

THE
S A I N T S ' S A C R I F I C E :

OR,

A COMMENTARY ON PSALM CXVI.

WHICH IS

A GRATULATORY PSALM, FOR DELIVERANCE FROM DEADLY DISTRESS.

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M.DCCC.LXVIII.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
ROBERT, LORD RICH,

BARON OF LEEZ AND EARL OF WARWICK.

SIR,—The last year, when the heavy hand of the righteous Lord lay upon this land and other parts of the Christian world, manifested by the three arrows of his anger, plague, famine, and sword, just cause was given to inquire after such means as might cure the wounds that were made by them, and move the Lord to withhold his hand from shooting abroad any more of them.

Upon inquiry there was found in God's word (the treasury wherein all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid¹) fit remedies for all those maladies.

There we find, Num. xvi. 45, &c., that Moses and Aaron applied such a plaster for the plague as healed that disease; and that David (2 Sam. xxi. 1) took such a course for removing a famine as did the deed; and that the said Moses and Joshua (Exod. xvii. 8, &c.) in such a manner resisted an infesting enemy, as they became conquerors.

All these means have been set out in several treatises. Whether they were well used, and whether upon the right use of them the foresaid judgments have been removed or no, he that knoweth the grounds and reasons of all things that fall out best knoweth.

But certain it is that the three mentioned arrows have either been withheld and put up into the Lord's

quiver, or else shot out against the enemies of God's church.

Our land is healed of the pestilence.

Fat kine of plenty have devoured the lean kine of famine.

The professors of the reformed religion in France have peace and rest.

Most seasonable succour is afforded to the oppressed churches in Germany. They that first took up the sword have perished by the sword.

Thus 'the Lord hath turned our mourning into dancing, and put off our sackcloth, and girded us with gladness: to the end that our glory may sing praise to him, and not be silent.'

What Christian heart is not affected herewith?

All that know your honour know how you stand affected to God's church. You count it your honour any way to honour her.

Witness your diligent frequenting her assemblies, and presenting yourself in her courts, your conscientious observance of all her ordinances, your good respect to her ministers, your faithful discharge of that trust which by the divine providence is committed to you for presenting faithful ministers to her people. Many humble petitions are in this respect daily put up at the throne of grace on your behalf. Many sacrifices of praise are offered up to the divine Majesty for you. Ministers and people bless you, and bless the Lord for you. So as your

¹ Thesaurus iste in quo sunt omnes thesauri sapientiae et scientiae absconditi, est Scriptura.—*Jerome, Comment. in Mat. xiii. 1, 2.*

administration of this service not only refresheth the souls of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God. He therefore that hath said it, will assuredly perform it, 'Them that honour me, will I honour.'

Neither is your entire affection so restrained to this flourishing part of the church whereof you are in special manner a particular member, but it is extended to her in every place.

Your endeavour hath not been wanting to the enlargement of her bounds.

You every way sympathise with her.

Her oppressions press heavy upon your soul.

Her deliverances revive your spirit.

In consideration hereof, the same hand that in the enemies' insultations over the oppressed churches presented to your honour, 'The Church's Conquest,' wherein were set out most sovereign means prescribed by God himself, and to good purpose practised by those that were therein guided by the

divine Spirit, for obtaining conquest and rest to the church; the same hand doth now present to the same patron, 'The Saint's Sacrifice,' wherein out of the fore-mentioned treasury of God's word divine directions are collected for rendering due praises to him who in due season delivereth his out of desperate distresses.

Accept, my good Lord, this testimony of that high esteem which he hath of your Lordship, who in regard of that respect you bear and shew to God himself, to his ministers and saints, humbly and heartily supplicateth the divine Majesty for all needful blessings ever to rest on your honour's person, on your honourable consort, on your noble offspring, on your whole family, and on all your affairs, and professeth to continue in God's court.

Your Honour's Remembrancer,

WILLIAM GOUGE.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE, RIGHT WORSHIPFUL, AND OTHER
MY BELOVED PARISHIONERS,

INHABITANTS OF BLACKFRIARS, LONDON,

SUFFICIENT GRACE HERE, PERFECT GLORY HEREAFTER.

RIGHT HONOURABLE, Right Worshipful, Beloved,—How entirely my heart stands towards you, the Searcher of hearts knoweth; so also doth that spirit which is in me, but for manifestation hereof means must be used.

I am confident that you yourselves will bear me witness, that for these four and twenty years my outward conversation among you hath given some evidence of the entireness of my affection towards you.

That others may know what I know you know hereof—others, I say, both near and far off, even farther off than in person I am ever like to be, and that not only in this present age, so long as we shall remain knit together by so near and firm a bond of relation as pastor and people, but also in future ages, (if at least my published meditations shall come to future ages,) I have presented to you in special manner all the treatises that by me have been set out to the public view of all; and that on no by-respect to myself, at which I never had cause to aim; but only on that due respect I owe to you by virtue of the foresaid relation.

Yours I am; and I desire to shew myself yours every way that I can.

Concerning this present treatise, 'The Saint's Sacrifice,' I began to draw my meditations thereunto

upon that extraordinary and admirable, if not miraculous, removal of the plague which happened in the first year of our now sovereign lord King Charles. In the beginning, therefore, of this treatise, sec. 3, you may observe a particular application of the general doctrine of praising God, to that special instance of God's singular mercy in so speedy and so full a deliverance of us from so infectious and far-spreading sickness.

But the summer being then spent, and that vacation time gone, which is the only time that I can get free from such encumbrances as afford leisure little enough, if not too little for my public ministry, in the years following rumours of the church's desolations through the might and malice, insolency and cruelty of her enemies in Germany, France, and other places, were brought to our ears, as the doleful news of the loss of Job's cattle, servants, and children, one upon the neck of another. And in the year 1630 the plague so began again to increase as another great plague was feared. It hovered over the city all the summer and autumn of that year: there died thereof in London and in the parishes adjoining, 1317; and that year burials increased more than ordinary, 1783, besides the five that died in Whitefriars of the plague, and were reckoned in no parish.

Cambridge also was much infected with the sickness the same year, and sundry other great and populous towns in the country.

Corn also then rose to a very high rate, and so continued till harvest 1631.

These judgments so following one upon another, like wave upon wave, turned the course of my meditations from the gratulatory Psalm to such scriptures as afforded fit remedies for removing the foresaid judgments, and occasioned the treatises of 'God's Three Arrows.'

But that God who delighteth in mercy, and to whom judgment is a strange work, hath so removed all the foresaid judgments, that there is now as just occasion for publishing 'The Saint's Sacrifice,' as there was before of setting out 'God's Three Arrows.'

While the judgments lay heavy on us and others, instant and earnest prayer was made for the removal thereof. Now that our prayers are heard, should we not return what he requires that hath granted our desires?¹ If thou be ungrateful, having what thou wilt, well mayest thou be what thou wilt not.

To stir up mine own soul and the souls of others to endeavour with our uttermost power to render to him who hath been so gracious to us that which is most due, all possible praise; and to stir us up to con-

¹ Si ingratus es in eo quod esse vis, iure cogeris esse quod non vis.—*Aug. de lib. Arbitr.*, lib. iii. cap. 6.

tinue our humble and hearty devotions to the high, mighty, wise, and merciful Lord for continuing his favour to his churches, and for establishing perpetual peace and rest to them, this 'Saint's Sacrifice' is here published. Whereunto I was in a private and a particular respect the rather moved, by reason of a more than ordinary recovery which the Lord was pleased to vouchsafe to his poor and unworthy servant in August 1630, who hath in regard of the dangerous disease and unexpected recovery cause to say, 'The sorrows of death compassed me, but it was the Lord's pleasure to deliver me.'

O my parishoners and other people of God, let us meditate ourselves alone, and confer one with another, about the gracious and wondrous works of the Lord in these our days, and whet one another's spirits, and incite our souls to praise the Lord, that it may never repent him of any kindness that he hath shewed, or yet further intendeth to us. Praise the Lord, O ye his saints. Let this sacrifice of saints be daily offered up by you in particular, together with

The builder up of your souls,

WILLIAM GOUGE.

BLACKFRIARS, LONDON, 14th Feb. 1631.

THE SAINT'S SACRIFICE;

OR,

A COMMENTARY ON PSALM CXVI.

Sec. 1. *Of the author, occasion, and matter of the Psalm.*

THIS psalm is a gratulatory psalm. Therein the psalmist giveth solemn thanks to God, for a great deliverance from a deadly danger.

By the kind of danger and deliverance, it may be supposed that David was the inditer of this psalm: and that the danger and deliverance whereunto he hath relation, are those that are recorded to be in the reign of Saul, who persecuted David even unto death. Oft did that wrathful king, when David was before him, cast his javelin at him to stick him therewith even to the wall, and many other ways did attempt to take away his life; as, by sending him out against the Philistines, by requiring a hundred foreskins of the Philistines in lieu of dowry, by speaking to his son and servants to kill him, by sending messengers unto his house, there to watch him and slay him; by commanding his servants to bring him in his bed, when it was told that he was sick; by sending messengers again and again to apprehend him, and following after him himself to the company of prophets; by raising an army against him, and pursuing him to Keilah, and from thence to Maon, and so to Engedi, and to Ziph, where he heard that David abode.

By reason of these persecutions he might well say, as is here recorded, ver. 3, 'The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell got hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.' And by reason of the many deliverances which the Lord gave him, (for it is expressly recorded that 'God delivered not David into Saul's hands,' 1 Sam. xxiii. 14; meaning thereby, that God by his divine providence delivered David out of Saul's hands, and preserved him from death, which Saul intended against him,) by reason hereof David might well say to God, as ver. 8, 'Thou hast delivered my soul from death,' &c. So as it is very probable that David upon the foresaid deliverances penned this psalm; yea, the agreement of this psalm both in the general matter, and also in sundry words and phrases with the 18th psalm, which is expressly said to be made by 'David in the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of Saul,' doth make it more than probable, that the same deliverances moved the same author to pen this psalm also.

Object. Jerusalem was not built in Saul's time,¹ whereof notwithstanding mention is made in the

¹ In fine mentio fit urbis Hierosolymæ, quæ tempore Saulis nondum condita fuit.—*Moller. Arg. in hunc Ps.*

last verse of this psalm. Yea, the courts of the Lord's house are said to be in the midst of Jerusalem, where neither the ark nor the tabernacle were in Saul's time. Therefore deliverances from those dangers were not the occasion of this psalm.

Ans. 1. Frequent mention is made of Jerusalem before Saul's time, so as it was then built.

2. This psalm might be penned many years after those deliverances, and yet they give occasion thereto.

But because the Holy Ghost hath not by name noted the penman, nor expressed the particular danger and deliverance, I will omit all probable conjectures, and insist on such general truths as may and must, without all contradiction or question, be received.

Those general truths are these :—

1. A prophet immediately inspired and infallibly assisted by the Holy Ghost was the author of this psalm. For 'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God,' 2 Tim. iii. 16. And 'The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man : but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,' 2 Pet. i. 21.

2. The penman of this psalm had been in very great danger, even near to death, ver. 3, 6, 8.

3. In his danger he called upon God for help, ver. 4.

4. He was delivered out of all his dangers, ver. 6, 7.

5. He acknowledgeth his deliverances to be from God, ver. 2, 8, 16.

6. He professeth God's grace to be the ground thereof, ver. 5, 16.

7. For the present he testifieth his true and hearty affection to God, ver. 1.

8. For afterwards he promiseth to walk worthy of the Lord, ver. 9, &c.

9. He is careful to perform what he vowed in his distress, ver. 14, 18.

10. He humbly acknowledgeth his weakness, ver. 10, 11.

11. He is ready to do what he may know to be acceptable unto God, ver. 12.

12. He faileth not to offer up praise to God, ver. 13, 17, 19.

13. His manner of praising God is most solemn, ver. 18, 19.

14. He stirs up others also to praise the Lord, ver. 19.

Other particular points are here and there inserted ; but they are such as may be brought to one of the forenamed heads.

Sec. 2. Of the resolution of the psalm.

The sum of this psalm is,—A gratulation for deliverance from deadly danger.

The parts thereof are two :—

I. A declaration of the author's present affection.

II. A protestation for his after-purpose.

In the former he noteth—

1. How he was affected to God.

2. How God respected him.

His affection to God is expressed in the first clause, *I love*.

God's respect to him is more largely set out in the words following to the 7th verse.

For, 1. It is generally propounded in the latter part of the 1st verse, and in the 2d verse, and then particularly exemplified in the four following verses.

In the general he noteth two points :—

1. How God's kindness to him was manifested,—namely, by hearing his prayer.

2. What use he made thereof: surely this, to 'continue to call upon God,' ver. 2.

In the particular exemplification he expresseth these four points :—

1. The danger wherein he was, ver. 3.

2. The means which he used for deliverance, ver. 4.

3. The cause whereby God was moved to help him, ver. 5.

4. The deliverance which God gave him, ver. 6.

II. His protestation for his after-purpose hath respect—

1. To his inward disposition.

2. To his outward conversation.

In regard of his inward disposition, he professeth a quiet settling of his mind, so as it shall not be distracted with doubts and fears. Wherein we may note—

1. His manner of expressing it, with a double apostrophe, one to his own soul, ver. 7, the other to God, ver. 8.

2. The ground or reason thereof: and that, 1. Generally propounded, ver. 7; 2. Particularly expounded, ver. 8.

In regard of his outward conversation, he professeth two points—

One, more general, to 'walk before the Lord,' ver. 9.

The other, more particular, to 'praise the Lord,' ver. 12, &c.

Betwixt these he inserteth a digression, which containeth a manifestation of his faith, ver. 10; of his fear, ver. 11.

The other more particular duty of praising God is more largely insisted upon: for it is set down—

1. By way of profession in relation to himself.

2. By way of provocation in relation to others.

His profession is, 1. Propounded; 2. Repeated.

In his first propounding of it we must observe—

1. The manner of expressing it.

2. The matter whereof it consisteth.

3. The motives to press it.

That manner is by a rhetorical communication, ver. 12.

The matter is public praise, ver. 13.

The motives which he useth to press the duty of praise are especially four—

1. His own voluntary bond, his vow, ver. 14.

2. God's high account of him, and of such as he was, ver. 15.

3. The relation that was betwixt God and him, ver. 16.

4. The kindness which God had done to him: 'Thou hast loosed my bonds.'

The repetition of the duty, and of some of the motives, is set down, ver. 17, 18, and amplified by a description of the place where it should be performed, ver. 19.

His provocation of others to perform the duty is in the last words of the psalm: 'Praise ye the Lord.'

Sec. 3. *Of solemn thanks to God for great deliverances.*¹

The general sum and main scope of this psalm giveth us this instruction—

¹ See 'The Whole Armour of God' for directions about solemn thanksgiving, treat. iii. sec. 73.

More than ordinary praise is to be given to God for more than ordinary deliverances.¹ The distress and danger whereof mention is made in this psalm appeareth to be so deadly and desperate, as the deliverance from it must needs be more than ordinary, even almost, if not altogether, miraculous. The prophet therefore contenteth not himself with a sudden ejaculation of his heart; nor with a secret form of praise betwixt God and his own soul; nor with a more open manner of performing this duty in a private family, or among a few saints; but after a more solemn and public manner he performeth it: ver. 18, 19, 'Even in the presence of all the Lord's people, in the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of Jerusalem;' and not only so, but also he publisheth as much to all the world, and penneth this psalm to remain as a record thereof to all posterity. We have not only this, and many other like patterns of other saints, guided herein by the Spirit of God, for solemn, public, registered, and other ways, extraordinary forms and manner of praising God on like occasions, but also express precepts of God to that purpose. The 136th Psalm was penned for this very end, to be a recorded public form of praising the Lord for great deliverances; and therefore it was appointed by Jehoshaphat, that good king of Judah, to be sung after that Jahaziel, stirred up by the Spirit of the Lord, had assured them, in the name of the Lord, that they should be delivered from their enemies, 2 Chron. xx. 21.

This extraordinary manner of praising God on extraordinary occasions is an especial part of 'walking worthy of the Lord.' It argueth our mind towards him to be answerable to his mind towards us; our readiness to bless him agreeable to his forwardness to bless us.² Such a disposition is wonderfully well pleasing to him, making him much to rejoice in the deliverances which he giveth, and blessings which he bestoweth, and never to repent any kindness that he doth, whether ordinary or extraordinary. For the Holy Spirit is given to saints that they should

¹ Ut hic psalmista, sic publicè pro bonis sibi collatis gratias Deo agit.—*Aug. Confess.*, lib. i. cap. 20.

² Spiritus sanctus sanctis datur, ut copulentur Deo in laudibus gloriæ ipsius; non quod Deus laude alicujus indigeat, sed quod laus Dei laudatoris prosit.—*Jerome Comment.* lib. i. in Eph. i.

be knit to God in the praises of his glory; not that God needeth the praise of any, but that the praise of God might profit them that praise him. We are God's soil; all manner of good things, positive or privative, which in any kind he bestoweth on us, are his seed. Gratefulness is the crop which he expecteth of his seed; for by what more sacred sacrifice can God be honoured than by thanks? As the husbandman is affected with a plentiful harvest answerable to his much tillage and seed, so the Lord with correspondent gratitude.¹

Behold here a good ground for justification of this day's solemnity. The occasion thereof is apparently more than ordinary; for as the judgment was much more lamentable than the like judgments have been in former ages, so the deliverance much more admirable. That pestilential sickness wherewith this city, and other parts of this land, were visited in the first year of King James, A.D. 1603, so exceeded all former visitations in the like kind, as it was called the Great Plague. For where in the year of the Lord 1562 there died of the plague 20,136, and 25,886 in the year 1593; in the foresaid first year of King James there died 38,244. But this year² there died 54,265 in London, and the liberties thereof, and the nine out-parishes that are in the suburbs. In Westminster then died 2540. In the five parishes that are round about London,³ within a mile or two, 6196. The total of all are threescore three thousand and one. If the number of those who died in other places somewhat more remote from London were added hereunto, it would be found to exceed the number of threescore and ten thousand that in David's time died of the plague. Indeed, the time wherein those threescore and ten thousand died was much shorter, which made the plague the more fearful for that time. But that fear was thereby the sooner removed, in that within the space of three days the plague was stayed, and infected no longer. But with us for the space of three months it increased very hotly; some weeks⁴ almost a thousand increased, so as thus week after week it

did more and more affright the hearts of men, till it amounted to the number¹ of 5205 in one week. Thus we see how terrible the judgment was. The manner of removing it was as admirable. For where it was increasing nine months, from November to August, it so decreased as within the space of seven months it came to nothing. For in the weekly bills that were given up the 8th of March 1625, not one was given up to be dead of the plague. And so fast it decreased as there died one week 944 less, and another 1009 less than the week immediately before, whereas the greatest increase that ever was in one week was 934. In the time of that raging pestilence pity and mercy was earnestly craved, and that also extraordinarily by fasting and prayer, whereunto the Lord without all question had respect. Should not now answerable thanks be given to God for a deliverance so free, so full, so speedy, from a distress so dangerous, so deadly, so fearful as this plague was? Who could have expected such a deliverance? Now we being above hope, beyond expectation, thus admirably delivered, shall not more than ordinary praise be given to him that hath delivered us? This day² is prudently and piously deputed by public authority to this very purpose. Let us rejoice and be glad therein. Let our rejoicing and gladness be spiritual in giving praises to the Lord. Rouse up your spirits to a hearty zealous performance of this duty. This is one end why we have been delivered out of the jaws of that devouring beast, the destroying pestilence. 'For the grave cannot praise the Lord, death cannot celebrate him,' Isa. xxxviii. 18. How many of our brethren and sisters that are gone down into the pit, if they were still living, would make the churches of God to ring again with God's praises! They being taken away, we that remain ought with the uttermost of our power to perform this duty. 'The living, the living, they shall praise the Lord,' Isa. xxxviii. 19. Let us answerably to the occasion do it; yea, so do it as others, even our posterity, may by our pattern be directed and incited on any like occasion to do the like. 'The father

¹ Quid est sacratius laudis sacrificium, quam in actione gratiarum?—*Aug. contr. adversar. Lec. lib. i. cap. 18.*

² 1 Caroli, 1625.

³ Lambeth, Newington, Stepney, Hackney, Islington.

⁴ July 28, 3583; August 4, 4517.

¹ August 18, 1625.

² The 29th of January, 1 Caroli, 1625, being the Lord's day, was by proclamation enjoined to be celebrated with solemn thanksgiving in London and the places adjacent, and the 19th of February following in other parts of the kingdom.

to the children shall make known thy truth, O Lord.'

This of the main scope of this psalm.

Sec. 4. *Of love ; what it is when good.*

Ver. 1. *I love.*

The first part¹ of this psalm is a declaration of the prophet's affection. Therein is shewed how he was affected to God, and how God respected him. The former is an effect of the latter, the latter a cause of the former. The effect is premised as a bounden duty, 'I love.' The cause (though in order of time and nature the first) is inferred as a reason to shew the equity of that duty, 'because he hath heard,' &c.

In the former consider we,

1. The prophet's affection.
2. His expression thereof.

The affection is love.

Love is a liking, uniting affection.

1. In the general nature of it love is an affection.
2. In relation to the different kinds of affections it is a liking one.

3. In the essential form of it, it is uniting.

1. Affections are simply in their general nature, nor virtues, nor vices.² For a virtue cannot be perverted and made evil. It would then lose the very nature of virtue. Nor can a vice be rectified and made good. It also would therein lose its nature and be no vice. Affections are as they are well or ill used. If well used, good; and so become as virtues. If ill used, bad; and so made like vices. Yet whether well or ill used, they retain the general nature of affections. Love well ordered is love, and love ill ordered is love. Therefore is love, in regard of the different ordering of it, both commanded and forbidden.³ So other affections. They are therefore good servants, but bad masters. If as servants they be kept within compass, they will be of singular good use; but if they rule as masters, they will prove young masters—like untutored heirs whose parents are dead, and so have all in their own hands,

and soon make havoc of all. They are in the soul as bellows; where fire is kindled they soon blow it up to a flame. Or rather they are in themselves as fire, hot and violent. Fire, if well used, is very useful; if ill, very hurtful.¹ So affections; so among other affections, love. And this is the general nature of love.

