

## SERMON IV

*According to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.—VER. 2.*

THE Apostle's scope in general is, to set forth the misery of all unregenerate men, brought home to these Ephesians by way of application, yet so as every man in his natural condition may see his own estate by it. Men walk in sin whilst they are unregenerate; 'in which ye walked,' saith he; and they have three guides. They have the world; 'according to the course of this world.' They have the devil; 'according to the prince of the power of the air,' &c. And, last of all, 'the flesh,' our own corrupt hearts.

In opening of these words, as they relate to the Apostle's scope, I reduced them to these three heads:—

The first is, That Satan hath a kingdom opposite unto Christ's, which the Apostle therefore a little enlargeth upon in these words—he is 'the prince of the power of the air;' having in his eye to describe Satan's kingdom in opposition to that kingdom of Christ's which he had held forth in two or three verses before, namely, in ver. 20, 21 of the former chapter.

The second is, That all men in the state of unregeneracy are subjects of that kingdom and of that prince, and do live accordingly. And that is imported in the coherence of these words, 'in which ye walked according to the prince of the power of the air,' &c.

The third is, What his power over these his subjects is? It is more intrinsical, by working in them; he is the prince of a spirit that worketh in them.

I may add this in the fourth place, Because that the working of this spirit is in them, and so to demonstrate unto men that all carnal men are under the power of Satan, there had need be some evidence of it; therefore the Apostle addeth, 'that worketh now in the children of disobedience.' He points to some more eminent children of disobedience, in whom apparently, to the eyes of these Ephesians, or of any man enlightened by the Holy Ghost, the spirit of the devil doth appear: and, saith he, ye all had your conversation among these, and you were under his power more or less, as every unregenerate man is.

I have despatched the first, the description of the kingdom of Satan, as it is held forth in these words. I come now to the second, repeating nothing of what I have said; and the sum of it is this, that all unregenerate men are subjects of this kingdom, or this prince; which, I say, is imported in these words, 'in which ye walked'—viz., when ye were unregenerate—'according to the prince of the power of the air.' In that they are said to walk after this prince, or according to this prince, it importeth him to be their prince according to whose will they live.

I will open the phrase a little, and then I will give you such observations as shall be both to explain the thing further, and to quicken our hearts.

How are unregenerate men said to 'walk according to the prince of the power of the air,' or according to Satan as their prince?

In the first place, men are said to walk after their prince when they walk after his example. *Regis ad exemplum*, after the example of the prince the whole kingdom follows.

If it be said that the devil's example is not visible, therefore that cannot be the meaning of it, that they 'walked after the prince of the power of the air,' that is, after his example; my brethren, it is true his example is not visible, and men do not *de industria* imitate this devil. Yet, notwithstanding, whilst they do the same works that the devil himself, if he were incarnate, or supposing him to be clothed with flesh and blood, and that he were to live in this world and to be conversant amongst men as one man is with another, according to the laws of human kind—if, I say, they walk so as he would walk supposing him such, so long they may be said to walk after his example; they do by his instinct the same things he would do. There is a notable place for this in John viii. 44: 'You are,' saith Christ, speaking to the Jews, 'of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do.' Yea, at the 39th verse saith he, 'If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham.' They pretended to be Abraham's children, and they pretended to do the works of Abraham; but Christ tells them they were of their father the devil, and that they did his works. At the 30th verse, saith he, 'I speak that which I have seen with my Father, and ye do that which ye have seen with your father,' meaning the devil. A strange parallel this! It is certain that our Saviour Christ did do what he saw with his Father; for the Father doth nothing but what he sheweth the Son, as he saith, John v. 20. Yea, but, saith he, although you do not visibly see what the devil doth, yet you do the same things as if you had conversed with him, and been acquainted with him, as if you had seen him as children see their fathers. This is his scope. 'The lusts of your father ye will do,' saith he; and as I do that which I have seen with my Father, so ye do that which ye have seen with your father. Abraham walked before God, and was upright, as eyeing God in all things. Wicked men, indeed, do not walk thus before Satan, as eyeing him; yet they walk in the same steps, as if they saw what the devil doth, and what he would do.

Then again, in the second place, they are said to walk after the prince of the power of the air, not only because materially they do the same things the devil doth and would do, but because they satisfy his lusts, and his will over them, in all that they do. 'The lusts,' saith he, 'of your father ye will do,' ver. 44. You do not only the same things which he doth, but which he desires you should do; and so you gratify him in all that you do, and you fulfil his pleasure more than you do your own. They are not said to fulfil their own lusts so much as the lusts of their father the devil.

And then, in the third place, not only they do what he would have them do, but they do it after a commanding power of his. A friend may do what a friend desires; but yet he doth not walk after him as a prince. But now, all carnal men in the world do walk after Satan as their prince; they do not only what he desireth they should do, but he hath a commanding power over them, for that being a prince evidently implies. And therefore, in 2 Tim. ii. 26, they are said to be 'taken captive at his will.' And in Acts xxvi. 18, when men are converted, they are said to be delivered, to be turned 'from the power of Satan.'

And so now you have the phrase opened—what it is to walk after the prince of the power of the air. I only add this, because he speaks chiefly of

the great devil. He doth not immediately command in all men's hearts,—for it is impossible he should,—as Christ doth; therefore Christ is called a Head as well as a Prince, so is not Satan; yet he sends out lesser devils that do command in men's hearts. As suppose there were those here in England that should act all the king of Spain's counsels, or the Pope's counsels, and what he commandeth, though what is done here is not immediately done by either of these, yet if it be done by those agents that are sent out by the king of Spain, or by those emissaries that are sent out from Rome, they may be said to walk after their prince, or to walk after the beast; those, I mean, that do obey their directions: so it is here.

I come now to some observations, that will further open the words.

*Obs. 1.*—The first observation is this: *That this great kingdom of Satan's especially lies, for the matter of it, in sin.* It is clear out of the coherence: 'Ye were dead,' saith the Apostle, 'in sins and trespasses, in which ye walked according to the prince of the power of the air.' His principedom therefore lies in matter of sin; and men are subject to him as to a prince, chiefly as they walk in sin. As the kingdom of Christ consisteth not in meat and drink, but in righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; so Satan's kingdom lies not in disposing of riches or honours, simply so considered, further than in order some way to the advancing of his own kingdom, and as men sin in the pursuit of them. It was a lie the devil told Christ, when he said he had all the kingdoms of the world to dispose of; that is proper only to God, as you have the expression in Dan. iv. But now, as the Pope pretends to a spiritual power, and saith he hath power in temporals *in ordine ad spiritualia*, in order unto spirituals; so the devil and these rulers of the world, they are 'spiritual wickednesses,' as they are called, Eph. vi.; but yet in order to advance this their spiritual kingdom of sin, they do deal in the great affairs of the world, and in turning things up and down; but yet still, I say, their kingdom properly, the object-matter of it, lies in matter of sin; and therefore in Eph. vi. 12, if you mark it, they are said to be the 'rulers of the world of this darkness,'—so the words are to be read,—that is, they are rulers only of the darkness of the world, that is, the sin of the world. And were it not for sin, they should have no power over men. 'The prince of this world cometh,' saith Christ, 'and he hath nothing in me,' because Christ had no sin. Satan's kingdom doth not lie hereafter to torment men, for then we might fear him. 'Fear him that can cast both body and soul into hell.' Torment, the punishment of sin in hell, is God's work; but the devil's proper work is sin.

