the gracious disposition of God, the multitude of his tender mercies, and the riches of his free grace. Plead the glory of his name, which would greatly be advanced and admired, if your great sins might be pardoned. Plead the merits of Christ, and satisfaction given to his justice by his Son, together with his intercession for you at his right hand. Plead the promises of the covenant of grace, and his faithfulness, which doth engage him to fulfil them. Humble, believing, fervent prayer will prevail for forgiveness.

(6.) *Forgive others, if you would that God should forgive you.*—"Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses." (Matt. vi. 12, 14, 15.) If you do not forgive the hundred pence of smaller offences unto your fellow-servants, you will be called to an account, and imprisoned in hell, and there tormented, for the ten thousand talents of heinous transgressions which you have committed against your Lord. (Matt. xviii., at the latter end of that chapter.) If you bear hatred and malice and revenge in your hearts against others, (whatever their offences, their wrongs, or injuries have been,) you put yourselves out of capacity of obtaining pardoning mercy. Do not say, "I forgive such an one who hath wronged me, but I will never forget him." For this is a deceit of your hearts, whereby you seek to stop the mouth of your consciences, that they may not trouble you by these scriptures; for if you do not forget injuries, so as to carry it toward such persons as if they had not wronged you, so as to love them cordially, and to be ready to show kindness unto them, you do not forgive them, and so you cannot be forgiven by God. If then you would be pardoned by God, you must from the heart forgive others: receive the exhortation of the apostle: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour,

and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." (Eph. iv. 31, 32.) Thus I have finished my answer unto the two queries, *Wherein doth appear the blessedness of forgiveness?* and *How this blessedness may be attained;* and now give me leave to borrow a little room for some application.

APPLICATION.

I might speak much here by way of comfort unto pardoned persons: but the most that I have already spoken, yea, all that I have spoken under the first query, may be turned into *an use of comfort* to yourselves; and therefore, referring you thither, I shall pass you by, and bend my speech only unto you that are unpardoned; too many of whom are to be found in every assembly, and therefore I cannot think that this assembly is free.

I shall take leave to chide you, in *an use of reproof*; endeavour to awaken you, in *an use of terror*; and, in the conclusion, press you to endeavour after this blessedness of forgiveness, in *an use of exhortation*.

USE I. *For reproof.* — Is there such blessedness in forgiveness? Whence is it then that so many of you neglect this blessedness, in the neglect of your pardon? Are not all of you sinners? Have not all of you need of forgiveness? Will not your own consciences tell you that forgiveness is a great privilege? And have not ministers often told you of this privilege, and the way of attaining it? Hath not God by them held forth a pardon to you, and used many arguments with you, that you would accept it? Whence is it then that so many of you slight and undervalue it, as if it were of no worth? Whence is it that so many of you are without pardon when proffered, when none of you are without sins often committed, and those highly aggravated, and whereby your souls are so greatly endangered? May not robbers, and murderers, and other notorious malefactors, rise up in judgment against you that are without a pardon? When such persons are apprehended, found guilty, and condemned, though but unto a temporal death, they will make all friends, and use all means to escape; and, O how welcome is a pardon to them! And yet, though you are all guilty of sin, and condemned for it unto eternal death, and a pardon is purchased, proclaimed, and proffered unto you, there are too many of you that slight and neglect it, that have no earnest desire after it, and hitherto have not been persuaded by any arguments to make use of the means which God hath appointed, with any diligence, for the obtaining of it. Who is there that to any purpose doth look after a pardon? Who do diligently hear for it, earnestly pray for it? Who do make full and free confession of sin, that you may attain remission of it? Who do prize Christ, and by faith make application of him, that they may have a pardon by him? Who do forsake sin, which God absolutely requires of all to whom he doth forgive sin? Who do, when injured, heartily forgive others, as they desire God would forgive them? Sinners, will not many of your consciences accuse you of unpardoned guilt, unto which you have added the neglect of forgiveness? And is not your sin

hereby doubled, and most highly aggravated, and the guilt of it fastened upon you?

USE 11. Let me tell you, *by way of terror* for your awakening, that God is displeased with all workers of iniquity, but he is most highly displeased with you that slight his mercy.—Your sins are inexcusable, your condemnation is unavoidable, and your punishment hereafter in hell will be most dreadful and intolerable. Possibly now you are careless and secure; sin is sweet and conscience is quiet; you are at ease and conscience asleep; but will this ease and sleep always continue? Is there not a time coming when you shall be awakened? If you are not awakened under God's word, may not God awaken you under his rod? If you are not awakened under God's threatenings, will you not awake when he cometh to execution? If you are secure in the midst of outward peace and prosperity, can you be secure in the midst of trouble and adversity? Think what you will do when death doth approach. Think what a dreadful aspect unpardoned sin will have, when you are brought down unto the sides of the pit, to the brink and border of eternity, and when you are summoned to make your appearance before the Highest Majesty. O the horror that then will seize you! O the fearfulness that then will surprise you! To have the black guilt of drunkenness or swearing, of uncleanness or deceiving, or any other iniquity, to stare you then in the face, O how dismal will it be and affrighting! And think with what rage and fury your consciences will then reflect upon your fore-past sins! especially your neglect of a pardon, then unattainable; and how tormenting will this be unto you! You may then cry out, "Lord, have mercy on us! Christ, have mercy on us!" But will God then hear you who have refused to hearken unto him? Will Christ regard you, who have neglected, refused, and shut the door of your hearts against, him all your days?

But, sinners, what will you do at the day of judgment, when the Lord Jesus shall come in flaming fire to take vengeance upon you for unpardoned sins? That great day will certainly come, and it will quickly be here. Time runs away swiftly, and it will quickly be run out. Yet a little while and the angel will lift up his hand, and cry with a loud voice, "and swear by Him that liveth for ever and ever, that time shall be no longer." (Rev. x. 5, 6.) Then the mystery will be finished, the prophecy accomplished, and the whole frame of this visible world dissolved! The sun then and the moon will be darkened, and the stars will fall unto the earth, as the fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind; and the heavens themselves then shall be rolled together as a great scroll, and so pass away with a great noise. The earth and all the elements shall be on fire, and consume away, on that day, when the Lord Jesus Christ shall appear from heaven with millions of mighty angels, in power and brightness of majesty; and then you must come out of your graves, and will stand trembling before Christ's great tribunal, and none of you will be able to hide yourselves under any rock or mountain from his angry face. Then, then you will fully know what a privilege it is to be pardoned, when you see where pardoned persons are placed, when you see them gathered to the right hand of the great Judge, and there acquitted openly, owned

graciously, and crowned by him with honour and glory, and invited by him to take possession of those eternal habitations of rest and joy in his kingdom prepared for them by his Father. But, O the tearings of spirit, and heart-vexing, tormenting grief, which you will have, that no place is found for you amongst them, that through your neglect of pardoning mercy you have forfeited and eternally lost a share in eternal glory; and not only so, but have by sin also plunged yourselves into a bottomless gulf of endless misery! Think how dreadful the irreversible sentence of condemnation will be unto you: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

Alas! alas! sinners, what will you do? No thought can conceive what your horror will be, when you come to reap the bitter fruit of all your unpardoned sins. It is the punishment of hell, sinners, which the guilt of sin unremoved doth oblige you to undergo; and therefore I am sent this day to forewarn you, and in the name of my Master to foretell you, that if you do not now sue out for and obtain this forgiveness of sin, your sin hereafter will bring eternal ruin and destruction of soul and body in hell.—Without a pardon, profaneness will be your ruin. Some of you, it may be, can swear, and curse, and blaspheme the name of God; hereafter God will swear in his wrath that you shall not enter into his rest, and you shall be banished out of Christ's presence with a curse: "Depart from me, ye cursed," &c. Those tongues which have been so liberal of oaths and blasphemies, must be tormented in flames of fire, without one drop of water to cool them.—Without a pardon, drunkenness will be your ruin. You that have so often inflamed yourselves with wine and strong drink, God will inflame you with the wine of his vengeance; he will make you to drink the dregs of his wrath, which is at the bottom of the cup of his indignation.—Without a pardon, uncleanness will be your ruin. Your pleasures are empty and of short continuance, but your pains will be full hereafter, and they will abide for ever.—Without a pardon, unrighteousness will be your ruin. Your unrighteous gains, one day, will prove your unspeakable loss; and God will be the avenger of all such upon you as have been wronged and defrauded by you.—Without a pardon, your neglect of Christ and salvation will be your ruin; and if you persevere in this neglect, it is impossible that you should escape.

Sinners, think seriously and think frequently of your unpardoned iniquities, and withal think of the dreadful punishment they will bring upon you; think of your eternal damnation unto the most exquisite torments of hell; and then drink on, swear on, and scoff your fill, be unholy and profane, unjust and unclean, if you think good: but know, that for all these sins God will bring you to judgment; know, that these iniquities, unpardoned, will be your ruin. Should I tell you of one that were condemned for some vile fact to be flayed alive, or burnt alive, or sawn asunder, or dragged to pieces with wild horses, or starved with hunger and cold, or any other ways cruelly tortured to death; but that he might escape all this misery, if he would accept of a pardon ready provided for him, and withal leave off such vile facts for the future; you would count him worse than mad, should he neglect his pardon, and

expose himself to ruin and misery through his carelessness and obstinacy. And yet, though you are condemned for sin to far worse torment and misery, that which is more dreadful than ten thousand painful deaths, and all this mischief and punishment may be avoided and escaped, if you will accept of the pardon which Christ hath provided, and in the gospel is proffered unto you, and withal [if you will] break off your sins by repentance; yet no words or arguments will persuade you to use the means of prevention, but still you live in the neglect of pardon and "so great salvation," and are secure, however great your danger be. O the folly and strange madness of unconverted sinners! O the unspeakable sottishness and senselessness they are under! Although we make it appear to their consciences that their condition is unutterably miserable, they are not moved, except it be with choler against the minister that warns them of the sword of God's vengeance which hangeth over them, and they champ at the bridle that would hold them from running to their destruction. But O that you would rather turn your anger against your sins, and say, "This iniquity will be my ruin; and that sin, without pardon, will be my damnation!"

USE III. Therefore, in the next place, *let me exhort all of you that lie under the guilt of sin, that you would labour after this blessedness of forgiveness.*—O that you would pity your own souls! Think what provision you have made for them. Think whither they are likely to go, upon their separation from your bodies; and what you will do, at the last day, when Christ cometh to judge and punish unpardoned sinners. Think how you will be able to dwell with devouring fire, to inhabit everlasting burnings. Methinks you should take-up such thoughts as these, and argue thus with yourselves:—

"What! shall I undo myself for a filthy lust? Shall I lose my soul to gain a little uncertain earthly riches? Shall I forfeit a crown of glory for the empty honour of this world? Shall I cast myself into everlasting horror and pain for a little vain, fading, carnal delight and pleasure? Can I be contented to be tormented for ever in hell to satisfy the desires of my flesh on earth, and that when they will never be satisfied? Shall I hug a viper in my bosom that will kill me? harbour lusts in my heart that will slay me? Shall I dishonour God, and damn my own soul, to gratify the devil my enemy, and please my flesh which will soon be turned into dirt and rottenness, and withal throw away the hopes of a glorious resurrection for my body hereby? Away then, ye foolish, filthy lusts! I will no more hearken to you, or be entangled or enslaved by you. Begone, thou deluding, tempting devil! I will lend my ear no longer to thy lying suggestions, nor yield any more to thy beguiling and bewitching temptations. Farewell, thou glozing, flattering world, with all thy charms and allurements! Thy gold is but dross, thy wine mixed with water, thy honour but wind and vanity, thy delights are bitter-sweets, such as will end in death and ruin. I will choose another portion, and look after a better blessedness, than thou canst give me, even the blessedness of forgiveness, which will bring me unto eternal blessedness."

Methinks you should take no sleep nor rest, and find no comfort in house, or trade, or friends, or any thing, until the anger of God be

appeased, your sins all pardoned, and so your souls set in safety from all that ruin unto which they are exposed by unpardoned iniquity. The absolute necessity of forgiveness should quicken you to look after it. You have not so much need of food to remove your hunger, as you have need of mercy to remove your guilt. You have not so much need of clothes to cover your bodies, as you have need of righteousness to cover your iniquities. Better be starved than damned; better be hanged than burned; better be exposed to the misery of the weather, and any bodily distemper, than to be exposed unto the storms and strokes of God's vengeance, and the eternal ruin of body and soul in hell, which there is no possibility of escaping without a pardon. And that which may encourage you to seek after forgiveness is the attainableness of it, and that by the vilest and most guilty amongst you. Others have obtained pardoning mercy that have been found as guilty: Manasseh was pardoned who was so heinous a transgressor; Paul, who was so zealous a persecutor; Mary Magdalene, who was possessed with seven devils; the Corinthians, some of whom were idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, extortioners, drunkards, revilers, yet they were "justified in the name of the Lord Jesus;" some of them who had imbrued their hands in Christ's blood, had the guilt of their sins washed away by it. There is mercy enough in God to give a pardon for the greatest transgression; there is merit enough in Christ to purchase a pardon, and prevalency in his intercession to procure it, whatever your offences have been. The invitation unto Christ for remission and salvation is general; none are excluded, but such as exclude themselves. The promises are full: crimson sins, such as are of the deepest dye, God promiseth to make as wool; and the promises are free; the acceptance of a pardon by faith makes it yours, without any price or merit on your part.

We ministers have a commission to preach remission of sins in the name of Christ, and to declare to you the glad tidings of salvation; yea, we have instructions, as ambassadors, in the name of God and Christ to beseech you that you would be reconciled, that you would accept of forgiveness: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God." (2 Cor. v. 20.) Give me leave to press this argument upon you: the great God of heaven and earth, so glorious in holiness and righteousness, is so infinitely merciful and gracious, as to beseech you that you would be reconciled, although you are so infinitely inferior unto him. He condescends to entreat you, not that you would show kindness unto him, but that you would show kindness to yourselves, and accept of the greatest kindness at his hands,—of forgiveness and reconciliation. God might command; and, upon once the least refusal, he might execute his vengeance upon you. But although some of you have stopped your ears so long, refused his gracious proffer so often; though you have abused his kindness, trampled upon his patience, slighted his invitations, despised his threatenings, disregarded his promises, and, turning all his rich grace into wantonness, do continue still in your disobedience; yet the Lord doth again make suit unto you, stretcheth forth his hands unto you, however disobedient and gainsaying you have been, and by me doth entreat you that you would be reconciled. Need we use entreaties with

condemned malefactors to accept of a pardon? If we had commission to preach pardoning mercy unto devils, would they need entreaties to accept? Would they be fooled-out of such a gracious proffer by any, as you hitherto have been by them? Sinners, I beseech you, in the name of the great and glorious Jehovah, and the Lord Jesus Christ your gracious Redeemer, that you would be reconciled, and that you would befriend yourselves, and accept of the forgiveness of all your sins. I entreat you that you would not, through neglect of pardon, and perseverance in a sinful course, irrecoverably ruin and damn your souls. Methinks my heart doth yearn over you, and bleed for you, who are wounding yourselves, and rushing-on inconsiderately toward the place of everlasting weeping and woe, from whence there is no coming back, no coming out for ever. Sinners, why should you be so hard to be persuaded, without any further delay, to be reconciled unto God? Why do I need to use so many entreaties? May I at length prevail with you, that you would not be miserable, and prove your own murderers; that you would be blessed here and hereafter, through your ready acceptation of pardoning mercy? What answer must I carry back to my Master, who sent me this day to proclaim in your ears the blessedness of forgiveness, and to use entreaties with you in his name that you would become thus blessed? Must I complain?—

“Lord, there are a company of obstinate sinners, whom I have entreated to accept of pardon. But there is not the least spark of ingenuity amongst them, nor the least sense of their sins upon them. Had I been to preach to beasts or fowls, to the earth or stones, they would have been as much moved as these sinners. Lord, I spent my strength and pains, my voice and lungs, for nought. I know not how to persuade, I know not which way to prevail with them. I thought, thy beseechings would have taken with them; that the entreaties of God, like a sweet flame, would have melted their hearts as wax within them. I thought, when thou didst vouchsafe by me to request them to leave their sins, and be reconciled unto thee, that this would marvellously have affected them, and that they would readily have complied in a thing so necessary for them, and so much for their own happiness. I did begin with terror to them, and yet they were not affrighted; but I hoped, when I came to end with mercy, and to speak in the soft and sweet language of thine entreaties, and to urge this most winning argument of thy requests unto them, that then they would immediately have yielded, and most thankfully have accepted so gracious proffers made unto them. But, alas, Lord! I found it far otherwise than I expected. If their ears were open, their hearts were shut up; and they would not receive my message, which from thee, in faithfulness and tenderness, I delivered unto them. And what may I farther hope will prevail with them, if thy entreaties be thus disregarded?”

Must I thus complain: or may I have occasion to say?—“Lord, I have been preaching the blessedness of forgiveness, which I backed with thine entreaties of sinners that they would accept of it; and, through thy blessing, the arguments I used were not altogether in vain. Some sinners, that had stouted it out a long time against thee, began at length to relent and yield, when they heard thine entreaties of them to be reconciled. Lord, I heard scalding sighs break forth from such and such,

whose hearts were breaking within them for their sins. I saw brinish tears trickling down from some eyes, proceeding from a spring of godly sorrow within, newly given them by the Spirit. How did they look and seem to long after thy salvation! How greedily did they hearken, even like the condemned malefactor, when he hath first tidings of a pardon! I hope, they are gone home to entreat that of thee which thou hast by me been entreating of them to accept of. O Lord, grant them their desires! Be reconciled to that drunkard and unclean wretch! Forgive the iniquities of that swearer, sabbath-breaker, and profane sinner!"

