

THE  
MORNING EXERCISE METHODIZED.

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SERMON I.

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THE INTRODUCTION.

*Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.*—2 Timothy i. 13.

It was the character which our Lord gave of John the Baptist: "He was a burning and a shining light." (John v. 35.) Such should every minister of the gospel be; "shining" with "light," and "burning" with zeal. He should have a *head* full of truth; that he may disseminate and scatter beams of gospel-knowledge into the dark world: and a *heart* full of love to that truth which he holds forth to others; that what he publisheth with his lips, he may be ready to witness with his life, and to seal up the testimony of Jesus with his dearest blood.

Both these our apostle in this chapter (after a passionate salutation in the five first verses) commendeth to Timothy; namely,

1. To look to his *light*: by "stirring up the gift of God that was in him." (Verse 6.) Timothy must not suffer his gifts to lie sleeping under the ashes; but must "blow them up," as the word signifieth,\* "into a fire," by study, prayer, and exercise.

2. He calls upon Timothy to look to his *zeal*: that that may not be extinguished; but that his heat may be equal with his light. And this he doeth two ways: (1.) *Negatively*; (2.) *Affirmatively*.

(1.) *Negatively*: "Be not thou ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner." (Verse 8.) Ministers of the gospel must neither be a shame to the gospel, nor ashamed of the gospel; no, although attended with disgrace and persecution from the reprobate world. And what herein he commends to Timothy, he first practised in his own person. Though he was a prisoner for the gospel, yet he was "not ashamed of the gospel:" (Rom. i. 16:) "For the which cause I suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed." (2 Tim. i. 12.)

\* *Ἀναζωπυρεῖν*, *ignem sopitum suscitare*. "The Greek word used in the original signifies 'to stir up a dormant fire.'"—EDIT.

(2.) *Affirmatively* : the apostle exhorteth Timothy to prepare for persecution : "Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God." (Verse 8.) The ministers of the gospel should be so far from being scandalized at the sufferings of their leaders, that they should be always disciplining themselves for the same warfare. To preach the cross of Christ, and to be ready also to bear the cross, make a complete minister of the gospel.

This the apostle urgeth, upon a threefold account : 1. *A good cause* ; 2. *Good company* ; 3. *A good Captain*.

Timothy and other evangelists,—they have no reason to be afraid or ashamed of their sufferings : for,

1. They have *a good cause*.—"For the which cause I suffer." (Verse 12.) What cause is that? Why, "the gospel." (Verse 10.) And this he presents under a twofold commendation : (1.) *The glory of the gospel* ; (2.) *The manifestation of that glory*.

(1.) *The glory of the gospel*.—As having wrapped up in it "the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ ;" grace and glory, holiness and happiness. He "hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling." (Verse 9.) Believers have begun their everlasting salvation on this side heaven.

(2.) *The manifestation of that glory*.—It was *given* from eternity ; but it is *revealed* by the appearance of our Lord and Saviour in the flesh. It lay hid in God's purpose ; but it is "brought to light" in the gospel. (Verses 9, 10.) Such a glorious gift, and so gloriously unveiled, is worth, not only our sweat, but our blood ; not pains only, but persecution : yea, to suffer in such a cause, is not more our duty than it is our dignity.

2. They have *good company*.—St. Paul himself is in the *van* of them ; who, though an apostle by extraordinary mission and commission, (verse 11,) yet was not only a preacher of the gospel, but a sufferer for the gospel : "For the which cause I suffer these things." (Verse 12.) What things? Namely, imprisonment and affliction. (Verse 8.) [St. Paul was] a sufferer, and yet not ashamed of his sufferings : "Nevertheless I am not ashamed." *They* may be ashamed of their sufferings, *that* suffer for sin ; but sufferings for Christ and his gospel are matter of triumph and rejoicing.\* (1 Peter iv. 13, 16.) Here is encouragement for gospel-sufferers.

3. And, thirdly, they have *a good Captain*.—Jesus Christ, "the Captain of our salvation ;" who, that he might entender his own heart toward his suffering followers by his own experience, was "made perfect through sufferings ;" (Heb. ii. 10 ;) and accordingly he is very tender of, and faithful to, all that endure persecution for his sake. This was a ground of the apostle's confidence : "'I am not ashamed : for I know whom I have believed.' I know him by report, and I know him by experience ; I know his faithfulness, and I know his all-

\* *Causa facit martyrem, non poena*. ["It is not the punishment which a man undergoes, but the cause for which he suffers, that constitutes him a martyr."] 1 Peter iv. 15, 16 : "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, or as a busy-body in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed ; but let him glorify God on this behalf."

sufficiency. I have deposited my liberty, my life, my body, my soul, my all, in his custody; and I 'am persuaded, as he is able,' so he is willing, 'to keep' all safe, to his glorious appearance. I may be a loser *for* Christ; I shall be no loser *by* him. Whatever I lay down now, I shall take up again one day, with the advantage of immortality. He will 'keep the trust which I have committed unto him,' *την παρακαταθηκην μου*: it is but equity that I should keep 'the [good] trust which he hath committed unto me,' *την καλην παρακαταθηκην*, (verse 14,) even 'the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust;' (1 Tim. i. 11;) committed to me upon those very terms,—that I should not only publish it with my lips, but attest it with my blood."

Thus in his own person the apostle sets Timothy and his successors a copy and an encouragement; which he windeth up in the words of my text,—the sum of the preacher's duty: "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." As if he had said, "The premisses considered, let neither pleasures nor persecution, the love of life nor the fear of death, take thee off from a faithful and vigorous discharge of thy ministerial office; but, whatsoever it may cost thee, 'hold fast the form of sound doctrine,'" &c.

Briefly, for the OPENING of the words:—

*The form*—*Υποτυπωσιν* in the Greek: it signifies "a module, [model,] or platform; a frame of words or things, methodically disposed;" as printers set and compose their characters, "types," or letters, in a table.

*Words*—By "words" we are to understand "doctrine, evangelical truths, the principles of Christian religion."

*Sound*—And they are called "sound words," *υγιαινωντων λογων*, either from their *intrinsic nature*, when they are purely taught and delivered; evangelical truths without mixture; the principles of religion in their native purity and simplicity; truth, and nothing else but truth: or else "sound words," from their *effect and operation*; because they be of a healing virtue and influence; like the waters in Ezekiel's vision, that issued out from under the threshold of the sanctuary, which healed wherever they came. (Ezek. xlvii. 1, 9.)