Now, my brethren, it is thus, both in Satan's intention, and in his constant course to this day. When he first set up his kingdom, he did not aim so much to have the disposeure of all the honours and glory in the world,—though in order to advance his kingdom he hath done it, and he hath had it,—but his principal aim was to set sin up in the world against God. Therefore, in 1 John iii. 8, sin is called the work of the devil; that is, it is his great project, his great design. And the Apostle speaks there of Satan's kingdom in men's hearts: for he saith that Christ came to dissolve the work of the devil, therefore not in his own heart, but in men's. Every kingdom, you know, hath an interest of state; and if men be true to their interest, they follow it close and pursue that above all things else. Why, the interest of state that is in Satan's kingdom is to advance sin. Therefore while you walk in sin, you walk according to the prince of the power of the air.

There is this difference between us poor men, that are by nature the

captives of this great prince, and the prince himself. We are gulled the most extremely that can be ; our design is to have riches, honours, and pleasures here in the world. We do not aim to sin, unless it be such as have sinned against the Holy Ghost. We would be glad to have these things without sin. But because we aim at these things, and cannot attain them without sin, therefore it is that we sin. But it is otherwise with Satan ; for to have men sin against God is his great design ; it is the kingdom that he hath set up. Therefore now we are like a company of poor silly rebels that are led into the field by an arch traitor, and some go for plunder and spoil ; but he goes to vex his prince, to oppose him, to rebel against him. And that is the great design of this great monarch the devil.

Now, my brethren, the meditation that you may have for your use from hence is this, and it is, next to the glory of God and the dishonour of God, the greatest consideration can be had in the world to deter a man from sin ; consider but this : that by sinning ye do pleasure the devil ten thousand times more than yourselves. Therefore saith Christ, ‘ his lusts ye will do ;’ and when ye do his lusts, that which he would have you do, you give him satisfaction, you bring him in pleasure, you advance his kingdom. It is the motive that John useth why men should not sin. Sin, saith he, is the devil’s work, and will you advance his design ? 1 John iii. 8. If you mark the coherence, it is clearly so. And it is the work of Christ to dissolve sin. ‘ He hath appeared,’ saith he, ‘ to dissolve the work of the devil,’ in the same place. So that now, as Christ’s kingdom and his power lies, and the intent of it is, to dissolve sin ; so the devil’s kingdom and his aim is to set up sin. All his comings in are by men’s sinnings. It is not man’s end to sin, but it is Satan’s. Nay, my brethren, let me say this unto you, that Satan doth not aim so much at your damnation as he doth aim you should sin, though he aims at your damnation too ; for he hates man, but he hateth God more. In the damnation of the creature, therein is God glorified ; but in the sin of the creature, thereby God is dishonoured, and thereby Satan is therefore the more gratified. And therefore we should learn from hence this great lesson, to hate sin more than damnation : for it is certain the devil himself is pleased more with your sin than with your damnation, for he is the prince of it. ‘ Walking in sin,’ saith he, ‘ according to the prince,’ &c.

*Obs. 2.*—A second observation, which will clear and explain what we are upon, is this : *That only those, and all those that walk in sin, be it the least, are subjects unto Satan ;* ‘ in which ye walked according unto the prince,’ &c. In 1 John iii. 8, 9, the place I quoted even now, ‘ he that committeth sin is of the devil ;’ and being of the devil, he is on the devil’s side, he is of his party ; that phrase of Christ’s interprets it, ‘ he that is not with me.’ He that committeth sin is with the devil ; and so he that walketh in it, the comforts of his life come in by it, makes a trade of it, be it the least. And John gives this very reason why every man that committeth sin thus is of the devil ; ‘ for the devil,’ saith he, ‘ sinneth from the beginning.’ What is the meaning of that ? He that continueth in any sin, saith he, is of the devil ; because that hath been the devil’s practice, it is that which makes him a devil, his having sinned from the beginning,—not having sinned at the beginning, but his continuing in sin, going on in a constant course of it. And then again, he saith, he that is born of God hath a new nature that cannot agree with it. But I add this reason to it also : because if that Satan’s kingdom lies in sin, as you heard before, then where sin reigneth, Satan reigneth. The case is clear ; for if his kingdom lieth in it, where that reigns, he must needs reign. And therefore to be servants of sin, as in

Rom. vi. 20, is all one and to be the servants of Satan ; as to be the servants of righteousness, as you have it there, is all one and to be servants unto Christ. And therefore in Acts xxvi. 18, instead of saying, to turn men 'from sin unto God,' you have it, to turn men 'from the power of Satan unto God ;' because where sin reigns, there Satan reigns.

There is this likewise may be added to explain it : Satan's kingdom, you see, lies in sin, and the bounds of his kingdom lie in the dominion of any sin. And therefore now, although he doth not carry on all men to all sins, yet, notwithstanding, if sin have but dominion in a man that he walketh in it, then Satan hath a dominion. Though he doth not carry men on to all degrees of sinning, yet still his kingdom is maintained in them, as concerning the persons that are the subjects of his kingdom, they come within the bounds of it ; for the bounds of Satan's kingdom lie in this, when sin reigneth, when men walk in it, let it be any sin, though never so small. The truth is, God doth not let men be so wicked as Satan would have them ; we must not understand it so, that Satan is such a prince that hath so his will as whatsoever he would have men do, they do. But he is such a prince as having a company of discontented rebels under him, he suffers them all to walk by their own laws ; yet look, what is peculiarly the law of his kingdom or commonwealth,—for so I call every man's heart,—he holds them to that law, he hath power to put them upon that sin. He is a tyrant that hath not a kingdom of one kind, as amongst men, but he hath variety of dominions, some greater, some lesser, for so I may call the hearts of several men unregenerate ; yet still, be it the smallest sin, if a man walks in it, he comes within the verge of his kingdom, his person is in his kingdom, and in that snare the devil takes him captive at his will, and so he is his prince. My brethren, sin is the devil's viceroy ; he is the chief prince indeed. And though it be but a petty viceroy, it keeps the devil's tenure, and the devil hath power according to the common law God affords him, to put men on to that sin which their peculiar humour is addicted unto. And therefore sin is called the 'snare of the devil,' 2 Tim. ii. 26, in which men are 'taken captive at his will.' Now any one lust is a snare ; and as a bird that is taken in a snare by the fowler,—for the word here, 'taken captive,' is *venatu capto*, to take alive by hunting,—the bird may hang by one string or cord, and he hath her by that at his will : so any one sin—for corrupt nature venteth itself in several men several ways—is a snare, and it is a snare of the devil. You may see that in 1 Tim. vi. 9, 'They that will be rich fall into a snare,' when their heart is set upon it ; it holds in any sin, instance in what you will.

*Obs. 3.*—The last observation that I shall make is only this, which is the apostle's scope also : *The misery that all unregenerate men are in that walk in sin.* It is the apostle's scope here to strike their hearts with the depth of that misery which they lay in by nature ; and to express it to them, he shews they were subjects of that great kingdom of Satan. My brethren, let me speak sadly to all our hearts. Every man falls either under the kingdom of Christ or under the kingdom of Satan ; and we do this hour, this moment, actually stand members either of the one or of the other ; there is not a third kingdom, as there is not a third place to go to. Our Saviour Christ, in Luke xi. 23, when he discoursed of Satan's kingdom and of his own,—of Satan's kingdom, ver. 18, 'His kingdom,' saith he, 'is not divided against itself ;' of his own kingdom and of God's, ver. 10, 'If I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you ;' here are two kingdoms,—now, ver. 23, he tells them plainly every man must fall to one of these kingdoms, there is no neutrality : 'He

that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth;’ he falleth to that scatterer, he that is the great destroyer, as he is called, Rev. ix. 11. As it is in war, you must take part either with the one side or with the other, there must be no neuters; so it is here, they are so engaged, and such an irreconcilableness there is, that men must fall, and they do fall, one way or other.

