

## SERMON XV.

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WHAT IS THE DUTY OF MAGISTRATES, FROM THE HIGHEST TO THE LOWEST, FOR THE SUPPRESSING OF PROFANENESS?

*For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil.*—Romans xiii. 3.

RELIGION, if right, doth excel all other things in the world, upon the account of its universal usefulness, and the powerful influences [which] it hath upon them that are true to it, for the promoting of their present, future, and everlasting happiness. Of all other, the Christian religion, which we own and profess, is the best and most worthy of our engaging in and immovable cleaving to, being "pure and undefiled before God and the Father," as the apostle James speaks. (Chap. i. 27.) Unspeakably profitable it is and advantageous to the kingdoms that receive it, and to the persons who are sincere in it, and studious of conforming themselves to its holy precepts and rules. The sacred scriptures, drawn up and left by men divinely inspired and infallibly assisted, from which alone we fetch it, (not from fathers or councils, whatever esteem and veneration we have for them,) do commend themselves unto the judgments and consciences of men who have not shaken hands with reason; and fetch so great a compass as to contain and reveal, either in particular or general directions, all that which is necessary for us to believe or do, in order to our full satisfaction and endless felicity in the next world, and our present safety, peace, and comfort in this foolish and troublesome one. David tells us, "Thy commandment is exceeding broad." (Psalm cxix. 96.) It is *long* for its duration, being *æternæ veritatis*, "of everlasting truth," not any thing shall be diminished or cut off from it, not any thing shall be changed or altered in it; and it is *broad* for its usefulness, extending to and spreading itself over all the occasions of men: for it hath comforts sovereign and proper in all distresses, though never so pinching, together with directions adapted to and fitted for all conditions and affairs, though never so difficult and abstruse.

The blessed word of God will teach you how to order and demean yourselves in your personal capacities, and in your relative too; how to walk alone, and how to draw in the yoke. It presents us with the best ethics, economics, and politics in the world: Aristotle's and Machiavel's are fooleries, if compared with it. This precious word, being well attended to and obeyed, will make comfortable families, flourishing kingdoms and states. O that all those unto whom the Lord hath in his goodness vouchsafed these oracles, would be so wise as to

make them their "delight and counsellors!" (Psalm cxix. 24.) Sure I am, we should then be blessed with better husbands and wives, better parents and children, better masters and servants, better friends and neighbours, better ministers and people, better magistrates and subjects. "The beauty of the Lord our God" would "be upon us," (Psalm xc. 17,) and that would make our faces shine.

Of the last-mentioned relation, namely, that between magistrates and subjects, the holy apostle Paul treats at the beginning of this chapter, and so on to verse 8. In the first verse he issueth out his precept; from which it appears that Christ is no enemy to Cæsar, and the principles of Christian religion not inconsistent with those of loyalty. The best Christians will be found (at long run, to be sure) the best subjects. None so true to their prince as those that are most faithful to their God. For what saith our apostle? "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers." (Verse 1.) Every one, man, woman, and child, that is capable of understanding what subjection means, and of expressing it; be he of what rank and in what station he will, high or low, noble or base, rich or poor, of the clergy (by the Pope's leave!) or of the laity, as some love to speak; let him be subject—not overtop, not "exalt himself over that which is called God," but "be subject—to the higher powers." "Who are they?" The civil magistrates. Antichrist hath put-in his claim here; but he is justly non-suited by Protestants. It is the civil magistrate whose interest and right our apostle here asserts and pleads; "kings," as he speaks in another epistle, "and all that are in authority." (1 Tim. ii. 2.) These we are to pray for; to these we ought to be subject; to these we must pay tribute; these we must honour, support, and assist; these we are bound to obey, "not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake," and that in all things in which obedience to them doth not carry in the bowels of it disobedience unto God, whom the greatest and highest of them are infinitely below. (1 Tim. ii. 2; Rom. xiii. 1, 5, 7; Matt. xvii. 27; 1 Peter ii. 17.) This precept he backs and binds upon Christians with sundry arguments, drawn,

1. *From the institution of magistracy.*—Of what kind soever the government be, whether monarchical, or aristocratical, &c., still government is of divine institution. It is God's ordinance and appointment: "There is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." (Verse 1.) It is not of the devil, who is an enemy to order, and delights in confusion; nor is it only by the will of man, whatsoever they may and do contribute toward it; nor is it only of those who possess the throne and sway the sceptre: but it is of God, who, in his infinite wisdom and goodness to mankind, hath determined and ordered it should be so; who, according to the pleasure of his will, without giving account of his matters, "putteth down one, and setteth up another;" (Psalm lxxv. 7;) and who hath infused such an instinct and principle into men living together in a community, as powerfully and effectually leads to the electing of one or more, and setting him or them over them, arming and intrusting

them with power and authority, for the administration of justice and public affairs; that by them common safety and good may be both secured and promoted, and from them, as from the head, vital and comfortable influences may be conveyed to the whole politic body, yea, to the meanest and lowest of its members who grind at the mill and handle the distaff.

2. *From the sin of those who refuse this required subjection, and oppose and resist the magistrate.*—"Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God;" (verse 2;) he doth herein run counter and cross to the all-wise God, and his declared will; he doth, as it were, set his wisdom and will against God's: *bellum cum Deo suscipit*, whatever he fancies to himself, he "undertakes and wages war with God." This man sinneth against God as well as against man; is a rebel against the Majesty of heaven, as well as his prince upon earth, refusing the obedience he owes to his ordinance and command.

3. *From the evil and fatal consequence or effect of rebellion and resistance.*—Of which in the same verse: "They that resist shall receive unto themselves damnation." They commit such a crime as shall most certainly and severely be revenged. They had better never have done it; for punishment will surely follow it, and, it may be, with a quick and speedy pace, either from the hand of the magistrate, to whom the sword is committed, with which he is to animadvert upon all disobedience; or by the hand of God, who will plead the cause and vindicate the honour of his lieutenants and vicegerents. So that such delinquents are never safe, but [are] in danger of a temporal punishment here, (as Korah and his accomplices experienced, and so did that unnatural wretch, Absalom,) or an eternal one in hell, in case hearty repentance do not by a happy interposal prevent it.

4. *From the end of the office, and the business incumbent upon persons called to it.*—Which is singularly good and greatly necessary, being designed for and tending to the preventing of vice, and promoting of virtue. And this is the argument used in my text: "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil." *Oi αρχοντες*, "princes, magistrates," they into whose hand the sceptre is put, or the sword of justice; whether they be supreme or subordinate, whatsoever place they hold in the political body. These are not *φοβος*, a "terror, a scare, a fright;" they ought not to be, it doth not become them to be, it is no part of their office and place to be. And so long as they act conscientiously; wisely, so long as they observe the rules given them, and carry in their several stations as they should; they will not be a terror *αγαθων εργαων*, "to good works," or to them that do them, whom they ought to defend by their power, and encourage with their smiles; but only *των κακων*, "to those which are evil."

It is the latter part of these words which falls under my present consideration. My work is to take a view of magistrates, and to discourse about them, as they ought to be terrors unto evil works,—all

of them, so far as they come to their knowledge, and fall under their cognizance; the question which I am desired to speak unto being this:—

## QUESTION.

*What is the duty of magistrates, from the highest to the lowest, for the suppressing of profaneness?*

In the handling hereof I shall observe this method:—

I. First. *Inquire what is meant by “profaneness.”*

II. Secondly. *What is intended by “the suppression of profaneness.”*

III. Thirdly. *Prove it to be the duty of all magistrates to employ their authority and power for that great and excellent end.*

IV. Fourthly. *Propound and offer sundry means which they may and should make use of in order thereunto.*

V. Lastly. *Shut up our whole discourse with application.*

And the great God assist in the work, and bless that which shall be done! Amen.

I. Our first inquiry then will be, *What are we to understand by “profaneness?”*—In answer whereunto we will consider the word, which in Latin is *profanus*, and, as some learned critics observe, is as much as *procul a fano*, “far from the temple or holy place,” far from God: that which is far from the mind and will of God, that which God doth not approve, will have nothing to do with, which speaks those that love and practise it a company of persons at a distance from God. The word in the Greek is *βεβηλος*. “Now,” saith Aretius, “*βηλον* signifieth ‘pure,’ such a purity as is in the stars of heaven, or a serene sky; and the syllable *βε* doth change the signification and import of the word; and accordingly we do well understand by it that which is ‘unclean, impure, polluted, filthy.’” So that profaneness is uncleanness, of which there are two sorts:—

1. *A ceremonial uncleanness.*—Thus we read of defiled hands, and common meats. Of the former: “There came together unto him certain of the Pharisees and scribes. And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault:” (Mark vii. 1, 2:) *κοιναις χερσι*, “with common hands, impure ones.” That was counted by them a profane action, which polluted the person that did it. And so you read of common meats: Peter “saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet, knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is” *κοινωνη ακαθαρτων*, “common or unclean.” (Acts x. 11—14.) There “common” is opposed to “holy;” it was a thing not fit for that holy people whom God had called out from the rest of the world, and made his own peculiar. That was common, unclean, or profane, which was lawful to the Gentiles, but prohibited the Jews by the ceremonial law; as, to instance, swine’s flesh. That law is

now abolished: with this sort of uncleanness we at present have nothing to do, as not being intended in the question.

2. *There is a moral uncleanness.*—And that is it here meant. That is said to be profane which is impure, polluted, foul, loathsome, and defiling; and so it may be, and, as we find in scripture, it is, applied both *to persons* and *to things*.

(1.) *To persons.*—Thus in Ezek. xxi. 25, when the Lord by the prophet spake to Zedekiah, it was in this language: “Thou profane, wicked prince of Israel.” His profaneness did arise from, or rather consist in, his wickedness; for he had grievously polluted himself with idolatry and perjury, with cursed persecutions, and the blood of the innocents. He was both a stranger and enemy to all piety and purity; he ingulfed himself in wickedness, and laboured with all his might to draw others of his subjects, both noble and base, into the same practices, and to plunge them as deep as himself. Esau hath the same brand set upon him: “Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birth-right:” (Heb. xii. 16:) a “profane person,” *qui nihil habet sacri*, “who hath in him nothing sacred,” nothing of holiness; who violates, neglects, tramples under foot holy things; who so pleaseth himself in filthiness as to wallow in it; in whom the love of the world is so predominant, and to pleasures, riches, and honours he is so addicted, that he prefers them before the grace of God, and the kingdom of Christ, in himself and in the world: such an one as values carnal things above spiritual, earthly above heavenly, and a small fleshly enjoyment above so great and advantageous a privilege as the primogeniture.

(2.) *Profaneness is attributed to things.*—Thus in 1 Tim. iv. 7: “Refuse profane and old wives’ fables;” by which we are, according to learned men, to understand, either the absurd Jewish stories, or some superstitious persons forbidding to marry, and the use of sundry sorts of meats; or those idle and foolish doctrines which place the worship of God in such low and pitiful things as external, sapless rites and ceremonies, forms, modes, and gestures. But, further: those things are plainly and notoriously profane which are sinful and wicked. Debauchery is profaneness in grain: a wicked life is a profane life. To lie, and swear, and curse, and whore, are acts of profaneness. For people to drive-on their worldly trades, to buy and sell, in houses, shops, or streets, upon the sabbath-day, are acts of profaneness: this is a profaning of that day which God hath separated from the rest of the days, and sanctified and set apart for holy use, his own worship and service, and the good of souls. In short: all that which is contrary to the divine law, those excellent and blessed rules which God hath been pleased in his word to give out unto us, for the right management of ourselves, and ordering of our lives and conversations in the world—all that, I say, is profaneness, whether it be impiety or immorality.

II. Our second work is to inquire *what we are to understand by “the suppressing of profaneness.”*—To this I answer in general: The

suppressing of it doth signify the keeping of it under. If profaneness be not carefully looked to, but let alone, it will quickly grow to a head, and soon overspread and overtop all. It must therefore be kept down; and if, through the negligence of some, and the impudence of others, it be got to a height, it must be knocked down. Such tough humours in the body politic need, and call for, strong purges; and civil magistrates, who are the state-physicians, cannot be better employed than about such works as that. More particularly, I shall mention two things which the suppression of profaneness doth carry in it: *a prevention of, 1. The acts of profaneness: 2. The growth of it.*

1. *There must be a prevention of the acts of profaneness.*—Profane principles in the heart of a man, lying still and, as it were, dormant, not breaking forth, are out of the reach of others; neither the magistrate's sword, be it never so long, nor the minister's word, if alone, and unaccompanied with the Divine Spirit, can reach it, or prevail against it. That is the mighty and glorious work of the great Jehovah, who alone knoweth the heart and searcheth it, and can change, alter, and mend it. None but he that made the heart at first can mould it anew; none but he can cast salt into that spring; none but he can graft such holy principles as to make a corrupt tree good. But [such] wicked and profane practices in the lives of men, as are the wretched products, fruits, and issues of base and cursed principles, may be curbed, restrained, and prevented: so that though the wickedness of the wicked will not depart from him, yet it shall not be committed with that frequency and boldness and openness as it hath been, and to this very day is,—with shame and sorrow be it spoken! In the [epistle to the] Hebrews, xii. 15: "Looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you:" you may understand it both of unsound and abominable practices; but I am now only to deal with the latter. Sin, lust, corruption in the heart, is a root of bitterness, yielding that which is bitter to God: his soul hates and abhors it. And it is bitter to man in the sad, direful consequences and effects of it, which, when the foolish, self-humouring sinner comes to taste, he will certainly find worse than gall. Sin is his dainties, he rolls it as a delicious morsel under his tongue; (Job xx. 12;) but it will prove the poison of asps within him. Now it nearly concerns every one to endeavour the pulling up of this root in his own heart; let him set both his hands to the work, let him lay the axe to it, and call God in to his assistance. It is ten thousand thousand times more desirable to have in you that "root of the matter" which holy Job spake of, (Job xix. 28,) than to have this "root of bitterness" in you. (Heb. xii. 15.) But then it ought to be the care of all, (specially governors, both in families, churches, kingdoms, and nations,—they should look diligently to it,) that this root do not *pullulare*, "spring up:" if at any time it begins to peep and show its head, oppose it with might and main, trample upon it with the foot of just indignation, never suffer it to shoot up, bud, and bring forth. Though men

will not be so good as they should, do not give them leave to be as bad as they would. It is not in your power to dry up the fountain, but it is a part of your duty to dam up the streams; and though you cannot eradicate men's vicious habits, yet you must restrain their outward acts. "Of whom are Hymenæus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme:" (1 Tim. i. 20 :) a strange way of cure, to prevent sin by giving men up to the devil; yet such as God prescribed and prospered. After the same manner, let flagitious persons be delivered up to punishment, that so, though they will not, *virtutis amore*, "for the love of virtue," yet *formidine pœnæ*, "for fear of punishment," they may learn to bridle themselves, and not to do any more so wickedly as they have done; one great end of punishment being the reclaiming and amending the offender, if he be not past hope.

