

SERMON IX.

BY THE REV. STEPHEN WATKINS.

THE MISERY OF MAN'S ESTATE BY NATURE.

And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.—
Ephesians ii. 3.

YE have heard the doctrine of man's fall, and of original sin, opened and applied. This text genuinely leads to speak of man's misery through sin. As to the coherence, briefly, the apostle's scope is, to display the glory of the Lord's grace, by comparing the sinful and cursed estate of the Ephesians and others by nature, with the dignity and privileges conferred on them in Christ. He insists mainly on three heads.

1. *He describes the natural estate and course of the Ephesians, and all other Gentiles in them.—Their estate:* "Ye were dead in trespasses and sins." (Verse 1.) *Their course:* "Ye walked wholly in sin, pricked forward by corrupt customs, which in several ages had taken place, and were effectual to hold and hearten you in the same tracks; and the devil, that eminently bore sway in others, ruled and acted you likewise at his very will. This was yours and the Gentiles' estate and course." (Verse 2.)

2. *He applies the whole equally and indifferently, to himself, and to the whole body of the Jewish nation.—*"Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." (Verse 3.) As if he had said: "Such children of disobedience were we also; as deep in sin and open to wrath as you Gentiles were." He would by no means have any think that, speaking so of the Gentiles, he exempted the Jews from the same ground of shame and despair in themselves: though he knew full well that this point went exceedingly cross to the grain of that people, who greatly boasted themselves to be the "holy seed," and children of Abraham, and despised the Gentiles as an idolatrous, unclean, bastard brood; (Ezra ix. 2; John viii. 33; Gal. ii. 15; Rom. x. 3; xi. 24;) and especially of the Pharisees, of which leaven himself once was, (Acts xxvi. 5; Phil. iii. 5,) who not only disdained the Gentiles, but thought and spake contemptibly of God's heritage, namely, the common people of their own nation, as a base and "cursed" crew. (John vii. 49; ix. 34.) He pricks this bladder, affirming roundly of himself and all the Jews without exception, that *as to their course*, whilst unregenerate, they did whatsoever their sensual and carnal man willed, liked, and inclined to; and *as to estate*, were "children of wrath" as much "as others," even as the very despised Gentiles themselves were. The great temporary difference flowing from grace,

(Psalm cxlvii. 19, 20,) hindered not their being the very same with the Gentiles by nature; this and no other was the estate and course of the Jews likewise.

3. *He sets over against all this, in them both, the quickening and recovering grace of Christ, in the Gentile, (verse 1,) and in the Jew. (Verse 4.)*

The words read contain a brief, comprehensive description of the misery that Jews, and consequently Gentiles with them, are under by "nature." And in the words observe these two particulars:—

1. *The case of all men, Jews and Gentiles, alike described: "Children of wrath."* Do not understand this actively, as "children of disobedience" (verse 2) are disobedient children, so that "children of wrath" should be angry and wrathful people; but passively, that are obnoxious unto wrath indefinitely; which, though it principally relates to that chiefest, pressing, insupportable burden, namely, the Lord's wrath, yet includes consequently the wrath and power of Satan, the terrors and rage of conscience, the vengeance and assaults of every creature, &c. The Hebraism, "children of wrath," implies,

(1.) *Desert.*—"It shall be, if the wicked man be" בן תשובה "a child of beating, that the judge shall cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, according to his fault, by a certain number;" (Deut. xxv. 2;) which the Septuagint solidly renders, *εαν αξιος η ωληγων*, "worthy of stripes." And so the Targums in like manner, concurrently with our Bibles, "a son guilty and worthy to be beaten." So, Matt. xxiii. 15: "Ye make him twofold more the child of hell," that is, more worthy of hell-fire, "than yourselves."

(2.) *Tendency, bent, and addictness to involve themselves under wrath.*—"But the son of perdition," (John xvii. 12,) who poured out himself in ways of self-destruction. He had many and excellent means to the contrary, but nothing would hold him back. Self-damnation is not proper to Judas, but a very common sin; and men ordinarily "treasure up to themselves wrath;" (Rom. ii. 5;) "love death." (Prov. viii. 36.)

(3.) *The event and issue which shall befall them, if they do abide such.*—Namely, that they shall be destroyed, and the eternal wrath of God abide upon them. So Judas gave up himself to those sins that not only deserved and tended to destruction, but would certainly destroy him. So, 1 Sam. xx. 31: "He is the son of death;" namely, deserves to die, and "shall surely die."

Now gather all these things together: our estate and course is such by nature as deserves destruction, tends and leads to destruction, and will end—and, the Lord hath peremptorily fixed and ordained, without a change, shall end—in eternal destruction.

2. *The rise of this case expressed: "By nature;"* which implies,

(1.) *The term from which this commences;* namely, the very first receiving of our natures and beings from our parents. From the first original and moment of our being, we received withal a liableness to the wrath and curse of God: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." (Psalm li. 5.)

(2.) *The ground for which this wrath impends and hovers* : namely, nature, not first created, for that was upright after God ; but the corrupted nature which is conveyed and derived with our beings. (Gen. i. 27 ; Eccles. vii. 29.) This very nature leads to, deserves, and will lodge under, eternal wrath, every mother's child in whom regeneration and transplantation into Christ are not found.

The DOCTRINE, then, comprising the sum of the text, is this :—

DOCTRINE.

Every man and woman from their very first conception, through a corrupted nature, are under the Lord's wrath ; and, continuing such, not new-born and engrafted into Christ, that wrath shall abide upon them for ever.

We may not mince and extenuate here with the Pelagian, as if this only were by imitation. Flatterers of nature may lessen the wound, but heirs of grace should and will rather magnify their Physician. Nor may we limit and confine this truth, as if it concerned native Turks, cankered Papists, and the proselytes of the Pharisees only, to be "children of hell ;" (Matt. xxiii. 15 ;) when it knocks at every of our doors, Jew and Gentile promiscuously. Neither people, nor ministers, nor apostles can exempt themselves ; great and small, rich and poor, those which "the Lord hath not appointed unto wrath, but to obtain salvation by their Lord Jesus Christ : " (1 Thess. v. 9 :) yet "by nature are children of wrath, even as others."

This wrath in the scriptures hath several names : respectively to the Lawgiver, it is called "wrath ;" respectively to the law itself, "the curse ;" respectively to the effects of both, it is translated "vengeance." (Rom. iii. 5.) Man by nature is exposed unto all these.

1. *He is exposed to the wrath of the Lawgiver.*—Here,

1. *Take some cautions, that we may duly conceive of wrath, the root of all penal afflictions on God's part, as sin is the meritorious root on man's part.*—All wars with men begin in wrath : animosities first boil within, and then wars break out : "From whence come wars and fightings among you ? Come they not hence, even from your lusts which war in your members ?" (James iv. 1 :) and, in special, this of wrath. So there is somewhat proportionable in God, if understood suitably to his glorious being ; namely, wrath perfectly clean from all dregs of,

(1.) *Folly.*—The fool never more peeps out than in passion : "He that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly ;" (Prov. xiv. 29 ;) that is, sets it aloft, that every body may discern and take notice of it. But the Lord is "a God of knowledge by whom actions are weighed." (1 Sam. ii. 3.)