And let me add this further: That we were all born under Satan’s kingdom is as certain as that we are; and that till by an almighty power we are rescued out of that kingdom, and translated into the kingdom of his Son, we must remain in it, and we walk in it. Now therefore consider with yourselves, it is a matter of the greatest happiness, or unhappiness, of men born into this world, under what kingdom they are born, and are cast to live. What an infinite misery is it to the poor Grecians and their children to be born under the tyranny of the Great Turk! and what a happiness to be born in these western parts! for still, the more western and northward, the more freedom have the subjects, and the more eastern, the more tyranny. It is a matter of great concernment what king a kingdom hath: ‘Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child,’ Eccles. x. 16; and, ‘When the wicked bear rule, the people mourn,’ Prov. xxix. 2. Now if God from heaven should curse a man, if Christ himself should utter the greatest curse that ever he uttered, what would that curse be? Let the devil be his king, and let the devil rule over him. You shall find in Scripture that it is thus: Ps. cix. 6, ‘Set thou a wicked man over him;’ the Septuagint renders it, ‘Set that wicked one over him,’ using the same word John useth in his first epistle, chap. ii. 13, *ὁ πονηρός*, that wicked one, the devil: and saith he, in the very next words in the psalm, ‘Let Satan stand at his right hand’—he is that wicked one; let him be both his ruler to carry him on to sin, and when he hath done, let him be his accuser too: for so always the witnesses that accused a man stood on his right hand; therefore, in Zech. iii. 1, you read, when Satan would accuse Joshua the high priest, he stood at his right hand.

Now, my brethren, whose curse is this, and upon whom did it fall? It is the first curse in that psalm in which the prophet begins to curse, that that same wicked one should be set in office over him, as some translate it, and that Satan should stand at his right hand,—that is, when he had carried him on to evil, then to accuse him, and so destroy him body and soul. Whose is this curse? My brethren, plainly this curse is against Judas, and therefore is spoken in the person of Christ. (And by the way, I take it, you have no psalm that hath this kind of cursing in it, but it is David bearing the type of Christ, or prophesying immediately of Christ.) How do you prove that? Look into Acts i. and you shall find that the very words of this psalm are applied to Judas, and that by the Apostle Peter. ‘It is written in the book of Psalms,’ saith he, ‘Let his habitation be desolate, and his bishopric let another take,’—the very next words in that 109th psalm,—and so he goes on. Now, that this did immediately concern Judas appears by this: for the apostle in Acts i. saith that another apostle was to be chosen in the room of Judas, which all the world could not have revealed had not the Holy Ghost revealed that his aim in this psalm was personally to curse Judas. And this curse is the curse of Jesus Christ, who is able to curse. When Christ from heaven would curse a man, Set the devil over him, saith he; and it was fulfilled, the Scripture saith Satan entered into Judas. As the swine, when the devils entered into them, were carried headlong into the sea, so Judas fell ‘headlong,’ saith Acts i. 18. And he carried him on to

hang himself; for after he had been his ruler to carry him on to sin, then he was his accuser to God; and he never left until he had a commission from God to tempt him to undo himself. You see, my brethren, that the heaviest curse that Christ himself from heaven pronounceth against his great enemy, he that was a traitor to him, that delivered him up to be crucified, is this, that the devil should rule over him.

Will you now but consider, in a word or two, what a king you have. Alas! in being a servant of sin, sin is but a moral king, a metaphorical king; but the devil is a real king, a personal king, a creature subsisting and existing as yourselves; therefore we are said to be 'taken captive at his will.' He hath an understanding and a will, and out of that understanding he rules and guides thee, as one reasonable creature rules and guides another. And what art thou but a poor captive? Thou hast but a little of thy will, he hath his will; thou art but taken captive, like the ox that goes to the slaughter, or as a bird that hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life, as Solomon speaks. Do but consider with yourselves;—for, as I said before, this is certain, though we hear not the devil, nor see him, nor feel him, yet whilst we lie in the state of nature, or walk in the least sin, the devil is our prince, and he serves his turn upon us;—consider, I say, we are all men, and man is a noble creature, he scorns to be led captive. Why, thou art led captive by Satan. 'Ye were carried away,' as the Apostle saith, 1 Cor. xii. 2, 'unto dumb idols, according as ye were led.' And thou art deceived and gulled by it, for thou hast but a petty project in sinning; he hath the greatest design in the world, he acts another part; his design is to set up sin against God directly and immediately. Poor creatures, that is not our design immediately. Therefore he is said to 'deceive the nations,' Rev. xx.; and he deceived Eve, 2 Cor. xi. 3. Now man, as he scorns to be led, so of all things else he scorns to be deceived. There was never such a gull put upon the world as this; therefore it is said, the mystery of iniquity wrought. They that brought in Popery knew not themselves what they did; but the devil knew, he designed it, it wrought in a mystery. So now the mystery of iniquity works in all men, and the truth is, they do not know the bottom of it, the depths of Satan in it, they do not know the bottom of the design.

And as we are thus deceived, so we serve one of another nature. It was a law in Israel that they should not have a king that was a stranger, one of another nation, but that they should choose one from among their brethren to be their king, Deut. xvii. 15. Why, Satan is not a prince of your own nature, he is not of flesh and blood. We fight not with flesh and blood, saith the Apostle, but with spiritual wickednesses. It is therefore to us poor men, as I may so compare it, just such a bondage as the Israelites were in under Pharaoh. Pharaoh was king over his Egyptians, they were his natural subjects, they had a comfortable life under him, as the natural Turks have under the Great Turk; but we are like the Israelites, whom he made to serve with rigour; or as the poor Grecians, and other Christians, that are slaves and captives to the Turk—he is of another nature from them. So is this devil; his own devils have a natural kingdom with him, therefore he doth temper it so to them as that he doth not oppose them, for then they would divide from him; and therefore Christ saith, if Satan should cast out Satan, his kingdom would be divided, and not be able to stand. But we, poor creatures, are as the beasts that are taken, as Jude expresseth it, at his pleasure, and are under a prince of another nature. And not only so, but we serve an utter enemy that perfectly hates us, and that seeks to destroy us. In Rev. ix. 11, those same locusts there spoken of had a king. But what

manner of king had they? Even such, yea, the same king as we have; it was the 'angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue,' saith he, 'is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue his name is Apollyon,'—that is, the destroyer. His aim is nothing but to destroy and to undo us; therefore he seeks whom he may delude. And when he useth his authority to carry us on to sin, then he goes to God and accuseth; when that wicked one ruleth over a man, then he standeth on his right hand and is an accuser. Therefore he is said to have the power of death, not because he is a tormentor, but because he hath a commission from God to carry a man on to sin, and then to urge his commission.

My brethren, let us therefore come in to Jesus Christ; he is a king of our own nature. In all probability, as I shewed before, it was a motive to the angels to set up a kingdom against Christ, because they would not be subject to one of another nature. It may therefore well be a motive unto us to come in and subject ourselves unto Christ. Why? Thou shalt have a king that is of thine own nature; and whereas the other is a destroyer, he will be a saviour; whereas the other is an accuser, he will be an interceder.

I should likewise shew you the Apostle's scope is thankfulness; but I reserve that till we come to those words, 'He hath made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ.' For it is a great change to be translated from the kingdom of Satan and to sit together with Christ in his kingdom, which is the state of every Christian.

And so much now for that second head,—viz., That every unregenerate man is a subject of Satan's kingdom, and their misery in that respect,—which is clearly the Apostle's scope,—and that they 'walk according to the prince of the power of the air.'

