

the eyes with eye-salve, that it may be seen." (Rev. iii. 18.) And wherever the image of Christ is, it is this Spirit that has instamped it upon the soul. "Live in the Spirit," and "walk in the Spirit;" so your feet shall not decline from the steps of Christ; "you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." (Gal. v. 16, 25.) He will cause you to look unto Jesus; and enable you to follow him, without turning aside, or drawing back; till you come to be where he is, and behold his glory: and then "you will be satisfied with his likeness," and be for "ever with the Lord." (Psalm xvii. 15; 1 Thess. iv. 17.)

SERMON XIV.

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The case proposed :

"HOW MAY A LUKEWARM TEMPER BE EFFECTUALLY CURED?"

I add,

"IN OURSELVES, AND IN ONE ANOTHER?"

The resolution given :

Και κατανοωμεν αλληλους εις παροξυσμον αγαπης και καλων εργαων· μη εγκαταλειποντες την επισυναγωγην εαυτων, καθως εθος τισιν, αλλα παρακαλουντες· και τοσουτω μαλλον οσα βλεπετε εγγιζουσαν την ημεραν.

And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day (to be) approaching.—Hebrews x. 24, 25.

THE inspired author of this profound, sublime, nervous epistle (whether St. Luke, or Barnabas, or Clement, or Apollos, or the apostle Paul, as I most think, I here dispute not) is evidently walking in the searches of the great excellency of Christianity, as it was brought unto us by, and took its denomination from, and serves the purposes and speaks the eminence, unction, and prerogatives, and designs of, Christ the Son of God. And this discourse he here directeth to "the Hebrews;" by whom we may understand those Christian Jews that were in Syria, Judea, and principally at Jerusalem; for those that were dispersed through the provinces of the Roman empire, were commonly called "Greeks." And those, indeed, who were converted to the Christian faith were terribly persecuted by the Jews their brethren, and assaulted by seducers to work them back again to their deserted Judaism; and much ado they had to stand their ground. Whereupon this author (mindful of what his Lord had said in Matt.

xxiv. 9—13) attempts to show the eminences of their state, and that Judaism was every way transcended by Christianity:—The Author of it was a greater and better person than Moses, Aaron, or Melchizedec. The doctrines were more mysterious and sublime; the laws more spiritual, and most accurately suited to the completing and perpetuating of the divine life and nature in them; and to the advancing them unto all conformities to God, imitations of him, and intimacies with him. The promises were more glorious, rich, and full; and all the constitutions, furniture, services, ministry, and advantages of the gospel-polity and temple, carried more glorious signatures of God upon them, and were more eminently attested, patronized, and succeeded by God, than ever Judaism was, or than it could pretend unto. Why, therefore, should it be deserted, or coldly owned, or improved negligently or defectively?

This author having, therefore, gained his point, and thoroughly proved the dignity of the Christian state and calling, beyond all possibility of grounded cavils or competition; he next proceeds to show these Hebrews the genuine and just improvement of what he had demonstrated. (Chap. x. 19—39; xi.; xii.; xiii. 1—19.)

The casuistical consideration of the text best serves the stated purpose of this hour. And that I may be evidently pertinent, clear, succinct, and profitable, let me now lay the case and text together, and consider them in their relative aspects each toward the other.

1. Lukewarmness is the remissness or defectiveness of heat, *χλιασσις* or *χλιαροτης*, “a middle thing betwixt cold and heat;” when there is not heat enough in *subjecto capaci*, [“in a capable subject,”] to serve the purposes that such a thing under such circumstances should subserve. Now God and Christ expect a fervent spirit, burning and flaming love; and in the text love is here represented as needing provocation. Heart-warmth is nothing else but love suiting and accommodating itself to worthy objects, according to their apprehended dignity, usefulness, or concerns. Love is the endearing to ourselves of apprehended excellence or goodness, and our letting out ourselves, or the issuings forth of our pleased wills, in correspondent motions toward, repose in, obsequiousness to, and engagements for, what we admire and affect; for worth or excellence discerned makes us accommodate ourselves unto the pleasure and concerns thereof, according to its nature, place, and posture toward us, and our affairs therewith. When, therefore, this affection, principle, or grace, (or passion, if love may properly be called so,) is grown too weak to fix the will and to influence the life so as to please its God, and turns indifferent, and unconcerned, and variable, as the winds and weather change; this languor of the heart and will, and its easiness and proneness to be drawn off from God and things divine, we call “lukewarmness;” which is nothing else, indeed, but the sluggishness and dulness of the heart and will to such a degree, as that it is not duly affected with, nor startled at, nor concerned intimately about, what is truly excellent and of great consequence and importance to us. And hence our author phrases it by *παροξυσμος αγαπης* in that love may

and ought to be smart and keen, heating and urging all the powers of the soul to excite all their vigours, and to perform all their functions with strength and pleasure. Consider well Canticles viii. 6, 7; 2 Cor. v. 14; 1 Thess. ii. 8. Heart-unaffectedness, unconcernedness, and inactivity, let souls and their concerns, God's interest and the matters of Christ's kingdom, go and be as they will. (Phil. ii. 20, 21.) This is the malady to be cured.

2. It is not so much a single instance of lukewarmness, as a temper, that the case speaks of. Nor doth the text intend an intermittent fever in the heart; it is not a transient paroxysm, by fits and starts for hearts to burn: but it is a stated frame, that must be changed and fixed. The malady is a lukewarm temper; a frame and constitution of the inward man, too weakly bent and biassed toward God and heavenly things, to make them stately its predominant ambition, business, and delight; (Acts xi. 23; 2 Cor. v. 9;) a frame of soul that sits too loose toward God, to do, to bear, to be, to hope, to wait much for him in the stormy and dark day.

3. It is the effectual cure hereof that the case aims at; and in this "paroxysm of love and of good works" the cure consists. Hence, "Labour of love;" (Heb. vi. 10; 1 Thess. i. 3;) "Love abounding more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." (Phil. i. 9—11.) When love is fervent, fixed, and genuinely fruitful, then is this lukewarm temper cured indeed. Hence, "Zealous of good works." (See Titus ii. 11—14.)

4. How this cure of such a temper may be effectually wrought, is the next thing to be inquired into, and the great import of the case before us; and a great cluster of apt and pertinent expedients doth the text here entertain us with: such as, (1.) *Determining and designing to enterprise the thing*: here called, "provocation unto love and to good works," *παραξυσμος αγαπης και καλων εργαων*. This is the great concern to be espoused, and the great scope of our intentions, resolutions, and endeavours. Love and good works are the great cure of this distemper; to which we must direct our thoughts, words, deeds, provokingly. (Col. iv. 5, 6.) Such a distemper must not be ordinarily expected to be cured by accident; nor are their labours likely to be prosperous, who do not cordially design this cure. (2.) *The mutual considerations of persons*: "Consider one another to a provocation." So the Greek. We must take into serious, deep, and frequent thoughts, the quality, capacity, spirits, courses, and concerns of one another; and see wherein they are defective, or exemplary and proficient, in these things; as also how to qualify ourselves, and how to manage our spirits, speeches, and behaviour, to the procurement of this end; and how to provoke ourselves to love and to good works, by what we see in others, and hear from them or concerning them. (Phil. iv. 8, 9; Rom. xv. 14; 1 Thess. v. 14, 15.) For we are all of us obnoxious unto very great

decays in Christian affections and behaviour, (and who is free throughout from guilt herein?) and equally concerned in this healthful exercise and temper. (3.) *Actual endeavours, upon consideration, to fix the temper and behaviour right* :—for thoughts and purposes are vain things, till they be put in execution :—such as mutual exhortation, attending on assembling of ourselves together, and our growthful progress in these things, under the re-inforcements and frequent representations of the approaching day. Hence, then, consider we, I. THE TEXT; II. THE CASE.

I. THE TEXT.

And here we have, 1. *The objects to be considered* : “One another.” 2. *The duty here required as conversant about these objects* : “Consider.” 3. *The end* : “Provocation to love and to good works.” 4. *The means and manner of performing it to purpose, and with good success* : “Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another.” 5. *The great inducement hereunto* : “So much the more, as ye see the day approaching;” improving the thoughts, belief, and expectations of this approaching solemn day, and, consequently, our concerns therein, as the most awful motive and quickening encouragement of our preparatory state and work.

And here I must premise, that the case here proposed to our present thoughts may and must be resolved into two : 1. How a lukewarm temper may be cured by us *in ourselves* : 2. How to be cured *in each other*. Now, seeing we are all related to the same God, and under the same circumstances as to our capacity of pleasing or displeasing God, of deserting or adhering to our Christian state and work ; and all of us, as Christians, [are] under the same powerful and manifold obligations to be found right and faithful in this “day ;” and as all of us are determined to solemn judgment and an eternal state, according to the temper of our spirits and tenor of our lives, as found to be when that day comes ; what can we say to one another, to “provoke each other to love and to good works,” that will not equally concern ourselves ? Whatever, then, we consider in each other, is as considerable in ourselves. Whatever we design hereby to provoke others regularly to, is to be equally designed and enterprised and promoted upon ourselves. Whatever we speak to others, or plead with others, hath the same errand to, and ought deservedly to be as cogent and prevailing with, ourselves. We are all concerned in the helpfulness of present assemblies, and in the process and results of the last general assembly ; and what we propose or press by way of counsel, request, encouragement, &c., must be as spoken to ourselves.