What do you say, sinners? Will you send me back to my Master saddened or rejoiced? Accept of my message, and it will be the joy of my heart; yea, it will be the joy of angels in heaven; and however it will cost you some grief and tears in your repentance of sin at the first, yet if you so seek after this blessedness of forgiveness as to obtain it, the issue will be joy to yourselves; you will have the beginnings of joy here, and in the other world your joys will be full, ineffable, and eternal. Methinks some of you seem almost persuaded. O that you were quite persuaded, without further delay, to put in practice the directions given for the obtaining the blessedness of forgiveness!

SERMON XXX.

BY THE REV. MATTHEW SYLVESTER,

OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

HOW WE MAY OVERCOME INORDINATE LOVE OF LIFE AND FEAR
OF DEATH.

But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.—Acts xx. 24.

THE context tells us, that the apostle was now at Miletus; (verse 17;) and from hence he sends to Ephesus, and calls for the elders of the church. Now these elders were not Timothy and Trophimus; for they were in his company already, and had been with him in his journey hither; (verse 4;) but rather those twelve men on whom he laid his hands, and bestowed the Holy Ghost, in order to their ministry at Ephesus, (Acts xix. 1—7,) and the rest whom Timothy had ordained whilst he was there.

From verse 18 of this chapter, we have the apostle's farewell sermon; wherein he clears himself, by close and smart addresses to their consciences and experiences, as to all charges and surmises of ministerial miscarriages among them, (verses 18, 27,) and works them all within the conscience of their ministerial charge and trust from God, to imitate

his ministerial faithfulness, by urging such significant and cogent arguments as were apt and proper to startle and engage them to and in their work. And these arguments are drawn from the present and instantly succeeding circumstances and concernments of the church of God. They were in danger of wolves breaking in upon them, and seducers arising from amongst them; they were the church of God, the price of his blood, committed to the care and guidance of these ministers to whom the apostle spake; and therefore the interest and worth of souls, and their relation to them, and all those sad and dangerous exercises, underminings, and obstructions, which they were sure to meet with in their pastoral work, did call aloud upon them for all possible circumspection, activity, and resolution, in and for their work; of all which, the apostle was an exemplary and awakening instance and example.

My text is the generous heroism of an awakened and prepared heart, occasioned by the tidings that were brought him by the Spirit, who told him there, that bonds and afflictions did abide him in every city. (Verse 23.) Here you may see those sinews cut of hopes and fears, which might obstruct his faith, diligence, and perseverance; he is mortified to all that love of life and fear of death which possibly might control his better prospect, hopes, and work. In the words we have the apostle concerned in reference to a double state:—

1. *As to this mortal life.*—It is implied in the text, and expressed in the context, that it is a theatre of smart contentions and miseries, and that he was concerned in the agonistical exercises thereof.

2. *As to the other life.*—He had the prospect of transcendent joys, exhibited to his views and hopes as the determined and proposed reward of his well-managed exercises; the influences and impressions whereof did strangely invigorate and fix his resolutions to maintain such a masculine frame of spirit as should entertain and answer all the challenges of danger, difficulties, and temptations, and to preserve that necessary liberty from, and useful indifference to, the hopes and love of life, and fears of death and danger, which might secure the spirit and prowess of a resolved and successful valour. Ουδενος λογον ποιουμαι, "I make no reckoning of any thing;" and he grows regardless of his life, and hath mortified the vigour of all the arguments and inducements that can be fetched therefrom. For the utmost reach of rage and villany is to effect no more, and can extend no farther, than the loss of life; (Matt. x. 28;) and all those comforts which are liable to the casualties and sequestrations of transient time, and cannot run parallel with our capacious souls beyond the limits of a dying breath, cannot be valued beyond the value of their end; and therefore he that conquers and subdues the estimation of his life, hath so far overcome all the disturbing and ensnaring influences of hopes and fears relating to it, and derived from it.

Well, we have here an instance and example, in this great and gracious apostle, of a resolved and proficient Christian; yea, and a visible practical demonstration of what blood and spirits are in the veins of Christianity, and are bred there, and what an energy and force there is in one right believing look and glance at things to come. (2 Cor. iv. 16—18; Heb. xii. 2.)

And if it be objected, that, "as the apostle's course was ministerial, so

were his joys which fixed his eye; and therefore in neither can he be proposed to others as their inimitable pattern or exact encouragement, seeing all are not ministers, neither can all expect his exercises, furniture, encouragements, and attainments; and so that we pluck not the fruit from the right tree:—

I answer, This doth not prevent his being our pattern, argument, and encouragement, if but these few things be seriously considered:—

1. *The apostle had a double course to run.*—He had the trust and business of a Christian, as well as of a minister, to discharge. He had a God to please, a soul to save, a hell to escape, a heaven to reach, a heart to cleanse, and sins to mortify, unruly passions and impetuous affections to be curbed and managed by their proper discipline, as well as others. He was a man subject to like passions with ourselves; he dwelt in flesh, and was opposed by the devil, as well as others; he had corruptions to be mortified and pardoned, and loved his life and what might make it comfortable, saving where inordinacies were to be corrected and subdued, because of inconsistency with better work and joys. Yea, he had such forcible inclinations to desire and beg some intermissions of, and respite from, his tedious exercises, as forced him to repair to prayer and arguments to get support, so that he might not *oneri succumbere*, [“fall beneath his burden;”] and thus I understand that “thorn in the flesh,” 2 Cor. xii. 7—10. And so the sense seems facile, and it amounts to this: the apostle had been labouring in the fire for God and for the interest of Christianity, and managed all his exercises in the face of danger; and, growing aged, he was tempted to desire of God, that he might spend the residue of his declining age in liberty and quietness: but when the flesh, so weather-beaten by the storms, grew so desirous of some respite from the severity of travel, chains, and labours, the messenger Satan comes again, threatening and acquainting him with designed and determined repetitions of former buffetings, and the renewals of reproaches, necessities, persecutions, &c., for Christ’s sake; which, when he understood and apprehended that Christ and his gospel were so concerned in them, he thought, and took them as, the matter of his glory, in that they might be serviceable to the interest of Christ, and great occasions of some special illustrations of the remarkable power and grace of Christ: but this, *pace aliorum*, [“with deference to others”]. The truth is, sirs, he had such exercises and temptations as that, had not the expectations and persuasions of these joys above, which succeeded the course well finished, interposed to fortify and compose his spirit, this world had never been conquered nor so easily forsaken and disclaimed by him, nor death so tamely entertained, nor hopes and fears so managed and subordinated, as they were. (1 Cor. xv. 19, 31, 32, 58.) Now thus far he stands on equal grounds with other Christians, and hath the same exercises, arguments, encouragements, interest, and obligations, that every Christian hath; and if it was possible for him to finish his course under the powerful influences of this prospect and design, it is as possible for us; for no impossibility, whilst such, can be our duty.

2. *His ministerial work and trust was, as to its full discharge, a necessary and essential part of his saving Christianity.*—No minister of Jesus Christ by office can be a sound and faithful Christian, that is unfaithful

in his ministry: it is in so doing that he must save himself as well as those that hear him. (1 Tim. iv. 15, 16.)

3. *Our accommodations being made answerable to trust and work, our faithful management thereof is of equal necessity in much or little.*—For we must be answerable to relations, trust, and places, and other circumstances, as God hath placed us in and under them; for we must be judged and are to act accordingly to what we have received. No man is commanded and encouraged faithfully to discharge his ministry, but upon some supposition that the ministry is his lawful calling; and where that is, unfaithfulness will damn him that is guilty of it; for it is his place of service, even as faithful service of all servants in general is their duty; yet places of service, and the matter and measure of their service, may be different, according to the master's pleasure and affairs.

4. *The close connexion of his whole course and comforts clears the case.*—For,

(1.) It is not imaginable that any man can be a faithful minister, whose heart is alienated from the true powerful principles, sentiments, and impressions of Christianity. For how can any man be separated cordially to this most costly, painful calling, and regularly bear the heat and burden of his place and day, who hath not well concocted the substance, evidence, and importance of this great mystery of salvation, (which is the indispensable and adequate exercise of his function,) into deep persuasions, warm affections, and most unconquerable resolutions? Who can unweariedly pursue the souls of others with close and pressing importunities to prize and prosecute that element and state of joys and holiness, which is not credited, relished, and valued by himself? And further,

(2.) Were it supposed also that the regular faithfulness of a minister was separable from the spirit and faithfulness of a Christian either in themselves, or in the subject, yet how can we imagine such operative, influential apprehensions and true relishes of the joy reported and proposed, as shall prevail against all oppositions and discouragements and competitions from the frowns and flatteries, bribes and strokes of earth and hell, to animate a minister's breast, so as to make him thorough in all the enterprises and employments of his function; whilst his own work and interest, as a Christian, is neglected, and those influences of this joy, entailed upon a course well finished, though they be powerful to make him faithful in the one, shall yet be found too languid to issue in the same diligence and success as to the other? And,

(3.) We must conclude, that this eagle-eyed apostle saw and reckoned on it, that a Christian minister and an apostle must be a thorough Christian and something, yea, much, more; or else he could not possibly conclude, his course would bring him to his joys. (1 Cor. ix. 24—27.) Therefore the sense and errand of the text amounts to this:—

DOCTRINE.

That the comforts of a well-completed course will make all discerning serious Christians to be above the regard of life, or fear of all afflictions, bonds, or death, to compass them. (Rom. viii. 18; Phil. i. 20—23.)—The very instance, argument, and errand of my text,

and doctrine grounded thereupon, imply and include several things ; as that,

1. *There is a state of future joys and retributions.*—For we have no reason to imagine that our apostle was so blind as to be deceived himself, nor so wicked as to deceive others. No man that knows and credits the existence of a Deity, but he must take him to be the strongest, wisest, and the best of beings, and so that he must needs be omnipotent, omniscient, and all-sufficient ; and if so, then it is beyond all controversy that Omnipotence can at such a rate address itself to creatures as to make them happy or miserable, as it best becomes itself. He that ordained and framed this state cannot be thought to have acted to the utmost of his strength ; for what can stint Omnipotence ? And doth it suit the wisdom of God, to make a creature capable of an everlasting state and of the hopes and prospect of it, and to implant in it an expectation of it, and rule him by those hopes and fears which do and must derive their influences from an eternal state ; and after all to make it evident, that man was only made to be imposed on, or ruled and managed by mistakes and mere fallacious arguments and errors ? Or hath God afforded us the least intimation of his mind, in nature, providence, or scriptures, that *this* is the way of conciliating that love and honour from his subjects, or of implanting and maintaining those necessary fears in man, which government requires for the attainments of its ends,—to make them live in expectation of what is no ways fit to reach its ends, because it is either false or mean ? And therefore I need not go about to prove what here is granted and improved, and what so many incomparably better pens have proved before me.

2. *This state hath sufficient force as to argument and motive to press us to do and suffer all that we can meet with or be called to in our whole Christian course.*—All those severe perplexities which our religion calls us to, as to obedience in sufferings and duty, are not beyond the compensations of these approaching, expected joys ; and if they obstruct the influences, and eclipse the light and glory, of what is proposed and promised as our great argument and encouragement, it is utterly and only our own fault that makes what is sufficient to be ineffectual.

3. *The comforts of a course well finished cannot be had without the regular management and finishing of our course.*—And this can never be without resolution and preparation of the heart, by which it must be borne and kept above immoderate love to life and fear of sufferings and death. Faith is the spirit of religion ; the spirit of faith is hope ; and the spirit of hope is love : and these are all the most successful preparations of the heart. Had faith its liberty, power, and prospect in the heart of all professors, it would make them too sagacious and concerned to be imposed-on by plausible delusions and bold pretences, in all these sublunary trifles, to that substantial, solid satisfaction and excellency, which are expected by ductile mortals to be experienced therein, or hoped for therefrom. Did we but look beyond the grave and wilderness, and search and see that land of promise which is beyond them, we might be entertained and allured with such clusters from it, as would afford us more grateful relishes and spirits than all the feculent extractions of these transient comforts could amount to. All our delights and pleasures in,

and great solitudes about, these lower things would be effectually mortified and conquered. (2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.) What breasts of consolation are "evidence and substance." (Heb. xi. 1.) Sense and presence do strangely invigorate and strengthen the dangerous influences of this world's comforts and concernments in their addresses to the heart of man; (2 Tim. iv. 10;) and because the gain and comforts of true religion are invisible and distant, therefore their certainty and transcendent excellency must be concocted into deep and sound persuasions, and be digested into answerable affections, resolutions, and pursuit; and all those arguments and motives which must prevail upon us to run and finish the course and race which is set before us, must be derived from, and are to be reduced to, this deep persuasion of these certain and transcendent comforts. Nor is it possible that religion should live or thrive but in the power of, and true proportion to, our apprehensions and persuasions of those fundamental truths and principles of God's existence and rewarding excellency. (Heb. xi. 6.)

Man must be ruled as God hath made him; and as fear and love are the commanding passions and affections of every subject capable of moral government, so something there must be reported and determined, fit for the exercise and discipline thereof; and if transcendency in what must influence both be not credible and demonstrable, their influences must of necessity prove too languid to attain their end. Equality spoils choice, as far as it extends; and if the comforts of another state do not exceed what we can meet with here, sure powerful godliness would lose its life and breasts together; nor could it be existent in its practice without its arguments and motives. And, with submission to better judgments, I think, that impossibility of pleasing God without faith, spoken of Heb. xi. 6, results, not only from God's arbitrary ordination, but from the very frame and habitude and fitness of means and ends themselves; and the sense is this,—as I have elsewhere lately and largely showed on the fore-mentioned place, though not in print, nor fit to be so,—that unless I be persuaded that God's majesty deserves, and that he can and will reward us for, the cost and exercises of godliness to infinite advantage, no man could be prevailed on to be religious. The very difficulties, burdens, and temptations of religion, under the present circumstances of revolted man, would press too sore upon the frailty and concernments of flesh and blood, to suffer him to obtain of himself to submit to the discipline and severities of true and powerful godliness. Nor can I see, if this be once denied, where the apostle's argument prevails and pinches, 1 Cor. xv. 19, 29, 32, 58. Adam in innocency was influenced by arguments, and I do not see that the economy of grace destroys the frame of nature, but rather comes in by way of medicinal ordination to repair it, that so religious government may revive again, by such energetical arguments and influences as are proper to the case. (Psalm cxxx. 4.) Nor did the Son of God and Saviour of the world appear for the supplanting of the Father as to his throne and interest, but rather acted all along in a professed state and way of delegation and ordinate substitution to this end,—that government might flourish, and poor, apostate man might be encouraged to seek and serve and please his God again; and were this well considered, I think that all our censorious, malignant flames would die,

which have no other fuel but such confidences as are grounded on and fomented by our rash mistakes; and we might peaceably *credere de verbis*, but not *de jure veritatis*. And I confess I cannot see how the joys of godliness can have the *vim motivam* ["the moving force"] of pressing arguments to quicken us to what activity, faithfulness, and resolution, and perseverance, are enjoined us and expected from us, if persevering godliness, which is the finishing of our course with joy, be not the great condition of our crown and triumph; and therefore it is ignorance and inconsiderateness that strengthens our infidelity and consequent reluctances to run the hazards of religion, and entertain the work and cost of this our Christian course, to reach its compensations. One piercing glance and sober look within the veil would strangely help us unto a right estimate of things, and make our quick reflections upon our foolish former choice and trifling carriages to minister to our present grief and shame. It is but a dotage to imagine that any thing short of holiness and heaven, or inconsistent with our present work, can be the true enrichment or content of souls. What man can keep his heart below his work, that knows and credits the blessed resolutions wherewith the all-sufficient God is fixed to recompense all self-denying, regular, and resolved racers? (See 1 John iii. 3.) Who can advance that life into a competition with the present work and will of God, which must be swallowed up of a surpassing immortality, when he hath regularly finished his course? So that now the way is clear to lead us to answer these

QUERIES.

QUERY 1. *What is this finishing our course with joy, which is to influence us into this regardlessness of life and death and every thing, in order thereunto?*

ANSWER 1. "Joy" is the privilege and satisfaction of the soul at rest in the possession and embraces of its both adequate and desired end and object; which is the sum of what is intended by the expression in the text.

