

SERMONS.

I.

Matt. vii. 14—"Few there be that find it."

Doc[trine.] 'Tis a hard thing to find the right way to Heaven.

I. There is a way to Heaven.

God has opened a door.

II. There is but one right way.

III. 'Tis a hard thing to find this one right way.

Appears: In that there are so few that find the way.

Tho[ugh] all have so much need to find.

Tho[ugh] so many desire to find and seek after it.

Tho[ugh] so many think they have found.

. so many are mistaken.

That many of those that do find it, first take a great deal of pains.

Some for a long time.

Many prayers.

Many difficulties.

Reason: Negatively, not that [God] han't [has not] called us.

" " very plain in itself.

Reasons:

Many wrong ways.

Like travelling through a great wilderness.

Full of difficulties . . . dangers

But one right way.

[A] narrow way.

Many wrong ways.

Mention some of the wrong ways.

Do right in some things only.

Outward Religion only.

Affections that go away.

Religious out of regard to men.

- Religious only out of fear of hell
 from self-love.
 Don't love God for Himself.
 Trust in their own righteousness.
 Depend on the good opinion of others.
 Apt to think themselves convicted when they are not.
 High pride : apt to think well of themselves.
 A little good looks great.
 Don't see what is bad.
 How many things men often think are CONVERSION.
 2. Men's own lust blind[s] 'em.
 The way is good and plain.
 Right way is what men don't like.
 Up-hill.
 Contrary to all their lusts.
 to their pride.
 to their worldliness.
 sensuality.
 slothfulness.
 Enmity against God.
 Wrong ways are
 Easy.
 Broad.
 Down-hill.
3. Devils.
 Blind them and deceive them.
4. Things of this world blind 'em.
5. Wicked men implead (?) 'em.

APPLICA[TION.]

- What a great mercy to have the Word of God.
 Mercy that God has appointed ministers.
 Great need of Prayer ———
 Never without God's help.
 Don't trust . . . v. 22 . . .
 What need of God's power and striving.

DIRECTIONS.

- Pray earnestly.
 Not trust [As above, v. 22.]
 Take advice.
 Begin soon.
 Hold on and hold out.
 Don't take hope *too soon*.
 In every thing follow the Word of God.
 You need to be much concerned.*

* It will be observed from the *facsimile* that the above Sketch of a Sermon is written on the leaf of a letter. Very many of Edwards's MSS. are thus written on all manner of kinds and scraps of paper.—G.

II.

2 Tim. iii. 16—"All scripture is given by inspiration of God."*

Doctrine: The Scripture is the Word of God.

I. There must be some Word of God.

'Tis unreasonable to think that God would always keep silence and never say anything to mankind.

God has made mankind and given him Reason and Understanding. Has made him the chief of all the creatures.

Given him reason that he might know God and serve Him.

Did not give the other creatures reason: He did make 'em to serve Him.

Other creatures are made for man.

Man was made for God: to serve God, or else he was made for nothing.

But we may be sure He did not make such a creature as man for nothing.

But how unreasonable is it to think that God would make us for Himself and never say anything to us.

God is the King that rules over all nations.

But how unreasonable is it to suppose that He should be a King and never say anything to His subjects. . . . be a King and never tell them what His will or what His commands are, that His subjects may obey Him.

Is as a Father: all His Family.

But will a father be always dumb and silent, &c.?

God has given mankind speech: so that they are able to speak and make known their minds to one another.

And therefore 'tis unreasonable to think that God never would speak to men and make known His mind to them.

We need to have God teach us as much as a child needs to be taught by his father.

And since God has given mankind understanding He doubtless will teach him and instruct him.

How can we know Him to worship God if we have no Word of God to tell us?

We should not know what way of worship would please Him whether to pray to Him or to sing or to keep the Sabbath, or be baptized, or come to sacrament, or what else we shall do.

'Tis certain God has made us for another world. . . . Men but a little while here.

And how shall we know how God will do with us in another world?

How shall we know how He will punish such as do wickedly in another [world]?

* In the left-hand corner is written, "St.; Ind. Novem. '53." See Introduction iv., p. 14.—G.

What He will do for good men in another [world]?

Whether He will forgive us after we have sinned?

How shall we know what He expects we should do that we may be forgiven?

In what He will save Whether He will forgive great sins.

What will men do when they come to die if there be no Word of God to tell 'em?

How should we ever know how the world was made?

How should we know how God made man at first?

We see men in this world are very wicked: the world is full of wickedness everywhere.

Certainly God did not make man so.

How shall we know how mankind came to be so wicked?

We see how the world is full of death: full of war and all manner of misery.

How shall we know how misery and death came, &c.?

And how shall we know what way of salvation there is?

Where shall we find one to be our Saviour that will stand for us . . . if the Word of God don't tell us?

How shall we know what God will do with the world at last? how the world will come to an end?

We see that God is kind to mankind: takes care of 'em.

Therefore He can't leave 'em in darkness and take no care to teach 'em.

We see what necessity mankind stand in, of a Word of God to teach 'em when we consider how it is in those countries where they have no Word of God.

They are all in darkness and blindness about God and Divine things.

They think there is a God.