*Which thou hast heard of me*—It may be understood of the whole platform of gospel-doctrine in general; or else, very probably, of a collection of some principal points of religion, which the apostle had methodically digested, and either preached in Timothy's hearing, or drawn up in writing, and committed to Timothy as a trust and treasure; not only for his own help and direction in preaching, but to transmit over to others, for the use and benefit of succeeding generations in the church of Christ: so called in the next verse, *την καλην παρακαταθηκην*, "that good thing which was committed unto thee;" (verse 14; 1 Tim. vi. 20;) and so expounded in chap. ii. 2: "The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

*Hold fast*—Greek, *Εχε*. The word hath a double signification;

namely, "to have," and "to hold:" and both of these the apostle commends to Timothy; namely,

1. *To have* such a form or collection of gospel-doctrines, as a type or exemplar to which he should conform in his ministry.

2. *To hold* it; that is, to "hold it fast:" not to swerve from it in the course of his ministry; but pertinaciously to adhere to it: not to suffer it to be corrupted by men of erroneous principles, nor to part with it upon any terms in the world; but to stand by it, and own it, against all opposition and persecution whatsoever.

This I conceive to be the sense of the words; which, thus opened, may afford us some such **DOCTRINAL OBSERVATIONS** as these:—

**DOCTRINE I.** Evangelical words are sound words. Or, All gospel-truth is of a healing nature.

**DOCT. II.** It is of great use and advantage both for ministers and private Christians to have the main, fundamental truths of the gospel collected and digested into certain modules or platforms. Or, Methodical systems of fundamental articles of religion are very profitable both for ministers and people.

**DOCT. III.** Such forms and modules are very carefully and faithfully to be kept.

**DOCT. IV.** Faith and love are, as it were, the two hands whereby we may "hold fast" gospel-truth.

Other doctrines beside these might be raised from the words; but these are the main, and lie visibly in the face of the text. And I intend to speak only to the second and third doctrine: the one, now, at our entrance upon this "Morning Exercise;" the other, at the close, if God permit. The first and last of these doctrines may be of use in the handling of these two; in which doth lie the main design, as of the apostle here, so of the work which falls to my share in this monthly service. I begin with the first of them; namely,

**DOCTRINE I.** *Methodical systems of the main and special points of the Christian religion are very useful and profitable both for ministers and people.*—In the managing of the doctrinal part of this observation, I shall only give you two **DEMONSTRATIONS**: I. *Scripture-pattern*; II. *The usefulness of such modules.*

#### **DEMONSTRATION I. SCRIPTURE-PATTERN.**

*The whole scripture is a large module of saving truth.*

The word of God is full of such maps and modules of divine truths necessary to salvation. The whole gospel, *in general*, is nothing but the great platform or standard of saving doctrine. It was the great end and errand of Christ's coming into the world, to reveal unto us the truth of God: so himself testifieth in John xviii. 37: "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." It took up one whole, entire office whereunto he was anointed of his Father,—his prophetic office: so he was named, many hundred years before his incarnation, by Moses: "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatso-

ever he shall say unto you." (Acts iii. 22.) The office of a prophet was not only to foretell things to come, but to reveal the mind of God; according to the import of the Hebrew word נָבִי, *nabi*, (as Aaron is called in Exod. vii. 1,) which signifieth "an interpreter."

Thus Jesus Christ came to be "an Interpreter" of his Father's mind unto the world: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him;" (John i. 18;) ἐξηγήσατο, "he hath expounded him." The whole gospel which Christ preached was nothing else, as it were, but a public testimony of the secret transactions between the Father and the Son concerning man's salvation; a transcript of that truth which was in the Divine Understanding from all eternity. (John viii. 38; xv. 15.) And accordingly it is observable that the sermons which Christ preached "in the days of his flesh," have more of doctrine in them than of persuasion, more of the teacher than of the pastor; as more suitable to his ministry; wherein he was to lay down a module of gospel-truth, and to leave it to the world, to be received and believed unto salvation. The credit of our religion is founded upon this important truth,—that Christ was sent from God to reveal unto us the mind and will of his Father, and to be believed in all he delivered unto us. All other apostles and ministers of the gospel are but deputy-witnesses, to make report of Christ's affidavit to the doctrine of salvation.

And it is yet further remarkable, that this doctrine which Jesus Christ left us in the gospel, is nothing else, as it were, but a comment or paraphrase of what was preached by Moses and the prophets in the Old Testament.\* As he "came not to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil them;" (Matt. v. 17;) so he came to expound and reconcile them with the doctrine which he himself taught. Thus, it is recorded by the evangelist that, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto his disciples in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." (Luke xxiv. 27.) So that the result of all this in general is this,—that the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testament are nothing else but a full and perfect platform or module of divine truth; given to the church at first by Christ himself, the great Prophet; and transmitted by the ministry of those who were successively the amanuenses or secretaries of the Holy Ghost; (2 Peter i. 21;) from which no man is to recede, upon pain of damnation.

But now, *more particularly*, we may observe that, beside this great universal map or synopsis of divine truth, there are to be found in scripture more compendious and summary abstracts and abridgments, containing certain of the main heads and points of saving doctrine, methodized into lesser bodies and tables, for the help of our faith and knowledge; and we find them accommodated, by the penmen of the Holy Ghost, to two special ends and purposes:—

\* *Novum Testamentum in Vetere velatum: Vetus in Novo revelatum.* "The New Testament was veiled in the Old: the Old is revealed, or unveiled, in the New."—  
EJMT.

*Two ends of such modules.*

1. *To instruct the church and people of God in the more necessary and fundamental points and principles of religion.*

2. *To antidote believers against the infection and contagion of unsound doctrine, which has crept into the church in the several ages and successions thereof.*

I. OF THE FIRST SORT: TO INFORM THE CHURCH IN THE PRINCIPLES OF RELIGION.

*The Ten Commandments, a brief abstract of the whole law.*

In the Old Testament (though in a larger volume) is the book of *Deuteronomy*; which, being interpreted, is, "the Repetition of the Law." And because that, being so large, might seem too great a burden to the memory, behold, God himself hath contracted it into a very brief, but full, *ὑποτυπωσις*, or "module," in the Ten Commandments; which are called עֲשֵׂת דְּבָרִים "ten words," (Deut. iv. 13,) because they are the briefest epitome of the law.

*Three modules delivered by Christ in his first sermon.*

And thus our Saviour, as he laid down the great and larger draught of gospel-doctrine, so also in his sermons he hath left some shorter forms, or types, of necessary points and principles of religion. *Exempli gratiā* ["for instance"]: in his first sermon after he entered upon his public ministry, he hath drawn up three very concise and most excellent modules.

*Of beatitudes, man's summum bonum ["chief good"].*

The *first* module contains *the beatitudes*; a list of particulars wherein man's true and chiefest happiness doth consist; (Matt. v. 3—11;) wherein He doth totally cross the judgment of the blind world; writing "blessedness," where the world writes "woe;" and "woe," where the world writes "blessedness." These we may call the *credenda*, "articles of faith to be believed" by all those that would be accounted Christ's disciples.