(2.) *Injustice.*—God's wrath is a clear fire, without any smoke of unrighteousness : "Is God unrighteous" *ὁ επιφθων την οργην,* "that inferreth wrath ?" (Rom. iii. 5.) He cannot be. We plough with an ox and an ass, (Deut. xxii. 10,) mingle dross with our zeal, &c.

(3.) *Perturbation.*—The wrath of men is the rage of men, who dis-

joint and discompose themselves as well as others ; (Prov. xi. 17 ;) but the Lord acts, and suffers not, in his wrath ; he strikes, wounds, destroys, from the infinite holiness and justice of his nature, declaring itself against all sin, with the exactest serenity and oneness of mind and frame within himself from everlasting to everlasting. This is the root of all wars with sinful men. Moses saw the plague growing up out of this root : " Wrath is gone out from the Lord, and the plague is begun." (Num. xvi. 46.) " He distributeth sorrows in his anger." (Job xxi. 17.)

2. Consider what this wrath implies : Two things,

(1.) *That the Lord is highly displeased with men and women in their natural estate.*—Though never so goodly a varnish of religion be above, yet if nothing but nature be underneath : " A hypocritical nation " are the " people of the Lord's wrath." (Isai. x. 6.)

No created understanding can conceive exactly what this displeasure is : " Who knoweth the power of thine anger ? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath." (Psalm xc. 11.) Take some short ladders, that our thoughts may a little climb up by ; and consider seriously and deeply,

(i.) *What a king's wrath is.*—" The fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion : whoso provoketh him to anger sinneth against his own soul ;" (Prov. xx. 2 ;) that is, acteth as an enemy to his own life. And, " The wrath of a king is as messengers of death : but a wise man will pacify it," as that which he cannot resist. (Prov. xvi. 14.) " Where the word of a king is, there is power : and who may say to him, What doest thou ?" (Eccles. viii. 4.) That is, where not only the name, but the reality, of a king is, he sustains the person of the commonwealth, and hath the strength and power of all put into his hand, and hath power to execute his wrath, and will not be controlled nor expostulated with. And what can a branch do against the whole tree ? The king is wroth, and Haman's face is covered. (Esther vii. 8.) " A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty ; but a fool's wrath," that is, that hath power, " is heavier than them both," to crush a weak person that standeth in his way. (Prov. xxvii. 3.) All these are but toys to the power and weight of God's wrath.

(ii.) *What an incensed brother's wrath is, that hath a little more power.*—Rebecca, understanding Esau's wrath against Jacob, packs him away till that wrath be over. (Gen. xxvii. 43, 44.) If a mother dare not venture a child into an angry son's presence, nor a brother himself into an angry brother's presence, how insufferable will the angry presence of the Lord be !

(iii.) *What God's fatherly refining wrath is against the dross that mingleth itself with his worship and ordinances, and what dreadful furnaces he hath put the vessels of mercy into, to take away their tin from them.*—" Who may abide the day of his coming ? and who shall stand when he appeareth ? for he is like a refiner's fire." (Mal. iii. 2.) If men cannot bear Christ's coming with a refining fire to purge out dross, much less not his coming with " flaming fire," to consume and burn up persons and dross together. (2 Thess. i. 8.) We have

need of "grace to serve him acceptably with reverence and godly fear; for our God," that is related to us in Christ, "is a consuming fire." (Heb. xii. 28, 29.)

(iv.) *What afflictions are, how very bitter; yet, separated from wrath, they may be borne with comfort.*—The mingling of fire with the hail in Egypt made it so very dreadful. (Exod. ix. 24.) The fire of the Lord's wrath mingled with storms, renders them so grievous to be stood under. Hell itself would not be so dreadful, did not "the breath of the Lord," that is, the wrath of the Lord, "like a stream of brimstone kindle it." (Isai. xxx. 33.)

The prophet submits to any strokes, only deprecates wrath, as worse than any strokes, and more deadly than death itself: "O Lord, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing." (Jer. x. 24.) Apprehensions of wrath were the dregs in Job's cup: "O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be passed" over! (Job xiv. 13.) He cannot stand in the face of God's wrath, though he knew it was passing, and not abiding, wrath; and therefore begs a hiding anywhere, and in the very grave, till that wrath be over. Who then shall dwell with abiding wrath? (John iii. 36;) "with everlasting burnings?" (Isai. xxxiii. 14;) with "fire and brimstone, and tempest," that hath hatred in it? (Psalm xi. 5, 6.)

(v.) *What the Lord's glory is, when it is proclaimed, and passeth forth in a way of grace, only in a little more lustre and brightness.*—Moses needs putting in a clift of the rock, and to be covered with the Lord's hand, while the Lord's glory passed by. (Exod. xxxiii. 22.) Peter is swallowed up at a glimpse of the power of Christ: "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." (Luke v. 8.) What then, when "he speaketh in his wrath, and vexeth in his sore displeasure?" (Psalm ii. 5.)

(vi.) *What the Lord's wrath, is passing upon others.*—All the children in the house tremble when the rod is taken down, though not with respect to themselves, but their fellows only. Take a man whose heart is touched with the sense of the Lord's greatness, and that will be his temper: "They shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth." (Isai. ii. 19.)

(vii.) *What the Lord's wrath is, only hanging in the threatening.*—His rebukes made both the ears of Eli to "tingle." (1 Sam. iii. 11; 2 Kings xxi. 12.) There is a terror when a prince convenes and rates his rebels for their conspiracies and insurrections against him, though not yet brought to the bar or block. "When I heard, my belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself." (Hab. iii. 16.) Josiah's "heart was tender," when he heard what the Lord "spake against Jerusalem, and against the inhabitants thereof." (2 Kings xxii. 19.)

(viii.) *What Christ himself did, under the sense of this wrath to be poured forth.*—Though supported with "all the fulness of the God-head dwelling bodily in him," and saw the glory beyond, and the

certainty of his resurrection, and the fruits of "the travails of his soul" that should be; (Col. ii. 9; Heb. xii. 2; Isai. liii. 11;) yet "sweats," and that clots "of blood to the very ground;" (Luke xxii. 44;) prays, and that "with strong cries and tears," that "if possible, this cup might pass." (Heb. v. 7; Matt. xxvi. 39.) Though other considerations made him drink it cheerfully, (Luke xii. 50,) yet nature droops, and cannot bear up under this burden. Those pills are very bitter, that very health itself doth hardly sweeten.

You that are yet in the mire of mere nature, steep your thoughts in these things, that ye may have a little taste what an evil and bitter thing it is, that God's wrath and displeasure is out against you. But this is not all; God may be displeased, and very highly, with his own people. "I was wroth with my people, and polluted mine inheritance;" (Isai. xlvi. 6;) namely, dealt with it as if a polluted and unclean thing.