(1.) I call it a *privilege*, as it importeth some considerable excellency in the object or gift,—and thus it is God in Christ, when he becomes the portion of once apostate man, though now recovered by relative and real grace, when he appears in the perfection of his image, favour, and presence, and that reciprocal intimacy which is consequent thereupon,—and as it is a favour peculiar to some, by way of discrimination and difference from others; * for it is the joy of God dispensed only to the godly. And I call it, (2.) *Satisfaction*, as importing suitability to the subject on whom it is bestowed on all accounts, and as such apprehended and resented by it. And, (3.) I appropriate it to *the soul*, as being first and most concerned in it, and most capable of it; for, till the resurrection, the soul alone enjoys it. Before the dissolution of the body, the soul is only capable of the prospect and improvement of it, and therefore most concerned and engaged about it; and after the resurrection of the

* *Privilegium est principis beneficium contra jus commune indultum; non enim est privilegium nisi aliquid indulgeat speciale*, say the Civilians. "A privilege" is a favour indulgently conferred by a prince contrary to the common course of law; for there can be no privilege, except there be some special indulgence conceded."—EDIT.

person and his introduction into glory, the soul is made the most immediate recipient of it; and the comforts and perfection of the body are resultant from the soul's satisfaction and delights, and truly subordinate thereunto, as both are subordinate unto God, not to his joys, but will and honour. And, (4.) I fixed it on the soul *at rest*, as the result of all its aims and motions; for it is both the recompence and cessation of all its painful exercises and pursuits. (5.) I make the matter of this joy to be the soul's *adequate end and object*, which none but God can be; since it is apparent that neither heaven nor earth have any beside God to make and be a portion for the soul. (Psalm lxxiii. 25.) And then, (6.) I lay the formality of this joy in the *possession and embraces* of this end and object, both as adequate and desired; for as it is *adequate*, it speaks no want nor deficiency in the object; and as it is *desired*, so it speaks the preparation of the subject; and as it is embraced and possessed, so it speaks no cost and labours lost, nor expectations frustrated. And now indeed the soul is most ravished, when all its motions are directed to their end and terminated there with unconceivable satisfaction; when God is all in all, and the poor painful Christian is, through tedious oppositions, difficulties, and travels, safely conducted to its most proper portion, choice, and joy.

2. By "course," is meant *the time of life in reference to our stated work and difficulties*.—The metaphor is fetched from that Olympic exercise which is called *ὄπλιτου δρομος*, in which the racers ran in armour, because of sharp assaults and oppositions all the way. *In armis cursorum fuere, galea, quam capite, ocreæ, quas tibiis, aspis sive clypeus, quem manibus ferrent, qui eo certamine contenderent.** Hence we have something in our Christian panoply answerable hereunto; as, "the helmet of salvation;" (Eph. vi. 17;) "feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace," answering to the *ocrea*; (verse 15;) and "the shield of faith." (Verse 16.) And therefore, after the apostle had showed the Ephesians their race and course of duties which they had to run in, (Eph. vi. 1—9,) he acquainteth them also what oppositions they might expect, and what enemies they had to grapple with, and what a panoply or armour they must put on and use, that so their course might be successful. (Eph. vi. 10—18.)

3. By finishing the course "with joy" is meant, *to have it managed and completed so as that the comforts, prize, and glory of it might be theirs who run to discharge trust and duty with all activity, prudence, constancy, and delight*:—To face and conquer difficulties with such masculine courage and success as best becomes the spirit, hopes, and furniture of a Christian; to make our matchless estimation of approaching glory remarkable in all our strokes and steps. No man is crowned that strives not lawfully: (2 Tim. ii. 5:) our motions must be persevering, swift, and even, and herein answerable to the great ends of God Christ, in calling us to our trust and care; and all our warrantable ends in our voluntary undertaking to be combatants and racers, to hold integrity so fast, to prize the crown so much, to watch over hearts so strictly, and

* PETRI FABRI *Agonistica*, lib. ii. cap. 23, p. 186. "Among the arms of the racers who strove in combat, were the following: *the helmet*, which guarded the head; *the greaves*, which defended the legs; and *the shield, or buckler*, which they bore in their hands."—EDIT.

discipline the whole man so exactly, as that the gospel may not be ashamed to own us, nor Christ ashamed of us. Our trust or talents must not be embezzled, nor managed with slightness nor falsehood, nor any way abused by us, lest those comforts should be lost that are before us as the determined recompence of faithful racers; for God resolves to render to every man as his work shall be. (Rom. ii. 6, 10; 2 Cor. v. 10; Jer. xvii. 10.) We know the apostle's care and counsel: (1 Cor. ix. 24—27; Phil. ii. 12:) he knew, all running would not serve the turn; and he was apprehensive of all those dangers, snares, and oppositions which called for universal watchfulness, resolution, care, and courage; and knew, the crown of life could never fit the sluggard's or coward's temples. Nor will God prejudice the interest of religion, nor restrain and mortify all those awakening arguments which are to be derived from this principle and topic, namely, that only faithful racers must be crowned with life and joys.

QUERY II. *How far must love to life be conquered and subdued, and every thing be disregarded, for the right finishing of our course with joy?*

ANSWER 1. *These things must be distinguished, in order to the understanding of the nature and measure of this duty and attainment:—*

(1.) It is one thing, what may be loved and valued simply and abstractedly, as only considered in itself; and it is another thing, what may be loved and valued, as compared with something else. And,

(2.) It is one thing, what degree of value of love and care may suit the excellency and importance of the object; and another thing, what may exceed it.

(3.) It is one thing, how I may love a thing, when consistent with and conducing to our best concernment; and it is another thing, how I may love what is withdrawn from and set against it. And,

(4.) It is one thing, to have affections to be snares and hinderances; and another thing, to have them helps and furtherances to something better. And,

(5.) A moderate and subordinate love is one thing, and a supreme and co-ordinate love is another. And,

(6.) It is one thing, to love with true submission to God's commanding and disposing will; and another thing, to love to the prejudice of God's prerogative and providence, so as to murmur and quarrel with the great Jehovah for what he doeth.

2. *And upon these distinctions may we ground these following propositions and conclusions.*

(1.) *Life and the comforts of it are eligible and desirable, as they are considered in themselves.*—And in this sense God hath not forbidden the loving of them. They come from God, as emanations and expressions of his goodness: they are “good and perfect gifts,” and lovely in their kind and places. For, had not life been lovely, it could have been no punishment to die;—for all punishment is *malum physicum propter malum morale*; [“a physical evil on account of a moral ill;”] and when it is laid in a privation, the want cannot be evil, if the thing we are deprived of be not good and lovely;—nor could the promise of long life have been a quickening argument to holiness and duty, (as it is, 1 Peter iii. 10, 11; Exod. xx. 12,) had we not loved it; nor would God have

promised to us as a mercy, what is not good and lovely. Adam in innocence had the love of life implanted in him; and he did ill, in that he feared the loss of life too little to make him regularly careful to preserve it: and it had been no argument of awful cogency that he should die upon transgression, had not the love of life been deeply rooted and implanted in him; for who can rationally fear the loss of what he cares not for? It is plain that Adam's love to life was the result of God's creation, and therefore good; for it was in him in his innocence: and the argument was framed to prevent transgression, as something possible, but not yet existent; and God was never angry with him, till he through sin had forfeited his life; and this proved his love to life to be every way consistent with a state of innocence. And for all the comforts of life, they are desirable in themselves and lovely; as, relation, (Eph. v. 25,) liberty, (1 Cor. vii. 21,) and birth-privileges, (Acts xxii. 28,) credit, (Prov. xxii. 1,) outward supplies, (Prov. xxx. 8,) yea, plenty of them. (Eccles. vii. 11; x. 10.) And it is impossible and inhuman for any man simply to desire and attempt his own personal misery and destruction; yea, it is his sin to do it. (See Acts xxvi. 29.) Neither doth grace itself mortify or correct our love to life and all its comforts, as simply considered in themselves; for if it did, it could neither be the trial nor the commendation of a gracious, sober Christian to part with life and comforts, since it would only be demanding from him what he cared not for. (Gen. xxii. 1, 2, 12.)

(2.) *Life and the comforts of it have their subserviency to better things.*—And thus it is more our duty not to disregard them. Life makes us capable of serving God, and of the enjoyment of him. Our spiritual and eternal life supposes natural life. And further, it is our state of usefulness and trial: we cannot actually serve God any further, or our generation longer, than we have our lives and beings here. The usefulness and comforts of relations are reciprocal: how can I see or serve God with what I have not? They are my helps, and trust, and trials. Relations may be mutually won and ripened for eternal glory by each other's conversation. (1 Peter iii. 1.) Credit is valuable, because of usefulness to others, and our own necessary confidences and encouragements. (1 Tim. iii. 7.) Places of honour and important trust must not be disregarded: Joseph, Mordecai, and Daniel were greatly serviceable through their great interest and estimation in their respective princes' courts. What useful instruments have holy kings and princes been for God upon their thrones! Plenty and fulness are desirable: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts xx. 35.) Innocence and independence steel the countenance. It is comfortable to be the poor man's staff, and the rich man's pattern. The like I may say of liberty, gifts, parts, &c. And when God throws these things upon us, to make us useful, it would be our misery, shame, and sin, to cast them from us with contempt; and as both life and comforts stand in relation to usefulness and glory, grace rather heightens than abates esteem and value of them, and rather quickens and engages thankfulness and affections for and to them, than sets the heart against them thus considered.

(3.) *It is the apostasy of our state and hearts from God, that sets*

our lives and comforts in their capacity of being snares to us.—Had it not been for sin, God and our lives and comforts had not been reduced to such an inconsistency as now they are ; nor had our natural lives and comforts been our snares, had not their end and ours been changed ; they had never been so insignificant as to our safety and delight, had we not torn them from that their figure,—God himself, to whom their true subordinate relation gave them their whole worth and value. Our snares and surfeits come from our own irregular appetites : (1 Tim. vi. 9, 10 ; Luke xxi. 34 :) life and its consolations are God's and good ; (James i. 17 ;) the lust is ours. (1 John ii. 16.)

(4.) *Life and all things must be disregarded, as they are separate from God, and set against him.*—As they are separated from God, so they must be neglected ; and as they are set against God, so they must be opposed. Our lives must never be a course of lusts ; (Rom. xiii. 13 ;) nor must their comforts and continuance be entertained or indulged as God's opponents or cor-rivals ; nor be preserved, possessed, or prosecuted, to the prejudice of better things, even holy works and joy. While they and better things may keep together, the elder must serve the younger : our present life and comforts must minister to the great concerns of another better state ; and when religion or our lives must go, we must disclaim the latter, to secure the former. Nothing must bound or circumvent religion ; nor must it be subjected to the trifling ends and dotages of a transient life. Our lives and comforts are dispensed to us for usefulness, not satisfaction. We must secure obedience and submission to God's preceptive and disposing will, and a true, constant, practical relation and subserviency unto God's glory, and our own eternal welfare, and the full credit of religion, and its advancement in ourselves and others ; and whereinsoever the love of life threatens or makes toward an equality with God and life-to-come concerns, or makes us change our Lord, to serve our lusts, or grow reluctant to that great seal and testimony which we owe to the full interest and claims of Christianity, or makes us more remiss, sluggish, and fearful in our Christian course of holy, painful, and resolved exercises, than our hopes and circumstances can admit of,—therein must life be wholly disregarded.

QUERY III. *Whence is it evident that this design and prospect will have such powerful influences upon concerned, serious Christians, as to make this regardlessness of life and every thing to be a possible attainment ?*

1. *From personal instances.*—All that are gone to heaven have reached this frame. O what a cloud of witnesses is afforded us, Heb. xi. 2—39 ; x. 32 ! The apostle here himself stands like a monument, with this superscription, “ It is possible to be a conqueror of life and death.” (2 Tim. iv. 6—8 ; Acts xxi. 13 ; Phil. i. 20—23.) Nor doth he want his seconds ; as, Barnabas, (Acts xv. 26,) Epaphroditus, (Phil. ii. 30,) Daniel, also, and the three children, long before ; (Dan. iii. 16—18 ; vi. 13—22 ;) and those in Rev. xii. 11, and many others.

2. *From scriptural injunctions and comminations.* (Luke xiv. 26 ; 1 Peter iv. 12—16.)—It is no ways probable that such weighty accents of command, concernedness, and importunity, and caution, should be

laid upon impossibilities; or that God should urge and threaten man, and press upon him both with promises and menaces, and be at such expense of cost and patience, grace and bounty, and digest his name and treasures into such cogent arguments, and make both heaven and earth, yea, hell and conscience, minister to this design of ripening and advancing him to such a pitch of exaltation above all prejudicial love of life and fear of death; if this were foreign to his own capacity, and therefore unattainable: for this would be the way even to distract the harmony of God's whole name with such unaccountable and impossible discords as that account which God hath given us thereof would not admit of; nor is it consonant to that analogy which his image on the new creature expressly beareth unto himself.

3. *From the advantages which the design and prospect of the text afford us.*—We have something nobler to attempt, than to preserve and cherish that life and interest which is separate from God and set against him; and something better to expect and promise to ourselves, than such contracted, transient comforts as death can strip us of; namely, the finishing of an honourable course that is set before us, and reaching of those matchless consolations which are tendered to us, and affixed to the end and termination of that costly, painful race which we have to run. And such things have an exact sufficiency in their kind, as arguments and motives to our hopes, and diligence, and resolution, to make us “more than conquerors” both of and in life and death. (Rev. ii. 10; Rom. viii. 18; 2 Tim. i. 8, 12; ii. 12; Acts xxiv. 14—16; Rom. viii. 32—39.)

4. *From the assistance which God is ready to afford us.* (1 Cor. x. 13; 2 Cor. i. 3—5; xii. 7—10; John xiv. 18; Matt. xxviii. 20; Jer. i. 8.)—Our winter-work hath suitable furniture and provisions: (James i. 2—6:) we shall have counsels, comforts, quickenings, and suitable relishes, views, and strength, to all our work and exercises.

QUERY IV. And the case in hand. *What must we therefore do to, and how must we, overcome the inordinate love of life and fear of death?*

For no man can love or dare to die, that loves this life inordinately, and values it too dear to let it go, or that prevalingly doubt or fears, or undervalues a better life hereafter. Now, in this instance in my text, bonds and afflictions seemed to minister to death; and death is very terrible to nature, as its dissolution, and terrible to interested souls in the concernments of this life, as ending all the pleasures, profits, honours, that sense and fancy can be courted with. It is terrible to those that are not satisfied of another state, because it ends what they were sure of the existence of, and had the greatest desires of and pleasures in; and because it ushers them thither where their doubt will be resolved, and that, for aught they know, (and they have great jealousies and suspicions of it in sober thoughts and cool blood,) to their eternal sorrow, cost, and shame. It is terrible to those that never valued the joys and hopes and work of godliness, and cannot then expect the recompences of that godliness which they declined and hated: and it is terrible to those that are uncertain as to their spiritual state, dark in their evidences, low in their hopes, and disturbed with melancholic or other fears about their interest in God and Christ, and everlasting welfare

of their immortal souls. So that where all or any of these things prevail, men dread to leave this life, and to be transmitted to another state by death, be it natural or violent; and the same reasons, helps, and motives that may be useful for the one, may be also useful for the other. And therefore, before the case can be resolved, something must be premised to prepare the way; and that is this; namely, *The argument of the text is a successful proper antidote against a double evil, and it is the ground and measure of a necessary duty.*

1. The evils are the inordinate love of life, and the fear of bonds, afflictions, death.

2. The argument imports, (1.) *A prospect of something better than what we are called to mortify, feel, or quit.*—And that is joy resulting from a course well finished: and a state, if I may call it so, of mere non-existence cannot deserve or claim the name of joy. (1 Cor. xv. 17, 29—32.) And nothing but this prospect could necessitate his sufferings, or his disregard of life; nor could this do it, had he not sure foundations for his confidence. (Heb. xi. 6; Titus i. 2; 2 Tim. i. 10; 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.) And therefore the prospect mortifies the inordinate fear of death. Now, (2.) The argument imports *a project*, too; and that is this; namely, *so to manage and complete the course as to secure the joy.*—Which cannot be, if life or any thing have an equal or transcendent interest in us or influence upon us; and therefore the necessary duty is the conquest of the love of life and fear of death. The measure of our necessary conquest is fetched from its relation and subserviency to the prize: so far as love of life and fear of death are opposed to and inconsistent with our better hopes and work, so far they must be overcome. And the ground of the duty is in the text; because otherwise our course cannot be finished with joy; it can be neither regular nor successful without the conquest and attainment of my text. And therefore my answer to the case before us shall lie in these few following

DIRECTIONS.

DIRECTION I. *Be thoroughly persuaded of, and heartily affected with, a life to come.* (2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.)—This is the “poise” and *pondus* of religion; (Heb. xi. 6;) this is the heart and strength of godliness. (Acts xxiv. 14, 15, 25.) It is this that strips that king of terrors, death, of all his frightful looks and strength; this spoils his fatal conquest, gripe, and sting. (2 Tim. iv. 6—8; 2 Cor. v. 1—10; 1 Cor. xv. 51—58.) It was this that did invigorate the confidence and courage of that noble army of martyrs: (Heb. xi. throughout:) this clothes the brow with confidence to face the storms and entertain the challenges, of earth and hell. (Rom. viii. 35—39.) This startles hearty resolutions into awakened exercises, and forceth such expressions of inward strength and fixedness as shall amaze the world, and shame the daring, stupid infidel into strange convictions of the transcendent joys and gain of godliness, and its approaching triumphs. This makes the heart indifferent to live or die, so that, by either, the great concernment may be prosperous and successful. And need I furnish you with arguments to persuade you to believe another state? Do not the word of God, the soul of man, the course and consequence of moral government, pass into arguments to

prove this thing? Would God create capacity in the soul of man to render him proper for another state, and do this as the result of his remarkable love and wisdom, and make him capable of being influenced by motives drawn from hence; and after all turn his capacity into his wreck, and abuse and rule him by mistakes and errors, and shame those hopes and confidences in the soul, and strip it of those proper ends and exercises, which God himself ordained, enjoined, and started? Moreover, will not the state and element of everlasting retributions be more significant than a probationary state and theatre? And if so, no way more proper to conquer the inordinacy in our case, than right persuasions and resentments * of another state of life. It is no wonder that an infidel should be inordinate in his love of life; for he that looks for nothing when he is dead, cannot attempt divorcement from his idols, interest, and consolations here; for now he must conclude, that "a living dog is better than a dead man;" and if the smart conviction will not suffer him to remain an infidel, (for atheists and infidels cannot be such, without His permission, if not judicial stupefaction and desertion, by whom they were created,) yet if he relish not the joys and exercises of another state hereafter, he cannot but be wanton and imposed upon by his ensnaring dreams and shadows, and parcel out his heart, till he have lost himself, amongst the incoherent, transient vanities of sense and fancy. The world and present life are this man's all; and it is no wonder if, when he hath nothing else on which he can place his heart, he fix it here: but O! when better things appear in chase and view, when things commensurate with his capacity and duration strike his concerned eye with close and smart appulses, and so affect his heart, shadows must fly away, and the sons of the morning must suit their exercises and attempts to the discoveries of their day, and alienate their hearts from what will be abusive of their souls and hopes, as their discoveries will make them then conclude.