The *second* module contains *a list of duties*; things to be done by every one that would be saved. This our Saviour doth by asserting and expounding the moral law; (verses 17—48;) confuting and reforming the false glosses which the scribes and Pharisees had put upon the Ten Commandments, thereby "making the law of God of none effect." (Matt. xv. 6.) And these we may call the *facienda*, "things to be done."

The *third* module contains *a list of petitions*; which, in chap. vi. 9—15, he commends to his disciples, and in them to all succeeding generations of the church, as a form or directory of prayer; not that Christians should always confine themselves to the words, but conform to the matter, in their supplications at the throne of grace: Οὕτως οὖν προσευχέσθε ὑμεῖς. "After this manner therefore

pray ye." And these we may call the *petenda*, "things to be prayed for."

*The apostles' method in their epistles.*

The holy apostles tread in our Saviour's steps. You may observe in all their epistles, that in the former part of them they generally lay down a module of gospel-principles, and in the latter part a module of gospel-duties.

*The Epistle to the Romans, the Christian catechism.*

The Epistle to the Romans is upon this account justly called by some of the ancients, "the Christians' catechism;" as containing an *ὑποτύπωσις*, or "list of the chief articles," of the Christian religion: for although the principal design of the apostle be to discuss that prime evangelical doctrine of justification in the negative and affirmative part of it,—NEG. Not in works. AFFIRM. In a free, gratuitous imputation of the righteousness of Christ, applied by faith,—together with the grounds, evidences, and fruits thereof; yet occasionally, "according unto him," (2 Peter iii. 15,) he doth, with a most profound and admirable art, interweave other deep and fundamental points of religion; namely, a parallel between the two Adams; the doctrine of original sin; (Rom. v.) the corruption and depravation of nature; (chap. vii.) the doctrine of grace; (chap. viii.) the merit and efficacy of Christ's death and resurrection; (chap. vi.) the doctrine of affliction, and the use of it to believers; (chap. viii.) the mysteries of election and predestination; (chap. ix.) the execration and rejection of the Jews; (chap. x.) the vocation of the Gentiles, with the restitution of the seed of Abraham, &c. (chap. xi.) And when he hath finished the *ὑποτύπωσις* of doctrinal principles, he winds up the epistle with a short, but full, delineation of evangelical duties; wherein he doth bring down those principles unto practice. The former part of the epistle is the doctrine; the latter part is the use: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God," &c. (Chap. xii. 1.)

*The Epistle to the Hebrews.*

The whole Epistle to the Hebrews is nothing else, as it were, but a delineation of the three offices of Jesus Christ,—King, Priest, Prophet; especially his priestly office; with a most profound, and yet dilucid, exposition of those Levitical types and figures which did more obscurely "shadow" forth Christ under the law: (Heb. x. 1:) so that, in that epistle, as in a table, Christians may behold the law to be nothing else but *evangelium velatum*, "veiled gospel;" and the gospel to be no other thing than *lex revelata*, "unveiled ceremony," or "the law with the curtain drawn."

But there be divers short modules or compendiums of Christian doctrine occasionally delineated by the apostles in their several epistles:—

In the Epistle to the Galatians, (chap. v.,) within the compass of

five verses, the apostle gives two full catalogues or lists; the one of sins, (verses 19—21,) the other of graces. (Verses 22, 23.)

In the Epistle to the Ephesians, (chap. v., vi.,) you have an excellent and complete module of relational duties:—of wives toward their husbands, (chap. v. 22,) husbands toward their wives; (verse 25;) children toward their parents, (chap. vi. 1,) parents toward their children; (verse 4;) servants toward their masters, (verse 5,) masters toward their servants. (Verse 9.)

The Epistles to Timothy give us a type or table of ministerial offices and qualifications; yet so as most beautifully adorned with other most precious evangelical principles: the sum whereof is Christ: “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief;” (1 Tim. i. 15;) and the principal comprehensive parts, faith [and] love; faith apprehensive, and love active. These two in my text many learned men conceive to be intended by St. Paul, as the two great comprehensive fundamentals of this *ὑποταγωγῆς* commended by him unto Timothy’s care and fidelity: “‘Hold fast the form of sound words,’ the two main branches whereof are ‘faith and love.’” But of this more hereafter.

In the Epistle to Titus, the apostle will furnish you with two short, but very perfect, systems:—one in chap. ii. 11—14; where you have,

(1.) God’s grace made the original and fountain of all the good we expect from God, and perform to God;

(2.) And this grace issuing itself by Christ for the salvation of the creature;

(3.) And “appearing” by the gospel; (verse 11; there you have scripture intimated;) and,

(4.) “Teaching us,” as to the *privative* part of obedience, to “deny ungodliness and worldly lusts;” terms capacious enough to comprise all sin: as to the *positive* part, “to live soberly,” implying all personal duties for the governing of ourselves in our single capacity; “righteously,” implying all duties to our neighbours; “godly,” (verse 12,) noting our whole communion with God in the duties of his worship. More cannot be said as to the duty of man. Now,

(5.) The encouragements are either from looking forward [or] backward. If we look *forward*, there is the “blessed hope,” the full consummation whereof we receive at “the glorious appearing of the great God,” the coming of Christ to judgment: (verse 13;) and there we have three grand articles of faith asserted: (i.) Heaven; (ii.) The day of judgment; (iii.) The Godhead of Christ. If we look *backward*, we are obliged to obedience, not only out of hope, but from gratitude for the great benefit of redemption by Christ: (verse 14;) and in that we have asserted,

(i.) Christ’s willingness to die: for he “gave himself.”

(ii.) The purpose or end of his death: “That he might redeem us from all iniquity.”



(iii.) The foundation of a holy life in our regeneration: "And purify us unto himself."

(iv.) The nature of a church: to be "a peculiar people."

(v.) The necessity of good works, in the last clause: "Zealous of good works."

So that in this short map you have a complete summary of all that fundamental doctrine which doth animate and quicken to the life of holiness.

The next body of divinity, according to the exact method of the Palatine Catechism, is in chap. iii. 3—8; where you have,

(1.) Man's misery by nature. (Verse 3.)

(2.) His redemption by Christ; (verse 4;) set forth,

(i.) By the spring or first moving cause: "The kindness and love of God." (Verse 4.)

(ii.) The false cause removed: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done." (Verse 5.)

(iii.) By the effects:—*justification*: "Justified by his grace." (Verse 7.) *Sanctification*: He hath "washed us in the laver of regeneration, and renewing by the Holy Ghost." (Verse 5.) *The consummation of all in glory*: "That we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (Verse 7.)

(3.) The thankful life, in a fruitful course of holiness and good works: "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works." (Verse 8.)