I come now to the third head, and that is this: *The spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.*

Here are three things for the parts of these words. Here is *the spirit that worketh*; here is the time when, *now*; here are the persons in whom, *the children of disobedience*. I must first open the phrases, before I can come to the things I shall speak out of it. And—

First, *What is meant by 'spirit that worketh'?* The difficulty of opening this lieth in this: because in the Greek it is the genitive case, as we call it; that is, if you would translate it rightly, 'the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that worketh.' And so here being three genitive cases coming together, 'of the power, of the air, of the spirit,' it makes the words the more difficult. There are some, and you see our translators took part with them, that say it is a change of the case; that the genitive case is put for the accusative, that is thus, 'in which ye walked according to the prince,' saith he, and if you would know what that prince is, he is 'the spirit that worketh,' &c. And it is true that there are instances in Scripture that one case is sometimes put for another. But the truth is, it is both hard and not so usual; and therefore, unless there be a necessity of it, I would not square the meaning here by that transposition of the case. And there is this reason for it besides, because that the great devil, who is this great prince, doth not work in every child of disobedience all those works that are wrought by other devils in them. Rather, therefore, it must be meant that he is the prince either of the *spirits*, or of a *spirit*, that doth work in them. And so the sense will run in a natural way, 'the prince of the power of the air, the prince of the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.'

Now then, if you take it so, it hath a double meaning. Either *spirit* is



taken here *pro spiritu spirante*, that is, the spirit that breatheth; or *pro spiritu spirato*, that is, the spirit that is breathed into men. That is, it is either taken exegetically for the words before, 'the power of the air,'—that is, those lesser devils that are under this great devil, that are his spirits, and that go and work in men by his directions, he being the prince of them, and ordering them so to do,—or else it is taken for that common joint gale that these devils have in the hearts of wicked and carnal men, especially those that are eminently the children of disobedience. He is the prince of both these spirits.

First, I say *spirit* is either taken for the devils themselves, that are under this great prince, whom he setteth on work. And so the Apostle explaineth what he meant by the 'power of the air;' they are spirits, saith he, sent out by the great devil to work in the hearts of the children of disobedience. And they are called 'spirit' in the singular number, as they were before called 'the power of the air' in the singular number, because they are united into one body, they do join with one force under this great devil; they work one way and as one spirit, especially in respect of a common spirit, of which we shall speak anon, that they breathe into the hearts of the children of disobedience; they carry things on by a common design. And that 'spirit' is taken thus in the singular number, although there be many of these devils, is clear from Matt. viii., and Mark v. from ver. 7 to 14, and Luke viii. 29. When Christ cast out a whole legion of devils—for so many they were—out of one man, yet that whole legion speaks in the singular number unto Christ, 'Torment me not,' ver. 7. And Christ speaks in the singular number to him, after he had told him they were many, 'Come out, thou unclean spirit,' ver. 9; and, ver. 10, 'He besought him that he would not send them away;' *he* and *them*. Though they were many, yet still they were called one spirit. And therefore this is one meaning of it, that there are a world of devils here in the air, which are spirits who join all together in one body under this great prince, and work in the children of disobedience. If you would know, saith the Apostle, what I mean by the 'power of the air,' I mean the spirits—which are called *spirit* for the reasons I told you of—that do now work in the children of disobedience.

But there is a second interpretation, which indeed, for my part, I rather think is the meaning of this place, although we need exclude neither, for both senses are fully taken in. When he saith, he is the prince of the spirits, or of a spirit, that now worketh, &c., he doth not mean only by 'spirits,' the devils, that work as spirits in men; but he meaneth that infusion, that spirit, as I may so call it, that general, common, special spirit,—for I may call it both special and common,—that the devils do raise up in wicked men against Christ and against God; a common active principle which the devils do all raise, whereof Satan, the prince, is the Æolus, the god of all these winds he letteth loose, and they all blow one way: and that common gale that comes from them all, and that by the great prince's direction, that is said to be the spirit that worketh. The Syriac doth father this interpretation, for it putteth in the word 'and,'—'and of the spirit,' that is, 'the prince of the power of the air, and of the spirit that worketh,' &c.

Now I shall shew you, both that *spirit* is so taken in Scripture, and that it seems to be taken so here too.

1. It is so taken in Scripture, Gen. xli. 38. There Pharaoh, speaking in the language of his conjurers that dealt with the devils, whom they took for gods, saith, 'Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the spirit of God is?' And, Dan. iv. 8, 9, Nebuchadnezzar useth the same word of

Daniel: 'A man,' saith he, 'in whom is the spirit of the holy gods;' that is, he hath the infusion, the inspiration of the gods, which indeed were their devils, who were then the gods of the world, and wrought in the soothsayers and in their sibyls, as amongst the heathens they did. Both Pharaoh, you see, and Nebuchadnezzar use the same language, and there *spirit* is put for the infusion of the devils in them. So now that spirit that breatheth in a man, that giveth him understanding, it is called a spirit, Job xxxii. 8, 'There is a spirit in a man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth understanding.' And so in Rev. xix. 10, 'The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy.' He means not the Holy Ghost only, but a prophetic gift inspired by the Holy Ghost. So here, by *spirit* is not only meant the devils that breathe, but that common spirit—*spiritus spiratus*, as I may call it—that the devil raiseth up in the hearts of men, and putteth into their spirits, and transformeth them to.

Now, that which makes me think the Apostle had this in his eye is this, because he doth put two articles, and not only so, but he addeth the word *now*. And the Apostle seems to point at some more eminently wicked. That you may know, saith he, that men are under the power of the devil, do but observe *now*, now in this age; do you not see what a spirit works in men that are eminently wicked, the children of disobedience? Although you do not see it in all unregenerate men, yet you may, saith he, see it in some evidently to be the devil, by the spirit that worketh in them, because the stream riseth higher than the fountain, beyond reason, beyond the spirits of men; for so their rage against Jesus Christ and his saints in those primitive times, the spirit that then wrought, was beyond the spirits of men: there could be no reason, no account given of their persecuting those that professed Christ; for they persecuted the Christians, and did not understand what they were, but the devil did. He raised a mighty spirit, a general stream, whereof some eminent men that were children of disobedience were the ring-leaders that carried on all the rest. The devils went, by a common blast that they breathed into men, and carried the world before them, against Christ and against the apostles and saints; you may see how it works, saith he.

And so now, my brethren, in the first words, when he saith, 'ye walked according to the prince of the power of the air,' he meaneth the ordinary sinfulness that is in all unregenerate men, being under the power of Satan. But in these latter words he meaneth a special spirit, that is yet a common and general spirit, that worketh in the children of disobedience, which is set up against Jesus Christ and the purity of his worship, as then it was, and against the commandment of the Lord Jesus. This same special spirit, that yet is one gale in the hearts of men, Satan is the prince of it, and your lesser devils go all one way, and under that persecute the saints, having direction from this great devil; therefore he is said to be the prince of the spirits. And the Apostle brings it in to this end and purpose, to let them see, though they were now converted, yet, saith he, had you lived in your former condition, this spirit would have breathed in you; you may even see what manner of men you would have been, how the devil would have jaded you, by the spirit that now worketh in the world: you would have been acted by the same spirit; for whilst you were under the devil's kingdom you might have been raised up—though all men are not, yet you might have been raised up—to the same height that he now worketh in them.

There is one objection why that this spirit infused, this raised spirit in men, should not be meant here; and it is Piscator's objection. I will give you an answer to it, and shew you that both may very well be intended, and

so come to observations. This latter interpretation is Zanchy's, though he expresseth it only in general, a *flatus*, an inspiration, or the breath of Satan. But Piscator's objection against this interpretation is this. That cannot be meant, saith he ; for the spirit here is said to *work* in the children of disobedience ; therefore the spirit here must be meant a person or persons, and therefore the devils themselves only. And he backs it with this, because in 1 Cor. xii. 6, speaking of the Holy Ghost as a person, he is said to ' *work all in all*,' which argueth him to be the Third Person in the Trinity.