(2.) *God reckons and will deal with men and women found in their natural estate as his enemies.*—God's tender-hearted servants have not been able to bear the apprehension of this: "He hath also kindled his wrath against me, and he counteth me to him as his enemies." (Job xix. 11.) The plural number increases the sense: "as his deadly enemy." He that takes the Bible, and carefully turns it over, and considers the contents thereof, and what He hath said of those [whom] he reckons his enemies, will have a further glimpse of the dreadfulfulness of this condition. "He reserveth wrath for his enemies;" (Nahum i. 2;) that is, he hath built and made wide the storehouses of hell, that there might be wrath enough in due season to be drawn forth for them. "Those mine enemies, that would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." (Luke xix. 27.) "Ah, I will ease me of my adversaries, and avenge me of my enemies." (Isai. i. 24.) "Judgment and fiery indignation shall devour the adversaries." (Heb. x. 27.) And this must be applied to both sorts of enemies:—

(i.) *Close.*—That go closely on in ways of sin; secretly correspond with the devil and his temptations, and their darling lusts; and will not lay the bucklers down; though they smile in the Lord's face, and seek him daily, and delight to know his ways, as a nation that doeth righteousness, and forsaketh not the ordinances of their God; (Isai. lviii. 2;) "flatter him with their lips, and lie to him with their tongues." (Psalm lxxviii. 36.)

(ii.) *Open enemies.*—That proclaim and declare war against heaven; that do and will do what they please, let the Lord say and do what he will to the contrary. As Pharaoh: "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?" (Exod. v. 2.) "Our lips are our own: who is lord over us?" (Psalm xii. 4.) "His citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us." (Luke xix. 14.)

And understand, when the Lord so deals with this sort of sinners he takes a kind of comfort in it: "Thus shall my anger be accomplished, and I will cause my fury to rest upon them, and I will be

comforted." (Ezek. v. 13.) To others, the Lord distributes sorrows with sorrow; and speaks of himself as "grieved," when he puts them to grief. (Judges x. 16; Lam. iii. 33; Isai. lxiii. 9.) But here he is comforted, in making them the resting-place of his fury. (Prov. i. 26.) The heat and height of his fury poured forth upon incurable sinners, is comfortable and pleasing to him. "In every place where the grounded staff shall pass, which the Lord shall cause to rest upon him, it shall be with tabrets and harps." (Isai. xxx. 32.) Vengeance on such is music and delight to the Lord and to his people. (Rev. xviii. 20.)

This is the first, and not the meanest, part of the misery of fallen man,—that he is under the Lord's wrath; that is, such as God is displeased with, and will reckon and deal with as his enemies.

II. *Every natural man and woman is exposed to and under the curse of the law.*—Is this nothing, to have the word against thee? and to have the Lord write bitterly against thee in that very book which is the storehouse of comforts and supports to others? (Job xiii. 26.) Dreadful is that language of Ahab, concerning Micaiah: "There is yet one man by whom we may inquire of the Lord: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil." (1 Kings xxii. 8.) So that language of a natural man's heart: "God's mind is in that book: but I cannot abide to read therein, or to hear it opened and applied by a lively, rousing preacher; for it only raises storms and tumults in my conscience, and speaks not a word of comfort to me." The word,

1. *Rings many a sad peal in the ears of conscience, and which he cannot abide to hear or think of.*—In that it doth declare,

(1.) *His sin.*—The word faithfully discovers God's straightness, and man's crookedness and swervings from that platform and rule to which he should be conformed, as the counter-part to the original. This charges omissions, commissions, and bunglings in the good which he does do, and "sets all in order before his eyes," (Psalm l. 21,) if possible, to make him ashamed and confounded in himself.

(2.) *The due and desert of sin.*—Every breaker of the law, the law pronounces and dooms to be cursed. There is that necessary connexion, that it is impossible to be chargeable with sin against the law, and not liable to the curse of the law: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in every thing that is written in the book of the law, to do it." (Gal. iii. 10.) *Justification* itself takes not away the desert of sin. Pardoned sins are as well sins, and as much sins, as they were. Pardon makes not the malefactor none; makes not that the fact was not committed, or not faulty, or that it deserved not death; for then he should have been legally acquitted, not graciously pardoned. Those will never take heaven of grace, that take not hell as their proper desert. The Lord will have his own wear this rope about their necks, the desert of hell in their hearts, to the very grave. *Assurance*, and in the very highest degree, takes not away the sense of the deserts of sin; but amplifies and enlarges them. The deserts of sin shall be perfectly acknowledged in the state of glory, and the

Ransomer adored and admired upon this score. Nothing so heightens grace as this,—that persons deserving to suffer, are yet freed in Christ from suffering, eternal wrath, as if they had not deserved it. This desert was no doubtful and dark point in the consciences of the Heathens themselves: they “know the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death.” (Rom. i. 32.) But the word more distinctly lays this home to the heart. “The expectation of the wicked is wrath.” (Prov. xi. 23.) There is nothing else that he can justly and solidly expect in that estate; and expecting otherwise, he does but cozen himself.

(3.) *The sinner's exclusion, while in that estate, from any part in the great and precious promises of the gospel.*—The word opens the promises, but knocks his fingers off from touching and eating of this “tree of life.” This is none of the meanest, heart-cutting terrors to natural men, to see “many come from the east and west, and sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, and themselves cast out;” (Matt. viii. 11, 12;) incorporated with the patriarchs, into fellowship of the same grace, and title to the same glory, and themselves debarred from both; to view “the unsearchable riches of Christ” displayed, and themselves justled off from any intermeddling, as to present application or grounds of application of them as their own. I met lately with a godly woman who heard a sermon full of choice, comforting, supporting promises to “weary and heavy-laden” sinners, which warmed her heart; but in the closure was stricken through with the first [fierce] arrows of God, discerning herself excluded, in her present estate, from any part in them. This makes the gospel a fiery serpent to sting them, which is the pole holding up the brasen serpent for healing to others.

2. The word *attaches and binds him over*: “Ye shall answer this at the day of Christ:” and *hangs the writ upon his door*; as the man that is in God's debt, and is to look for an arrest, and to be dragged into prison till the utmost farthing be paid; unless a speedy, timely peace be made: *and enforces this, partly from the will and justice of God*, that hath made “indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish,” the portion of “every soul” that goeth on to “do evil;” (Rom. ii. 8, 9;) *and partly from the nature and circumstances of sin itself.*—Debts may be so great, so long owing, so growing, and the negligence and boldness of the debtor such, that makes it necessary, in point of wisdom, not to keep the writ longer off from his back.

3. The word *excites terrors.*—A man bound in a very great sum, in which the forfeiture will be his undoing,—the very obligation troubles. There are no debts but, where any ingenuity is, induce answerable cares. And the Lord, “knowing the frame,” and tendering the peace, of his people, advises therefore against all debts; especially sticking under them, and not coming timely and carefully off: “Owe no man any thing;” (Rom. xiii. 8;) much more, to be over head and ears in God's debt, and no care to agree with him, is a very dreadful condition. (Matt. v. 25.) If these terrors actually are not, yet they are very subject every moment to be, excited. The sea may be very

calm; but the least storm makes it nothing but commotions: conscience, though now quiet, hath a very wide and clamorous mouth, when the Lord commissions and commands it to rebuke for sin. These terrors hold the sinner in bondage, or "all his life-time subject unto bondage." (Heb. ii. 15.)