Yet don't know what He is.

Many think there is [are] a great many gods.

Worship "graven images" and stones.

Worship the devil.

Don't know how to serve God.

Know nothing how the world was made how man was made.

Know nothing what God will do with men in another world.

Don't know how men shall obtain forgiveness of their sin.

Some think [by] offering their own children. . . .

Thus we see there must certainly be some Word of God.

But where is any Word of God if it ben't [be not] in the Bible?

The Heathen han't [have not] no Word of God amongst them.

The Bible therefore is the Word of God, must be.

The Bible gives right notions concerning God.

Tells how God made the world made men how men became wicked

What God will do with men in another world.

What way we may have the forgiveness of sin.

What is the way of salvation ?

What God's mind, and [what His] will, is.

All the Rules and Commandments in the Bible are holy.

Here told what man's duty is in many things.

All sin is forbidden.

How God will be served.

The great things God has done for His people through all ages.

What the Saviour did and suffered : how He ascended into Heaven.

How the world will come to an end.

How God will judge the world.

Another thing that shews that the Scriptures are the Word of God is this :—

That when God told the wise and holy men to write the Bible He gave 'em power to work great MIRACLES, to convince men that it was His work.

Moses was a man that wrote all the first part of the Bible.

And God, to shew that the Word he wrote was His word

And so the other Prophets that wrote other parts.

Jesus Christ gave us the Scriptures of the New Testament. He spoke the Word of God.

He, to shew that His Word was the Word of God, wrought great miracles.

He told His Disciples to write down what He said enabled them to do great miracles.

The Apostle Paul.

That there was such a man as Christ that great miracles [were wrought] even His enemies own : none deny it.

Another thing that shews the Scriptures to be the Word of God is that the Scripture FORETELLS a great many things.

The OLD TESTAMENT that was given to the Jews a great while before Christ was born foretold Christ's coming.

And a great many things concerning Him. All which are FULFILLED.

The Scriptures of the NEW TESTAMENT foretell a great many things all came to pass.

The Jews should become a *distinct* nation that the Pope shall arise many turn Papists just as it is.

The Scriptures we here read is the same Word that was given of old.

The same Word has been kept all along : it has not been changed.

Here it still is the same language in which it was written at first.

It must be the same that the Jews had, and that God's People had in Christ's and the Apostle's time.

It could not be altered since, because it was scattered about a great many nations all over the world which have had it ever since.

Therefore the world could not be cheated.

The Jews, to whom the Old Testament was given : they remain a distinct People still, and have had the Old Testament amongst 'em, written in their own language.

They are all over the world and can't alter it.

The Scripture has all along been among people that have been against one another in their OPINIONS . . . could not agree to alter it . . . if one altered the other would find it out.

Another thing that shews that the Scripture is the Word of God is this:—

That the Scripture has been the means of enlightening so many nations.

Many nations formerly in great darkness : but now . . .

All the greatest nations of the world . . .

No people in the world can come to have right notions of God and of another world any other way than by this Word.

Another thing that shews [it, is]

. . . Great opposition : the Devil and wicked men make against it.

Another thing that shews [that it is] the Word of God is this : it has PREVAILED against such great opposition.

When it first came abroad in the world all the wicked set themselves against it . . . kings . . . armies . . . [Christians] put to cruel deaths . . . yet it PREVAILED . . . overcame all the greatest and strongest nations.

Then there is this thing : those [who] first preached were poor men.

So many nations never could have been made to believe it if men had made it.

Not only foolish men, little men, but great men and wise men.

Another thing : no other Word ever was used as the means of bringing men to know the true God but the Scriptures.

Where the Scriptures have come there has been light : all the rest of the world has remained in darkness. So 'tis now all over the world.

Another thing that shews [it] is this : no man could make such a Book as the Bible. . . .

It must be made by wicked men or good men. . . . Wicked men would not make it. Good men could not.

Another thing : no Book reaches the hearts of men so much. No word so AWAKENS the conscience. No word is so powerful to change the heart. Great many have been made 'new men : ' very wicked men.

No word so powerful to comfort the hearts of men . . . in death . . . cruel deaths . . .

Another : good men all love the Bible. Better they are the more they love it . . . the more they are convinced that it is the Word of God. The more wicked men [are] the more they are AGAINST it.

APPLICATION :

1. How thankful we should be to God. . . .

2. Hence we may learn that all the Scripture says to us is certainly true.

God knows . . . God cannot lie . . . God is very angry for sin.

About another world. There is another world. Good men die.

About Hell. The Scripture says there is a furnace of fire.

God will not hear. No rest.

Many are ready to think that it may be there is none.

About Heaven. About the Day of Judgment: rise again.

About the sorrowful, miserable condition man is in.

About the way of salvation.

Christ is the Son of God. No other Saviour. HE WILL SAVE ALL THAT COME TO HIM.

About the mystery of being 'born again.'

Some are ready to say in their hearts there is no such thing.

What we must be in order to go to Heaven—

Therefore let all men that are not 'born again' consider these things.

All these are not seeking their salvation.

3. Hence 'tis worth the while to take a great deal of pains to learn to read and understand the Scriptures.

I would have you all of you think of this.