DIRECT. II. Look upon life and comforts as they are, not as they seem to be under their present circumstances; and make your choice and value suitable thereunto.—Your life is but a shadow which must disappear; a cloud that must be scattered, more easily passed through than embraced; and all the glory of this world is easily winked into blackness and distaste, and all the lower comforts of our lives are but the crumbs we gather from the broken world. The world itself is but an element of sin and sorrow; and through that curse upon it which was derived by our first apostasy, it is become a stormy and disturbed region. There is nothing suitable to our better part therein, when separate from God and set against him: our souls, the noblest part of man, are entertained with nothing but burdens, stints, and snares. A chain of gold may pinch as hard as one of iron. There is nothing here that can endure those warm affections and close embraces which our true happiness deserves; and should we thus embrace them, our idols' arms and hearts would certainly be broken altogether. Our lawful comforts and delights are hereby embittered and polluted, and melt away to nothing, and bid farewell with dreadful gripes and bitter relishes, and fly away upon the wings we give them; for indeed the great affections of our inflamed hearts cannot but

* Concerning the meaning of this old word, consult the note in page 483, vol. I.—EDIT.

turn them all to smoke. It is their subservient usefulness and relation to God, our present work, and future glory, that make and speak them excellent: and if you change their *σχεσις*, ["condition,"] you rob the cluster of its best juice and blessing; and if your lives and comforts turn God's competitors and enemies, you spin them into snares and ruins. And were but this the rule and measure of all our fears and love, there would be joy in keeping and resigning them; God would be with them in their stay, and in their stead and places when they are gone. (Psalm lxxiii. 24—26.) O, how disgracefully is this world reflected on in holy writ! (2 Cor. iv. 18; Matt. vi. 19—21; Rom. viii. 18.) And when you do compare it with that above, and cast them both into an equal balance in your considerate and serious thoughts and pauses, then think which is noblest in its nature, most indisturbed in its possessions, most uniform in its constitution, most enduring in its excellence, most adequate in its proportions, and most desirable in its full dimensions. (1 Peter i. 4.) And what advantages herein are others' testimonies in the case! Would you but measure the good and evil of both worlds by the experiences and apprehensions of dying and awakened persons, how vast a difference would you see betwixt the life and comforts of them both, yea, and their sorrows too! Where have you any thing in this world that can preponderate or equal the comforts of God's blessed face and favour? especially when all clouds and frowns are gone. What is this world more apt to do, than to deface God's image in us, or prevent it, darken his glory, obstruct his comfortable emanations and addresses to us, and to foment our jealousies and suspicions about his present interest in us, and his eternal kindness to us? O, what a difference is there betwixt the mantle of our mortal life, which falls upon that dark and sluggish world where purblind man delights to be, and those more glorious and enduring robes of righteousness, salvation, praise, and immortality, which our Redeemer hath provided for us, where by our death he calls and takes us! What, therefore, but our inconsiderateness can make us love our prisons, chains, and rags, or the pretences of ensnaring cheats, impostures, and delusions?

DIRECT. III. Look upon life and all its comforts as a probationary state for something else, and use them so. (Prov. ix. 10—12; Eccles. ix. 10; 2 Cor. v. 10; Rom. ii. 6—10; Heb. ix. 27.)—Trifle not here, for it is your time of trial; we are all designed to live elsewhere, and future retributions must be answerable to our present carriage. This is our trading season; and would you be always in the shop or market? Would you be always travelling homeward, and never reach your Father's house? (2 Cor. v. 6—9.) We must not dream of being always on the stage; we have our parts to act, our work to do, and must be called off ere long, that others may succeed us; and after a few successive acts, the theatre must be taken down; and can we fancy shadows, representations, and resemblances to be everlasting? What, hath God sent us hither to dote upon those lives and comforts which are built upon the weak, uncertain sands, and spend themselves in triflings upon the hasty streams of short, uncertain time? Or is it not rather, that we should be acting and ripening for eternal joys and exercises? This is our time of discipline, exercise, and education for the prince's court,—to fit us for our everlasting ministrations before the great Jehovah. Now we are learning

principles, and labouring to understand and try what it is to love and honour God ; what to be ruled and taught, that so we might be saved, by Christ ; to thrive upon and under preparatory quickenings, counsels, and consolations of the Spirit ; what it is to receive, reflect, refract God's holiness and image in his instituted ways and methods : and can we terminate our affections, pleasures, and desires upon these preliminary elements and prelusions to those more lofty exercises and enjoyments that wait for us when we have regularly finished our probationary course ?

Surely our dark discoveries, slender attainments, cold affections, frequent and great disturbances, and faint attempts to get near God, our mean proficiency, and the true prospect of what we want, as to both our accomplishments and enjoyments, should make us easily resolve our value, care, and love, into this one single aim and enterprise ; namely, to see that comforts, lives, and time, be most effectually managed and improved for the securing of these joys before us. For there is nothing that we are and have below, but it is a talent for the market, not the napkin ; and therefore, neither life nor comforts should lie as dead goods upon our hands, nor be as idols in our hearts. Have we but "one thing needful" to secure, and are we upon our trial for it ? and shall we turn our trust and helps to snares and hinderances, by doting on them, and by fixing and abiding, where we should be in motion ? Are not we called to labour in the vineyard, in order to our reckoning and reward at night ? and is it not "to-day" that we must work ? (Heb. iii. 12—15 ; John xvii. 4, 5.) Will not our crop and harvest be answerable to our seed ? (Gal. vi. 7, 9.) What wonder is it that the guilty drone so much desires to live and fears to die, or that he rages, frets, and trembles to hear his hour and the Judge are come ? When men have trifled all the day, it is a most frightful sight to see the lengthened shadow and declining sun.

Stupefaction is no conquest of the fear of death, or love of life ; but when the awakened soul expects and sees the king of terrors in the head of his whole army and on his hasty march, what *then* can steel that countenance whose heart and life have been expended and embezzled in trifling dotages and mistakes, yea, and gross neglects of what the man was sent into the world to do ? He that was sent into the world to please his God, and save his soul, and to grapple with and trample on the twisted strength and subtilities of earth and hell, and to adorn and propagate religion by an exact and exemplary conversation, and so, under Christ, to make all clear within and sure above,—when he hath neglected all, cannot be comfortably furnished to sacrifice or part with life for the concerns of eternity, with cheerfulness, and out of choice ; or to conquer the exercises, fears, and challenges of a dying hour. And besides, did we but carry* as upon our trial, weaning our hearts from things below, and wedding them to things above, and managing all our duties with all diligence and resolution ; the very oppositions and difficulties of the way and of our work in this world would make us weary of our entertainment here, and full of vehement longings and desires to be gone. We should have little heart to wish for long continuance, where we can have neither welcome nor satisfaction. Our very works and sufferings

* "Did we but *conduct* or *behave ourselves* ;" an ancient form, equivalent in meaning and use to the French verb, *se porter*. It is occasionally found, as in this passage, and in a subsequent page, (664,) without its reciprocal pronoun.—EDIT.

would abate our love to life ; and our encumbrances about many things and from them, when they are apprehended as prejudicial to the "one thing needful," would be rejected by us, because distasteful to us.

DIRECT. IV. *Keep-up your ordinate fear of death, as the corrective of your inordinate love to life, and see that this be well improved.* (Psalm xlix. 6—14.)—Why! should our hearts be where we must not stay? Had Eve but thought more upon death, the forbidden fruit had never been betwixt her teeth. We fancy immortality in a maze of vanity, and our imagined continuance here inflames our hearts; and did we more consider how short a time we have to stay, and how much work to do, how sure we are to die, and why death came into the world, and how suddenly, yea, and surprisingly the king of terrors, who receives not bribes, may make dispatches of his sharp and hasty arrows into our sides and hearts, the enamouring influences of this mortal life would more effectually be mortified and obstructed. Why should I dote on that to-day, from which I may be gone to-morrow? The fear of death hath its ordained place and use, and calls upon us to prepare. He that is sensible of his own vanity here below, and capable of immortality above, ought to be ready for his change and call. (Job xiv. 14.) If we be negligent in the discipline of our affections within the prospect of our dying day, our misery becomes our choice, and we betray our souls to startling sorrows and surprisals, and give our hearts away for trifles in the very face of danger. Security makes us prodigals and wantons, and exposes us to the powerful charms of fearful fascinations. Extinguished lamps and empty vessels are only in the hands of slumbering virgins, by whom the midnight-cry is clear forgotten. Treasures and "goods [are] laid-up for many years;" and then the heart is gone and sold to empty confidences and vain delights; until that cry, "Thou fool, this night thy soul must go," correct the cheat, and shame the dreaming wanton. Methinks, the awful thoughts and looks of death should quench those flames of love which have no other fuel but a vapour or thin exhalation, which hath no light and glory but in its own destruction; and they should rather make us careful to secure that treasure in the heavens which remains to be possessed, when our "mortality shall be swallowed-up of life." Our daily instances of mortality should start such fresh remembrances in us of our own approaching dissolution, and that amazing alteration of our comforts and employments which will ensue thereon, as should irresistibly prevail upon us to guard and fortify our hearts against the inroads and invasions of such addresses as the corrupting flatteries and pretences of life and comforts here below are apt to make upon our hearts; for this inordinacy of love to life gives death a fatal sting to strike us with.

DIRECT. V. *As to the inordinate fear of death, labour to get a perfect understanding of its grounds and cure.*—For our mistake herein may make the application of the medicine both dangerous and successful: and therefore let us first inquire into *what it is that makes us loath or afraid to die*; and then, *what antidotes are expedient for this cure of such inordinate fears*; and then *direct your application*.

1. *That which makes death terrible to us, is either relating to,* (1.) *What we leave behind us.*—As life, comforts, or advantages here for getting and exercising grace in order to eternal glory. Or, (2.) *The*

state we are going to.—As to which, we either, (i.) *Doubt of its existence as to eternal comforts*; or, (ii.) *Want a title to them*; and so fear the loss of them, and pains of hell for ever; or, (iii.) *A value for them*. Or, (3.) *The passage from one state to another*; and that either, (i.) *As to its pains*; or, (ii.) *Its conflicts*; or, (iii.) *Its separation of soul and body*. And, (4.) *A remaining in that state of separation of soul and body*, through a defect of divine power or faithfulness to and mercy for us.

2. *The proper antidotes and expedients for the cure of these excessive fears*, which I shall briefly give you, are in these following

PROPOSITIONS.

PROPOSITION I. *There is a state of life and immortality designed and prepared for holy persons.*—It is “prepared,” (Matt. xxv. 34,) discovered, (2 Tim. i. 10,) “purchased” by Christ, and proposed by God, (Eph. i. 11, 14,) “promised,” (Titus i. 2,) and “reserved in heaven for” such. (1 Peter i. 4.) We have all the imaginable proofs and demonstrations of it, that things invisible and at a distance from us can be capable of. God hath made us capable thereof, and hath implanted in us a desire of and longing for it; though some, through sin, have rotted these desires at the roots. And further: on these desires, capacity, and inclinations, God hath grounded laws for moral government, and rules the world by hopes and fears, whose vital influences are derived from this future state. And further still: God hath sent his Son to tell us of these preparations, who in the human nature published such reports, which God attested by frequent, apparent, uncontrollable miracles, and sealed them with his blood, and “rose again as the first-fruits of them that sleep;” and after taught this doctrine, and went to heaven to take possession, and make necessary preparations for our conduct thither and title and possession there; and sent the Spirit down for the repeated seals and publication of this doctrine of a life to come, who did inspire apostles to write and preach it, and urge it upon the consciences of men, and to prepare the heart of man for this inheritance, to urge it as an argument of weight upon them, and start joys and sorrows in them, as they carry * in relation hereunto. And he hath declared, that he will judge the world by Christ in order to their legal settlement in this state.

PROP. II. *Our present state of life and comforts is no way comparable to what is designed hereafter.*—It is a state and city, in respect whereof “God is not ashamed to be called our God;” (Heb. xi. 16; with Luke xx. 34—38.) O, what a change of persons shall we meet with there! (Phil. iii. 21; 1 John iii. 2; 1 Cor. xv. 49—54.) Our bodies shall not be what they now are,—even the wrecks and loads and chains of souls. What are they now but foul unactive lumps of clay? They are pierced with cold, and worn with labours, appalled with griefs and dangers, and griped with pains, and macerated with keen and envious passions, and after all mouldered to dust by death and rottenness; but *there* neither deformity, pains, nor death, shall be their fear nor exercise. Our souls shall quit their prisons, clouds, and chains; our apprehensions shall be clear, (1 Cor. xiii. 12,) and consciences full of peace and joy. O, what a harmony and concord shall there be betwixt God’s will and ours! what

* See the note in page 662.—EDIT.

purity, order, warmth, and vigour shall there be in our affections! and what subserviency and due prostrations in our passions! Yea, what comfort and constancy shall there be in full and grateful exercises in the whole man! No jars and discords shall spoil the melody of our spheres; our holiness shall need no crutch, but reach the "fulness of a perfect stature;" no broken-winded nor imperfect praises there; the pulse of perfect souls shall know no intermissions nor unequal motions, but keep one constant rate of work and joy. And what a change of state, as well as persons, shall we meet with there! (Phil. i. 23.) A vale of tears quit for rivers of eternal pleasures; an element of joys succeeds our bitter cups. Our rights can never be invaded there; nothing can stain the comforts of that world; no blots nor wounds are there contracted nor endured; no troubles in that Israel. *There* are no pauses of astonishment through surprisals of afflictions; death smites no corners there; Providence makes no storms. *There* lies that ark wherein no vile or wicked Ham shall dwell: the glory of that place,—it knows no eclipse nor cloud. No dim discoveries or flat notes shall be the exercise or entertainment of that state: how sprightly are the airs and descants of their Hallelujahs! No worm on conscience or carcass there; there charity knows no breach; no mal-administrations in that kingdom, nor bad constructions of God's providence, or of the actions of his servants, there. *There* are no cuts from friends, nor gripes from enemies; no frailties to report, nor enemies to report them; no falls in Israel to grate upon these holy hearts, nor fears to be their painful exercises. There are no wrinkles on the brows of God, nor frowns upon the face of Majesty, nor one dejected look amongst those blessed myriads of saints and angels; their ark hath neither shake nor cover, nor any startling strokes to terrify its attendants. Souls, once arrived at this harbour, are entertained with perfection in a morning-blush and everlasting youthfulness.

O, who can draw these "breasts of consolation" dry? These upper springs,—they run clear and freely; and all "the fountains of the great deep" shall there be "broken up," to overflow the banks of Paradise with everlasting joys and satisfaction. With what a torrent shall these clear and pleasant rivers run! Should I attempt a full description of this joyful state, I might far sooner set rhetoric upon the rack, and contract the character of being one that quaintly did attempt to play the fool and was eloquently mad, than think to escape that censure: "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?" (Job xxxviii. 2.) O! it must be vision and fruition, and not the flourishes of expression, that must reach the excellent perfections of that state. (1 Cor. ii. 9; Psalm xvi. 11.) And now shall we fear to leave this world and die? What, shall we be undone by being happy? Is it the misery of man, to be with God, like Him, and dear and near unto Him? What is this state and theatre of woes and sorrows, that we are so loath to quit it? Methinks I see the angels overmatched with strange astonishment at our reluctancies to be gone, and our averseness to desert our dotages and prisons. It might in reason be expected from us, that no exercise of our patience should be so sore and pinching as this,—that we must stay from heaven so long; and shall we, after all, raise such a

false report about the Land of Promise, by our averseness to be gone thereto, as to insinuate into the thoughts of others that either the trifles of this mortal life, or the pains and terrors of our passage to the land of rest, are much beyond the recompences and reparations that we shall meet with there? View, then, the difference; and be free to go.