Taking it, then, for granted and concluded, and needless to be proved and demonstrated, 1. That lukewarmness is a heart-distemper ; 2. And that the formal nature of it lies in the remissness of due affections unto their proper, worthy objects ; and so in too mean resentments and distastings of whatever is contrary thereunto ; 3. That the cure of this distemper formally consists in the due fervour of provoked love, invigorating and producing its congenial operations and

effects; (here called "good works," which are but answerableness of practice and behaviour to this principle or grace;) 4. And that all these means and courses which genuinely and stately relate hereto, as divinely instituted by Him whose blessing is entailed hereon to make them prosperous and successful hereunto, are the most likely means to work this cure; 5. And that the purport of my text amounts to this, and is itself of Divine inspiration, and so of God's appointment for this end:—Taking, I say, these things for granted, for brevity's sake, I shall dispatch the text and case together, in the close consideration of these three general heads or topics of discourse:—

I. *The things to be provoked to*: "Love and good works;" for herein the CURE consists.

II. *The things that are most likely and prepared to provoke hereto*; and so the REMEDY, or means, will be directed to.

III. *The course and method of improving these most regularly*; and so the skilful, faithful MANAGEMENT thereof will be considered.

I. *The things to be provoked to*.—"Love and good works." Ferour and vigour in the heart, to and for its proper objects, productive of their right effects, are the soul's health indeed, the very *esse formale* ["formal entity"] of this cure in hand: for knowledge ministers to faith in its production and proficiency, and in all its exercises and designs. Hence, "Established in the faith, as ye have been taught." (Col. ii. 7; 1 John v. 9—15.) For we must know whom to believe, in what, and why: the credibility of a witness, the trustiness of a promiser and undertaker, the valuableness and certainty of things promised, and the way of acquisition and attaining what is promised, if promises be attended with and ordered to depend upon any thing commanded by the promiser to be done by us;—these must be duly known ere faith can fasten on them. Faith is no blind, no inconsiderate, no rash, no groundless act: "I know whom I have believed." (2 Tim. i. 12.) And it is "the evidence of things not seen." (Heb. xi. 1.) And "faith worketh by love," or it is "inwrought and becomes energetical by love:" ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΔΙ' ΑΓΑΠΗΣ ΕΝΕΡΓΟΥΜΕΝΗ. (Gal. v. 6.) "Building up yourselves on your most holy faith, keep yourselves in the love of God." (Jude 20, 21.) Faith's proper work and great design upon the heart or will is, to kindle, feed, and keep this holy flame of love within, and to direct and keep it to its due expressions and employments. Thus truths and hearts are brought together, and fixed in their reciprocal endearments. (2 Tim. i. 13.) And then God, and the image, interest, saints, and things of God, are like the king upon his throne, with all his lovely train about him. And then this faith makes Christ upon the heart, and dwelling there, like Manoah's angel, working "wondrously" in these flames of love: (Judges xiii. 19:) for now no faculty, sense, or member, can be idle, languid, or indifferent, amidst such glorious and lovely objects; when urged and provoked by such powerful and busy principles, as faith and love, to be employed for God, truths, duty, soula, and glory.

Let us, then, consider it in its, 1. *Objects*; 2. *Actings*; and, 3. *Effects*.

1. *The objects of this love, toward which it is to move, for which it is to act, wherewith it must converse, and wherein at last it is to rest and to repose itself for ever.*—And these are, the name, the things, the children of God, the good of men; or rather,

(1.) *God as in himself the essential source and abyss of perfection, bliss, and glory.*—“Of, and through, and to whom all things are;” (Rom. xi. 36;) “who is God blessed for evermore.” (2 Cor. xi. 31.) Here study well these following texts, as shadowing forth that only Holy One; of whom, comparatively, the universe (how vast in its expansions, how gloriously rich in furniture and treasures, how variously replenished with inhabitants, and how accurately framed and governed, who knows?) is but as one small hint. See, I say, Exod. xv. 11; xxxiv. 6, 7; 1 Chron. xxix. 10—13; Job xi. 7—9; Isai. vi. 3; 1 Tim. i. 17; vi. 15, 16; 1 John i. 5: to name no more, save only one, that pertinently tells us that “God is love.” (1 John iv. 16.) Here love and goodness are essentially in their incomprehensible and immense perfection; from hence are all the communications of derived goodness, and all the issuings forth thereof, that all the creatures can any way receive; and of this boundless ocean are they all swallowed up eternally at last.

(2.) *God in the sallyings forth of his communicative and endearing name, and in all those mirrors and testimonies of himself which he affords us.* (Rom. i. 20; Acts xvii. 24—29; 1 Tim. iii. 16; Heb. i. 3; Eph. iv. 6—24.)—O what a mirror of divine perfection is the vast fabric of the universe! How far doth it extend itself! How richly hath its Maker furnished it with glorious luminaries! vast in their bulk, beautiful in their orderly situations, constant and regular in their courses, and highly useful, and as liberal, in their dispensings of those influences which serve more glorious and various purposes than any man can reach at present, or perhaps in all the proficiencies of eternity, if such things may with modesty be supposed to be there. O wonderful power in its production! wonderful wisdom in its harmonious contrivance and compagination! and as great goodness in those stores and magazines, which are so generously provided for and accommodated to all the capacities and necessities and concerns of the whole frame, and of every part thereof! Is not God’s glorious name here legible, and his kind heart and hand as fully and even sensibly discernible herein? We are hereby both rendered and constrained to be his witnesses that he is God, and the best object of our love. Here, therefore, must our love both look and fix.

Should I here speak of God-Redeemer, in all the glorious appearances, performances, and dispensations of his indwelling Deity in our nature; or of what the Spirit is and doeth; of all the scenes and systems of common and special providence; of all the constitutions and administrations of the upper and lower world, and of the church militant and triumphant: or should I show you man in his natural state, as the workmanship of the God of nature; or in his Christian state, as in his renovation by the God of grace; or in his glorified state at last, as the eternal temple of the Spirit of grace: should I

show you the angelical state, or all the excellences of the end, and of the orderly means and instruments which relate thereto; the name, seed, things of God:—you would see, with whom and what love hath to do. But, to sum up all:—

(1.) *God* is the object of this love, as considered, (i.) In his essential perfections,—Trinity of persons; (ii.) In his creation of the universe of beings; (iii.) In his relations consequent upon creation, and avouchedly assumed by him; (iv.) In those various signatures and explications of his name, that are upon the whole and every part of his creation, according to the various habitudes and states thereof; (v.) And in his relative deportments toward them, and communications to them, as they are capable of receiving them.

(2.) *Jesus Christ*; in all his mediatorial excellences, dignities, and prerogatives; in his relations, offices, unction, performances, and acquests, both *for himself*, as one exalted now to his Father's right hand; and *for us*, as our exalted and engaged Head in all his sympathies and endearments.

(3.) *The Holy Ghost*, as God our Sanctifier; in all those counsels, quickenings, comforts, which he provideth for us, offereth to us, and succeedeth in us and upon us. And,

(4.) *Those that are near and dear to God*, according to the various measures of their unction, stations, and serviceableness unto God. And here comes-in the main design both of my text and case; namely, that we Christians be so considered each by other, as that Christian excellences be observed to mutual inflammations of endearments, where they are; that Christian principles and affections may be awakened, invigorated, and advanced, where they are dormant, idle, or decayed; and that accordingly those gospel-means and helps be valued duly, and pertinently applied and improved, which may reduce us to and keep us in the fervours and vigours of our Christian love; that 'so the love of our espousals may fix and centre in the God of love, and have its orderly and kindly circulations and diffusions through the whole body; and every thing [may be] abhorred, resisted, and rejected, that shall or would attempt a rape thereon.

For, toward these glorious and lovely objects there should be no indifference nor cold affections, nor the least possibility of a divorce therefrom, that we by any diligence, providence, or resolution can prevent. Whatever, as to things and persons, is really and evidently of God and for him, be it in us, with us, or about us, must not sit loosely on our hearts; for it is the Christian religion, as it imprinciples souls for God and Christ, and forms them after God and Christ, and keeps them faithful and proficient in their practical devotedness to the Divine design upon us, that fits us for and keeps us in the state and spirit of endearment unto God, (2 Peter i. 2—11,) and that must imprinciple and actuate our reciprocal affections and endearments each toward other. See 1 Cor. vii. 19; Gal. vi. 15; v. 6; 2 Cor. v. 16—18. Parties and persons, no, nor eccentrical opinions, nor magisterial impositions of dividing terms of concord in pretence and show, nor multitudes of proselytes to our novel, darling, self-

conceited notions;—such things as these cannot commend us unto God: why should *they*, then, be thought lukewarm, *whose* fervours draw not forth themselves upon such pitiful, mean, unworthy things? “The kingdom of God” and Christ must be endeared to us, with all subjects of that kingdom, in all their universally-holding principles and interests. (Rom. xiv. 17—19.) And the great fervours, vigours, and effects of love must be directed to and settled upon these objects, proportionably to their excellences and postures toward us, and our concerns with them, and relations to them. This for the objects.

2. *The formal nature of this love.*—And here I shall premise, that it is best understood and known by its own exercised and experienced vigour. Sensation helps us to the clearest and most lively apprehensions: the most accurate definitions and descriptions that can be given us by the most sagacious and exact persons, can never tell you, to such degrees of satisfaction in your information, what health or sickness, hunger or thirst, pain or ease, light or darkness, sweetness or bitterness, &c., are, as one hour’s experience of your own will do. Men that are born blind have not, by all the advantages of reading to them, or discoursing with them, such clear discerning of light, as a little opening of their own eyes will help them to. Beauty and melody are and must be seen and heard, before they can be duly understood. But, as far as I am able, I shall adventure to describe it, thus:—

Love is the pleasure of the heart or will in the discerned and valued excellency of its object; so as delightfully to make it accommodate itself unto the nature, pleasure, and concerns thereof. Or, it is the endearment of apprehended excellence; so as to sweeten all our contemplations and esteem thereof, our motions toward it, our reposes in it, our sufferings and adventures for it, and our reposes and abode therein. Here we may briefly note these things:—

(1.) When its object doth evidently transcend our reach and pitch in excellence, then the formal act of love is a delightful admiration of perfection. Infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, cast us upon the heights and depths of wonder and astonishment, and entertain us with the highest satisfactions in our severest and most awful contemplations thereof. These ravishing views or thoughts of the incomprehensible source and abyss of perfection, which is Essential Goodness, and the very height thereof, (for what is goodness but the height of excellency?) affect us with the most reverend sense thereof.