When there is such a book that you may have, how can you be contented without being able to read it?

How does it make you feel when you think there is a Book that is God's own Word? That tells . . .

And you think with yourself that you are not able to read it. . . . See and think about it. All that you know is only what others tell you . . . see nothing with your own eyes.

Especially I would have you that are young people take notice of these things.

Parents should take care that their children learn . . .

This will be the way to be kept from the Devil . . . Devil can't bear [the Bible.] Kept from Hell. To be happy for ever.

But if you let the Word of God alone, and never use, and you can't expect the benefits of it. . . .

You must not only hear and read, &c., but you must have it sunk down into your heart. Believe. Be affected. Love the Word of God. Written in your heart.

Must not only read and hear, but DO the things. Otherwise no good; but will be the worse for it.

And you should endeavour to understand. To that end to learn the English tongue.

If you had the Bible in your own language, I should not say so much.

Endeavour to promote your children's learning English.

You that can read should often read . . . meditate . . . pray that God would enlighten you.

Consider how much it is worth the while to go often to your Bible to hear the great God Himself speak to you.

There you may hear Christ speak.

How much better must we think this is than the word of men. Better than the word of the wisest man of the world.

How much wiser is God than man.

Here all is true; nothing false.

Here all is wise; nothing foolish.

This is the GREAT LIGHT God has given to the world. To make use of this is the way to walk in the Light . . . to have our souls filled with Light. If we neglect this we shall walk in darkness.

We should value this more than the light of the sun. We see the light of the sun does a great deal of good . . . gives light . . . pleasant to see . . . 'tis comfortable . . . it gives life.

So Scripture gives light . . . gives life.

Should hear the Word: come to meeting. 'Tis the way to have God's mercy, to seek God in His Word. There we may expect to meet with God. God will respect His own Word for the good of men: what great good has been done.

God has often made it a means of great good. Conversion of many souls. Great joy of many. Many have been comforted in affliction . . . in death.

This will be the way to be wise with the most excellent wisdom.

III. and IV.

Rom. v. 1— . . . "we have peace with God."*

SUBJECT: Peace with God.

1. The nature of it.
2. How it is brought to pass.
3. The distinguishing marks of it.
4. The benefits of it.
5. The course that should be taken in order to it.

I. The nature of it.

Here I would observe that we ought to distinguish between that peace which is real and [which is] sensible.

The one consists in the state of the soul: the other in the sense of the soul. The one is the foundation of the other. That peace of God which is real or that consists in the state of the soul is the ground of that which consists in its sensation or apprehension. Both are called in Scripture by the name of PEACE; and are represented as the peculiar privileges of God's saints. And therefore I will something very briefly consider the nature of each.

1. That peace with God that is *real* is that state of a believer whereby he is in reconciliation and favour with his Creator. It consists in two things:—

1. Something negative—viz., the removal of God's anger and displeasure . . . forgiveness of sin . . . total, (Isa. i. 18)—'White as snow,' . . . compared to the unrolling of a cloud, (Isa. xliv. 22, 23;) . . . as though they never had been, (Jer. l. 20;) 'sought for and shall not be found,' . . . 'depths of

* See division V. for commencement of the second sermon from this text.—G.

the sea,' (Micah vii. 18;) . . . everlasting, (Jer. xxxi. 34;) "make an end of sin." (Dan. ix. 24.)

2. Something positive—viz., as being received and treated as the objects of God's favour.

As the expression is used in Scripture [it is] something more than merely negative. . . . Title. Manifestation. Treatment.

Difference between love and favour, though sometimes called by the same names — Acceptance. Compliance . . . as entitled to a reward.

2. [That peace with God that is] *sensible* is that inward, holy calm and quietness of soul arising from a sense and apprehension of the soul's union with God.

A sense of this gives an inexpressibly sweet calm. This is usually intended by Christ. (John xiv. 27.)

This is twofold :—

1. Peace of conscience or a sweet calm from a sense of the pardon of sin and acceptance with God as righteous.

Two things—

A sense of sufficiency.

An apprehension of the faithfulness of the promise.

These things give a sweet rest.

2. That rest of soul that arises from the sense or feeling of a real conformity to and union with [Christ].

Peace of confidence consists in a sense of a relative union.

That is the rest that arises from hope : this from love.

II. How the children of God come to be made partakers of this benefit.

1. The first and highest source and spring of all is from God's eternal foreknowledge. . . . Choosing 'em, the particular persons by the Father.

Jer. xxxi. 3—"Everlasting love."

The love of the Father. Giving them to the Son.

The Son owing them . . . predestinating of them. (Ephes. i. 4.)

Titus i. 2.

This is the first foundation.

2. The purchase of this blessing was made by the offering that Christ made to the Father.

Prince of Peace. (Isa. iv. 6.) Peace on earth. . . . Nigh by the BLOOD. (Ephes. ii. 14.) He is our Peace. In the text, peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Way. Great High Priest. Offering is but one ; but it is to be variously considered.

3. The way in which we come to have an interest in this.

Purchase : and so to be actually brought into peace with God is by being united to Christ.

Threefold union.

Most immediately by a legal union. . . . Real union foundation of legal.