PROP. III. *Death is an enemy which Christ hath conquered; and God hath "given us the victory through Christ."* (1 Cor. xv. 54—57; Heb. ii. 14, 15.)—O, what an emancipation hath Christ here wrought! That Christ hath conquered it, it is clear in Acts ii. 24. That prophecy is now accomplished, Hosea xiii. 14; (Rom. i. 4;) and blessed are the consequences of this victory to us. (John vi. 39, 40.) Why should we fear this king of terrors, who gives his stroke, but has no sting? The stab is deep, but the captivity short; for we shall have our lives again, which are "hid with Christ in God" till Christ appear; (Col. iii. 3, 4;) and soul-death is escaped; for when we are "absent from the body," we shall be "present with the Lord." (2 Cor. v. 8.) Sin bound us over to eternal death by law; and here was the strength and sting of death; but this sentence is reversed through "the law of the Spirit of life;" (Rom. viii. 1, 2, 4;) and death itself can neither come from, nor end in, any want of love in God to us. And how triumphantly doth the apostle speak, when animated with this meditation! (Rom. viii. 32—39.) What an allay is it, amidst our pangs and fears of death, to think upon those confidences, encouragements, and consolations, before and in and after the shakes and conflicts, yea, and execution of a dying hour, which God allows, intends, and is resolved to give us then! It is now consistent with the dearest love to die, and introductive of the best delights and state; and therefore we have little cause to fear it, seeing we shall be gainers by it: it is but a moment's blow, and that shall be healed again. (1 Peter i. 3.)

PROP. IV. *He that is true to his baptismal covenant hath now the title, and shall have the honour and advantages, of this victory.*—If God be served and sought and loved as our great end and happiness; (Psalm lxxiii. 25, 26;) if we be freely for Christ, (John vi. 37,) faithful to him, (Rev. ii. 10; iii. 10; Heb. v. 9,) and fruitful in him; (John xv. 1—10; 2 Peter i. 5—10;) "if we live in the Spirit," and "walk" by it, (Gal. v. 25; Rom. viii. 9, 17,) and "sow to" it; (Gal. vi. 8;) and if we heartily and prevailingly answer the claims and ends of the gospel of the grace of God; (Titus ii. 11—15;) what need we perplex ourselves with fears, as if we served a rigid or unfaithful Master? O, let not our involuntary weakness and surprisals discourage us; for God is merciful, his goodness is exceeding great, and our High-Priest is sensible of our weaknesses and true to all our interests. (Heb. vii. 25; ix. 24; ii. 14—18; iv. 14—16.)

And now having thus prepared the way by these preliminary propositions, what now remains for us to do, but to take these following directions, which will come something closer to the case in hand?

DIRECTIONS.

DIRECTION I. *See that you lay foundations right and deep.*—How can it be imagined, much less expected, that unprepared and estranged souls

from God and Christ should face the challenges and terrors, or escape the dangers, of a dying day? What can support the confidence of that man who is dispirited by the deserved rebuke and buffetings of an exasperated, because a guilty, conscience? For conscience is the mouth of God, and speaks his mind, (and what speaks otherwise in point of charge or censure is rather ignorance than conscience,) and, by his order and commission, and in his name and majesty, whips the careless soul. It is impossible to still the cries of guilt and wrath: it is far more easy for us to charm and stupify the man than truly cure him. He that is negligent of the main affair is like to bear the smartings of his own voluntary wounds; and the more voluntary our negligence appears to be to our awakened consciences, when startled by gripes and fears of death, the less cause will there be for help and pity.

All fears arising from an unconverted state have God to back and sharpen them; because they are truly grounded on God's professed resolution and legal comminations, to bring those fears on them by whom they are deserved. So that our only way to cure and quell these fears, is to remove their cause, by giving up ourselves to God the Father, to know him, love him, and live to him, and to delight ourselves in God's image, presence, and favour, in his Son Jesus Christ, more than in all the treasures and delights of lower things; to know the Lord that bought us, and to serve him in "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;" with confidence to commit ourselves to his tendered conduct, government, and protection, and entertain him with all suitableness of apprehension, affection, and conversation to all his excellencies, offices, and appearances; to answer all his kindnesses, cost, and care, with all such faithful, fruitful, cheerful conversations as God and Christ determined and designed in man's redemption: (Eph. i. 4:) yea, to be ruled, assisted, and refreshed by what the Spirit of grace and holiness and wisdom hath done for us, and is sent from the Father and the Son to perfect and complete in us; to live the life of faith and holiness, and endeavour to spend our days in the delightful hopes and foretastes of, and ripenings for, and "hasting to," (or "hastening," as the word, *σπευδοντες*, imports, 2 Peter iii. 12,) your everlasting state of joys and glory; to make the unseen world the exercise, poise, and spring of your most vehement desires, most vigorous pursuit, and most inviolable satisfaction; and, in a word, to walk in all due conscience of your trust and charge, to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to others and yourselves; in all things to think, and speak, and do as in the sight of God, relation to him, and special interest and delight in him; and not through ignorance, enmity, and sloth, to let the devil, flesh, or world mortify your delight in God, your motions toward, affections to, and resolutions for, God. And hearken not to those discouraging thoughts and jealousies of God and Christ, which your grand enemy, the prince of lies and darkness, is ready to abuse you with. Where hath God told you that the willing, thoughtful, painful soul, though much distempered and imperfect, shall be rejected by him? For when the Son protests so solemnly against rejecting such as come, he speaks his Father's heart. (John vi. 37—40.) And I profess, when I most seriously consider the terms and tenor of the covenant of grace, I am much confirmed in this,—that all grounded

jealousies, suspicions, and discouragements as to our hopes of everlasting happiness, can only fix upon our voluntary rejecting of God and Christ, and holiness and heaven; and though many things may humble us, and ought to do it, yet nothing can implead our title to the purchased possession, nor our comfortable hopes at death, when once our wills are fixed on Christ, and well resolved for him, and prevail upon our lives for walking worthy of our great vocation.

We have no impossible conditions imposed on us; especially if we consider gospel-assistances, indulgence, and encouragements: for when we know our way, as God hath showed it us in Christ, and have our hearts inclined and fixed for God, we are but to exert what strength and power we have to serve and please our God, and, proportionably to our abilities and advantages, to wait upon God for more, according to his instituted ways and methods. Improvements are but required to be proportionable to our talents; and he that brought ten talents to his lord, had more than one or two at first to make improvement of. I do indeed believe the law of nature yet in force,* though now incorporated into the law of Christ; and that the decalogue is yet in force to bind and rule us; and never look to see its abrogation proved, till they that hold this abrogation can demonstrate that the Father lost his right and throne of government by the appearance of his Son, and that Christ acted not as his Father's delegate and for his glory, and that grace was not designed and directed to the reparation of declined religion in the world, but that God was so prodigal of his pardon and indulgence as to grow regardless of his government. But yet that law is one thing, and this covenant another thing; for the covenant of grace respected those distempers and perplexities and disadvantages,—and supposed them, and was suited to them in its tenders and provisions,—for which it did design relief. And now our terms of life are not so strict as those on which God dealt with healthful, sound, and innocent Adam; for now sincere and prevalent faith, and love, and holiness shall reach those consolations after death which once, namely, antecedently to Christ's undertaking and completing satisfaction, they could not do. And therefore, if your insincerity and fundamental unpreparedness for your change be that which starts and feeds your fears, labour to be sincere and faithful in covenant-making and covenant-keeping; and you may be sure of this, that death will lose its sting and victory, and thereupon its fearful looks, when sin hath lost its throne, and when God and Christ have got your hearts, and life-to-come concerns influence and rule your purposes, projects, and pursuits. It is with relation to our manifold temptations, wants, and weaknesses, and all despondencies and discouragements consequent thereupon, that Christ hath undertaken to be our great High-Priest, Physician, Advocate, and Saviour. His satisfaction related to our forfeiture of all the good we had in promise and possession; and his intercession is with respect to our great distance and unworthiness. His deep compassionate suppose our misery; and his assistance and supplies imply our wants and

* By "the law of nature" I mean God's revealed will as Ruler, objectively signified in the nature of things within us and without us, concerning our duty, and rewards or punishments; and this law is written upon, and discovered by, our own capacity and constitution, our relations to God and others, and our furniture and advantages from what we are encompassed and intrusted with in the whole frame of nature.

disadvantages. We are to be taught, because we are ignorant; and healed, because we are sick; and disciplined, because so prone and subject to disorders; and succoured and supported, because we are tempted: and when the heart is once resigned to Christ and God by him, Christ looks upon himself as much concerned to perfect in and for us every thing that can concern us in life, and death, and after death.

DIRECT. II. *Labour to understand your fears distinctly, and know their reasons, ends, and measures.*—We are buffeted in the dark, while we are ignorant of, and so mistake, the reasons of our fears, and know them not in their original and end. The devil loves and labours to disturb us by such boisterous storms and winds as none shall know either whence they come or whither they go: he loves to walk and speak and act in the clouds, to our astonishment and confusion; that we may be disturbed, even when he knows we cannot be destroyed, because he sees our hearts are gone for God. It is here as in polemical divinity: “A case, when it is clearly stated and discovered, is half answered by the stating of it;” for then our arguments are driven and directed to a point: but when words and things are ambiguously used and rendered, there will be great contention and but little satisfaction. We are too often frightened with clouds and shadows at a distance; but when by near approaches and clear inspection we understand the matter, our fears become our shame: and therefore, to come nearer to the case and our own consciences, what makes us thus reluctant and afraid to die?

1. *Is it the loss of what you must be divorced from by death?*—If so, then think a little on what you are likely to lose. What is this state which you must leave, that it hath stolen your hearts away? What is the wise man’s motto on it, but “Vexatious vanity?” (Eccles. i. 14.) Is it not a state of blindness, enmity, and active wickedness? a state of distance and distractions? Is it not a state wherein nothing is more sure and frequent than sin and sorrows? The mind and heart of man are sooner stupified and corrupted, than comfortably exercised and satisfied: the pleasures and delights of this distracted, transient state are most near of kin unto the sluggish, drossy part of man, his senses and his fancy; and when the impetuous cravings of sense and fancy have got their gluts and surfeits, the soul, that nobler and more capacious part, is furiously invaded, sadly imposed on, and prevented and obstructed in its sublimer exercises and enjoyments; it is degraded by a base captivity, stripped of its choicest ornaments and enrichments, and made to slight and quit its best concerns, that so the brutish part of man may rule and ruin all. The excellency of all things here lies in their ordinate usefulness and subserviency to better things; from which when you abstract them, you have no right, propriety, nor proportion in them for you; but by your own averseness to be gone from them, you show your little or no love to God.

2. *Is it your startling apprehension of what you must encounter and sustain in death, that makes you fear to die?*—It is true, the terrors, jealousies, and pains, that commonly do attend a dying hour, together with that dissolution to which our natures are averse, make death appear an enemy in the way ready to meet us, like Balaam’s angel, with an amazing sword, and therefore formidable. But yet the serious, painful,

and resolved Christian hath many things wherewith to scatter or correct the evil influences of all discouraging apprehensions of this amazing exercise and change. For,

(1.) *Those sins that have truly and regularly lost their throne and interest in the heart, shall never be the ruin of the man.*—Through Christ, the domineering and damning power of sin are left together. He that hath subjugated and mortified his vile affections, interests, and corruptions, and hath broken off his sins by righteousness, and hath changed his principles, end, and actions, hath that immortal seed of life and peace and joy, which will assuredly ripen into his everlasting life, security, and triumphs. (1 Cor. xv. 56—58.) Your former provocations lose their damning strength, when you have deserted them by penitent conversion. (Acts iii. 19.) And when He that hath the keys of death and hell hath told you this, (as he hath, Luke xxiv. 47,) what have you then to exercise your jealousies and sad suspicions, but sinful and groundless infidelity, which gives the lie to all those testimonies and assurances of the ability and fidelity of God and Christ, who have engaged themselves by promise to save you from those dangers which you fear, and of whose gracious nature the gospel, and all those wondrous mercies that attend it, have informed you?

(2.) *This being granted, what then hath the devil to shake your confidences with, but lies and falsehood?*—It is your own fault to credit Satan, when he invalidates the truth of God, and would weaken and enervate all the assurances which God hath given you of his resolved design to save you. If he can prove that sin may be repented of, and yet unpardoned; that sin may be pardoned, and yet the soul undone; that God and Christ are either forgetful, impotent, or false; then be dejected: but it is your comfort, that he hath no other arguments but what are bottomed on these great absurdities. And,

(3.) *As to the terrors of that hour, which may arise from Satan's furious onsets and assaults; God will not let you walk alone.*—He hath his rod and staff in readiness for your assistance and support. Christ, our compassionate High-Priest, knows what it is to die; he knows the subtilty and fury of the tempter by smart experience; and his sympathy hath taught him pity; and our compassionate Head will not forget his exercised members under their pains and terrors and great temptations at that hour. Christ is not exalted above the exercise of pity, but went to heaven for the reception and possession of that capacity, throne, and dignity at God's right hand, which he is resolved to improve for our security and relief when we are most afflicted and in danger. And,

(4.) *As to the pains and stroke of death; they are but short and sudden, and made our necessary passage to everlasting glory.*—And may not much be borne, when all shall be secured? What are the strugglings, gasps, and stretches of departing saints, unto those gripes of conscience and fears of vengeance which are the inward, frequent exercises of sinners, when they live, and when they die too? Nay, it is a great allay unto the bitterness and fears of death, that God hath such rich and mighty cordials and consolations proper for that hour. O, what refreshments do oftentimes issue and arise from those discoveries of God's image in us, presence with and favour for us, which are made by us,

when we are forced to retire within, when all things round about us fail, and lose their interest in and favour with us, because our flesh decays and wastes through pains and rottenness, to which the bewitching dotages of time could make their easiest and most successful applications! And it oftentimes happens that our fears exceed our pains, and that the king of terrors doth not gripe so hard, nor stab so painfully, as we are apt to think and look for; but when the stroke is given indeed, and the pains are gone, how easily and quickly do the first openings of our eternal morning even swallow-up all the remembrances of our dying sorrows! O! when the joys and visions of our God invade and exercise our departed souls, then comes the great preclusion and welcome pledge of our eternal conquest of this last enemy; and after a short sleep of bodies in the dust, whilst souls retire and go to God, the trump will sound, the Lord will come, the world shall perish or be refined by the flames, and the dead rise again, and die no more.

3. *Is it because you fear a change of state to your great disadvantage when you are dead, that you are loath and dread to die?*—If so, then it is because, either (1.) *You credit not or question the certainty and excellency of the world to come.* Or, (2.) *Because you do not understand and value it.* Or, (3.) *You do suspect your interest in and fitness for it.*

(1.) If it be the first, *concoct those arguments and intimations which God hath given you, by diligent inquiries, sober pauses, faithful meditation.*—Reflect upon the first and second propositions, and those more cogent, useful treatises which are written on this subject, and wherewith the world abounds; and let not the bribes and flatteries of a vain world divert you, nor the malignant influences of a wanton fancy corrupt and mortify the faculties which God hath given you for this end; for here the light is ready for the prepared eye.

(2.) If you do not understand its excellence, and so have no value for it, *compare both states together.*—That so your choice and value may result from wisdom, and be the product of true and sober judgment. Is it so good to dwell, delight, and perish in the flames of smart contentions betwixt God and you, or to have your breath and spirits expended in dreadful groans and echoes to the apostle's deep complaints and cries in Rom. vii. 18—24? Is there no melody like heart-reproaches for practical despising and displeasing God? (Psalm li. 3, 4.) Is there such harmony and advantage in the sluggish exercises and motions of diseased souls? Is there such pleasure in dark and difficult discoveries, which are but one remove from the thick darkness of damning ignorance and blindness, as that your aversation to be sent away unto that element of clearer views and visions in the other world may well be fixed there? Can you delightfully be exposed to temptations, to injurious and unworthy thoughts of God; and dwell where God is little discerned, prized, and served? What! is a hospital such a desirable habitation, that you are loath to quit it? Are the distractions, pains, and vanities of a forsaken world such charms and loadstones to your hearts, as to set you on building tabernacles and fixing there? Who ever loved to be exposed to miseries, or to build his palace on the sands or hasty streams? And what is this state of life but the true theatre and centre of all these

woes and miseries? But if you look above, and pierce the heavens, there you will meet with clear discoveries and vehement flames of love, and all desirable, unconceivable vigour, liberty, and satisfaction in an immortal state. But of this, see more in the Second Proposition. (Page 664.)

(3.) *Is it because you do suspect your interest in and fitness for the life to come?*—If so, then know the terms of life, and try your state thereby. Do you not know what God is, believe what he saith, accept what he tenders, and do what he commands? Know you not who Christ is, what he hath done, what he expects, what he promises, and will do! Are you an enemy to the graces, truths, and motions of the Spirit, and to his directing, quickening, and comforting influences? Are ye not dead to sin, and alive to God through Christ? Is not another life the exercise and object of your chief desire, pursuit, and satisfaction? Have you no prevalent inclinations, affections, and resolutions to renounce the world, flesh, devil, and to discharge all your duties to God, yourselves, and others, with wisdom, holiness, activity, and courage? and to do all this as in the sight of God, and with delight, as in the hopes and prospect of a better world? and to expect what God hath promised, in the ways which he commands? “If these things be in you and abound,” your hearts are right, condition safe, and title good. If you be wanting here, this is your way of reparation and security: do these things, and death is yours; and when these things are done, all your discouraging doubts and fears are answered and dispelled, by being clearly understood. For,

(i.) It is one thing to be fit to die, and another thing to know it.

(ii.) It is one thing to have your title good; another thing to be sinless, and so fully ripe for heaven immediately.

(iii.) It is one thing to have a serious, fixed heart and will for God; and another thing to have passionate affections, which depend more upon the temper of the body, than the power and ripeness of the grace of God upon the heart.

(iv.) It is one thing, what we cannot be, though we would be with strength and readiness of will; and another thing, what we have little or no will to be.