Another system of practical divinity you have in the Second Epistle of St. Peter, chap. i. 5—7: "Add to your faith virtue," &c. By "virtue" is meant "the study of holiness;" which there is set forth by its furniture, and subjective parts or branches.

(1.) *The furniture of virtue*: it is rooted in "faith;" guided by "knowledge;" (verse 5;) armed on the right hand by "temperance," or a holy moderation in the pleasures and comforts of the world; on the left hand by "patience," against the crosses and inconveniences thereof. (Verse 6.)

(2.) *The branches, or subjective parts, of this virtue* are, "godliness," (verse 6,) a grace that guideth us in our immediate commerce with God; "brotherly kindness," a grace that directeth us in our duties to our fellow-saints; "charity," helping us in the duties we owe to all men. (Verse 7.)

In many other places do the apostles lay the doctrine of God in one entire view before our eyes; lest the mind should be distracted by various and dispersed explications, or, by dwelling too much upon one part, we should neglect the other.

## II. SECOND END OF SUCH PLATFORMS: TO OBVIATE ERROR.

A second sort of modules, or a second end and design of such modules, is, to obviate errors, and to antidote Christians against the poison and infection of rotten, pernicious principles: for no sooner had the good husbandman sowed his field with good seed, but the

envious man went out after him, and began to scatter tares. (Matt. xiii. 25.) In opposition whereunto, the apostles in their several epistles were careful to furnish the churches with such modules and platforms of truth as might discover and confute those "damnable heresies." (2 Peter ii. 1.)

Hence the apostle St. Peter calls them "present truths;" (*ἐν τῇ παρούσῃ ἀληθείᾳ* 2 Peter i. 12;) that is, principles of the Christian faith most seasonable for those times wherein they were writ. As every church and age had its present errors and false doctrines, whereby the false apostles did labour to undermine the truth, and to seduce the professors of it; so the apostles, in their zeal to the truth and compassion to the souls of men, did bestir themselves to countermine those seducers, and to establish the churches in the faith of Jesus Christ, by collecting some special heads and points of gospel-doctrine opposite to those errors, and sending them to the several churches where they had planted the gospel. These the apostle calls "the present truth." Thus St. Paul, (among other places,) in his First Epistle to Timothy, chap. iv. 1—9. The apostle Peter, in his Second Epistle, chap. ii. throughout. St. Jude spends his whole Epistle upon the same design. But, above all, the apostle St. John is very large and distinct upon this account. His First Epistle consists specially of a twofold module or platform; that is, 1. *A form or table of gospel-principles*; 2. *A form or table of gospel-evidences*: \* both of them in opposition to the false teachers of those times, those antichrists of whose numerous increase he gives them that solemn notice: "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists." (1 John ii. 18.) To antidote Christians against the plague of the false doctrines which such sectarian antichrists had disseminated, doth the apostle lay down,

1. *ἡ ὑποτύπωσις, or "pattern," of gospel-principles.*

For instance, (1.) *That God is a God of an infinite, universal perfection and holiness*: "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." (1 John i. 5.) This [he declares] against them that most blasphemously asserted God to be the author of sin, &c.; † against whom also St. James contends. (James i. 13—18.)

(2.) *That conformity to God is an inseparable concomitant of communion with God*: This, against them that were not afraid to affirm that justified persons, being elected, let them live never so impurely, do remain in the favour of God, &c.; (as some amongst us, and such as would be accounted stars of the first magnitude;) that a man

\* *Admodum artificiosa est hujus epistolæ methodus; nam ad modum catenæ Christianæ fidei mysteria et axiomata connectuntur, &c.*—DICSONUS. "The arrangement of this epistle is very skillful: for in it the mysteries and axioms of the Christian faith are linked together, as in a chain."—EDIT. † The Carpocratians taught that men must sin, and do the devil's will; or else they could not enter into heaven.—EPIPHANIUS. Simon Magus, and, after him, Florinus, Blastus, Apelles, Hermogenes. *Valentiniani, Marcionitæ, &c. Priscillianistæ Deum affirmant mendacem.*—AUGUSTINI *Liber de Hæresibus*, cap 70. "All these heretics teach a fallacious deity, framed by their own imaginations."—EDIT.

might have as much communion with God in sin, as in the duties of religion.\* "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." (1 John i. 6.) It clearly implies, there were [men] that did say so.

(3.) A third principle [which] he lays down is, *the doctrine of original corruption, even in the regenerate themselves*: against those that taught the total abolition of original sin in and by baptism; or that denied the being, or at least the damnable nature, of it: † "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (Verse 8.)

(4.) *The necessity of confession of sin*: not only against them that decried repentance for sin and confession of sin, ‡ but against them that denied pardon to them that repent: § "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (Verse 9.)

(5.) He asserts *the doctrine of actual sin in the regenerate*: against them that affirmed that a justified person could not sin, or (which is the same) that God sees no sin in his children: || "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." (Verse 10.) *If we say that we have no sin*—There is the denial of original sin. *If we say that we have not sinned*—There is the denial of actual sin. Both make up the great heresy of the Catharists, who held perfection in this life. ¶

(6.) The apostle vindicates *the preceptive obligation of the moral law, even over justified persons*: against the antinomian heresy, which presumptuously breaketh even that yoke also from the neck of the disciples: \*\* "Hereby we do know that we love him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him." (1 John ii. 3—5.)

So early were these poisonous weeds sprung up in the church of God.

\* *Eo tempore fuerunt qui non dirimi societatem cum Deo propter peccata censebant.* The Gnostics, Ebionites, &c., *ambulantes in tenebris, jactitabant se Deo placere. Falsitas doctrinae et turpitudine morum tunc vigeant, non solum in philosophorum scholis, sed et apud hereticos.*—CYPRIANUS. "There were at that time some who held that fellowship with God is not destroyed by sin." The Gnostics, "Ebionites, &c., walking in darkness, boasted that they pleased God. Corruption of doctrine and baseness of manners then had sway, not only in the schools of the philosophers, but also among the heretics."—EDIT. † *Pelagiani negant originale peccatum.*—AUGUSTINUS *Contra Mendacium*. "The Pelagians deny original sin."—EDIT. ‡ Epiphanius calls the Novatians *τοὺς φονεῖς τῆς μετανοίας*, "murderers of repentance." [Vide] BASILII *Homil. De Penitentia*.

§ *Montanistae et Novatiani.*—HIERONYMI *Epist. ad Marcellam De Erroribus Montani*. || The Simonians, Gnostics, and other heretics of that age, taught that there was no sin but unbelief; that, to the justified, all things were clean, however they [might] live. Vide AUGUSTINUM *De Perfectione Justi*, cap. 21; CLEM. ALEXAND. &c. They conceived the apostles, after the coming down of the Holy Ghost upon them, *nullis esse peccatis aut passionibus obnoxii* ["to be liable to no sins or passions"]. *Joviniani docebant, justum nec leviter peccare.* "The Jovinians taught that a just man does not sin in the slightest degree."—EDIT. ¶ Catharists [arose] in the third century after Christ. \*\* The Simonians, Carpocratians, Marcionites, Manichees, did not only deny the moral law, but curse and blaspheme it, as given not by God, but by some unlucky nature.