2. Affections are liking, disliking.

Liking are such as have for their object that which is in truth or in appearance good.²

Disliking are such as have for their object that which is indeed evil, or seems so to be. For good things are liked, but evil disliked. And if things which are in truth good seem evil, as evil, they are disliked; and evil, if they appear good, liked.

Liking affections are desire, love, joy, &c. Disliking, fear, hatred, anger, grief, &c. Thus we see in what kind of affections love is ranked.

3. That whereby love is differenced from other liking affections is a uniting efficacy. For love knitteth the heart that loveth to the object loved.³

Instance the love which Jonathan had to David, which the Holy Ghost thus setteth out, 'The soul of Jonathan loved him as his own soul,' 1 Sam. xviii. 1. This apostolical phrase, 'knit together in love,' Col. ii. 2, proveth as much. In this respect love is styled a bond; yea, a bond of perfectness, whereby things are close knit and fast bound, Col. iii. 14.

As other affections, so love becomes good or evil by the object whereon it is placed, and by ordering it thereon.

Love is evil when it is placed on an evil object, or not well ordered on a good object; but good when it is placed on that which is good indeed, and well ordered. The world to worldly minds seemeth good, but in truth it is not good; therefore 'love not the world,' 1 John ii. 15. Jehoshaphat is reproved for 'loving them that hated the Lord,' 2 Chron. xix. 2. As to dislike and hate good, so to like and love evil, is evil.

¹ Igne quid utilius? si quis tamen urere tecta, &c.—*Ovid. Trist.*, lib. ii.

² Passio enim velut duces sunt delectatio et dolor.—*Amb. de Jacob*, lib. i. cap. 2.

³ Quid est amor, nisi quedam vita duo aliqua copulans, vel copulare appetens, amantem scilicet, et quod amatur.—*Aug. de Trin.*, lib. viii. cap. 10.

¹ See sec. 2.

² πᾶσι οὐκ εἰσὶν αἱ ἀρεταί, οὐθ' αἱ κακίαι, ὅτι οὐ λεγόμεθα κατὰ τὰ πάθη, σπουδαῖος ἢ φαῦλος.—*Arist. Ethic.*, lib. ii. cap. 5.

³ See on ver. 11, sec. 68. See 'A Plaster for the Plague,' sec. 43.

Object. Christ commandeth to love enemies.

Ans. By distinguishing betwixt their persons and qualities we may discern a double object.

1. Their person, which is good, that may be loved.

2. Their evil quality, that may and must be hated.

For well ordering love, being placed on a right object, a mean must be kept betwixt two extremes—one of defect, the other of excess.

Love faileth in the defect when it is not according to the utmost of its ability extended, answerable to the excellency of the object whereupon it is set. I say the utmost of its ability, because there are some objects so transcendently excellent as no love can be correspondent to them. It is enough in such cases that love be stretched to its utmost extent. The law requires no more where it saith, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might;' and again, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' Deut. vi. 5; Lev. xix. 18.

Love offendeth in the excess¹ when it is so placed on an inferior object, as it is withdrawn (at least in some degree) from a more excellent object; as when father, mother, son, or daughter is loved more than Christ, Mat. x. 17. Eli therefore is justly punished for honouring (a testimony of love) his sons above God, 1 Sam. ii. 29, 30.

Sec. 5. *Of the prophet's expression of his affection to God.*

2. The expression of the prophet's affection is in this short abrupt phrase, 'I love,' which is but one word in the original, and expressed as a full and entire sentence in itself, thus—'I love, because the Lord hath heard,' &c. Most translators so turn it, as if, by a trajection, or passing of a word from one sentence to another, this title Lord were to be joined with the first clause, thus—(יהוה אהבתי כי־שמע), 'I love the Lord, because he hath heard,' &c. I deny not but that thus the sense is made somewhat the more perspicuous, and the words run the more roundly; yet are they not altogether so emphatical. For when a man's heart is inflamed, and his soul

¹ Non frater, non filius, non amicus, non omnis affectus amoris Domini præponatur.—*Jerome*, lib. iii.; *Comment in Mat.* xviii.

ravished with a deep apprehension of some great and extraordinary favour, his affection will cause interruption in the expression thereof, and make stops in his speech; so as this concise and abrupt clause, 'I love,' declareth a more entire and ardent affection than a more full and round phrase would do. Great is the force of true love, so as it cannot be sufficiently expressed.¹

Object. How shall the object of his love be known by this abrupt speech?

Ans. The express mention of the person loved in the reason following doth sufficiently demonstrate the object of his love; for who will not infer upon the reason following the protestation thus, 'I love, because the Lord hath heard my voice,' that it is the Lord who is loved?

Seeing, therefore, that the words, as they stand in the original, may have so useful a construction, I see no cause of altering them. Many ancient and later expositors so take it.²

The mention of the prophet's affection sheweth that,

I. *God is to be loved.*

The manner of expressing it so concisely and abruptly declareth that,

II. *Our love of God must be most ardent.*

The prefixing of this his affection before his declaration of God's kindness to him, and that too as a bounden duty arising from thence, teacheth that,

III. *A due consideration of God's kindness to man, works an ardent affection in man towards God.*

Sec. 6. *Of love due to God.*

I. *God is to be loved.* He knows not God, he knows not the nature and end of love, that denieth the truth of this position. Both law and gospel require it. 'Thou shalt love the Lord,' Deut. vi. 5, saith the law. 'This is the first and great commandment,' Mat. xxii. 38, saith he that was both the giver of the law, and author of the gospel. Yea, the heathen³ by that glimmering light which they had of God, saw the equity thereof.

¹ Grandem vim obtinet vera dilectio.—*Jerome ad Celant.*

² Sic Augustinus, sic Hieronymus, sic alii veteres et recentiores.

³ Cic. de Divin.

1. Love is the ground of all the duties that are acceptably performed to God. In which respect the law, Exod. xx. 6, premiseth love before keeping the commandments; and compriseth all the commandments under it, Luke x. 27. And the apostle expressly saith, that 'Love is the fulfilling of the law,' Rom. xiii. 10. As love of man is the fulfilling of the second table, so love of God is the fulfilling of the first table.¹ Had not corruption so infected and perverted man as it hath, there would need no other motive to provoke him to any duty than love. Where love abounds, there will be much willingness, cheerfulness, forwardness, and readiness to do what can be done to the well-pleasing of him that is loved. Instance the disposition of wives, children, servants, subjects, friends, and others, whose heart is possessed and filled with true love.

2. All things that make one fit or worthy to be loved, are in God, as,

(1.) Surpassing excellency, majesty, and glory. In these and other like respects we love God for himself.²

(2.) High sovereignty, and supreme authority over us.

(3.) All manner of relations whereby one is knit to another; for he is our king, our father, our husband, our master, our friend, Ps. xlviii. 6, 7; Isa. lxiii. 16; Jer. xxxi. 32; Mal. i. 6; Cant. v. 1.

(4.) Free grace, rich mercy, abundance of all manner of blessings and good things that may any way be needful to us.

3. Gratefulness in regard of the many good things which we have received from him, requireth all love.³ By him we are what we are; and every good thing that in any kind we have, we have received from him. But who can reckon up and set in order all the good things which from God we have received?

What now may be thought of such as hate God? How impious, how perverse a disposition have they! That there have been such, is evident by that fear-

¹ Soli Deo honor et gloria; sed horum neutrum acceptabit Deus, si melle amoris condita non fuerint.—*Bern. super. Cant. Serm.* 83.

² Deum diligimus propter semetipsam.—*Aug. Probat. Epist.* 12.

³ See 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. iii. part 2, sec. 63, &c.

ful commination that is denounced against them in the second commandment, and in sundry other places. Such a one was Ahab; such were the Gentiles that believed not; such are all that hate Christ. In this respect they are worthy to be hated with a perfect hatred. Such as love God will so hate them; for God himself hates them. Whereupon it is noted that he will rain snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest upon them. What else can they expect from the Lord, that hate him?

So far be our souls from any such diabolical disposition of hating God, as that rather we make him the object of our love; and for that end oft and duly weigh how worthy he is of our love; what a prerogative it is to have such an excellent object to cast our love upon; and what benefit redoundeth to us by loving him. For assuredly no love shall be lost that is cast upon him. He knows who love him, he approves them, and will love them again; and what may not they expect from him that are loved of him? 'God keepeth mercy for them that love him,' Neh. i. 5; and not for them only, but for thousands of their generations after them; whereupon the psalmist thus prayeth to God, 'Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name,' Ps. cxix. 132. The many many favours which God here bestoweth upon them that love him, and reserveth for them hereafter, cannot by the tongue of men or angels be expressed. 'All things work together for good to them that love God,' Rom. viii. 28. 'The crown of life, the kingdom of heaven, is promised to them that love God,' James i. 12, and ii. 5. 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him,' 1 Cor. ii. 9. Who now would not, who should not love God?¹ Impious he is against God, injurious against himself, who setteth not his heart upon God, and maketh him the object of his love. Without love all other affections are as nothing. Fear and hon-

¹ Absque amore et timor penam habet, et honor non habet gratiam. Servus est timor quandiu ab amore non manumittitur. Et qui de amore non venit honor, non honor sed adulatione est. Amor per se sufficit, per se placet, et propter se, &c.—*Bern. super. Cant. Serm.* 83.

our are due to God, Mal. i. 6. But fear without love hath torment. Honour without love hath no grace, is not acceptable. Such fear is servitude, such honour is flattery. But love is sufficient of itself; through itself, and for itself it pleaseth, and is accepted. To shew how far our heart should be extended hereunto, note the next doctrine.

Sec. 7. Of the ardency of our love of God.

II. *Our love of God must be most ardent*, such as may fill our heart with a holy admiration, and even ravish it again; as this prophet was so ravished therewith, as in mention thereof he was at a stand and stop. I love, saith he, a phrase of an entire and earnest lover. The law that setteth these large limits thereto (with all thine heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might) requireth as much.

So excellent an object he is, so worthy of all love, so many, so great his kindnesses to us, as it is not possible for us sufficiently, or answerably to love him. Therefore in the highest degree that can be must he be loved. They that aim at the sun, which they cannot possibly hit, will put to all their strength, draw as far, and shoot as high as possibly they can.

Such therefore as see just cause to love God, and are persuaded so to do, let them never satisfy themselves in what they do in this kind. But when they have testified as much as they can, know that they have come much short of that love which is meet for such an object; and therefore still prick on their souls to go further and further. And on this ground take we heed that we suffer not our love so to be set on any other object whatsoever, as that thereby our love should be any whit drawn from God. Note the doom which Christ in this case hath given: 'He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me,' Mat. x. 37. Whether our love be an ascending love, up to father or mother, or a descending love, down to son or daughter, it may not be greater than our love of Christ. Nay, our love of all others, in comparison of our love of Christ, must be hated. Therefore he saith, 'If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple,' Luke xiv. 26. Rather than

not love Christ, (if the case so stand that they must be hated, or Christ not loved,) they must be hated.¹

And when we love them, our love of them, in comparison of our love of Christ, must be hated: as the light of a candle, compared to the light of the sun, is darkness. Take heed therefore of lukewarmness in loving Christ. Such love makes Christ to spue men out of his mouth, as he threatened Laodicea, Rev. iii. 16. Take heed of leaving thy first love, Rev. ii. 4. Let thy love of God daily increase, as the cedars of Lebanon, till they come to be the tallest of trees.

For a help herein note the next point.

Sec. 8. Of considering God's kindness to inflame our love of him.

III. *A due consideration of God's kindness to man works an ardent affection in man towards God.* The large expression of God's care over this prophet in the verses following doth demonstrate his due consideration thereof. This pathetic speech, 'I love,' importeth his ardent affection. That which is here in one word thus concisely implied, is in Ps. xviii. with much variety of words expressed; and by the penitent woman that washed the Lord's feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair, in many actions so evidently declared, as thereupon the Lord gave of her this testimony, 'She loved much,' Luke vii. 37, &c. He that is perfectly loved claimeth and challengeth to himself the whole will of him that loveth him. Nothing hath a greater command than love.² Besides, God's kindness hath an operative virtue in it, which much affecteth those that seriously fix their mind thereon, as fire heateth such as stand near thereto. Indeed we have of ourselves no heat of love in us to God-wards; yet as cold iron put into the fire may thereby be made red hot, so we, by much meditation on the kindness and providence of God towards us, whereby we are as it were cast into the fire of God's love, may be red hot with love, and inflamed in our affection toward God, as he hath here said, 'I love;' and

¹ Si necessitas fuerit, ut amor parentum, ac filiorum, Dei amori comparetur, et non possit uterque servari, odium in suos pietas in Deum.—*Jerome Comment.*, lib. i. in Mat. x.

² Qui perfecte amatur, totam sibi vœdicat amantis voluntatem. Nihil est imperiosius caritate.—*Jerome ad Colant.*

again, 'I will love thee dearly, O Lord,' Ps. xviii. I.

The word whereby the psalmist expresseth his entire affection in the noun signifieth a womb, and importeth such an affection as cometh from the innermost part of man, (חַמָּה matrix,) from his bowels, from the bottom of his heart, as we speak. It is therefore oft put for such pity and compassion as moveth the bowels, as we shall after shew (sec. 26) on the fifth verse. Some therefore thus translate that phrase, 'From my innermost bowels will I love thee, O Lord.'¹ To give evidence of his entire and ardent love of God, he oft professeth his wonderful great love to God's commandments, whereof he saith with admiration, 'Oh how love I thy law! I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold. I love them exceedingly,' Ps. cxix. 97, 127, 167; therefore he saith to God, 'Consider how I love thy precepts,' ver. 159.

This entire and ardent love of God will give good demonstration of that notice which we take of God's merciful dealing with us, and of the heed which we give to his tender care over us. If no heat of love be wrought in our hearts, after that God hath dealt graciously with us, surely no regard hath been had thereto. If the heat that is wrought be but little, though there hath been some regard, yet that some hath been very slight. Let us hereby make trial of ourselves. We have all cause to say, as the prophet here doth, 'The Lord hath heard my supplication.' For when the plague raged among us, when thousands fell on the one and other side, when sorrows of death compassed us, then called we upon the name of the Lord. With fasting we humbled our souls week after week before the Lord, and oft we said, 'O Lord, we beseech thee, deliver our souls;' and the gracious Lord inclined his ear to us; he delivered our soul from death, our eyes from tears, our feet from falling. Can we now every one in truth say, 'I love?' With our tongues we may utter this word, being put into our mouths; but if our hearts were thoroughly sifted, I am afraid that most of them would be found to be otherwise affected. It hath been shewed that love knitteth one's hearts to the object loved. Are our hearts

knit to God? our spirits to his Spirit? If they were, we should more mind the things of God than we do; our care to please God, our fear of offending him, would be more than it is. For these are two especial properties of a child, that, in relation to his father, can in truth say, 'I love.' What from these premises can be inferred but that we have not so duly and deeply considered God's gracious dealing with us as we should have done?

Let us therefore for the time to come take notice of this our over-careless neglect; that, being humbled for what is past, we may yet by recalling to mind, and deeply meditating on the great and gracious deliverance which the Lord hath given us from the snares and sorrows of death, the remembrance whereof is yet fresh among us, be so affected therewith, as, with such a heart and tongue as the prophet here did, every one say, 'I love;' and give evidence thereof by breaking through and passing over all things that may draw our hearts from God. Love of God easily breaketh all bonds.¹

Hitherto of the prophet's respect to God, God's respect to him followeth.

Sec. 9. Of God's hearing prayer.

God's respect to the prophet is² generally expounded in these words:—

1. Because the Lord hath heard my voice and my supplications.

2. Because he hath inclined his ear to me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.

In this general declaration of God's kindness to him, he sheweth—

1. How it was manifested.

2. What use he made thereof.

It was manifested by God's hearing his prayer. And to shew that this was no small kindness, he setteth it out with much copy³ of words and variety of phrase.

His prayer is expressed in two words—voice, supplication.

The former noteth his outward expression.

The latter his inward intention.

¹ Facile rumpit hæc vincula amor Dei.—*Jerome ad Hiodor., De Vita Eremit.*

² See sec. 2.

³ Qu., 'copia,' or 'copiousness?'—*Ed.*

¹ Ex intimis visceribus diligam te Jehovah.—*Trem. et Jun. in Ps. xviii. 2.*

Here, then, is a warrant for vocal and mental prayer.¹

Vocal is first expressed, because it is best discerned; but mental is added, to shew that his voice came out of his heart.

God's granting his desire is also expressed in two phrases,—1. He heard; 2. He inclined his ear.

Both of these are metaphorically, by way of resemblance, attributed to God after the manner of man.²

The former declareth the ground of God's granting his request, He heard his voice.

The latter noteth the manner of doing it, He inclined his ear to him. As one willing to do him good, he purposely bowed his ear, he hearkened to his petition.

Now to shew that this readiness of God to hear him was an especial kindness, and deserved all love and respect, he inferreth this evidence of God's love to him as the cause of his love to God, by a causal particle, thus, 'I love, *because* the Lord hath heard my voice.'

From this text thus unfolded five distinct observations do naturally arise.

I. Man's desire is to be uttered to God.

The word *voice* importeth as much.

II. What is outwardly uttered must be inwardly intended before God. For this end, unto voice is added *supplication*.

III. The Lord heareth prayer.

This is expressly set down.

IV. The Lord is ready and forward to hearken to that which his saints pray for. The metaphor of inclining his ear implieth thus much.

V. It is a great kindness in God to hear prayer. This is a main point here intended.³

Sec. 10. *Of voice in prayer.*

I. *Man's desire is to be uttered to God.* The frequent mention of voice, words, call, cry, mouth, lips, with the like, in relation to prayer, (which are

¹ Of these two kinds of prayer, see 'The Whole Armour of God,' Treat. 3, sec. 74, 75, on Eph. vi. 18.

² ἀνθρωπίνως.

³ See 'The Whole Armour of God,' Treat. 3, sec. 75, on Eph. vi. 18.

all evidences of uttering man's desire,) is a pregnant proof of the point.

Though to God, who knoweth the thought of our heart, it be not necessary to have our desire opened, yet, for manifesting to ourselves and others the truth of our desire, and for adding more force to our inward devotion, an outward expression thereof is necessary; for, as the beams of the sun wax hotter by reflection, so the desire of the heart by expression. Justly, therefore, is his prayer rejected who thinketh much to cry unto the Lord, and thereby to manifest the ardency of his desire.¹

They, therefore, that content themselves with inward ejaculations of their spirit to God, and with devout thoughts and meditations which are in their kind commendable, fail in an especial means which God hath sanctified to make prayers the more forcible to our own souls, more profitable to others that hear them, and more acceptable to God, who delights to have the outward parts of our body as well as the inward powers of our soul used in his worship. Thus shall that which we do be more public and more solemn, for what is that which the psalmist saith? 'I cried with my mouth, and I rejoiced with my tongue;' but thus much, 'I did openly and publicly that which I did.'² But that no countenance may hereby be given to such as 'draw nigh to God with their mouth and honour him with their lips, when their heart is far from him,' let the next doctrine be duly observed.

Sec. 11. *Of voice and heart together in prayer.*³

II. *What is outwardly uttered must be inwardly intended before God.*⁴ It is therefore usual with the

¹ Meritò non exauditur qui clamare dissimulat.—Bern. in Ps. Qui habitat, &c., Ser. xvi.

² Quid est clamavi ore meo et exultavi sub lingua mea? Ipsum publice predicavi.—Aug. Enar. in Ps. lxxv.

³ The word תְּהַנִּיחַ, translated supplications, is derived from הִנֵּן, which signifieth an inward passion or affection of the soul, so as תְּהַנִּיחַ, supplications, may fitly be applied to the inward devotions of the soul, and so much the rather, because this latter, supplications, is added to the former, voice, as the fountain whence it cometh, and importeth as much as if it had been thus expressed, קוֹל תְּהַנִּיחַ, the voice of my supplications, as it is Ps. xxviii. 2, 6; xxxi. 22; lxxxvi. 6; cxxx. 2; and cxl. 6.

⁴ Laudate totis votis de totis vobis, id est ut non solum

Holy Ghost to join such words together as import the one and the other, both outward expressions and inward intention, as 'words and meditation,' 'words of mouth, and meditation of heart,' 'heart and tongue,' 'lips and soul,' 'lips not feigned,' 'heart and hands,' 'soul and eyes.'

The Lord, whose incommunicable property it is to 'search the heart,' hath his eye especially on it, and accordingly doth accept or reject such things as are outwardly done by men. He professeth as much of himself, saying, 'I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways,' Jer. xvii. 10. The true affection of the heart maketh prayers to be sincere, and such prayers are said to be offered up by Christians who have respect to God;¹ if, therefore, he hear anything uttered with the mouth which he finds not intended in the heart, he regards it no more than he did the sacrifice of Cain, Gen. iv. 5. God is a spirit, and it is necessary that whosoever desireth to have his cry come unto God, do cry in spirit as well as in voice; for, as God regardeth not the face of man as man doth, but rather beholdeth the heart, so his ears are more attentive to the voice of the heart than of the body.²

A strong motive this is to provoke us to look to our hearts, whensoever we open our mouths before the Lord. If in truth we can say, 'Our heart is prepared, O Lord, our heart is prepared,' Ps. lvii. 7, 8, then may we with boldness say to our tongue, 'Awake up, our glory;' though there may be some failing in the outward manner of offering up our spiritual sacrifice of prayer, yet if the heart be prepared to seek the Lord, he will be ready to bear with our errors and to pardon our aberrations; instance that mercy which he shewed to the men of Israel that in Hezekiah's time came to Jerusalem to celebrate the passover. The true intention of their heart was it that Hezekiah pleaded before the Lord when he said, 'The good Lord pardon every one that pre-

pareth his heart to seek God the Lord God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary.' And the Lord hearkened to Hezekiah; for the heart is that which the Searcher of hearts doth of all things most delight in; and thereupon he saith, 'My son, give me thine heart,' Prov. xxiii. 26; 'But when the heart is far from God, it is in vain to draw near to him with the mouth, and to honour him with the lips,' Mat. xv. 8, 9. To offer such an oblation, to burn such incense, is no better than 'to offer swine's blood to bless an idol,' Isa. lxvi. 3. It doth therefore nearly concern us thoroughly to try our hearts, that the cries which we make to God who is a spirit, may not be of the tongue only, but of the heart also, yea, of the heart especially;¹ for the cry commended in Scripture is not of the voice, but of the heart; if therefore, our hearts be in any good manner prepared, the third doctrine will shew that we may with boldness call upon God.