Being in Christ, the believer, as it were, necessarily is a partaker.

4. The immediate efficient of this union is the Holy Spirit.

So Christ is in them, and they in Christ. (Rom. viii. 9, 10.)

The union is first by a communication from Christ; and this is what is communicated.

The vine is united by deriving sap: the womb by deriving life.

Thus the Holy Spirit makes application. In this respect the peace with God is from the Holy Spirit.

5. The work by which the Spirit effects this union.

The qualification that the Holy Spirit works in the elect by which this union is effected is faith.

This is the uniting act. Therefore God looks on the sinner as one with Christ, because He has accepted of him; and his soul has united [itself to Christ].

6. The end of this union, by which the soul has sensible peace with God, is sanctification of heart and life . . . including faith and all other graces.

And thus it is that the Spirit of God gives sensible peace.

This is the seal of the Spirit, (Ephes. i. 13;) earnest of the Spirit. (2 Cor. i. 22.) By this 'tis a spirit of adoption.

III. Distinguishing marks of it, whereby it may be distinguished from the false appearances of it.

1. In those that have a true peace with God their sensible peace has its foundation laid in conviction.

There is a false peace.

Preparation . . . legal conviction.

Immediate foundation: . . . spiritual conviction has its foundation in light, and not in darkness . . . increased by conviction.

2. In those [that have peace] that quietness and rest of soul they have is not only their comfort but their virtue or nature. (3)

3. Christ is the foundation of all.

4. In those [that have peace there is] a sense of glory and suffering precedes a sense of propriety [= property, possession].

A more principal foundation.

5. . . . a rest of choice and love precedes a rest of hope.

The rest of the faculties of the soul in God is the Church's God . . . goes before a rest in Him as our God. . . . As a rest in His favour.

6. In those [that have peace] there is a union of heart with God and Christ, attended with a relinquishing all other things.

7. Attended with an irreconcilable war with God's enemies.*

* In a smaller character there is added here—

1. Conviction, . . . legal, . . . spiritual. . . . 2. Divided from that in which it sought peace. 3. Christ is the foundation. 4. Union of heart with God and Christ, attended with relinquishing [of all else.] 5. An irreconcilable war with sin, . . . an holy peace and rest. 6. A sight of excellency and suffering procures a sight of rest. 7. A rest of choice and love precedes a rest of hope. 8. A sweet, humble, peaceable frame of life. These are 'Notes' of a recapitulation of the Discourse thus far, preliminary to a second, which consisted of the remaining head V., amplified from the 'Notes.'—G.

IV. Benefits.

1. A being infinitely above the reach of everything that might make them men. . . .

I say infinitely above. . . . Infinitely strong defence . . . as impossible as to destroy God Himself . . . infinite wisdom . . . infinite strength engaged . . . infinite price . . . infinite truth. . . .

Dwell "on high" . . . infinitely high.

Foundation in that which is eternal: from eternity to eternity. . .

Oath of God. (Heb. vi. 17, 18.) . . .

2. A being at peace with all God's creatures. In different senses. Angels. . . . Saints. . . . Sun, moon, stars. Beasts. Stones, (Job v. 23.)

Water and fire, (Isa. xliii. 2.) . . . Whole creation 'groans.'

Poisonous things, (Mark xvi. 18 ; Luke x. 19.) . . . Wicked men and devils — All things for them, (1 Cor. iii. 21, 22.)

3. Communion with God.

4. An holy and sweet walking and friendly conversing with God. Amos iii. 3—"Two walk together." . . . "Called you friends."

5. More and more conformity and assimilation to God.

6. Communion with saints, (1 John i. 3-7.)

7. An irrefragable title to eternal glory.

8. Steadfastness under the changes of life. Anchor to the soul.

A steadfast calm in the midst of storms. A steadfast meekness in the midst of oppositions.

9. A strong and conquering support and comfort under the troubles of life. . . . Waiting our death.

10. Joy unspeakable.

V. Course to be taken in order to the obtaining this peace with God and enjoying the benefit of it.

1. A sense of the great breach. . . .

2. A sense of their misery by reason of the breach, and the absolute necessity of reconciliation. All false rest must be destroyed. The world. Own righteousness.

3. A conviction that God may justly refuse ever to be at peace with us.*

4. An eternal divorce of the heart from that which made and which maintains the breach.

5. The Prince of Peace must be resorted to and embraced.

6. An high war must be maintained with God's enemies.

7. A spirit of peace and love must rule in our hearts and lives.

This is the end of union between God and the soul. And this is the end of union between Christians, one with another. If we are much under the influences of a spirit contrary to this, we can't expect to have the sensible peace of God. But if you live in the lively exercise [of this] it will be the way to love.

The feeling of this gives sensible peace, as I observed before.

* Interlined here—"It is the foundation for spiritual light and knowledge."—G.

And it tends to give the other sort of sensible peace, that which consists in hope. "For perfect peace casts out fear."

V. and VI.

Acts xxiv. 25—"And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee."*

- I. The subject of the Apostle's preaching.
- II. How Felix was affected by it.
- III. How he conducted himself in these circumstances.