2. *A catalogue of scripture-evidences.*

The other module which the apostle layeth down, is a *catalogue of gospel-evidences*; certain marks and signs of an interest in Christ, and of a right and title to life eternal: such as these:—

- (1.) Obedience to God's commandments, *ut supra*.
- (2.) Contempt of the world. (1 John ii. 15.)
- (3.) Steadfastness in the doctrine of the gospel. (Verses 18—24.)
- (4.) Conformity to Jesus Christ in holiness. (Chap. iii. 3.)
- (5.) Mortification. (Verses 6—10.)
- (6.) Love to the saints. (Verse 14; chap. ii. 5, 10, 11.)
- (7.) A believing confession\* of God's sending Jesus Christ into the world as the promised Messias; with love to him, and thankfulness for him. (Chap. iv.)

In the first four verses of the fifth chapter, we have no less than seven evidences, each linking in with the other, and bearing witness to the other. As,

(1.) You have *faith in Christ*, bearing witness to *regeneration*: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God."

(2.) *Love to God*, bearing witness to *faith*: "Every one that loveth him that begat," &c.

(3.) *Love to the saints*, bearing witness to our *love of God*: "He loveth him also that is begotten of him." (Verse 1.) Augustine understands it of our love to Christ; but the context expounds it of our love to the saints: for so it followeth in verse 2; where we have,

(4.) *Love to God*, reciprocally witnessing our *love to the saints*: "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God."

(5.) *Obedience to God's commandments*, bearing witness again to our *love*: "And keep his commandments."

(6.) *Delight*, testifying *the truth of our obedience*: "His commandments are not grievous." (Verse 3.)

(7.) And, lastly, *victory over the world*, bearing witness to *regeneration*: "For whosoever is born of God overcometh the world." (Verse 4.)

It were easy, out of this and the other two subsequent epistles, to complete the *ὁποσυνωσις* of gospel-evidences; which are not thus expressly delineated, that by them only the church might describe her members; (as some loose and vain spirits fancy;) but for the members of the church to try and examine themselves by, whether they be real and living members; yea, or no. It were easy, I say, to add to the catalogue; but I have insisted too long upon the first demonstration; namely, scripture-pattern.

## DEMONSTRATION II. THE ADVANTAGES OF SUCH MODULES.

I come now to the second demonstration; namely, *the excellency and advantage of such forms and collections of evangelical truths*.

\* Most blasphemously denied by the Simonians, Chrystolites, Proclites, &c.—Augustine *Liber De Hæresibus*.

ADVANTAGE I. *For the ornament of the truth.*

And, in the first place, *it adds much to the beauty and ornament of the truth.*—Whether it be delivered from the pulpit or from the press, in such systems and platforms the hearer or reader may, as in a map or table, (sometimes of one sort, sometimes of another,) behold divine truths standing one by another in their method and connexion, mutually casting light and lustre upon each other.

Every truth single is very precious, and indeed of infinite value, as purchased with, and ratified in, the blood of Christ; but to see the truths of the gospel linked together in their proper union, facing one another like the cherubims, (Exod. xxv. 20,) is very glorious: as the stones of the temple, when they were squared and polished in the forest, were very costly for both matter and workmanship; but when they were laid into the building, and formed up into a temple, what a beautiful and magnificent structure did they make! The disciples, beholding it, were filled with delight and wonder. (Luke xxi. 5.) The curtains of the sanctuary, each by themselves, were very rich, both for their materials and curious embroideries; but had you seen them in their connecture, each curtain fastened to the other with taches of gold, and so making up one entire perfect tabernacle, sparkling and shining in all its native splendour, it would have been a ravishing sight. The very representation of many countries in one nation, of many nations in one of the divisions or quarters of the world, and of all the quarters described in one globe or map,—it is very delightful to the eye of an intelligent beholder; at once discovering the site and cognation, the longitude and latitude, the distance and degree, of every kingdom and country: such globes and tables are full of delight and profit.

It is in a most eminent manner observable in the creation of the world, [that] of every single day's work it is said, "God saw that it was good;" but when the whole *compages* ["structure"] of heaven and earth was set together into one entire fabric and creation, "God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was *very* good." (Gen. i. 31.) Such a rare piece are gospel-truths in their variety and uniformity; not less glorious and admirable than heaven and earth, sun, moon, stars, elements, in all their order and ornament.

ADVANT. II. *Help to knowledge.*

Secondly. *Such types and exemplars of divine truths are of great help to the understanding.*—As the collection of many beams and luminaries makes the greater light, so it is in the judgment: a constellation of gospel-principles shining together into the understanding, fills it with distinct and excellent knowledge. It "gives us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Cor. iv. 6.) One truth doth irradiate and expound another. The truths of the gospel, in their method and series, are interpretative one to the other; while the understanding by means hereof hath the advantage of dwelling upon them [as] the object, and "comparing spiritual things with spiritual;" as the apostle speaks, 1 Cor. ii. 13.

The truth is, *he* knows but little of the truth, *that* knows it only within itself: *he* understands it aright, *that* knows it in its connexion and correspondence with other truths of the gospel.

That Christ died "to save sinners," is a most precious truth: (1 Tim. i. 15 :) but *he* knoweth too little of it, *that* knows it alone; as most of ignorant Christians do, who perish with their knowledge. *He* knoweth this truth to purpose, *that* knows it in its connexion with a lost estate, *that* knows it in its references to the fall, the wounds and bruises and death contracted by it. *He* knows redemption by Jesus Christ aright, *that* knoweth it in order to the guilt and power of sin, and man's total impotency to save himself from either.

*He* knows salvation aright, *that* knows it in the extent and virtue of all Christ's offices,—King, Priest, and Prophet: *that* understands salvation to be a saving of the poor creature from the reign of sin by the *kingly* office of Jesus Christ; a saving of a man from ignorance, error, and those false, rotten principles which are naturally radicated in the understanding, by the *prophetical* office of Jesus Christ; as well as a saving him from hell and wrath to come by the *priestly* office of Jesus Christ.

*He* knows aright the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, not *that* knows it singly and nakedly only in the story and notion of it, but *that* knoweth it in the effectual application of it by the Spirit for mortification and vivification; *that* knoweth it in its connexion with, and influence unto, justification and sanctification, &c. *He* that thus "knoweth Christ and him crucified," knoweth him "as the truth is in Jesus;" (Eph. iv. 21 ;) his understanding is full of light.