Sec. 12. *Of God's hearing prayer.*

III. *God heareth prayer;* for, 'He that planted the ear, shall not he hear? He that teacheth man to understand, shall not he understand?' Ps. xciv. 9, 10. 'He understandeth our thought afar off,' Ps. cxxxix. 3, 4. Much more when it is uttered, and made known to him; for 'there is not a word in our tongue but the Lord knoweth it altogether.' And if he understand any thoughts, and know any words, most of all doth he understand and know the thoughts and words of prayer, which are directly intended to him. For, to join the fourth doctrine with this, by reason of their near affinity,

IV. *God is ready and forward to hearken to that which his saints pray for.* He need not be much solicited and importuned to hear: he listens to hear what suits of his servants are preferred to him; while they are speaking, he will say, 'Behold, I am here.'² Besides, this phrase in my text of God's 'inclining his ears,' and others like to it, of 'bowing and bending them,' (which are evidences of a mind

lingua et vox vestra laudet Deum, sed et conscientia vestra, &c.—*Aug. Enar. in Ps. cxlviii.*

¹ 'Σπρόδομενός Θεῷ δεήσεις εὐλακρεῖς.'—*Justin Mart. in fine Expos. Fidei.*

² Deus sicut non faciem hominis respicit, tanquam homo, sed magis intuetur cor: sic ad cordis potius vocem, quam corporis, aures ejus, &c.—*Bern. in Ps. Qui habit. Sermon xvi.*

¹ 'Clamor in Scripturis non vocis sed cordis est.—*Hier. Comment. in Ps. v.*

² Ipsum Dominum quære, et exaudiet te, et adhuc te loquente dicet, Ecce, adsum.—*Aug. Enar. in Psalm xxiii. con. 2.*

very willing to hear;) that his 'ears are open and attend to their prayer,' Ps. xxxiv. 15; 2 Chron. vii. 15.) I might here as a real demonstration of this point produce many hundred instances of God's hearing his saints' prayers in all ages of the world; but not to insist on them, this style, 'O thou which hearest prayer,' שְׁמַע תִּפְלֵה, Ps. lxxv. 2, attributed to God, is very pertinent to the point in hand. The psalmist had hereupon just cause thus to say unto God, 'Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear.' God will not stay till they prepare their heart; but he himself will prepare it. He doth not expect that others should cause him to hear; he will cause himself to hear. Yea, yet further to this purpose he saith, 'It shall come to pass, that before they call I will answer, and whiles they are yet speaking I will hear,' Isa. lxxv. 24. Thus much David professeth to be verified in his own case; for, saith he, 'I said I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin,' Ps. xxxii. 5.

God's omnipresence and omniscience, his presence in every place, and knowledge of all things, is the cause that he heareth prayer: but it is God's own goodness and kindness; it is the efficacy of his Son's intercession; it is the fragrant savour which the sweet incense of prayer sendeth forth, that maketh God so forward to hear. In regard of God's goodness thus saith the psalmist, 'Hear my voice according to thy loving-kindness,' Ps. cxix. 149. Concerning the Son of God, thus he speaketh to his Father, 'I know that thou hearest me always,' John xi. 42. And to us he thereupon thus saith, ' whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name he will give it you,' John xvi. 23. As for the savour of prayer, it is like that sweet savour that God smelled out of Noah's offering, Gen. viii. 21. For much incense is offered with the prayers of all saints, Rev. viii. 3. Good ground, therefore, had David to say to God, 'Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of mine hands as an evening sacrifice,' Ps. exli. 2.

'O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!' Ps. viii. 1. Who is a God like unto thee, O Lord, that is so able, so ready to hear his servants' suits? Many of the gods of the heathen

have no ears at all. Many have ears, and hear not at all. The creatures that hear can hear no more, no further, than by the sound of a voice is brought to their ears. Among them all, none can hear the inward desires of the heart; none can tell whether voice and heart consent or no. They are oft loath to hear, what they cannot but hear; they are not always able to grant what they may be willing to hear. It is a divine propensity, even thy property, O searcher of all hearts, O Father of mercies, and God of power, to have thine ears always open and attentive to the saints' prayers, to hear their voice and supplications, their outward cries and inward sighs, and to grant all their desires, and that because thou art full of mercy.¹ 'O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!' Ps. viii. 9.

What good and just cause have saints to make known their needs to God, in all distresses to call upon him! He is not a God that is talking or pursuing, or in a journey, or sleepeth, or must be awaked, 1 Kings xviii. 27, so as in those or any other like respects he cannot hear; but ever at hand, ready to hear, able to help.² What more forcible motive can there be to incite us to call upon him? From this property of God that he is a hearer of prayer, the psalmist maketh this inference, 'Unto him shall all flesh come,' Ps. lxxv. 2. From such a motive as this the servants of the king of Syria persuaded their master to seek favour of the king of Israel: 'We have heard,' say they, 'that the kings of Israel are merciful kings, let us go to him,' &c., 1 Kings xxii. 31. We have so heard it, as we may well believe it, that our God heareth prayers, and inclineth his ear to supplications. To him, therefore, let us go. Christ having given evidence in the days of his flesh of his ableness and readiness to cure all that came unto him, they came themselves, as many as had plagues, and they brought others unto him that were taken with diseases, Mat. iii. 10, and iv. 14. What moved them so to do? Surely faith in Christ's power and will to help. Whereupon Christ was wont to use these phrases to

¹ Plenus misericordia, non amovet deprecationem meam a se.—Hier. Comment. in Psalm v.

² Inclinat se nobis ut nostra ad eum ascendat oratio.—Ambr. in Orat. de Obiit Theodos.

them, 'As thou hast believed, so be it unto thee,' Mat. viii. 13; 'Thy faith hath made thee whole,' chap. ix. 22; 'According to your faith be it unto you,' ver. 29; 'If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth,' Mark ix. 23. Let us therefore believe that God is ready to hear, as we have heard, and in faith 'go boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need,' Heb. iv. 16.

To make us more highly prize this privilege, note the first doctrine.

Sec. 13. *Of the kindness of hearing prayer.*

V. *It is a great kindness in God to hear prayer.* The prophet that was hereby moved to love God, and praise God, (for saith he by way of gratulation, 'I love, because the Lord hath heard my prayer,') accounted it a great kindness. As a kindness the saints have desired it for themselves and others. As a kindness it hath been promised of God, and by him performed as a kindness. Answerably the saints have acknowledged it for a kindness, and as for a kindness praised the Lord. But on the contrary, God as a judgment hath threatened not to hear prayer for themselves or for others, and it hath been lamented as a heavy judgment.

By hearing prayer God giveth evidence of the notice which he taketh of our estate, of the respect he beareth to our persons, of the pity he hath of our miseries, of his purpose to supply our wants, and of his mind to do us good according to our needs. What greater kindness can we expect? When, therefore, thou observest that thy prayer is not rejected, thou mayest be secure, because his mercy is not removed from thee.¹ But when no respect is borne to persons, where there is no compassion of their distresses, no purpose, no mind to do them good, then shall the ear be turned from them, no regard had to their petitions.

This being such a kindness, as a kindness it ought to be accepted, and our answerable care it ought to be, to carry ourselves worthy thereof; and that is by making our acknowledgment thereof, as here the psalmist doth, by rendering due praise

¹ Cum videris non a te amotam deprecationem tuam, securus esto, quia non est a te amota misericordia ejus.—*Aug. Enar. in Ps. lxx.*

to him who is ready to hear us for our good, by opening our ears to his word,¹ who is so ready to open his ears to our prayers: to be ready to do what he requireth of us, as he is ready to do what we desire him to do for us. Otherwise we shew ourselves most unworthy of the forenamed kindness: we provoke him to be angry against our prayer, to shut his ears, and to turn them away from us. And so much hath he threatened. 'Because,' saith he, 'I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded, &c. They shall call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me,' Prov. i. 24, 28. 'For he that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abominable,' Prov. xxviii. 9.² And that not without just and great cause. For what comparison is there betwixt the Creator and creatures, the Lord and servants? 'When we have done all those things that are commanded us, we are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do,' Luke xvii. 10. But God is tied to none. What he granteth to us is of his mere grace. Of the benefit of this grace that we may partake, let our care be to endeavour with our uttermost power to do our duty. For the ears of God are always open to the prayers of the righteous.³

Thus much of God's hearing prayer.

The use to be made thereof followeth.

Sec. 14. *Of the encouragement men have from God's hearing to pray.*

Ver. 2. *Therefore I will call upon him in my days.*⁴

¹ Exauditus es! gratias age quod exauditus es.—*Chrys. Hom. De Profect. Evang.*

² Quamdiu in tenebris erroris sum, non me exaudit. Quum vero sol justitiæ venerit in corde meo, tunc me exaudit.—*Jerome, Comment. in Ps. v.*

³ Semper piæ aures Dei justorum precibus patent.—*Jerome, Comment. in Ps. lxx.*

⁴ The prophet joineth these two together with a copulative particle, thus, אָרַב אֶקְרָא, and in my days I will call. But because there is in the beginning of the verse this causal particle, כִּי, for, or because, the copulative must either be used in way of emphasis thus, 'Because thou hast inclined thine ears to me, even in my days I will call,' or else be put for a note of inference, as Tremel. and Jun. *Idcirco*. And the king's translators, 'Therefore will I call.' This phrase, כִּי, in my days, is directly taken; some take it for continuance of

These words do note the use which the prophet made of God's readiness to hear him: which as a just consequence followed from thence. God having shewed his readiness to hear him, he would from thence take heart still to call upon God. This consequence is here amplified by the time, thus, in my days,¹ which time, because it is indefinitely set down, compriseth under it all a man's time, so long as he liveth: and because the days of trial are by a kind of property called a man's days, and they are the most seasonable days for man to pray and God to hear, this phrase, in my days, may in particular be applied to the time of trial, the days of his visitation.² Wherefore to join the consequence of calling upon God, and the time thereof, in his days, and that in both the forenamed acceptions, to join, I say, all together, the doctrine thence properly arising is this,

God's hearing one's prayer in former distresses is a good encouragement in all future distresses to call upon him. Thus Jacob having called on God, as he was going from his father Isaac to his uncle Laban, and being graciously heard, took encouragement from thence to call on God again when he heard that his brother Esau came out against him with four hundred men. Yea, in his prayer he thus pleadeth God's former favour to him: 'With my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands: deliver me, I pray thee,' &c. And again, meeting with the man Jesus Christ, he would not let him go till he had blessed him, and given him assurance of safety. And again, when he had cause to fear the envy of all the nations round about him for the cruelty of his sons in destroying the Shechemites, 'at Bethel he built an altar to God,'

time, as the king's translators, who thus turn it, 'as long as I live.' For the word in my days being indefinitely set down, may fitly be extended to all his days, even the whole time of his life. Others, as Tremel. and Jun., expound it of the time of affliction, thus, in *diebus meis*, i. *afflictionis mee*; as Ps. cxxxvii. 7, the time of Jerusalem's misery is called the day of Jerusalem. Neither of these cross the other: but both may stand together, as is manifested by the doctrine gathered out of these words. Of praying always, see 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. iii. sec. 113, 137, on Eph. vi. 18.

¹ Non in paucis, sed in omnibus diebus vite mee; nam certis diebus invocare, non omnibus, fastidientis est, non sperantis, &c.—*Amb. in Orat. De Obiit. Theodos.*

² Dies meos possum dicere, dies miserie mee, dies mortalitatis mee &c.—*Aug. Enar. in hunc Ps.*

an evidence of his calling upon God. And again, 'He set up a pillar, and poured a drink-offering thereon,' another like evidence of his calling on God. Thus time after time in his days he called on God. The like might be exemplified in Joshua, Moses, David, and other kings and prophets; yea, in Christ himself, who, knowing that his Father heard him always, always called upon him; in his apostles, and other saints. But it is enough to point at them.

God's former hearing of our prayer is an actual evidence and real demonstration, not only in general of God's willingness to hear, and ableness to help, whereof before, but also of his good-will to us in particular, for he ever remains the same God, of the same mind and will. 'I am Jehovah,' saith this God, 'I change not.' Such prayers as were once acceptable to him, will be ever acceptable to him. If after he have once opened his ear he shut it again, the fault is in him that maketh the prayer. Have ye not read what answer the Lord made to Joshua, when, upon the discomfiture of the host of Israel before the men of Ai, he 'fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord until eventide'? It was this, 'There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before the enemies, until you take the accursed thing from among you.' But where there is not some manifest obstacle in the person that prayeth, or in his prayer, he that hath once been heard may assure himself that he shall be heard again. God will ever be like himself.

Good cause there is that we should on this ground diligently observe at what times, in what things, God heareth our prayer. This is a principal prop to support our faith. It is noted as a point of wisdom in the servants of the king of Syria, that they 'did diligently observe whether anything would come from the king of Israel, and did hastily catch it,' 1 Kings xx. 33. It would certainly be a part of better wisdom, and a matter of far greater consequence, diligently to observe wherein God's ear hath been inclined to us, what suits he hath granted unto us. Our spirits would be much quickened thereby, and our faith much strengthened. He that thus pleaded God's hearing of others' prayers, 'Our fathers cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded,' Ps.

xxii. 5, had his faith questionless much supported thereby. How much more may we by God's hearing our own prayer? Such a ground of faith had David when he said, 'The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine,' 1 Sam. xvii. 37. We lose the main benefit and comfort of God's gracious inclination toward us, if we make not this use thereof.

Quest. How may we know when God heareth our prayer?

Ans. When we are sure that our prayer for the matter is according to God's will, (1 John v. 14,) agreeable to his word, and withal have the inward testimony of our conscience bearing us witness that in truth from our heart we have made our prayer, and God hath thereupon granted what we have craved, we may, we ought to think and say, that God hath heard our prayer.¹ This is not simply in itself a vainglorious ostentation of the worth of our prayer, as of a work proceeding from us, but a grateful acknowledgment of God's gracious acceptance of his own ordinance. God is the fountain of all blessing. He can cause his blessings to flow from him by what means seemeth best to himself. Now he in his wisdom hath sanctified prayer as an ordinary means of receiving blessing from him. Wherefore, when God upon prayer made for such and such blessings hath granted them, to think and say God hath heard our prayer, is but to acknowledge that he hath done the things in and by the means which he himself hath sanctified, and to justify his faithfulness in that order and course which himself hath set down. We oft pray, and God granteth that we pray for, and yet we are loath to say, God hath heard our prayer. We are prone to think that that which happeneth, though by prayer it were craved of God, falleth out by chance; and that it would have fallen out whether we had prayed for it or no. This conceit maketh us backward to praise God for the good things which we have. Fortune and chance² have ob-

¹ Cum hæc omnia gesta apud me cernerem, quomodo non crederem quod inclinavit aurem suam mihi.—*Aug. Enar. in hunc Ps.*

² Of chance, see 'The Extent of God's Providence,' on Mat. x. 29, sec. 5. Si casibus reguntur homines, nulla providentia aliquid geritur.—*Aug. Enar. in Ps. xxxi.* Fortuitum (que,

tained so great esteem among men, as God is thereby robbed of much glory. No such thieves of God's glory as they; they take away the whole glory of his providence. For if men's affairs be ordered by chance, nothing is done by providence. But if we were thoroughly instructed in the divine providence, and persuaded of the wise order and course of the same, in and by such means as in the word of God are revealed, our opinion of fortune and chance would vanish as a mist before the bright sunshine. For that which is casual (which the vulgar call fortune) is ordered by a certain secret course, which is providence. Now a diligent observation of the fruit and effect of our prayers will give us good evidence of the divine providence, and make us more thankful for good things bestowed, and more faithful, fervent, and constant in praying for the things which we want. And let no man hence imagine that God may be tired with suitors and suits. He is not as man. He taketh great delight in prayers well-ordered and rightly made. Such suits, the more frequent they are, the more welcome they are. Therefore, because thou always receivest, always crave.¹

This of the manifestation of God's kindness in general.

The particular exemplification thereof followeth.

Sec. 15. *Of the expression of the prophet's distress.*

Ver. 3. *The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell got hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.*

Here beginneth the exemplification² of God's kindness to his servant; the first branch whereof is a description of the danger wherein he was, and out of which he was delivered. Now to magnify the kindness of God the more in delivering him out of the same, he setteth it out with much variety of words and phrase.

1. The first word חַלְוִי is diversely translated. Some expound it snares,³ some cords,⁴ some sorrows.⁵

vulgo fortuna nominatur) occulto quodam ordine regitur.—*Aug. contr. Acad., lib. i.*

¹ Quia semper accipis, semper invoca.—*Ambr. in Orat. de Obi. Theodos.*

² Sec. 2. ³ Genevens. Eng. Metre. ⁴ *Fumis*, Jerome.

⁵ K. Translat., Tren. and Jun., Gr. Septuagint.

The reason of this difference is because the word itself is metaphorical.¹ It is taken from cruel creditors, who will be sure to tie their debtors fast, as with cords, so as they shall not easily get loose and free again. The pledge which the debtor leaveth with his creditor as a pawn, hath this name in Hebrew; so also a cord wherewith things are fast tied; and the mast of a ship fast fixed, and tied on every side with cords; and bauds or troops of men combined together; and the pain of a woman in travail, which is very great; and destruction with pain and anguish. Thus we see that such a word is used here as setteth out a most lamentable and inextricable case.

2. The next word, *of death*, בּוֹת, sheweth that his case was deadly; death was before his eyes; death was as it were threatened.

3. He is said to be *compassed* herewith in two respects: (1.) To shew that these sorrows were not far off, but even upon him, as waters that compass a man when he is in the midst of them, or as enemies that begirt a place. (2.) To shew that they were not few, but many sorrows, as bees that swarm together.

4. The word translated *pains*, כּוֹצָרִי, in the original is put for sacks fast bound together, and flint stones, and fierce enemies, and hard straits; so as this word also aggravateth his misery.

5. The word translated *hell*, שְׂאֵל, is usually taken in the Old Testament for the grave; it is derived from שָׂאֵל, a verb that signifieth to crave, because the grave is ever craving, and never satisfied.

6. The words translated *gat hold on me*, כּוֹצָאוֹנִי, and *I found*, אֶחְצֵצֵה, are both the same verb; they differ only in circumstances of tense, number, and person. The former sheweth that these miseries found him, and as a serjeant they seized on him; he did not seek them, he did not wittingly and wilfully cast himself into their clutches; he would most willingly have escaped them, if he could. The latter sheweth that indeed he found them; he felt the tartness and bitterness, the smart and pain of them.

¹ Debita, vel pignora pro debitis. Item funes et dolores qui ceu funes constringunt. חֶבֶל Debit, obstrictus est cere alieno.

7. The word translated *trouble*, צָרָה of צוּר, hath a near affinity with the former word translated *pain*, כּוֹצָר, צוּר, and is used to set out as great misery as that; and yet further to aggravate the same, another word is added thereto, sorrow.

8. The last word, *sorrow*, יָנֹן, יָנָה¹ importeth such a kind of calamity as maketh them that lie under it much to grieve, and also moveth others that behold it much to pity them. It is oft used in the Lamentations of Jeremiah. Either of these two last words, trouble and sorrow, do declare a very perplexed and distressed estate; what then both of them joined together? For the Holy Ghost doth not multiply words in vain.

Sec. 16. *Of the great distresses wherunto saints are subject.*

The forementioned expression of the prophet's distress affordeth this observation.

Saints may fall into deadly dangers and desperate distresses. None can deny this prophet to be a saint. The express mention of death and grave give just occasion to say that his danger was deadly.² The other words of compassing about, getting hold, finding, bonds, pains, trouble, sorrow, as they have been expounded, do argue that his distress was desperate; desperate, I say, not in relation to God, as if there were no hope of help in him, but in relation to man, being such as is beyond his ability to afford any relief, and so desperate, according to that which Jehoshaphat said, 'We know not what to do,'—namely, in regard of human help; yet in respect of his hope in God he addeth, 'Our eyes are upon thee, O our God,' 2 Chron. xx. 12.

Take a view of the dangers and distresses wherein were Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 7, and xxxiv. 30; Joseph, Gen. xxxvii. 18, &c., and xxxix. 19, &c.; the Israelites in Egypt, Exod. i. 14, &c., and v. 5, &c.; and at the Red Sea, Exod. xiv. 9; in the time of the judges very often. And wherein were Moses, Exod. xvii. 4, Num. xvi. 2, &c.; Job, chap. ii. 13; David, 1 Sam. xxx. 6; Abijah, 2 Chron.

¹ Ingemuit pre dolore. Hinc γένω, gemo, deploro.

² Quicunque in via hujus seculi fuerit, quamvis Moyses, et Aaron, quamvis Hieremias sit et Helias, tamen necesse est eum de tentationibus Ægypti, et solitudinis bibere.—*Jerome, Comment. lib. i. in Hab. 2.*

xiii. 13; Asa, 2 Chron. xiv. 11; Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xx. 12; Hezekiah, Isa. xxxvii. 3, and xxxviii. 10; Jonah, chap. i. 15; Jeremiah, chap. xxxviii. 6; Daniel and his three companions, Dan. iii. 21, and vi. 16; Christ, Luke iv. 29; the apostles, Acts v. 18; Peter, Acts xii. 4, &c.; Paul, Acts xxi. 28, &c.; and many other, whose histories are recorded in the Holy Scriptures, and other books; take a view of all the dangers and distresses wherein they were, and it will evidently appear that they were deadly and desperate.

This God suffers both to give the more clear demonstration of his own divine properties, as his of prudence, providence, power, pity, truth, &c., and also to afford means for a more thorough examination of the graces he bestoweth on us,¹ as of our faith, hope, wisdom, patience, courage, constancy, &c. Yea, he suffereth the day of tribulation to fall on us, that we should call on him, for, were it not for affliction, we should scarce call on God.²

1. Take heed, therefore, of over-rash censure. Judge not such as are compassed with the sorrows of death, and on whom the pains of hell have got hold who have found trouble and sorrow; if they have professed themselves to be God's servants, judge them not to be hypocrites, to be forsaken by reason of their distresses. This was the fault of Job's wife, to whom Job made this wise and just answer, 'Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil?' Job ii. 9, 10; whereby he sheweth that the same God who sometimes giveth to his saints much prosperity, may also in his unsearchable wisdom lay heavy crosses upon them, and yet account them saints. The friends also of Job, though they performed a friendly part in coming to visit him, yet foully failed in misjudging his inward disposition and outward conversation, and that upon no other ground than the great calamity wherein they saw him lie. On this very ground David's enemies judged him to be forsaken of God. This censure is both malicious in itself, and also injurious and grievous to the party mis-censured. All that the devil could do against Job could not so vex his soul

and perplex his spirit as his wife's and friends' censure did. Many saints that with their crosses are much pressed, are with such censures almost oppressed.