(2.) Where Excellency appears as capable of being shadowed forth by imitations and resemblances, and challenges our conformities thereunto, the formal act of love is a pleased attempering of itself unto its much-valued and endeared object; joyfully loving and endeavouring a correspondency and agreement with all the communicable excellences and allurements of such a valuable and admired pattern and exemplar. Thus love is an ambitious imitation of admired worth, pleasing itself in all its gradual approaches to its object, in its attainments of what most resembles Him, whose mirrors we so much long and please ourselves to be. Thus our Christian love, (our love to God, and unto

Christ, his image,) in its nature, its operations, and attainments, is but the impress of Divine perfections upon ourselves, with all the solaces which arise in and from our thus transformed selves.

(3.) When Excellency appears upon the theatre, showing its lustre in exquisite performances and productions, bearing the signatures of that name whose works they are ; (as, "The invisible things of God are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead," Rom. i. 20;) then the formal act of love is pleasure in our notices and observations of the eminencies of the Cause appearing in the effects thereof, and in our delightful searches thereinto.

(4.) When Excellency appears upon the throne of government, the formal act of love is our delightful acquiescence and satisfaction in, and our cheerful comporting with, all the laws and interests of such government. Thus, "I delight to do thy will, O my God." (Psalm xl. 8.) And, "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments." (1 John v. 3.) And, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work:" (John iv. 34 :) authority owned, laws obeyed, disposals rested in, and all with cheerfulness. And then,

(5.) When Goodness appears communicative, designing and dispensing kindnesses, directed and designed to the benefit and welfare of the recipients of its communications ; the formal act of love in the thus-befriended persons is, their thankful acceptances, cheerful acknowledgments, and faithful improvement of what they thus receive in the service, according to the pleasure and order, and to the praise, of Him that gives them. And as these favours are of several sorts and sizes ;—such as our beings, and their receptiveness of Divine kindnesses ; and the kindness showed us to make us good, to do us good, and to capacitate us to do good to others, and to receive further good from God, according to our different capacities, stations, relations, opportunities and advantages, conditions, and other circumstances ;—so hath our love its diversified actings, expressions, and effects, according to its various objects, considered in their own proper excellences, their several relations to us, their postures toward us, and their concerns with us, and ours with them ; which I here cannot mention, much less enlarge upon, even as they and we are related and concerned with the essential Source of all communicative excellence or goodness ; and therefore I leave it to the deeper thoughts and further searches of better heads and hearts than mine.

(6.) When Excellence espouses evidently some great interests and designs ; such as the recovery of lost souls, the reparation of declined holiness, the shaming and abandoning of all sin, the utter extirpation of Satan's interest and kingdom, the erecting of His gospel, house, and kingdom, the exaltation of His Son, and the edification of His children in Christian knowledge, holiness, and comfort, and in all things fit to make them acceptable to Himself and approved of men, and to make them regular and easy in themselves : when God designs and prosecutes the spreading of the gospel, the sanctification of his name

in and before the eyes of all, and the completing [of] the Divine life and nature in his own: what then can be the formal act of love hereto in us, but the endearment and espousal of these things to us, as matters of the highest consequence and importance to the world, the church, and us; and as things more valuable and delightful to us, in our contemplations and pursuits thereof, than all our personal interests and pleasures in this world?

(7.) When Excellence communicates itself discernibly to others, then love rejoices in this gift and grace to them.

(8.) When Excellence appears communicable to others, and *that* through one another as appointed means and instruments for this end; then love is so far thankful; and it covets, enterprises, designs, and prosecutes the thing; and so it grieves, or joyfully triumphs, as it discerns the matter to succeed or to be defeated or delayed; and it forms and cherishes and exerts its sympathies accordingly.

(9.) When Excellence is rivalled, confronted, and opposed, then love turns jealous and enraged; and puts-on fortitude and resolution to stand by its darling object and concerns, in all the agonies of contention for them which they need, and notwithstanding all the hazards, cost, and difficulties which attend them. And,

(10.) It accounts and uses all as friends or enemies, as they appear against or for its object.

3. *The genuine practice and productions of this love.*—Here they are called “good works;” a correspondent practice with this divine and active and diffusive principle. All instances and effects of this delightful conversation with God and man, according to the rules and principles of Christianity, must savour of, illustrate, and subservise this principle and grace. Thus, “Love God, and keep his commandments:” (1 John v. 2;) think and speak of him, address yourselves in your devotions to him, serve him and walk before him, trust him and depend upon him; all that you are and have, design and do, let it be suited to, and worthy of, that glorious and fearful name, “the Lord your God,” whose eminent and perfect name you love so well. (Heb. xii. 28; 1 Thess. ii. 10—12; Rom. xii. 1, 2; Matt. v. 16; John xv. 8; 1 Peter iv. 11.) Away with such mean things and actions, such flat devotions, and such *tantum non* [“all but”] offensive conversations, and such lean and stingy offerings to God or actings for him, as must put charity upon the rack to observers of you, for to conclude or think you love him! (Mal. i. 13, 14; 2 Peter iii. 11; 1 Cor. xv. 58.) Nothing below that cluster in Phil. iv. 8, and that in Titus ii. 10—14, can escape its “*Mene, Tekel*,” in this balance of the sanctuary: (Dan. v. 25;) “Rich in good works,” (1 Tim. vi. 18,) and “rich toward God,” (Luke xii. 21,) and “fruitful in every good work;” (Col. i. 10;) actings continually toward God and for him; facing the eyes and consciences of all observers with such illustrious and large characters and signatures of this Divine principle of love, as to convince even the most critical observers of you, and to extort confessions from them, that none could act and live as you do, did they not love God dearly, and most entirely and

constantly live to him and upon him, as their all. (1 Peter ii. 12 ; iv. 16 ; Heb. xi. 13—16.) For I take not καλος here to import what may be barely "good;" but something generous, and fit to strike the beholder's eye and conscience with some astonishing convictions, that what you do for God looks too majestically great to come from any ordinary principle, yea, from any thing below your God enthroned in your best affections.

Love is the very soul of godliness, the very heart of the new man ; a principle so impetuous and charming, as that it scorns, where it is regent, to be confined to or signalized by any thing mean or base. Such objects and concerns in its most intimate and close embraces and in its stated prospect ; and yet act sparingly, sordidly, or sneakingly for God ? love burns and blushes at the thought. And heaven itself ere long will irritate, exert, and show the purity and generous vigours of this grace, in such a stated and inviolable series of great and generous actions, so full of God, and every way so fully for him, and so worthy of him, as that the life of God in glory shall evidence the force and excellence of that spring and principle whence it proceeds. And yet even here, even in this its infant and imperfect state, it groans and labours to have God's will "done on earth as it is in heaven."

Well, in a word, such must your actions and your conversations be, as that (whatever you are conversant about or with,—the temper of your spirits, and the fervours and vigours of your love to God, his image, interest, Son, Spirit, gospel, and all that do profess and own respects hereto) every step you take, and every thing you do, ought to be great and exemplary, and impregnated with what may speak the greatness, largeness, cheerfulness, and energies of your inflamed, exalted, and invigorated souls, through love to God, Christ, souls, and Christianity. O, to be exemplary in all conversation ; to live [quicken] each other into awakened considerations of spiritual concerns ; to dart forth all those glorious rays of Christian wisdom of which we are told in James iii. 17, 18 ; to make men feel, as well as see, the force and flames of Christian love ; to charm exasperated passions down by all the sweetnesses of true wisdom, patience, meekness, gentleness, and every way endearing conversation with them ; to have the law of kindness always in your mouths, the notices of true friendliness in your looks, the gifts and proofs of generous charity in your hands, in constant readiness to minister to the necessities of the saints, as God shall prosper your endeavours in your lawful and regularly-managed occupations and employments ; to have your dealings and commerces each with other accurately and severely just, and yet sufficiently securing the credit and concerns of Christianity ; and, in a word, to "be blameless and harmless," as "the sons of God, without rebuke ; shining as lights, and holding forth the word of life," (Phil. ii. 15, 16,) to universal satisfaction and advantage, wherever groundless prejudice and partiality do not prevail and govern ; and to fill up every relation, step, and station with the fruits of goodness, righteousness, and truth:—these are the good and generous works of love, whereto

we are to be "provoked;" for thus we do "not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." (1 John iii. 18.)