(v.) It is one thing to love and hate proportionably to what God and sin are and deserve; and it is another thing to love and hate as God requires, in proportion to our strength, and with reference to our work and joy. And,

(vi.) It is one thing to have corruption dwell in us, and another thing to have it rule.

(vii.) It is one thing to be tempted of the devil, and another thing to yield thereto. And,

(viii.) It is one thing to have ground of hope and joy, and another to have the sense thereof.

(ix.) Joy is also considerable, as our duty, and God's gift.

And these nine distinctions, well observed, rightly applied, and carefully improved, will go exceeding far towards answering all those doubts which animate unwarrantable fears of death in those whose hearts are right, whilst their hopes are low, their jealousies great, their spirits faint, and so their lives uncomfortable, through their own ignorant and sad mistakes.

INFERENCES.

INFERENCE I. Christian religion at the worst, is better than a course of wickedness at the best.

INF. II. Men's carriages will be answerable to the truth and power of their faith and hope, in reference to the comforts of the unseen world.

INF. III. All the dejectedness of thorough gracious Christians arises from their inconsiderateness.

INF. IV. To understand the regular measures of fear and love, is of considerable concernment in our Christian course.

INF. V. To look and act for joys to come, and to make them quickening arguments to our obedience and preparations, is an essential part of our religion. (2 John 8.)

INF. VI. Immoderate love of life and fear of death are sinful, and of dangerous consequence.

INF. VII. It is of great use to understand the truth and worth of the comforts of a well-finished course.

INF. VIII. Infidelity, in whole or in part, as far as it reaches, cannot but mortify those noble dispositions and necessary preparations which Christianity calls us to; for it is impossible to be religious any further than God's existence and rewarding excellences and resolutions are credited. (Heb. xi. 6.)

INF. IX. The want or distance of pertinent and smart temptations is the only reason of perseverance in the formality of godliness amongst professors whose hearts and aims are not upon and for the joys of heaven.

INF. X. To have our faith and hope well fixed and exercised, is the best method and expedient for cheerfulness, constancy, and courage in the whole frame of Christian sufferings and duty. This makes exalted, active souls in godliness and for it.

INF. XI. Then, what considerable friends are God and Christ to Christianity and serious Christians, who have furnished us with hopes and arguments drawn from the certainty and transcendent excellence of joys to come!

INF. XII. No man hath cause to quarrel with what he is called to do and suffer for the Christian cause, nor reason to decline religion because of difficulties in the way.

These inferences should and might be enlarged upon, but that the determined bounds of a single sermon must not be exceeded. Close with the truth delivered here; and, with the author, lament, and pray for the heightening of, his too mean accomplishments and furniture.

SERMON XXXI.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM HOOK,

SOMETIME MASTER OF THE SAVOY.

WHAT GIFTS OF GRACE ARE CHIEFLY TO BE EXERCISED IN ORDER TO AN ACTUAL PREPARATION FOR THE COMING OF CHRIST BY DEATH AND JUDGMENT ?

And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came ; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage : and the door was shut.—Matthew xxv. 10.

WE have two large and weighty discourses of Jesus Christ to his disciples newly before his death : the one, to comfort them against his departure out of the world ; (John xiv.—xvi. ;) the other, to prepare both them and us against his return to judge the world ; of which the present chapter treateth, and part of the precedent. In the former chapter we have Christ's exhortation unto watchfulness against his second coming, urged from the uncertainty of the time of his return ; (Matt. xxiv. 42 ;) and this exhortation is continued in this twenty-fifth chapter ; in which there are these three parts : *The first* is contained in the parable of the ten virgins. (Verses 1—13.) *The second*, in that of the several talents given by the master to his servants, to be employed and improved by them against his return. (Verses 14—30.) *The third* containeth the description of the coming of Christ to judge the world. (Verses 31—46.)

My text lieth in the first parable ; namely, that of the ten virgins ; of whom " five were wise, and five were foolish." And whereas Christ very often opened his mouth in parables, none of them comes closer to the consciences of men than this, as I may have occasion to show hereafter. I shall not insist in opening the whole parable, seeing the following discourse will take-in most thereof : I will hasten, therefore, to that part thereof which I have now read unto you.

Now as for these ten virgins, they professed alike ; and who were the wise, and who the foolish, lay undiscovered till the midnight-cry was heard : " Behold, the bridegroom cometh ; go ye out to meet him." " Behold, he cometh with clouds, he cometh to judge the earth ; he shall judge the world in righteousness, and his people with equity." This was an awakening cry to slumbering virgins in the midst of the dark and black night, who little dreamed that Christ was so near at hand ; but wise and foolish are startled and raised with it, and all of them betake themselves forthwith to the trimming of their lamps ; when the foolish, finding theirs extinguished, desire the wise to communicate of their oil unto them. They speak like persons not well awake ; for though there is a communion of saints in the exercise of their graces mutually among themselves, yet there is no communication of personal graces to each

other ; and moreover “ the just shall live by his ” own, and not by another’s “ faith.” What therefore say the wise ? *Μηποτε, Nequaquam*, “ By no means,” say they ; “ ‘ lest there be not enough for us and you ; ’ we have no oil to spare ; ‘ but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.’ ” *Salsa derisio, non cohortatio*,* saith Beza. The wise answer the foolish wisely ; yea, wittily upbraid them for their folly ; for was this a time to get grace, when the Bridegroom was come, and time was slipped ? Is that a time to have oil to buy, when we should have oil to burn ? Or is this oil to be bought with money and price, which is most freely given in the day of grace and mercy ? What, therefore, do the foolish do ? As if they foolishly understood an exprobration for an exhortation, they are thinking now of buying : “ But while they went to buy, the Bridegroom came ; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage ; and the door was shut.” In which words you have, 1. *The going of the foolish to buy.* 2. *The coming of the Bridegroom to the marriage.* 3. *The preparedness of the wise to enter with him.* 4. *The shutting of the door after them.* But not to insist upon these things distinctly, let me gather-up the principal scope of our Saviour in the words ; which is, to show us,

OBSERVATION.

That very miserable is the condition of such, especially professors of the gospel, who have grace to seek and get at the coming of Jesus Christ ; and as happy is the state of such who are ready to enter with him into the bride-chamber of eternal rest and peace.—This is the point that I shall insist upon ; which, in the application, will lead me to the question that is to be spoken to.

1. I say, *Very miserable is the condition of such.*—That is, of such in general ; and not only of such as profess to Christ, but of others also that profess not to him at all, as to any show of godliness in their lives ; such as are the far greatest part of men ; yea, and commonly too, where the gospel is preached, who are, sure enough, to seek not only of the oil of grace in their vessels, but of light also in their lamps.

2. *But more miserable is the state of such who are professors of the gospel, and yet have grace to seek and get at such an hour.*—Yet so will it be, as you see in my text ; for such are these foolish virgins, who go to purchase grace when the Bridegroom cometh.

3. *Very miserable is their case, because the door of the bride-chamber is shut against them.*—They profess to the Bridegroom in common with the wise ; and now the wise are admitted, and the foolish excluded ; for the everlasting doors of glory stand open unto *saving*, but never unto *common*, grace.

4. *It must needs be, then, that the state of the wise is very blessed.*—Because they are prepared, and their lights are burning, and their loins girded, and their oil of grace in exercise, when Christ is coming to them ; and therefore they are brought to the “ King in raiment of needle-work ; ” yea, with gladness and rejoicing they are brought, and “ enter into the King’s palace,” where “ the wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and even as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”

* “ A sharp and derisive speech ; not an exhortation.”—EDIT.

But I shall not stand upon this second part of the doctrine,—to show the happiness of the wise prepared virgins; the time, and question to be handled, will not permit it: only something I shall speak to it in the close of this exercise. Therefore, in opening of the other part, namely, the misery of such as profess to Jesus Christ, who have grace to get and seek at the coming of the Bridegroom; let me show you,

1. That there are such as profess at a high rate, and yet are no better than foolish virgins.—For such are these here in my text, who rise very high in their professions, as excelling the ordinary rank of pretenders unto Christ. “How so?”

(1.) *They are virgins.*—“And what is that?”

(i.) *They have renounced anti-christian idolatry, and all the false worships of the mother of harlots.*—And they will in no wise conform to the inventions of men; as it is said of the hundred and forty-four thousand which stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion: “These are they that have not defiled themselves with women; for they are virgins.” (Rev. xiv. 4.) That is, they have abandoned the spiritual fornications of the great whore, and kept their garments undefiled in that respect.

(ii.) *They have also renounced “the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”* (2 Peter ii. 20.) —*Τα μiasματα*, “the puddles or sloughs” wherein the swine of the world do wallow; they “flee from” these, as the word doth signify: yea, they are not only *αποφυγοντες*, but also *αποστρυφουντες*; not only “such as flee from” these puddles, but “such as,” at least seemingly, “abhor” them. For these virgins are too neat to defile themselves with the world’s mire and dirt: they arise, you see, and trim their lamps; they are therefore trim virgins, who have not visibly defiled themselves.

(iii.) And more especially, *they are virgins in professing espousals to Christ the Bridegroom.*—Who, as it was prefigured under the law, marrieth “a wife in her virginity.” (Lev. xxi. 13.) These virgins, therefore, are visibly espoused unto Christ, and joined in the same communion with the wise; for here is a fellowship between the ten: they stand at so great a distance from the world’s defilements, that they profess communion visibly with the choicest saints. And, indeed, the saints in gospel-fellowship are virgins, and every church of Christ is a virgin. Hence saith the apostle to the church at Corinth, “I have espoused you to one Husband, that I may present you a chaste virgin to Christ.” (2 Cor. xi. 2.) And therefore the members of the churches are to be reputed such, seeing they are parts of the same homogeneal body.* And thus you see how these professors are virgins.

(2.) *They have their lamps, as well as the wise.*

(i.) In that they are persons of light and understanding, guides to the blind, and lights to them that are in darkness, instructors of the foolish, and yet themselves but fools.

(ii.) The word is also “a lamp to their feet and a light unto their paths,” so far that they will conform their actions to the rule: “For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light.” (Prov. vi. 23.) And in

* *Eadem est ratio partis et totius.* “Those properties which appertain to the whole, belong also to every part.”—EDIT.

these two respects, their knowledge and external conformity, their lamps shine as brightly as [those of] the wise virgins do.

(3.) *They profess not only expectation of Christ's coming, but make also preparation for it.*—In that they go forth together with the wise to meet the Bridegroom. And though at last they are found unready, yet they prepare so far that they go forth to meet him, as hoping to partake in the blessing and comfort of the nuptial day; whereby it appeareth that they had “tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come.” And though they fell into their midnight's sleep, so did the wise virgins also: for it will indeed be such a drowsy time immediately before the coming of Christ, that not one of ten that profess unto him will be awaked; no, nor one in five of such as do truly love him. And at the first, too, they only “slumbered;” and neither slept nor waked; but by degrees they fall fast asleep; for security hath its gradual progressions before it be midnight with the soul. But this was not proper to these five, but common to all the ten.

(4.) *They are no less awaked than the wise with the midnight-cry of, “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.”*—For, saith the text, “Then all those virgins arose;” so that they take the alarm equally with the rest. Thus one may be awaked with the cry of the word of God, and yet be void of grace in his heart.

(5.) *They likewise fall to trimming of their lamps no less than the wise virgins do.*—That is, they fall to furbishing of that profession which had contracted scurf and foulness in the time of their midnight-security. For now they looked upon themselves as espoused unto Jesus Christ, and begin to deck and trim themselves with ornaments against the nuptials, as conscious that preparation is most necessary for those who desire to be found of Christ in peace at his appearance; for there is no meeting him with lamps untrimmed and lives unguided by the word.

(6.) *They persevere unto the Bridegroom's coming.*—They were guilty of security, indeed, and so were the wise also; but here is neither apostasy nor discovered hypocrisy thus far; namely, until the midnight-cry. They held out to the last, and die at heaven's door, and, like the Levite's concubine, with their “hands upon the threshold.” (Judges xix. 27.) Thus they professed far; for such a sort, I say, there is, that rise thus high, and yet are foolish virgins.

2. In the next place, *let us consider where the defect is, and wherein the folly of these virgins lieth.*—For you have heard of their virginity in their separation from and profession against anti-christian idolatry and men's inventions, and also in their escaping the world's pollutions; and you have seen their virginity in their espousals unto Christ, and visible communion with the wise in the enjoyment of gospel-ordinances; you have heard also of their light, their hopes, their awaking, their trimming their lamps, and how near they came to heaven. But here now was the one thing lacking,—that all this was the effect only of an external and ineffectual work, wherein though there was something internal, it was but light and transient, which never wrought a thorough and powerful change of the heart: whereas the wise had an inward and powerful call to Christ, insomuch that “the gospel came to them not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Ghost;”

whereby they were made to "know wisdom in the hidden part," and became virgins in affection and disposition, as well as in profession and action. Meanwhile the operations of the Spirit are languid, weak, and transient, upon the hearts of foolish ones; as we see in the stony ground, in which there is no thorough, powerful, and abiding change. And hence it is said, "The foolish took their lamps, but took no oil with them;" they wanted the oil of the Spirit of God, and his saving gifts, in the vessels of their hearts. Briefly: the wise virgins were sincere professors and followers of Christ; the others, mere hypocrites and foolish builders, who laid their foundation on the sand. And yet I do not say, that foolish virgins have always saving grace to seek at the coming of Christ; because there is repentance and pardon to be had in time for hypocrites. A foolish professor may go forth to meet the Bridegroom with his lamp only in his hand, and no oil at all in his heart; and yet he may meet with timely awakenings by the way, and Christ may infuse the oil of saving grace into his heart before the midnight-cry; whereby *he* becometh wise in the latter end, *who* was a fool in the beginning; for Christ calls upon hypocrites, as well as others, to repent. (Matt. xxiii. 26; James iv. 8.) Hypocritical Sardis is called hereunto, as well as the other virgin-churches of Asia; and many unsound professors have been effectually converted, when many others have lived and died in their hypocrisy; and perseverance in profession unto Christ is no argument of a good estate to a dying virgin, except she be found in the way of wisdom.

3. There remaineth one thing more to be spoken to for the clearing of the point; and that is, *that very miserable is the state of such as these, who have grace to get when Christ cometh.*—For "the door is shut" upon them. In which words is declared their punishment of loss, which some have thought to be greater than that of sense; which I shall not dispute, but briefly discourse of that of loss, as mentioned only in the text; which is inevitably followed by that of sense.

(1.) *All the profession of these virgins is lost.*—Their prayers, praises, humblings, external reformations, communications both of their worldly substance and likewise of their parts and gifts; and so are their sufferings and their witness-bearing to the truth, &c. All these are excluded from God's acceptance of them, through want of an interest in the Bridegroom; for none of these were offered up in Christ; and the greatest and most glorious services, without unfeigned faith and love, are nothing. (Lev. xvii. 5, 6; Heb. xiii. 15; Col. iii. 17; 1 Cor. xiii. 1—3.)

(2.) *All opportunities and means of grace are now lost, never to be enjoyed more.*—The door of opportunity (as the apostle calleth it, 2 Cor. ii. 12; 1 Cor. xvi. 9) is for ever shut against them; they have survived all their seasons, which now give place unto eternity. For the Bridegroom cometh first by death; and "it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment;" not, "After this, and further means of grace;" not, "After this a sabbath, or a sermon, or a time to pray and repent;" but, "After this the judgment." And what, then, succeeds the judgment? The perpetual execution of it; in which respect it is called the "eternal judgment;" (Heb. vi. 2;) so that the door of opportunity is now for ever shut.

(3.) *There is "a door of hope," and that also is shut against them.* (Hosea ii. 15.)—These virgins had hopeful expectations of entrance with the Bridegroom; for that was it they waited for: whereas now their hope is perished, and hath given up the ghost; for, at best, it was but a fine-spun "spider's web," (Job viii. 14,) but never a true lively hope.

(4.) *It followeth upon this, that the door of grace is shut, never to be opened more.*—Christ stretched forth his hands to them all the day long; but now "the accepted time and day of salvation" is ended, and there is no further place for grace and mercy, nor hopes of seeing "the King in his beauty."

(5.) *They have now lost their communion with the wise virgins, who are safe within the door.*—That whereas they separated from the world to join in fellowship with saints, they are now for ever separated from the saints, to take their portion with the world. (Matt. vii. 23.) Time was, when the door of Christ's house upon earth, which is the church of God, stood open to them as well as unto the wise, and the key of the kingdom of heaven gave them admission into this lower house upon their visible subjection to his rule and government; and they had entrance equally with the wise to partake of all the privileges thereof: and now, when they think to enter into the upper house of eternal glory, the key is turned against them.

(6.) *These virgins now have lost their veils.*—And are discovered to the wise, who see not the virgins their companions brought to the King in fellowship with themselves in glory. And now they are discovered also to themselves and to all the world, and known to be what they are; so that they have nothing henceforth to cover them but everlasting shame and contempt. Time was, that they were taken together in the same net with them who are within the door; but the angels have gathered the good fish into their vessels, and cast away the bad. (Matt. xiii. 47—49.) That therefore now is taken from them which they seemed to have, even the shows and shadows of that grace they never had, by Him that "brings to light the hidden things of darkness, and maketh manifest the counsels of the heart." Their lamps were going out, when they awaked at the midnight-cry; (Matt. xxv. 8;) and now they are quite extinguished, never to shine more. The word shall shine no longer to them, nor their knowledge and other gifts to any.