2. As others may be misjudged, so also may men mis-censure themselves and their own estate, by thinking they are cast off and forsaken of God, because God suffereth them to fall into the snares of death, into trouble and sorrow. The apostle was otherwise minded when he said, 'We are troubled on every side, but not distressed: we are perplexed, but not in despair: persecuted, but not forsaken: cast down, but not destroyed,' 2 Cor. iv. 8, 9. When a man hath the testimony of his conscience for the sincerity of his heart, he need no more doubt of God's fatherly favour to him, though he be as much afflicted as Job was, than Job did, who, notwithstanding all that Satan could do, or his friends could say, doubted not of his title and interest to God's favour, but confidently said, 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him, and I will maintain mine own ways before him. He also shall be my salvation,' Job xiii. 15, 16.

3. There being no such outward affliction but may befall a saint, we may on this ground comfort ourselves, even in the midst of trials. If this were a sound ground of comfort, 'There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man,' 1 Cor. x. 13—as sound it must needs be, because laid down by an apostle—surely this must needs be much more a sound one, 'There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to a child of God.' Faint not, therefore, under any cross, but remember the consolation 'which speaketh unto you as unto children: My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him,' Heb. xii. 5.¹

4. That when we find trouble and sorrow we may not faint, it is fit to be prepared beforehand; and in the days of our peace and prosperity to meditate on this condition whereunto all saints are subject, from which none are exempt. That which befalls any one may befall every one. There never was nor shall be any that have had or shall have a protection in this case, or immunity from this condition. For our preparation we have an excellent direction, Eph.

¹ See 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. i. part 2, sec. 2; *ibid.*, part 4, sec. 11; *ibid.*, treat. ii. part 5, sec. 12.

² Ad hoc permisi diem tribulationis tibi fieri, quia forte si non tribulareris, non invocares me.—*Aug. Enar. in Ps. xli.*

¹ See 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. ii. part 5, sec. 20.

vi. 10, 11, &c., which was for this end prescribed, as is evident by this clause, 'That you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand,' Eph. vi. 13.¹

Sec. 17. *Of aggravating a distress after deliverance.*

The forementioned² aggravation of the prophet's distress at this time of gratulation, even when he was freed from it, further sheweth that—

*The uttermost extremity of a calamity is to be acknowledged after we are delivered out of it.*³ Read for this purpose the beginning of Deborah's song, Judges v. 6, 7, and Hezekiah's whole song, Ps. xxxviii. 10, &c. David is copious herein in many of his psalms, and St Paul in many of his epistles.

1. The judgment of a man will be hereby the better instructed in the cause of his deliverance to be from God, and the more convinced of the equity of his duty in giving thanks.

2. His heart also will be the more enlarged to admire, and his mouth the wider opened to celebrate the power, and wisdom, and mercy of God in his deliverance.

The application of this point nearly concerns us who have so lately⁴ received so gracious, so miraculous a deliverance from so deadly a danger, as the like hath not been heard of in former ages. The kind of danger, and the fear which possessed us while we were in the midst thereof, is oft to be meditated on; yea, and to be recorded also, as here the psalmist by divine instinct recordeth his, that if it should in process of time slip out of our memories, we might have that means to recall it again. And not only the substance thereof in general, but also such particular circumstances as may make to the aggravation thereof.

Many will whine pitifully while the cross lieth on them, and complain exceedingly of the weight thereof. They will then set out every circumstance of aggravation to the uttermost, if not beyond the uttermost truth; but when they are freed, at ease, and at liberty, then lightly think of it, and say there was more fear than needed. Thus is the deliverance

¹ See 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat i. part 4, sec. 6, &c.

² Sec. 15.

³ 'Graphicè miseras vitæ sure rationes, postquam ab iis liberaverat eum Deus, describit.'—*Aug. Confess.*, lib. 1, 2, 3, &c.

⁴ Sec. 3.

slighted, God's power, providence, and grace disrespected, men's hearts closed, and tongues tied from giving to God his due praise; and God provoked either to inflict heavier judgments, or else to cease to smite them any more with the stripes of a father, and to give them over to a reprobate sense. In a word, by that means the profit and benefit of a visitation is lost.

There be others that after their deliverance will much speak of the danger wherein they were, and of the very extremity thereof; but how? boastingly, vaingloriously; bragging of their own wit and forecast, or, to use their own base and vulgar phrase, of their good fortune. Thus is God by another extreme robbed of that honour which is due to him.

To avoid these two extremes the forenamed duty is rightly and wisely to be performed; that so that which is good in the substance may for the manner be well done. For which end these rules may be of good use:—

1. Empty thy soul of all self-conceit, and humbly acknowledge thyself 'not worthy of the least of all God's mercies,' Gen. xxxii. 10.

2. Well weigh with thyself, and willingly make known to others, what little hope of deliverance thou hadst in the extremity of thy calamity. 'I said,' saith he who made a psalm of praise after his recovery, 'I said, in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave,' &c. Isa. xxxviii. 10, &c.

3. Record the evidences of God's more than ordinary providence, that thyself and others which hear may discern where the finger of God hath shewed itself. He that said, 'This is the Lord's doing; and it is marvellous in our eyes,' Ps. cxviii. 23, well observed the work of God.

4. Remember how thou wert affected in the distress; whether thou didst then call upon God for deliverance. If thou didst, make known as much. Boldly think and say, as the psalmist, 'In my distress I cried to my God: he heard my voice,' Ps. xviii. 6. This will be an evidence of the work of God, that he hath delivered thee.

5. What thou doest, do in way of praise to the glory of God, as the psalmist where he recordeth a great deliverance, and ascribeth it to the Lord, inserteth this clause, 'Who is worthy to be praised,' Ps. xviii. 3.

6. What thou doest in this kind do before such as

thou supposest have minds and hearts disposed to take notice of God's works; as this prophet said, 'I will pay my vows unto the Lord in the presence of his people,' Ps. cxvi. 14; before such, a man dares not boast of anything but of God and his work.

7. In this kind what thou doest, do it as before the Lord. When thou art alone before him, then open thy soul in the aggravation of thy distress to the full. When thou art in company let thy heart be fixed on the Lord. No better means to keep thee from boasting in thyself. Thus did he whose mouth was so full of God's praises, 'I have set the Lord,' saith he, 'always before me,' Ps. xvi. 8.

Sec. 18. *Of the resolution of the fourth verse.*

Ver. 4. *Then called I upon the name of the Lord; O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.*

II. The¹ second branch of the exemplification of God's kindness setteth out the means which the prophet used to obtain deliverance of the Lord, and that was in one word prayer, which is here noted in this fourth verse, where we may observe:

1. A general declaration of that means, 'Then called I upon the name of the Lord.'

2. A particular expression of the main substance thereof, 'O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.'

In the general, three distinct points are observable:

1. The time, 'Then.'

2. The action, 'I called.'

3. The object, 'Upon the name of the Lord.'

In the particular, we may discern:

1. The manner of framing his prayer.

2. The matter that is prayed for.

The manner pointeth out two graces of special use to make prayer effectual:

1. His faith, 'O Lord.'

2. His fervency, 'I beseech thee.'

The matter expresseth:

1. The thing desired, 'Deliver.'

2. The subject for which it is desired, 'My soul.'

Sec. 19. *Of seeking a remedy in misery.*

The first point to be observed in the fourth verse is the general declaration of the means used for deliverance. And thereof the first special branch is the time when that means was used, 'Then called I,' &c.

¹ See sec. 2.

That particle of time is in the original expressed by a copulative particle, 'and,' which is thus joined with the former, 'I found sorrow, וַיִּשֶׁם, and on the name of the Lord I called.' It is usual with the Hebrews to point at the time of doing a thing by joining the thing done with the occasion of doing it. And if in English we should thus speak, 'I was in prison and petitioned the king,' any would thence gather the time when the petition was made, as if it had been said, 'When I was in prison, then I petitioned.' Wherefore for perspicuity sake this particle of time, 'then,' according to the true sense of the word, is here not unfitly used, and from thence this instruction may be inferred.

*In distress redress is to be sought.*¹ It is that which God hath commanded, and to which he hath made a promise, Ps. l. 15, which the saints in all ages have done, Ps. xxii. 5, and found good success therein; yea, which very sense teacheth unreasonable creatures to do, Job xxxviii. 41.

It is the very end why God hath afforded means of redress, that they should be sought and used. To be careless herein is to neglect the divine providence for our good, whereby men shew themselves both ungrateful to God and injurious to their own souls.

Just cause there is on this ground to reprove those stupid blocks who are never moved in any judgment to inquire after any means whereby it may be removed; but upon conceit that it is an inevitable destiny neglect all means, thinking that if their hap be to escape, it is well, but if they must needs perish, it cannot be avoided.² Thus, by the shallowness of their conceit, they cross the incomprehensibility of God's wisdom, or rather by their obstinate blockishness they pervert the revealed goodness of God. For the wise God, keeping close to himself his determined purpose, hath in goodness revealed means for such an accomplishment of his counsel as may best make for our good; in use of which means, if we be conscionable, we shall assuredly find God's will accomplished to the best. It is not therefore their destiny, but their folly, that such as neglect means warranted and sanctified by

¹ *Revera pauper et inops, pulsa ad eum qui aperit.*—*Bern. super Cant. Serm. 1.*

² See 'Whole Armour of God,' treat. iii. part 5, sec. 18, 19.

God's word do perish, wherein they make themselves accessory to their own destruction. For howsoever the patrons of destiny do attribute all things thereto, both good and evil, yet it is evident, that God justly revengeth in evil men their deserts, but bestoweth all good things through an undeserved grace, of his own merciful inclination; so as of him grace and help in time of need is to be sought.¹

This therefore will be our wisdom, to take notice of the distress wherein we are, to inquire after the best means of help and succour, and to be conscientious in using it. Common sense and natural reason move men to seek after temporal, sensible remedies, and to learn which of them have a *probatum est*, an experimental evidence of good done by them. To such as are minded to believe God's word, and to use that remedy to which God himself and his saints in all ages have given a *probatum est*, the next following doctrine will be of good use.

Sec. 20. Of prayer in affliction.

The second² special branch of the general declaration of the means is the action used: 'I called,' saith the prophet. This having relation to the Lord, as the next words shew, setteth out his praying to God. And this was that sovereign, that effectual means which he used; so as—

Prayer is the best remedy in a calamity. This is indeed a true *catholicum*,³ a general remedy for every malady. Not like the empiric's *catholicum*, which sometimes may work, but for the most part fails, but that which upon assured evidence and constant experience hath its *probatum est*; being that which the most wise, learned, honest, and skilful Physician that ever was, or can be, hath prescribed,—even he that teacheth us how to bear what is to be borne, or how to heal and help what hath been borne.⁴ Well weigh the testimonies of Scripture⁵ pro-

¹ Fati assertores et bona et mala hominum fato tribuunt. Deus autem in malis hominum merita eorum debita retributione persequitur, bona vero per indebitam gratiam misericordii voluntate largitur.—*Aug. contr. 2 Epist. Pelag. ad Bonifac.*, lib. i. cap. 6.

² See sec. 19.

³ Quintilianus, lib. ii. cap. 13, interpretatur καθολικά universalis, vel perpetua.

⁴ Potens est Deus, vel docere tolerandum, vel sanare toleratum.—*Aug. Enar. in Ps. xlix.*

⁵ Sec. 19.

duced for proof of the general doctrine, that redress is to be sought, and they will be found very pertinent to this particular kind of redress, prayer. This is the remedy which God hath commanded to be used, and whereto he hath promised his blessing, which accordingly hath been used, and an answerable blessing observed. Yea, further to shew the effectual operation hereof, when the Lord hath resolved not to cure, he hath forbidden this remedy to be used; as if, if it were used, it must needs do the deed, it could not be in vain.

It is no latent virtue in prayer, as it is a work performed by man, that maketh it so effectual in operation; but the order which it hath pleased the divine wisdom to establish. God being the fountain of all blessing, the author of all help, that 'father of lights from whom every good gift cometh,' James i. 17, who can convey what help and succour it pleaseth him,—and there is nothing so difficult which, by the help of God, cannot be accomplished,¹—he who can afford help by what means it seemeth best to his wisdom, hath sanctified this means of prayer for us, thereby 'to obtain mercy and to find grace to help in time of need,' Heb. iv. 16. And that because in and thereby God who is called upon is much honoured, and man stripped of all matter of boasting and self-conceit.² For in that men seek help by prayer of God, they testify an acknowledgment,—

1. Of their need. For need, yea, sense of need makes men crave.

2. Of their own impotency. For they who are able to help themselves, use not to seek help of others.

3. Of the disability of other creatures to help. For they who can have succour nearer hand, will not seek further off for it. By prayer the soul ascendeth into the highest heavens, to the throne of the highest majesty, because lower than that it can have no hope of help.

Finally, if ever men uncover their nakedness, open their sores, lay forth their wretchedness, set their

¹ Nihil est tam arduum atque difficile, quod non Deo juvante plauissimum atque expeditissimum fiat. In ipsum itaque suspensi, ab eo auxilium deprecemur.—*Aug. de Lib. Arbit.*, lib. i. cap. 6.

² See 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. iii. sec. 17.

sins in order, confess their guiltiness, acknowledge their cursedness, cast away all cloaks of vain hopes in themselves, and in other creatures, it is in prayer. For proof hereof, set the pattern of the saints' prayers recorded in Holy Scripture before you.

1. Here take notice of the cause why men in their needs and distresses lust and have not, desire to have and cannot obtain: even because, as the apostle hath set it down, they ask not. Hath God sanctified a means for attaining help in all our necessities and extremities, and shall we think that he will suffer his ordinance to be crossed? Can we expect help by any other course than that which in his wisdom he hath prescribed? Let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.

2. Be exhorted, as to take notice of your necessity, so to be conscionable in using this warrantable remedy.

(1.) When thou feelest any symptoms of God's anger vexing and grieving thy soul, pray, and say, 'O Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath,' &c., Ps. xxxviii. 1.

(2.) When thou observest the power of sin to begin to prevail over thee, and to make thee a vassal, pray, and say, 'Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me,' Ps. xix. 13.

(3.) When fears of falling away possess thee, pray 'that thy faith fail not,' Luke xxii. 32.

(4.) When thou art assaulted with violent temptations, pray against them: pray that 'God's grace may be sufficient for thee,' 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9.

(5.) When thou wantest wisdom, or any other grace, 'ask it of God.'

(6.) When thou art visited with sickness, or art in any like distress, pray as Hezekiah did; yea, 'Call for the elders of the church, let them pray over thee,' James v. 14; that at least 'the Lord would strengthen thee on the bed of languishing, and make thy bed in thy sickness,' Ps. xli. 3.

(7.) When there is fear of enemies entering into the land, pray that 'there be no invasion, nor complaining in our streets,' Ps. cxliv. 14.

(8.) When thou hearest of traitors conspiring against the peace of the land, pray to God to 'turn their counsel into foolishness,' 2 Sam. xv. 13.

(9.) When thou seest multitudes scattered abroad,

as having no shepherd, pray 'the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth labourers into his harvest,' Mat. ix. 38.

(10.) When ministers are silent or silenced, pray that 'they may open their mouth boldly, to make known the mysteries of the gospel,' Eph. vi. 19.

(11.) When thou canst not profit by the word, pray that 'the Lord would open thine eyes and heart,' Ps. cxix. 18; Acts xvi. 14.

(12.) When thou wantest good success, pray, and say, 'Prosper, O Lord, the work of our hands; O prosper thou our handiwork,' Ps. xc. 17.

(13.) When thou fearest that thy children have done amiss, do as Job did, 'offer the sacrifice of prayer for them,' Job i. 5.

Let the like be done for husbands, wives, masters, servants, kindred, friends, neighbours, and all others in any need or distress. In all things, at all times pray: pray for removing evils, pray for obtaining good things.

Sec. 21. *Of calling on God as known by name.*

The third special branch of the general declaration of the means is the object to which the fore-mentioned action of prayer was directed: and that is thus expressed—'the name of the Lord.' Of calling on God, I shall not need here to speak;¹ all that was before delivered of prayer concerned prayer made to God.

The point that remaineth to be insisted upon, is the manner of setting down this object, thus, the name of the Lord.

The name of God is that whereby God is made known.² By this phrase, then, he importeth that he called on God, as God had made himself known; with understanding of, and respect to those divine attributes whereby God as by a name had revealed himself: whereby is given us to understand that

*God must be called upon as one that is known.*³ The many titles attributed to God in saints' prayers, whereby God is manifested to be the true God, and distinguished from all false gods, are evident demonstrations of this truth. Take for instance these:

¹ See 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. iii. sec. 5, 6.

² See the 'Guide to go to God,' sec. 20.

³ See Legationem Augustini ad Deum, Soliloquiorum, lib. i. cap. 1.

'O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac,' Gen. xxxii. 9. 'The Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh,' Num. xxvii. 16. 'O Lord of hosts,' 1 Sam. i. 11. 'Thou art great, O Lord God: there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears,' 2 Sam. vii. 22. 'O Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee,' &c., 1 Kings viii. 13. 'O Lord God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth,' 2 Kings xix. 15. 'Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty,' &c., 1 Chron. xxix. 11. 'O Lord God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy,' &c., Neh. i. 5. The books of the Psalms and prophets abound with such titles as set out the name of God. And in the New Testament thus his name is set out: 'The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,' Eph. iii. 14.

God's name, as it is set out in the word, is both a glorious name, full of majesty; and also a gracious name, full of mercy. His majesty worketh fear and reverence, his mercy faith and confidence.¹ By these graces man's heart is kept within such a compass, as he will, neither presume above that which is meet, nor despair more than there is cause. But where God's name is not rightly known, it cannot be avoided but that they who come before him must needs rush upon the rock of presumption, or sink into the gulf of desperation. Necessary, therefore, it is that God be known of them that pray to him, that in truth they may say, 'We have called upon the name of the Lord.'

Be persuaded hereby all that desire so to offer up your spiritual sacrifice of supplication to God, as he may have respect to your persons and prayers, (as he had respect to Abel and his offering;) be persuaded to learn to know the name of God, as in his word it is made known; and then, especially when you draw near unto him, meditate on his name. Assuredly God will take good notice of them that take due notice of him, and will open his ears to them by name who rightly call upon his name.

¹ Nullum Dei nomen reperietis quod non aut pietatis gratiam, aut potentiam majestatis sonet.—*Bern. super Cant.*, Serm. xv.

Sec. 22. *Of saints' familiar access to God.*

The particular expression of the substance of the prophet's prayer is in these words, 'O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.' Wherein the first thing to be considered is the manner of framing his prayer to God, in the vocative case and second person, as it were face to face speaking unto God: 'O Lord;' whereby we are taught that

*Saints have a holy familiarity with God.*¹ They need not send in their petitions to him by some of his servants, they may even by name present their prayers to himself; yea, they ought so to do. To omit many hundred of examples that might be alleged out of the approved prayers of the servants of God, guided therein by the Spirit of God, and recorded by the Holy Ghost, (for this was their constant custom, to direct their prayers even to God himself by name,) that pattern which our Lord prescribeth in his perfect platform of prayer is a sufficient proof of the point; for he that knew what familiarity with God his children might warrantably use, teacheth them thus to pray to God,—'Our Father.'

God's indulgences towards us is the only ground of this prerogative. His desire is to do us good on all occasions, and in all our needs to help us.

Wherefore, that we may not be kept from him, and miss of that good which he intendeth to us, he affordeth us this admirable familiarity and comfortable liberty to come ourselves into his presence, and even into his bosom to pour forth our whole hearts. A prerogative this is whereby we are advanced above death, and above all things subject to corruption.²

Now I beseech you that ye receive not this grace of God in vain. It is a high honour, a great favour, proper to favourites. That which on our parts is hereupon expected, is, that we freely use this prerogative, and 'draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith.' If God were not minded to receive our petitions, and to grant our requests, he would never afford us so free and friendly access

¹ *Profecto cum deo confabulamur, quoties vacamus deprecationi.*—*Chrys. de Orand. Decum*, lib. i.

² *Necessse est ut qui cum Deo familiaritatem habeat, superior evadat et morte, et omnibus que corruptioni sunt obnoxia.*—*Chrys., loc. citat.*

into his chamber of presence. We do not, as Esther did by going into king Ahasuerus his inner court, put our lives in hazard by presenting our persons and prayers before the face of God, but we do that which much pleaseth him, and which will bring much peace to our own hearts. For as thereby we gain much assurance of God's fatherly favour to us, so we may be sure to have all our lawful and meet desires granted unto us. Ask, therefore, what thou wantest: 'Ask of God himself, who upbraideth not; ask in faith, nothing doubting, and it shall be given thee.' True faith will draw us unto God. The centurion, the more his faith increased, the more boldly and familiarly he approached to the Lord.¹ Compare Luke vii. 3, &c., with Mat. viii. 5, &c., and well weigh their manner of setting down the history of the centurion's coming to Christ, and it will appear that the centurion, in desire of his servant's recovery, first sent the elders of the Jews to entreat Christ to come to his sick servant. But so soon as they were gone, better thinking of his own unworthiness and of the power of Christ, he sent friends to stay his coming, and only by his word in absence to cure his servant. Yet further meditating on Christ's goodness, to shew that it was not in pride that he sent others rather than went himself, he takes boldness and went himself to Christ.

Sec. 23. *Of fervency in prayer.*

The second branch of the prophet's manner of expressing his prayer is in this phrase, 'I beseech thee,' which importeth a kind of earnestness.² For the things which we fain would have we use to entreat for, as St Paul, who earnestly desired that the Galatians should return to him, thus expresseth his desire: 'I beseech you be as I am,' Gal. iv. 12. Hence learn, that

Prayers made to God must be fervent. A property this is appertaining to prayer much pressed in Scripture, and that under these and suchlike metaphors: 'crying,' Exod. xiv. 15; 'striving,' Rom. xv. 30; 'wrestling with God,' Gen. xxxii. 24; 'renting the heart,' Joel ii. 13; 'pouring out the

soul,' 1 Sam. i. 15; 'panting after, thirsting for,' Ps. xli. 1, 2. Yea, it is expressly required ('be fervent in spirit,') and added as a proviso to effectual prayer, James v. 16.