2. *There must be a suppression of the growth and spreading of profaneness.*—I shall hereafter show you a little more fully how that sin is like some unhappy weeds, that if once they get into a ground, and be not timely dealt with, will in a little while run far and near, and overspread the whole: they do not need any encouragement; it is enough for them to be let alone. Of all weeds this wickedness is the worst and most diffusive of itself. A profane wretch is like one that hath the plague; he is indeed a pest, or common plague, in the place where he is; his very breath and touch, his discourses and actions, are infectious; he goeth up and down tainting those with whom he doth converse, who are not of healthful constitutions of souls, and well antidoted with the fear and awe of God. And this was one reason that the apostle Paul gives, in the fore-mentioned, Heb. xii. 15, why he would have such special care taken to prevent the "springing up of any root of bitterness:" "Lest thereby many be defiled," *μιανθῶσι*, "polluted, bespattered," made as filthy and nasty as the beasts themselves. If such a "root of bitterness" be suffered to spring up, many will be troubled at it, and many will be defiled by it. It is the design and delight of wicked men to make others as bad as themselves, and to draw both acquaintance and strangers to cast-in their lot among them, and to walk hand in hand with them in their crooked ways that lead down to the chambers of death. O that the saints and people of God were as desirous and industrious for the promoting of true piety, as the emissaries of hell are for the propagating of profaneness! O that they would be as diligent to persuade men and women into the faith and obedience of the gospel, as these are to make devilish proselytes! In a word: that they would take as much care and pains for the carrying others along with them to heaven, as these are [taking] to allure and hurry others to hell! But, to our shame be it spoken, we are too dull, heavy, and unactive; we are greatly out-done by them; we are not a quarter so zealous for the rescuing of poor sinners out of the clutches of "the destroyer," (Psalm xvii. 4,) as they are for the bringing [of] them under his power.

But sure I am, it is the duty of all, specially the concernment of those who are by God invested with power, to reckon it, and accord-

ingly to mind it, as a very considerable part of their work, to look to it, that this noisome plague be stayed. And to that purpose, I desire them to consider what was the resolution of David, the man after God's own heart: "I will early destroy all the wicked of the land:" it should be one of the first things he did, to destroy them, not corporally, by taking away their lives, but civilly, by a due and strict discipline; and so "cut off all evil-doers from the city of the Lord." (Psalm ci. 8.) Where this is not attended to, sad and doleful experience hath made it evident to the world, that hell will immediately break loose, the flood-gates of wickedness will be all drawn up, and an inundation of the blackest villanies will follow and drown a land. "In those days there was no king in Israel;" none that could effectually hinder idolatry or any thing else, none that had a sufficient coercive power; for the judges did deal with the people rather by counsel and persuasion, than by commands and punishments; and then, saith the text, "Every man did that which was right in his own eyes;" (Judges xvii. 6;) and you need not doubt but a great deal of that was wrong and odious in God's eyes.

But magistrates, by their diligence in their places, acting up to their trust, and a due execution of justice, may secure our banks, and set up a standard against wickedness, even then when it cometh in upon us swelling and roaring like a flood. God, in Deut. xiii. 6—10, made this law,—that if any one should offer to tempt another to idolatry, though the person doing it were his "brother, the son of his mother, or his son, or his daughter, or the wife of his bosom, or a friend, that was as his own soul," let him be never so near, and never so dear, yet if he should say, "Let us go and serve other gods," his friend and most intimate relation, being thus tempted, should "surely kill him; his hand should be first upon him; and afterward the hand of all the people, and they should stone him with stones till he died." And now observe what was the end and design hereof; you have it set down in verse 11: "All Israel shall hear and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is among you." This will be *in terrorem*, it will "scare and fright" the wretches: such an act of justice will ring and grow famous, it will be talked of both in town and country; and wheresoever the report comes, it will strike an awe upon men, so that they shall not add [dare] to do the like.

III. The third thing which, according to the method I propounded, I have to do, is *to make it plain and evident, that it is the indispensable duty of magistrates, from the highest to the lowest, to mind the suppression of profaneness as their business.*—For when I do in this case speak of magistrates, we are to understand it in the utmost extent, of "kings, and all that are in authority." (1 Tim. ii. 2.) All of them, one and other, who have the sword of justice put into their hands, must not drowse and loiter, nor suffer that sword to lie rusting in the scabbard; but are obliged to draw it, and run it to the very hilts into the bowels of profaneness. This I shall endeavour to prove unto you by sundry particulars. Though I have



looked upon a sermon of this nature as more fit for another auditory, than this which consists of private persons ; only my thoughts have been, that what in the preaching did not reach some men's ears, may in the print come to their view ; and if there were, as peradventure there were, any inferior officers present, they might consider what was delivered, and carry it home with them, and be thereby excited to their duty, and do much toward the filling up of their places. But we proceed :

First. *Magistrates are God's vicegerents, his representatives ; they stand in his place.*—As God teacheth by ministers, so he rules by magistrates ; not that he needs either the one or the other, but it pleaseth him to make use of both. He that at first, as the great Creator of the world, instamped upon man that "image" of his which consists "in knowledge," "righteousness, and true holiness," (Col. iii. 10 ; Eph. iv. 24,) hath since the fall, as the wise Governor of the world, impressed upon princes and rulers that image of his which consists in honour, authority, and power. This is plain from the names and titles given them. They are called "his ministers :"  
 "He is the minister of God unto thee ;" (Rom. xiii. 4 ; ) a minister of God's choosing, a minister of God's appointing and advancing ; it was God that seated him in the throne, that committed to him the trust, that gave him his office, and put the power in his hand. And saith Paul, "He is a minister of God for good ;" that is, according to Pareus, 1. For natural good, to preserve men's lives, liberties, and properties. 2. For moral good, to keep men from vice and flagitious, self-ruining courses. 3. For civil good, to hold up societies, and to promote righteousness and honesty. 4. For spiritual good, to establish and uphold the true religion and pure worship of God. So that they are appointed for a great deal of good ; all which you may comfortably expect, and with some good confidence promise to yourselves, whensoever you see good men in the place of magistracy. Brambles will rend and tear, fire will go out of them to devour ; but the fruit of the vine is cheering, and with delight we may sit under its comfortable shadow.

Yea, they are not only called "the ministers of God," but because they are in so great place, and set about so good work, God hath been pleased to put upon them his own name, as we find in sundry places of scripture. "Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people : " (Exod. xxii. 28 : ) where the latter expression, "the ruler of thy people," is exegetical and explanative of the former, "the gods ;" and accordingly the Chaldee translation renders it, "the judges." So again : "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty, he judgeth among the gods," מַלְאָכֵי אֱלֹהִים (Psalm lxxxii. 1 : ) by which some indeed understand "the angels ;" as when the witch had raised up the devil, a fallen angel, in the shape of Samuel, she said to Saul, "I saw gods ascending out of the earth." (1 Sam. xxviii. 13.) And so Psalm lxxxvi. 8 : "Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord : " though the holy angels are noble creatures, excellent in wisdom, and mighty in strength, yet among

that innumerable company not one can be found like God. But others better understand hereby, princes, judges, and civil magistrates. And not only David, a good man, a king, called them by this name, but Jehovah himself hath given it them, he hath vouchsafed to honour them with this name: "I have said, Ye are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High;" (Psalm lxxxii. 6;) you are my commissioners; you do *locum tenere*, 'hold my place' with my leave, and by my appointment. Your throne is the throne of God, and your tribunal the tribunal of God. I have given you an inviolable authority: take heed how you use it. I have made it your work to do justice, and to distribute rewards and punishments: see that you do it." Now what shall we infer from hence? Certainly, thus much: that magistrates being God's vicegerents, they ought to act like him, and according to his will. Having their commission from him, they should study it and conform to it; bearing his name, they should be expressive of his nature; being clothed with his power, they ought to employ it for his honour and the promoting of his interest, and against his enemies, of whom sin is the worst; for men are said to be "enemies in their minds through wicked works." (Col. i. 21.) Are they "children of the Most High?" and as such admitted to a part of his judiciary power? then it becomes them to "be followers of him as dear children," (Eph. v. 1,) and, as well as they can, to imitate him in the discharge of that trust which they have received from him, who is "not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with him. The foolish shall not stand in his sight: for he hateth all the workers of iniquity." (Psalm v. 4, 5.) But let us pursue this a little further.

Secondly. We have seen what is the place of magistrates; it is very high and honourable, but not supreme; there is One in heaven that is higher than they. Great men in authority are still, as the good centurion said, "under authority:" (Matt. viii. 9;) their place is a vicegerency. Now let us, but specially *let them, consider and remember what is the work and business of their place.*—For that they ought to do, endeavouring to stand complete in all the will of God, as men, as Christians, and as magistrates, or men in office. It will by no means be found enough for men to hold such or such a place in church or state, but it ought to be their desire and endeavour to fill up the place they hold. Which if men would seriously think upon, there would not be that seeking of and hunting after places as there generally is. Places then would rather seek men than men places. And as persons in authority and power do, and will, and justly may, expect and require that honour, revenue, and salary which doth of right belong to them upon the account of their place; (the prince will not part with his crown, sceptre, and throne, so long as he can hold them; nor the lord mayor with his sword and mace; no, nor the constable with his staff, which is the badge of his office;) so they and all others ought to fill up, as I said, their places with the performance of that duty which is inseparably annexed to them. A man had a great deal better never have been advanced to a place of

trust, than to be careless, negligent, and remiss in it. He that, so advanced, is not a public good, is no better than a common nuisance. *Honos* and *onus* go together, "honour" and "burden;" and *he* doth not deserve to meddle with the honour, *who* is not willing to take up the burden. Well, these places carry great work along with them, and that work must be done.

Now if the question be, "What is that work to the doing whereof magistrates are by their places obliged?" I answer: To appear for God, and to act for God. As God is the Author of their power, so his interest and honour ought to be the matter of their designs, and the end of their government. This that good king Jehoshaphat did full well understand: accordingly, when he had "set judges in the land, through all the fenced cities of Judah, city by city," he spake thus unto them: "Take heed what ye do; for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment." (2 Chron. xix. 5, 6.) An excellent speech it was, a charge fit to be given to judges, when [about] to go their circuits. Judges, yea, and others too, as well as they, had need be very cautious and wary men, exceeding prudent and circumspect. It concerns them to ponder and weigh actions, how they carry [themselves], what laws they make, how they execute them, what judgments they give, and what sentences they pass. "But what is the reason hereof?" Because they "judge not for men, but for the Lord;" and so they rule not for men, but [for] the Lord; and when they meet in parliament they should consult not for men, but for the Lord. Though indeed they do manage all most prudently for men, when they act most faithfully for the Lord. And it is certain, it is not officers' own advancement and enrichment, not their own honour and grandeur, at which they should level and direct their actions: none of these is the end of government, or of their being called to any part or share of it; but the honour of God and his glory as supreme, and the good of men as subordinate. And let not that be forgotten which Jehoshaphat added: "The Lord is with you in the judgment." When you do well, and act according to the law of righteousness; God is with you to own you, to justify you, to stand by you, to comfort and encourage you, to protect and defend you, to reward and bless you, as persons that have been faithful. And you may be sure, he is at all times with you, in the throne, and in the senate, and upon the bench, and elsewhere, curiously to observe and take notice of that which you do; for "by him actions are weighed." (1 Sam. ii. 3.) Magistrates and officers of all sorts have many eyes upon them; more see them than they themselves see. There are upon them the eyes of good men and bad, of friends and foes, of subjects and strangers: and they have upon them one eye more than, as I fear, some of them think of so much as they should; and that is the eye of the great and most holy God. He sees what is done upon the throne, and at the council-board; what in the parliament-houses, and what in the courts of judicature; what bills are drawn, and what do obtain the royal assent; what laws are enacted, and how they are executed.

Now, that the punishment of vice and suppression of profaneness is a special part of the work and duty of their place, is evident from this: "He is the minister of God, an avenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." (Rom. xiii. 4.) Let the man be what and who he will,—let him be clothed with what circumstances he will, let him make what figure he will,—if he will do evil, he must suffer for the evil that he doeth. If men will take a lawless liberty, the ruler must take vengeance; if they will do the evil of sin, he must see to it that they suffer the evil of punishment. This is the work of his office; he is the minister of God for this purpose; being *ultor iræ divinæ*, and "having a vial of wrath put into his hand by the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth;" which he is to open and pour out upon "the children of disobedience," who are, for their being such, meritoriously *filiî iræ*, "the children of wrath." (Eph. ii. 2, 3; v. 6.)

Thirdly. *Profaneness is of that cursed nature and tendency, that it is not to be tolerated.*—Being contrary to the light and law of nature; and therefore hath been condemned and punished among heathen nations; specially such of them as have been civilized, and made any improvement of those *κοινὰς εννοίας*, "common notions and principles" that had been impressed upon their souls, and taken any care to demean and carry themselves according to the ducture and guidance of them. How much more contrary is it to the greater and more excellent light of scripture and gospel-revelation, which God hath caused to so eminent a degree to shine among us, and which doth so expressly and abundantly condemn, and denounce the wrath of God against, all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men! Who can sufficiently tell how odious it is to persons who are moralized; and, yet more, to all them who have been savingly enlightened, and had their blindness cured by some of Christ's eye-salve? And by consequence how greatly ought it to be abhorred, and totally abandoned, in all those places, countries, and nations, unto whom God hath sent the *magnalia legis*, "the great things of his law," and also the precious things of the everlasting gospel! "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial?" (2 Cor. vi. 14, 15.) Without all peradventure, this is a work of darkness, and that is not a fit employment for them that dwell in a land of light. In Eph. iv. 18, 19, the "giving of themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness," is spoken of by the apostle, as the work of those who "have their understandings darkened, and are alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts," and altogether indecorous and unbecoming them who have learned Christ, and been trained up in the gospel-school. Shall then such things be winked at, allowed, or countenanced in a valley of vision? "No, no," say I; for as these are the sins, so they are the ignominy and shame, both of those that do them, and of those that suffer them. As gospel-truths and ordinances, and the ordering of a conversation aright in suitableness to them, are, as the dying wife of Phinehas said of the ark, "the glory of Israel,"

(1 Sam. iv. 21,) so immorality is its disgrace. Both these we are assured of by Solomon in one verse: "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people." (Prov. xiv. 34.) The common opinion of men is, that the exaltation of a nation is from the prudence of its prince, the wisdom of its counsellors, the valour of its commanders and soldiers, the success of its armies, victory over its enemies, (foreign, domestic,) flourishing of trade, abundance of riches, the stateliness of its palaces, and such-like; and it will easily be yielded, that every one of these doth make its contribution; but know, that righteousness alone doth more toward it than all them put together. This, this was it that made "the faithful city," "princess of the provinces;" and the land of Canaan in Israel's possession, so long as Israel walked with God, "a land of desire, an heritage of glory." (Isai. i. 21, 26; Lam. i. 1; Jer. iii. 19.) Plato, a great and excellent Heathen, could say, *Nemo rectè honorat animam suam, nisi qui vitiis fugatis justitiam colit*; "None truly honours his own soul but he that, bidding defiance to vice, loves and embraceth virtue." The same may as truly be said of a nation: righteousness, religion, is its glory and defence. But,

"Sin is a reproach to any people." Mark that! "any people." Let a people be never so low, abject, contemptible, sin will make them lower yet. And let a people be never so great, famous, and renowned, sin will be a blot in their escutcheon. It is a reproach to a heathen people, to Turks, Pagans, Indians; but much more so to a Christian people, to a people that profess themselves Protestants and Reformed, that call themselves "the people of God." O England! what cause then hast thou to blush! How great is thy shame, O London! who hast had so many of Christ's ambassadors sent unto thee with the counsels of his will, so many bright stars of the first magnitude shining in thine orb, such plenty and abundance of means and spiritual mercies afforded to thee, as no nation hath had more, if any so much! Thou hast been exalted indeed, and lifted up to heaven, like Capernaum, by these precious and inestimable enjoyments; and yet, I fear, it may be said, no place hath acted at a higher rate of contrariety and desperate opposition to the gospel; no place hath expressed a greater enmity to reformation and the power of godliness; no place hath so superabounded with profaneness; in no place hath profaneness been more impudent and daring than in thee. Thy lewdness is in thy skirts. O how great is thy reproach! Now it is unquestionably the duty of all among us to endeavour the honour of the nation, and to "roll away" this its reproach. And if there be any magistrates, higher or lower, that will not heartily set both their hands to that work, let them know, and think of it again and again, that that very thing will be to their reproach; yea, fall out as much to their reproach, as it was to the honour of "the angel of the church of Ephesus," to have such a testimony given of him by "the faithful and true Witness," who holdeth "the seven stars in his right hand,"—that "he could not bear them that were evil," (Rev. ii. 2,) that is, not with any patience; but reproveth them, and did what belonged to

his office ; either reducing them from their extravagancies, and bringing them to repentance and amendment of life ; or otherwise, if incurable, cutting them off from the body, and casting them out of communion.