(7.) *It now remains, that they who erewhile were in their midnight's sleep, are now in their midnight's darkness.*—Even there where the light of a candle never shined, nor the voice of the bridegroom and the bride was ever heard. For they are driven out of light into darkness, and an eternal night of grief and desperate sorrow, to "have their portion with hypocrites," their lamps to be put out in obscure darkness. This door of separation, like to the pillar of the cloud between the Israelites and Egyptians, yields light to the wise within, and darkness to the fools without.

These things (which are mostly textual) are enough to demonstrate the misery of these virgins: I need not spend further time to dilate upon the pain of loss, nor at all upon the pain of sense, which followeth inevitably upon what you have already heard. Let me, therefore, apply the truth thus opened, and hasten to the question.

USES.

USE I. *Are these things so? What, then, shall we think of such who fall as short of the foolish virgins as the foolish do of the wise? And where shall the profane and ignorant sinner appear?*—O, how many are there in a land of light, who are far from this virginity fore-mentioned, as being defiled with antichrist's and the world's pollutions! How many, who never engaged in the saints' communion; and who never pretended to the Bridegroom, never waited for his coming, never went forth to meet him, never regarded a lamp of light without them in the word, nor of the knowledge of Christ within them; and who are so fast asleep in sin, that no midnight-cry can awake them! Surely, the door of grace will be shut against these when they die, who never cared to come near it whilst they lived. And if foolish virgins perish with their hands upon the gates of glory, what will become of them who live and die at so vast a distance from them? And if five of ten that go forth to meet and marry the Bridegroom, are yet shut out of doors, what can they expect who go out to meet him in a hostile manner and professed opposition to him?

USE II. *The point admonisheth all that profess unto the Bridegroom, to take heed of resting in aught that is common to them with the foolish virgins.*—For "except your righteousness exceed" theirs, "ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. v. 20.) There are two negatives in the original text, *ου μη* as much as to say, "You shall not, you shall not enter." The door is double-locked against them. Now you have heard of their attainments,—their virginity, that is, their protesting against idolatry and superstition, and also the world's pollutions; yea, their joining in communion with sincere believers, their light, their fellowship in all the ordinances, their expectations of the Bridegroom's coming, and preparation for it, their awaking and taking the alarm of his approach, the trimming of their lamps, and perseverance in these attainments to the end. Verily, these are great things, and more than we can find in many that profess to Christ this day. Surely our Lord Jesus did foresee the slumbering frame of all the virgins, both wise and foolish, from age to age, especially against his coming, that he hath left behind him such a parable as this to awaken them, which is sufficient to make one start in his midnight-sleep, and arise and clothe himself with tremblings.

You read, Heb. vi. 4, 5, 9, of enlightenings, and tasting of the heavenly gift, partaking of the Holy Ghost, tasting, also, "of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come;" and yet these things do not infallibly attend salvation, but may at last determine in apostasy. Here are three things: *illuminations; common gifts and operations; and tastings*, 1. *Of the heavenly gift*, which is Christ. 2. *Of the promise*. 3. *Of the joys of heaven*. But, I say, these things do not infallibly conclude salvation, except effectual saving grace be joined with them: for they may be where there is no saving grace, and they may be where there is, or they may precede a saving work; but bare *illuminations* as to the doctrine of Christ, and attaining the literal knowledge of the gospel, is no saving work. The like may be said of *common*

gifts and operations of the Holy Ghost ; as, a gift of prayer, of preaching, of utterance, of tongues, and of working miracles, as in the primitive times. So for the *tastes*, either of the *heavenly gift*, Christ Jesus, and the glorious divine things of the gospel, or of the *good word of God in the promises*, or of the *joys of the world to come* ; all these things may be found in temporaries. Supernatural gifts are given sometimes to mere natural men. (Matt. vii. 22, 23.) John Baptist's hearers "rejoiced in his light for a season ;" the stony ground "received the word with joy ;" and even Balaam had a taste, for the time, of the world to come, when he desired to "die the death of the righteous ;" and these foolish virgins lived to the last in hopes of entering into glory. But the immortal soul cannot live upon light, superficial tastes, which yield only a transient relish : there must be a feeding on, as well as a tasting of, the heavenly gift, the good word of promise, and the glory of a higher world. Tasting is a thing distinct from feeding ; and therefore, when the apostle useth a similitude to illustrate what he had said of this kind of tasting, in distinction from eating and drinking, digesting and living upon, the things thus tasted, saith he, "The earth which drinketh-in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God : but that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing ; whose end is to be burned." (Heb. vi. 7, 8.) In which comparison he intimateth, that as it is not enough that the rain doth fall upon the earth, except the earth doth drink it in, without which it will not be fruitful, nor receive a blessing ; even so it sufficeth not that these heavenly things do fall more lightly upon the spiritual palate, except the soul so drinketh them in as that it liveth upon them ; for then, and then alone, it receiveth a blessing from the Lord ; whereas otherwise such persons are "rejected and nigh unto cursing," and their "end is to be burned."

Brethren, the parable now in hand, and that text to the Hebrews, are of an awakening nature ; for God knoweth our slumbering dispositions. You have heard, then, of the attainments of these virgins, and of those professors mentioned by the apostle to the Hebrews. (Heb. vi. 4—9.) And they are indeed good things : "But," saith he, "there are 'better,' and such as do 'accompany salvation.'" For in the second part of that chapter, he speaketh of "the work of faith, the labour of love, and the patience of hope in the sight of God and our Father ;" (1 Thess. i. 3 ;) that is, such as are not spurious and adulterine, but german and genuine, and will endure the test as to their sincerity, in the presence of a heart-searching God. And by these infallible notes we must take our measures. Illuminations, common gifts and operations, and light, transient tastes and relishes, are no evidences ; we must have these better things to bear up our hearts against the coming of the Bridegroom. It sufficeth not to be enrolled among professors, and to enjoy the charitable thoughts and approbations of the wisest virgins under heaven. It is singular mercy to be rightly guided in self-esteem and valuation ; for they that "measure themselves by themselves, or compare themselves among themselves, are not wise." The apostle would not have us to take up with the positive degree of *good* things ; but to take our aims by the comparative of *better*. (2 Cor. x. 12.) These good things are more light,

ineffectual, and superficial, and too often like the seal that is impressed upon bare paper; whereas these better things are like the seal's impression on the wax.

Yet let no trembling soul or broken reed be affrighted at the end of these foolish virgins, to see the door thus shut against them: the tender heart of Jesus Christ aimeth not at our consternation, but awakening, and to prepare and hasten us unto glory before the key be turned. Nor doth his apostle, in the foresaid place, despise the day of small things; but his real scope and purpose is, to excite professors to look carefully to their foundations, and then to "go on unto perfection." (Heb. vi. 1.) And blessed for ever be the Lord for the second part of that sixth chapter to the Hebrews; in the close whereof we may see the afflicted heart tossed with tempests and not comforted, yet hoping in mercy, and fleeing to Jesus as his refuge, and casting the anchor of his floating soul "within the veil, whither the Forerunner is for us entered," who himself was once tossed in the ship of the militant church, "albeit without sin;" but is now gone ashore to heaven as our Forerunner, both to look to our anchor, which is fastened there, and to hold all fast, and to draw our tossed ship to shore, and to see all safe; that where our Forerunner is, there may we be also. And thus the sweet conclusion of that chapter doth fully recompense the severity of its beginning. Let us "comfort ourselves and one another with these" things.

USE III. You have heard the miserable condition of such, especially professors of the gospel and pretenders to Christ, who have grace to seek at his coming. As for the happy state of such as are ready to enter in with him into the bride-chamber of eternal peace and joy, I shall speak a little in the close.

QUESTION.

Now therefore, in the remainder of this exercise, it will be expected, as seasonable, that it be considered, *What gifts of grace are chiefly to be in exercise in order to an actual preparation for the coming of Christ by death and judgment?*—For his coming is first by death, and then by judgment.

1. And I say, "an actual preparation," because *there is always a general and habitual preparedness to meet Christ Jesus in hearts that are truly godly, but not always a particular, actual fitness.*—And this we see here in the five wise virgins, who are found in their midnight-sleep, with lamps that have need of trimming at the coming of Christ. Thus Hezekiah was fit to die, as to a general and habitual fitness, in that he could assert his sincerity before God, when the message of death was brought him; but he was to seek of a particular, actual fitness, in that he begs for longer life with prayers and plenty of tears. The message of death awaked him, and the holy man is startled, and hath his lamp to trim; for the tidings of his death at hand was as much in effect, as if it had been said unto him by the prophet, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go forth, Hezekiah, to meet him." The nature of his distemper, which some by the remedy, a lump of figs applied to the boil, conceive to have been the pestilence; and this considered with the shortness and sharpness of the message, and the prophet Isaiah's quick and

abrupt departure from him, and that the king had then no heir to succeed him in the throne, and also that he was now at the full strength of nature, being but nine and thirty years of age; and his fear also what might become of his kingdom, and of his former reformation after the grand apostasy of his father Ahaz; I say, these considerations made him to apprehend that there was a rebuke of God in this present dispensation, and therefore he is loath to die under a temporal frown; albeit his avowed integrity would, at the worst, have seen him safe at heaven. For though a child of God cannot die in His debt, yet he is unwilling to depart under the sense of His temporal displeasure, so as the good prophet did, whom the lion slew at his return from Bethel to Judah. (1 Kings xiii. 24.) When David, therefore, was under God's rebukes for sin, and even almost consumed with the blow of his hand, he betakes himself, as Hezekiah did, to prayers and tears. Saith he: "Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears: for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were. O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more." (Psalm xxxix. 10—13.) Thus you see that the dear children of God, who have a general and habitual fitness to meet Jesus Christ when he is coming to them by death and judgment, may yet be to seek of a particular actual preparation.

2. Before I come to the answer of the question, let me premise this also: That *though a state of grace is here supposed, seeing grace cannot be exercised where it is not; yet there may be need to have it cleared.*—Inasmuch as the want thereof is a great hinderance in the way of this duty. You know that one that feareth God, and "obeyeth the voice of his servant" Jesus Christ, may yet "walk in darkness, and see no light;" (Isai. 1. 10;) and he may say with Jonah, he is "cast out of God's sight;" (Jonah ii. 4;) and his "soul is filled with troubles," when his "life draweth nigh unto the grave." (Psalm lxxxviii. 3.) Wherefore let your eye be not only on your lamp, but also on your vessel; and examine your oil, as well as mind your light. For though you have received an unction from the Holy One, and felt the sweet influences of the Spirit, and have had the witness in yourself; yet the Comforter, who sometimes relieved your soul, may at the present be far from you, and suspend his testimony; for grace inherent is not self-enlightening, but like the moon, which holdeth forth light no longer than the sun shineth upon it. And though the dial hath its lines and figures, to declare the time of the day, yet you will be to seek, if the sun withdraw his light. Even thus, though the Spirit of God hath drawn the lines and figures of his gifts and graces in your heart, yet if he also do not shine upon them, you will not know what time of day it is with your soul. Pray, therefore, and strive for renewed sights of grace, and for anointing with fresh oil; for the saints do often lose their impressions, through carelessness and inadvertency, whilst they have here and there to do, or indulgence to some carnality, and through the malignancy of some overbearing temper or temptation in an hour and power of darkness. And this makes the soul to drive heavily, which sometimes ran as pleasantly as the chariots of Amminadib; but now the wheels begin to creak, through want of fresh anointings. It being so, look to your vessels and your oil,

and see how they are stored with it, and how the Spirit shineth at any time upon his own lines and figures. This also I premise to the answer of the question, because the soul never acteth grace so vigorously, as when one's state is cleared.

First, therefore, for resolution : *Maintain your faith in frequent exercise, and make no less conscience of acting daily faith than you do of daily prayer.*—For we are apt to rest in a *quondam* call to Christ, and in the original work of faith ; and not to be coming still to Christ, and that as earnestly and studiously as if we had never come before. “ He that is coming unto me,” saith Christ ; (John vi. 35 ; 1 Peter ii. 4 ;) the word in the original is a participle of the present tense. And through the neglect of this daily coming the soul is often in the dark, and seemeth to have lost the promise in which it was formerly drawn to Christ ; by means whereof it is sometimes midnight with the wisest virgins, as well as so at other times by means of their security. For instance : “ By faith, Abraham, when he was called,” not only unto Canaan, but unto Christ, “ obeyed ;” for he looked more to the promised seed than to the promised land ; else, what had his faith been ? But now, in tract of time, namely, about ten years after, he begins to call the promise into question, and to make the steward of his house his heir ; (Gen. xv. 2 ;) till God renewed the promise, to revive thereby the actings of his sleeping faith. “ Look now towards heaven,” saith God, “ and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them : and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.” Upon this, Abraham “ believed in the Lord ; and he counted it to him for righteousness.” “ Why ? Did he not believe before ?” Yes ; the apostle dateth his faith from his coming out of Ur of the Chaldees ; (Heb. xi. 8 ;) and yet here we meet with a second date, that is, as to an eminent reviving act of his faith, as if he had omitted to believe, (as indeed he did,) and now began again ; which was only an interruption, not an intercession.

Now thus it may be with you who believed many years ago ; but the promise and impression of it are perhaps almost worn out, and your faith begins to languish. But the promise is still the same ; and “ the word of the Lord endureth for ever,” and that is the word of the gospel which is preached to you. Wherefore, take hold of it again and again, and of Christ therein ; and not only of that particular promise wherein Christ at first was held out unto you, but of any other that occurreth ; and in the frequent renewings of your faith, your drooping hearts will be revived, and long at last for the coming of Him in whom your soul believeth. You know that your faith will determine with your life ; and therefore improve it daily for your death, which draweth on by gradual steps, in which you are still making forward toward the Bridegroom's coming, who keeps equal paces with you ; so that he and you will meet together at the point of dissolution. Your faith cannot conquer death ; for there is no discharge in that war between death and nature : only faith will vanquish the dread and horror of it. For death (in which the Bridegroom first cometh to us) is, in itself, “ the king of terrors :” other afflictions—as poverty, reproach, imprisonment, debt, exile, sickness, &c.—are inferior fears, which possibly may be escaped, and out of which there is oftentimes deliverance ; but death is the sovereign lord and king

of all of them, from whence there is no return. He that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more, but passeth presently unto the highest tribunal, there to receive the eternal judgment, whether of absolution or of condemnation. And upon this account, the fear of the king of terrors is *the king of fears*, and a sore and painful bondage, in which many are held all their life-time, till faith in Christ release them; yea, and afterwards also, if their faith be not the stronger. What shall I say, then, but, "Awake, faith, and flee to him for refuge, 'who through death hath destroyed him that hath the power of death, that is, the devil; and delivered them who through fear of death were all their life-time subject unto bondage!'" For without this refuge of faith, Christ's coming by death is terrible and astonishing, which the bare habit of faith cannot cure and conquer. Believe, therefore, that you are Christ's, and believe it daily by frequent closings with him and resignations of yourselves unto him; and then you are not so much death's, as death is yours. (1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.) Make good your interest in the Bridegroom, and then you will rejoice at his coming. "Make haste, my beloved," saith the bride. (Canticles viii. 14.) "Why so?" Because he is "beloved," and "*my* beloved." "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come;" (Rev. xxii. 17;) that is, the Spirit in the bride, or the spirit of the bride; for a bride hath a bride-like spirit, which longeth for the coming of the bridegroom. But perhaps the weak believer cannot reach to say thus; and therefore saith the Bridegroom to him, "'Let him that is athirst come:' if thou canst not say, 'Come,' to me, I say, 'Come,' to thee." For we must first come to Christ, before we can say, "Come," to him; yea, we must have some sense of our coming to him, before we can heartily say, "Come," to him. And this faith that I have spoken of, is the principal grace preparing the believer for the coming of Christ, provided that it be maintained in frequent exercise; for hereby the person is justified, the heart purified, the conscience pacified, a sweet correspondence continued between Christ and the believing soul, death conquered, and heaven opened.

Secondly. *This faith doth necessarily work by love.*—And as they always do co-operate, so are they commensurate, and carry a just proportion each to other; though, peradventure, you may be more sensible of your love than of your faith. But now, the more you abound in both, the more you will long for the coming of Christ, and be the more prepared for it. No marvel, therefore, that the apostle loved the appearance of Christ, (2 Tim. iv. 8,) who had so great a love to his person, that he was "not ready to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." (Acts xxi. 13.) "To die at Jerusalem;" for there, he remembered, Christ died for him; and this inflameth his love toward him, and makes him willing to die for him, and to be for ever with him. No marvel, also, that he was straitened between the choice of life and death, and that the balance seemed to incline mostly toward departure and being with Christ. He crieth, *Συνεχομαι εκ των δυο* "I am constrained between two." (Phil. i. 23.) "Why so?" Because he could say, *Ἡ ἀγάπη του Χριστου συνεχει με* "The love of Christ" (that is, to serve him with all my might) "constraineth me." (2 Cor. v. 14.) The original word is the same in both places.