Alas! the ignorance and misery of our times is, not that people are totally destitute of the principles of Christian religion, but that they know them singly only and apart; and so they know them but by halves; yea, not so much: for I dare be bold to say, the better half of every truth consists in its method and necessary coherence with other truths; without which, therefore, the knowledge [that] men have of them must needs be but dark and lifeless.

#### ADVANT. III. *Help to memory.*

Thirdly. *Such patterns and platforms, whether of larger or of lesser compass, are a great help to memory.*—In all arts and sciences, order and method is of singular advantage unto memory. We do easily retain things in our mind, when we have once digested them into order. It is not so much multitude of objects, as their variousness and independency, which is burdensome to memory: when once the understanding apprehends them in their natural union and fellowship one upon another, the memory comprehends them with much more sweetness and facility. Hence it is that number and place are of such rare use in the art of memory.

The reason why people generally remember no more of the sermons they hear, is for want of catechising, whereby they might come to know the principles of religion in their order and methodical texture. Usually in sermons truths are delivered single and apart;

and the ignorant hearer knows not where the minister is, nor what place the doctrine delivered obtains in the body of divinity, nor how they are knit together; and so the memory leaks them out as fast as they are dropped in. Order is the very glue of memory. Method in a single sermon, when the hearer is acquainted with it, gratifieth the memory, as well as the understanding; while it doth not only lodge things in their own place, but locks the door upon them, that they may not be lost. When things are knit and linked-in one with another, (as in a chain,) pull up one link, and that will pull up another; so that the whole chain is preserved. But we may have occasion to speak again of this point: and therefore,

ADVANT. IV. *To quicken affection.*

Fourthly. *Such modules serve to quicken affection.*—Sympathy and harmony have a notable influence upon the affections. The sounding of a single string makes but little music: let a skilful hand touch them in their musical concert and symphony, and it affects the hearer to a kind of ravishment. So it is with evangelical truths: place them in their proper rooms, that a man may behold them in their mutual correspondencies and apt couplings together; and truly the seraphims themselves, answering one to another and echoing [one] to another, make not a sweeter harmony in their celestial Hallelujahs.

ADVANT. V. *Antidote against seductive errors.*

Fifthly. *It is a marvellous antidote against error and seduction.*—Gospel-truths in their series and dependence are a chain of gold to tie the truth and the soul close together. People would not be so easily trepanned into heresy, if they were acquainted with the concatenation of gospel-doctrines within themselves. As, for instance, men would not certainly be so easily complimented to worship that idol of free-will and the power of nature, were they well principled in the doctrine of the fall [and] the design of God in permitting of it, held out in scripture in such large and legible characters that he who runs may read; (Psalm li. 5; 1 Cor. i. 29—31; &c.;) if they did with sobriety of spirit observe what the scripture proclaims concerning the impotency of the lapsed and ruined creature, man's helpless condition in himself, (Rom. v. 6; Eph. ii. 1,) of the absolute necessity of the quickening, helping, and stablishing influence of the Spirit of Christ, &c. When a chain of pearls is broken, a single jewel is easily lost: divine truths are mutually preservative in their social embraces and coherence.

ADVANT. VI. *Growth in grace.*

Sixthly. *Growth in grace is one blessed fruit of such systems and tables of divine truths.*—When foundations are well laid, the super-structures are prosperously carried on. Want of distinct knowledge in the mysteries of religion, is a great obstruction to the growth of grace. The great cause of the believing Hebrews' non-proficiency was their defect in the foundation, the στοιχεια, the "first principles of the oracles of God." (Heb. v. 12.) "Unskilfulness in the word of

righteousness" made them that they were but "babes in grace." (Verse 13.)

#### USES.

**USE I.** In the first place, it *serves to justify the practice of the churches of Jesus Christ*.—Which have their public forms and tables of the fundamental articles of the Christian faith, drawn up by the joint labour and travail of their learned and godly divines, after much and solemn seeking of God by fasting and prayer; in the solemn profession whereof they all consent and agree.

Such were those ancient public Creeds:—the Athanasian Creed; the Nicene Creed; and that which is commonly called "the Apostles' Creed," which justly merits that title; if not because compiled by the twelve apostles, every one casting-in their *symbole* or article, as tradition goes; yet because [it is] collected out of the apostles' writings, and is, as it were, a brief form or abridgment of the doctrine taught by Christ and his apostles, an epitome of the Christian faith.

And such are the Confessions which most of the Reformed churches have drawn up for their own use, comprehending the most necessary and fundamental articles of the Christian faith, to be generally owned and asserted by all within their associations and jurisdictions, whether ministers or people. That Confession of Faith which was compiled by the reverend and learned divines of the late Assembly at Westminster, and presented to the two Houses of Parliament, as their advice in matters of religion, was of this nature, and obtains the primacy amongst all the Confessions of the Reformed churches, in the judgment of many learned orthodox divines. Such forms and modules are of excellent use in the churches: *partly* to be a bank or bulwark to keep error and heresy from breaking into the church of God: *partly* to prevent dissents and dissensions, which are very apt to rise amongst the pastors and teachers, as well as amongst the private members, of such congregations where every one is left at liberty to preach and practise, to hold and hold forth, what is right in their own eyes: *partly* to preserve the truth in its integrity and beauty, and the professors of it in unity and uniformity,—“the glory” of the churches, and the “defence upon that glory.” (Isai. iv. 5.)

**USE II.** *It serves to show us the benefit and advantage of public catechisms*.—Whether *larger*, containing a more general collection of gospel-truths, for the use of such as are of larger understandings, young or old; or *lesser*, containing only some few of the most necessary principles of religion in the most facile and familiar way, for the help of meaner capacities: amongst which (although there be some hundred several forms extant in the Reformed churches, yet) those two forms or modules drawn up by the late reverend Assembly, their “Larger” and “Shorter Catechism,” obtain the general vote both abroad and at home for their excellency and usefulness. And it is the wish of very learned and judicious men that there were yet some shorter and more easy form drawn up, that might be reduced to a few heads of the first and most necessary points of Christian faith, for the institution of babes. The great advantage of such forms of



catechetical doctrine is, that thereby a minister of the gospel may acquaint his people with more of the necessary and saving truths of the gospel in a few months, than he can well preach over in many years; and by the brief and frequent running over the principles of religion, people of all sorts and ages would be incomparably prepared for the word preached, and profit more by one sermon than unprincipled hearers commonly do by twenty.

USE III. *Hence also I might commend to young students in divinity the reading of systems and compendious abstracts and abridgments.*—

As an excellent entrance and manuduction unto their theological studies, before they launch into the larger tracts and treatises in that vast and immense ocean of divine knowledge; of which we may say, almost to desperation, *Ars longa, vita brevis*.\* The shipwright that is to build a large and stately vessel, doth first shape his work in a very small module. And he that is to travel into the remote parts of the world, shall render his labour much more fruitful by reading maps and globes at home: for by that means he shall know where he is, when he comes abroad; his eye and his understanding will mutually interpret one to the other. Thus your curious workwomen do first make their borders and trails, and then fill them.