4. *The intenseness of the principle, and vigour of the practice.*—Called here (as the designed effect of the prescribed means) *παροξυσμος*, "a provocation;" the warmth and vigour wherewith love and good works are, as it were, to be inspired: "Zealously affected in a good thing;" (Gal. iv. 18;) "zealous of good works;" (Titus ii. 14;) the motive so effectually cogent as to fix and fortify the principle, and the principle so powerful as to go through with its great enterprise and concern. Principles are the springs of action; and love importeth intimacy. It is a principle rooted in the heart, and it lays its beloved objects deep therein. Warmth,—it is essential to it; and where it is perfect or considerably grown, it is serious and fervent. It is a commanding thing, and affects regency over all the actions, faculties, and passions. It is peremptory in its precepts, fixed in the purposes and concerns which it espouses. It is powerful in its influences, pressing in its claims, diffusive of itself through all that is performed by us; impatient of resistances, denials, or delays; and moved to jealousies, indignation, and vigorous contentions, when any injury, affront, or rape, is threatened, attempted, or pursued, that any way is prejudicial to its object, and its concerns therewith. It claims and pleads, it urges and provokes to diligence, and to all eager prosecutions of what it aims at, and endears unto itself; and it entirely reconciles the whole man to all the cost and difficulties of its divine pursuits. It is never well but in its motions toward, its acting for, its conversation with, and its repose in, its "pearl of price." And hence its actions are invigorated: it gives no faint blows in its holy war, it runs not [tardily] in its race, it deals not triflingly in its merchandise, for God and heaven; it is all mettle, fortitude, patience, action, desire, and delight in every thing relating to its grand affair and scope; and it makes all its actions and performances to bear their testimony to its own fortitude and fervours. And this is the "paroxysm of love and good works."

II. *The things provoking hereto.*—And here behold "a troop," as it was said of Gad. (Gen. xlix. 11.) How do inducements and incentives spring up in manifold and mighty clusters! What can we mention or fix our thoughts upon, that may not kindle and increase this flame of love, and its eruptions in good works? The things which we might pertinently and copiously insist upon, might be reduced to these heads:—

1. *The objects of this central grace or principle:—*

(1.) *Things in heaven:* as God, Christ, the Spirit, angels, the spirits of just men there made perfect; the glorious furniture, laws, and orders, the visions, services, ministrations, and fruitions, of that state; all the perfections, prerogatives, and employments of that blessed world above; with all the accomplishments and accommodations which relate immediately thereto, and all the satisfactions and advantages that result therefrom.

(2.) *Things from heaven:* "God manifest in the flesh;" (1 Tim.

iii. 16;) the Spirit, works, and word of God; the great provisions and engagements of Divine Providence for us; all that we are, or have, or meet with; express God's merciful regards to us, and his compassionate concernness for our universal welfare.

(3.) *Things for heaven*: the Spirit of grace, the word of grace, all the ministers and means of grace; with all the discipline and encouragements which Providence sensibly affords us; the good and evil things of time, as ordered by God to fit us for, and help us to, the glory which we look for; the very sons of men themselves, considered in the relations which they bear to God, and their expressiveness of his endearing name, and all those marks and notices which they bear and give us—in the frame, capacity, and management of human nature—of God's incomprehensible wisdom, power, goodness, &c. O who can think hereon, and yet be unprovoked to love and to good works, whenas God is so eminently and endearingly discernible in all? for God by all this courts our love. And should I speak of the sons of God and heirs of glory; that Divine workmanship which is in them and upon them; the impressions, reflections, and refractions of the Divine nature and life; their capacity of growing up to all the fulness of God, and to be eternally the beautiful and delightful temple of the Holy Ghost; all their relations to the Holy Trinity; with all their obligations to him, their interest in him, their business with him and for him, and all their imitations and resemblances of him in their actual and possible motions and advances toward him, and their great expectations from him: should I insist upon their membership, with all the duties and advantages and pleasures which arise therefrom; and pertinently illustrate and apply (as I could easily and quickly do) what doth so copiously occur in Eph. iv. 4—6, as the central articles and holding bonds of union and endearments:—would you and I consider all these things, and all the loveliness that would then be communicable or observable, could our love want its provocation?

2. *The formal nature of this love.*—It is fit to be a provocation to itself. (1 John iv. 16—21, 7—12.) This is the beauty, health, strength, pleasure, safety, and renown of human nature. Love is the aim and scope [of] knowledge, the end of faith, the spirit of hope, the life of practice and devotion, and “the bond of perfectness,” (Col. iii. 14,) and the true transformation of the soul into the image of its God. No pleasing thoughts of God, Christ, heaven, or heavenly things, no cheerful motions toward eternity, no foretastes of the highest bliss, no warrantable claims thereto, nor confident expectations of unseen realities, no true and lasting bonds of friendliness in service and affections, without this spirit and state of love. This only faces God in his own beautiful and delightful image; this only turns the notions of divinity into substantial realities, and so exalts the man above the pageantries of mere formal, outside service and devotions. And the truth is, [without this love] all that we say and do for God or with him, and all our expectations from him, are but the tricks and forgeries of deceitful and deceived fools, and the most provoking

profanation of the tremendous, holy name of God, and an abuse of holy things.

3. *The services which love must do, and the fruits it must produce, to God, to Christ, unto the Spirit, unto ourselves, and others.*—God himself must be revered, addressed unto, served, and entertained, like himself; and walked-with in all required and fit imitations of himself. And all these cannot be without just valuings of and complacency in his eminent perfections, near relations, and the admirable constitutions and administrations of his kingdom. Christ must be duly thought on, heartily entertained, gratefully acknowledged, and cheerfully obeyed, submitted [to] and improved unto the great and gracious purposes of his appearances, performances, and kingdom, and minded most delightfully in all the grandeurs of his grace and throne. *The Holy Spirit* must possess his temple to his full satisfaction; and have the pure incense of his graces in their fragrant, liberal, and continual ascents; (“Praying in the Holy Ghost,” Jude 20;) and be feasted with the growthful and constant productions of his graces, both in their blossoms and full fruits: and we must be continually sowing to him, if we hope to reap eternal life of him. (Gal. vi. 8.)

We must possess *ourselves* in God and for him, in our full devotedness and resignations of our entire selves to him; pleasing ourselves in this,—that we are not by far so much and so delightfully our own as his, and that we cannot love ourselves so well as when we find God infinitely dearer to us than we are to ourselves. And as for *others*, much must we cheerfully do, and bear, and be, to bring poor renegadoes back again to God, to testify our great respects unto and pleasure in the grace of God in our fellow-Christians, to accommodate ourselves to their edification and concerns, and to make our best advantage of every thing discernible in them; helping ourselves and them in spirit, speech, and practice. And can these things be brought to pass, or ourselves reconciled and suited to all our Christian duties and interests, without provoked love? And for the solemnities, transactions, and results of “the approaching day,” what is that day to those who have no love, or very great declensions of it? For all that come with Christ from heaven, come in the flames of love to God, to godliness and godly ones; and a cold heart will no way be endured there. And as to fellow-Christians, the duties and counsels of the text,—consideration, adhering to the assembling of ourselves together, mutual exhortations in the encouraging and quickening prospect of this “day,”—can these things be without love?

III. *The management of these “provoking” things.*—And here let us follow the method of the text itself; where we have these topics to insist upon:—

1. *Persons must be “considered,”—each other, and ourselves.*
2. *We are not to desert “the assemblings of ourselves together, as the manner of some is.”*
3. *We must “exhort” each other.*—And so, what one proposes, the other must consider, entertain, accommodate, and improve, to the great ends and benefit of the exhortation given.

4. *And the actuated knowledge of the approaching day must quicken us to and in the more serious and intense performance of these duties:* "Exhorting, by so much the more, by how much the more ye see the day approaching." Let me but touch a little upon these things.

1. *Let us "consider one another" for this provoking work, or "in order to this provocation."*—The word here in the text, *κατανοωμεν*, imports strict observation of, and great solicitousness of thoughts about, each other, as to great matters, for their good. So that we have, (1.) *The objects:* each other. (2.) *The act or duty toward them:* "Let us consider." (3.) *The end and scope:* "To a provocation unto love and to good works."

(1.) *The objects:* "One another."

(i.) *As to the great and stated ends of our creation and redemption.*—Such as the divine nature and life and joy; God's image in us, service from us, and the delightful, blissful (and that eternal) presence with us, in the glorious discoveries and communications of himself to us in heaven; and as we are recovered and redeemed by Jesus Christ, so our loyalty, gratitude, and faithfulness to him, in all acknowledgments and improvements of his kind conduct, government, providence, and grace, unto the Father's glory through him. As we are related to the Holy Ghost, it is our correspondent temper and practice with, improvement of, and our fit returns unto, the offered, accepted, and professed relations of the Spirit, and his communications to us, his operations in us, and his effects upon our spirits; that he might thereby suit us to the concerns and privileges of our Christian state, and that we might be built-up, furnished, and possessed, as the eternal temple of the living God; linked and laid together, and so related and obliged to each other; dependent each on other, and consequently useful and delightful in being heartily and practically faithful each to other unto the edification of the whole in love; that so God (Three in One) may be eternally and evidently all, to universal satisfaction. For we were made and bought, and are committed to the care of Christ and of the Spirit; and we are, accordingly, intrusted with gospel-helps and means, that we might hereby be the mirrors of divine communicable excellences and perfections, the monuments of prosperous and rich grace, and instruments of special service. For these ends God created and redeemed us, and in respect hereto are we to be considered each by other.