This is the second branch of the misery of a natural estate,—to be in all these respects under the curse of the law, and to have the Lord "fight against him with the sword of his mouth." (Rev. ii. 16.) Here is patience,—that the Lord will fight with this sword first, that he may reclaim and lead to repentance, rather than destroy him. And if this prevail, then is the curse turned into a blessing, and the bondage ends in liberty indeed; but if this do not prevail, then "there remains" nothing else "but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." (Heb. x. 27.)

III. *Every natural man and woman is obnoxious to all the effects of the wrath of God, and of the curses denounced in his word.*

(I.) *There are manifold effects of God's wrath that are upon him, or are apt every moment to be rushing in upon him, in this life.*

1. *Upon the body.*—Look upon all the breaches, flaws, defects, monstrosities in the body, and set them upon the score of sin. Every man else had been like Absalom, and much more: "From the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him." (2 Sam. xiv. 25.) These argue not special sin; (John ix. 2;) yet had never been without sin. Look upon all diseases, natural or adventitious: "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." (John v. 14.) There had never been a stone in the reins, or in the bladder, if not first in the heart. These crumbings by degrees into the dust flow in by sin. We pity the ruins which war hath made in goodly palaces; but those are nothing to the havock which sin hath made in the more noble fabrics of our own bodies. Look upon the difficulties, cares, turmoils, for provision of us and ours. (Gen. iii. 17.) Labour is with toil, weariness, vexation, disappointment. We plough and sow, and reap not; earn, and "put in a bag with holes." (Haggai i. 6.) Look upon shameful nakedness. We have lost our robes of glory, and need now the spoils of beasts to cover our shame with. (Gen. iii. 21.) How many trades are there, and what toil in them, merely for this end, that the dishonour of the body may be hidden! Look upon the sorrows of the female sex; (verse 16;) which, though mitigated and mingled with promises, yet still are arrows which sin hath shot into their sides, and grace doth not quite pluck them forth. (1 Tim. ii. 15.) Look upon the assaults made, even to our ruin, by those things that otherwise were "under our feet," (Psalm viii. 6,) but now withdraw from the yoke, serve with groans, remissness, and much unserviceableness, and often lift up their heel, and turn and tear us. These are a very small part, and only bare hints, of those confusions and effects of the Lord's wrath, which sin hath let into the body, which else had been invulnerable in the very heel.

2. *Upon the soul.*—Consider,

(1.) *The mind*.—O what blindness, ignorance, thick darkness, in the apprehensions of God, his very being, most self-evidencing attributes, in the very mysteries of the first magnitude, which are the rules of our duty, and the grounds of our hope! incapableness, dullness, slowness to believe! loathness to inquire or receive the light which shineth forth from heaven! doubts, distrust, mistakes, wanderings after that which is not light, and into “ways that seem right, but the end of them are the ways of death!” (Prov. xiv. 12.) The heresies of the whole earth are seminally in the blindness of the mind; and would grow up from thence, though there were none of our many sowers to scatter them, being nothing else but corrupt imaginations formed into a system. Unprofitableness in the knowledge of truths which we most clearly and distinctly conceive! unsteadiness, that we cannot fix and close upon holy thoughts, till the impressions thence be powerful, and work a real change! There is no spaniel more wild, and running after every lark and butterfly that rises in his way, than our thoughts are, gadding after every thing that comes in our way. Yea, our mind gathers vanity to itself, when the eyes are shut, and no objects to divert and inveigle us with. These are sins, and yet are rushing in further, as the recompences of former sins, which are meet. (Rom. i. 27.)

(2.) *The memory*.—Things stick there that a man would gladly learn, and count it a singular mercy to attain, the art of forgetfulness of; and others leak and slip away, though taught often plainly, repeated, mused upon, and we felt the power of them in a degree upon our hearts. What indispositions to the use of means in order to a cure! what proneness to cumber ourselves with by-matters, till they talk with us sleeping, and crowd in and suck away Lord's days themselves, and leave nothing but scraps of prayer and preaching to us! Sin first brought-in these plagues; and wrath binds them on, and leaves judicially the reins loose to them.

(3.) *Conscience*.—The *directing* part is out of tune; and either gives no directions, as a master that is nobody in his family; or gives wrong directions, as false lights on the shore lead the ships upon the rocks and quicksands,—forbids where the Lord commands, and urges to that which he forbids; (John xvi. 2; Titus i. 15;) or gives right directions, and hath no authority. And the *judging* part of conscience is out of tune, and gives no judgment of what is done; or like a bell whose clapper is out, or a dumb dog that cannot bark; or gives perverse judgment, and excuses where it should accuse; makes sin no sin, or very little; and stays the heart with empty comforts: or accuses for having done that which he is bound to do, and disquiets with undue fears: or accuses rightly for the matter, yet with excess, and so sinks the soul under despair: so that there is as much need for conscience to be overseen as to oversee, to be guided as to guide. These arrows abide in, and the venom of them invades more and more; and that is a very dreadful effect of the wrath of God.

(4.) *The will*.—There are sad strokes there. Averseness and impotence unto that which is spiritually good. (Phil. ii. 13; Psalm x. 4.)

Inclinations and biasses to drink-in the very first and the very worst motions and suggestions unto sin. Lustings after evil things; (Job xv. 16;) and against the Spirit. (Gal. v. 17.) Stubbornness. (Rom. viii. 3.) Contempt of the offers of reconciliation. (John v. 40; Ezek. xxxiii. 11.) Incompliance with the counsels of the Holy Ghost. (Acts vii. 51.) These are cords of man's twisting; and the Lord in dreadful wrath says, "Be it so;" and pinions him with them to the last judgment.

(5.) *The affections fly upon unmeet objects, headlongly inclining to them, and clasp, and cleave there, and cannot be gotten off: recoil from that which is good: are stirred, in respect of evil, to embrace it, and in respect of good to eschew and be weary of it: (Ahab imprisons the true prophets; and sets the false at his own table, and gives them his ear and heart:) are full of disorders; more offended with our injuries than God's: merry, and the Holy Ghost calleth it "madness;" (Eccles. ii. 2;) mourn and "swallowed up:" (2 Cor. ii. 7;) cannot be raised to things above, and settled on them. We complain, and justly, of servants that are nimble and expert in any piece of knavery, and lozels * [loiterers] at their work. This is the very temper of our hearts,—nimble and wise to do evil; but in the things and ways of God, and which are of greatest necessity and advantage, we have no knowledge. And a sharper wrath is not, than the Lord to leave us to ourselves. (Psalm lxxviii. 30; lxxxi. 12.) These are hints, and no more, of the Lord's wrath upon the soul.*

3. *Upon the estate.*—Look upon the *general estate of the whole creation*; impaired, groaning, and subject unto vanity: into the *public state*; confusion, stumbling-blocks, underminings of civil and spiritual liberties, &c.: into the *particular estates of men*; snarls, damages, wrongs, pollings [plunderings]; men taken and carried whither they would not; build, and dwell not therein; gather, and it melts as butter against the sun, &c.