USE IV. *It serves to commend methodical preaching.*—That minister that is wise and judicious to observe method in his sermon, and method between sermon and sermon; a scriptural connexion, as much as may be, between subject and subject, doctrine and doctrine;—*omne tulit punctum*; he is a preacher indeed: he shall not only profit, but delight, his hearers;† and make them not only knowing Christians, but distinct and judicious.

USE V. *It commends (not least) constant and fixed hearing.*—Especially when people sit under a judicious and methodical ministry. “Loose hearing may please, but the fixed will profit:”‡ skipping hearing, for the most part, makes but sceptical Christians. When people hear at random; have a snatch here, and a snatch there; here a truth, perhaps, and there an error; here a notion, and there a novelty, &c.; such mixed hearing makes up the garment of knowledge, but just like a beggar’s cloak—full of patches. They are never able to bring their knowledge into any form or method; “ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth:” (2 Tim. iii. 7:) their knowledge is like a heap of pebbles, upon which a man can never raise a superstructure. Whereas, they that sit under a fixed ministry, (one that is master of his art,) they are acquainted with the way and course and project of his preaching; as the apostle tells Timothy: “But thou hast fully known my doctrine, purpose,” &c., (verse 10,) that is, the design and method of my ministry.

\* “The art is long in being acquired, and life is but short.”—EDIT. † The author here alludes to the following well-known lines:—

*Omne tulit punctum, qui miscuit utile dulci,  
Lectorem delectando, pariterque monendo.*—HORATIUS *De Arte Poetica*, 343.

“The man who joins instruction with delight,  
Profit with pleasure, gains the praise of all.”—ROSCOMMON’S Translation.

‡ *Varia lectio delectat animum; certa prodest.*—SENECA.

Such hearers, if judicious, can follow their teacher through the series and deduction of his ministry, from subject to subject, and from text to text, and from head to head; till at length they have, before they take notice of it, a *hypotyposis*, or collection, of gospel-truths formed in their understanding. Such a hearer begins where he left the last time; and so, from time to time, is still going on, "shining" and growing and enlightening "unto the perfect day;" (Prov. iv. 18;) from faith to faith, from knowledge to knowledge, and from truth to truth; "till he comes in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." (Eph. iv. 13.) Various hearing makes variable Christians, St. James's professors, (for the most part,) "double-minded men, unstable in all their ways:" (James i. 8;) they are still beginning, but never able to make any prosperous and successful progress in the knowledge of Christ.

USE VI. Sixthly and lastly. *From hence give me leave to commend to you the benefit and advantage of "the Morning Exercise."*—Which the good hand of providence brings to your doors this ensuing month, and begins to-morrow morning in this place.

#### THE FRUITS OF THE MORNING EXERCISE IN THE CITY.

Truly God hath been pleased to make this Morning Lecture a great mercy to this city, ever since it was first erected; which was, when Leicester was besieged. It hath been like the ark in the house of Obed-edom,—a blessing wherever it hath come, a morning cloud which hath let fall sweet, refreshing showers in every place. In special God hath made it instrumental,

#### *Comfort against fear.*

1. *For the strengthening of the weak hands, and confirming the feeble knees, of the people of God.* (Isai. xxxv. 3, 4.)—Who in this time of England's troubles have been of a fearful heart and of a trembling spirit. Many poor Christians, who in times of public dangers and confusions have come to these morning-assemblies, like the Marys to the sepulchre of our Lord, with their hearts full of fears and their eyes full of tears, have been dismissed those assemblies "with fear and great joy;" (Matt. xxviii. 8;) their hearts have been revived, and their hands strengthened in the Lord their God.

#### *A preservative against apostasy.*

2. God hath made use of this Exercise *for the preserving of thousands from error and damnable doctrines in these times of sad apostasy.*—While many ignorant and unstable souls, being "led away with the error of the wicked, have fallen from their own steadfastness," (2 Peter iii. 17,) there want not multitudes, through grace, who are ready to acknowledge that they owe their confirmation and stability in the truth, (under God,) in a very eminent manner, to the labours of those godly, orthodox divines who have bestowed their pains in these early Lectures from time to time.

*Conversion.*

3. God hath commanded his blessing upon it *for the conversion of many souls to Jesus Christ*.—Blessed be God! “the Morning Exercise” hath not been childless since it was set up. Some there be, to my knowledge, who have calculated their spiritual nativity from the time that this Exercise was in the places of their habitation; as in this place some can bring-in their testimony to the honour and praise of free-grace.

*Edification.*

4. It hath been a very choice instrument in the hand of the Spirit *for the “building up of Christians in their most holy faith.”*—Many of them that have attended “daily at the gates of wisdom, waiting at the posts of her doors,” (Prov. viii. 34, 35,) in this ministerial course, have been observed to have made eminent proficiency in the school of Christ, “to grow” in God, “in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter iii. 18.)

To all which blessed ends these “Morning Exercises” have had some advantage above other assemblies:—

*Partly*, by reason of the frequency and assiduity of them. Sabbath-day-sermons and weekly lectures, being distanced with such long intervals of worldly encumbrances, are for the most part forgotten before the return of their weekly course: whereas, these Exercises treading so close upon the heels one of another, they that have constantly attended them have, as it were, lived under a constant vision, the sun of the gospel arising upon them as assiduously as the sun in the firmament; whereby they have been carried on in a daily progress of gospel-proficiency.

*And partly*, the preachers, by a kind of secret instinct of the Spirit, having been directed in their order to preach seasonable things; *παρουσιν αληθειαν*, as the apostle calls it, “present truth,” (2 Peter i. 12,) truth most proper to the present state of things; carefully obviating the errors of the times. And not only so; but sometimes, as if there had been a design laid by mutual consent, they have been guided to preach methodical truths. Their sermons have been knit together, not without some natural connexion, into a kind of *ὁμοτιμωσις*, or “module,” of evangelical doctrine; at least, so far as [that] it hath not been difficult to find out, not only consent, but a kind of dependence, between their successive discourses, that might be of more than ordinary help to their auditors: as,—in this place, about this time four years;\* and since, in a neighbouring congregation,†—by some short notes, published for the help of weaker Christians, may appear. But now, brethren, behold, “I show you a more excellent way.” That which sometime hath fallen out provi-

\* “The Morning Exercise at Giles in the Fields,” May, 1655; printed for Richard Giles in Chancery Lane, near Serjeants’ Inn. † “The Word of Faith,” at Martin’s in the Fields, February, 1655; printed for Fran. Tyton, at the Three Daggers, in Fleet-street.

dentially and but in a very imperfect way, is now, *de industria* ["of set purpose"] and by pre-agreement and consent, intended and designed among you in this course of "the Morning Exercise;" namely, that which the apostle here commends to Timothy's care and custody,—a *ὑποτυπωσις*, or "form, of sound words;" a series or delineation of some of the chief points and heads of gospel-doctrine, methodically collected and digested, as far as the narrow circle of so few days will contain. "And this will we do, if God permit." (Heb. vi. 3.)