(ii.) *As to our capacity of serving and reaching such great ends and purposes.*—The powers of our souls, the members of our bodies, and all our natural accommodations for these ends. For we are men, and so have faculties and powers naturally capable of and formed to a propenseness and appetite to the Supreme Good, and thereupon receptive of all the attractive influences of the First Cause: and were it not for our moral depravations and corruptions and alienations of heart herefrom, which we have sinfully contracted, espoused, and indulged; considering divine discoveries, assistances, and encouragements, procured for us and dispensed to us by Jesus Christ; what

hinders our return to God, and unto those reciprocations of endearments betwixt him and us to which by our rational frame and constitution we are so admirably suited? Are we not capable of discerning what may excite, inflame, preserve, and regulate our love, and of the fixing and managing it accordingly? We are capable of judgment, choice, and motion, and reposes, right objects being set before us in their apt illustrations and addresses, so that we cannot speak to brutes and stones as we may do to men. For nothing but sinful ignorance, prejudice, negligence, and malignity, or sad delusions and mistakes, through inconsiderateness, and unreasonable avocations and diversions, can prevent the return of our first love; and all these things may be redressed by our judicious, well-advised, and warm discourses about these things, duly attended to, impartially considered, and prudently and pertinently applied unto ourselves. Thus mistakes may be rectified, known truths and notions actuated, hearts affected, lives reformed, and love restored to its regular fervours and productions of good works. He that is capable of knowing what he is to do, and why, and of doing and being what most concerns and best becomes him, deserves to be accordingly considered by us.

(iii.) *As to our obligations and advantages, as we are creatures, subjects, favourites.*—As we are redeemed to God by Christ, so our obligations to the returns of gratitude should be considered by us. (2 Cor. v. 14, 15.) We are Christ's, and God's by him; and so he must be glorified in the whole man. (1 Cor. vi. 20.) And all the vast advantages of our gospel-day, as they are talents and encouraging advantages put into our hands, must be considered by us too, and ourselves and one another as stewards intrusted and accountable. (2 Peter i. 3, 4; 1 Peter iv. 11.) So that we must regard each other as under ties and bonds to God and Christ, and as greatly helped and furnished to be provoked thus, if well-considered, and managed accordingly.

(iv.) *As to our spirits and behaviour according to our Christian claims and helps, relations, obligations, and professions.*—Whether we foot it right, or not; (Gal. ii. 14;) whether professors value their souls to their just worth, or not, in keeping them intent upon their great concern; and whether their furniture, discipline, temper, and behaviour bear evidently their fit and full proportion hereunto; how gospel transforming and reforming work goes on with them; whether the Christian name and interest, the gospel and its Patron, be credited and promoted, or disgraced and hindered, by us; and whether our proficiency and improvements be answerable indeed to our advantages, obligations, and professions.

(v.) *Wherein our helps and helpfulness, or our dangers, mainly lie.*—Their gifts and graces, and encouragements and advantages, on the one hand; and their constitutions, customs, callings, company, temptations, and secular concerns, and hinderances, on the other hand; are all to be considered.

(2.) *The act or duty toward these objects:* Κατανοωμεν, "Let us consider."

(i.) *Bend your minds to observation of one another, that ye may understand how matters are with one another.*—Concern yourselves about the right knowledge of the principles, tempers, actions, circumstances, and concerns of persons, so far as your duty toward them calls you to it. For this injunction doth not countenance what we find elsewhere forbidden. (2 Thess. iii. 11, 12; 1 Tim. v. 13; 1 Peter iv. 15.) So far as you may do or get good, prevent, redress, or allay evil, under such circumstances, relations, and advantages as may notify that God then calls you to it, and so encourages your expectations and endeavours of doing good, or preventing the sin and mischief which God would have prevented by you; so far may others be inspected, inquired after, and observed by you. But when it is, and evidently appears to be, to no purpose, to ill purposes, or to needless purpose, you must not do it.

(ii.) *And then seriously pause upon and duly weigh what you discern by your inquiry or your more immediate observation.*—And do not partially, passionately, rashly, and censoriously, form and fix your measures. Give what you hear or see concerning one another, your second, serious, and impartial thoughts; that so, matters of fact being duly and truly stated, measures of prudence may be advisedly and safely taken up and fixed upon: so that, when persons, matters of fact, your Christian rules and work, and way of managing this great concern, are duly laid in the balance of the sanctuary, and all this fixed in its just reference to this weighty end, you may proceed accordingly in the sincerity, tenderness, and wisdom of the right Christian spirit. And then,

(iii.) *Be well advised about the most taking way of managing what you thus instruct yourselves about.*—The humour of the person, your ways and seasons of addressing your discourses to him, and the preserving or managing of your interest in him; or, at least, your own abilities to prove what you accuse him of, to demonstrate what arguments you advance and use, and to enforce the motives that you would press him with. And study yourselves into a just measure of your own abilities, a thorough mastery and command of your own passions, and good and clear discerning of and insight into the fittest seasons and occasions. And well observe, as far as may be, men's tempers, interests, ends, and intimates; that you may hereby charm them, win and govern them. And if you would know men thoroughly, mind them strictly in their trusts, their passions, interests, companions, surprises, and necessities; and let each other have serious thoughts herein.

(iv.) *And overlook no good in others, to lessen it, despise it, disgrace it, or neglect it; but think distinctly upon all you see.*

(3.) *The end and scope of all must be this "provocation unto love and to good works."* (Eph. iv. 29, 15, 16; 1 Thess. v. 11.) "The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright." (Prov. xv. 2.) Therefore the mind and heart must be intent upon right ends: (Rom. xiv. 19:) not to let others know the reaches of our thoughts, the furniture of our minds, the nimbleness of our tongues, the neatness of

our words, or the briskness of our parts or fancies; nor to spy faults or weaknesses, for our discursive entertainments; "as the manner of some is;" much less to make them proselytes to our opinions, parties, or persuasions in lower matters, or votaries to our particular interests or humours. (Phil. i. 27; ii. 19—21.) I wish professors, ministers, and others, would read these texts, and well consider them.

We must inspect, observe, and well consider one another; that where we observe warm hearts and fruitful lives, we might by our commendations provoke them unto perseverance and proficiency therein; that where we discern a mixture of things commendable and blameworthy, what is divine may not be overlooked because of what is culpable, nor what is faulty [be] imitated and commended because of what is there praiseworthy; and that where we find our brethren overtaken with their infirmities and defects, they may be dealt with "in the spirit of meekness," (Gal. vi. 1,) and so recovered from their declensions and defects, and so return to their first love; and that we ourselves may be provoked to and by their excellences, and grow more effectually careful to avoid all that did assuage their holy warmth and vigour. He that considers others, to glory over their defections and neglects, to aggravate their slips and falls more, to expose their persons to rage and scorn, doth what the devil would advise him to, were he consulted with. The truths of God and soul-concerns are fixed things; and fervent hearts and fruitful lives are the soul's grand affair; and he that minds his brother in the neglect hereof, hath a corrupted and cold heart to purpose. To make each other all light about the things of God and Christ, all fervour in our love thereto, and all regular and cheerful vigour in the pursuit thereof, is what we must design, and direct our personal considerations to.

2. *Let us "not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is."*—Here note,

(1.) *The thing not here to be deserted,* is the *ἐπισυναγωγή ἑαυτῶν*, "our assembling."

(2.) *The thing relating hereunto forbidden,* is our "forsaking" it.

(3.) *The tempting instance hereof, proposed by way of warning to us,* is, that "the manner of some is" thus to do.

(1.) *The thing not to be forsaken* imports either,

(i.) Our own conventions for public worship: in the general, our open meeting together, as an organized congregation or assembly, wherein pastors and their flocks assemble stately to speak to God, and to hear from him, and sacramentally to eat and drink before him; and so to recognise and represent our Christian state with all solemnity in open view together. Or,

(ii.) Doing this without dividing distances and separations each from other, under the notion of Jew and Gentile, or of persons differing each from other about difficult or trifling things.

(iii.) Or our gathering others unto the church of Christ, by our orderly and alluring carriage in this and other points of Christianity; and so, the additions which hereafter God will make hereto. Or,

(iv.) The great assembly of the completed and triumphant church of Christ in the great day of his appearance and kingdom. See 2 Thess. ii. 1 ; the only place, that I remember, in the New Testament, beside my text, that this noun occurs [in]. And in that place the word (as here it is) being a decompound, it fitly may be rendered "an after-synagogue or gathering ;" and how far thus rendering it in the text is countenanced by the last clause, "that day," I here determine not.

But I will here consider it in the first sense, wave or lightly touch upon the other two, and transfer the last to the consideration of the last clause of the text ; where it will be freer from exceptions than here perhaps it would be.

(2.) *The thing here given in charge concerning it*, is that we "for-sake it not :"

(i.) *In thought* ; as judging it to be no help or duty.

(ii.) *In heart* ; as not attempered and reconciled to the solemnity, seriousness, and great concerns thereof.

(iii.) *In presence* ; as abandoning or neglecting our personal presence and attendance there.

(3.) *The snare that we are warned of here*, is our being influenced into a deserting such assemblies by the practical declensions and neglects of others. Others do so ; they use to do it ; it is evidently their custom and practice : it is possible for you to do the same, and to be drawn thereto by their example. But their example cannot justify this practice, and therefore should not influence you hereinto : and this caution may prevent it ; and therefore should accordingly be considered and improved by you, as being of such manifest and mighty consequence to your love and practice, both as to the warmth and strength thereof.