SUBJECT: Sinners delaying in putting off the great concern of their souls till a supposed more convenient season.

1. How sinners oftentimes do delay.
2. The reasons or causes why sinners do thus.
3. The end of it.

I. I would briefly observe how sinners do frequently delay and put off the great concern of their souls till a supposed more convenient season.

(1.) They sometimes put off to certain times they set, when they intend. . . . Children sometimes. . . . Shall know more—Know better how to pray and perform other duties of Religion that grown-up persons perform.

'Tis a common thing for young people. Till settled in the world. "More convenient season:" a better inclination not so much inclined to mirth and youthful vanities fewer temptations out of the way of young company more in the way of those who are solid and serious persons.

They esteem the present season very inconvenient for religion being so very convenient for other purposes. . . . Now a very convenient time to take liberty in mirth and youthful delights.

Many that are past their youth put off to a supposed more convenient season when got through such and such particular affairs wherein they are now involved when they hope they shall be more at liberty or till in this and the other respect they are got into more convenient circumstances.

(2.) There are many that delay and put off without fixing any time in their mind hoping for a more convenient future time. . . .

The present time appears peculiarly inconvenient feel a great opposition have many temptations hope it will be

* In the left-hand corner is marked, "Novemb. 1749," and a little beyond, "St Ind. = Stockbridge Indians, Aug. 1752." See Application for the second sermon. —G.

better with them not feel such an aversion fewer temptations. . . .

Wait to have the Spirit of God strive with them.

Now a time of general deadness, and very inconvenient on that account all the talk is of other things put off till a time of the outpouring of the Spirit of God. . . .

Or, perhaps, they are hoping for some greater advantage in other respects, some better means than now they enjoy, or a better concurrence of circumstances to favour a design of seeking God and their salvation.

II. The cause of persons thus delaying.

1. Stupidity senselessness of their danger and necessity.

Insensible of the reality insensible of the greatness senseless of the heinousness of their sin a brutish stupidity. . . .

2. The importunity of lust. . . . Job xx. 12—"Wickedness is sweet in his mouth; he hides it under his tongue; he spares it, and forsakes it not, he keeps it still in his mouth."

3. Aversion to their duty.

4. Ignorance of themselves and self-confidence.

Trust in wisdom strength steadfastness. . . .

5. A spirit of self-blinding. . . . The blinding influence of a sinful self-love promise themselves future opportunity better opportunity that God will hear. . . .

6. The subtle temptations of the Devil. . . .

III. The evil of it.

1. 'Tis exceeding wicked.

Direct disobedience wilful, resolved, wickedness determine to continue in sin, and an allowance of it. . . .

'Tis not only designedly committing one act of wickedness, but deliberately determining on a course of it a course of manifested wickedness neglect of many commands gratification of many lusts horrible ingratitude, abusing the past "long suffering" horrible presumption on future mercy contempt of offered mercy. . . .

2. 'Tis exceeding foolish. . . . Hereby they reject and miss a good deal of present good wilfully continue in a miserable state bring a great deal of certain future misery upon them. . . .

They run a dreadful risk depend on innumerable uncertainties life continued means of grace continued use of reason disposed "more convenient season" given one if disposed whether succeed whether God won't give over to delusion and to hard-heartedness. . . .

Depend on many things that are not only uncertain, but very improbable disposition convenient season thought when they were children make their case more and more dangerous depending on greater conveniences they make incon-

veniences for themselves and by this means many thousands are actually undone. . . .

APPLICATION :*—

This may be of warning to sinners not to delay and put off. . . .

You have heard how common this is. . . . Men are exceeding prone to it. . . . Does your own experience confirm what has been said in this matter? And are there not some here who are now doing as has been represented? Have we not reason to think that there are many here present that say as Felix, "When . . ." &c.?

Undoubted, by what is everywhere to be seen at such a time of general deadness and regardlessness of religion as this is: a good evidence of the exceeding proneness to put off. . . .

Let all take warning. . . .

You have heard something in general of wickedness and folly; but here consider more particularly—

1. What guilt you contract: what a horrible thing it is to live in known and wilful disobedience to God; what great light ye will sin against if you

2. What would you think of your delays if God should say to you, "Thou fool, this night?"

3. If the future time you are putting off to should never come, how far it will probably be from being a "more convenient season."

In many respects, far more inconvenient God's anger increased your heart harder, more stupid every evil habit established sloth a carnal, worldly disposition an habitual making light of things affecting such awakenings. . . . Satan's great opportunity to establish his interest commonly an increase of inconvenience of outward circumstances increase of temptations commonly many inconveniences arise that never would be thought of less likely ever to set about the work Satan hath greater advantages if they do more likely to be unsteady more likely soon to be discouraged the work is greater and harder that they have to do less time to do it. . . .

4. Others have lamented their folly in delaying many when under concern I who have long been in the work of the ministry many on a death-bed.

5. How much otherwise you deal with God, and desire that God should deal with you.

6. If you continue still to delay after the warning you have this day, how aggravated your wickedness will be!

How have you been warned hereof before and how have you gone from the meeting-house and still

How can you excuse yourself to go home to-night and do nothing? or to do a little this evening, and then to-morrow, or in a few days?