For that I answer, that this hindereth not but still by *spirit* here may be meant that raised spirit that is from the devils themselves, that inspiration of them, and infusion of them ; because I find that the same word that is used here of working, is applied to other things than persons, that is, to spirits too, infused. 2 Thess. ii. 7, 'The mystery of iniquity now worketh ; it is the same word. What was this mystery of iniquity ? You shall find in 1 John iv. 3 : 'The spirit of Antichrist,' saith he, 'whereof you have heard that it should come, and even now is come into the world.' That is, the truth is, saith he, the devil beginneth to raise up the beginnings of that spirit of Antichrist amongst Christians, which shall one day work up to a height ; it worketh now, saith he. And indeed it may be that this very spirit was one part of the Apostle's meaning that he points at. Look out, Christians, saith he ; see what a spirit there is among them, making way for corruption in the worship and truth of God ; look among the heathens, see what a mighty spirit there is, the devil in both, he is the prince of both these. Now, in Rom. vii. 5, likewise, because you will say it is not said to work in us ; yea, but there it is said that 'the motions of sins,' ἐνεργήσω, 'did work in our members ;' it is the same word that is here. It is applied then, you see, to other things than to persons. Therefore, I say, that is no objection but this latter should also be meant. For my part, I say, I take in both—the one as the cause, the other as the effect. He is a prince of a company of devils that are spirits, and work as spirits in the children of disobedience ; and they raise up a common spirit. And that you may know the devils work, saith he, Do but see now how they work in the children of disobedience, and such would you have been, if God had not freed you ; you would have had the same spirit they had, and been led by him more or less. This is the Apostle's scope. The like phrase of speech you have in 2 Cor. iv. 13, 'We have received the same spirit of faith.' What means he by 'spirit of faith' there ? He means both *spiritum spirantem*, the Holy Ghost that puts faith into me, who is called therefore the Spirit of faith ; and he means also the grace of faith, the infusion of the Holy Ghost, whereby I do actually believe. Many like instances may be brought to prove that 'spirit' implies both ; therefore, for my part, I take in both, the one and the other.

So now you have these three parts of the words. First, you have here a spirit that works, whereof he is the prince, taken both for his devils, that are spirits and work by him ; taken also for that common infusion which his devils breathe into men. Secondly, you have the time ; 'that now worketh.' Thirdly, the persons in whom ; 'in the children of disobedience.' Now, I shall give you some observations, if you take either one sense or the other ; for both are intended, the one as the cause, the other as the effect, and as a demonstration of the misery of man by nature, which these Ephesians themselves may see in those that are eminently the children of disobedience, in whom the devil raiseth such a spirit.

*Obs.*—First, If you take it for his being a prince of spirits that thus worketh, I shall give you these observations, which shall further explain it.

First, *that it relates to their manner of working*, that they work as spirits in men. And the Apostle doth insinuate this for two ends: the one, to shew the manner of their working; the other, to shew the advantage of their working. They work as spirits, for the manner of their working, in the children of disobedience; and for their advantage,—they have mighty advantage upon it,—and therefore to shew it, in Eph. vi. 12, he saith, ‘We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual wickednesses,’ that is, wickednesses that are spirits. I shall explain it to you by degrees. God did make man under angels, as he hath made other creatures under man; though not in the like inferiority, yet in a proportionable distance. Now, this is a certain rule, amongst all God’s works, take the whole chain of them from first to last, that in the subordination of several creatures, the higher one creature riseth above another it is able to do all that is below it, all that is excellent, yea, and hath a power to do more; as now, all the senses that a beast hath, man hath, and he hath reason besides. Then for the manner of their working, which is the point I would explain: the angels being spirits, all the ways which one man hath to work upon another, the angels have the same, and more. What are the ways that a man hath to work upon another? He can do it by speech, and he can do it by presenting objects externally; and he can do it by threatening, or by punishment, or the like. But the devil can do all this and more. He can appear as a man doth, and convey himself unto a man by speech; and not only so,—for this is but working upon a man, this is not working in him,—but the devil can creep into the fancy, he can creep into the humours, and into the passions of a man’s body, which depend much upon his humours, and can act them; therefore he can work in us. My brethren, one angel cannot work in another; one devil doth not possess another. Why? Because they are creatures of a like rank. And therefore as one man communicateth his mind to another, and cannot creep into a man to suggest it secretly and indiscernibly, because man and man are creatures of a like rank; so are angels. Michael and the devil disputed indeed about the body of Moses, as one man doth with another; but one angel cannot indiscernibly work in another. And therefore there is this difference between the devil’s working in us, and that which one man worketh upon another. One angel may work upon another, and persuade him thus and thus, but he cannot work in him; but the devil, being an angel, and an angel being a superior creature to man, hath a way of communicating himself to man which one man hath not to another. Yet he hath not that way that God hath, for he doth not know the heart; but he can work upon the fancy and upon the passions. The will is joined to the affections and passions, and he can work upon them. The understanding is joined to the fancy; he can work upon that, and so work upon the understanding. He can work in us; yet, notwithstanding, it is not as God doth.

If you ask me, what it is he can do in us? I will answer in a word, because it hath been spoken to heretofore—

He can, first, indiscernibly, as a spirit, *put into you what thoughts he will*, suggest anything; he can imprint it upon the fancy, and the understanding will take it off presently. In John xiii. 2, it is said, the devil ‘put it into the heart of Judas to betray Christ;’ he wrought in him. He can take away thoughts, and put in thoughts; he can take them away, for he can divide the thoughts. In Luke viii. 12, the devils are compared to fowls—*αἱ τοὶ λαγῶν*—that take away, that snatch away violently the seed that is sown; he will not only steal them away, but doth it violently; divide the thoughts of a man at a sermon, and make him think of somewhat else. And he is

the envious one that soweth tares in the night, and undiscernibly; as seed, you know, is sown in the ground undiscernibly, especially in the night. He can put into us what he will. And, my brethren, let me add, he would not have power to work in us, unless we had sinned. If he had been perfect, and we perfect, he might have wrought in us, and suggested to our spirits undiscernibly; but, as I take it, this same *working in us* is not only a note of difference from what one angel can do to another, but it is a note of difference of what Satan, being fallen, could have done to Adam, or to Christ himself, who were perfectly holy. He could not come to Eve, though he was a foul unclean spirit, and work in her, he could not put a thought in her undiscernibly, for that had been his best way; and he could not then take the shape of a man or a woman to talk in, because the image of God was not yet defaced in man, and therefore he comes and talks to her in the shape of a serpent; and she knowing the nature of that beast, knew that he was next door to reason, and so he might speak, and that deceived her. And so for Christ himself, he comes and makes visible apparitions, but we read not, nor do I know any good warrant or ground for it, that that unclean spirit should come and work in him. But now, we being sinners, he can, especially those that are his own, work in them undiscernibly, put in any thoughts, or take any thoughts out of their minds.

He can, in the second place, when he sees that that thought which he hath put in doth take, that a man's will doth a little come off to it, he can then, and he doth,—and God permitteth him to do it to ungodly men,—*enter into them, and possess them*, as a man dwelleth and possesseth his own house; for so the comparison is, Luke xi., that he dwells there as in his own castle. And as he entered into the body of the swine and carried them headlong into the sea, so he entereth into men, and doth possess their spirits; and he joineth with their spirits, and strengtheneth all those consents to sin in them. He is only said to enter into Judas, Luke xxii. 3, for though he was in Judas before, yet when he cometh to put a man on upon any great sin, he is said to enter into him, as he did enter into the swine,—for it is the same word,—because he joineth with his spirit to carry him on in it, as if another soul should come into a man.