Fervour in prayer is as fire put to powder, which makes it ascend high.¹ Yea, prayer, if it be made with intension, will be as armour of proof against all that can annoy a Christian. Fervency makes prayer so much the more prevalent, in that it manifesteth a high esteem of the thing for which we pray, truth of our desire, and faith in obtaining. Who will be earnest for that which he little regards? Where the desire is feigned, how can the heart be thoroughly affected or inflamed? If there be distrust, doubt and fear of prevailing, will not the spirit be heavy and the desire cold? But God is well pleased when he discerneth that men highly prize, heartily seek, and confidently expect his favour. True fervency, then, arising from all these, must needs be acceptable to God, and fervent prayers effectual, for they pierce heaven, whence they cannot return empty without blessing.

Let us now rouse up our spirits when we call upon God; let us entreat him, beseech him, importune him, not take any nay. Do as the widow did in the Gospel, Luke xviii. 2, &c., with the hard-hearted judge, give him no rest.² We have to deal with a father, with a tender-hearted father, who delights to hear his children beseech him, so as we may rest upon it that our beseechings shall not be in vain.

Sec. 24. *Of delivering a man's soul.*

The matter³ of the prophet's prayer is in these words, 'Deliver my soul.' The thing desired, 'deliver,' importeth that he was in distress, which he acknowledged in the former verse, and that to be freed out of that distress he called upon God. The subject for which deliverance is desired, his soul, is synecdochically put for his whole person, body and soul; a synecdoche frequent in Scripture, so clear as translators do oft turn this very word, person. In this and other like places, soul is put for a man's whole person very emphatically: 1. To shew the

¹ Centurio, quo magis credidit, eo magis accessit ad Dominum.—*Aug. de Consens. Evan.*, lib. ii. cap. 20.

² פָּנָה de hac voce vide infra, ver. 16, interpretatur rogo et deprecor.—*Jerome in hunc. loc.*

¹ Magna arma sunt oratio si cum intentione fuerit.—*Chrys. in cap. 11 ad Heb.*, Hom. 27

² See 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. iii. secs. 141, 142, 143.

³ See Sec. 18.

grievousness of the distress, it pierced to their very souls; 2. To shew the danger thereof, it brought their very souls, their life into danger; thus it appeareth that that which the prophet desired was to be freed from such a distress as endangered his life.

This kind of prayer, namely, for deliverance from evil, is called deprecation.

The evil from which he prayed to be delivered was such an one as touched his person; it was temporal, corporal. The description of it in the former verse sheweth as much.

It was also deadly; it brought his life into danger.

Three observable points may be gathered from this matter of the prophet's prayer.

I. Deprecation may and must be used.¹ Hereof see 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. iii. sec. 32, &c., and the 'Guide to go to God,' on the 5th petition of the Lord's prayer, sec. 156.

II. Deprecation may and must be used against temporal evils, even such as touch our persons, our bodies as well as our souls. Let the places whereto reference is made in the former point be advisedly marked, and we shall find this branch also handled; yet further for this particular, see the 'Guide to go to God,' on the 4th petition, secs. 81, 83, 89, 93, 99, 100.

III. In danger of death deliverance may be sought of God.

Sec. 25. *Of praying for deliverance in danger of death.*

That it is lawful when our life is in hazard to seek help of God is evident, as by the frequent practice of them who well knew what was lawful for them to do, so by God's gracious hearing of their prayers, and delivering them from death. Here we have David's pattern.² Take for further instances in this case the examples of Moses at the Red Sea, Exod. xiv. 15; Jonah in the whale's belly, chap. ii. 1; Hezekiah when he had received from God a message of death, Isa. xxxviii. 1, 2; and the church for Peter when he was bound in prison, Acts xii. 5. Yea, the apostle oft requireth this duty to be per-

formed for him in his dangerous distresses; among other places especially note these, Rom. xv. 30; 2 Cor. i. 11; Heb. xiii. 19.

God is the Lord of life and death, Deut. xxxii. 39; 1 Sam. ii. 6, they are at his command to come, to go, to tarry. 'Unto God the Lord belong the issues from death,' Ps. lxxviii. 20, that is, deliverances from death and deadly danger. 'Hezekiah was sick unto death,' Isa. xxxviii. 1, yet the Lord preserved him from death. So hath the Lord oft delivered his servants from such dangers as their enemies supposed they could never have been delivered from.

'Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God,' Heb. iii. 12. Oppose not seeming impossibilities to God's omnipotency. Say not in diffidence, as the Israelites did, Can God do this or that? Ps. lxxviii. 19, 20. Note the vengeance that followed the incredulous prince, 2 Kings vii. 17.

Seeing there is so good a ground of faith in the most desperate distress that in this world we can fall into, learn we to exercise our faith; and when we know not what to do, then with faithful Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xx. 12, to fix them upon the Lord. It is one main end why God hath set in man's eyes a fifth muscle, whereas other creatures have but four, one to turn downwards, another to hold forwards, a third to turn the eye to the right hand, a fourth to the left hand; but no unreasonable creature can turn the eye upward; only man, that hath reason to convince him that there is a God above, hath also a fifth muscle in his eye to roll it up to God, and in all extremities to expect help from him.¹ Let us therefore on all occasions turn our eyes up to God, and call on him for help, and rest on him to be heard, so far forth as in his wisdom he seeth it to be fit for his own glory and our good. For true faith so trusteth to God's power as it subjecteth itself to God's will, like the leper that said to Christ, 'If thou wilt thou canst make me clean,' Mark i. 40. Or rather, like those three faithful and valiant servants of the Lord that said to the angry king, that threatened to cast them into a hot fiery furnace

¹ *Legē Augustini precationem in afflictione, qua multa deprecatur mala.—Medit., cap. 38.*

² *David perpetuis precationibus plurimos dolores pressuros eum removit. Ita et Job ad Deum precibus utebatur.—Chrys. de Pror. Dei, lib. iii.*

¹ *Quintum musculum si attrahas, oculus sursum vertitur, ut ejus auxilium cœlum intueretur.—Columb. de re Anatom., lib. v. cap. 9.*

if they would not worship his idol, 'O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known to thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods,' Dan. iii. 17, 18. With this proviso of a contented submission of our desires to God's good pleasure we may in the most mortal sickness that can seize upon us, in prison, in captivity, when our enemies have us the most sure that they can imagine or desire in any other extremity, call upon God to deliver us; yea, and to deliver others also in the like cases, yea, though they lie at point of death. So also in times of public judgments, when the heavens threaten to destroy all the fruits of the land, when the plague most rageth, when the enemies have entered into our land, we may pray to God for deliverance.¹ No judgment can so far proceed as to exceed God's power in suppressing it, whereof this plague giveth good evidence; and this phrase, 'O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul,' manifesteth the affection of one earnestly craving the removal of the evil wherein he was. For, as we have heard before, he was in very great danger.

Sec. 26. *Of God's attributes of goodness.*

Ver. 5. *Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful.*

III. The third¹ branch of the exemplification of God's kindness declareth the cause whereby God was moved to deliver him; and that is here attributed to God himself, only to him. He therefore taketh occasion to describe God, and that by three of his properties:

1. Gracious.
2. Righteous.
3. Merciful.

All these are further amplified by a particular application of them to that God in whom he trusted, and on whom he called, who is here set out,

1. By his title of excellency, Jehovah the Lord.
2. By the relation that saints have to him, our God.

¹ Quod dicit, hoc est, deprecor, Domine, libera animam meam, non est enim vocatus, sed deprecantis affectus. In ingenti enim periculo constitutus est.—*Jerome in hunc loc.*

² See sec. 2.

The first attribute, gracious, (רַחוּם,) hath especial respect to that goodness which is in God himself. The root (רָחַן) whence it cometh signifieth to do a thing gratis, freely, of one's own mind and goodwill. This is that word which is used to set out the free grace and mere goodwill of God, thus, (אֲשֶׁר אֶחָד אֶת רַחֲמֵי אֵת,) 'I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious,' Exod. xxxiii. 19. There is also an adverb (חַנּוּם) derived thence, which signifieth gratis, freely, as where Laban thus speaketh to Jacob, Shouldst thou serve me for nought? Thus is this word opposed to merit. And hereby the prophet acknowledged that the deliverance which God gave was for the Lord's own sake, upon no desert of him that was delivered.

The second attribute, righteous or just, (צַדִּיק), hath particular relation to the promise of God.

God's righteousness largely taken is the integrity or equity of all his counsels, words, and actions.

This is generally manifested by his equal ordering of all things. For 'the Lord is righteous in all his ways,' Ps. cxlv. 17. 'All his ways are judgment. A God of truth, without iniquity, just and right is he,' Deut. xxxii. 4.

Particularly is God's righteousness manifested in giving reward and taking revenge. Thus it is said to be 'a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble the saints; and to them that are troubled, rest,' 2 Thes. i. 6, 7. This is that righteousness whereabout the Lord maketh this challenge, 'Is not my way equal?' Ezek. xviii. 25. In regard hereof, the day of rendering to every one according to his works is styled, 'The day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God,' Rom. ii. 5.

But the occasion of mentioning God's righteousness here in this place being to shew ground of his calling on God, and of God's delivering him, it must needs have respect to God's word and promise, and to God's truth in performing what he hath promised.¹

For truth is an especial branch of righteousness. Thus the righteousness and faithfulness of God are put for one and the same thing; as where the psal-

¹ Justitia Dei convenienter veritas nominatur. Et sic dicitur in nobis veritas justitiæ.—*Aquin.*, Sum. 1, par. q. 21, art. 2. Ps. cxliiii. 1.

mist saith, 'I have not hid thy righteousness,' &c., by way of explanation he addeth, 'I have declared thy faithfulness,' Ps. xl. 10. In like respect the apostle joyneth these two attributes together, as signifying one and the same thing, thus, 'He is faithful and just to forgive us,' 1 John i. 9. So as this sheweth that it was God's own word and promise, whereby he had bound himself, that moved him to afford succour. Yet so as his grace is the ground thereof, and his mercy accomplisheth it. Therefore mercy is twice expressed; righteousness once. Righteousness in the midst, enclosed with a double fence of mercy.¹

The third attribute, merciful, (מרחם), hath apparent reference to misery; for misery is the proper object of mercy. And in this respect this word is oft translated compassion: as where Moses, speaking of the great misery whereinto Israel should be brought, saith, 'The Lord will have compassion upon thee,' Deut. xxx. 3, (רַחֵם). And when Hazael had much oppressed Israel, it is said, 'The Lord had compassion on them,' 2 Kings xiii. 23, (וַיִּרְחַם). The notation of the word importeth as much; for the same word in Hebrew (רָחַם) signifieth bowels and mercy: for mercy ariseth from the moving of the bowels at the sight of misery. Hence it is that the LXX translate mercies, bowels. As where the wise man saith, 'The mercies of the wicked are cruel,' Prov. xii. 10, (רַחֲמֵי), they, the bowels, (τὰ σπλάγχνα). And in the New Testament, 'to have compassion' is usually set out by a word that signifieth 'to have the bowels moved' (σπλάγχνα κινῆσαι); and 'the bowels of mercies' (σπλάγχνα ἐλέους, Luke i. 7, 8), is a phrase oft used.

Object. These phrases import passion, whereunto the divine essence is not subject.

Ans. Nor mercy, nor any other like property is attributed to God properly, as a passion, but tropically, to demonstrate that the effects of such affections do come from God.² Men that have bowels of compassion in them, and are truly affected with

the miseries of others, will be ready to afford them what help they can. So, because the Lord is ready to succour such as are in misery, he is said to be merciful, full of compassion, and to have bowels of mercies.

The first title, *Lord*, sets out the excellency of God.¹ Fit mention is here made thereof, to shew the blessed concurrence of greatness and goodness in God. Though he be Jehovah the Lord, yet is he gracious, and righteous, and merciful.

The second title, *our God*, manifesteth a peculiar relation betwixt him and the faithful that believe in him and depend on him, as this prophet did. And to them in an especial manner the Lord is gracious, which moved him thus to change the person; for where in the third person he had said before, the Lord is gracious, here, in the first person, our God: yet so as he appropriateth not this privilege to himself, but acknowledgeth it to be common to such as himself by the plural number, *our*.

This description of God is not by any particle of connexion tied to the words going before or following after, but fitly it may be referred to both: to the former, as shewing the ground of his calling upon God, because he is gracious, &c.; to the latter, as shewing the ground of God's delivering him, even God's own grace, &c.

Many comfortable instructions do flow from this description of God, as—

I. God's goodness ariseth from himself. He is gracious.

II. God is faithful in his promises. He is righteous.

III. God is moved with man's miseries. He is merciful.

IV. The great Lord is a good God. Jehovah the great Lord is gracious, &c.

V. The Lord is in special manner a God to the faithful. They may say to him and of him, Our God.

VI. God's goodness in peculiar appertaineth to his peculiar people. They that can say, Our God, may especially say, He is gracious, &c.

VII. Knowledge and faith in God's goodness encourageth saints to call upon God; for, after the prophet had testified that he called on God, he thus describeth God to shew what made him bold so to do.

¹ Of this title *Lord*, see 'The Church's Conquest,' on Exod. xvii. 15, sec. 72.

¹ Bis misericordiam posuit, semel justitiam in medio; justitia est gemino septo inclusa misericordiae.—*Amb. in Orat. de Obi. Theodos.*

² Misericordia est Deo maxime attribuenda: tamen secundum effectum, non secundum passionis affectum, &c.—*Aquin.*, Sum. 1, par. q. 21, art. 3.

VIII. God's goodness is the cause of the deliverances which he giveth to his people ; for so soon as he had set out the goodness of God, he addeth, The Lord preserveth, to shew that that was the cause of this.

Sec. 27. *Of God's graciousness.*¹

I. *God's goodness ariseth from himself.* The attribute *graciously* importeth as much, and as much is expressly avouched in Scripture. What else doth this speech of God import, 'I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious?' (Exod. xxxiii. 19.) And this, 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake?' (Isa. xliii. 25.) And this, 'For mine own sake, for mine own sake will I do it?' (Isa. xlviii. 11.) And this, 'I was found of them that sought me not?' (Isa. lxxv. 1.) And many the like.

Whence should God's goodness arise if not from himself? What is in the creature to move God to be good and kind unto it? 'The creature hath nothing but what from God it hath received,' 1 Cor. iv. 7; what it hath can 'profit God nothing,' Job xxii. 2, 3; the most excellent is 'less than the least of God's mercies,' Gen. xxxiii. 10; when it hath done all, it is an 'unprofitable servant,' Luke xvii. 10; it hath done nothing but duty, whereunto it was bound.

Object. Christ our Mediator is worthy to appear before God for us. He hath merited grace and favour. For his sake God doth the good which he doth to us.

Ans. 1. If we consider—1. Who Christ is, even the only begotten Son of God, very God. 2. Who gave Christ to be a Mediator for us, even God himself: 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,' &c., John iii. 16. 3. What moveth God to accept that which his Son hath done, what moveth him to accept thereof for us—namely, his grace: for, 'By his grace God maketh us accepted in his Beloved: in whom we have redemption, according to the riches of grace,' (Eph. i. 6, 7.) If we consider these three points, we shall find that God's grace and Christ's worth are not incompatible, such things as cannot agree together, but rather such as

do commend each other; yea, thus justice is mercy, and mercy is justice.¹

Admirable comfort doth hence arise to us poor unworthy wretches; unworthy as wretches, more unworthy as mortal creatures, dust and ashes; most of all, unworthy as sinful creatures. Nothing in us can work in us any boldness to approach into God's presence, to expect any favour, any blessing from him; but matter enough there is in us to make us fly from his presence, as Adam did when he heard his voice in the garden; and to make us expect wrath and vengeance. Now then being in us no matter of worth, no matter of hope, wherein lieth our comfort, what ground of confidence have we? Surely this, and none but this, 'The Lord is gracious;' for his own sake he doth good. But how may that appear! even by the objects of his goodness, who have no worth at all in themselves. For if he doth good to such as are unworthy thereof, he doth it not for their sakes, but for his own sake. Herein then lieth our comfort and confidence, that we approach to a gracious God, who to shew that what good he doth he doth for his own sake, doth it to such as are unworthy. Thus, when Adam by his transgression had spoiled himself of all that excellency which might make him acceptable to God, and had made him liable to the just vengeance of God, God came to him, not as a judge to condemn him, but as a physician to cure him. At the first word he raised him. For first he calls to him, and by his own name he calls to him, saying, 'Adam, where art thou?'² Thereby he intimates his mind to him. Wherefore we, though we know ourselves to be, as indeed we are, most unworthy of the least grace, yet we are bold to call, and hope for grace, because we call upon and hope in a gracious God.

Be now well instructed in this divine property, and let thy confidence be placed thereon. Learn when thou comest before God to go out of thyself, and utterly to renounce all confidence in thyself.

¹ *Liquet justitiam esse misericordiam, et misericordiam esse justitiam.—Ambr. in Orat. de Obi. Theod.*

² *Deus ad Adamum venit sicut medicus ad ægrotum. A prima voce ipsum statim erexit: et jacentem, et timentem, et trementem confidere fecit, prior eum vocans ipse: quinimo non tantum prior vocans, sed etiam ex suo ipsum nomine appellans, et dicens, Adam ubi es, &c.—Chrys. ad Pop., Hom. 7.*

¹ See the 'Guide to go to God,' sec. 204. *Deus ex se sumit materiam, et velut quoddam seminarium miserendi.—Bern. in Natal. Dom., Serm. v.*

Plead with assurance of faith, plead this graciousness of God before him. It is of force to keep him that is well instructed therein, and placeth his confidence thereon, from despair. It affords more encouragement of drawing near to God than our unworthiness can give discouragement. Oft meditate thereon, and that seriously, especially, when thou art about to make any supplication to God, and thou shalt find such a virtue therein, as thy cold heart will be so warmed, thy dull spirit so quickened, thy doubting mind so resolved, thy fearful conscience so encouraged, thy weak and wavering faith so settled, and thy perplexed soul so quieted thereby, as with much comfort thou mayest call upon God, and with much confidence expect a gracious answer from a gracious God. For he overcomes that trusteth to the grace of Christ, and presumeth not on his own power.¹

This also is of special force to enlarge our hearts, and to open our mouths in the praises of God for the good things we receive from him. The more unworthy we are of favour, the more bound we are for favour. The more free a kindness is, the more worthy of praise it is. The donor that for his own sake doth a kindness, gains thereby all the glory thereof to himself.

Sec. 28. *Of God's righteousness as he is faithful.*²

II. *God is faithful in his promises.* In this respect is he said to be righteous, and to be 'a God of truth, just and right,' Deut. xxxii. 4.³ The truth and faithfulness of God is as frequently set out in Scripture as any other of his properties; and that not only affirmatively, that he is 'true,' Rev. vi. 10, and 'faithful,' Deut. vii. 9; but also negatively, that 'God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?' Num. xxiii. 19. 'The strength of Israel will not lie,' 1 Sam. xv. 29.

God's honour is much engaged in his truth; the faith of his saints doth wholly rest thereupon. It is that which maketh his promises, threatenings, and

¹ Ille vincit qui gratiam Dei sperat, non qui de sua virtute presumit.—*Ambr. in Orat. de Obi. Theodos.*

² See Sec. 26.

³ See 'Whole Armour of God,' treat. ii. part 6, sec. 27.

whole word to be the more regarded. A main difference lieth therein, not only betwixt him that 'when he speaketh a lie, speaketh of his own mind, being a liar and the father of it,' John viii. 44; but also betwixt vain unconstant man and the God of truth.

Suffer not any word to slip out of thy mouth, nor give entertainment to any thought that may any way impeach God's righteousness. If any such thought come into thy mind, say with the prophet, 'Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee,' Jer. xii. 1. And remember the apostle's exprobration, 'O man, who art thou that repliest against God?' Rom. ix. 20. 'Let God be true, but every man a liar,' chap. iii. 4. 'Heaven and earth shall pass away, but God's words shall not pass away,' Mark xiii. 31.

Among other sins, 'take heed of an evil heart of unbelief,' Heb. iii. 12. 'This maketh the righteous Lord a liar,' 1 John v. 10. Infidelity,¹ as it is of all sins the most dangerous and damageable to man, so the most dishonourable to God, in that it is directly opposite to one of his most excellent properties, his truth and faithfulness, or righteousness.

For supporting thy faith, well mark whereon it may safely rest; even upon God's righteousness, as well as upon his mercy. On this ground did the apostle in faith expect the crown of righteousness, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8, because the Lord from whom he expected it is a righteous judge; and the psalmist is bold to appeal to the righteousness of God, Ps. xxxv. 24. For we may be well assured that what God's goodness, grace, and mercy moved him to promise, his truth, his faithfulness, and righteousness will move him to perform.

Object. Why doth he then appeal from God's righteousness, and say, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant?' Ps. cxliii. 2.

Ans. 1. In regard of his own vileness and unworthiness. Thus he desireth not to be dealt with according to his own desert. 'If God contend with man, he cannot answer him one of a thousand,' Job ix. 3. 'If he mark iniquity, who shall stand?' Ps. cxxx. 3.

2. God's righteousness with one eye looketh on

¹ See 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. ii. part 6, sec. 34.

his law, and beholdeth all sins as transgressions thereof, whereby all stand accursed, and so can no man be justified in his sight, Ps. cxliii. 2. But with another eye it looketh on God's promise, on his covenant, on Christ the Mediator of his covenant, whose blood cleanseth from all sin, John i. 7. Thus it maketh us with strong confidence to expect till we come to possess what is promised. In this respect the psalmist, where his plea is the multitude of God's tender mercies, professeth and promiseth to 'sing aloud of his righteousness,' Ps. li. 1, 14.