* The text is again placed above "Application," shewing that it formed a second sermon.—G.

Consider how unreasonable this is. . . .

And if now again, and there be a God, how may you reasonably suppose He will resent it?

7. If you still what danger that you will be utterly given up before the time comes. . . . Giving up a common thing. . . .

8. Enquire whether you yourself don't believe [that] there are many now in Hell through this very means?

Here some, perhaps, may say, to excuse themselves, and quiet their own consciences with respect to this, "I don't delay and put off the concern of my soul. I am in a way of seeking my salvation."

Here I would put two or three questions to such persons.

1. Whether you are in a way of minding this affair more than all others? "Seeking FIRST the kingdom of God,"—"one thing." . . .

2. Is your reformation universal? Sins of omission commission. . . .

3. [Do you feel] as much pains as ever you take will be needful? Forsaken all practices you think you would need to forsake? Complied with all duties? As earnestly? Do you intend to continue? How has secret, closet religion been with you? How have you kept the Sabbath? Attended the sermons? If not, . . . you are guilty of the forementioned wickedness, . . . wilful disobedience—guilty of folly. Therefore, if you have any regard to think on your mercies, and "turn your feet," and whatever "your hands find to do." . . .

VII. and VIII.

1 Pet. iii. 19, 20—"By which also he went and preached to the spirits in prison," &c. . . .*

Two things it is my present purpose to observe concerning the spirits or souls of those wicked men that Noah preached to. . . .

1. How long ago they lived.

2. How those souls are here spoken [of] as to their present state, "spirits in prison."

DOCTRINE.—Those wicked men who lived before the flood, and went to Hell in Noah's time, are there still.

1. I would give some reasons why they have remained in Hell so long.

2. Observe in some respects in what circumstances they remain there all this while.

I. Give some reasons.

Negatively.

1. 'Tis not because Hell has been tolerable to 'em.

2. 'Tis not because they ben't convinced of their former folly, . . .

* In left-hand corner, marked "June 1749." See 'Directions' for second sermon.—G.

that they have not yet been brought to their right mind or to their judgment of things.

3. 'Tis not because they are careless about their own welfare and ease, and not willing to be at any possible labours or cost in order to escape, if there were any hope of deliverance. Not because they don't wish and long not thoroughly-overwhelmed not because they ben't in earnest that they ben't thoroughly engaged in their spirits not yet disposed to own that the courses that they went on going weren't good not disposed to attend to any offer of mercy because they begrudge would be unwilling to lay out themselves not because they are covetous not willing to be shewn. . . .

4. 'Tis not because they were weaker than the generality of men. Many of them were giants.

5. Not because there is not a great number of those who are disposed to unite their strength to burst prison.

Afirmatively.

1. Their souls are immortal made for eternity of a nature agreeable to this design. . . .

Though they desire it, they can't return to nothing. "Seek death and cannot find it." Extreme torment, but no tendency to annihilate the soul tendency to sink it, but not to reduce it to nothing. 'Tis not with the soul as 'tis with the body in its present mortal state extreme oppression tends to destroy it.

2. They are not in a state of probation.

3. Their debt is what they can't pay. . . . Great debt to Divine justice. Have not wherewith. . . . Nothing to pay. . . . Cast into prison till they should pay the last mite. . . .

4. THERE IS NO GOSPEL PREACHED IN HELL. Christ did not die for the damned. . . . Had no respect to that world to those in this state any more than to the devil. No means of grace. Means of grace not accommodated to that state. No manner of provision made in any respect for their relief. No aid. Preaching of the Word don't reach them. The prayers of saints, of godly friends, don't reach them.

5. The place and state they are in was never designed for the exercise of mercy.

God is infinitely merciful ; but the exercises of mercy are not for ever. . . . Limited by Wisdom in various respects : has declared what the purposes of His wisdom are with respect to the exercises of His mercy. As to the kind of beings ; fallen men and not angels. . . . His declarations are according to truth. . . . His purposes are not altered. . . .

Hence no mercy in Hell. . . . Though their pain is extreme God don't pity 'em. Though their wishes for deliverance are great though their cries are loud though long continued though it be exceeding intolerable.

6. By being longer in Hell, they have not become any more fit for any other state don't make 'em better although indeed

their judgments are convinced, yet their hearts are the same. No change in their dispositions. There are no conversions in Hell. The wrath makes a great change indeed; but no saving change. The wicked in Noah's days were most of them very wicked on earth, yet, in some respects, they became worse when they went to Hell. Not fit for Heaven. Not fit to come and live in this world. Fit for no other place. That is the place provided and fitted for such.

7. The prison is strong that holds them. Delivered up into the hands of Satan . . . against whom they have no strength. And his cruelty is as strong as his power. And what is much more than devils, God confines them . . . irreversible sentence binds them. Omniscience opposes them. No escape by subtlety unobserved. Often here, in this world, persons break prison by stealth . . . get away by night, when no one observes them. . . . And God's Almighty power holds 'em down. And God ever lives. He is unchangeable. He never will alter His purpose . . . never will forget His own Son . . . never will forget His righteous sentence. . . .