And not only so, but he is able to *fill a man's heart*,—as Acts v. 3,—as wine filleth a man's veins, and giveth him new spirits and strength; or as wind doth fill the bagpipe: for the hearts of unregenerate men, they are, as I may call them, the devil's instruments in this respect, he breathes into them, and blows them up. He cannot, indeed, put affections into them, but he can blow them up when once consent is given. You may read of a good angel in Dan. xi. 1; saith he, I am with the king of the Medes, to confirm and strengthen him in his purpose to deliver the Jews: both these words are used. So can Satan, when he hath put in a temptation to a man,—you see he is able to suggest it, being a spirit,—when he hath put in his suggestion, then he entereth, especially when a man is his own, and giveth place to him. If a man be a saint, he hath leave to enter for that time, and he can confirm and strengthen that resolution, and hold him in it, and join with him, and so the man shall have a superadded strength, another spirit in him beside his own. Therefore in Mic. ii. 11, speaking of false prophets, he saith, they do 'walk in the spirit, and lie.' It is the same phrase that is used of a man's walking in the Holy Ghost, when the Holy Ghost strengtheneth him. And the devil did use to come into Ahab's prophets; he was a lying spirit in them; they 'walk in the spirit, and lie.' I speak it for this, that he can thus blow up and fill up a man's spirit. I should have added a middle, between entering

and putting into the heart,—that is, he can provoke men, inflame them. ‘The tongue,’ saith James, ‘is set on fire of hell;’ and it is said expressly of David, in 1 Chron. xxi. 1, that Satan provoked him to number Israel.

And not only this, but he can *effectually prevail*. He can by all these means work in us; first, work indiscernibly in a man; secondly, having right, as in wicked men he hath, he can enter and dwell there, as in his house or castle; thirdly, when he hath provoked and stirred up the affections and passions, when the will hath consented, he can strengthen that will, and so strengthen it that he shall prevail and work effectually; for so the word here implies. In 2 Thess. ii. 10, speaking of Satan’s working upon the learned part of the Popish party that know the truth, and hate it, ‘his coming,’ saith he, ‘is with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, that they might all be damned.’ The doctrine is so laid to men’s corrupt hearts, that it deceiveth them, and deceiveth them effectually. Therefore in 2 Chron. xviii. 21, it is said there by God himself, ‘Thou shalt go and entice him, and thou shalt prevail.’ And you know, he was presently a lying spirit, and prevailed over all Ahab’s prophets, and over Ahab himself. And he doth it with a kind of command, for he is a prince too; therefore they are said to be taken captive at his will.—And so much now for the manner of his working, which this phrase, ‘he worketh in them,’ implieth; and what I have said is necessary to open it.

Now, the Apostle’s scope is likewise to hold forth all *the advantages he hath as a spirit*. He is an active spirit; for spirits are active. ‘The horses of Egypt are not flesh but spirit.’ I shall not now stand to open the advantages, for time would fail me.

The observation I shall make from hence is this: That though the devil worketh in men thus, and works effectually, yet so as *all their sins are their own still*. Why else are they called children of disobedience? He ‘worketh,’ saith he, ‘in the children of disobedience;’ and they walk in sin, though the devil thus work, and doth work in all the sins of men. For that which we translate ‘our life is a continual warfare,’ the Septuagint renders it ‘a continual temptation.’

The reason why, though the devil thus work, yet it is all our sin, is this: because that the devil doth not thus enter into us or join with our spirits to confirm us, till our wills are come to a consent; we give place first. And then when he doth confirm, still the will of a man is free, he is but strengthened in it; he may cause the waters to swell, but he cannot turn them back. It is evident in Ananias, ‘Why hath Satan filled thine heart?’ You will say, Did not Satan work in him? How could he help it? Yet it is made his sin, for that he gave way to the devil; for he gave way at the first, and then the devil entered in and filled him. Another instance for it is that in 2 Tim. ii. 26; he saith, we are taken captive alive, ἐζωγχεῖσθαι, as the word is derived from thence; the meaning is this, they are alive when they are taken, and they are taken willingly by him; though at his will, yet with their own will too. They are not moved as dead stocks, but they are moved as having a living active principle in them, their own will. No man sinneth, my brethren, because Satan commandeth him; for we do not see that Satan commandeth us, for he works undiscernibly, but we sin because of what is propounded to us: as no man doth sin because God decrees him to sin, therefore no man can excuse himself with that; so no man can excuse himself with this, that Satan worketh in him.

And so much now for that first interpretation, that here, by *spirit*, is meant the devils, who, as spirits, work in the children of disobedience.

I come now to a *second interpretation*, which is taken for the effect of these devils, that common spirit that they raised in those times in the children of disobedience, which the Apostle bringeth as an instance, that themselves might see how it wrought. Do not you see, saith he, how it worketh, what a spirit there is working in men against God, and against Christ? The devil is the prince of it. I opened it before, I shall now give you some observations about it.

*Obs.*—The first is this: That besides the common ordinary walking of men in their particular lusts, walking in sin, according to their prince, the devil, their king,—for in every sin that a man ordinarily committeth, he walketh according to this prince, and his mind and will he doth,—besides that, I say, there is a special spirit, which yet is a common spirit in another sense, that is, because it breatheth in a general way in men; yet I call it special, because it is superadded, over and above the natural inclination that men ordinarily have to the ways of sin,—there is a special spirit, raised up by the devils in the children of disobedience.

I shall make this evident to you by parts. I take these Ephesians for an instance, for to me the Apostle seems to point to that spirit that wrought among them. In Acts xix., when Paul was at Ephesus, you shall find there what a spirit was raised, all the whole city upon a sudden were gathered together, and were all filled with confusion, and the text saith, ‘the greater part knew not wherefore they were come together.’ They would have haled Paul before the judgment-seat, and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, his companions, ‘they rushed with one accord into the theatre;’ and all this while they knew not for what. And then, for the space of about two hours, they all with one voice cried up their goddess Diana, and cried out against Jesus Christ; alas! they knew not Jesus Christ. But why did they cry up their goddess thus? Why, the devil was in it. Do not you see, saith the Apostle, how the spirit works? If you read the Apologies of Tertullian, and others that wrote in the primitive times, you shall still find them telling the heathens thus: Why do you persecute us? What is the matter? You understand not our way. You can let other sects alone, why do you meddle with us? It is nothing but a name you persecute, you know no more. Yea, but, my brethren, the devil knew more, and so raised up a common spirit amongst them against the Christians.

The devil doth raise up in several ages—that should have been another part of the observation—a several kind of spirit, yet still the same devil. Do you not see, saith he, the spirit that now worketh? Why, the spirit of heathenism wrought then in a bitter opposition unto Christ; and the spirit of Antichrist wrought then. The spirit of Antichrist is now in the world, saith John. And these both wrought in one, wrought against Christ. The devil had then two strings to his bow. Among the heathens he had a spirit that wrought to advance his kingdom, and to keep him up as long as could be as the god of the world; and if that failed, then he had the spirit of Antichrist, that was then a-working too: and many of the Christians themselves, that were good, understood not this, for it was a mystery. And, my brethren, such is his cunning still, if the scene alters, he alters his spirit that he breatheth into men; he will breathe in new principles, such as the world shall close withal; and he will be still sure so to state the quarrel as that he may vent his malice against many of the saints, if he cannot against all. He made way, through I know not how many errors, that if the world should happen to turn Christian, he might raise up such a persecution against those that would oppose those corruptions, more or less, as possibly could be.

Therefore in Rev. xii., when he was thrown down from heaven to earth,—as he was when heathenism was gone,—he found a way to persecute those that kept the commandment of Christ and the testimony of Jesus ; for there was then so much corruption brought in and found in the churches by the working of this spirit, that God stirred up some or other still, in their several ages, to bear witness against it : and against these the devil raised a spirit, as being the witnesses of Jesus and such as kept some of the commandments of God, which others did not. The apostle John, in the place I quoted even now, saith, the spirit of Antichrist is now in the world, 1 John iv. 3. Paul saith, it was a mystery ; the apostle John, that he is to come into the world, nay, that even now he is in the world. I see his horns are budding, saith he ; and that spirit that breatheth now in heathenism shall work up to the very same, when the world shall turn Christian, in Antichrist. Now, this was a mystery, yet the devil knew what he did, he drove it on, and carried on this common spirit, and that among Christians themselves in those primitive times, even when the heathens did oppose them. So now, as it is said of the Holy Ghost, in 1 Cor. xii., that he hath variety of gifts, but there is one spirit, that worketh all in all ; so in several ages there are several spirits infused, and principles that men are led by, but yet so as still they shall be against some part of the commandment of Jesus ; and it is the same spirit that still worketh all in all.