## CAUTIONS.

What remaineth, brethren, but that you stir up yourselves in the strength of Christ?—

1. *To prize such a precious season and opportunity as Providence puts into your hand.*—God is bringing a very precious treasure and *depositum* unto your doors: "He hath not dealt so with every nation," &c. (Psalm cxlvii. 20.) See, my brethren, that you put a due value and estimate upon it; lest God challenge your contempt with that angry question: "Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?" (Prov. xvii. 16.)

2. *To frequent it.*—Christians, be afraid of losing a morning; let not one such golden opportunity fall to the ground: you do not know what you lose. Borrow a little from your sleep and from your worldly employments, (if your callings and families shall not be too great sufferers by it,) and bestow it upon your souls: will it not be fruit abounding to your account in the day of Christ? While ye have the light, walk in the light: know ye not that "the shadows of the evening are stretched out?" (Jer. vi. 4.) "Redeem the time, because the days are evil." (Eph. v. 16.)

3. *Stir up yourselves to prepare your hearts for a solemn attendance upon God in them.*—Remember what the Lord said to Moses: "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me." (Lev. x. 3.) O profane not your accesses to such holy things! I may bespeak you in the language of Moses to the people: "Sanctify yourselves against tomorrow: for the Lord will come down amongst you." (Exod. xix. 10, 11.) And remember, if he be not sanctified *by* you, he will be sanctified *upon* you: if he be not sanctified by us in holiness, he will be sanctified upon us in judgment: "Before all the people I will be glorified." (Lev. x. 3.)

Christians, be much in prayer for your *ministers*, that they may "come unto you in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of peace." (Rom. xv. 29.) Say, with the Psalmist, "Blessed be he that cometh to us in the name of the Lord." (Psalm cxviii. 26.)

Pray for *yourselves*, that God would "open your hearts" as he did the heart of Lydia, that you may "attend unto the things which shall be spoken." (Acts xvi. 14.) Pray that you may "mix the word with faith;" (Heb. iv. 2;) that you may "receive the truth in the love of the truth," that you may not be given up to believe lies. (2 Thess. ii. 10, 11.)

Pray for *others* that shall hear with you. Pray as Christ prayed for his disciples: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." (John xvii. 17.) Pray that some may be convinced, some converted, [and] that others may be edified, by the sermons which shall be preached amongst you.

4. *Stir up yourselves to come to these evangelical exercises with evangelical dispositions.*—Those especially prophesied of in relation to gospel-times: "Many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths." (Isai. ii. 3.) In this gospel-promise you have three gospel-graces,—charity, faith, obediential resolutions.

(1.) *Come ye, and let us go*—There is their *charity*, their mutual care and love to one another's souls. They call upon one another, and "consider one another, to provoke one another to" a diligent attendance on the means of grace: (Heb. x. 24 :) "Come ye, and let us go." Gracious hearts would not go to church or to heaven alone: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." (Psalm cxxii. 1.)

(2.) *He will teach us of his ways*—Here you have their *faith*. They come to the ordinance with good thoughts of God; the same wherewith holy David doth encourage his own soul: "Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will he teach sinners in the way." (Psalm xxv. 8.) "Though I am evil, yet God is 'good;' though I am a sinner, yet God is 'upright:' therefore I shall be taught of God." It is good to come to the ordinance with great expectations upon God. You may easily over-expect men; and, indeed, for this, God sends you home often with disappointment. You come to a sermon, and you say, sometimes, "O, there is a rare man to preach this day!" The man fails your expectation; and you return censuring and complaining of the preacher; not considering [that] the fault was in yourselves. God withdrew, possibly, wonted auxiliaries of grace, to punish your carnal confidence; to teach you to "cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?" (Isai. ii. 22.) I say, You may easily over-expect the creature, but you cannot over-expect God: "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it;" (Psalm lxxxi. 10;) widen and dilate the desires and expectations of your souls, and God is able to fill every chink to the vastest capacity. This honours God, when we greaten our expectation upon him; it is a sanctifying of God in our hearts: "He will teach us of his ways."

(3.) *We will walk in his paths*—There you have their *obediential resolutions*, highly becoming the children of God. If God be so gracious [as] to teach us, they resolve not to be so ungracious as to refuse to be taught: they come with a desire to know God's will, and go home with a resolution to obey it. This is the method of gospel-proficiency: "If any man will do my will, he shall know my doctrine." (John vii. 17.) Behold, here is the pattern: go ye, and do likewise.

5. *Take heed of perfunctory and customary use of the ordinance.*—Rest not satisfied in a Popish *opus operatum*, the “work done.” As you should prepare before you come, so you should reflect when you go home, and not take up with notions in the head without motions in the heart. Expressions in the lips, when separate from impressions upon the conscience, make empty and formal professors, and give occasion to standers-by to suspect the truth of religion. A careless Christian, that often heareth of the glorious things of the gospel, but feeleth nothing of them, doth put a temptation of atheism upon himself, and of scandal upon others; and while himself is not made better by his frequenting the means, others become worse, while he raiseth up an evil report upon the ways of God. Surely we need much quickening, that we may “not receive this grace of God in vain.” (2 Cor. vi. 1.)

6. And lastly. When you have this *ὑποτυπωσις*, this “form, of sound words,” let it be your care to keep it: when ye “have” it, then “hold” it; which is the second acceptance of the word *εχει*, and brings me upon the second doctrine:—

DOCTRINE II. *Such forms and modules are very carefully to be kept.*

But of this in the concluding sermon, if God permit.

## SERMON II.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM BATES, D. D.

GOD IS.

*But without faith it is impossible to please God: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*—Hebrews xi. 6.

IN this chapter, faith is represented as the principle of obedience; conveying vigour and strength to other graces, whereby they become operative unto several ends and objects. Hence those acts which immediately spring from other graces as their proper stock, are attributed to faith, that being the principle of their heavenly working; in this respect, as the success of an army redounds to the general's honour, so the victory which is effected by other Christian qualities, is here ascribed to faith, which animates them, and leads them forth as their chief captain. This is intimated in the text, in which we may observe,

1. *A proposition*: “But without faith it is impossible to please God;” that grace being the medium of our communion with God, as it gives through Christ an admission and approach to him; and in this respect is opposed to “drawing back.” (Heb. x. 38.)