Make use of this righteousness of God, by trusting to it, and by pleading it before God, and sharpening thy prayers in due meditation thereon; as he that said, 'O Lord, in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness,' Ps. cxliii. 1. In like manner say thou, I put no confidence in myself, but I desire thy truth and righteousness, that it may be merciful to me.¹

Sec. 29. *Of God's mercifulness.*

III. *God is moved with man's miseries.* This is that which this attribute, merciful,² applied to God, doth most principally set out. And this is the reason why 'bowels of mercy,' Luke i. 78, are metaphorically applied to God, intimating that his bowels are moved, and do yearn again at the miseries of his saints; as God himself said of Ephraim, (whom he styles his dear son, and pleasant child,) 'My bowels are moved for him,' Jer. xxxi. 20. Whereupon, when the Lord seemed to shew no mercy, thus saith the prophet to him, 'Where is the sounding of thy bowels, and of thy mercies towards me?' Isa. lxiii. 15. To like effect it is said that God's soul was grieved for the misery of Israel, Judges x. 16. And the tenderest compassions that are in any are applied to God, as of father and mother. For 'like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him,' Ps. ciii. 13. 'As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I (saith the Lord) comfort you,' Isa. lxvi. 13. Yea, to shew that in these comparisons there is no comparison, God's compassions

¹ Non confido mihi, sed ego veritatem et justitiam tuam peto, ut ipsa mei miseretur.—*Jerome, Comment. in Ps. cxlii.*

² Sec. 26.

are said so to exceed theirs, as in comparison theirs is none at all: as where the church thus saith, 'Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel know us not: thou art our Father, our Redeemer,' Isa. lxiii. 16. And God himself thus, 'Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee,' Isa. xlix. 15. And the psalmist thus, 'When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up,' Ps. xxvii. 10. Well therefore may he be styled the Father of mercies, whose property it is always to have pity. How great this mercy of God is I know not. That it is very great, I well know.¹

This tenderness over his children the Lord is pleased to shew, to encourage them in their misery to call to him for mercy, and to rest upon him for help and succour.

Oh let this manifestation of the Lord's merciful disposition towards us provoke us in all time of need to seek help of him; and the greater our misery is, the more confidently expect succour from him. For he that hath bowels of mercy, the greater the misery is wherein he seeth any to lie, the more is he moved to afford help.² David, therefore, out of the depths cried unto the Lord, Ps. cxxx. 1; Jonah also 'prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly, and said, I cried by reason of my affliction unto the Lord,' Jonah ii. 1, 2. Thus one depth crieth to another; a depth of misery to a depth of mercy—and many are the mercies of the Lord, because many are the miseries of the righteous, out of all which he will deliver them.³

Learn here of beggars how to procure succour and relief. Lay open thy sores, make known thy need, discover all thy misery, make not thy case better than it is. Beggars by experience find that the more miserable they appear to be, the more they are pitied, the more succoured; and yet the mercies of the most merciful men are but as drops

¹ Bene dicitur Pater misericordiarum, cujus proprium est semper misereri.—*Bern. in Natal. Dom.,* Sermon v. Quanta sit misericordia Dei, nescio: quod grandis sit, novi.—*Chrys. in Ps. l.,* Hom. 2.

² Sec. 19.

³ Misericordiæ Domini multæ, quia multæ tribulationes justorum, et de omnibus his liberabit eos Dominus.—*Bern., loc. citat.*

in comparison of the oceans of God's mercies; and among men there are many, like the priest and Levite in the parable, Luke x. 30-32, that can pass by a naked, wounded man, left half dead, and not pity him nor succour him. But God, like the merciful Samaritan, hath always compassion on such as with sense of their misery are forced to cry out and crave help. Read how Job, chap. vi. and vii.; David, Ps. xxxviii. 3, &c.; Hezekiah, Isa. xxxviii. 10, &c., and other like saints poured out their complaints before the Lord, and withal observe what mercy was shewed them of the Lord, and you may have in them both good patterns how to behave yourselves in like cases, and good encouragement so to do. This is it which God expecteth of us, and whereunto he desireth to bring us, that seeing our own emptiness and insufficiency, and the impotency and disability of others to help us, we should in all humility fly to his mercy.¹

Sec. 30. *Of God's greatness and goodness agreeing in one.*

IV. *The great Lord is a good God.* He that is Jehovah, the Eternal, that hath his being of himself, and is all-sufficient in himself, even he is gracious and righteous and merciful. His greatness is no way any hindrance to his goodness, but rather a help thereto. Where this incomprehensible name of his is, for emphasis' sake, twice together proclaimed, and another word added thereto that sheweth him to be a mighty God, there the titles of his mercy, grace, patience, and goodness are also proclaimed; thus, 'The Lord, the Lord, the strong God, merciful and gracious,' &c., Exod. xxxiv. 6, (יהוה יהוה אל רחום); again, where Moses thus setteth out God's excellency, 'The Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, a great God, mighty and terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward,' he addeth in demonstration of his goodness, 'He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger in giving him food and raiment,' Deut. x. 17, 18; and in that perfect pattern of prayer where the Lord is set out in his high and glorious palace in heaven,

¹ Hoc erat certe quod quærebat Deus, hoc erat ad quod nos perducere satagebat: ut videntes defectum nostrum, et quod non est nobis auxilium aliud, ad ejus misericordiam, tota humilitate curramus.—Bern. in *Quadrag.*, Ser. v.

there is he styled 'our Father,' Mat. vi. 9; and in most of the solemn prayers of the saints recorded in Scripture, there are express titles of both these divine properties, God's greatness and goodness, whereby they shewed that, notwithstanding that knowledge which they had of God's excellent majesty, they believed him to be a gracious and merciful Father, tendering them as impotent succourless babes, and thereupon, though in regard of that throne of glory whereon he sitteth, they are affrighted, as Isaiah was, Isa. vi. 5; yet knowing that throne of glory to be also a throne of grace, a mercy-seat, they are emboldened to approach thereunto that they may 'obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need,' Heb. iv. 16.

Both these are revealed to be in God, to manifest the absolute perfection of his excellency; for, there is an excellency in both, and by the concurrence of both is excellency perfected. Greatness without goodness might give suspicion of tyranny. Goodness without greatness might import impotency. But a mixture of goodness with greatness demonstrates a willing ability, and an able willingness; from whence what may not be hoped for and expected?

Who now may be compared unto God, or supposed to be like unto the Lord? Among men greatness makes them scornful; inasmuch as it is said of majesty and love, that they agree not well together, nor abide in the same seat.¹ But God's goodness is as his greatness—both incomprehensible, both infinite.

On this ground whensoever we are affrighted, and made to tremble through the apprehension of God's glorious majesty, perfect purity, and fiery jealousy, we may through due consideration of his grace and mercy, comfort ourselves, and say, as Manoa's wife once did, 'The Lord would not have shewed us such things,' Judges xiii. 23, he would not have made himself known to be a gracious Lord, righteous and merciful, if with the brightness of his glory he had meant to dazzle and confound us. A thorough understanding of this point, and a serious meditation thereon, is very requisite for such as are so base, so foul, and so unworthy

¹ Non bene conveniunt, nec in una sede morantur Majestas et Amor.—Ovid. *Metamorph.*, lib. ii.

as we are, the Lord being so glorious, so pure, so excellent every way as he is.

If they that sit on thrones in earth, who are decked with majesty, and have authority over others, would herein shew themselves children of their heavenly Father, and be gracious and merciful as he is, their subjects, and such as are under them, would be more encouraged to make known their grievances, and they themselves be in more honour, and gain more assurance to their own souls of God's favour and mercy towards them. This part of imitation is so much the rather to be observed, because the Lord himself doth on this very ground press it. For having shewed what the great God doth, it is thereupon thus inferred, 'Love ye therefore the stranger,' Deut. x. 17-19.

Sec. 31. *Of the particular relation betwixt God and saints.*

V. *The Lord is in special manner a God to the faithful.* A faithful one was this psalmist, who in relation to himself, and such as himself was, saith of the Lord, our God;¹ which is so much the more observable, because in the former part of the verse he spake of the Lord in the third person, but here he speaketh of him in the first, our God. Where God saith, 'All the earth is mine,' Exod. xix. 5; Deut. x. 14, 15; of the faithful that keep his covenant he addeth, 'Ye shall be a particular treasure unto me above all people.' To like effect St Paul saith that God is the Saviour of all, specially of those that believe, 1 Tim. iv. 10. These are they of whom the Lord saith, 'I will be their God, and they shall be my people,' Jer. xxxi. 33; and to whom Christ saith, 'I go to my God and your God,' John xx. 17; and whom St Peter styleth 'a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people,' 1 Pet. ii. 9.

The Lord is indeed a most supreme and absolute sovereign over all. He is the creator, preserver, and governor of all: 'In him we live, move, and have our being,' Acts xvii. 28. 'Of him, and through him, and to him are all things,' Rom. xi. 36. So as in this general extent he is the God of all. But yet in a peculiar respect, as he bears

an especial affection to the faithful, and takes an especial care of them, preserving the world principally for their sakes, and ordering all things to their good, they, they alone may style him 'our God.'

The ground hereof is thus expressed by the apostle, 'Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's,' 1 Cor. iii. 23. In the chiefest and principallest respect that can be, the Lord is 'the God of Jesus Christ,' Eph. i. 17. But Christ and the faithful are one, John xvii. 21; 1 Cor. xii. 12; one mystical body, and his God is their God, John xx. 17.

Take notice of your prerogative, O you saints and faithful ones! Take notice thereof as of a matter of admiration, consolation, gratulation, direction.

1. It is a matter that can never be sufficiently admired, that the great Lord of all should by a special bond of relation tie himself unto us, to become our God. In man there is no difference, Rom. iii. 22, 23, 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;' who then maketh us to differ? 1 Cor. iv. 7. As on this ground it was said to the Jews, 'The Lord set his love on you because the Lord loved you,' Deut. vii. 7, 8; so of the Gentiles, 'God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us,' &c., Eph. ii. 4, 5. They know not God, whose hearts are not ravished herewith.

2. What sounder and greater ground of comfort can the creature have, than that the Lord of all should in special be his God? May he not on this ground expect all needful and sufficient protection and provision? Need he fear any enemies? Needeth he the favour of any friends? If a mortal man might say to his wife perplexed for want of children, 'Am not I better to thee than ten sons?' 1 Sam. i. 8; how much more truly and comfortably may the Lord say to such as are in any manner of perplexity or extremity, to such as are destitute of any outward comforts or helps, 'Am not I better to you than all these?' What can be more desired than the Lord to be our God? Wherein may we more solace ourselves? wherein may we more confidently place our rest? On this ground the psalmist as a type, Christ himself as the truth, said, 'The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant

¹ Of this correlative 'our,' as relation passeth betwixt God and man, see the 'Guide to go to God,' sec. 11, 12, &c.

places; yea, I have a goodly heritage,' Ps. xvi. 5, 6.

3. We ought (as it followeth in the said psalm) to 'bless the Lord,' Ps. xvi. 7, for this his special favour to us. Oft doth the psalmist make this his ground of praising God, and saith, 'I will praise thee, O God, my God,' Ps. xliii. 4, lix. 17, lxviii. 19, 20, xcix. 5, civ. 33, and cxviii. 28. It is the best acknowledgment that we can give of our answerable respect to our God, and the best recompense we can give to our God, to praise him.

4. Many and weighty are other duties, for the performance whereof this special relation betwixt God and us giveth good directions, and which saints of old have thereupon performed, as in Scripture they are recorded.

(1.) To love God, Ps. xviii. 1, 20. Herein God manifesteth his special love to us; and doth not such love of the Creator require love from the creature to him?

(2.) To delight in the place where he manifesteth his presence, Ps. lxxxiv. 2, 3. His special respect to us in being our God sheweth his delight in us; should not we, then, delight in beholding his presence?

(3.) To wait for him, Ps. lxxix. 3. Surely our God will come, and will not tarry beyond that season wherein he knoweth it to be most fit to come unto us.

(4.) Confidently to trust on him, Ps. xxxi. 14, and xci. 2. He that is God can effect what we expect; he that is our God will do it so far as it may be for our good.

(5.) To take due notice of his works, Ps. cv. 5-7. For our God worketh all for our good, and for strengthening our faith he would have us to remember them.

(6.) To exalt him, Ps. xcix. 9, civ. 1, and cxv. 3, and to set forth his glory with the uttermost of our power. It is the glory of our God.

(7.) To fall down before him, Ps. xcv. 6, 7, and to worship him. Whom shall we adore, if we adore not our God?

(8.) To hearken unto his voice, Ps. l. 7, and to delight in doing his will, Ps. xl. 8. Thus shall we shew ourselves to be planted in the courts of our God, Ps. xcii. 13.

(9.) To be jealous against his enemies, Ps. lxxxiii. 13. For how can we suffer our God to be despised, or any way dishonoured, and not be moved thereat?

(10.) To walk worthy of our God, Jer. xxxii. 38, 39; Ezek. xxxvi. 27; which is done when we carry ourselves as becometh his people. For oft where promise is made that God will be their God, Zech. xiii. 9, this is inferred thereupon, they shall be his people, 2 Cor. vi. 16.

These and other like duties, which, by virtue of this prerogative, are in God's word required of us, will give evidence that the Lord is indeed our God, and that we in this our God are blessed: for, 'Blessed are they whose God is the Lord,' Ps. xxxiii. 12, and cxliv. 15.

Sec. 32. *Of God's goodness to his people especially.*

VI. *God's goodness in peculiar appertaineth to his peculiar people.* They whose God the Lord is, they have most cause to say, 'Our God is merciful.'¹ Of such saith the Holy Ghost, 'Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself above all the nations that are upon the earth,' Deut. xiv. 2; 'He hath not dealt so with any nation,' Ps. cxlvii. 20. True it is that the Lord 'maketh his sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and unjust,' Mat. v. 45; but properly to have the Lord to be gracious and merciful is their prerogative whose God he is: for none but they can make title to Christ, in and by whom only God's fatherly grace and mercy is conveyed to children of men.

Fret not, O people of God, fret not at anything that they who are not God's people do enjoy. They are but as husks given to swine, with which the prodigal would fain have filled his belly when he was out of his father's house, in comparison of that bread whereof his father's hired servants had enough. Advisedly, therefore, meditate on the excellency and benefit of that grace and mercy that is treasured up for God's people, that therewith you may be satisfied, and therein rest contented.

And ye who have yet no assurance that the Lord

¹ Consolamini, dicit dominus vester. Quibus, putas? Plane populo suo. Ipse enim salvum faciet, non quoscunque, sed populum suum, &c.—*Bern. in Nat. Dom., Sermon. v.*

is your God, inquire after the means whereby you may be made partakers of this privilege, to have the Lord for your God, and be conscionable and diligent in the use of those means which God hath sanctified for effecting this blessed communion. To this purpose note what the law saith: 'When a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it, and he shall be as one that is born in the land,' Exod. xii. 48. Subject yourselves, therefore, to the holy ordinances and discipline of the Lord, and he will be your God, and ye shall be his people. I would to God that we, beloved, had always a mind to be in the number of this people which their own Lord God doth comfort and take such special care of.¹

Sec. 33. *Of the encouragement which God's goodness giveth to call upon him.*

VII. *Knowledge and faith in God's goodness encourageth saints to call upon God.* This encouraged the prophet here to call upon God, as this inference of the description of God's goodness upon his praying to God sheweth. God himself on this ground inciteth them so to do. For where he saith, 'I am the Lord thy God,' he addeth, 'Open thy mouth wide,'—that is, earnestly, confidently, call upon me,—'and I will fill it,' Ps. lxxxix. 10, and lxxxix. 26; I will satisfy thy desire to the full. Answerably saints on this ground have been bold so to do, and that with all manner of prayer—as petition for good things, deprecation for removing evil things, and for preservation against evil men, and imprecation also against them. They have been bold also, on this confidence that the Lord was their God, to appeal to him for trial of their integrity.

This relation for the gracious and merciful Lord to be our God, what grace, mercy, favour, protection, acceptation, blessing, doth it not promise? What will he, what can he deny us, that vouchsafeth to be our God? And if such be his mind to us, may not we boldly and confidently call upon him?

¹ Utinam nos dilectissimi in eo populo inveniri semper optemur, quem consolatur Dominus Deus suus.—*Bern., loc. citat.*

Be instructed hereby how to approach to the throne of grace, namely, with knowledge of, and faith in that special favour which God beareth to thee, that thou mayest in some assurance thereof say unto him, O our God. A particular persuasion of that particular relation which is betwixt God and us, is then especially requisite when we pray unto him. This will make us in our greatest extremity to say, Being pressed with the weight of miseries, I have hope in no other but in the mercy of God.¹

Sec. 34. *Of God's goodness moving him to deliver his people.*

VIII. *God's goodness is the cause of the deliverances which he giveth to his people.* The prophet, to shew his acknowledgment hereof, setteth out a description of the goodness of God immediately before the mention of that deliverance which God gave. This hath ever been acknowledged by such as were well instructed about the mind and ways of God. 'Thou in thy mercy,' said Moses to God, 'hast led forth the people,' &c., Exod. xv. 13. 'In his love and in his mercy,' saith Isaiah, 'he redeemed them,' chap. lxiii. 9. This phrase, 'Ye shall be redeemed without money,' importeth as much, Isa. lii. 3. Where the psalmist maketh express mention of sundry deliverances which God gave to his people, at the particular expression of every of them he thus closeth, 'For his mercy endureth for ever,' Ps. cxxxvi. 11, &c. And hereupon the redeemed of the Lord are enjoined to say, 'The Lord is good: for his mercy endureth for ever,' Ps. cvii. 1, 2.

It was before shewed² that his goodness moved God to choose a peculiar people to himself: that goodness ever remaining the same, without alteration, it moveth him to provide for them, and to deliver them according to their needs.

Hereby we learn, when we seek deliverance of God, what to plead, and wherewith to strengthen our faith. Not anything in ourselves, nor in any other creature, but to say, as the Holy Ghost teacheth us, 'O Lord, redeem us for thy mercies' sake,' Ps. xlv. 26. Let the reasons therefore which in prayer thou dost press to move God withal, be taken from

¹ See the 'Guide to go to God,' sec. 12. Pressus pondere malorum, in nullo alio nisi in Dei misericordia spem habeo.—*Jerome, lib. xvii. Comment. in Isa. lxiii.*

² Sec. 31, 32.

God himself, and from those properties which set out his goodness.¹ On these meditate when thou wouldst have thy heart enlarged with earnestness to call on God. And when thou observest his wrath withheld, so as thou dost not perish, know and acknowledge that it is not through any merit of thine, but his own mercy.

Sec. 35. *Of the Lord's preserving the simple.*

Ver. 6. *The Lord preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me.*

IV. The fourth branch² of the exemplification of God's kindness expresseth the deliverance which God gave him. This is set down,

1. In a general (*κατὰ θεῖον*) consideration of God's dealing with others: 'The Lord preserveth the simple.'

2. In a particular (*καθ' ἐπίθετον*) application thereof to himself: 'I was brought low, and he helped me.'

In the general there is distinctly noted,

1. The author, or deliverer, the Lord.

2. The action, or kind of deliverance, preserveth.

3. The object, or persons delivered, the simple.

I. The Deliverer is described by that magnificent name Jehovah, a name proper to God alone.³

II. The kind of deliverance is expressed under this word preserveth, *שָׁמַר*, which most properly signifieth to prevent, or keep away that which is like to fall upon one, and that before it hath happened: in which sense the Lord thus forewarneth the Israelites, 'Preserve yourselves from the accursed thing,' Joshua vi. 18, *שָׁמְרוּ*. A noun coming from this verb signifieth a 'watchtower,' Isa. xxi. 8, *מִשְׁמֹרֵת*, a place to descry a danger for preventing it. Yet the application of that which is intended by this word in the other part of this verse, importeth a pulling out of that danger whereinto he was fallen. Here therefore occasion is offered to inquire after the several kinds of preserving or delivering from evil. This is done,

1. By preventing them, Mat. ii. 13.

2. By putting them off to other times, 2 Chron. xxxii. 26.

¹ See the 'Guide to go to God,' sec. 204. Non tuo merito, sed mea misericordia furorem meum distuli, ne penitus interires.—*Jerome, Comment.*, lib. xliii, in Isa. xlviiii.

² See sec. 2.

³ See the 'Church's Conquest' on Exod. xvii. 15, sec. 72.

3. By enabling men to bear them, 1 Cor. x. 13; 2 Cor. iv. 8, &c.

4. By affording means of ease, Gen. xxxix. 21.

5. By doing the more good for the evil which men suffer, 2 Sam. xvi. 12; Job xlii. 10.

6. By turning the evil itself into good, Gen. i. 20.

7. By taking away the evil which lieth on them, Judges ii. 18.

8. By taking them away from the evil, Isa. lviii. 1.

III. The word by which the persons delivered are described (*simple*, פְּתַיִם) is derived from a verb (פָּתַח) that signifieth to persuade, and in the passive to be persuaded. And because by persuasions men are oft deceived and seduced to evil, in the active it oft signifieth to beguile, and in the passive to be beguiled; as where the Lord said, 'Who shall persuade (1 Kings xxii. 20, מִי יִפְתֶּה) or entice¹ Ahab?' an evil lying spirit answered, 'I will persuade.' To his ruin he persuaded him; thereby, therefore, he enticed, he deceived him. To like purpose saith the law, 'Take heed that your heart be not deceived,' Deut. xi. 16, פָּתַח, (word for word *persuaded*.) Answerably the word here used, *simple*, is oft put for such as are witless, easily persuaded,² enticed, deceived. So doth the wise man decipher him, 'The simple believeth every word,' Prov. xv. 16. Thus he is opposed to a prudent, wary man. For in the latter part of the verse it followeth, 'But the prudent man looketh well to his going.' And a little after, 'The simple inherit folly: but the prudent are crowned with knowledge,' Prov. xv. 18. Thus the word *simple* setteth out an evil man. But it is also used in a better sense, and signifieth such a one as will be persuaded to yield to admonition or correction, and is opposed to a scorner; for, 'Smite a scorner and the simple will beware,' Prov. xix. 25. Yea, it is also put for such as are in the world's account *simple*—that is, without craft and guile—who, being in distress and destitute of human helps, with a single and simple heart commit their estate wholly and only to the Lord, and so quietly and patiently rest on him for succour. That it is here so to be taken is evident by the prophet's particular application of this general care of God over

¹ Targum., יִמְעִי, decipiet; Tremel. and Jun., pelliciet.

² פְּתַיִם, vel פְּתִי, persuadibilis. Cui quidvis facile persuadetur.

them whom he styleth simple to his own particular case.