And why is such opposition called a spirit ?

Because, my brethren, things are carried with spirit oftentimes more than with reason. Saith Paul, ‘I was exceedingly mad against the saints,’ Acts xxvi. 11. And I think there are few that are mad but there is some kind of possession or obsession of Satan. ‘I was mad,’ saith he, and madness, you know, is to go in a thing against reason, and beyond reason, beyond the nature of the thing itself : and that is, because the devil is in it ; for he carries it as a prince, and therefore he carries it as by a spirit that he stirreth in them.

And it is called a spirit, too, because it is active, and high, and violent. In Rev. xvi. 13, speaking of those emissaries of Rome, that, when Antichrist is brought to his last throw for his subsistence,—and if he loseth that, he is gone,—he sendeth out, (the devil and Antichrist together, for they are said to come out of the mouth of both,) he calls them spirits ; they shall be nimble agents, that should have a world of zeal. What is the reason ? They are said to be ‘spirits of devils,’ and were therefore more active than men of themselves would have been. And Satan was the prince of them, for they ‘came out of the great dragon ;’ and they ‘go forth to all the kings of the earth, to gather them to the battle of that great day.’ And how nigh it is, God knows.

Now as it is a special spirit, thus raised,—I have shewn you that it is called a spirit, and a spirit that altereth as the scene altereth,—so it is a general spirit, a common spirit, wherein, saith he, the children of disobedience do agree. The reason, my brethren, why his kingdom is a monarchy, and why they have one prince,—by what the Scripture seemeth, both in this and other places, to hold forth to me,—is this. Because there is one great devil, that is the old serpent ; he hath the great head, the great wit, and inventeth what to do still, in all the turns and agitations and motions of the world, and accordingly directs. As Pharaoh—who was a type of the great devil and his monarchy, and the Egyptians are the little dragons, as they are called, Ps. lxxiv.—gave the counsel, ‘Come,’ saith he, ‘let us deal wisely :’ so Satan is, as it were, the great dictator, and all the lesser devils take from



him what he doth judge, and breathe a common spirit into men in whom they work. And therefore he is said here to be the prince of a spirit. The reason why it is one spirit is, because there is one prince of them that doth guide and direct all the other spirits to go thus one way, and to make one common gale in the hearts of men. In that Rev. xvi. 13, 14, they are said to be three spirits; yet all agree in one, they all came out of the mouth of the dragon too, for he was the prince of them, the great devil; for by the great dragon there, I take it, the great devil is meant, for the little devils are in that phrase, 'he and his angels.' And a breath came from this prince, and the other devils, he saith, were three; that is, many, or more than one, men acted by the devil; yet they all agreed together in one project and design, which was, to go forth to the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to battle against Christ. For when Antichrist shall be put to it, he will get the assistance of heathens, and Turks, and all; all shall join together against the battle of the great day.

When our Lord and Saviour Christ was crucified, it is clear, then he breathed a common breath. Herod and Pilate were one against another, yet conspired in crucifying of Christ. Why? Because there was a prince in the world, and though he had nothing in, or against Christ, yet he ruled their hearts unanimously. Therefore, in Ps. ii, 'Why do the heathen rage, and the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed?' The truth is, the devil was in them. 'This is your hour,' saith Christ, 'and the power of darkness;' that is, the devil, who is the power of darkness, hath power over me, by means of you.

Now, my brethren, it is a spirit likewise which, if the godly wise do heedfully observe, may be discerned. The Apostle saith so much. Do you not see it work, saith he, in the children of disobedience? You may see it by the nature and carriage of things, that Satan carries them on.—And so much for the interpretation of those words, 'the spirit that worketh.'

I come to *The Time; 'that now worketh.'* Some put it for *etiamnum*, that still worketh; but I think that is not the meaning of it, for it refers to that present spirit that then was, which, as I said, Satan was the prince of; 'which now worketh.' It may have relation also to the times of the gospel, in comparison of former times. In John xii. 31, saith Christ, 'Now is the judgment of this world;' that is, now is the time of the gospel, when this world is to be reformed, and the prince of this world is cast out. Now, because that is the *now* when the prince of this world is cast out, therefore this is the *now* wherein the devil being cast out, being vexed, raiseth up a spirit in the children of disobedience. And he is more active a thousand times than he was in the Old Testament. It is true, Satan under the New Testament hath less power than he had under the Old; for the kingdom of Christ cometh still more and more upon him, and spoils his plots, eats them out; but yet his activeness, his working, is more by far. And the reason is this, because the devil is enraged; for still as Christ goes, and casts him out of his kingdom, or out of men's hearts, the more he rageth. In Mark ix. 26, when the unclean spirit was to be cast out, the text saith, 'he cried, and rent him sore.' And in Rev. xii. 12, when the devil, that great dragon, was cast out, thrown from heaven, it is said, 'he is come down, having great wrath, because he knoweth he hath but a short time.' And if he had millions of years, they would be a short time to him. But when he saw himself thrown down, it was to him as the beginning of the day of judgment, which he thinketh is approaching. And still, my brethren, the more he is

confounded, the more he is enraged, and the more active he is ; therefore he saith, 'the spirit that now worketh.'

You shall see this, by comparing the instruments he doth employ in one age, and in others, successively, that come after. In Rev. ix., there comes out of the bottomless pit a company of locusts, whose king was the devil ; these were, as some think, the Saracens ; or, as others, those preaching friars, that were some hundreds of years ago sent abroad to uphold the Pope's kingdom. For my part, I think, the Holy Ghost did carry on the story of both, even in that first part of the prophecy. Now you shall find in Rev. xvi., when Antichrist cometh to his last cast, his agents then are not locusts, but 'frogs,' and so raised that they are called 'spirits,' because they are more nimble and active than those locusts were ; for the devil still, as his time grows shorter and shorter, begins to work more furiously and more fiercely, bestirs himself more in the spirits of men. Those locusts were too dull creatures, therefore now he hath frogs, he meaneth the Jesuits, who are a nimble company of men, men of spirit, full of activeness, that can, like frogs, leap into kings' chambers, and can be in the water and on the land, deal in church and deal in commonwealth ; and these he calleth spirits. The locusts, I say, those preaching friars, were too dull for his turn, now in this last cast. And, my brethren, it is good to learn of an enemy. Still as our time draws shorter, let us work the more. 'Exhort one another,' saith he, Heb. x. 25, 'and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.' And if you will have it more full, 1 Cor. vii. 29, 'The time is short.' Therefore let us improve it to the uttermost. The devil, you see, doth so ; he acteth and worketh more now than he did before, because he knoweth he hath but a short time.—And so much now for the time.

I have now nothing to speak to but *The Persons* ; 'that worketh in the children of disobedience.' I must, as I use to do, a little open the phrase.

It is a Hebraism, 'sons of disobedience.' The Jews do use in common speech to apply the words, *sons* and *children*, to many things ; as, son of captivity, that is, a captive. A son of the resurrection, saith the gospel ; that is, those that shall rise again, and shall be begotten by the resurrection ; for it is a begetting again, and so they are sons of it. It importeth, as the phrase is here, one that hath addicted himself to disobedience. As wisdom is said to be 'justified of her children,' Matt. xi. 19 ;—there are sons of wisdom, that is, those that have given up their souls to be led by wisdom, that have been converted by Christ ;—so here, those that have addicted themselves to disobedience, to sin, they are called sons of disobedience. You have the like in Ps. lxxxix. 22, 'The son of wickedness shall not afflict him.' So, sons of violence. I shall not need to open that much, I shall speak of it when I come to handle 'sons,' or 'children of wrath,' in the next words.