(4.) *The usefulness of the worshipping assemblies of saints and Christians to this great and needful "provocation,"* must quicken us unto and keep us in these "courts of God." (Psalm xcii. 13—15 ; Exod. xx. 24.) "There the Lord commandeth the blessing, even life for evermore." (Psalm cxxxiii. 3.) There you have the openings of the gospel-treasury : there are these golden candlesticks, which bear the burning, shining tapers, whose light and heat diffuse themselves through all within their reach who are receptive of them ; the gifts and graces, the affections and experiences, of gospel-ministers are in their communicative exercises. There God the Father sets and keeps his heart and eye : there the Lord-Redcemer walks by and amongst his commissioned officers and representatives, dispensing warmth and vigour through their ministry to hearts presented to him at his altar : there doth the Holy Spirit fill heads with knowledge, hearts with grace, and all our faculties and Christian principles with vigour. There mysteries are unfolded, precepts explained and enforced, promises fulfilled, in soul-improvements ; incense is offered up in golden censers, and federal concernments are solemnly transacted and confirmed in open court. And there, through the Angel-of-the-Covenant's moving upon the waters of the sanctuary, are soul-dis-

tempers and consumptions healed. And there you are informed, acquainted with, and confirmed in, what may instruct you in, and encourage you unto, this "provocation unto love and to good works." And there prayer gets fuel, and gives vent to love, drawing forth all the energies of souls and thoughts toward God. And thus fervent prayers, and love-quickening returns thereto, are, like the angels of God, ascending and descending from and upon the heart; while the deserters hereof grow cold thereto, and starve their love and practical godliness thereby.

All there is known, obtained, and exercised. There you may fill your heads with knowledge, your hearts with grace, your mouths with arguments, your lives with fruitfulness, your consciences with consolations, and your whole selves with those experiences of divine regards to soul-concerns, which may inflame your hearts with love to God and Christ, to holiness and heaven, and fit you both to kindle and increase this holy flame both in yourselves and in each other. And, indeed, what greater advantages can be derived into our souls, to make our altars burn, than what our Christian assemblies, duly managed, will entertain us with? What understanding do the inspirations of the Almighty here afford! Such curious explications of the name and counsels of your God! such large and full accounts of all the endearing grace of Christ! such critical dissections and anatomizings of the state of souls! such over-shadowings of the Spirit of God! such clear and full descriptions and accounts of the divine life and nature in all their strength and glory! How are desires invigorated and twisted, to make them more effectual to ourselves and others! This sanctuary-love is "like the best wine, that goeth down sweetly, causing the lips even of those that are asleep to speak." (Canticles vii. 9.)

Keep, then, to these assemblies; that you may duly know whom, what, how, and why to love; and how to suit yourselves, in spirit, speech, and practice toward God, yourselves, and toward each other, unto this generous and noble principle. Thus will you grow exceedingly both in the knowledge and savour of what is most considerable and most deservingly affecting, both as to things and persons: for Christianity is contrived for love and godliness in all its doctrines, laws, and ordinances; and in assemblies you have the explications and enforcements of those truths which will complete the man of God, as to his principles, disposition, and behaviour. Here you may know your most holy faith, as to its matter, evidences, and designs upon you, and its improbability by you to its determined and declared ends and services; that faith which is to illuminate your eyes, to exercise your thoughts, to fix your holy purposes, to form and cherish expectations, to raise desires, to embolden prayer, to fire your affections, and regulate them, as to their objects, ends, and measures, and expressions.

And when you there attend, you are in the way of blessings. How oft and evidently are divine truths there sensibly sharpened and succeeded by the God of truth! (Rom. i. 16.) Paul and Barnabas

“so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed.” (Acts xiv. 1.) And thither must you and I resort, and there attend, for doctrine, exhortation, and instruction in righteousness. “The priest’s lips must preserve knowledge,” (Mal. ii. 7,) how to speak of God, with him, and for him. There gospel-luminaries are to diffuse their light; and there must we receive it, and know what is considerable, eligible, practicable, and encouraging to love and to good works. Why, then, should we forsake that?

3. *But let us “exhort” each other.*—For consideration and attendance on assemblies are for our own and others’ good, for personal and mutual quickenings “to love and to good works.” I know that *παρακαλουντες*, and thence *παρακλησις*, is sometimes used more largely, for any pleading of and pressing home a thing pursuant to its import and design, whether by counsel, comfort; or sometimes it imports “consolation or encouragement.” This is too well seen and known to need its scriptural instances and quotations. That which is here intended, I offer in this paraphrase: “Draw forth all the spirit and strength of what you know and have advisedly considered as to yourselves and others; of what you have seen and heard, in your assembling of yourselves together, concerning your obligations to attend them, their fitness to advantage you, and all the benefit derived or derivable therefrom. Draw forth the vigour of all your received discoveries, directions, assistances, and inducements to do and be what is required and expected from you, professed by you, and of eternal consequence and concernment to you. Plead this thoroughly with yourselves and one another; that so your Christian love be not extinguished or abated, but wrought and kept up to its genuine and just pitch of fervour and effectual operations and eruptions in good works. Drive home upon yourselves (by deep and serious thoughts, and pertinent applications of them to yourselves, and warm debates about them with yourselves) the things which God hath manifested and proposed to you as credible, acceptable, and practically improvable.”

He that expects this flame upon his heart must be a thoughtful man, severely contemplative and solicitous about the things of the kingdom of God, and the name and interest and servants of the Lord-Redeemer. How can that man be warm and active, or “zealous of good works,” whose knowledge is not actuated by self-awakening meditations, and whose furniture, principles, and spirit are commonly neglected by himself? What! are divine truths, laws, promises, and institutions only to be with us or in us as empty speculations or thin notions? Have divine revelations and endearings no errand to our hearts and consciences, and no business there, and no practical vigours to be exerted thence? That thoughtless, idle souls should be lukewarm, is no such wonder or strange thing. The contrary would be stranger, even to a miracle.

And being thus awakened and prepared yourselves, drive all things home upon each other, and plead the cause of every duty, truth, and motive thoroughly, in free and frequent conversation each with other. (Mal. iii. 16; Luke xxiv. 32; 1 Thess. v. 11—15; Rom. xv. 13—

16; Col. iii. 16; 1 Thess. iv. 18.) Christian conference well managed makes and speaks warm hearts, and leads and helps to better lives. Men that rarely, transiently, or triflingly think upon or talk about the things of God, must needs be cold within; and when such pray that God should warm them, can they expect returns to prayer, when neither hearts nor pains are after them? And here how many heart-warming topics of discourse and edifying conference might I now entertain you with! But let the text speak for itself; and though it here offer but one, yet is that one impregnated with many:—(1.) It is “the day.” (2.) It is an “approaching” day; and, (3.) They “saw” it thus approaching. (4.) The sight ought (because so fit) to quicken them to growthful care and diligence in this heart-warming course and work. Whence,

4. *Preserve, and practically answer and improve a quick, deep, constant sense of the approaching day.* (1 Thess. v. 1—11; 2 Peter iii. 1—14; Jude 20, 21; Col. iii. 2—5; Luke xxi. 34—36; xii. 35—40.)—Perhaps the reader will not lose his time and labour in perusing and pausing upon these cited texts; nor find them impertinent nor inexpedient as to the case in hand. See also 1 Peter i. 5—13. How copiously and closely might all these passages be insisted on, did not the press stay for me, and the stated confines of a short discourse restrain me, and the fruits and labours of abler heads and better pens and hearts urge me severely, because deservedly, to give place thereto!

Well, sirs, consider “the approaching day,” and represent it to your thoughtful and concerned selves in all its grandeurs and solemnities of process and results; and try then if it do not warm your hearts, and urge you pungently and severely to good works. As to the persons here most immediately concerned,—these Christian Hebrews; there was a day of reckoning with their malignant enemies by providential controversies and rebukes, which also was a day of great redemption and establishment to the persecuted faithful Christians. There was to be a day of great conversion and divine attestations to the Christian faith and to its proselytes; and what was more congenial herewith than this endeavoured provocation to love and to good works? And they that are provoked hereto are also fittest for a day of trial. But I shall here consider it as the great day of Christ’s appearance and his kingdom; (2 Tim. iv. 1, 8; i. 18;) “that day” of God, of Christ, of judgment and perdition of ungodly men; “that day” of revelation of God and Christ in their majestic glory; “that day” of searches, sentence, and full execution and adjustments, in all the accuracies of governing wisdom, holiness, and grace. Who can contemplate this, and yet be cold and barren?

Then, in the glorious splendours, solemnities, and proceedings of that day, shall it be evident who, and whose Son, Christ is; what cost and care he hath been at to bring men to this warm and active course and temper; and what an estimate he and his Father set hereon, by what they then dispense and testify by way of recompence of reward thereto. Christ in his threefold glory; (Luke ix. 26;) God sending him forth, and appearing in him, by him, and for him, as his own

dear Son, the Son of such a King; (1 Tim. vi. 13—16;) Father and Son making so vast a difference amongst the sons of men by everlasting punishments and rewards, as they are differently found as to Christian love and practice; (Rom. ii. 6—10; 2 Cor. v. 9—11; Matt. xxv. 34—46;) and all that vast assembly and convention applauding God's proceedings, and joyfully congratulating the great endeavours and rewards of our provoked and successful love:—are not these warming thoughts?

II. THE CASE.

And of this I have given you this textual resolution. You have seen,

1. *The seat* of this distemper,—of a lukewarm frame or temper; that it is in the heart or will.

2. *The formal nature* of it: it is a defect or chiliness of practical love and zeal to and for God,* and their concerns with us, and ours with them.

The things which claim and merit the highest place in, and that should engage and exercise, our best affections and most active zeal, are, (1.) God's glory in the church and world. (2.) The life and growth, and the vivid exercises, profession, and effects of godliness in ourselves. (Titus ii. 11—14; Rom. xiv. 17—19; Jude 20, 21; 2 Peter i. 3—11.) For we must begin at home, and set our all in order there. (3.) The power, peace, and progress of the gospel in the world; (Phil. i. 3—11; ii. 19—21;) that it may "have its free course, and be glorified." (4.) The harmony and prosperity of the church of Christ, wherever this gospel is accepted and professed. (5.) The case and circumstances of particular professors, as they variously are, and are evidently considerable, as to their growth, trials, duties, dangers, decays, wants, or weaknesses, &c. (6.) And the sons of men, as strangers, enemies, persecutors, or any ways endeavouring to supplant the gospel-interest, or to obstruct it or discourage it; and these considered as reducible or incorrigible. Now heartlessness, neutrality, or sluggishness of our affectionate concernedness about these things, is what we call "lukewarmness."