Out of these words, 'The Lord preserveth the simple,' so opened, arise these three instructions :

I. God is a deliverer from distress.

II. God can any way deliver. He can either keep safe from danger, as the word, שׁוּר, most properly implieth; or pull out of danger, when men are fallen into it, as the latter part of this verse implieth.

III. God taketh most care of them that, being otherwise least cared for, wholly depend on him. Such are the simple here meant.

I. Of the first of these, see the 'Guide to go to God,' on the 6th Petition, sec. 188.

Sec. 36. *Of God's manifold preservation.*

II. *God can any way deliver.* Before the evil come he can prevent it, and preserve his saints from it; and when it is come, he can many ways save and deliver, as by the particular instances produced in the former section is evident. The two parts of the last petition of the Lord's Prayer give good proof hereof. In the former part we are to pray for prevention from evil (lead us not into temptation); in the latter for redemption out of evil (but deliver us from evil).

They who have any understanding of the divine properties of God, as of his omniscience, (whereby he knoweth all things beforehand,) omnipresence, (whereby he filleth all places,) omnipotency, (whereby he is able to do what he will,) and unsearchable wisdom, (whereby he can order all things to the best,) cannot make question of this, that the Lord can preserve as he please.

As in our judgments we give consent to the truth hereof, so let us answerably call on God, and depend on him for succour as occasion is given. By reason of the manifold necessities whereunto we are subject, it is requisite that God be by us solicited in frequent supplications, that so his manifold deliverances may appear.¹ Wherefore, when we have cause to fear any evil before it be fallen out, pray to have it prevented and kept off; when it is fallen out, pray

to have it removed or mitigated, or to have sufficient strength to bear it, and a good issue out of it. 'We know that all things work together for good to them that love God,' Rom. viii. 28; safely, therefore, may we rest upon God, to be so preserved by him as shall best make to our good. Only that we may with the more assured confidence rest on him, let us weigh what kind of persons he thus preserveth, even the simple.

Sec. 37. *Of the simple ones whom the Lord preserveth.*

III. *God taketh most care of them that, being otherwise least cared for, wholly depend on him.*¹ These are in a good sense simple ones; simple in the world's account, and simple in their own eyes. Such as he that said, 'I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people,' Ps. xxii. 6. And again, 'I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh on me,' Ps. xl. 17. These are those 'poor ones of a contrite spirit on whom the Lord looketh,' Isa. lxvi. 2. Of such fatherless is God a father: and of such widows a judge. Read Ps. lxxviii. 5, and cxlvi. 7, 8, 9. Yea, read observantly the histories of the Gospel, and well weigh who they were to whom Christ in the days of his flesh afforded succour, and ye shall find them to be such simple ones as we have shewed to be here intended.

By such objects the free grace and merciful mind of the Lord is best manifested. Their case being most miserable, in regard of human helps, the greater doth God's mercy appear to be. And there being in them nothing to procure favour or succour from God, for in their own and others' eyes they are nothing, what God doth for them evidently appeareth to be freely done.

1. Behold here how of all others they who seem to have least cause to trust on God have most cause to trust on him. Simple persons, silly wretches, despicable fools in the world's account, who have not subtle brains, or crafty wits to search after indirect means, have, notwithstanding, enough to support them, in that they are such as the Lord preserveth. Now, who knoweth not that 'it is better to trust in

¹ Ex occasione frequentium necessitatum, crebris necesse est precationibus Deum ab homine frequentari, &c.—*Bern. de Diligend. Deo.*

¹ Inops clamat, et exaudit Dominus. Quomodo clamabo inops? Ut etsi habes aliquid, non inde presumas de viribus tuis, ut intelligas te indigentem, &c.—*Aug. Enar. in Ps. xxxiii. Conc. 2.*

the Lord than to put confidence in man; it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes,' Ps. cxviii. 8, 9.

2. As thou puttest not thy confidence in other men, so take heed of placing it on thyself. 'Lean not unto thine own understanding,' Prov. iii. 5. Self-confidence makes self-conceited: whence ariseth pride and arrogancy, that makes men odious to God and man. True grace makes men modest and humble. Hereby have all the saints in all ages been approved and accepted of God.¹

3. Be therefore confident ye simple ones. If any shall upbraidingly say to you, 'Flee as a bird to your mountain,' confidently reply, 'In the Lord put we our trust,' Ps. xi. 1. If you lie among them that are set on fire, 'even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword,' Ps. lviii. 4, hold out this shield against them all. This is that 'shield wherewith ye may quench all the fiery darts of the wicked,' Eph. vi. 16. God keepeth such as are little or simple, or such as in a humble affection confess themselves to be such. Good and blessed, therefore, is that humility or simplicity which delivereth those that are in danger, and raiseth up those that fall.² They may be secure. For safe are they whom the Lord keepeth.

4. This is also a good ground of plea before God, that we are simple, destitute of all help, but in God. Plead it therefore you that are such. Say unto God, 'I am poor and needy, but the Lord preserveth the simple,' Ps. xl. 17. The inference which the prophet himself doth here in this verse make thereupon importeth as much.

5. Such evidences of goodness as these are, are also for our imitation. We must be 'merciful, as our Father is merciful,' Luke vi. 36; and in shewing mercy have respect rather to the object of our mercy, to the person that stands in need of our mercy, than to ourselves. So as if we see a simple one, one succourless, not able to help himself, and

destitute of all other help, then to perform the part of the pitiful Samaritan, though otherwise he be a stranger to us. From this very ground is this duty pressed in the law. For where it thus setteth out God's goodness, 'The Lord your God regardeth not persons, he doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and the widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment,' Deut. x. 18, 19, it maketh this inference, 'love ye therefore the stranger.' This kind of mercy is most divine; and herein especially do mortal men shew themselves like to their heavenly Father, when they succour the succourless, and that readily and freely. 'If ye love them which love you, or do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same,' Luke vi. 32, 33. They were 'the poor, the fatherless, and him that had none to help,' Job xxix. 12, through succouring of whom Job received much comfort in his great distress.

6. What now may we think of such as are hard-hearted, and that against the simple? that take advantage from their impotency to scorn them, to wrong them, to oppress them? A heavy voe is denounced against them. They are put into the catalogue of cursed ones. This was a principal cause of the Jews' captivity, and of the destruction of Ammon, Moab, Edom, Tyrus, and other nations. Cruelty to the simple is as diabolical, as mercy to them is divine. What then can be expected of such cruel ones, but to be at length in Dives his case?

Sec. 38. *Of God's saving such as are brought low.*

XI. The particular application of God's general pity to others, the application, I say, thereof to the prophet himself, followeth in these words:

'I was brought low, and he helped me.' The word translated brought low, דלה אֶדְלוֹתִי, properly signifieth to be drawn dry. The metaphor is taken from ponds, or brooks, or rivers that are clean exhausted and dried up, where water utterly faileth. Thus doth Isaiah use this word, 'The brooks shall be emptied and dried up,' Isa. xix. 6, דללו וחרבו יארי. Being applied to man, it setteth out such an one as is spent, utterly wasted, or, as we use to speak, clean gone; who hath no

¹ Quo magis virtutibus locupletamur eo magis humiliemur. Hinc enim omnes sancti probati fuerunt et Deo accepti.—*Chrys. in Gen. xi, Hom. 31.*

² Deus custodit parvulos; aut certe eos qui se parvulos humili confitentur affectu. Bona igitur humilitas, quæ liberat periclitantes, jacentes erigit.—*Amb. de Obi. Theod.*

ability to help himself, no means of help, no hope of help from others.

The other word whereby the succour which God afforded is expressed, and translated *helped*, דרושיע *ab* ישע, signifieth such help as freeth out of danger. It is usually translated to save. Where the prophet saith, 'Israel shall be saved with an everlasting salvation,' Isa. xlv. 17, he useth this word. From this word the proper name of him, who 'is able to save to the uttermost,' Heb. vii. 25, even Jesus, ישוע, is derived.

The copulative participle, *and*, that knitteth the prophet's distress, and God's release together, intimateth the time when God saved him; even when he was at the lowest. 'I was brought low and he helped me.'

Four points are here offered to our consideration.

1. The case wherein the prophet was. I was brought low.

2. The kind of help. He saved me.

3. The time when God afforded that help. When he was brought low.

4. The inference of God's particular dealing with him, upon God's general dealing with others. 'The Lord preserveth the simple,' that is the general; 'I was brought low and he saved me,' this is the particular.

These four considerations afford four useful observations.

I. No extremity exceeds God's ability. He can raise him that is brought low,—that is, as an exhausted pond,—that hath no more strength in himself than a dried pit hath water.

II. God's succour is salvation. He saveth, and setteth free from danger, those whom he undertakes to help.

III. Man's extremity is God's opportunity. Then is it the fittest time for God to help, when man is in the greatest distress.

IV. Due observation of God's mercy to others maketh men in like cases to acknowledge God's mercy to themselves. He that observed how God used to preserve the simple, could say when he himself was brought low, 'The Lord saved me.' The particular application to himself of God's general pity to others occasioneth this doctrine.

Sec. 39. *Of the extremities wherein God helpeth.*

I. *No extremity exceeds God's ability.*¹ He can deliver even from instant death. To believe as much is an evidence of a strong faith. In secs. 15 and 16 many deadly dangers and desperate distresses of the saints are produced; observe the issue which God gave to them all, and you shall find by real evidences that God was able to help and save in them all. For so indeed he did. The vision of the dry bones that came together, and were covered with sinews, flesh, and skin, and lived, was shewed to Ezekiel, to assure the church of God's ability to help in any extremity. For where the house of Israel said, 'Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost; we are cut off for our parts,' the Lord made this answer, 'I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves,' Ezek. xxxvii. 11, &c.

To settle the faith of the prophet Jeremiah herein, the Lord thus puts him in mind of his almighty power, 'Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh; is there anything too hard for me?' Jer. xxxii. 27. 'That which with men is impossible, is not so with God; for with God all things are possible,' Mark x. 27. Though he have set bounds to his creatures beyond which they cannot go, yet can none set bounds to him: 'Our God is in the heavens: he doth whatsoever he will,' Ps. cxv. 3. Read more hereof in Hannah's song, 1 Sam. ii. 1, &c., and in Ps. cxiii.

Of sundry duties and comforts arising from a due consideration of the foresaid power of God, see 'The Guide to go to God,' secs. 213, 214; and of other instructions arising from the help which God affords in man's extremity, see the next section but one to this.

Sec. 40. *Of God's perfect preservation.*

II. *God's succour is salvation.* It freeth out of all danger. Thus much intended Moses, when, the Israelites despairing of all help, he thus said to them, 'Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord,' Exod. xiv. 13. Such was that salvation, as they had no cause to fear those their enemies any more. The like may be exemplified in

¹ Hoc est robur virtutis et fidei, credere et scire quod Deus à morte præsentè liberare potest.—*Cypr. Epist.*, lib. iv. ep. 6.

other deliverances which God undertook to give, especially in the cures which Christ did in the days of his flesh. When his pleasure was to heal any, he made them whole, Mat. xv. 28; and for evidence thereof, he commanded lepers to shew themselves to the priests, whose office it was to judge whether a leprosy were perfectly cured or no, Luke xvii. 14. Others, Mat. ix. 6; John v. 8, that had been very weak and impotent, he willed to carry their beds, that thereby it might be seen that they were perfectly cured. The dead he caused to rise up, Mark v. 41; Luke vii. 14; John xi. 43. Demoniacs he charged to preach the gospel, Mark v. 19, 20. But the greatest and best evidence that can be given hereof is the eternal salvation which is given to saints, whereunto the apostle having relation, saith, 'He is able to save to the uttermost,' Heb. vii. 25.¹

God will have his works to be manifested to be divine: to be so perfect in their kind as nothing need be added thereto, nor help sought of any other but of him; that so by evident demonstrations men may be forced to say, 'This is the finger of God.'

1. Assuredly they that know and believe this truth, that the Lord saveth them whom he undertaketh to help, cannot but be much encouraged in their distresses to seek help of him. In such cases as are to men incurable, we use to do much for some present ease; and yet fail oftentimes in that which we seek for, and expect at mens' hands, as that 'woman which had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse.' If we could believe as she did, assuredly we should do as she did, and have as good success as she had.

2. Let us beware of Asa's fault, who 'in his disease sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians,' 2 Chron. xvi. 12. How much better had it been to have sought not to the physicians, but to the Lord.² Which I would not have so taken as if physicians were not at all in any case to be sought unto; but to shew that it is much better to neglect all means

¹ *ἐἰς τὸ παντελὲς*, id est perfectè. Ita videlicet ut nihil ad eam salutem possit amplius desiderari.—*Beza in annot. major. in hunc loc.*

² *Vae* iis qui tempore tribulationis atque angustie non confidunt in Domino, sed in Ægyptiorum, id est secularium hominum, auxilio.—*Jerome Comment. lib. x. in Isa. xxxi.*

than to neglect the Lord, who giveth a blessing to all the means that are at any time of any use. Warrantable means may lawfully, must conscionably be used, but used as the hand of God's providence, whereby he doth whatsoever good thing is done by them. Woe is denounced against them that trust to means without the Lord, Isa. xxx. 1, &c., and xxxi. 1, &c. Whether, therefore, means be used, or not used, let not the Lord be neglected. He saveth.

Sec. 41. *Of God's taking occasion to help at a pinch.*

III. *Man's extremity is God's opportunity.*¹ Then, even then especially, is God ready to help, when men are at the lowest. To pass over those instances which are mentioned before,² there are two proverbs used in Scripture which give good proof to this point. The one is this: 'In the mount will the Lord be seen,' Gen. xxii. 14. *בְּהַר יְהוָה יֵרָאָה*.³ Knowledge of the just occasion of this proverb will give light to the true interpretation thereof. The occasion, therefore, was this: God gave an express charge to Abraham to take his only, his beloved son, even him of whom it was said, 'In Isaac shall thy seed be called,' and to offer him for a burnt-offering on a mountain which the Lord should shew him. Abraham, in obedience to the Lord's charge, went on whither the Lord appointed him, with a full resolution to do what he was commanded to do. Three days was he in journeying to the place; and at length came to the top of a mount, where he built an altar, laid the wood in order, bound Isaac, laid him thereon, took a knife, and stretched out his hand to slay his son. Thus in his intent he had slain and sacrificed his son.⁴ In all this time did not God shew any mind or means to save Isaac; but even then, when there was scarce a step betwixt him and death, the Lord shewed himself, and declared his pleasure for preserving Isaac. Now because it was on a mount where Isaac was thus near unto death, and that on the mount, and not before, God shewed himself for the preservation

¹ Sec. 38.

² Sec. 39.

³ Hoc apud Hebræos exivit in proverbium, ut si quando in angustia constituti sunt, et Domini optant auxilio sublevari, dicant, In monte Dominus videbit.—*Jerome Quest. in Gen.*

⁴ Quantum ad voluntatem attinet, creventaverat dextram Patriarcha, &c.—*Chrys. in Gen. xxii, Hom. 47.*

of Isaac, thence arose this proverb: 'In the mount will the Lord be seen.' And to be an evidence to all future ages of God's wisdom in affording his help at the last cast, the Holy Ghost prefixeth this clause: 'As it is said to this day.'

The other proverb is this: 'The children are come to the birth, and there is no strength to bring forth,' 2 Kings xix. 3. By this proverb, Jerusalem, being so besieged by the king of Assyria, as there was, in regard of human helps, little hope of deliverance, is compared to a woman great with child, in pain of travail. The inhabitants of the city are resembled to the children in the mother's womb; the extremity of distress wherein they were, to the difficulty and danger of travail. Such then was their case, as the case of a woman, which, having a weak child not able to help itself, is spent with pain and travail, and hath no midwife, nor any other means of help. Were they not now brought even to uttermost extremity? In this extremity, when they were so low brought, the 'Lord helped them,' 2 Kings xix. 35.

The help that in such extremities is afforded manifestly appeareth to be from God. When the Egyptians observed the succour which was afforded to the Israelites in the midst of the Red Sea, they said, 'The Lord fighteth for them,' Exod. xiv. 25. Thus is God the more honoured by reserving himself to such extremities.

In extremities succour is much more welcome, much better accepted, more highly prized, and man's heart more affected and inflamed therewith. When the Israelites were safely led through the depths, then they sang the Lord praises, Ps. cvi. 9, 12.

Is there not now great and just reason that God should take this opportunity to help?

1. Wait, therefore, to the very uttermost of an extremity. This being the most reasonable time for God to help, most meet it is that we should tarry the Lord's leisure, and wait for his season. This the prophet noteth to be a property of true faith, 'He that believeth maketh not haste,' Isa. xxviii. 16. He seeketh not to prevent the time appointed of the Lord. If the Lord tarry, the believer will wait, Hab. ii. 3. He well knoweth that there is an appointed time which cannot be prevented, which shall not be overslipt. For the Lord will take his opportunity.

2. When thou supposest that the uttermost of an extremity is come, then put fire to the powder of thy prayer; then stir up thy soul to all fervency; then be instant and importunate; then give the Lord no rest; then especially plead these and such like promises: 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee,' Heb. xiii. 5; 'He that shall come will come, and will not tarry,' Heb. x. 37; 'God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape,' 1 Cor. x. 13; 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee,' Isa. xliii.

2. Be so far from fainting by reason of the extremity of distress, as rather with stronger confidence expect deliverance. This being God's opportunity, put him in mind of thine extremity, and thus plead it, 'Arise, O Lord, have mercy: for the time to have mercy, yea, the set time, is come,' Ps. cii. 13; 'O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake,' Dan. ix. 19. Only let the truth of confidence be manifested by repentance.¹ He that repenteth may be confident when the time to save is come.

Sec. 42. *Of applying to ourselves God's dealing with others.*

IV. *Due observation*² *of God's mercy to others maketh men in like cases to acknowledge God's mercy to them.* This was it that moved the prophet to say, that when he was brought low, the Lord saved him, because he had duly observed how the Lord preserved the simple. Well note the forms of praise that are recorded in Scripture, and you shall find it usual with the saints to relate God's accustomed dealing with others to be such as it was with them. To omit the many psalms of David that are pertinent to this purpose, the two hymns of Hannah, 1 Sam. ii. 1, &c., and the Virgin Mary, Luke i. 46, &c., give good proof hereof.

Men ordinarily behold God's dealing with others with a single eye, whereby they are so convinced of the verity and equity of that which they see, as they

¹ Confidat qui agit penitentiam, quum venit tempus salvandi.—*Jerome Comment. in Psalm. ci.*

² Sec. 58.

cannot but acknowledge the like (when the like falleth out) in their own case.

Behold here what good we may gain to ourselves by taking notice of the divine properties as they are exercised on others. Few or none can so well discern the evidences of God's providence and mercy, or of his justice, jealousy, and displeasure, in themselves as in others. Objects brought too near to the eye cannot be distinctly and clearly discerned. Self-love dims men's sight in their own case. When others partake of any good thing we can soon say, O how good is God unto them. When judgments are executed on others we are ready to ascribe it to the justice of the Lord. Well, seeing we are so forward to discern God's dealing in other men's cases, let us make good use of this our disposition, and do so still, that hereby we may be brought to the mind of this holy man; and finding the Lord to deal with others as he doth with us, acknowledge as much; and that, as in works of judgment to be humbled the more, so in works of mercy to be provoked to more hearty thankfulness, as we shall be in truth, and on just ground we can say, 'The Lord that sheweth mercy to them that are in misery, was very merciful to me when I was in misery.'

Sec. 43. *Of the exposition and resolution of the seventh verse,*

Ver. 7. *Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.*

Here beginneth the second part of this psalm,¹ which setteth out the prophet's protestation for his after purpose. This hath respect:

1. To his inward disposition.
2. To his outward conversation.

For his inward disposition he profeseth a quiet settling of his soul.

Rest, *נוח*, whereby his inward disposition is here expressed, is opposed to travail and labour, Exod. xxiii. 12; Gen. viii. 9, or to trouble and sorrow, Ruth i. 9; Deut. xxviii. 65, and that both outward, Lam. v. 5, and inward, Isa. xxviii. 12.

Here it is taken in the latter respect, as opposed to inward trouble and anguish, as is evident by the relation it hath to his soul. It importeth an assur-

¹ See sec. 2.

ance of God's favour to him, and tranquillity of mind and peace of conscience thence arising.

This rest he calleth his soul's, because it was a rest wherein his soul had solaced herself before; which the Lord having given, he sweetly and quietly enjoyed as his own.

But it seemeth that his bitter affliction had bereaved him of it, and therefore as to a right lost and recovered again, he saith, 'Return,' *שׁוּבִי*. For this is the very word which the angel useth to Hagar when she fled from her mistress, 'Return,' Gen. xvi. 9. As Hagar through her mistress' rough dealing with her fled from her, so the soul of this prophet by reason of affliction fell from her former quiet confidence in God. As the angel therefore biddeth Hagar 'return to her mistress,' so the understanding of this prophet biddeth his soul 'return to her rest.'

Very elegant and emphatical is this manner of the prophet's directing his speech to his soul as to another person, thus, 'O my soul.' Hereby his understanding well enlightened and resolved of God's favour to him, stirreth up his will, conscience, heart, and affections to be quieted, and no longer perplexed and troubled with doubts and fears about God's wrath, but to rest assured of his love and favour.

To shew what good ground there was for his soul to repose itself quietly in the Lord, he addeth, 'For the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.' The first particle being a causal particle, *for*, *כי*, sheweth that this is added as a reason of that which went before. The reason is taken from the manifestation of God's favour to him, and it may thus be framed:

He with whom the Lord dealeth bountifully may well rest on the Lord.

But the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee, O my soul.

Therefore thou, O my soul, mayest well rest on the Lord.

One Hebrew word is expressed by this circumlocution, hath dealt bountifully (*נָתַן*, God's repaying). The word properly signifieth to repay; it hath in that signification, relation to something done before, and that good or evil; and in both these senses it is attributed to God and men. God is said to 'repay, or reward the righteous according to their

righteousness,' Ps. xviii. 20; and to the wicked to 'repay or render a recompense,' Jer. li. 6. In these respects he is called 'a God of recompenses,' Jer. li. 56. (אל נלום.) Men, likewise, are said to 'repay or render for good,' Ps. cxvi. 12, and 'for evil,' Ps. cxxxvii. 8. But the word is also simply used without relation to anything before, especially being attributed to God, and that in the better sense, for conferring or bestowing some good. Thus doth the Psalmist pray to God to be 'recompensed,' Ps. cxix. 17, that is, graciously dealt with by him; and acknowledged that he hath so dealt with him, Ps. cxlii. 7. In this simple signification do Hebrew expositors,¹ Greek translators,² and other interpreters and expositors³ take the word in this place. Thus some of our English translators turn the word here, 'hath been beneficial,' others, 'hath dealt graciously.' And because the kindness which God sheweth is not scanty or niggardly, but such as becometh his majesty to give, others thus translate it 'hath dealt bountifully.'