4. *Upon relations.*—*Unequal marriages*: yokefellows disloyal, wasteful, idle, "withholding more than is meet;" troubling their own flesh; dampers in the ways of God; suddenly stricken; and the greatest comforts leave the smartest wounds after them, &c. *Unfaithful servants*: looking only to the master's eye; invading that which is not theirs; embezzling, or suffering to go to wreck, that which by care they might and ought to preserve. *Children*, sickly; unnatural; taking to no callings, or not diligent and faithful in them; dispose themselves without consent, run themselves into briers, and see their error when too late to retreat. This is wrath in *domestic relations*. And wrath as terribly mixeth in *public relations*. *Ministers* preach not; oversee not; are not ensamples to the flock; have not experience, nor ability, nor care, "rightly to divide the word of truth," and muzzle the gainsayer; [are] misled themselves, and mislead others, &c. *Magistrates* mind not the things of Christ; are tight and vigilant over the good, indulgent to the evil; "bear the sword in vain," &c. Such vials there is much wrath poured through.

* The explanation which Serenius gives of this old Saxon word, is *latbund*, "an idler," "a sluggard."—EDIT.

5. *Upon the holy things of God, and of his people.*—Ours come not with acceptance to God; the Lord's, not with savour, closeness, authority, &c., to us. The very book of the covenant needs sprinkling. (Heb. ix. 19.) The law, which is "pure" and "clean," (Psalm xix. 8, 9,) is made a killing letter. (2 Cor. iii. 6.) The gospel which is "the grace of God bringing salvation," (Titus ii. 11,) is made "a savour of death unto death;" (2 Cor. ii. 16;) the Lord's supper, an eating and drinking judgment to ourselves. (1 Cor. xi. 29.) And Christ himself is made for "falling;" (Luke ii. 34;) and "a stone of stumbling, and rock of offence." (1 Peter ii. 8.) Without Christ's blood taking away sin, the very book of grace had never been opened; (Rev. v. 4;) and, though the choicest in itself, being opened, would never have been useful unto us: and sorer wrath cannot be, than to curse our very blessings, (Mal. ii. 2,) and the very means of grace, that they shall be useless, and for judgment.

6. *Upon the whole man.*—The person is under the effects of wrath.

(1.) *Enslaved to the devil.*—This is plain,

(i.) *From the scriptures.*—Else converting grace could not "deliver from the power of darkness;" (Col. i. 13;) nor men be said, when "God gives repentance, to recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, that were taken captive by him at his will." (2 Tim. ii. 25, 26.)

(ii.) *From the likeness of man's work with Satan's.*—Ὁμοτεχνοί, "Men of a trade," are ordinarily of a company together: but here the rule fails not: "He that committeth sin is of the devil;" (1 John iii. 8;) that is, by doing the same work discovers himself of communion with and in thralldom to him. The first finders of a craft, are "fathers;" (Gen. iv. 20, 21;) and successors and imitators in the craft are called "children." We naturally and freely do the devil's work: "The lusts of your father ye will do;" (John viii. 44;) and have no mind to the Lord's work, nor can brook the same to be done circumspectly and exactly by others: "Thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness." (Acts xiii. 10.)

(iii.) *From the community of principles.*—The very mind and will of Satan is engraven upon our spirits, and express themselves in efficacy and obstinacy of sinning. These principles are Satan's image, instead of God's.

(iv.) *From the natural man's subjection to the guidance of Satan.*—Regenerate persons are led by the Spirit; but Satan filleth the hearts of natural men. He had possession of Judas's heart, and by a piece of money rides deeper into him, and prevails to engage him to betray Christ. This is a lamentable branch of the natural man's misery.

(2.) *He is banished and separated from God,* both from conformity to, and communion with, him; and doth electively banish and cast himself forth of the Lord's presence. This appears,

(i.) From the former point, namely, *man's fellowship with Satan.*—There cannot be fellowship with God and with Satan together. These communions are inconsistent, in the same spirit, at the same time, in a reigning, intense degree.

(ii.) *From God's end, and his apostles' and ministers', in the writing, explanation, and application of the scripture.*—"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." (1 John i. 3.) Were this fellowship already in the state of nature, there needed not this means of re-bringing into fellowship with God. Defiers of the evil one with their mouths, are not the less in league with him in their hearts.

(iii.) *From the language of the carnal heart.*—"Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." (Job xxi. 14.) This they speak internally, and the desire of their souls is to be rid of God: notions of God are a sapless and burdensome piece of knowledge: "They did not like to retain God in their knowledge." (Rom. i. 28.) To banish ourselves is the height of man's sin and folly; and to be banished, the height of the Lord's wrath, and of man's misery.

Now do we know what a man loseth in the loss of God? That is impossible for any created understanding to conceive.

The world is a dungeon without the sun; the body a carrion without the soul; but neither so necessary as God is to the soul. A taste of the goodness of God made the world and the lives of the martyrs nothing to them: "In thy favour is life;" (Psalm xxx. 5;) and, "Thy loving-kindness is better than life." (Psalm lxiii. 3.)

The very heaven of heaven lies in the enjoyment of God, and the hell of hell in the loss of him. The loss of him is the loss of the fountain from which all kind of good doth or can come. The loss of the cause is the loss of all the effects, of all the blessed affections, influences, and promises of God; the loss of all those blessed hopes that fill the soul "with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." No prayer, praises, faith, love, fear, or any spark of other grace, are to be found in truth upon the hearth of that heart. Now, the person in league with the devil, and banished from and "without God in the world," must needs be miserable and accursed.

(3.) *He is discontented and unprofitable in every condition.*—"They are altogether become unprofitable." (Rom. iii. 12.) The Holy Ghost makes a natural man of no more use than rotten things, which we cast forth to the dunghill for their unprofitableness. This is a dreadful ruin, that a creature so excellent should become unprofitable to others, and very far from comfort to himself in any condition. The wife, having all for use, and the husband's heart, hath nothing, because not the authority, dominion, and disposition which is proper to the husband. Israel have bread and quails from heaven, and water from "the rock that followed them;" a table everywise furnished for need, and for delight; and yet grumble because not meat for their lusts. Many have all things very good, and the wisdom of heaven could not carve fitter and better things; and yet all not good enough. Let sin creep in, and Adam will not be content in Paradise, or the apostate angels in heaven, but "leave their own habitation." Go from God; and take thy leave and farewell of contentment and satisfaction.

(4.) *He is grown a wolf and devil to his brethren.*—Biting and devouring; (Gal. v. 15;) tearing, pulling, catching at advantage, flying upon the necks of the weaker. Men execute much of the wrath of God in these feuds among themselves; so that the caution is very necessary: "Beware of men;" (Matt. x. 17;) in a sort, as of any wild beast, or the very devils themselves.

This is a glimpse of that wrath which the Lord draweth forth against natural men in this life before the sons of men.

(II.) *There are further degrees of this wrath that rush in at the end of this life.*—"The wages of sin is death." (Rom. vi. 23.) The bodies of the very heirs of glory, and which are temples of the Holy Ghost, lie trampled upon under rottenness, and suffer loss of their appointed glory till the last day. The Lord batters them, till the house tumbles about their ears. He lays on load till the heart-strings crack. And to whom hell is remitted, death is not remitted: those must die that shall not be damned for their sins, and death shall have dominion over them till the morning of the resurrection. There is a progress in God's wrath, which will not stop in the midway, but goes on till it shall be accomplished. (Ezek. v. 13.)