3. *The cure* hereof doth formally consist in our inflamed love, exercised and expressed unto the life by constant activity, congenial with this principle; the practical accommodating of all the regency and vigours of this principle of love to the concerns of Christian godliness, and of those that are concerned therewith, pursuant to the growth and prosperousness thereof. When we so value these concerns, and have such sympathizing with, and such genuine adherence to, resolutions and activity for, and satisfaction in, the prosperousness of the things of God and Christ and souls and Christian churches, as that nothing can stand before us, nor be regarded or dreaded by us, that rivals or opposes them; then are we indeed effectually cured. Here our thoughts naturally fix and work; here our hearts cleave and flame; and hereunto our vigours, time, interest, and treasures, are most entirely and cheerfully devoted. Where is there, then, the least

* Some word requires to be supplied, to render the subsequent part of the sentence intelligible.—EDIT.

remainder of a lukewarm temper, when we are wrought up to this frame and pitch ?

4. *The way and means of working this great cure are, (1.) Persons considered. (2.) Assemblies attended on. (3.) What there and thence and otherwise is or may be derived, improved by mutual exhortation. (4.) And all this under the powerful influences of, and in fit and full proportion to, a quick and constant apprehensiveness and apprehension of "the approaching day."*

Now, seeing the text is hortatory, directive, and encouraging hereto ; and hath, as such, been treated on accordingly ; I will wave all further application, and only give you the directions and prescriptions for the curing of a lukewarm temper.

DIRECTIONS.

DIRECTION I. *Love-quickening and abating principles, interests, and practices are to be exploded and avoided.*—If once you entertain hard thoughts of God, as if he were morose and captious, a barren "wilderness," or "land of darkness;" (Jer. ii. 31;) and only careful to ruin and distress his creatures, upon the mere accounts of sovereignty, and the prerogative of dominion ; though a poor penitent lie prostrate at his feet for mercy, in tears and shame and self-abhorrence ; or [be] in a readiness to do so, were there but any hopes of merciful acceptance : if you shall represent him to yourselves, as if he were so tenacious of revengeful purposes, and of advantages put into his hands for the full executions of such deserved revenges, through former crimes provoking thereunto :—alas ! how can you think upon him, or address yourselves to him, with hope and pleasure ?

We find grace represented to us as God's image in his creatures. We find that holiness in creatures makes them the sweetest of all persons in their dispositions and deportments, and readiest to be charitable and abundant in benign and alluring and obliging remissions, constructions, and dispensations. Such are most backward to make rigid interpretations and constructions of men's miscarriages and neglects, when they arise from rather infirmity than malignity, and from ignorance and surprise [rather] than from contrivance or perverse resolution. They hate, above all men, every thing that savours of stinginess and of a sordid spirit ; and they like not to retain revengeful purposes to ruin or disturb those criminals who seriously and pathetically implore their pardon, and beg admission to their now much-valued favour. And doth grace make such persons better than their Maker ? and is that God's image in them, which hath nothing in God correspondent herewith ? or can we think that the image can exceed its Grand Exemplar ?

Such black and dismal thoughts of God can never kindle love in us to him. Did I not know and think that "God is love," how could I seek to him in hope, and love him ? For my part, I verily believe God sent his Son into the world, to convince us of his love and goodness, and to invite us to himself, under the power of this alluring principle of truth,—that God loves us dearly, and that he will reject

no sinner whose heart is touched with such love to him as makes it restless and uneasy in itself, till it obtain his pardon, image, fellowship, and presence. (See Heb. xi. 6.) And as for Jesus Christ, the liveliest image and the truest and most glorious mirror of the Invisible God that ever any eye beheld, or can behold; how sweet, indulgent, humble, gracious, and endearing, was he unto all! and how ready to receive all that come to God through him! O, do not, then, mistake his grace, design, or temper! Love cannot live and do its work, where Christ is not duly represented in his lovely excellences.

And yet, on the other hand, represent not God below himself, as fond in his respects, partial in his dealings, slack and easy in his proceedings, apt to favour us, though neglected by us; as one ready to indulge us in our sins, and to connive and wink at our miscarriages; or one that we may trifle with; and fondly think that we can at any time procure his favour, and extinguish or evade his anger and displeasure, by some trifling applications to him, or flattering eulogies of his name upon the knee, or a copious, verbose declaiming against our sins and selves in our stated or occasional addressings of ourselves to him, when pangs of death, horrors of conscience, or the tastes and expectations of his wrath make us uneasy to ourselves; as if, by compliments, and petty observances of God in lower matters, we could turn and toss a ductile nature into any aspect, shape, or posture, that may serve our private turns, and please our arrogant and presumptuous humours; and court God to strip himself of all the glories of his name and throne, and prostitute his interest and honour, laws and majesty, unto the fond conceits of fools and sinners. For this is blasphemy and presumption to the height, both fit and sure to be punished by the Judge. Could God be love, or lovely in the eyes of sober and discerning men, were he thus facile, so as to be influenced by the conceits and humours of sinners in their dotages? He that would not signify one thought of mercy to our revolted parents, before he had represented himself most awful in his judiciary process; and that so guarded both his laws and throne with awful majesty and sanctions; and that exacted so severe a satisfaction from his Son;—he, surely, neither will nor can debase himself, and tempt his creatures, by unfit relaxations of his laws and courses, to think him despicable, even by such unfit deportments of himself toward them. That fool which takes God's mercies and indulgences to be at his commands, so as to sin and pray; and that makes such easy pardons and redresses the continual encouragements of sinful practices and hopes;—that fool, I say again, that is of this persuasion and deportment, is no way likely to be cured of his lukewarm temper. (Deut. xxix. 19, 20.) For so easy pardons and redresses would evidently and effectually mortify the Spirit, and defeat the glorious designs of divine government amongst men. (See Heb. xii. 25, 28, 29; x. 26—31; Rom. ii. 6—10; Gal. vi. 7—9; 1 Sam. ii. 2, 3, 29, 30; 2 Chron. xv. 2.)

And if you take your Christianity to be a state of drudgery and disconsolateness; if you degenerate into worldliness, luxury, or voluptuousness; (as in John ii. 15—17; James iv. 4;) if you grow so

tender of yourselves as to be swayed more by what affects the outward, than the inward, man; if you give way to partiality, to jealousies, heats, and ferments, to a censorious, jealous, and detracting spirit, or to the spirit of domination and division; or if you form your principles, interests, and actions, according to the measures and concerns of this vain, transient world and of the animal life: this malady will prove incurable.

DIRECT. II. *Heart-warming objects are to be contemplated.*—Such as, the glories of God's name, the grandeurs of his majesty and throne, the accuracies of his government in all its constitutions and administrations; the stores and treasures of his goodness, with all their provident and yet generous distributions unto all his creatures; the riches of his grace, in his kindness to us by Jesus Christ, the exhibition of his Son, and all the amiable excellences and endearing aspects and addresses made to us by him; the life that is in Christ; the grace and promises that are given us by him, so "great and precious;" all the fellowship and intimacies that we are hereby called and admitted to; gospel treasures and provisions, to bring and keep our God and us together, in order to all the solaces and satisfactions of steady, full, eternal friendship; the eminent importance of his gospel, interest, and kingdom, in and to the world, the church, and us; the loveliness and vigours of his interest and image in us, as formed, fixed, and actuated, and possessed, by his eternal Spirit, to his eternal praise by Jesus Christ; the solid pleasures, peace, and usefulness of regular zeal for God, Christ, Christianity, and all that are near and dear to God; with all the comforts and renown which this well-fixed and ordered zeal prepares us for; all that we are saved from, by, to, through the effectual cure of this disease; all the solemnities of Christ's approaching day, and our great concerns therein; all the good that is in, that attends upon, and that issues from, the prosperous successes of the gospel, the holiness and peace of the church, and the health, the usefulness, the possession, the conflicts, and conquests of a well-cured soul; and all the honours, ease, and blessings that attend our glorious gospel.

All this, and much more, deserves deep thoughts, and all the fervours and acknowledgments and services of love. And the plain truth is this:—we are both constituted of, and surrounded with, inflaming objects of this love; and the great object and attractive shines even most gloriously in all:—nature, in all its harmonies, stores, and beauties; Providence, in all its illustrations of its excellences and exactness, suiting itself in all the articles thereof to every thing and being and concern in heaven and earth; the sacred scriptures, every way entertaining us with what may exercise and enrich the mind of man, heal and compose his conscience, enthroning it as God's vicegerent to inspect the principles, designs, and practices, and state of men, to make and keep them orderly, safe, and easy, and so to affect the heart and life, as that we may be lovely in the sight of God, the blessings of our stations in our generations, and a most comfortable entertainment to ourselves. Our very selves are most provoking

objects unto love. So many faculties in our souls! so many passions and affections to be ordered and exercised aright! so many senses for reception! so many organs and instruments for the commodious promoting and securing of our own good! so many objects, employments, and acquests, to be engaged vigorously about, and orderly conversant with all continually! And God in all this eminently beaming forth those perfections which are so fit and worthy to take endearingly with us! How inexcusable is cold-heartedness, whenas it may so easily be cured by serious contemplations of these objects! Light and colours and beautiful proportions to the eye, words and melodies to the ears, food to the taste, and all the objects, exercises, and entertainments of every sense, afford our very minds and hearts their delicacies to feed on, and urge us to love God and man.