Fourthly. *Let men neglect or be remiss about the suppression of profaneness, and they will soon see the increase of it.*—For ill weeds will grow apace, shoot and spread incredibly. Men do not need to bestow time, and pains, and care to house them in winter, and water them in summer ; for by a bare connivance and permission they will flourish and abound. It is indeed a piece of great difficulty, and requires skill and labour, to make that take and thrive which is good and excellent ; such is the nature of the soil since the fall. The sin of man brought upon the very ground the curse of God, so that thorns and thistles it will send up by wholesale ; but if a man will eat bread, he must do it in the sweat of his brows. So here, the heart of man is so miserably corrupt and depraved, that there is scarce any thing good that will prosper in it. That “goodness” which sometimes seems to be in some, as to instance in Ephraim, is “like the morning cloud, and early dew that passeth away ;” (Hosea vi. 4 ;) that which is lasting and abiding in persons regenerate, is for its continuance beholden to the mighty power and special influences of the Divine Spirit.

We see it often and often,—the experience of too many years, of some generations, doth sadly prove how difficult a thing it is to bring about a reformation, which, one would think, should commend itself to the consciences of men that understand any thing of the mind and will of God ; nay, to do any thing toward it, or to reconcile most persons to the naming thereof, to persuade them to break off from unwarrantable customs, to put off old rags which are rotten and defiling, and to throw away those things which have neither marrow in them nor flesh upon them, but are mere bones of contention, and to prevail with them to make a further remove from Rome, and advance toward Sion, I mean, a gospel-worship and gospel-order. How difficult a thing is it to bring the debauched person to a sober life, or the sapsless, empty formalist to the power of godliness, and a real, hearty, thorough closure with the Lord Jesus Christ and his laws !

But as for sin and wickedness, it needs not any endeavours to promote it in the world, and commend it to the practice of men ; it needs no encouragement, not because it is so good, but because men are so bad. The devil himself may sit still and let his servants alone ; they will be sure to follow his work hard without having his eye upon them. He might forbear and give over his temptations ; for they can and will go, yea, run alone, in those down-hill ways of folly : their connate principles of enmity to God, and rebellion against him, will of themselves break out into hostile actions, as naturally as hay, stacked or laid up when green or moist, will fire of itself, and proceed to rage more and more. Sin is like to a fire in a town or city, which, if it be not extinguished, or at least kept down and stopped in its furious career, will march from house to house, and step from one side of the

street to the other, and never desist so long as there is any combustible matter for it to fasten upon, and so till it set all on a flame, and bury the whole in its own ruin and ashes. Let but a profane wretch alone, and I dare confidently say, you shall not find him long alone. He will, like a decoy, soon gather company to him, and multiply them too : "One sinner destroyeth much good." (Eccles. ix. 18.) And so, being "of his father the devil," (John viii. 44,) and doing the works of his father, let him enjoy his name : call him Abaddon, Apollyon, "a destroyer." (Rev. ix. 11.) He will call himself, a hundred to one else, "a good subject," "a good churchman ;" but he is "a destroyer ;" that is his right name.

If you would know how he doth destroy much good, I answer, In these two things :—

1. He doth it *impia vitæ meritis*, "by the demerits and high provocations of his impious, ungodly life." He "draweth iniquity with the cords of vanity, and so judgment as with cart-ropes." (Isai. v. 18.) He is as a Jonah in the ship, who raiseth the storms that threaten us ; and as an Achan in the camp, that arms and succeeds the enemies that come out against us. To whom do we owe the plague that hath consumed our inhabitants, and the fires that have devoured our houses, towns, and cities, but to him and his fraternity? Ahab spake very unhandsomely to one of the Lord's prophets when he said, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" But Elijah answered him truly and bravely : "I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim." (1 Kings xviii. 17, 18.) It is the idolaters, superstitious, and profane, that troubled Israel, and that trouble England, and will trouble the whole world ; for they provoke God to trouble us, and to distribute sorrows in his anger.

2. They destroy much good *impiis consiliis et exemplis*, "by their wicked counsels and examples," while they allure, entice, and persuade, and by their practices draw, others into the same courses, the same excess of riot. These are like Samson's foxes with fire-brands fastened to their tails, that spoil the harvest we hoped for as the joyful reward of our labours. How comes our youth to be tainted as they are? Who fills the eyes of parents with tears, and their hearts with sorrow who travailed in birth for them that Christ might be formed in them, but now mourn and weep bitterly over them as lost, because vicious and extravagant? Whence is it that our hopes as to the succeeding generation are so exceedingly enfeebled, but by means of many among us so notorious for profaneness, who make it both their work and sport to render others as bad as themselves? And if timely care be not taken to prevent it, we can rationally expect nothing else but the leaving [of] this pleasant land, the land of our nativity, to be possessed by sons of Belial, who will make it mourn and groan, and sick to the spewing of them out. I desire you to lay this to your hearts, if you have any bowels of mercy and compassion. A little spark is to be narrowly watched, where there is so much tinder ready to catch.

Fifthly. Let this be seriously considered : *If magistrates, superior and inferior, do not put forth their power and endeavours for the suppressing of profaneness, they will pull down upon their own heads the guilt of all that profaneness which is committed.*—And this I dare say,—There is no man that liveth in the world, no, not the best and most holy, but he hath sins enough of his own, too, too many, more than he is able to bear or to answer for. His own follies and miscarriages, if bound upon him, will be found sufficient to break his back, and sink him into the bottomless pit of misery. So David tells us : (and he spake no more than what his own sense and feeling did suggest and dictate to him :) “ Mine iniquities are gone over my head : as a heavy burden ; they ” (that is, his own iniquities, his own head-, heart-, and life-sins) “ are too heavy for me.” (Psalm xxxviii. 4.) And as it was with him, so it is with every one ; and therefore no man hath need to add to the load, by heaping upon himself the guilt of other men’s sins too. Though it must be confessed, that notwithstanding all which the wisest and most circumspect person can do, notwithstanding all the care he can take, he will hardly be found altogether innocent as to this. Holy Austin, one of the best of the fathers, saw sufficient, yea, abundant reason for the putting-up this humble petition, “ Lord, deliver me from my other-men’s sins ; ” and it may be feared that no small number of great men who have been, yea, and are, in place of power and authority, will, when the all-seeing God comes to search them, be found deeply culpable and dreadfully chargeable upon this account ; and therefore others that do at this day possess the same or like places, are very nearly concerned to look to themselves. *Felix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum* : “ Happy the man whom other men’s sins and dangers, falls and hurts, make to beware.”

That hath gone for current as a certain truth : *Qui non prohibet, cum potest, jubet* : “ He that doth not forbid and prevent the commission of sin when it is in the power of his hand to do it, doth interpretatively command the doing of it.” He allows it *who* winks at it ; he doth encourage it *who* stops it not : he doth so in the account of God, who is a righteous Judge. He had as good command it, as stand by and see it done, and say nothing. And if men will in this or any other way contract guilt, they may expect to taste the bitter effects of it. If rulers will spare offenders, let not them think that God will spare them. Ahab, in a foolish kindness and pity, let Benhadad go, whom God had “ appointed to utter destruction.” Now observe what a thundering message the prophet brought him thereupon : “ Thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people.” (1 Kings xx. 42.) So that this kindness of Ahab to Benhadad was desperate cruelty to himself and Israel. And the case of Eli is very pertinent to this purpose, and most worthy of observation. He was not only priest, but judge, armed with both parental and magistratical power. His sons did not write after that copy which he had set them, but “ were sons of Belial,” wicked and profane to a prodigy ; for they sacrilegiously robbed God, and filthily abused “ the women that were assembled at



the door of the tabernacle ;” and by these means made the offering of the Lord to stink, turned it to an abomination. For this, Eli their father reprovèd them, but it was with very soft and silken words : “ Why do ye such things ? for I hear of your evil doings by all this people. Nay, my sons ; for it is no good report that I hear : ye make the Lord’s people to transgress. If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him : but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him ? ” (1 Sam. ii. 12—17, 22—25.) And here was all he did. But, O, how angry was God hereupon ! It made his fury come up into his face. Though Eli was a good man, a priest, one that God had caused to draw near to him ; though he had reprovèd his sons, and given them good advice ; yet this was not enough, it would not serve his turn ; God was greatly provokèd because he did proceed no further. And see how dreadfully he threatnèd him : “ I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father’s house, that there shall not be an old man in thine house. And thou shalt see an enemy in my habitation, in all the wealth which God shall give Israel : and there shall not be an old man in thine house for ever. And the man of thine that I shall not cut off from my altar, shall be to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart : and all the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their age. And this shall be a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas ; in one day tkey shall die both of them.” (1 Sam. ii. 31—34.) And the dream is doubled, the resolution of God is fixed ; this one threatening, that carrieth sorrow and anguish enough in the bowels of it, is followed with another : “ I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. I will perform against Eli all that I have sworn concerning his house : when I begin, I will also make an end.” (1 Sam. iii. 11, 12.) God would go through with the work, and not only be diligent in the beginning of it, but likewise constant in the performance, and complete in the finishing, of it : “ For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever,” such a punishment shall be inflicted, such a burden laid upon him, as shall never be taken off, “ for the iniquity which he knoweth ; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.” (Verse 13.) Set a mark upon these last words, in which indeed the accent and emphasis lies : there was the provocation, that was it that exposèd him to the divine displeasure, and brought him under so severe a judgment,—“ His sons made themselves vile ; ” they defiled, debased, and dishonoured themselves ; by their sins and abominable practices, they had rendered themselves odious and loathsome in the eyes of God, and in the eyes of the people. Eli was not ignorant of this, but was told of it ; it raisèd a great cry, many complaints thereof were brought to him : but “ he restrained them not.” He did not curb them. He was too mild, and tender, and gentle ; he carried the matter as one that was not zealous for his God, but afraid to offend them, and unwilling to grieve them. He did not affright and ferret them out of their profaneness ; they still continued what they were, and held on their former course ; and yet he did not draw the sword of justice, he

did not inflict upon them grievous punishments, though they persevered in the commission of grievous sins ; he forgot to act up to the authority of a father, a high-priest, a judge ; and therefore God will severely punish him. Eli's sons run deep in score ; and because he thus let them alone, God would make Eli himself to pay the reckoning. Consider of this, and tremble, you indulgent, fond parents, that hear and see your children's lying, swearing, looseness, and debaucheries, but let them alone ; and you timorous, slothful magistrates, that will not make profane persons smart, know and be assured that yourselves shall. You let them go, but vengeance will hold you.

But I proceed : for though rulers' own concerns should awaken and rouse them up, yet that is not all ; therefore,

Sixthly. *If rulers will not take due, that is, utmost, care to suppress profaneness in a nation where their power lieth, they take a direct course to pull down the wrath of God upon that whole nation, as well as upon themselves.*—Solomon hath these passages : “ If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself : but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it.” (Prov. ix. 12.) But we cannot say, If a magistrate will not discharge his duty, but suffer wickedness to pass without control, he alone shall bear it ; no, no ; the burden may light, and lie heavy, upon more shoulders than his own. His remissness and neglect may turn to the smart of the land and people over whom he is set ; the not shutting the flood-gates of sin, which let-in a deluge of wickedness below, is no other than the opening of the windows of heaven above, for the letting down [of] showers and storms of wrath that shall drown and swallow up all. For want of this, as you heard under the last particular, God did not only with great severity judge the house of Eli, but also threatened to “ do a thing in Israel,” (or “ unto Israel,” as some read it,) “ at which both the ears of every one that heard it should tingle.” (1 Sam. iii. 11.) If any inquire what that terrible thing was, I answer : It was no less than the delivering of the army of Israel into the hands of the accursed Philistines ; so that thirty thousand of them fell in battle before those their enemies, and, which was yet worse, “ the ark of God was taken,” before which they worshipped, and which was the special and delightful symbol of the divine presence with them. (1 Sam. iv. 10, 11.) When the sword of magistracy lieth still and dormant in the midst of crying abominations, then God thinks it fit and high time to awake himself to the judgment which he commanded and man neglected, and to draw his own : and how doth he then lay about him ! what blows doth he give ! what stupendous work doth he make ! When one Jonah—that had been disobedient to his God, and, being sent by him upon a message to Nineveh, took him to his heels and ran another way ; when he, I say—was in the ship, and lay in peace, and at ease, the whole was in danger : nor did the storm cease, though the heathen mariners called every one to his god, till the guilty criminal received his deserved punishment, in being cast into the sea. That is a notable saying of Solomon : “ The king by judgment establisheth the land ; ” when it shakes and totters, he shores it up, he settles and confirms it

again, and makes all sure: "but he that receiveth gifts overthroweth it." (Prov. xxix. 4.) These do blind the eyes of men in place, and bind or tie their hands, so that they shall not do the things they should. And he that receives them, that will take bribes to stop the course of justice, doth overthrow the land, he turns it upside down, he destroyeth the very foundations of it; and when he hath once done that, where is the wise man that can tell me what he will do himself? I can expect no other, but his own being buried in its ruins; yea, probably he shall go first, and not live long enough to be a mourner at its funeral. Whereas, on the other side,

Seventhly. *Magistrates, by a vigorous suppression of profaneness, may most happily both prevent the coming of those judgments which are impending over a nation, and remove those which are incumbent and heavy upon it.*—They may stay the hand of revenging justice, when it is lifted up, as Abraham's was, and ready to give the fatal stroke; and also they may take off the hand of God, when it lies heavy upon a people, and presseth them sore; or, to use David's expression, they may "remove the stroke away from it," and hold his hand when it is about repeating of the blow. (Psalm xxxix. 10.) I shall speak to both these under this head.