The only question is this : whether he meaneth all sorts of unregenerate men ? or whether he meaneth some special sort, in whom the devil in those times raised up a special spirit ?

The truth is, it is hard to determine it ; the context seems to carry both. In Scripture phrase—I shall speak a little to the latter—a child of disobedience notes out one that is more eminently wicked than others, a son of iniquity ; and it is all one with that which in the Old Testament was called a son of Belial, which phrase you have often ; and you never have it used but it noteth out one more wicked than ordinarily the generality of mankind are. Sons of Belial are men without a yoke, that have broke the bounds, as the prophet expresseth it, for so the word signifies. Still when they are

mentioned, I say, it notes a special sort of wicked men. I shall quote the places :—Deut. xiii. 13; 1 Sam. ii. 12, the sons of Eli are called sons of Belial, being more eminently wicked than others; so in Judges xix. 22; one given to drunkenness is called a daughter of Belial, 1 Sam. i. 16. Those, therefore, that either in respect of living in profaneness, or in respect of opposition to God and Christ, are more eminent than others, are especially sons of Belial; yea, they are called even Belial itself. And, in 2 Cor. vi. 15, Belial is called the devil himself; even as in the New Testament the devil is called ‘that wicked one.’ And answerably, one that is more eminently wicked is called a devil; as in that speech of Christ, who saith of Judas that he was a devil.

The word ‘disobedience’ is ἀπειθεῖας, an obstinacy of heart, that a man hath stood out persuasions. So as now it doth import such kind of men likewise as have received the truth, or have heard of the truth, yet obey it not, but do the contrary. ‘I have stretched forth my hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people,’ Rom. x. 21; those are called disobedient—it is the same word—which have had God’s hand stretched out to them. You have many places for it: Rom. ii. 8, and Titus i. 16, ‘In works they deny him,’ saith he, ‘and are disobedient,’—it is the same word here,—‘and to every good work reprobate.’ And in Heb. iv. 6, 11, it is used for unbelief.

Now, if it be taken in a large sense, as perhaps in Eph. v. 6, it is taken for all unregenerate men; ‘for which the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience:’ then the observation in a word is this. It cometh in here by way of difference from Satan’s working in godly men and in unregenerate men. He worketh in the children of disobedience, that is, he ordinarily prevaileth with them, I mean for those lusts they are addicted to; he ruleth them, as it is spoken in that curse concerning Judas, Ps. cix. He prevaileth over them, he works effectually in them,—take that, I say, which is their proper and special way of sinning, that which their spirits are addicted to,—they are, as I may so express it, his working shop, they are called his house where he dwelleth. ‘I will go, and return to my house,’ saith he, when he was cast out there, in Luke xi. 24. He works as an enemy in the people of God, but in these as a prince. He works as a tyrant in those, and prevails often over them for acts; but in these as a conqueror, taking them captive at his will. My brethren, I take it, that there is this difference set by God between those that are godly and regenerate men, translated into the kingdom of Christ; and unregenerate men, who are members of the kingdom of Satan. It is true, indeed, he cannot carry all unregenerate men to all the sins he would, because, like a tyrant, he applies himself to the several humours of men, and that by God’s ordination; yet so, as the common law that God alloweth him to rule over them with, it is in respect of their peculiar lust, and peculiar sin. Look, what a man’s snare is, the devil hath him at his will, as the expression is, 2 Tim. ii. 26. But now, if he come to deal with a godly man, he ordinarily asketh leave: Luke xxii. 31, he ‘hath desired,’ he hath sought to winnow thee, speaking of Peter, when the devil carried him on to that great sin against Christ. But when he comes to unregenerate men, they are his subjects, his natives, his proper goods; and he enters into them as into his own house. And the reason of it is this. Because the saints are translated into the kingdom of Christ, therefore if he will deal with them, he must come like a party into another kingdom, into another’s quarters, where he hath not ordinarily the power and the rule; and what hath he to do with another man’s servant? That is

the law. A regenerate man is Christ's free man, therefore, but by special permission from God, to exercise his children, he doth not so come to tempt them as to carry them on to great sins.

Now if it be meant, as I take it rather it is, of men eminently wicked, that are the ringleaders of all the devil's kingdom; then, in a word, here is the observation:—

*Obs. 1.*—That Satan in his kingdom hath several sorts of sinners, and there are some in whom the devil's breath is so strong that a man may smell it; as a holy man may savour the Spirit of God in another man that is holy. You may see how it worketh, saith he, in some of the children of disobedience, that are the ringleaders—and so instances—of the bondage that all the rest are in. I say, of unregenerate men, there are several sizes of them; yea, the same man, as he grows wicked, so he hath more devils. 'He brought with him seven devils worse than himself.' 'You make him,' saith Christ, 'ten times more the child of Satan' than he was. I quote it for this, to shew you there are several sizes of wicked men, though the meaning is, that of every generation of men, the second is worse than the first; for otherwise how could they make him worse than themselves? But they making him a proselyte, the curse of God, when they had made him so, made him worse. But I will not stand upon that.

*Obs. 2.*—The second observation is this: That which makes men eminently wicked, and the spirit thus of the devil to work in them, more than in others, it is an unpersuadableness. They have been dealt withal by God, and by the preaching of the gospel; they have had some hints, some hearsays of it; and they refuse that light, and will not believe that truth. And for this disobedience, doth the Lord give them up to Satan, to rule in them more fully, and to transform his spirit into them. In 2 Thess. ii. 10, he cometh with all deceivableness of unrighteousness. But in whom is it? In them that receive not the truth in the love of it.

Now, my brethren, in a word, this is the Apostle's scope plainly to me. Saith he, Whilst you were unregenerated, you lived in the devil's kingdom. And though you were not opposite to the gospel of Christ then, and had not that spirit which you see now worketh in some; why? because you never heard of the gospel before; ye turned, when ye first heard it: yet you may see what you would have been, if God had not turned you. That spirit that you see now worketh in men eminently wicked,—by which you may see that the devil hath a hand over men,—that spirit, if you had gone on, would have wrought in most of you too. So that his scope is, to hold forth the spirit that was more eminently in some men that were sinners amongst them, or perhaps in the generality of men, that did conspire in one way of wickedness, to let them see what themselves would have been. And, my brethren, we are apt to forget our natural condition. Let us make just that use of it the Apostle here doth. We think we should not have been so bad, we should never openly have done thus and thus, as others do. Oh, but remember and consider this, that whilst you walked in sin you were under the prince of the power of the air; and look, what spirit you see now works in the children of disobedience, had you not turned unto God, had you been unteachable and unpersuadable, the same spirit would have been in you. So that now what wickedness is abroad in the world, all men that are turned to God may make use of it: The like would have been my heart, I should thus have been the slave of the devil; as these are carried headlong, so should I have been.

And, my brethren, let me add this last : Though he speaks thus of such, and saith they are children of disobedience, yet he calls them not the sons of perdition : he calls them children of wrath indeed, in respect of their present state, namely, in the next words ; but he calls them not sons of perdition, as for the future ordained to destruction. Then, although men should have great high spirits against, and be unteachable, and unpersuadable to the truth of God and ways of religion, yet pray for them, seek to God for them. Though they are children of disobedience for the present, yet it follows not that they are children of perdition, as Judas is called. In 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25, saith he, ‘The minister of God must be gentle, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves ; if God peradventure will give them repentance, that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil,’—that though now they are under the spirit of Satan, and he hath a snare upon them, and out of that they do oppose, yet in meekness instruct them ; they are children of disobedience, thou canst not say they are children of perdition.—So much now for the opening of this text.