(III.) *The full vials and very dregs of this wrath shall be poured out in the world to come.*—Which now God reins in, and lets not get loose and break over the banks; or, if it do, calls it back, and turneth it away. But then "all his wrath shall be stirred up," and let forth to the full. (Psalm lxxviii. 38.)

1. *There shall be the general judgment of the great day.*—In which "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God;" (1 Thess. iv. 16;) and "shall be revealed, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire," terribly to execute the curses of that law which was so terrible in the promulgation. (2 Thess. i. 7.) Then shall the sinner be forced from his grave, dragged to the bar, arraigned, the books opened, all the secrets of darkness and of the heart made manifest, and the goats put on the left hand, and have that dismal sentence: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matt. xxv. 41.)

2. *There shall be dreadful and final execution.*—And this stands in two things:—

(1.) *In loss.*—Expulsion from the Lord's face, and presence, and glory, as incurable lepers from the camp and fellowship of the saints: from the good things which they never cared for, and from the good things of the world which they grasped, and were their portion: from all hopes of grace, all preachings of peace, all strivings of the Spirit. Never a friend to comfort, a sun to shine, a drop of water to cool the tongue, or any blessing to come near them any more for ever.

(2.) *In sense.*—Which is sometimes termed, "suffering the vengeance of eternal fire;" (Jude 7;) "wrath to come." (1 Thess. i. 10.) Where there shall be, with the damned angels, subjection to the eternal wrath of God, the worm of a guilty conscience that never dies; where the Lord will bear up the creature with one hand, that it continue in

being, and beat it with the other, that it shall be ever dying ; in death always, and never dead.

USES.

USE I. INFORMATION. We may clearly gather divers corollaries hence.

(I.) This may inform us of the vast and woful change that sin hath made.—Men could not come, possibly, such out of the hands of God. "God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good," and therefore "blessed ;" (Gen. i. 31 ;) but sin hath taken him from Mount Gerizim, and set him upon Ebal. (Deut. xxvii. 12, 13.) And the misery now is such, that if the Lord should open the same to the conscience fully, the very view would drive men out of their wits ; and men could not tarry in their beds, or relish a morsel of bread, till delivered, and blessed with some evidence of deliverance, out of that condition.

(II.) This may inform us of the causelessness of the offence taken at ministers for preaching this point.

Now consider seriously,

1. *Is there a parallel to the offence taken here in any other case in the whole earth?*—Who is angry with a watchman for giving notice that the house is beset, and ready to be broken up, or on fire ; though all be disturbed, some half-frighted out of their wits, or wholly, with the tidings ; and very great pudder [pother] follows till the house be secured, and the fire quenched ? Men might otherwise have been undone and destroyed in their beds. Who flies out against a sentinel that gives a true alarm, and rouseth the soldiers at the deadeest time of the night ? He prevents their surprisal, or throats being cut in their beds, and the town from being sacked. Who storms at a passenger that sticks up a bough in a quagmire, that other travellers, going securely on, may not be laid fast, ere they think of any danger ? Who takes it ill of a friend, that, seeing a bearded arrow coming that would strike the stander next him mortally, pulls him aside with that force possibly as to draw his arm out of joint, and the arrow goes not through his heart ? Who thinks amiss of a lawyer that opens the badness of his client's cause to him, that he may not insist on a wrong point, in which necessarily he must be cast ?

2. *Should we, to avoid your displeasure, not give you warning, and so draw God's displeasure, and the blood of you perishing, upon our heads ?* (Ezek. iii. 18, 19.)—Is this good for you or us ? *

3. *Do you well to provoke poor ministers to balk that part of their office which flesh and blood makes us too willing to have our edge taken off in ?*—Desire we to be messengers of sad tidings, or rather to come in the abundance of the comforts of the gospel ? A pettish patient makes the surgeon search the wound less than is necessary to a thorough cure. Ye tempt us to stop from speaking needfully of your danger, by your loathness to hear on that ear, and by your rage and regret against the teller. Those who have most need of faithful intelligence of the Lord's wrath, have least upon this very score.

* *Videsis GREENHILL in loc.*

“Who shall declare his way to his face,” namely, that is respited, and prospers, and tramples the doctrine under foot, and turns again, and tears the preacher? (Job xxi. 31.)

4. *This is no other than what the scripture speaks, and conscience upon retirements will speak, and Satan will lay in your dish, and the Lord will pay into your bosom.*—Will those fly in the Lord's face, and of conscience, telling this story to them, and pronouncing the sentence against them? O profane, partial spirits, that cannot endure such preachers as themselves shall be unto themselves! that cannot bear the hearing of those terrors that themselves shall be relaters and inflictors of upon themselves! Ye had better have the commodity at the first hand. Conscience will preach in another note and loudness than we do; and the more, because your ears have been stopped against our words.

5. *There cannot be a greater madness than not to be able to live under the noise and news of this wrath, and yet stick under the wrath itself.*—The hearing makes the ears tingle; but the wrath does not make the heart quake. Ye had better hear the heralds in the prince's name denouncing the war, and send out for peace, than have the prince himself come with fire and sword into your bowels upon the contempt.

(III.) This may inform us *of the righteousness and wisdom of the Lord in this wrath annexed and declared against sin.*

1. *Consider the high rewards the Lord hath propounded.*—The law is not so fiery in comminations against sin; but the gospel is as full of grace and promises to ways of duty. (1 Cor. ii. 9; 2 Cor. xii. 4.) Now bring things to the bar of reason itself: and may not the Lord annex this dreadful wrath to sin, that doth annex such glorious incomprehensible promises to the duties and weak services of his people? Sin strictly deserves; these not. May not he punish severely, that rewards eminently? How just is it that persons invited to the supper, and making excuses, should not taste thereof! (Luke xiv. 24;) that despisers of the recompences of God should suffer eternal loss of them, and be scourged with the contrary to them!

2. *Consider the ends the Lord hath designed to reach.*

(1.) *In the elect.*

(i.) *To startle.*—“I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.” (Luke xii. 5.) Faith in the threatening engenders fear, as faith in the promise gendfers hope. Faith and fear were conjoined in Noah; and wrought together in his obedience and preservation. (Heb. xi. 7.)

(ii.) *To make all things else little that meet them in the world, to shoulder them off from the truth and homage of Christ.*—A merchant in a storm throws his goods over-board. The wrath of God makes the startled sinner part with any thing, and incur any thing, rather than incur that. Moses had rather incur the wrath of a thousand Pharaohs, than the wrath of God, because he knew the power of his wrath. As God's people have rewards promised that outweigh all that they arc

called to part with; so terrors propounded, that all other terrors may be overlooked and incurred rather than these.

(iii.) *To worm out the esteems of the world, and the sensual pleasures, honours, and profits thereof, the fuel of lust.*—There is need of violence to pull out of this fire. Now he that propounds an end, pitches upon means fitted to compass that end. A cleaver of knotty timber must have a wedge that will go through. The mother that will wean the child, must lay such bitter things on the breast, as will make the child loathe the milk. So the Lord hath declared those wages to sin, that shall turn the edge of love and liking to sin. That had needs be very bitter, that shall make those very sweets bitter to us. No lesser evils would work the sense of that evil of sin into the conscience. And those secretly grudge and complain of the pains as too great, to whom they are too little to awaken and lead them to repentance.