They may *prevent a judgment, and dispel that cloud which threatens a storm.*—Hence it was that when the people had most grievously offended and provoked God, by making a golden calf, and then worshipping it after the manner of Egypt, Moses said unto the sons of Levi, who had gathered themselves together unto him as persons resolved to be on the Lord's side: "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses, and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men." (Exod. xxxii. 27, 28.) Observe his temper: he was the meekest man in the earth, of a most sweet and loving disposition, knowing how to bear and forbear; but now he was all on a flame, the lamb was turned into a lion. He was nearly and greatly concerned for the name and honour of his God, and he accordingly set upon the doing of justice, and therefore made many a sacrifice; and when that was done, "he said unto the people upon the morrow, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin:" (verse 30:) "Now that I have done the duty of my place, now that I have vindicated the honour of God, now that there hath been this due execution of justice, *now* I will go up unto the Lord; and I will go up in hope, now I have a *peradventure* to encourage me to think, that I shall make an atonement for you." And let us not pass over in silence that which you have in verse 29 of the same chapter: "Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves to-day to the Lord, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day." The shedding of blood, of the blood of man, the blood of an Israelite, by the hand of justice, in a cause

deserving death, did not defile them, but consecrate them. Acts of justice are as acceptable to God as sacrifice, the blood of sinners as the fat of rams, and abundantly more; and saith Moses, "Upon your doing this, the Lord 'may bestow a blessing upon you.'" Levi before, by using a sword of injustice and cruelty against the Shechemites, lost the blessing. When their father Jacob called all his sons together, speaking of Simeon and Levi, he speaks of their "instruments of cruelty," calls to mind their sin, cursed their anger and wrath, divided them in Jacob, scattered them in Israel; (Gen. xlix. 5;) but not a word of blessing: that they had lost. "Now," saith Moses, "do you quit yourselves in this great piece of justice, and you may get a blessing." And so they did; for God chose the tribe of Levi for himself above all the tribes of Israel, and appointed and employed them about his sanctuary and service: "Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him. And they shall keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation before the tabernacle of the congregation, to do the service of the tabernacle. And they shall keep all the instruments of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge of the children of Israel, to do the service of the tabernacle. And thou shalt give the Levites unto Aaron and to his sons: they are wholly given unto him out of the children of Israel. And thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall wait on their priest's office: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death." (Num. iii. 6—10.) And, "Thou shalt take the Levites for me, (I am the Lord,) instead of all the first-born among the children of Israel." (Verse 41.)

And as this is the way to prevent judgments when upon their way, so to *remove them when they are already come*.—For the proof hereof you have a famous instance, in Numbers xxv. The case was this: the people did double their transgression, in committing idolatry and whoredom at once. It is indeed no cause of wonder to see spiritual and corporal uncleanness going together in company. This kindled the wrath of God against them, which rose to that height that it brake out into a plague. The plague did not stop the sin: wicked men will harden themselves against God, and run upon the mouth of the cannon, "on the bosses of his buckler." (Job xv. 26.) Notwithstanding the judgment, Zimri, one of the children of Israel, a prince too, that should have set a better example, impudently and daringly "brought a Midianitish woman, in the sight of Moses, and of all the congregation of Israel, while they were weeping before the door of the tabernacle:" while the congregation was drowned in tears, these two wretches burned in lust. Phinehas was an eye-witness of it, and his heart was hot within him: upon the sight thereof, he took a javelin in his hand, entered their tent, and ran both of them through. With this remarkable act of justice and holy revenge God was exceedingly pleased, as appeared by the happy consequences, which were two: healing mercy upon Israel, with a blessing upon himself and his posterity. You may read what God himself said upon this occasion: "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Phinehas, the

son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy. Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace: and he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel." (Verses 10—13.) Do you stem the tide of profaneness, and in so doing you will stop the bottles of Divine wrath. And then hereupon it followeth,

*Eighthly. The suppression of profaneness is an excellent way for the making rulers an eminent and choice blessing unto the people over whom the providence of God hath set them.*—By this means they will indeed prove, as our holy apostle speaks in the verse immediately following our text, Θεοῦ διακονοὶ εἰς τὸ ἀγαθόν "ministers of God to them for good." For it is a great deal of good that is ministered and conveyed by them; "golden oil" that is communicated by and through these "golden pipes;" (Zech. iv. 12;) the whole land is the better for them; every mother's child hath reason to rise up and call them blessed. Briefly thus:

By this means they *confirm and establish it.*—They are strong supporters, while others are wicked and cursed underminers, Psalm lxxv. 2, 3: "When I shall receive the congregation," that is, the government of it, when I shall be once seated upon the throne, "I will judge uprightly," or righteousness; a vein of righteousness shall run through every one of my actions, they shall be done according to the rule of equity. "The earth and all the inhabitants of it are dissolved:" the reins are now let loose; there is a visible, apparent disorder both in church and state; all things are for the present in confusion, and therefore running apace to ruin and dissolution. "I bear up the pillars thereof." Some do look upon religion and righteousness as the Jachin and Boaz, (2 Chron. iii. 17,) those great and mighty pillars which uphold a nation; and magistrates are the persons appointed to bear up those pillars. If those be the pillars, these are the basis upon which they stand; and these bear up them by judging uprightly. In this way it is they bear up the fabric, and keep it from crumbling into pieces, and falling to nothing.

And, further: as by this means they bring unto a nation the blessing of stability, so they also yield that other lovely and very desirable blessing of peace.—So that all good men "shall sit under their own vines and fig-trees," without others "making them afraid;" (Micah iv. 4;) they shall have a quiet and comfortable enjoyment of themselves, and the good things which God hath graciously vouchsafed to them. Unto this, I say, magistrates, both supreme and subordinate, the higher and inferior officers in a kingdom, do very much contribute, by the diligent and faithful discharge of the work and duty of their several places. This is evident from that, Psalm lxxii. 3: "The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness." That word "peace" is very comprehensive, carrying in it not only a freedom from war, commotions, quarrels, and dis-

turbances, but prosperity, too, and happiness, plenty and abundance of all good things, so that there shall "be no complaining in our streets." (Psalm cxliv. 14.) This is to be brought to a people; and, sure, when it is, they will bid it welcome. But who shall bring it? "The mountains and little hills;" that is, the metaphorical ones, the magistrates, the king and all that are in authority under him. But it will come only in a way of righteousness: God's peace always keeps God's way. This you learn from that of the prophet: "Righteousness and peace kiss each other:" (Psalm lxxxv. 10:) they meet, and embrace, and so go hand in hand. Righteousness in the throne, in the senate, and courts of judicature, is accompanied with peace in the city, yea, and all the country over.

Lastly. *A conscientious care for the suppression of profaneness in a land, is the way to engage the great and holy God on the behalf and for the good of those rulers in whom that care is found.*—And this argument will, I am sure, signify much with all those with whom God signifieth any thing. As the place of rulers is high, so the work of their place is hard: it carrieth a great deal of difficulty and of danger along with it. As wicked men are very filthy, so the Psalmist tells us, they "are always grievous." (Psalm x. 5.) They are like the raging sea which is continually casting up mire and dirt, specially when there is a storm upon it. Let there be endeavours used to put a stop to them in their sinful course, by a vigorous execution of righteous laws, their hearts do presently swell against those that restrain and punish them, and they break out into a rage; whereupon they often study to avenge the quarrel of their sordid and impetuous lusts, upon those worthies who would promote the cleanness of their lives, and the welfare of their souls.

Upon this account, it is no more than necessary for the omnipotent God to *stand at their right hand, for the encouragement of their hearts, and the preservation of their persons.*—Now see Psalm vii. 10: "My defence is of God, who saveth the upright in heart." When men are upright in their hearts, and also in their way, they may be confident. Solomon saith, "The righteous is as bold as a lion." (Prov. xxviii. 1.) And well he may; for though he may be faced and environed by many dangers from men, yet his defence is of God: and *that* may well be reckoned enough to secure him from sinkings and discomposures of mind. What matters it, though poisoned arrows and fiery darts fly thick? So long as God is a man's shield, he will quench them all.

And as God will defend them, so *he will put a glory upon them, and maintain their glory.*—"Them that honour me I will honour." (1 Sam. ii. 30.) He is resolved upon it. Those persons that honour him by the holiness of their walking; those professors that honour him, by owning him and his truths and ways in times of furious opposition and persecution; and those rulers that honour him, by a faithful execution of justice, punishing those that dishonour him;—them God will honour; and he will make them great and honourable in the eyes of others. Their government shall be highly com-

mended, their persons shall be greatly esteemed, and their memory shall be blessed: whereas in the same place He tells us, they "that despise him shall be lightly esteemed," not only by himself, but by all.

Yea, and God will see to it, that *things shall go well with them*.—As he said, when speaking of Jehoiakim, that wicked son of famous Josiah: "Did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice, and then it was well with him?" (Jer. xxii. 15.) He began to reign betimes, when he was very young; but he began and went on well; he was a religious, gracious, and righteous prince. In his days religion was in its beauty, and the righteous did flourish; and "it was well with him," good for him; he tasted the sweetness of it, and reaped the advantage. He did eat and drink, not to gluttony and drunkenness, as is the fashion of too many; but he did reign in peace and plenty. God furnished his table, and filled his cup. The Lord blessed him; so that there was nothing wanting to the comfort of his life, or the supporting of his royal state. He was not negligent in his duty, nor God sparing of his mercy and kindness to him.

Thus I have given many reasons why magistrates should be careful to suppress profaneness.

IV. I proceed to the last thing propounded, namely, *to show what means ought to be used in order hereunto*.—In general, I would say this, Those that go about it, will certainly find that a little matter will not do. Wickedness is so natural to fallen man, and his heart is so set in him to do evil, and oftentimes sin is grown to such a prodigious height in a land, and so exceedingly overspreads the face of it, and those who take pleasure in committing it are arrived at that pitch of resolution and daring boldness, that it is no easy thing to give an effectual check. As the doing of it will be greatly acceptable to God, and issue in the everlasting honour of rulers, so to set upon it and go through with it doth necessarily require height of courage, fixedness of resolution, strength of zeal, utmost industry, and constant care. And when they set heart and hand to it, they will find both heart and hands full. But for the answering of this question, I shall humbly propound and offer to the serious consideration and due practice of all those that are in authority,—from our dread and dear sovereigns the king and queen who sit upon the throne, to the petty constables and headboroughs who walk up and down the streets,—these following particulars, which I desire may be minded and done by all according to their several places, and those various parts of power and government with which they are intrusted.

First. *It will be highly conducing hereunto, if they all would in their own persons and conversations make it their business to set good examples*.—For that old saying doth carry a great deal of truth in it:

—Componitur orbis  
Regis ad exemplum totus.\*

CLAUDIANI *Panegyris De Quarto Consul. Honorii*, 300.

"The manners of the people are much squared by, and conformed to,

\* For the whole passage, and a translation, see p. 446.—EDIT.

those of the prince." The experiences of most, if not all, ages and countries do afford abundant proofs of this ; though you need go no further than the sacred history of the kings of Israel and Judah. We see it to be thus in smaller societies : children will not question the doing of that which they have known done by their parents before them ; and usually servants will conclude that lawful which they have seen practised by their masters ; and so the generality of subjects will not stick at what they observe in the life and carriage of their sovereign, so that it be not too high for them, and out of their reach, as perhaps some have found in these cities to their cost and ruin. *Ex-empla cogunt* : " All examples have certainly in them a very attractive power," specially those that are bad. The worst have the strongest influence ; because they meet in others, that see or hear of them, with a wretched principle of corruption that likes and approves of them, a vile nature which delights *sequi deteriorem partem*, " to follow the worst part." But of all bad examples, those that are set by great persons are the most prevalent ; and therefore it becomes them to walk circumspectly, and be very curious.

The Lord Jesus was, without controversy, the greatest person that ever the world had ; for he " thought it not robbery to be equal with God," (Phil. ii. 6,) which thought was no error or mistake ; and St. John, in Rev. i. 5, calls him " the Prince of the kings of the earth." Now his whole life was no other than the setting of a most exact and excellent copy for the children of men to write after, more particularly all those that are called by his name, and profess themselves to be in the number of his disciples. And surely the great men of the earth, chiefly those that are and would be counted Christians, are obliged, as in other his imitable actions, so in this, to resemble him ; that they may be able without any stinging reflection to say to others in a lower sphere, " Do as you see me do, and live as you see I live. Why will you profane the name of God by your oaths and curses, or the day of God by your pastimes and sports, or abuse the mercies and good creatures of God to gluttony and drunkenness ? Do you see any such thing in me ?" It was a brave and noble resolution that holy David took up betimes, when he was ready to ascend the royal throne, or newly seated in it : " I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. I will walk within mine house with a perfect heart." (Psalm ci. 2.) Observe how extensive his care was, reaching both to his heart and way : to his heart, as one that had to do with God, who searched it ; and to his way, as one that had to do with men, who observed it. He would do this, that, if it were possible, he might allure and draw others to walk in the same way of wisdom and holiness as himself had chosen ; but, however, he would do this, that none of them might have his pattern to justify and embolden any of them in their ways of wickedness. Of all persons, parents in a family, ministers in the church, and magistrates in a kingdom, ought to be very careful and curious ; they should *ορθοδοξουν*, " take heed to their way, and foot it right ;" for those that do not, prove public pests and mischiefs, going up and down to the infecting of many.



Secondly. As such should make it their business to live profaneness down, so *it will be an excellent thing for them to frown it down.*—Let them not bestow their smiles upon those that practise it, for those smiles are misplaced. Princes will do well not to admit them into their courts, nor to make them the objects of their special favour. We find the Lord speaking thus: “When I would have healed Israel, the iniquity of Ephraim was discovered, and the sin of Samaria.” (Hosea vii. 1.) I find, some expositors do by “Ephraim” there understand the court; for certain, after the revolt of the ten tribes from the house of David in the days of Rehoboam, Samaria was the metropolis or capital city of the kingdom of Israel. This being so, we may by warrant of that text lay down this position:—If there be iniquity in Ephraim, no man hath any reason to wonder that he finds wickedness in Samaria. Sins in the court will diffuse themselves, and not be kept out of the city, no, nor the country neither. Therefore holy David did not only resolve to take special care of himself, (though it was his wisdom to begin there; that was beginning at the right end; but he did not shut up his care within so narrow bounds, he did not limit it to himself,) but would look about him, and have an eye upon his domestics, all those that should live with him: “‘A froward heart shall depart from me: I will not know a wicked person.’” (Psalm ci. 4.) As soon as I have discovered such an one, and found him to be of an evil temper and life, he shall away, he must depart from me, if he be a worker of iniquity. I will cast him and turn him out of doors; my palace shall be no place for such vermin. I will not know him. He shall be none of my acquaintance or retinue.” And indeed there is very good reason why *they* should be out of credit at court, *who* are a discredit to the God they own, and the religion they profess. Marks of special favour are at all times and in all places very unhappily bestowed upon such as do by their lewdness and debauchery deserve the blackest brands of infamy. And, whatever other abilities and accomplishments they may have, I think it is very hard and hazardous to trust them who do not fear God. None are before the throne of God in heaven but holy angels, and the saints “who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” (Rev. vii. 14.) “Evil shall not dwell with him, nor shall the workers of iniquity stand in his sight.” And then will things be well indeed, when none but such are suffered to stand before the thrones of earthly princes, his substitutes and vicegerents. The way of profaneness would not be so beaten a road as it hath been, but have far fewer travellers, when all shall see that it doth not lead to preferment. To be severe against the wicked, is a convincing argument of a prince’s wisdom: “A wise king scattereth the wicked, and bringeth the wheel over them.” (Prov. xx. 26.) And in this way he doth provide for his own security: “Take away the wicked from before the king, and his throne shall be established in righteousness.” (Prov. xxv. 5.) When cardinal Julian was commended to Sigismund, he answered, *Tamen Romanus est* [“Yet he is a Roman”]. Let such or such a man be commended for never so much, if it may be said, *Tamen profanus est*, [“But he is a

profane and wicked person,"] that should be enough for a bar in his way.