II. Observe, in several things, in what circumstances they have been in, all this so long a time.

1. They have not been in a state of insensibility. "The Rich man." Not less their sensibility by long-continued torment and misery . . . hence not been deprived of the use of reason.

2. Have had no time of respite all this while. No rest. Rev. xiv. 11—"No rest day nor night." Both day and night are mentioned, because the night in this world is a time of rest. Have never been asleep . . . never find any resting-place. Never find out any assuaging medicines . . . any cool shadows . . . cooling green . . . never found a drop of water . . . never found any expedient for mitigating their torment.

They have had much to goad 'em, in exercising their invention. Necessity is the mother of invention. But their inventions have not saved them . . . have had nothing to divert them . . . no amusement to take off their attention. . . .

3. Have not forgotten things that were so long ago, or when they were on earth. "Son, remember." . . . Will remember over all at the Day of Judgment. Have not forgotten pleasant circumstances they lived in . . . swam in delights . . . their lives were long . . . the wickedness they committed . . . the opportunities they had . . . the warnings . . . Noah's preaching . . . their folly . . . the thoughts they had concerning God and His testimony.

4. Their misery is not grown more tolerable by their being so long used to it.

5. The great additions that have been made to the numbers from their time has been no comfort to 'em.

6. They have had no hope all this while . . . have none now . . . though their torments have been so long continued.

This is verified concerning all that go down to the pit of Hell. (Isa. xxxviii. 19)—"They that go down to the pit cannot hope for Thy truth."

USE :

May be of warning : Let sinners in these days take warning. Those that now live in unbelief and impenitence are in danger of the same.

1. Let me call upon [you] seriously to consider how long a time those who have been spoken of have already worn out [themselves] in Hell : they have been there 4000 years. How many ages ? How many and great changes, and successions, and transactions ? How many generations have passed ? How many successions of those who had come into being, gradually grown up, and grown old, and then died ?

Not only have many generations gradually come upon the stage and have died ; but many great and populous nations have come into being, and have flourished, and made a great figure in the world for many ages, and then by degrees have dwindled and wasted, swallowed up by other nations and come to nothing, and nothing of them now known but by history. And some of them very ancient and powerful, so that even the very history of them is almost come to nothing and vanished ; and all since they have been suffering the flames of Hell, without any cessation or rest. The world has been peopled subdued many mighty princes have appeared and made a good bustle, and none whose memory is now almost forgotten. . . . Very great and magnificent cities and now 'tis hardly to be known where they stood. Many kingdoms, yea, many great monarchies. . . . Those four monarchies of the world. How many things have worn out ! The strongest fortunes strongest empires most durable monuments pillars of brass monuments of marble stone. . . . Languages used as the common speech of large countries. Such things have gradually perished, and length of time worn 'em out ; but yet the torments of the "spirits in prison" yet remains not come to nothing are as fresh and lively and in as great vigour as the first moment.

The souls who are the subjects of these miseries were sinners, and their miseries immortal. Since they have been in Hell there has been a long series of wonderful dispensations of God towards His Church and the whole world. After the flood, the nations degenerated fell off to idolatry Abraham was 'called' children of Jacob became a great nation Christ was foretold of old, from time to time anciently prefigured and in the fulness of time Christ actually came into the world all these ancient prophecies and ancient types were fulfilled the Jews, God's ancient people, rejected Gentiles called prophecies were given a mighty change made in the Roman kingdom Anti-christ arose reigned for long time but at length the Reformation came. . . . During all those mighty changes on earth those souls spoken of in the doctrine, continued without ease day or night or one minute's respite, wrestling with the mighty torments of Hell ; and so they continue still torment not abated. These great and mighty changes on earth have not affected them to cause

any change there. There have been many good times on earth : days of great good ; but

2. How we may suppose the things which they remember of their past lives now affects them their worldly enjoyments the length of the time of their past ease and pleasures they lived long lives their past opportunities their long warnings the preaching they had their folly and stupidity obstinacy

3. How many since have followed their steps and have gone to Hell in like manner. 'Tis not the manner of men to take warning by those that perish before them. . . . Those that are gone before can see the folly of those that come after, whom it will do no good. The rich man in Hell. Those that went to Hell in Noah's day, see the folly of those that come to 'em from generation to generation. But those that follow after don't see the folly of those who went before, and so they follow them. . . .

4. They that have worn out so many ages in Hell, are never the nearer any end of their misery. The time is very long that they have suffered many tedious days tedious years and tedious ages one after another. . . . They must wear out another space of time as long as this in Hell flames, and another after that. . . . Soon the time will come when they will actually have worn out a million such as yea, a million and millions. . . . God foresees the time knows the particular passage of the day. Yea, as many such ages as there are particles of dust on the globe of the earth. . . . And even then NO MERCY. It will be without end. FOR EVER, YEA, FOR EVER. Therefore take warning. If you neglect to take warning you will go to Hell and the time will come when you will have been as long as they now have been and you must also be there millions of millions and you will be no nearer yea, will be in absolute despair as they are your wishes, and cries, and strength, and entreaties will be in vain. You in like manner will reflect on and curse your folly.