(2.) *In the reprobate.*

(i.) *That he may discover his perfect and infinite displeasure against sin.*—And in these great letters, that all the world may read his full hatred of it. Eli's faint checks proclaimed his faint dislikes of his sons' sins. High dislikes produce answerable checks. Affections in men are the feet the soul goes forth upon; and strong affections go a very nimble, eager pace: the Lord much more, because of his infinite contrariety to sin.

(ii.) *That he may discover the power of his justice and wrath.*—“For this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.” (Rom. ix. 17.) Those who glorify not God in that manner which he would, he will glorify himself in the manner that they would not. Pharaoh said, “Who is the Lord?” (Exod. v. 2;) and trampled his authority and commands under foot. Now as he did sometimes bring light out of darkness, and the apothecary doth preservatives out of rank poisons; so the Lord, not actively glorified, doth fetch the glory of his power and vindictive justice out of sin itself. The walkers in greatest pride and scorn of God,—the Lord will have everlasting glory in their everlasting smart; and he will so punish, that heaven and hell shall ring of his justice, and power, and displicence against sin, and that his threatenings to the utmost are made good, and were not scare-crows.

3. *Consider the dreadful aggravations of sin.*—It is,

(1.) *A confederacy with the devil.*—A sworn servant about the prince's person to contract amity and hold correspondence with the worst of his enemies, makes the sin rise, and his judgment without pity. Should a Christian fall from a mild and gracious prince without a cause, and side with the Turk, or worshipper of the devil, against him, we should think no punishment too much for him.

(2.) *A defection from, and insurrection against, God, and a teasing [of] the Lord into the lists and field.*—“Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?” (1 Cor. x. 22.) Goliath challenges and defies the host of Israel, till David comes forth, and sends

a stone into his brains, and cuts his head off with his own sword, and gives his flesh to the fowls of heaven; so sinners, till they draw the Lord, and the weight of his infinite and eternal displeasure, forth against themselves, even that weight which sinks them, and they are never able to rise from under it again. Now sins rise, as the quality of the person that they are done against. He that flies in my face, and gives me blows and wounds thereby, there is an action of battery and damages to be had against him; he that doth the same against the judge of assize, or the king upon the throne, that is treason, and his life and estate are hardly enough to make amends for it. The infinity of God makes the infinity of the evil and meritoriousness of wrath in sin: the majesty rises, and so the guilt and demerit rise, infinitely.

(3.) *The contempt of all means used for fetching the rebel in.*—"How often would I have gathered you, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matt. xxiii. 37.) Men stand out; and if they could have stood, would have stood out, and continued hostility against heaven, for ever. How equal is it, that a creature nigh to God, falling off to the devil without a cause, and which chooses to have God his enemy, and that no means can reduce, though the danger and evil of sin be evidenced, and his inability to stand, an act of oblivion offered, and highest preferment, and yet will not come in,—how just is it, that he reap the fruit of his continuing at a distance from his Sovereign, and in disobedience against him!

(IV.) This may inform us *of the distemper and pride of man's heart*, that will charge his misery anywhere rather than upon himself.

1. *Upon instruments foreign, that do inflict, rather than sin within, for which the same is inflicted.*—The Lord scourges sin by that which is the inflicter's sin too. They have no warrant to do, and yet we justly suffer from them as organs of wrath in God's hand.

2. *Upon God himself.*—"The foolishness of man perverteth his way: and his heart fretteth against the Lord." (Prov. xix. 3.) The malefactor blames the judge, when it was himself that delivered himself over into the judge's power, and armed the law with power of doing all that is done against him.

(V.) This may inform us *of the grounds and advantages the Lord hath given us to humility and self-abasement.*—Wipe the sweat off from thy brows, and say, "This is the fruit of sin." See the clothes on thy back; and these are the coverings of that shame which came in by sin. Look into thy body, soul, estate, relations, person; whatsoever is crooked and afflictive pertains to this account, and is to be set at the foot of sin. When beaten, consider the fault that thou art beaten for, and "accept of the punishment of thy iniquity." (Lev. xxvi. 41.) Thy eye cannot turn, but there are remembrances of sin, and provocations to lay thyself in the dust before the Lord.

(VI.) This may inform us *of their folly that kindle this wrath yet more.*—The princes spake well to the two tribes and a half: "Is the iniquity of Peor too little for us, from which we are not cleansed until this day, although there was a plague in the congregation of the Lord,

but that ye must turn away this day from following the Lord?" (Joshua xxii. 17.) So are those wrath-provoking pollutions of nature too little for us, by which we are so far defiled and troubled unto this day, that by increases of sin we should "augment yet the fierce anger of the Lord?" (Num. xxxii. 14.) While abiding in this estate, ye do this more and more continually.

USE II. EXHORTATION. And this is double:—

1. *To carnal and unregenerate persons.*—"Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your rest;" (Micah ii. 10;) this is not an estate to be quietly abode one moment in.

MOTIVE I. Who can dwell with this wrath? which God describes to be,

(1.) *Burning wrath.*—"He hath kindled his wrath against me." (Job xix. 11.)

(2.) *Tearing wrath.*—This set the bears a-work. (2 Kings ii. 24.) "Consider this, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces." (Psalm l. 22.)

(3.) *Piercing wrath.*—That goeth down into the very inwards of the conscience, when all visible blessings stand entire round about, and not a hair of the head is ruffled. This curse often works in the middle of blessings, and ripens by them insensibly for hell itself.

(4.) *Abiding wrath.*—The prisoners of which are bound hand and foot, and there is no starting. (Zech. v. 4.)

(5.) *Surprising wrath.*—"When he is about to fill his belly, God shall cast the fury of his wrath upon him, and shall rain it upon him while he is eating," (Job xx. 23,) and so, of all other times, is most cheerful.

(6.) *Reserved wrath.* (Job xxi. 30; 2 Peter ii. 9.)—Which, like a woman with child, will travail, till it have brought forth judgment against all the enemies of the Lord, though upon thrones, and having nations under their feet. (Psalm lxxviii. 30, 31.) Was Sodom a city fit to be dwelt in, especially for Lot, when the Lord had given him notice of the cloud of fire and brimstone hovering, and ready to come down upon the same? This climate is too hot for any that have spiritual senses to dwell a minute in.

MOTIVE II. Shall all our warnings be lost, that tell you of the storm, merely to drive you under covert; and that ye may understand and savour that glorious name,—"Jesus, that delivers from wrath to come?" (1 Thess. i. 10.) The avenger of blood is in your necks, to quicken your haste into this city of refuge. Why should ye make the furnace hotter; and to the Father's wrath, which is quenched in the blood of Christ, superadd the wrath of the Lamb, which is absolutely unquenchable? Shall we only stand forth to clear the justice of the Lord against you in the last day?

MOTIVE III. The great and swaying care of all God's people as soon as ever they saw themselves in the glass of "the law of liberty," was to "be found in" Christ. (James i. 25; Phil. iii. 9.) This was Paul's prevailing care, when sought for and to be set to God's bar,—to be found clothed with Christ's righteousness, and to have his image legibly engraven upon him: the like care should be ours.

DIRECTIONS.