Thirdly. Another excellent way for the suppressing of profaneness is *an opposition made to it by severe laws*.—Yea, to every sin that falls within the cognizance of the civil magistrate, and runs upon the point of his sword. And by those laws let punishment be provided for it according to its nature and demerit. For all sins are not equal in themselves, and therefore there ought to be a diversity in the punishment. Let rulers thunder most terribly against those abominations that have the loudest cry in the ears of heaven; make the strongest fence against that sin which above all others threatens the land with an inundation; and be sure to spend the most angry and formidable frowns upon the boldest and most daring outrages. Let laws, kingdoms, and commonwealths be sure to look those sins out of countenance which are of all other most impudent, and look men in the face without a blush, and walk up and down in our streets at noon-day. This to do is one part of the work belonging to our king and parliament, with whom alone is lodged the legislative power, whose meetings are to be for the public good, with which they are intrusted, and for the promoting whereof they were chosen and sent. And as they will answer for it to the holy, righteous, and eternal God, who is "a consuming fire," they are strictly obliged, and that at their peril, to take care that those laws which they make be not grievous, but righteous, have not a malignant, but benign, influence, and that by them every man's property may be secured; that religion which is warranted by scripture, and so, "pure and undefiled before God and the Father," be not discouraged, punished, and first driven into corners, and then ferreted out of them, but countenanced and promoted; and that all that, whatsoever it be, that is contrary to godliness and sound doctrine, as well as that which disturbs the public peace, and creates uncivil disorders, may be kept down, and, as far as is possible, banished out of a land. We read, Psalm xciv. 20, of "a throne of iniquity that frameth mischief by a law." If there never had been such thrones in the world, there would not have been that mention made of them in the scripture. But such there have been. That of Jeroboam was one, who would not suffer the people, according to the divine command, to go up to Jerusalem to worship God, who had there placed his name; but spread, for them that went, nets upon Mizpah, and set snares upon Mount Tabor. (Hosea v. 1.) And such thrones there have been since, too many of them. Well saith the Psalmist, "Shall they have fellowship with thee?" No, no: God keeps his distance from them. Those that we call "stinking dunghills" are not [so] offensive to God as thrones of iniquity are, which shall neither be approved by him nor secured. Stay a while, Christians, and "in patience possess your souls;" for the world shall see that in due time he will overturn them all. That, yea, that throne shall have fellowship with God, which doth punish mischief by a law.

We have had for some considerable time a great deal of discourse about penal laws, and men have been much divided in their sentiments and apprehensions concerning them; for my part, I think that nation is

extremely deficient which is altogether without them: the hedge of it is taken away, the wall of it is broken, and it will easily be trodden down. But I heartily wish and pray, that all penal laws may be framed according to the mind of the Supreme Lawgiver; let the axe be whetted as sharp as it should be, so that its edge be once turned and always kept the right way. Spare neither odious idolatry, nor unso- ciable Popery, nor damnable heresy, nor destructive profaneness; but under your shadow let religion, truth, and the power of godliness live, and a scriptural reformation grow and be carried on toward its perfection.

Fourthly. *Let righteous and good laws that are made have their free course*, and the sword of justice be drawn, and not suffered to lie rusting in the scabbard; as it will certainly do when put into the hand of a careless Gallio, or of persons that allow themselves in the commission of those sins which the law condemns, or in the hand of those that have not something of courage and a greatness of spirit. Justice at all times is not to be expected from a wicked and debauched person, or a coward. A fearful magistrate or civil officer in a city, town, or country, is as bad and as great an absurdity as a timorous and white-livered soldier in the field: for as the one will fly before a bullet, so will the other fall before a frown; and so while his heart fails him, the hand of justice grows feeble. His fear will sometimes keep him from doing of that which is right, and at other times it will put him upon the doing of that which is wrong. This was the cause of Pilate's miscarriage, and made way for the unjust condemnation and crucifixion of the best and holiest, the greatest and most glorious, person in the world, our dear Lord Jesus. The Jews indeed were madly set for his death; but Pilate's wife sent him this message, "Have thou nothing to do with that just man." He himself said that he "found no fault in him," which he thrice repeated; and when he saw the Jews were resolved, "he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude," (if that would have done,) "saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just man." But when the people "cried out, If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend," he was afraid, and delivered him up to sufferings. (Matt. xxvii. 19, 24; John xviii. 38; xix. 4, 6, 12, 16.) But I am guilty of digressing. That which we were speaking of is the execution of righteous laws. For to what purpose are they made? Surely not only to be read, or talked of, and lie by, or be set up as mere scare-crows in trees to keep birds from cherries; but to be made use of as occasion requires. There must be not only speaking against sin, but striking at it, else it will not down. In Rom. xiii. 4, the apostle tells us that rulers "bear not the sword in vain." By "the sword," he means that of authority and power, good laws, together with all the means and instruments of punishment; and they are not to bear this sword in vain. It must be brandished, wielded, and sheathed in the bowels of sin. What are the best laws but a company of dead things, unless magistrates put life into them by a vigorous execution? And it is very sad at any time when there is cause given of saying, "There is a law against profaning of the Lord's day, a law against swearing, a law against drunk-

eness and whoredom : but where is the man that doth put these laws in execution ? There are many wretches that break the laws ; but where are those that will make them feel the penalty ?” This is the honour of a city and the comfort of a people, when it may be said, “ Here is a good law against such a vice, and such a vice ; and here is a good mayor, a good justice of peace, a good constable, that will execute it.” Good laws without good magistrates and officers, will never make a people happy.

But, further : As there must be an execution of righteous laws, so an impartiality in that execution.—“ Judgment” should “ run down as water, and righteousness as a mighty stream,” (Amos v. 24,) in a constant current, without interruption, bearing down all before it, all private and little considerations that would break it off. As to those, justice ought to be blind, not seeing nor taking notice of them. And laws ought not to be cobwebs, that catch the little flies, and let the great ones make their way through. The greater the person is that offends, the greater and more heinous upon that very account is the offence which he commits. His greatness is an aggravation, and renders his sin of a much deeper dye. The nearer the offender is to the magistrate, the greater is the magistrate’s honour in punishing him. It was the honour of Levi, and as such it is set and left upon record, that he “ said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him ; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children : for they have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant.” (Deut. xxxiii. 9.) This refers to that execution which had been by them done upon those who had worshipped the golden calf. And as this is a great honour to the magistrate, so will it strike a great terror upon by-standers. Whereas that officer who is known to pardon a malefactor, upon this, or that, or the other by-respect, will not himself know how to punish it in another. The very remembrance of that remissness and neglect would make his hand tremble, when he draws his warrant or makes his mittimus. “ Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times ;” (Psalm cvi. 3 ;) *non abreptus affectibus, periculis, spe lucri, &c.* : “ not biassed, nor diverted by affections, fear of danger, hope of gain,” or any thing of like nature. *Fiat justitia, ruat cælum* : “ Let who will be displeased, and what will follow, justice ought to be done.” For want of this, profaneness and all manner of abominations will greatly increase and abound, according to that in Eccles. viii. 11 : “ Because sentence against an evil work is not speedily executed, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.” They grow audacious and desperate ; they are resolved upon their way ; they go on with a full sail to the commission of sin. And if the mere deferring of judgment will produce so bad an effect, what will not the total neglect of it, or partiality in it, do ?

Fifthly. An excellent way, therefore, for the attainment of this excellent end, the suppression of profaneness, is the putting of the sword of justice into the hands of good and faithful men.—I do not go about to make parties in the nation : God forbid ! it is contrary to my principles ; there hath been too much of it in the nation, and in

the world ; and O that there may be no more ! O that God would, in the greatness of his goodness, heal all our breaches, and compose all our unbrotherly differences, and grant that we may all “serve him in the beauties of holiness,” “with one shoulder and one consent.” (Psalm cx. 3 ; Zeph. iii. 9.) O that I might see it done ! In the mean time I am verily persuaded, that among every one of the different parties in the land, who “hold the Head,” and are sound in the vitals of Christianity, the main fundamental points of our religion, there are to be found persons fearing God. And if I may have leave humbly to speak my thoughts, I count it a great pity that any of them should be laid aside “as vessels in which there is no pleasure,” as persons altogether useless and unfit to be trusted and employed, (merely because they dissent from others of their brethren in those things which are acknowledged to be indifferent, but cannot be by them complied with, lest they should sin against God, and wound their own consciences,) so long as they are sound in the faith, set for the glory of God, and for the honour of the king, and for the public good. Why, O why may not such men be owned and encouraged, and employed in those things of which they are capable ? Are they fit for nothing because there is something that they cannot do ? I know, and all men must yield it, that there have been, and will be, as well as are, diversities of judgments, and, by consequence, of practice. No man hath his judgment, faith, and reason at his command ; and it is as possible to make all men of a stature as of a mind. But I must and do humbly submit this to our superiors ; withal leaving particular persons to their several sentiments, and to walk accordingly to that light which they have received ; and begging of God the hastening of that day prophesied of in Zech. xiv. 9, wherein “the Lord shall be King over all the earth,” and wherein there “shall be one Lord, and his name one.” *Una fides, et una Deum colendi ratio* : “One faith and one worship.”

This I take for certain, that ungodliness is very unlikely to be suppressed in a nation, when the ungodly and wicked men of that nation are the men intrusted with and employed about the suppression thereof. It is not probable that a swearing and cursing magistrate will punish another for his oaths ; or a drunken magistrate will inflict the legal penalty upon another for the like brutishness ; or an unclean officer make another smart for his whoredom. While he is going about it, a hundred to one, there will be a bitter reflection ; the man will find a sting within himself : his own conscience, if it be not seared or in a profound sleep, cannot forbear flying in his face, and asking him in his ear this pinching question : “How canst thou punish *that* in this person *which* thou knowest to be thine own practice ?” “Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery ? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege ? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God ?” (Rom. ii. 22, 23.) Upon this account it was that holy David resolved, his “eye should be upon the faithful of the land.” He would express his special favour upon

those that were of known integrity; that would faithfully mind and perform the duty of their place, and be true to their God and to their trust. And, saith he, "He that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me;" (Psalm ci. 6;) namely, in governing the nation, and in seeing to it, that good orders be kept. And I look upon that as a good saying of one: *Melior est respublica et tutior, &c.*: "That commonwealth or kingdom is safer and in a much better condition in which there is a bad prince, than that which hath in it bad magistrates, officers, and ministers of state."

Sixthly. In order to the effectual suppression of profaneness, it cannot but be owned as absolutely necessary, to *watch diligently and deal severely with the nurseries of it.*—For as our Lord Jesus, who is the King of Sion and saints, hath his schools and nurseries for the instructing and training up of persons in sound knowledge and true holiness; (such are the assemblies and congregations of his people: "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths," Isai. ii. 3;) so Satan, "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience," (Eph. ii. 2,) hath his nurseries, which he fills with cursed temptations, and his instruments with venomous examples, in order to the alluring of men to flagitious courses, and rendering them expert, ready, and complete artists in sin. And do not all men see how our youths are tainted and corrupted there, and how many of those that once were hopeful, and thought to be plants of righteousness, have been there blasted, and turned into the degenerate plants of a strange vine, bringing forth the grapes of Sodom and the clusters of Gomorrah? All that read these lines may easily understand my meaning, what houses they are at which I now point. And I would ask, Are stews and brothel-houses fit to be suffered among us? I have not at all wondered, when I have read and heard how many of them are allowed in Rome, that mother of harlots, who holds in her hand a cup of fornication; we must expect the great whore will not fall out with the little ones, specially when they are profitable to her. *Bonus odor lucri ex re quolibet*: "In her nostrils the money smells well, come it from whence it will." But it is an arrant shame, that any of them should be found in a land of light, in a nation of Protestants, in a city of righteousness, in a place where that religion is professed and established that condemns all such filthy practices. And as for ale-houses and victualling-houses, though some of them, possibly, are useful, yea, and necessary, yet is there need of such multitudes, in which so many sit many hours together, fuddling, and drinking away their money, their wits, their health, and their souls, while their poor wives sit at home mourning, and their children crying, and perhaps all of them wanting, and ready to starve? I am sure, none ought to have licences for the keeping [of] such houses, who will suffer them to be places of licentiousness, and not be careful to observe good hours and orders.

Seventhly. *Let all inferior officers be very careful and diligent in*

*their places.*—For their places are not dormitories, places to idle and sleep in, but to watch and work in. Churchwardens, constables, and others have a very considerable power, and without doubt they have it not for nothing. And as it is given them for good ends, so for those ends they ought to employ it. That power is in vain which is not reduced into act. The staff which you constables carry up and down with you is for something more than a bare and empty sign, and to tell people what you are; and though you do frequently leave your staff at home, yet, I pray, be sure to carry your eyes and ears along with you to the farthest bounds of your jurisdiction. What a great deal of good may be done, and what abundance of wickedness may be prevented, by one active person! And I think I am not mistaken, when I reckon upon a curious inquisition as one part of the work of your office. Surely it is not for you to sit still at home till you are alarmed and called forth by riots and uproars in the streets, or have men come with their complaints rapping at your doors; but you should take your walks, and make inquiry after evil-doers, find out their nests and haunts; see what companies meet in public-houses for entertainment, and what they do, how they behave themselves when they are together; and be sure to dissolve their wicked clubs, and debauched meetings, and carry the persons whom you find so transgressing before those superior magistrates whom you know most hearty and active in their places. For, verily, when there are good and excellent laws in a land for the regulating of things, and correcting that which is amiss, and yet sin grows because of a mal-administration, much, very much, of the guilt will be chargeable upon, and lie at the doors of, inferior officers, more than they will be able to answer for.

*Eighthly. Let those officers who are faithful in their places have their due and full encouragement.*—And not be snibbed, and brow-beaten, and taken up short, and treated with abusive language and frowns, as they have been in the late times, when practices of religion were hated and punished as the worst of crimes, and a company of wretched informers, that neither had a dram of honesty, nor were worth a groat, were hugged and entertained with welcome and applause, beside their part in the fines, which they gaped for as the wages of their unrighteousness. Honest, vigilant, and active officers, who are in the discharge of their duty, and proceed no farther than the law empowers them, ought to be commended; they that do well deserve to hear well, and not be counted or called “busy fellows,” so long as they are employed about their own business. Yea, and they ought to be assisted too. Where the constable’s staff will not do the work, let the justice of peace draw his sword. And when they have brought the matter as far as they can, let them that have higher power set their hands to it and carry it on further. It cannot but be a great discouragement to honest men, when they have found out and seized upon ranting, roaring debauchees, and brought them, notwithstanding their cursing and storming, their heats and huffs, before their superior, and then he shall receive them with one compliment, and, after the speaking [of] a few words of course, dismiss them with

another. Such men as these may be assaulted by a temptation to grow cold and remiss; but I do advise and desire them not to yield to that temptation; for still this may be their comfort,—that they have not been wanting unto their duty; and the other must and shall answer for his neglect, possibly to the higher powers below; or, if not to them, yet, for certain at last, to that God who is higher than the highest, and sits in the throne judging right, and from whom every one shall receive according as his work hath been.