5. The torment that those spoken of in the doctrine have endured for so long a time, is but an imprisonment in order to execution. "Spirits in prison." "Chains of darkness." There is another day. Their misery is great now. We learn by the parable of Dives and Lazarus. . . . I know nothing by which it can be determined that the misery will not be a thousand times as great. . . . They 'tremble.' The chains are strong. There is no hope no relief to them.

6. The means and opportunities they enjoyed were nothing to yours. Little revelation of a future state.

7. God has an appointed time to wait on you. 'The Spirit will not always strive.'

8. Consider the sudden, unexpected manner in which they were destroyed (Luke xvii. 26, 27.) You will probably be surprised as they were. They had as much reason to flatter themselves as you, (Job xxvii. 20)—"A tempest stealeth him away in the night."

DIRECTIONS :*

1. Avoid those things by which the men that went to Hell in Noah's time undid themselves . . . particularly sensuality, (Gen. vi.; Luke xvii. 27.) . . . So it was with Sodom. Violence. "Evil imaginations." They would not hearken. They grew hardened to long-continued calls and warnings . . . habitually made light. Is there not reason to apprehend that this is the case with many here? You must reform your life . . . thorough reformation. . . .

2. You must in this respect be as Noah was in the generation of those souls that are "castaways;" particularly

1. You must avoid those liberties of young people that are customary.

2. Another thing that is apparently become customary, and doubtless is very provoking to God, is pride and extravagance in apparel. Not that I condemn all adorning the body. 'Tis evident by Scripture that some moderate degree of this is lawful. Oil that makes his face to shine, (Eccles. ix. 8; Matt. vi. 17; Prov. xxxi. 21, 22; Exod. iii. 22.) But yet 'tis apparent that there is a most sinful extravagance in this kind, (1 Tim. ii. 9; 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4; Isa. iii. 16, 18, &c.) Appears to be very provoking to God . . . when persons go beyond their rank. One end of apparel seems to be to distinguish. (Prov. xxxi. 22, 23.) Common people to shew an affectation to be like those of high rank; country towns to affect to be like the metropolis. When they go beyond their estate, disable themselves from paying their debts; deprive themselves of other things more necessary and more profitable; disable themselves much from deeds of charity. An affectation to distinguish themselves in imitating the fashions of the more gay part of the world. Complying with the general customs of a country in clothing is not vulgar. On the contrary, 'tis not decent to be singular. But some fashions in themselves are ill . . . extravagance . . . very costly . . . inmodest. . . .

All this care, and pains, and cost to adorn themselves shews persons to much affect outward ornament . . . seem to shew that they make much of themselves . . . all that which tends to encourage a general excess. Such things as these have been condemned by wise men of all nations.

'Tis a time when the nations here have got to a vast excess. The land is become exceeding extravagant. More so than in England in proportion to our ability and ranks. Prevents great good that might be done . . . is continually running in debt. The main thing that brings our greatest national calamities . . . particularly the present state the country is in with regard to a medium.† And is the main source of that general injustice that has been so long complained of . . . keeps the country in constant distress . . . maintains constant injustice . . . threatens us with ruin. . . . We in this

* Text and Doctrine placed here, shewing a second sermon commenced at this point.—G.

† That is, "the currency," coinage.—G.

town* are evidently got to a great excess. Boston is extravagant beyond London. And we, considering all things, I think beyond them how far below we fall short in rank state education and our situation in the world far beyond them.

I had occasion to observe the people at Portsmouth, in both the congregations in that place. That is a place very much famed for politeness, and is a city much like Boston in many respects. I judged the apparel of our congregation was fully as costly. Many things that might make it proper for them to go beyond us.

Such excess in gaiety and costliness of apparel is a manifestation of great vanity of mind. It seems to shew a great senselessness of our own vileness becomes us to go modestly modest apparel would better become such sinful creatures. Do not consider the end for which clothing was given to hide our shame that deformity that is the first of sin senselessness of what our bodies are coming to shews vanity of mind, as it shews the heart to be set on that which is exceeding vain and empty great want of a sense of the worth of those spiritual ornaments that are infinitely more valuable.

If persons had a proper concern for their soul, there surely would not appear very much affectation to

If religion should greatly revive it would undoubtedly make a great alteration.

This is one thing, among others, that tends to prevent its reviving.

God has of late awfully testified His displeasure for the extravagance of the country's manner of living.

3. You must not only seek, but strive. You must make it a business main business thorough How plain the necessity of it! How often in the Word of God! How plain by experience! On many accounts necessary How much you have had to convince you of the necessity! And are you, after all, in any sense awake? And how can you excuse this folly?

4. Be seasonable.

The sinners of the old world perished by the Flood because they were not seasonable. They doubtless, many of them, used means afterwards. Had need to make haste. . . . So we are directed from time to time. "Haste" "escape for thy LIFE." On many accounts necessary. How many have we reason to think perish through delay!

5. Not only engage in but go through that great work that is necessary in order to your escaping eternal damnation.

Do in this respect as Noah did for the saving himself and his house from the Flood.

6. Don't waste time in halting between two opinions.

How there seem to be some things that give special encouragement. Isa. lv. 6, 7.

* Viz, Northampton, New England.—G.