And let me add this also,—the beauties and delightfulness of holiness and practical religion, as exemplified in holy persons; those “excellent ones, in whom is all my delight,” saith David. (Psalm xvi. 3.) O to observe them in all their curious imitations and resemblances of their God; in the wisdom of their conduct, the fervours of their spirits, the steadiness of their purposes, the evenness of their tempers, the usefulness and blamelessness of their lives, the loftiness of their aims, the placid gravity of their looks, the savour and obligingness of their speeches, the generous largeness of their hearts, the openness of their hands, the impartiality of their thoughts, the tenderness of their bowels, and all the sweetnesses of their deportments toward all! Such things are really where Christian godliness obtains indeed; though mere pretenders, or real Christians in their decays and swoons, may represent religion under its eclipses to its great disadvantage and reproach.

When, therefore, we contemplate all these excellences, (and many more, not mentioned,) will not our hearts take fire, and burn with love of complacency, where these things are visible; and with the love of benevolence and beneficence, to that degree, toward those that are receptive of, but want, them, which shall enrage desires and prayers, and quicken us to diligent endeavours after what by such may be attained unto, were they but closely and warmly followed by us, and brought to the diligent pursuits thereof? Thus, you see, deep thoughts about lovely objects will get up love and cure lukewarmness in us to the purpose. Let this, then, be done.

DIRECT. III. *Heart-awakening and love-quickening truths are to be duly and intimately considered.*—And this is, indeed, in part, to “truthify in love;” if I may make an English word to express the *valor* of the Greek word, *αληθευοντες εν αγαπη*. (Eph. iv. 15.) [We must duly consider] the existence and excellence of the great Jehovah, the Trine-One Holy One; the care which he hath taken, and the expensive cost [which] he hath been at, to cure this malady by the fore-mentioned means and helps; the critical inspections of his eye into the heart of man; and his making this the test and balance of the sanctuary to try us by; counting and judging us more or less fit for mercies and judgments, heaven or hell, service or to be thrown

aside as refuse, as our *hearts* stand affected. No exact soundness in our spirits, no safety in our state, no real ease and cheerfulness in our souls, no evidence of our acceptance with our God, no duty well performed toward God or man, no sins subdued, no trial bravely managed and resulted, no talents used fully to the Master's satisfaction and advantage, nothing professed, performed, endured, or obtained, without this love. And according to its ebbs and flows, its inflammations and abatements, so doth it fare and go with all our Christianity and concerns. The truth is, all the concerns of souls and persons, in life, death, judgment, heaven, and hell, are hereupon depending. These articles of truth, considered well, will make us serious, fervent, resolute, and industrious in the things of God.

DIRECT. IV. *Heart-warming duties are to be performed thoroughly, in public, private, and in secret.* (Eccles. ix. 10; Rom. xii. 11, 12.)—Pray hard, read frequently and seriously, hear diligently and impartially; meditate closely and concernedly upon all you read or hear relating to the great concern. Be much in Christian conference, in the due spirit and to the genuine design and purposes thereof. Be much in praise, thanks, self-observation, government, and discipline. Look up to heaven for help, and improve faithfully what you thence obtain. And I do take the Supreme, essentially Infinite Good to be dishonoured and degraded by us in our thoughts and walk, if any creature-interests or excellences do ultimately terminate our affections and intentions.

For my part, I take converses, employments, ingenious recreations, and even sensitive entertainments, to be most delicious and grateful, when they occasion or provoke me to those observations of God in all, which carry up my thoughts through and from them to him, with thanks and holy wonder. And when these thoughts do, as it were, return again from heaven, to set us more delightfully and strenuously to our needful work on earth, for heaven and for the most generous and true services, to the great benefit of the church and world; O what a sea of pleasures and advantages do love and good works cast us then into, and keep us in!

How often have the delicate composes of grave and sprightly music, well managed by the sweet and skilful voice or touch, provoked and urged my soul to admire the Chief Good, and the Eternal Source of all communicated and communicable ingenuity and expertness in that, and in all sorts of arts and sciences! The delicate composure of the ear, to render it receptive of melodious sounds; the usefulness of the air for the conveyance of them to the prepared ear; the pregnantencies of human souls and fancies for the endlessness of various compositions; the command that the soul hath over the animal spirits, to order and command the voice or fingers; the rules of harmony, and the particular gracefulness of relishes and flourishings and humourings of some particular notes and touches; and the different tempers that God hath made, whereto the varieties of sounds have their as various degrees and ways of gratefulness;—these things, with all the mysteries of sounds and numbers, O what is their cry?—“How lovely is the Eternal God, that gives us such abilities and

entertainments! How lovely are the souls of men, that are receptive of such things! How lovely are those labours and designs, that are, with wisdom, diligence, and faithfulness, directed to the cultivation and salvations of such souls! O how beautiful and lovely are the feet of those, and how deserving of our prayers and universal helpfulness are they themselves, who lay-out all their time and strength, to get each other, and as many as they can, in readiness to bear their parts and take their share in the melodies and entertainments of that triumphant state of love and holiness in the heavenly glory!" The cry of all is, "Love! love!"

These are things and objects that require and deserve our love, in its most urgent vehemencies, to promote their interests. This noble flame is desecrated and profaned by us, and used to its own prejudice and reproach, when it is not directed to, and diligently conversant about, objects and services truly worthy of itself. (Gal. iv. 18.) I should have thought my thoughts and heart, not only feculent, but in a sort profane, had I applied my studies, or this sacred directory in my text, to the promoting of fervour, noise, and stir about things much below, or repugnant to, the weightier things and matters of Christ's gospel-kingdom,—judgment, mercy, and love; (Matt. xxiii. 23;) "the love of God," saith Luke. (xi. 42.)

Woe worth that *Papal* zeal and diligence, that is for the promotion of an universal visible headship! wherein they pretend that all the church militant must be united, into whose arbitrary and bold dictates it must resolve its faith, according to whose edicts it must form all its practices, and to the supports whereof, in all its secular grandeurs, pageantries, and usurped prerogatives, it must devote and sacrifice its all. Is he lukewarm in God's account, that will not anathematize, traduce, distress, destroy, souls, persons, families, churches, kingdoms, and the choicest and most useful persons; who will not absolutely devote himself hereto, and show his zeal in desolating flames and slaughters? Such zeal, we know by whom it was called "madness." (Acts xxvi. 9—11; Phil. iii. 6.)

Woe worth *malignant and censorious* zeal, that overlooks much excellence in others, and that envies or despises all deserving services, gifts, and graces, if not seated in and performed by themselves!

Woe worth *dividing* zeal, that intimately espouses particular opinions, modes, forms, and humours; and then makes these the main, or the only, terms of peace and concord; that lays out all its time, strength, interest, and fervours, to gain proselytes and votaries hereto, and to defend their own fictions; and quarrel with, and keep at sinful distances from, persons better (perhaps) than themselves, because their Shibboleth is not pronounced by them!

Woe worth *partial* zeal, that measures things and persons by their discords and agreements with our own interests, parties, or persuasions! Every thing is idolatry, superstition, and rigorously to be dealt withal, that falls not even with our sentiments and ways!

Woe worth *self-conceited* zeal, that lays its quarrels upon this cause and bottom,—that others will not reverence and yield to us, as wiser and better than themselves!

And woe worth all zeal, that lays the Christian interest, peace, and welfare, on covenants, subscriptions, or any terms too mean and narrow to sustain them! I shall never value, vindicate, practise, nor endure that zeal which bears not all those characters of God mentioned in James iii. 17, 18.

POSTSCRIPT.

And now, reader, let me bespeak thy candour. I am very sensible of very great inaccuracies and defects in this resolution of so great a case: it became my work under unusual disadvantages, not fit to be mentioned here. I have exposed my first draught to an observant generation. The truths contained therein are God's; and the directions offered are, for the substance of them, according to the doctrine of the scripture of truth. May they but prosper to the cure of lukewarm hearts, I can the better spare the praise of men, and bear their censures and contempt. It is the desire, endeavour, and design of my poor soul to think as meanly of myself as others can. I have no time (and, through the infirmity of my right hand, writing is the most tedious part of my work) to correct my first copy; which entertains me, in the perusal thereof, with many superfluous expressions to be retrenched; many inaccuracies of phrase and method to be rectified; many defects to be made up, as to that matter which the full resolution of the case requires; many hints and heads which might more copiously have been insisted on: yea, and some passages in the text itself, I find, upon review, might have been more fully and nervously improved to the exacter resolution of the case. Much more I could have said; and much more than *that* can a multitude of my brethren speak, were they to undertake the subject, and handle it according to the grace and wisdom which God hath more copiously given unto them than unto me: though I will leave this testimony to his great and gracious name upon record,—that he hath ever helped me; and had done more for me, had I not unworthily obstructed the current of his kindnesses to me. My books and helps are nothing to me without him. It is ignorance of ourselves and of God, that makes us proud; but our sensible approaches to eternity and to himself will make us sneak and lay us in the dust before him; we being hereby made to see how little [that which] we know can signify, obtain, or do, without him.

Some may perhaps object my mistake and misapplication of this text, in that men, our fellow-Christians, are the object of this love and service here to be provoked unto. And I deny it not; but it is God's image, interest, and service, in and by them, in reference to the pleasing of his will, so "good," so "acceptable," and so "perfect," (Rom. xii. 1, 2,) that is the great inducement to this love. And as these things are discernible in them, communicable to them, and followed or neglected by them, so are they related to, and all of us concerned in, this love and good works, either as agents or objects, or both: and of this love and service is God the original Dirigent, and ultimate End.