Ninthly. *An orthodox and godly ministry is a very choice and excellent means for the suppression of profaneness.*—Surely this ill-favoured monster, though grown up to a gigantic stature and bigness, is most likely to fall when it is opposed and set upon by the magistrate who bears the sword of civil power, and by the minister too who bears and draws against it the sword of the Spirit, which hath been by God committed to him, and those other weapons with which he is furnished out of the divine armoury, and which, according to that of the apostle, he hath or ought to have “in a readiness for the revenging of all disobedience.” (2 Cor. x. 6.) And therefore I heartily wish that as a learned (and so much the better by how much the more learned) ministry may be kept up in the land, both in cities and countries, and, in order to that, sufficient liberal provision made for them; so such and only such may be employed in that high and sacred function, as in the judgment of rational charity may be looked upon as being indeed the ministers of Christ.

And the two *χριστηρια*, “marks or characters,” by which such may be known, are *the preaching of Christ and his doctrine; their living of Christ and according to his rules*: and their doing of both these will conduce and contribute very much to this great end.

1. *This will be singularly promoted by their preaching of Christ.*—Not ceremonies, but Christ; not imposed forms of prayer, but the power of godliness; not only morality, but true piety; not the cross in baptism, but “crucifying the flesh with the affections and lusts;” (Gal. v. 24;) not bowing to the name of Jesus, but to the authority, and government, and law of Jesus; not a white garment, but the linen of saints, righteousness and holiness. I do not at all deny but civility and morality are duties, very goodly pearls, necessary and becoming. O that there were more of them to be found among us! It is beyond all question that they who would be saints must not be beasts: I cannot think any fit matter for a visible church who are devils incarnate. Nor do I deny but that many useful sayings, good precepts and rules, may be fetched from heathen authors, Plato, Seneca, Tully, Plutarch, &c. But we need not borrow jewels of Egyptians, blessed be God! nor go down to the Philistines for the sharpening of our mattocks. It is the gospel of Christ which is the power of God to salvation. There is no need of quoting a philosopher when we have a Paul. What examples can we produce and propound so exact and curious as is that of Christ, “who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth?” He spake so as “never man spake,” and he walked so as never man walked. What arguments can we find



more convincing than those of the scripture, which are mighty for casting down the λογισμοις, "imaginings, conceits, reasonings," of a carnal, vain, and proud mind? What motives more persuasive and alluring than those of the gospel, which are indeed "the cords of a man?" What thunder-claps can be thought of more terrible, or what terrors more amazing and affrighting, than "the terrors of the Lord?" What promises more inviting and encouraging than those he hath given us, which "are exceeding great and precious?" Where,—if any one can, let him tell us,—where shall we see sin so clearly and fully in its deformity and ugliness, in order to a real and thorough aversation from it, or religion, godliness, and a conversation ordered aright, more in its loveliness and enamouring beauty, in order to our setting our hearts upon it, than we do or, at least, may see it in the gospel? When all is said and done that can be, it is "the grace of God," the doctrine, the gospel of grace, "which bringeth salvation, and hath appeared to all men," Jews and Gentiles, men of all sorts and ranks; it is that, yea, it is that which "teacheth us," and all that sit under it, "to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." (Titus ii. 10—12.) O, therefore, that this precious and everlasting gospel of God our Saviour may be the main object of ministers' study, and the principal theme upon which they insist in their several congregations! therein imitating the great apostle of the Gentiles, who told the Corinthians, he "determined to know nothing among them but Jesus Christ, and him crucified." (1 Cor. ii. 2.)

2. But this is not all. Ministers ought not only to preach Christ, *but likewise to live him.*—What good are those pretended ministers likely to do, in whatever place, country, or nation they are to be found, who are scandalous and profane? Grant that some of them preach well, I would fain know whether that be enough either to save themselves or those that hear them. What such men seem to build up by their doctrine, they pull down by their practice. Let any rational man judge, whether *they* are likely to convince and persuade others, *who* do lead self-contradicting lives. How can *they* prevail with others to be sober, *who* will sit and quaff, and be drunk themselves? With what face can *they* persuade others to possess their vessels in sanctification and honour, *who* are unclean and filthy themselves? In short: how are *they* likely to lead others in the way everlasting, *who* do themselves turn aside to crooked paths with the workers of iniquity? O that, therefore, care might be taken by all those who are invested with power, and have the oversight of such things as these, that those and none but those, may be set as spiritual guides and leaders over the several flocks and congregations in the land, as may without blushing say to their hearers, "Walk so as ye have us for an example, and be ye followers of us even as we are of Christ!" (Phil. iii. 17.)

Tenthly, and lastly. In order to the effectual suppression of profaneness, *I would and do heartily commend to all those that are in authority over us, diligent, yea, and utmost, care for the strict observation of the first day of the week.*—Which is, in Rev. i. 10, called

ἡμέρα Κυριακή, "the Lord's day;" and ought to be kept as the Christian sabbath to the end of time: a day sanctified and set apart for the solemn public and private worship of God both in churches, families, and retirements, and for a sweet, close, and intimate communion with him, while we are delivered and taken off from those secular affairs that, upon the other days of the week, do necessarily engage us, and cannot but divert us: a day not to be spent in any thing, no, not any, the most minute part of it, but the duties of religion and works of godliness; except those works of necessity and mercy which God, out of his goodness and pity to man, doth allow; for he "will have mercy rather than sacrifice," so that when acts of mercy are of absolute necessity, sacrifice shall give place to it. This is a day which God hath seen fit to usher in with a Memento in the fourth commandment: "Remember that thou keep holy the sabbath day." (Exod. xx. 8.) As if the Lord should have said: "I know your frailty, that you have slippery and treacherous memories, and possibly may, yea, certainly will, forget some, nay, many other things in which you are concerned; but let this be fastened as a nail in a sure place, be sure to think of this, to be mindful of this, I charge and command you to remember it: remember the sabbath-day before it comes, so as to rejoice in the thoughts of it, to long for it, and to prepare for it, that upon the day of praise you may have on your 'garments of praise,' souls in a right frame; and remember to sanctify and keep it holy when it is come."

We find the sabbath was given unto Israel for a sign between God and them. So you have it in Ezek. xx. 12: "I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them." By this they were distinguished from all other nations. These were a plain and evident proof that they were the Lord's people, and that Jehovah was their God. This did loudly proclaim God's choosing and calling them out from the rest of the world, and gracious setting them apart for himself, as his peculiar portion and inheritance. And indeed, where there is no care of sanctifying the sabbath by nations, families, or persons, it is a plain case, it amounts to a demonstration, that they are unsanctified nations, families, and persons. It is an evident sign of a people estranged and alienated from the life of God; of a wicked people, that savour not the things of God, but only those things that be of men; of a people that have not the fear of God before their eyes; that are not carried out in desires of honouring him and lifting up his name, or of enjoying communion with him in the world. To profane sabbaths is a very great and notorious piece of profaneness. Sins wilfully and out of choice committed upon a sabbath are sins in grain, scarlet and crimson sins. To mind worldly affairs, to sit brooding upon worldly thoughts, to follow the trades and callings of the world, to open shops, and buy and sell, upon a sabbath-day, are God-provoking sins, acts of profaneness. These are lawful upon other days, in which God hath given you leave, nay, more, he hath made it your duty, to labour and do all that you have to do of this nature; but they are very sinful upon the sabbath.

Let me propound Nehemiah to the consideration of magistrates and inferior officers, and his care and activity in this point, as an example richly worth their imitation. Take the account of him as it is drawn up by himself, in Neh. xiii. 15—22: He “saw some treading wine-presses upon the sabbath-day, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem upon the sabbath-day; the men of Tyre also dwelt there, who brought fish and all manner of wares, and sold on the sabbath to the children of Judah and in Jerusalem.” This was exceeding evil, and one would wonder it should be found among a people but a little before come back to their own country out of a sore and tedious captivity. Yet thus it was. But let us see what good Nehemiah, that excellent governor, did hereupon, and how he bestirred himself. He “testified against them in the day whereon they sold victuals,” and he “contended with the elders of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath-day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? And yet ye bring more evil upon Israel by profaning the sabbath.” And after this, he shut the gates, and set his servants to watch, and would not suffer the merchants and sellers of wares to lodge about the walls, but threatened to lay hold upon them, and did not desist nor give over till he had prevented their coming any more upon the sabbath-day. O that there were many such Nehemiahs in the world among Christian nations! Shall I gather up what this scripture affords, and show you what is to be learned from it? Briefly thus: 1. Trading upon the sabbath-day is a violation and profaning of it. 2. It is such a profaning of it as is highly displeasing unto God, and will bring down his wrath upon a people that are guilty. 3. It is the proper work of the civil magistrate, not unbecoming the supreme, to punish and prevent it. 4. In order therunto, he will find it necessary to be very vigilant and active. 5. It is not enough to begin well and do something, but there must be a going on till there be a thorough reformation. And let not any say, “Such care as this would be Judaizing, and the gospel brings along with it a greater liberty;” for though we have a blessed liberty, yet not a sinful one. We are delivered from the ceremonial law, which was a heavy and oppressing yoke, but not from the observation and obedience to the moral law as it is; and still it is, and to the end of the world it will be, a rule of life. And God’s abounding in his goodness to us, whose lines are cast in New-Testament times, is a very bad argument for an abating in our care of sanctifying his name and his day.

Time, my beloved, hath been when England, as well as our neighbour-nation of Scotland, was famous for the sanctifying of the sabbath; and truly for these many years it hath been, and to this day it is, as infamous for the breaking of it; and upon that account and by that means it hath lost much of its pristine glory. Do you not see, (I am sure, with grief of heart I do,) how vile and wretched persons set forth their wares to sale upon that holy day in our fields

and streets? Do you not see how the victualling and ale-houses are frequented and filled upon that day? Do you not see, or at least hear of, plays and pastimes upon that day? as if "the Book of Sports" were revived and allowed. How many among us do make that their gaming-day, and their fuddling-day, which God hath made his holy day! What, O what, is the matter? Where doth the fault lie? We have something of law against this, blessed be God! and what! have we no officers to put the law that is into execution? I earnestly beseech all those who are concerned, as they fear God, and as they have any affection, good-will, and kindness for the land of their nativity, that they would put on strength, and appear vigorously on this behalf. For if you will tolerate the profanation of the sabbath, you can rationally promise to yourselves no other but a tremendous overflowing of wickedness all the week after; it will be so through the corruption of man, and the most righteous judgment of God, with whom it is far from unusual to punish sin with sin. Do but read histories, and, if you have minded things, consult your own observations, and you will find that, according to a people's holy care, or vile neglect, of keeping holy the sabbath-day, religion doth flourish, or wickedness abounds, and grows rank and rampant, among them.

Having finished the doctrinal part, I proceed to the APPLICATION, and therein direct my speech to all sorts of persons among us. And O that it may be acceptable to them, and come upon their souls with power, that so there may be some stop put to these crying abominations, and the "wickedness of the wicked" among us may "come to an end," and they may come over, upon this call from God, to a temperate, sober, and religious life; or if not so, yet at least their wickedness may not make such prodigious advances, nor rise up to that height, as it hath done for so many years, to the dishonour and provoking of God, the grief of all good men, and almost the ruin of the nation, and the pleasing of none but a cursed company of the anti-christian brood, who made it their design and business to introduce Popery at the door of debauchery: which indeed was the most likely way; for when persons and a people have cast off the fear of God, and run cross to the principles of that religion which they profess, and, by leading flagitious lives, offered violence to their consciences, they are in a frame ready for the basest impressions, and to follow that devil who shall first tempt them. And, however it comes to pass through the all-ordering and over-ruling providence of a wise God, who, when he pleaseth, and as he pleaseth, chains the sea, and restrains the lusts of men, so that though they go thus far, they shall go no farther, I shall not at all wonder to see a practical atheist become a doctrinal Papist, that so his religion itself may spread its wing over his profaneness.

But I come to the

#### APPLICATION.

USE I. Let me not by any be counted too bold, and going out of my place, while I turn me to the great men of the nation, and speak

to them as persons not too high for the counsels, commands, and exhortations of the word of God; I mean, the king as supreme, nobles, gentlemen, and all under him to whom any part of the government in this nation is committed: and these, all these, from the highest to the lowest, I do, with all due humility, as knowing my distance from many of them, yet with utmost earnestness, I do beseech that they would awake unto righteousness, and see to it that they be found faithful in their place and to their trust; filling up every one the province which God hath set them in, and trading every one with their talents, whether more or fewer, five or two; nay, let not him that hath but one hide it "in a napkin," and bury it in sloth; (Matt. xxv. 15; Luke xix. 20;) but be abounding in this work of the Lord, that, through your care and industry, justice may run down among us like a flood, and judgment like a mighty water, for the washing away [of] that loathsome filth which is in our streets.

1. All that know you, may it please your most excellent majesty, know that you have a great deal of important and weighty work continually before you, which must necessarily fill your royal head with thoughts, and your heart with cares, that keeps your eyes waking while others sleep without interruption or disturbance. There is abundant reason for us all to pity your burdens, and to pray that you may be counselled by the God of wisdom, and supported by the God of power, and have "the arms of your hands made strong by the everlasting arms of the God of Jacob;" (Gen. xlix. 24;) but no reason for any Protestant among us to envy your honour and other pre-eminences, which are just, though too small, recompences for the hazards you have run, and the kindness you have shown, and the thoughts, cares, and pains you have taken, for the saving of a people, looked upon as being within a very few steps of ruin. None knows the weight of a crown but he that wears it. While it glisters, it sits heavy. Yet, great sir, among those other affairs which do incessantly engage you, let the promoting of morality and piety, the beating down of ungodliness and profaneness, put-in for and obtain a principal share; for they do deserve it.

2. And O that other magistrates would contribute what in them is to the promoting of the true religion, the power of godliness, and a scriptural reformation, together with a hearty and vigorous suppression of profaneness! remembering that it is the great and holy God who hath, by the hand of his providence, put into your hand the sword of justice, which ought not to rust there: you must not bear it in vain, but draw it when, and use it as, need requires. And if the making of good laws, and denouncing of judgments in the penalties contained in them, be not sufficient to curb vice, and to keep men within compass, lift up yourselves as those that know it is your part, as the "ministers of God, to execute wrath upon them that do evil." (Rom. xiii. 4.) If menaces will not do, there must be a proceeding to execution; and if shaking the rod over the head doth not reach the end, there must be a laying of it upon the back; only be sure that it is indeed upon the back of them that do evil. And unto such it doth concern you to be

“a terror ;” for that is the will of God, as my text tells you. It must and will be readily granted, that a pleasant and smiling aspect is very grateful, because lovely, and an affable, obliging carriage doth exceedingly become and adorn great ones ; but sometimes it is needful for them to clothe themselves with terror, that they might make the most stout-hearted sinners to tremble. Magistrates should not be like Jupiter’s blocks, for vermin to skip upon and play with. An undue and foolish lenity will render them contemptible, and the wicked more audacious, so as to lift up their horn on high, and “declare their sin as Sodom.” (Isai. iii. 9.) When justice and mercy are mingled with a judicious and skilful hand, they will constitute a government of a most excellent temper.