And how came Peter to sleep so soundly and sweetly in his chains between the soldiers, the night before his intended death, in which he was to go to Christ? Why, he could say, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." (John xxi. 17.) When Christ lieth in the embraces of faith and love, what followeth next but *Nunc dimittis*?* "How so?" Thus: the more we are purified, the more prepared. Now as the heart is purified by faith, so also by love: for "herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world." Love doth assimilate a godly soul to Christ; and then what followeth? "There is no fear in love;" that is, no fear of the day of judgment; for "perfect love casteth out fear;" (1 John iv. 17, 18;) that is, strong love; for so is "perfect" taken sometimes: "In understanding be men," or "perfect;" (1 Cor. xiv. 20;) that is, strong, and not like children. So, Heb. v. 14. So that strong love casteth out the fear of the day of judgment, which every degree of love will not do; for "he that feareth is not made perfect in love;" he may have a true, sincere love, but it is too weak to overcome his tormenting fears about that great and terrible day of the Lord. Be much, therefore, in the exercise of this grace, "keeping yourself in the love of God, and looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life;" and be often in the contemplation of the preventing love of God and Christ, to which John in the foresaid place directeth us for the strengthening of faith, and overcoming our fears. Saith he, "We love him, because he first loved us." (1 John iv. 19.) And "Christ is deservedly beloved of him, who is undeservedly beloved of Christ;" † and though there is a force in Anathema Maran-atha, to put the soul upon the love of Christ; yet be taken rather with, "Grace be with all them that love him in sincerity."

Thirdly. *As faith and love are co-operary, so "faith and hope are very near of kin."* ‡—Only, hope is the younger sister as to operation, as waiting with patience for that good which faith layeth claim to in the promise; and without this hope we can neither live nor die with comfort. For the promise is many times deferred as to accomplishment; and without hope's patience, how will you spend the interval? God made a promise to Abraham of multiplying his seed; but neither he, nor yet Isaac, nor Jacob, must live to see it fulfilled. But saith Stephen, "When the time of the promise drew near, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt;" so that God's promises have their stated times and seasons, during which there is work for hope, or else the soul would swoon away. "My soul," saith David, "fainteth for thy salvation: but I hope in thy word;" (Psalm cxix. 81;) that is, thy word of promise. Hope is a cordial against the soul's fainting-fits.

Again: during this interspace between the promise and the accomplishment, you may meet with many tribulations, through which you must enter into the kingdom of heaven,—fightings without, and fears within. The watchmen may smite you, and the keepers of the walls may take away your veil, as if you were no virgin, but a prostitute; you

* "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace," &c.—EDIT.
Fides et Spes.—PAREUS in *Heb. vi.*

† *Amat ille non immeritò qui amatus est sine merito.*—BERNARDUS.
 ‡ *Valde sunt cognatæ sorores*

may meet with sad eclipses, and the hidings of God's face; his wrath may lie hard upon you, and all his waves afflict you. Nay, you may meet sometimes with such a storm, that neither sun nor stars may in many days appear; during which time, you may reel to and fro like a drunken man, and be at your wit's end; your tackling and freight may be thrown overboard with your own hands; you may call all the work of God in you into question; and your hull may be laid adrift, either to sink or swim. In these and the like cases, what will you do without casting the anchor of your hope within the veil, and riding it out till sun and stars appear again? O, let the patience of hope "have its perfect work;" for you will have great need hereof, that when you "have done the will of God, you may receive the promise." Though the wise virgins fell asleep, yet so far as they waited for Christ's coming, they exercised their hope; and such can say at the coming of Christ, "Lo, this is our God: we have waited for him, and he will save us. This is the Lord: we have waited for him; we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

Fourthly. *Keep even accounts with God, and still be perfecting that repentance which is the work of every day; and let there be no old reckonings between God and you.*—For so it may be with a true believer; and it may be called to his remembrance in an evil day, and lie heavy, too, upon his conscience. For this, I conceive, was Jacob's case, who had sinned greatly in his fraudulent and surreptitious way of getting the blessing from his brother Esau; for which he was not thoroughly awakened to see the evil of it for the space of twenty years, namely, at his return from Padan-aram, and [until] that Esau was coming forth against him to be revenged on him: but then his sin came fresh to his remembrance, and he set apart a night to seek the Lord by solemn prayer, and to wrestle with the Angel of the covenant. "And what did he wrestle with him for?" You may see by his answer to the Angel: "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." (Gen. xxxii. 26.) "Why, did not his father bless him?" Yes: "I have blessed him," said he to Esau; "yea, and he shall be blessed." (Gen. xxvii. 33.) And not only so, but when Isaac sent him to Padan-aram, he blessed him again. (Gen. xxviii. 1.) But Jacob would not trust to this, seeing the first and chief blessing, which was due to him by oracle and promise, had an ill foundation as to the manner of obtaining it, and in that respect there was a flaw in the title; which therefore now he striveth to corroborate, before he dares to look his brother Esau in the face; as if he should say, "My father indeed hath blessed me; but there was *error personæ*, he 'mistook the person,' and therefore the blessing is null. And moreover, what the meaning of this providence is, that my brother should come forth against me in this hostile manner, I know not: wherefore, I humbly beg thy blessing, and the confirmation of that title which hath so great an error in it." Thus God brought an old reckoning to his remembrance in an evil day, and set it on his conscience, and put him to repent and mourn; for "he wept, and made supplication unto the Angel." (Hosea xii. 4.) He came not off so easily, but was fain to wrestle hard all night, to lose his rest, and to struggle, and sweat, and pray, and weep, and shed many a tear, and to go halting afterward upon his thigh unto his dying day. Take heed, therefore, of old reckonings undischarged: look back and consider how it

hath been, and omit not a day without reviewing your actions and repentings; I say, as duly as the day determineth, let not the sun go down upon any guilt contracted, that so your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and exercise yourself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and men; and this will the better prepare you for the coming of Jesus Christ both by death and judgment.

Fifthly. *Be much in the exercise of goodness, mercy, and works of liberality towards Christ in his needy members, according to your opportunity and power.*—For though you shall be saved by your faith, yet you shall be judged according to your works; and it greatly concerneth us to be laborious in that service upon which the judgment shall pass at Christ's appearance. (Matt. xxv. 35, 36.) Call yourself, therefore, to an account, what you have done in this way for Christ; as, how you have fed, clothed, visited, relieved him in his members here on earth. And if this were more considered, such as profess to Christ would be more active for him in aught wherein they might be more serviceable to him: but when we see but little activity in the exercise of this grace, we may well fear there is but little oil in the vessel; for rich anointings will make men agile and ready for every good work, inasmuch as "the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness;" and they that hope for eternal life, when Christ shall come by death and judgment, must "seek for glory and honour and immortality," not only "in well-doing," but in "continuance in" it. Beware of omissions, and, among others, of this great duty. The judgment will reach unto all sins, and to omissions in a special manner; (Matt. xxv. 37—39;) for which that learned and holy Usher was humbled upon his death-bed.* The Nobleman hath put a pound into your hand, saying, "Occupy till I come;" yea, he hath given you many pounds in a literal sense, with which you must trade, as well as with the talents of your parts and gifts of grace: and I know you would be glad to "find mercy," with Onesiphorus, in the day of Christ. Remember, therefore, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy;" (Matt. v. 7;) but "he shall have judgment without mercy, who hath showed no mercy;" whereas "mercy rejoiceth against judgment." A merciful man is so far from fearing judgment at Christ's coming, that he rather rejoiceth at the thoughts of it.

Sixthly. *Exercise diligence and faithfulness in your particular calling.*—For when Christ speaketh of his coming, saith he, "Be ye ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." What followeth? "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing." (Matt. xxiv. 44—46.) When Christ was speaking to this point, saith Peter, "Lord, speakest thou this parable to us, or even to all?" (Luke xii. 41.) Truly Christ spake it unto all, though in a special manner to such as Peter: for Christ will have an account how every one of us has managed our particular callings; but they that are stewards in the house of God, which is his church, have a very great account to give; and "it is required" of them in a special manner, "that a man be found

* In the Narrative of his Life and Death.

faithful ;” and, of all Christ’s servants, his stewards have most to answer for ; [so] that if a dispensation of the gospel and the care of souls were not committed to them, he that understandeth the weight of stewardship would dread to undertake it ; but a “ necessity is laid upon ” them, and “ woe unto them if they preach not the gospel.” It is said of Calvin, that when nature began to decline in him, and the symptoms of a dying man appeared on him, he would be diligent at his studies ; from which his friends dissuading him, saith he, *Nunquid me Dominus inveniet otiosum ?* * “ Shall my Master find me idle ? ” Let such, therefore, and all, be diligent and faithful in their respective places and employments. And, indeed, every man is a steward, more or less. You know what the Master saith of the slothful servant : “ Take him, and cast him into outer darkness : there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Such slothful servants shall be under the tribute of eternal pains ; (Prov. xii. 24 ;) when the “ good and faithful servant ” shall be made “ ruler over many things, and enter into the joy of his Lord.” (Matt. xxv. 23.) Would you stand before Christ at his coming ? O, dread idleness and unfaithfulness in your callings, as you desire to be found of him in peace at his appearance ! Fill-up your days with duty, and give your time to Him who gave it to you. Paul was a great lover of Christ and his appearance ; and who more abundant in his labours for him ? For he had the conscience of his indefatigable industry and fidelity in his work for his Master. Saith he, “ I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.” (2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.) He meaneth especially his military faith and oath in fighting a good fight for Christ. And wherefore do we hear him groaning so earnestly, desiring to “ be clothed upon with his house which is from heaven ? ” It was because he laboured ambitiously, that “ whether present or absent, he might be accepted of him.” “ For,” saith he, “ we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” (2 Cor. v. 2, 9, 10.)

Lastly. That I might not multiply particulars, let me add what Christ hath joined together : *sobriety, watchfulness, and prayer.*—And therefore “ take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that day come upon you unawares.” (Luke xxi. 34, 36.) “ Gird up, therefore, the loins of your minds, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter i. 13.) “ For we are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your earthly members ; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.” (Col. iii. 3—5.) You must not only deny all visible gross ungodliness, which even the very sons of morality will decline and decry ; but also all worldly lusts and their secret operations, “ living soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world ; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” (Titus ii. 12, 13.) Take heed of slumbering in these secret lusts ; for

* MELCHIOR ADAMUS in *Vita Calvini.*

“ye are the children of the light, and the children of the day. Therefore” take heed that you “sleep not, as do others; but watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breast-plate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation;” (1 Thess. v. 5—8;) “watching and praying always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape those things” which shall befall the foolish virgins, and that ye may “stand before the Son of man,” (Luke xxi. 36,) who “is coming with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all.” (Jude 14, 15.) And “therefore be sober, and watch unto prayer,” seeing “the end of all things is at hand;” (1 Peter iv. 7;) and look well to your lamps, which are your watch-lights, that they burn brightly in this world’s midnight; and pray particularly for daily supplies of oil, and sincerity in all your actions and duties both to God and man; never omitting to beg for death-bed grace, that so you may live and die to the honour of your Bridegroom. And as for this present world, use it as if you used it not, and have no more to do with it than bare need requireth; and set your hearts and houses, and all your civil, secular affairs, in order, “having your conversations in heaven, whence you look for Christ the Saviour.” And thus walking with God in the exercise of these gifts of grace, when we come to die, we shall change our places only, but not our company. And let none of you behold death at a distance, nor have it seldom in your thoughts, but daily in your eye, that you may not fear it when it cometh. A lion is not terrible to his keeper, that seeth him every day. You must frequently converse with God, Christ, death, and judgment. For when Christ speaketh of his coming to judgment, he so expresseth it as if he were to come in their time to whom he spake it. (Matt. xxiv. 42; Mark xiii. 33—37; Luke xxi. 34—36.) And so indeed he did; for he comes to every man at the hour of his dissolution. And we are his agents or factors in a foreign land; and how soon he may remand us home, and call us to an account, we know not. Say not, therefore, “My Lord delayeth his coming;” lest we are thereby rocked into a midnight-sleep, and scared with a midnight-cry of, “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.”

I shall not detain you much longer. You have heard what those graces are which are chiefly to be exercised in order to an actual preparation for the coming of Christ by death and judgment. I now commend them to your daily exercise; and, for your encouragement therein, shall leave a few considerations with you, and conclude.

First. *That the door of eternal rest and glory shall stand open for you at Christ’s coming to you by death.*—“Why?”

1. Because you are ready; and they that are ready, go in with the Bridegroom. God “hath made you meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light,” (Col. i. 12,) and “hath wrought you for the self-same thing.” (2 Cor. v. 5.) You are a “vessel of mercy, prepared unto glory.” (Rom. ix. 23.)

2. You admitted Christ into the door of your hearts, when there he stood and knocked. (Rev. iii. 20.)

3. You had your conversation in heaven, whilst you lived here on

earth. It was your Father's house, where you used daily to converse ; the doors whereof shall open to you at your death.

Secondly. *Consider the place into which you shall be admitted.*—For the wise “virgins shall enter into the King's palace,” (Psalm xlv. 14, 15,) into paradise, the third heavens, your Father's house, “a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God ;” (Heb. xi. 10 ;) a magnificent structure surely, that hath such “a Builder and Maker,” one that hath built the city most artificially and curiously and for public show, as the original words, *Τεχνιτης και Δημιουργος*, do import. Such a city it is ; yea, a “kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world,” (Matt. xxv. 34,) the first handsel of God's workmanship. (Gen. i. 1.) This is the place whither you shall enter.

Thirdly. *You shall enter thither with the Bridegroom, even our Lord Jesus Christ.*—And this is heaven enough ; namely, to be where Christ is : Luke xxiii. 42, 43 ; John xiv. 3 ; xvii. 24 ; Phil. i. 23 ; 1 Thess. iv. 17, heaven is described by “being with Christ.” And when Christ shall descend from heaven with a shout, to judge the world, if all the saints, suppose, should not descend with him, but any of them be left behind, what an alteration would they find in heaven ! Whereas all of them going with Christ, it is all one as if they were still in heaven with him. You know, Paul was caught up into the third heavens ; and yet when he comes to describe heaven, and the saints' everlasting happiness there, he calls it “being for ever with Christ ;” for this is a comprehensive expression. “How so ?”

1. If the saints shall be with Christ, then shall they be exempt from all troubles and trials ; these fall-off from them like Elijah's mantle, when he went to heaven. There is now a glorious door of partition between these and them ; they are all excluded ; namely, sin, sorrow, afflictions, reproaches, necessities, persecutions, poverty, sickness, pain, death, curse, wicked men and devils. You shall never be troubled with these any more.

2. If they enter in with Christ, they shall enjoy the Father in him, (John xx. 17,) and be filled with the Holy Ghost from them both, and thereby with unspeakable consolations and the fulness of God ; and they shall live for ever in the immediate contemplation and vision and fruition of one God in three persons, and be replenished to the brim with eternal love from them and to them.

3. You shall enjoy the fellowship of an innumerable company of angels ; and shall then know who they are, and love them entirely, and be as intimately beloved of them, though now in your present state you cannot bear the presence of one of them.

4. You shall “sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven,” and enjoy communion with “the spirits of just men made perfect.” (Heb. xii. 23.) All this followeth from your entrance into heaven with Christ.

Fourthly. *Consider that you shall enter into heaven with Christ the Bridegroom, and therefore to be married to him.*—And hence again it will follow,

1. That there will be the nearest relation possible between Christ and you ; for you shall be one conjugally for ever with him. You are one

with Him mystically and matrimonially who is one with the Father essentially.

2. You shall be invested with unutterable glory; seeing it is a marriage-time, wherein the Bridegroom and bride shall shine in the richest attire and embroidery that is in all the wardrobe of heaven. Christ and the saints shall wear the very same glory. (John xvii. 22.)

3. There shall be unconceivable love, joy, delight, and complacency between the Bridegroom and the bride; and "as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride," so shall the Lord Jesus rejoice over his spouse. O, there will be a most glorious, delightful, loving, sweet familiarity and conjugal rejoicing between Christ Jesus and the saints! Marriage-joy upon earth is usually great; what, then, will that be in heaven, when shall be fulfilled that which Christ spake at his last supper?—"I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." (Matt. xxvi. 29.) Where, by "fruit of the vine," we understand "wine, that maketh glad the heart of man," (Psalm civ. 15,) and causeth it to rejoice, and shadoweth-out the love of Christ and joys of heaven to us. (Canticles i. 2, 4.) And by "new," we understand "other;" (compare Mark xvi. 17, with Acts ii. 4 in the original;) so that in this marriage there shall be "new," that is, other, yea, otherguess, "wine"—namely, love, joy, and rejoicing—than there is in the Lord's supper; for Christ, who kept the best wine to the last at the marriage in Cana in Galilee, will surely do so at his own marriage at the last day.

4. This marriage is not on earth, but in heaven; and therefore it shall never dissolve, as marriages on earth do, but continue unto eternity. O, how will the holy angels rejoice and sing at this marriage! For they that sang at the birth of Christ when he lay in the manger, will sing to the purpose at his marriage, when he sitteth upon his throne in the highest glory.

Now the consideration of these things is greatly inducing to be very studious in actual preparations for the coming of Christ. Be ye, therefore, much in the exercise of faith, hope, love, repentance, goodness, mercy, and works of bounty, diligence, and faithfulness in your callings, sobriety, watchfulness, and prayer; that so at last you may have "an entrance ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." And now, brethren, "abide in him; that, when he shall appear, you may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming;" but lift up your heads with "joy unspeakable and full of glory." Hear wisdom, therefore, "and receive instruction, that you may be wise in the latter end." And "God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, make you to increase" in all these preparatory graces, "to the end that he may stablish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." And now, grace be with all them that love him in sincerity. Amen.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.