DIRECTION I. *Stir up shame, and sorrow, and fear, and indignation against yourselves.*—No sins are heavier than those we count light of: “Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here?” (Ezek. viii. 17.) Take this oppositely to a double evil:—

(1.) Men pare and lessen their sins, and make a very small matter of them; and consider not, that, lessening their own indignation, they increase God's. “Fools make a mock at sin.” (Prov. xiv. 9.) “It is as sport to a fool to do mischief.” (Prov. x. 23.) So those: “Against whom do you sport yourselves? Against whom make ye a wide mouth, and draw out the tongue?” (Isai. lvii. 4.) They fell to other gods, and laughed the prophet to scorn, that made such a business of it: so when Christ, and grace, and life were offered, “they made light of it, and went their ways;” (Matt. xxii. 5;) that is, made light of grace, and of the sin of contempt of grace.

(2.) Men stick in vile practices, and think their sacrifices and prayers will salve all up again, which the Lord so earnestly declares against. (Isai. i. 14.) But stir ye up sorrow, shame, displeasure. (2 Cor. vii. 11.) Repentance hath these adjuncts, and proceeds to, and deals with, and chiefly with, this first bottom-sin.

DIRECT. II. *Lie down meekly at the Lord's feet.*—This follows upon the practice of the first direction.

(1.) *In submission to any the sharpest dispensations.*—As passions stir up passions, and one coal kindles another; so our frettings, the Lord's wrath. There are tangs of this sin in the godly themselves; (2 Sam. vi. 8; Jonah iv. 5;) but grace takes it by the throat. (Psalm li. 4.)

(2.) *In supplication.*—The Lord's servants have humbly and earnestly deprecated wrath. (Jer. x. 24; Psalm vi. 1.)

DIRECT. III. *Embrace the Lord Jesus in the force of all his blessed offices, and then go, fly to, and lift up thy face without spot before, the Father in him.*—Know,

(1.) *That it is a dreadful thing to have a settled war and plague in a nation.*—Much more to be in the Jews' case, that rejected, and would not be under, the blessing of Christ; and are under the curse of God; and “wrath is come upon them to the uttermost,” (1 Thess. ii. 16,) and hath rested already these one thousand six hundred years.

(2.) *That there is no other remedy propounded to remove this wrath, which we came into the world children and heirs of, but only Christ.* (Acts iv. 12.)—“He hath the keys of hell and death,” (Rev. i. 18,) to let the soul out of the body and into hell when he will; to infer and remove wrath. If any receive not him, this wrath tarries still, and will cleave to and “abide upon him” for ever. (John iii. 36.) He speaks with authority: “Those mine enemies that would not that I should reign over them, bring them and slay them before me:” (Luke xix. 27;) and it shall be done.

(3.) *That the Psalmist makes it (as it is) a point of wisdom in the*

greatest, to "kiss the Son" with a kiss of homage and subjection, "lest he be angry,"—(What is the danger of that?) "and ye perish in the way" of your hopes and purposes, and never compass grace nor glory, if "his wrath be kindled but a little. Blessed are all those which put their trust in him." (Psalm ii. 11, 12.)

(4.) *That then ye may plead with the Lord with humble boldness.*— "Why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture? Remember thy congregation, which thou hast purchased of old; the rod of thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed; this mount Zion, wherein thou hast dwelt." (Psalm lxxiv. 1, 2.)

(5.) *And assure your hearts of welcome.*—"A gift in secret pacifieth wrath, and a reward in the bosom strong wrath." (Prov. xxi. 14.) Mark their policy: "And Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with one accord to him, and, having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, desired peace; because their country was nourished by the king's country." (Acts xii. 20.) And be assured [that] the relations of Christ are beloved of the Father: "Then he is gracious to him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom." (Job xxxiii. 24.)

2. *To those whom the Lord hath translated out of their natural condition.*

(1.) *Bring the work often to the touchstone, that you may not boast in a false gift;*—gold will endure the test, and be more fully manifested to be gold indeed;—and, finding the work to be right, live with an enlarged heart to the praise of that grace which hath made this change.

(2.) *Deal seriously in the mortification of sin, which God only strikes at; and in order thereto, count sin the worst of evils.*—If this were done, and thoroughly and fixedly done in our spirits, there is nothing of any other directions [that] would be left undone. To set up this judgment, there needs,

(i.) *Ploughing carefully with the Lord's heifer.*—Namely, search into the oracles of God; there, and there only, are lively portraitures of sin, and the genuine products and train of sin.

(ii.) *The eye-salve of the Spirit.*—We are blinder than bats in this matter; and are indisposed very much, or rather wholly, to let this truth sink down into our hearts.

(iii.) *Applications to the throne of grace.*—None but those who deal in good earnest in heaven, will see the hell and mystery of sin in themselves. He gives the Holy Ghost to them who ask him.

(iv.) *Excursions and communings with yourselves.*—"The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly;" (Prov. xx. 27;) and, duly made use of, will tell many stories correspondent to the word of truth. Use conscience, and use therewith another and bigger candle, to rummage the dark room of thy heart with. Superadd to conscience the succours of the word and Spirit; and thou shalt do something in the search; and find out convictively the swarms of evil in thine own heart.

(v.) *The work of grace.*—There will be else a beam in the eye, and

plain things will not be plain to us. God's work holds intelligence, and is of amicable affinity, with his word. Grace hath the only excellent faculty in looking through sin.

(vi.) *Attendance to the Lord's administrations against sin.*—God writes in great letters in the world, what he had first written in the scriptures. Every breach by sin should lead down into more hatred, brokenness of spirit, and shame before the Lord for sin. This is the engaging evil; this engages God and the holy angels, and devils, and the very man, against himself. Nothing can be *his* friend to *whom* sin hath made God an enemy. Woe to the man that is in this sense alone, and hath heaven, and earth, and hell, and all within the continent of them, against him! it is impossible for that man's heart and hands to stand strong. This is the mighty prevailing evil. Never was man so stout as to stand before the face of sin, but he shivered, and was like a garment eaten up of moths. (Psalm xxxix. 11.) This hath fretted the joints of kingdoms in pieces, and made the goodliest houses in the world a heap of rubbish; (Zech. v. 4;) will make Babylon, that sits as a queen, an "habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird;" (Rev. xviii. 2;) made the angels devils, and heaven itself too hot for them. Never were the like changes made as by sin: grace makes not changes of richer comfort, than sin doth of dismal consequence. It is made by the Holy Ghost an argument of the infinity of the power of God, to pardon and subdue sin. (Micah vii. 18.)

(3.) *Bear all afflictions incident to a holy course cheerfully.*—The martyrs went joyfully into the fire, because the flames of hell were quenched to them; bore their cross easily, because no curse and damnation to them in Christ Jesus. (Gal. iii. 13.)

(4.) *Reduce your anger to the similitude of God's.*—Which is very slowly kindled, (Psalm ciii. 8,) and is an intense holy displicence only against sin; and is cleansed from all dregs of rashness, injustice, and discomposure. Such zeal should eat us up. (John ii. 17.)

This sermon consists of rough notes, which the author had not leisure to amplify, and present in a more attractive form; as he intimates in page 145: "These are hints, and no more."—EDIT.