USE II. I shall also be free to speak a few words to my reverend fathers and brethren in the ministry, of what judgment and persuasion soever they are, about those things which have been and are matters of difference and controversy among us. You would, all of you, be received, honoured, and attended unto as the ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ. My request unto you is, that you would approve yourselves, and convince all, that you are such, by your preaching Christ up and sin down, all manner of sin, all sorts of filthiness, both of the flesh and of the spirit. Spare none, neither small nor great. Be sure, that what offends you doth offend God as well as you ; and then bend your bow and level your arrows at it. But as for the over-grown profaneness of the age, which you cannot but know doth so greatly abound in the midst of us, set yourselves with all your might, not only to lop off its luxuriant branches, but, if possible, to pull it up by the very roots. Do not, in the bowels of love I beseech you, do not rend and tear one another ; do not waste and spend your precious and swiftly-flying time, your heat and strength, about those things which your consciences tell you are adiabourous, or “indifferent,” and [which] some of you have by word of mouth and in your writings owned and acknowledged to be so ; and a zealous contending for them and stiff upholding of them will break the peace both of church and state, as it hath done ever since the beginning of the Reformation ; but will never afford you solid comfort and a well-grounded peace, when you come to lie upon a death-bed, and [when] the king of terrors, with his grim and ghastly countenance, shall look you in the face. But labour with might and main against that “root of bitterness,” profaneness ; which, if you know any thing as you ought to know, you cannot but know is of a damnable nature, and will, if not prevented, and heartily repented of, cast and sink particular persons into the bottomless pit of eternal perdition, and also bring ruin upon a whole nation ; so that though Noah, Samuel, and Job should stand before God and plead for them, yet his mind could not be toward them. (Ezek. xiv. 14, 20.)

Do not you admit to the table of your Lord filthy swine, that wallow in the mire of all profaneness : swearers, drunkards, and others of that black guard do not look like guests meet for such a solemnity, not like such as the holy Jesus will bid welcome. Do not

you seal to them an interest in all the blessings of that covenant which they wickedly violate ; nor in the saving benefits of that most precious blood, which was indeed shed for sinners, but is by them trampled under foot as if it were "an unholy thing," (Heb. x. 29,) and had purchased for them a lawless liberty or licence to be unholy. Do not you receive *them* to a distinguishing ordinance *who* run with the herd, and are not by their lives and actions distinguished from the worst and vilest. Remember that old saying, and very good one, *Sancta sanctis*, "Holy things for holy persons." And consider what our Lord said to the prophet : "If thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth." (Jer. xv. 19.) He will have his servants sever the good and the bad ; giving his promises and seals to the former, denying them to the latter. He will have his stewards to be faithful ; feasting his children with the dainties of his house, but not throwing them away to dogs. And those that do so he will own. Thus do ye ; and, by so doing, you will come forth to the help of the civil magistrate against those mighty abominations which domineer and reign among us. Considering the place you are in, and that solemn work you have engaged in, one would expect that all of you should be holy, not only by dedication, but by a real inward sanctification ; at least, of unblamable conversations, free from scandal, being without offence, though not before God, yet before men. A profane, wicked minister is a gross solecism, and deserves to be counted a monster, and to be driven from among men, as Nebuchadnezzar was when brutified. (Dan. iv. 25.)

But while you do shine with the bright beams of holiness, and walk according to the blessed rules of the everlasting gospel, which you ought to preach, you may boldly and comfortably, without any severe gripes within, and without any reproaches cast upon you from without, bend your utmost force against those extravagants who walk contrary to them. Therefore, my brethren, let us all study the gospel we preach, and live it as well as know it ; for knowledge will not be saving until it influence heart and life, and be reduced into practice ;—let us, I say, think with ourselves, and repeat the thought often and often, "what manner of persons we ought to be in all holy conversation and godliness ;" (2 Peter iii. 11 ; ) and then may we lift up our voices like trumpets, and decry all the wickedness we know to be acted. Herein will you do singularly good service both to the great God in heaven, and to our king and magistrates upon earth, and to the whole land. We read, that, in the fight with Amalek, while Israel was in the valley, Moses was in the Mount with the rod of God in his hand, which he lifted up ; and when his hands were weary, and ready to flag, Aaron and Hur were by, to sustain and uphold them. (Exod. xvii. 8—13.) Aaron was the priest of the Lord, and Hur was a prince of the tribe of Judah. Let this example teach all their duty, and excite and quicken them to the performance of it. When the hand of Moses, the supreme magistrate, I mean, is lifted up with the rod of God against the sins of the times, let both Aaron and Hur, magistrates and ministers, come in cheerfully and

strenuously to his assistance. For it is a thousand pities that the magistrate should work alone, when set about so great and good a work as this. Do you back him, and afford unto him all the assistance that you can.

USE III. I shall now in the last place direct my discourse unto those who are placed in a lower sphere, for the present, not put into any office, nor clothed with any thing of magistratical power and authority, but altogether in a private capacity. I would have you to consider what you have to do: for there is a duty incumbent upon every one. Though you are not to reach out your hands to works or acts of office either in the state or in the church, yet you are not to lay aside or neglect any part of that work which belongs to you as members of both. And as there is not the least and meanest person in a kingdom but may do a great deal of mischief, so there is not the meanest but, if he have a heart, may do some good. Solomon tells us of a little city that had but few men, and was besieged by a great king. And "there was found in it a poor wise man, who by his wisdom delivered the city." (Eccles. ix. 14, 15.) And, in 2 Sam. xx., when Sheba rose up in rebellion against David, and, being pursued, went to Abel, Joab with his host "cast up a bank against it, and battered the wall;" but a woman saved it from ruin. Every one may be instrumental for good.

Since it is, then, the duty of magistrates, from the highest to the lowest, to act what they can toward the suppression of profaneness, there are these two things unto which I would exhort you who are in private stations:—

First. *Set a high value and esteem upon every one of those magistrates whom you know or hear to be herein true to their trust, and careful to perform their duty.*—You may be sure of this, that they will find discouragement enough and opposition from the ranting crew. The wicked themselves, at whose lusts they strike, will hate them with an implacable hatred, and curse them, and drink to their confusion, and, with longing, desire to be rid of them, and do whatever they can in order thereunto. I do not wonder to hear of the plottings and combinations both of atheists and Papists in such a case. There is nothing that they hate more than reformation and religion; nothing they will be more impatient under than a restraint laid upon their lusts. Therefore those that are pious and sober, that fear God, and are friends to the nation, should be exceeding dear over them, and prize them at a high rate, and love them with their hearts, and honour them, and willingly pay tribute, and bless God for them. We are less than the least of mercies; and ought to own *them*, much more, greater mercies. A good servant in a family is a blessing to it. Laban confessed it to Jacob: "I have learned by experience that the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake." (Gen. xxx. 27.) How great a blessing then is a good king upon the throne, a good lord-mayor in the chair, good justices upon the bench! Certainly, these are blessings with all thankfulness to be owned; they are mercies, among temporal ones, of the first magnitude; they do



make a happy nation and a happy people, unless that people will be so vile and froward as to stand in the way of their own happiness. Those that are Protestants in their hearts, who, while they verbally profess that religion, are sincere in that profession, cannot but with delight look upon it as a choice and singular mercy, for our gracious God, in a day wherein there were great searchings and sinkings of heart, to set over us our king and queen, a Protestant king and queen, whose hearts, we persuade ourselves, are set for the maintenance of the true Reformed religion, and, we hope, for the pulling down whatsoever is contrary and bids defiance thereunto in its principles and precepts. Love them for this; let them be our dear, as well as our dread, sovereigns; and let us be sure to be subject to them, not only for wrath, but likewise for conscience' sake, yea, and out of choice. And let us pray for them, and plead for them, and strive both together and apart with God for them, and bring down upon them from heaven all the blessings we can. This was done by the Jewish church: "The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee. Send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion. Remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice. Grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel;" and "hear thee from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand." (Psalm xx. 1—4, 6.) Thus they did bless their king in his exploits, and thus let us bless our king in his. Yea, let the blessing of Joseph come upon him: Let "the Almighty bless him with the blessings of heaven above, and blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb." Let his "blessings prevail above the blessings of all his progenitors, unto the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills:" let them be upon his head, and the head of his dearest consort. (Gen. xlix. 25, 26.) For, I hope, time will make it further evident, that he is a singular instrument, raised up by God for the effecting of great and glorious things in the world, and for the church of Christ, which hath been in so many places for so many years "afflicted, tossed with tempests, and not comforted;" (Isai. liv. 11;) yea, that he is designed for an avenger to execute wrath upon him and them who have been the plague of the Christian world, and have made it their work and delight to destroy the earth, and their design to erect to themselves a monument of glory out of the ruins of kingdoms and the Protestant religion.

Secondly. Let me desire you to *facilitate the work of magistrates, and make it as easy to them as you can.*—You that are masters of families, having children and servants under you, and understand your work, and desire to go through with it, find, that you have enough to do in your narrow and little spheres; your small cock-boats call for much care and pains. We that are pastors of churches have a great deal more, even so much as makes our heads and hearts to ache; and we cry out, with holy Paul, *Τίς ικανός*; "Who is sufficient for these things?" (2 Cor. ii. 16.) People do little think [of] those many thoughts which gracious and faithful ministers have both day and

night; the multitude of those cares which they take; the burdens which often lie upon their spirits; and the many bitter sighs and groans which, upon various accounts, they do utter in their private recesses, when they are alone with God. But yet, what is this, all this, to that load which lieth upon the shoulders of our sovereign, who sits as pilot at the helm of so great a ship, and upon whom cometh daily, not only the care of three kingdoms, but, as doubtless I may safely add, of the whole Protestant interest, which hath been so desperately struck at; yea, and of all the churches who have felt the fury of oppressors, that have put yokes of iron upon their necks? And not only the king, whose place is highest, and province hardest, but others also who are employed by and under him, do find they have enough to do. The lord mayor, the justices of peace, the petty constables, beadles, watchmen, have enough to do. How many avocations have they from their own callings and particular affairs, which for their own and families' good must be attended to! and how many troubles and vexations have they in the management of their places! I would therefore prevail with you to pity them, and to help them, and to take off from their burden all that you can. This will be an argument of your being acted by a spirit truly Christian; and it doth very well become all good subjects.

When Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, came to the camp of Israel in the wilderness, and saw all that Moses did to the people, he spake thus to him: "Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee, thou art not able to perform it thyself alone." (Exod. xviii. 18.) So I say, Our king will wear away. He is but a man; his strength is not the strength of stones, nor is his flesh of brass: he is made of flesh and blood as well as others; and is subject to the same infirmities, decays, and strokes that others are: and truly his life deserves to be exceeding precious in our eyes. He is the breath of our nostrils; and our life and peace, our comfort and happiness, is very much bound up in him. And therefore we have, and I hope we shall more and more see that we have, a great deal of reason to contribute all that we can to the lengthening out of his days, and making his life comfortable. But the weight of government is too heavy for him; I mean, as good old Jethro did, he is not able to perform it himself alone. To deal with England's enraged enemies abroad, and with England's daring sins at home, is too much for him alone: nay, may I not go farther? It is too much for his privy council and parliament too; yea, and for all inferior magistrates and officers too. Take them all together, and it is too much for them alone.

I do therefore earnestly beseech you all to put your helping hand to the work, and yield them all the assistance that you can. We have, as my experience and constant observation tell me, a spirit of discontent and complaining very busy and active, though indeed oftentimes not without too much cause: and the Lord grant [that] those who are now our rulers may have such a spirit of wisdom and government plentifully poured-out from heaven upon them, that they may never

give good men any [cause],—that those who have an interest in God, and will certainly be heard at the throne of grace, may never be constrained—to go with their just complaints! But how many are there that do without cause fill their mouths with complaints, and call those faults which are not, and throw dirt in the faces of persons in place! But I will ask this one question: What do these complainers do in order to the amending of that which is amiss? Our streets would be clearer than they are, if every one would sweep before his own door; and reformation would happily become universal, if every one would be a self-reformer. And O that you would be so! O that others would be so! O that all would say, what Elihu doth, in Job, tell us is meet to be said, unto God: “What I know not, teach thou me, and if I have done iniquity, I will do so no more!” (Job xxxiv. 32.)

I shall yet divide this my exhortation into two branches:—

First. I shall speak unto those who are *governors of families, and have children and servants under their inspection*.—Apply to your duty there. Would you gladly see all things well abroad, as far as you can, every one of you take care that they be so at home. You that are parents must know and consider, that that God who gave you children, hath committed to you the care and charge of their souls. And you that have apprentices ought likewise to know and consider, that the souls as well as the bodies of your apprentices are committed to your care by their parents or friends, and are your charge likewise. And the same is true as to your other menial servants, so long as they shall continue under your roof as such: and accordingly you are under a strict obligation for looking after them. That is not a thing which you may do or leave undone, as you please; but you are bound to it. You ought to be their keepers, for you are responsible for them; and if, through your neglect and carelessness, any of them do eternally miscarry, they will die in their sins, but their blood will be required at your hands.

Whereas your holy care as to them will be very pleasing and acceptable unto God, as is clear from his former dealings in this very case. He took this so kindly at the hand of Abraham, that upon the account thereof he would reveal unto him his purpose: “The Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?” (Gen. xviii. 17.) Shall I not communicate my secrets to Abraham? shall I do such a work as I am now resolved upon, and not let Abraham know it?” But why did the Lord ask such a question? Why might he not hide that, or any thing else, from him or another, if he pleased, being *Agens liberrimum*, “a most free Agent,” and giving no account of his matters? But what was the reason of this his so great condescension? Or what was Abraham, that God’s cabinet-council should be, as to any one particular, unlocked and opened unto him? God himself gives two reasons of it; one in verse 18: “Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him.” I have promised him great mercies and blessings, such as I have not promised to any man besides in the whole world; and shall I after that conceal this from

him, which is a great deal less?" But the other reason to which I now refer you, followeth in verse 19: "For I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord.' I know him: I am sure he is my friend; he loves me dearly; his heart is set for my honour and interest; he will commend me and my way to all that are under his charge; and he will lay his command upon them to love, fear, and serve me, and keep my way." God will manifest himself unto, and set a special mark of favour upon, those that are studious of promoting and posteritizing religion and the worship of God in their families. These are men and women according to his heart.

Will you then study and heartily apply to your duty to this purpose? Will you teach your children and servants the good knowledge and fear of the Lord? Labour to instil betimes into them right principles, and be dropping as they are capable of receiving. Will you be provoking and spurring them on to their duty by your warm counsels and exhortations? Will you lay your strict commands upon them to do it, as they would have your love and avoid your displeasure? Allure them by your own example; that is a strong silken cord, which draws sweetly. The way to have them write well, is for you to set them good copies. O let them not see irreligion in you, and profaneness in you; for, a hundred to one but, if they do, that will do them more mischief than all your precepts and counsels will do them good. Are you in good earnest when you tell them you would have them good? Then take care that you be good yourselves. Be sure to set up and keep up in your families the worship of God. There were indeed saints in Nero's house; and an Ahijah in Jeroboam's, in whom there was some good thing toward the Lord God of hosts, who can make flowers grow in dunghills and wildernesses, as well as springs of water in deserts: but these are rarities: there is no great reason to expect them; such soils do not usually afford them. Therefore do you worship God, and pray with your families morning and evening; a duty, I fear, too much neglected by some who know better. Follow you the pattern of good Joshua, in that excellent resolution, that he and his house would serve the Lord; (Joshua xxiv. 15;) not he alone, nor they alone, but all in a conjunction. Company is comfortable and desirable in that which is good. Keep a watchful eye upon them, do not trust them with themselves; for the scripture tells you, that "childhood and youth are vanity," (Eccles. xi. 10,) and that "folly is bound up in the hearts" of young ones: (Prov. xxii. 15:) there is a whole pack of folly in them; and if you do not look to them, they will both add to the pack and open it. They bring into the world with them a great deal of corruption; and that is just like tinder and touchwood, that will quickly catch and be fired by those sparks of temptation which fly up and down thick in the world. Give unto them all the encouragement that is fit for them. Children should have ingenuous and liberal education; and servants not be used like slaves, not dispirited and discouraged, chid and beaten into mopes. Command mingled with kindness and love will be found to

do best and go furthest: but never let loose the reins of government; hold them strait; for where too much liberty is given, a great deal more will be taken; by which means, if there be not care taken to prevent it, that liberty will soon degenerate into licentiousness, for it borders upon it already. I beseech you, therefore, fathers and masters, mothers and mistresses, study you to be good in your places; and since you are to govern others, be sure rightly to govern yourselves. National-reformation will easily follow, when family-reformation leads the way.

Secondly. I shall direct my exhortation to *particular persons*.—Every one of you to whom I now speak, and every one of those to whom this discourse shall come, from the highest to the lowest, of what rank and quality soever they are, and in what place and station soever the hand of Divine Providence hath set them. It is not so much matter what you are for greatness, as what you are for goodness; not so much in what orb you are fixed, (if we may speak of such a thing as a fixation in a tumbling and rolling world,) as with what beams you shine. I beseech you all, one and other, to look to yourselves, and be very circumspect and careful of yourselves, what you are, what you do, and how you carry [yourselves] in the world. Every man is charged with himself; though not only with himself, yet with himself: “Every man is to give an account of himself to God.” (Rom. xiv. 12.) None of you are so high as to be unaccountable. It is your unquestionable duty to “keep your hearts with all diligence,” and to “ponder the path of your feet.” (Prov. iv. 23, 26.) You ought to be considerate men, and curious, and exact; and to weigh things propounded to you before you close with them, and actions before you do them.

Will you be persuaded to apply to this duty? Will you do it? Will you “walk circumspectly,” accurately, “not as fools but as wise,” (Eph. v. 15,) not as beasts but as men, not as heathen-men but as Christians, as those that have been under gospel divine teachings? Will you endeavour to lead such a conversation as becomes those who do really believe there is a God, another life and state after this, a resurrection from the dead, a judgment, a heaven, and a hell, unspeakable glory and happiness for them that obey the gospel, and conform themselves to the law and rule of the new creature, and everlasting shame, contempt, and torment for those that are workers of iniquity? Know, such a life hath admirable delights to sweeten it in the way, and inconceivable rewards to crown it in the end. I earnestly beseech you to propound such serious and weighty questions as these to yourselves, when you do either feel the stirrings and motions of sin, or are assaulted by temptations to it from without:—“Doth such an action become me? Whether will it contribute to or detract from my honour, interest, or comfort? Is a life of debauchery and profaneness worthy of a man that hath an immortal soul, and doth expect, when I die and leave this world, to launch into the ocean of eternity? Would I have ‘my Lord, when he cometh, find me so doing?’ Is not this that I am now enticed and inclined to, con-

trary to the law and end of my creation, to the gospel-law, and to the dictates of right reason? Will this be for my advantage, either now or hereafter? If this be the seed I sow, what will be the harvest that I shall reap? Will sin ever pay me for the cost I am at upon it, and for the pains that I take about it? The scripture tells us, the 'wages' it gives its servants are 'death:' (Rom. vi. 23 :) and what wise man will do hard work for no better wages? Suppose that it doth afford present pleasure that tickles a vain, carnal mind; will that pleasure last? Is there not a sting to follow that honey? will it not be bitterness in the latter end? Certainly it will issue in shame and sorrow. And who will choose to walk in that way, though it be a carpet one, that will go down to, and lodge the traveller at last in, the chambers of death, and the bed of flames?"

As for those of you who have been hitherto vain and loose and wicked, (and, God knows, there are too many of you,) do not stop your ears "to the voice of the charmers," (Psalm lviii. 5,) do not, O do not hate to be reformed. It is better for you to break off your sins by a timely and speedy repentance, than to go on; because none of you can tell but the very next step that you take you may tumble into hell, since every step in sin's way "takes hold" of it. (Prov. v. 5.) What Daniel therefore said to that proud and haughty monarch Nebuchadnezzar, I will say to you: "Let my counsel be acceptable to you, break off your sins by righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of your tranquillity;" or, as you have it in the margin of your Bibles, "an healing of your error." (Dan. iv. 27.) If every one would mend one, how soon should we see a lovely face and excellent beauty upon the whole! Nay, if the generality or major part of the inhabitants of England and London would be prevailed with to come over to a sober and religious life; if princes, nobles, and gentlemen will be exemplary therein; sin and debauchery would learn to abate something of its impudence, and grow more modest than it is. Instead of walking up and down with a brasen face at noon-day in our streets, as it hath done, it would seek corners, and hide itself under the covert of darkness, as in the apostles' times, when "they that were drunk were drunk in the night." (1 Thess. v. 7.)

Now, that I might promote in all persons, according to their several spheres and capacities, a conscientious care and endeavour to suppress profaneness, I shall close this discourse with these few following

#### DIRECTIONS.

First. *Pray for some of Christ's eye-salve, that, your eyes being thereby opened, you may see the ugliness and deformity of profaneness.*—Do not give credit to that report which sin makes of itself; no, nor to theirs neither who are its sworn slaves and vassals. For what true information can you expect to receive from them, who are under the power of strong delusions, who are self-deceived, and have their minds blinded by the god of this world, and run away with a lie in their right hand? But do you sit down and take the word of God for your

guide and counsellor, and from thence your measures ; and seriously consider, What beauty can there be in that which hath defaced the whole creation, that was at first a most exquisite and curious piece, and "every thing in it very good?" What excellency can there be, after the most diligent inquiry, found in that which is in itself contrary to the best and supreme good, and makes every thing else so that is so? What desirableness can there be in that from whence have come all those stings with which man is tormented, and all the poisons by which he is endangered?

O that you could look upon it with such an eye as the infinitely wise and holy God doth ; and then I am sure you would see it to be out of measure sinful, and so, hate it with a perfect hatred, and flee from it more than from the devil ; for it made him what he is ; and is worse than he, who, had it not been for sin, would still have continued a glorious angel ! O that you would take a view of it as it is represented to you in the glass of scripture-precepts which do expressly forbid it, and in the glass of scripture-threatenings which are most dreadfully thundered out against it, and in the glass of those many tremendous and amazing judgments which have been executed up and down in the world, by which God hath revealed his wrath from heaven against all the ungodliness, unrighteousness, and wickedness of men ; sparing neither people nor princes, but hanging up some of both sorts, as it were, in chains, that they might be for the admonition and warning of them that do survive ! Once more : look upon it in the glass of our Saviour's blood, which had never been shed, no, not a drop of it, had it not been for sin ; but that caused the shedding of it all, even his heart-, life-blood. And it was absolutely necessary, according to the divine determination, in order to man's salvation, that it should be so ; for "without the shedding of blood there would have been no remission." (Heb. ix. 22.) Had not the blood of Jesus, God-man, been shed, and made satisfaction, as a propitiatory sacrifice, to Divine Justice, infinitely provoked by the sin of man, the offence and displeasure caused by sin would have, to all everlasting, remained without any hope or, as far as we know, any possibility, of a reconciliation. The least sin is such an anomy or "transgression of the divine law," such an affront to the Divine Majesty, gives such a blow at the sovereignty and government of God, and carrieth in it so much of malignity and provocation, that there needs no more than it to sink the guilty person into the bottomless pit of endless misery. I leave it then to you to consider, what there is in that profaneness, and numberless number of God-daring abominations, which are to be found in the midst of us. In short : this is that which I propound and desire of you : Judge of sin by its utter contrariety to the great, holy, and ever-blessed God, and by the sufferings of Christ, who was his people's Surety, and died a sacrifice, the iniquities of them all being laid upon him ; (Isai. liii. 6 ; ) and by the fatal consequences of sin upon men and devils, yea, upon the whole world, upon the face whereof it hath thrown dirt and deformity, and in the bowels whereof it hath caused afflictive, painful agonies and convulsions.

Secondly. *Be sure that all of you get your hearts filled and awed with the true fear of God.*—In which you ought and are commanded to “be all the day.” (Prov. xxiii. 17.) Lie down at night in it; awake and rise in the morning in it; and so walk up and down in all places and companies, and about all your businesses and affairs. No persons in the world are so audaciously and impudently vile as those who have their hearts hardened from this fear. That passage is very observable which you find in Psalm xxxvi. 1: “The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes.” Sin hath a voice: it cries aloud in the ears of God, and it speaks loud to men, to the hearts of good men. It speaks that which grieves and saddens them; it speaks that which informs them. So here: “The transgression of the wicked, his visible and open transgression, the life he leads, which is flagitious, the course he takes, which is lewd, the villainies he commits: these speak within my heart,” saith David; “they speak to my mind and understanding.” But what do they say? “Enough: so much as amounts to a plain and full evidence, so much as is to me a sufficient and firm foundation, to build this conclusion upon, that ‘there is no fear of God before his eyes.’ Either he doth not believe that there is a God; or else he believes that he is not a terrible God, a consuming fire, and everlasting burnings; but ‘such an one as himself;’ (Psalm l. 21;) a God not to be trembled before, but to be trifled and played with; one that did not mind what is done here below, or that hath pleasure in wickedness, as he hath himself.”

What was the reason that Abraham, though a good man, eminently good and strong in faith, yet was not willing to have it publicly known that Sarah was his wife, when he sojourned in Gerar? You have the account thereof given in Gen. xx. 12: “‘I thought, Surely, the fear of God is not in this place.’ Here is not the worship of God, therefore here is not the fear of God.” But what did he gather from thence? “What, if there be not the fear of God? Then there is the fear of nothing, they will stick at nothing; they will have their will: they will slay me for my wife’s sake. This is indeed a sweet place, a lovely and pleasant country, it wants for no earthly accommodations; but, as I conjecture, and that not without reason, the best and principal thing is wanting: here is none of the fear of God; and where there is not that curb to restrain men, they will certainly run wild, and their impetuous lusts will hurry them into the vilest and most monstrous practices.” *Ubi non est timor Dei, ibi regnant omnia vitia.* “All vices reign and rage in those places where the fear of God hath not a commanding power.” Whereas, on the other side, no persons do hate and oppose sin so much as those who do fear God most; for this is that which doth teach men, and that effectually, to depart from evil. “Former governors” did so and so; but, said good Nehemiah, “so did not I, because of the fear of God.” (Neh. v. 15.) There was none like Job in all the earth; and it is said of him by the Lord himself, that “he feared God, and eschewed evil:” (Job i. 8;) he avoided and resisted it. This fear will set the heart of a man against sin, and constrain him to lift up his hand against it, or his voice at least, when



there is not any power in his hand. Wheresoever there is the fear of God as the greatest and best good, there will inseparably accompany it the fear of sin as the basest and worst of evils, and that person will be sure to make an universal opposition to it, wheresoever it is to be found, both in himself and in others, at home and abroad, in enemies and in friends too, yea, in them most: as a man that hath a natural antipathy to a viper, cannot endure it lying in his bosom, nor lurking in his chamber, no, nor creeping in the highway.

Thirdly. *Pray that your souls may be filled and fixed with a holy zeal for God.*—A zeal for his name and honour, for his law and interest. Cold, lukewarm, and basely indifferent persons will never be famous and renowned upon the account of any vigorous appearings for God or against sin. A sordid spirit of indifferency, greatly unworthy of every one that is honoured with the Christian name, doth evermore carry along with it a spirit of slothfulness and inactivity, let the matter be never so important, the concern never so great. In Acts xviii. you read that the blind and hardened Jews “with one accord made insurrection against Paul;” and “the Greeks took Sosthenes,” the apostle’s friend and companion, “and beat him before the judgment-seat.” But Gallio appeared neither against the one nor the other; he “cared for none of those things.” He thought, What were those things to him? I believe, this wretched spirit influenceth and acts many, a great many, among us. God is greatly dishonoured; his name is taken in vain; his precious sabbaths are openly and wickedly profaned; religion suffers in its honour and interest; the nation is endangered, and exposed to the dismal effects of divine indignation; young ones are corrupted, perverted, and drawn aside to their destruction; and wrath is pulling down apace: and who can tell how soon a holy, jealous, provoked God may unstop his vials, and “distribute sorrows in his anger?” (Job xxi. 17.) But what is all this to them, so long as they can follow their callings; and enjoy themselves; and gratify their proud, vain, wanton humours; and go fine, and fare well, and lay up money, and live in quiet, and mirth, and plenty? But let me be believed by you whilst I tell you, that if there were in you a zeal for the honour and interest of God, you would judge and conclude that this is something to you, and this concerns you; and accordingly it would go to your very hearts, and be as a sword in your bones, as it was in the holy prophet’s, which extorted from him that passionate exclamation: “Is it not enough for you to weary men, but you will weary my God also?” (Isai. vii. 13.) It was this holy zeal that put *Eleazar* [Phinehas] upon that heroic act of taking such speedy revenge as he did upon Zimri and Cosbi. God himself took notice of it, and imputed it to his zeal, and was highly pleased with it, and mentioned it twice: Num. xxv. 11: “He was zealous for my sake among them.” And again, verse 13: “He was zealous for his God:” his heart did burn within him, he was all in a flame, and could not with any patience endure to see his God so unworthily dealt with and dishonoured. While I am writing of this, I am informed of that excellent precept against the profaning of the Lord’s day, sent out by the Right

Honourable Sir Thomas Pilkington, our present Lord Mayor ; which being of a more than ordinary strain, I look not upon as a matter of custom, but an effect of his zeal ; and let it be for his honour to succeeding generations, and an embalming of his name ; and let God himself remember it for good to him both in time and to eternity ! One thing more :—

Lastly. *Frequently and seriously call to mind that account which you are at the last and great day to give of yourselves, and your power, and all your actions, to a better, greater, and higher than any of you, even to God himself.*—He will, for certain, he will call you all to a strict account ; therefore awe and quicken your souls with the thoughts of it. It is but a little, very little time that the youngest and strongest of you have to spend in the world ; death will certainly come and summon you hence. And when it comes, it will not stay for you till you have mended faults, and supplied defects ; possibly it will not allow you time enough to say : “ Lord, have mercy upon me ! ” And then your places will know you no more, and your power will know you no more, and your comforts and enjoyments will know you no more. You that now sit upon thrones, and in parliament-houses, and courts of judicature, must then stand before the divine tribunal, upon an equal level with the meanest of the people, and every one of you give an account of himself to God, and of his trust and power, and how he did carry himself, and manage and improve his power. And therefore, if you have any kindness for yourselves, make it appear by your care so to live now, so to act and rule, as that you may give up a good account with boldness and comfort, and hear the Judge say, “ Well done, good and faithful servants ; you have been faithful in your little, you have done your duty, and filled up your places : now enter into the joy of your Lord.” (Matt. xxv. 21, 23.) I shall conclude this sermon with that of the apostle, 2 Cor. v. 10, 11 : “ We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or evil. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men ” so to live in the world, so to order their conversations, so to trade with those talents of interest and estates, of parts and power, for the present, that then they may be found “ faultless and presented with exceeding joy.” (Jude 24.)