To infer any matter of merit on man's part, because a word that sometimes signifieth to repay is attributed to God in relation to man, is too sandy a foundation for such a lofty Babel.

To take occasion from hence to set out the bounty of the Lord would be too impertinent. The word doth indefinitely set down the grace, favour, mercy, or goodness of the Lord, without any particular or distinct respect to extraordinary liberality and bounty.

The principal point here to be noted is, the alteration of the prophet's disposition. Where before he was restless, now he returneth to rest.

In expressing hereof three points are observable:

1. The matter.
2. The manner.
3. The motive.

In the matter are further to be noted:

1. The action, return.
2. The object, rest.
3. The agent, soul.

The manner is by an apostrophe to his soul, O my soul.

The motive is taken from the manifestation of

¹ Targum, 'גבול טובה' retribuunt bonum.

² LXX, ἐπεργέτησε, benefecit.

³ Sic Jerome, Aug. aliique.

God's favour to him; for, the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.

A further exemplification hereof is in the next verse:

1. The action, return, implieth a former restlessness, and sheweth that,

The souls of saints are oft unsettled.

2. The object, rest, together with the appropriation thereof to his soul, thy, demonstrateth that, Saints have a rest.

3. The agent, soul, to which the forenamed action and object have relation, giveth evidence that,

The rest proper to saints is spiritual. Such a rest as their soul, a spiritual substance, may enter into.

4. The motive, taken from the manifestation of God's favour, whereof he had now some assurance, declareth that,

Sense of God's favour is the ground of saints' rest.

5. The manner of expressing all these by speaking to his soul, and provoking it to enter into rest, teacheth that,

Men must stir up themselves to that which they see to be good for them.

Sec. 44. *Of the unsettledness wherunto saints are subject.*

1. *The souls of saints are oft unsettled, much disturbed, and restless.*¹ What can we else judge of him who made this expostulation with his soul, 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?' Ps. xlii. 11, and professed that his 'soul refused comfort,' Ps. lxxvii.

2. Or of him that said, 'When I lie down I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day,' Job vii. 4.

This thus falleth out by reason of the violence of temptations and troubles wherunto they are subject on the one side, and by reason of the weakness of their flesh and disability to resist those temptations on the other side.² So long as breath remains

¹ Mortem frequenter in hoc seculi istius lubrico sustinebat, inquietus fluctibus peccatorum.—Amb. in Orat. de Obiit. Theod.

² Sancti cum mente sint spirituales, adhuc tamen isto corruptibili corpore quod aggravat animam recte intelliguntur esse carnales, &c.—Aug. cont. Jul. Pelag. lib. vi. c. 11.

in us flesh remains in us: and 'the flesh is weak when the spirit is ready,' Mat. xxvi. 41. Yea, when the spirit is willing patiently to yield and quietly to submit itself to God, the flesh swelleth, rebelleth, and raiseth tumults. So as saints being in their mind spiritual, are notwithstanding carnal in their corrupt flesh, which is a burden to their soul. An apostle in this case saith of himself, 'When I would do good, evil is present with me. And I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind,' &c., Rom. vii. 21, 23. Now calamities and afflictions being grievous, Heb. xii. 11, namely, to the flesh, they make it to stir and struggle, to murmur and mutiny; yea, the violent heat of them causeth a mist to arise before the light of understanding, and to obscure and darken it exceedingly, so as that light which should in this tempest direct a man cannot clearly shew itself. It falleth out with a man in this case as with a glass of sweet and clear water that hath much dregs in the bottom. Stir the glass much and the water will be much troubled, nor sweetness will be so smelt as before, nor clearness seen till it may be settled again. Herein lieth a main difference betwixt Christ's pure and man's polluted nature. He, indeed, took to himself our true nature, even the nature of our infirmities, and the infirmities of our nature, but free from sin; no dregs of corruption were in his nature. Though he therefore seemed to be shaken all to pieces, yet no rebellious, no disordered passion was thereby stirred up in him. These phrases, 'Now is my soul troubled,' John xii. 27; 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death,' Mat. xxvi. 38; 'If it be possible let this cup pass from me,' chap. xxvi. 39; 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' chap. xxvii. 46, manifested a very dolorous agony in his soul, but no seditious mutiny. Such passion in our soul would stir up much sedition, yea, after we are truly regenerate. For we are but in part regenerate.

1. This infirmity of our nature is not wisely observed of them, who, from the perplexities and agonies of saints especially, if thereby they be forced to manifest any disquietness of soul, take occasion to insult over them, and to trample the more upon them. David was much troubled with such, and

oft complaineth of them. In that respect he saith of them, 'They talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded,' Ps. lxxix. 26. Thus Job's friends, though they came a long journey to comfort him, yet proved 'miserable comforters,' Job xvi. 2. Too many such miserable comforters there are, who, when a man hath need of some comfortable cordials, give him (as Christ's, Mat. xxvii. 34, 48, and David's, Ps. lxxix. 21, enemies did) gall for meat, and vinegar to drink. The heathen accounted this a most inhuman part.¹ How ill then doth it besem them who profess themselves to be Christians.

2. Let such as through God's mercy have peace and comfort in their souls and consciences so bear with those that are unsettled and perplexed, as they may the better, by speaking 'a word in season,' Isa. i. 4, quiet and settle their souls. It is an express charge given to such as are 'strong to bear with the infirmities of the weak,' Rom. xv. 1, and to such as are 'spiritual to restore a brother overtaken, with the spirit of meekness,' Gal. vi. 1, and that for this reason, 'lest they also be tempted.' What any one is subject unto, every one is subject unto. Thus shall we shew ourselves to be as a true brother, even 'born for adversity,' Prov. xvii. 17.

3. From this whereunto saints are subject to be sometimes unsettled, all have need to give diligence to make their calling and election sure, and to be well instructed how to have 'the heart established with grace,' Heb. xiii. 9, that therewith the soul may be fast fixed, as the oak is said to be, whose roots spread as far and grow as deep into the earth as the boughs thereof grow wide and high into the air,² whence it cometh to pass that no storm can overturn an oak—it will sooner be rent and split clean through than overthrow. So they who are 'well-rooted and built up in Christ and established in the faith,' Col. ii. 7, and 'rooted and grounded in love,' Eph. iii. 17, will sooner have their bodies and souls rent asunder than be overturned in their faith on Christ. Instance the true martyrs of the church.

To enforce this point further, note the next note.

¹ Urgere jacentem est inhumanum.—*Cic. pro C. Rab. Post.*

² Quantum vertice ad auras Ætherias, tantum radice in Tartara tendit, &c.—*Virg. Georg. l. 2.*

Sec. 45. *Of the rest of saints.*

II. *Saints have a rest.* Yea, even in this world they have a rest. How else could the prophet here say to his soul, 'Enter into thy rest?' Why else should he blame his soul for being restless, Ps. xlii. 11, xliii. 5. That peace which as proper to the saints is expressly mentioned in Scripture proveth as much, John xvi. 33; Rom. v. 1, xiv. 17.

To embolden, encourage, and hearten them in the sea of this world, that by the storms of affliction they should not be overwhelmed and drowned before they come to the 'rest which remaineth for them,' Heb. iv. 9, and which the Lord Jesus shall give them 'when he shall be revealed from heaven,' 2 Thes. i. 7, here they have a rest, wherein, that we be not deceived, mark the third point.

Sec. 46. *Of the spiritual rest of saints.*

III. *The rest proper to saints is spiritual.*¹ It is such a rest as may stand with tribulation in this world. It is 'a peace which they have in Christ,' John xvi. 33, 'a peace with God,' Rom. v. 1, 'a peace of God that passeth all understanding,' that keepeth men's 'hearts and minds,' Phil. iv. 7, 'a peace and joy in the Holy Ghost,' opposed to 'meat and drink,' Rom. xiv. 17, a peace of conscience; for a good and quiet conscience is the bed of the soul, in which it sweetly and quietly resteth.²

This is the best, truest, and surest rest; a rest that sustaineth a man's infirmity; a rest that not only quieteth the soul when the body is disquieted, but also moderateth and mitigateth the disquietness of the body.³ This maketh us 'glory in tribulations,' Rom. v. 3. What made 'Peter to sleep quietly between soldiers bound with chains?' Acts xii. 6. What made 'Paul and Silas,' having been sorely scourged, cast into prison, and their feet made fast in the stocks, at midnight to sing? chap. xvi. 23-25: surely this spiritual rest wherein their souls were reposed; this peace of God. This being the best rest, God provideth it for his best beloved.

1. Take evidence hereby of the true estate of

¹ Sec. 43.

² *Bona et tranquilla conscientia est lectus animæ. In hoc requiem capit anima.—Bern. Serm. parv. 1.*

³ See 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. ii. part 5. sec. 724.

saints, and be instructed in the manner of God's dealing with them. True it is that he putteth them to many trials; 'The Lord scourgeth every son that he receiveth. All are partakers of chastisement,' Heb. xii. 6, 8. 'All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution,' 2 Tim. iii. 12. Yet, as true it is that the Lord affordeth sufficient supportance, yea, and comfort also in all their troubles, that we may learn that God's captived servants are not forsaken of him.¹ 'God is faithful who will not suffer his to be tempted above that they are able to bear,' 1 Cor. x. 13. As Christ said of the Sabbath, I may say of the afflictions of saints, 'afflictions are for the saints and not the saints for afflictions,' Mark ii. 27; therefore, God correcteth us for our profit, and from thence issueth 'the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby,' Heb. xii. 10, 11. The assistance, comfort, peace, and joy which God giveth even in troubles and afflictions, ministereth just cause for us all to say, 'We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed,' 2 Cor. iv. 8, 9. This is the benefit of spiritual rest, that temporal troubles do not disturb the same. If any be disquieted and unsettled, as we heard before some might be, it is their own weakness. They have a rest to return unto, ordained, revealed by God, whereunto, when they recal their spirit, they will return; as here the prophet doth. If thus there be peace and rest to saints in times of trials and troubles, inward peace, spiritual rest in outward trials and temporal troubles, who can doubt of their rest in halcyon, in quiet and peaceable times, when there is nothing to disturb the same? The world is altogether ignorant of this peace. If they had a true and due understanding thereof, their mouths would not be so opened as they are against saints by reason of their troubles.

2. Take notice hereby of the difference betwixt the condition of believers and unbelievers, servants of the Lord and slaves of the devil. They have their rest—a rest that may stand with external unquietness. Though in body and in outward estate they may seem to have no rest; though in that re-

¹ *Discamus captivos Dei servos non deseri a Domino suo.—Aug. Epist. 122, ad Victorian.*

spect they may be thought, as Christ, to be in a worse case than foxes, that 'have holes, and birds of the air that have nests,' Mat. viii. 20, because they have not where to rest their head; yet have they a rest for their soul, a rest that refresheth and solaceth both soul and body. But it is otherwise with the wicked. 'The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked,' Isa. lvii. 20, 21. Though they have health of body, and all outward prosperity; though by reason thereof they say (as the rich fool did, Luke xii. 19) to their soul, 'Take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry;' yet cannot this be but only to the teeth outward. They seem to have rest, and to enjoy quiet; but that is no rest where the soul is restless,¹ that is no peace of mind where the mind is troubled with stings of a guilty conscience. Their conscience is like to the fore-mentioned troubled sea. If they feel it not, it is because they are intoxicated and made senseless, as the drunkard that 'lieth down in the midst of the sea or upon the top of a mast,' and feeleth nothing, Prov. xxiii. 34, 35. Their 'conscience is seared with an hot iron,' 1 Tim. iv. 2. When it is roused it will be as 'a roaring lion and a ranging bear, or a bear robbed of her whelps,' Prov. xxviii. 15, and chap. xvii. 12.

3. Envy not (O ye saints) the rest whereof the men of this world so much boast; return to your own rest; rest satisfied therewith. In your greatest troubles meditate thereon, solace yourselves therein. The mariner, in hope of coming to a calm haven, patiently endureth all manner of storms while he is on sea. Should not saints much more quietly bear all manner of troubles, not only in expectation of that 'rest which remaineth to the people of God,' Heb. iv. 9, but also in regard of that inward spiritual rest which they have in the midst of their greatest afflictions?

Sec. 47. *Of God's favour, the rest of saints.*

IV. *Sense of God's favour is the ground of saints' rest.*²

¹ Videntur habere tranquillitatem, videntur quiete frui; sed non est quies ubi animus inquietus est; non est tranquillitas mentis ubi animus exagitatione obnoxie stimulo conscientie.—*Amb. Comment. in Ps. cxviii., Serm. xvii. ver. 5.*

Sec. 43.

After the prophet had expostulated with his soul about her unquietness, he gave this advice, 'Hope in God,' Ps. xlii. 11, as the only means of settling his soul. Faith is it that persuadeth the soul of God's favour. Hence is it that 'being justified by faith we have peace with God,' Rom. v. 1. Yea, because this peace relieth on God's favour, it is called 'the peace of God,' Phil. iv. 7. When David was in one of the most desperate distresses that ever befell him, it is said that 'he encouraged himself in the Lord his God,' 1 Sam. xxx. 6. The assurance that he had of God's favour, and confidence that the Lord was his God, supported him and moved him to rest thereon. Many are the metaphors which to this end are applied to God, as 'Rock, fortress, deliverer, strength, buckler, horn of salvation, high tower,' Ps. xviii. 2; 'refuge,' Ps. xlvi. 1; 'portion of inheritance, maintainer of lot,' Ps. xvi. 5; 'hiding-place,' Ps. cxix. 114; 'strong habitation, whereunto we may continually resort,' Ps. lxxi. 3.

1. Nothing can satisfy the souls of saints but God's favour. They find all other things to be 'vanity and vexation of spirit,' Eccles. i. and ii. Whereas therefore others say, 'Who will shew us any good,' saints say, 'Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us,' Ps. iv. 6.

2. God's favour is that proper place whither a soul well enlightened and rectified (as the souls of the saints are) aspireth. Now nothing resteth till it comes to its proper place. Instance light things that fly upward, and heavy things that fall downward.

3. The uttermost end whereunto the saints refer all their endeavours is to be accepted of God. All things which advisedly they do, are but as means for attaining to that end. Now till men attain to that main end at which they aim, they cannot think of a spiritual rest. A traveller hath no settled rest till he come to his journey's end: nor a mariner, nor a soldier, nor any other that professeth a weighty end to himself.

1. Let this only true rest be well observed; let us be well instructed therein, and that the rather because all of all sorts desire rest; but most, yea, and all that are not thoroughly instructed in this true rest, are deceived thereabout. He that is destitute of the needful things of this world, sup-

poseth that if he had bread to eat and raiment to put on, he should say to his soul, be at rest. He that is in pain conceives that if he had ease he should rest, and desire no more. So he that is sick, if he had recovery; he that is in prison, if he had liberty; he that is in any distress, if he had release. Yet when their desire is accomplished, they are as restless as before. After one thing is obtained, another is desired. Greater contentment is supposed to be in the things of this world by them that want them, than can be found to be by them that enjoy them. Hence is it that wealth to the covetous, honour to the ambitious, pleasure to the voluptuous man, and all things here below to such as desire them, are as water to him that hath a dropsy, the more is drunk the more is desired.¹ 'The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ears filled with hearing.' No human knowledge satisfieth the philosopher; no inventions, no indulgencies, the superstitious person. All things out of God are as ice, snow, dew, and other like meteors; they waste in using, they soon melt or dry away. In consideration hereof saith the prophet; Isa. lv. 2, 'Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not?' 'Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not?' Prov. xxiii. 5. As all natural men are unsatisfied in all their desires and endeavours, so among others, they who most set their thoughts and hearts on mischief. Fitly doth the prophet, Isa. lvii. 20, resemble such to 'the troubled sea when it cannot rest.' Yea, in the greatest calm it beats against the shore, and raiseth waves which cast up mire and dirt.²

2. Seeing out of God there is no rest, let the Lord and his favour be to thee as the ark was to the dove. While she was out of the ark 'she found no rest for the sole of her foot,' Gen. viii. 9. Give no sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids till thou hast found out this rest for thy soul, assurance of God's favour. To be restless till we

¹ Quo plus sunt potæ, plus sitiuntur aquæ.—*Ovid fast.* lib. i. *Eccles.* i. 8.

² Impios comparat mari quod nunquam potest quiescere: sed etiam in summa tranquillitate, fractis ad littora advolvitur fluctibus: finisque eius lutum est, et conculcatio.—*Jerome, Comment.,* lib. xvi., in Isa. lvii.

find this rest, will be a means to find it. 'The Lord filleth the hungry with good things,' Luke i. 53. 'He giveth to him that is athirst of the fountain of life freely,' Rev. xxi. 6.

3. For gaining such assurance of God's favour as may make thee rest securely therein, observe these rules.¹

(1.) Acquaint thyself with God's promises, which are the only true sure ground of faith and confidence. For God's promises are declarations of God's favour towards man; what God promiseth, man may safely rest upon. It was God's promise whereof David thus saith, 'Upon it thou hast caused me to hope,' Ps. cxix. 49.

(2.) Meditate seriously and frequently on God's properties, as on his grace, mercy, truth, power, &c.² This meditation, added to faith in God's promises, will be as oil put into a lamp, which will continue the life and light of it. The forementioned description of God, ver. 5. sec. 26, by his divine properties, sheweth that the faith of this prophet in God's favour was nourished thereby.

(3.) Observe God's former dealing with thee, and call to mind such evidences of his favour as he hath shewed to thee in former times. This will give thee evidence of his present good-will towards thee; for whom he once loveth he ever loveth: he loveth his with an everlasting love, John xiii. 1; Jer. xxxi. 3. When Zion said, 'The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me,' this answer was replied, 'Can a woman forget her sucking child? &c. Yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee,' &c., saith the Lord, Isa. xlix. 14, &c.

(4.) When thy affections are much prone to heaviness, and thy heart much misgiveth thee (as we speak) by reason of doubts and fears, let thy judgment, grounded on God's word and promises, support thee. A right understanding of God's promises are of force to keep a heavy spirit from sinking. A man's judgment well-informed, will convince his affections of folly when they make doubt of God's favour, and so bring them to yield to that which it conceiveth to be truth.

Having some evidences of God's favour towards

¹ See 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. ii., part 6, sec. 71, 72.

² See *Ibid.*, sec. 25, &c.

there, repose thyself therein. Say to God as the psalmist doth, 'Thou art my hiding-place,' Ps. cxix. 114. *אתה סתרי*. The beasts of the wilderness, that have their dens and hiding-places, use on all occasions to have recourse thereunto. In their dens they sleep securely; to their dens they carry their prey, and there eat it: when they are wounded, or any way hurt, they make to their dens; there they lick themselves whole, if at least they can; but if their hurt be mortal, so as they must needs die, they will die in their dens. Thus ought we to make the Lord our den, our hiding-place, and in all conditions, on all occasions, to repose ourselves in him and his favour. If we have cause of joy, to rejoice in the Lord; if of sorrow, to mourn and shed our tears in his bosom: while we live, to live in him; when we die, to die in him, even within the arms of his favour. Thus shalt thou be sure to be safe in all estates; for safe is he whom the Lord doth keep. Oh cleave to him, therefore, who hath made you! Stand with him, and ye shall stand safe. Rest in him, and ye shall be in quiet rest.¹

Sec. 48. *Of comforting and quickening one's self.*

V. *Men must stir up themselves to that which they see to be good for them.*² As the prophet doth here stir up his soul to return unto her rest, so in other places to 'hope in God,' Ps. xlii. 5; 'to wait upon God,' Ps. lxi. 5; 'to remember all his benefits,' Ps. ciii. 2; yea, and 'to praise the Lord,' Ps. cxlvi. 1. To the proof of this point tend all such exhortations as in Scripture are made in the first person, as such as these, 'Let us labour to enter into that rest,' Heb. iv. 11; 'Let us go boldly to the throne of grace,' ver. 16; 'Let us go on to perfection,' chap. vi. 1; 'Let us draw near with a true heart,' &c., chap. x. 22. By these, men of God stirred up themselves as well as others.

For even they who are in place, and have any calling to stir up others, 'are men of like passions with others,' Acts xiv. 15, and are not only subject, but prone also to wax dull, cold, backward to holy duties, even to such as tend to their spiritual comfort. We have shewed that the best may be

much disquieted and restless,¹ and therefore have need to 'stir up the gift of God that is in them,' 2 Tim. i. 6.

Quest. How can this be?

Ans. 1. By putting difference betwixt the understanding and affections. The understanding is in man as a mistress, the affections are as handmaidens. The mistress may see that to be very meet to be done which the handmaidens are loath to do, and thereupon quicken them.

2. By distinguishing betwixt the spirit and flesh. The spirit is oft willing when the flesh is weak, Mat. xxvi. 41. Yea, when the inward man warreth against it, Rom. vii. 22, 23. Now all these being in man, when the understanding inciteth the affections, and the spirit driveth away the heaviness of the flesh, man is said to stir up himself.

Learn here how beneficial a man may be to himself, how he may instruct, direct, encourage, and comfort himself, namely, by well using that light of understanding which God giveth him, and by applying that wherein he is well informed to himself. On this ground, when we are tempted to a sin, when we find passion, pride, lust, or any other corruption beginning to arise in us, let us make our case to be another's case, and by our understanding reason with our souls as if they were other person's, and what we would in such cases say to others, let us say to our own souls, as the psalmist, 'Why art thou disquieted, O my soul?' Ps. xlii. 5. And here, 'Return unto thy rest, O my soul.'² Many that much doubt, and even despair themselves, can produce sound grounds to move others to be confident in God, which, if they would press upon their own souls, they might be much quickened thereby. They can tell others that, when God seems to hide himself, it is but a cloud that keepeth away the brightness of God's favour, which shall be driven away, and therefore they ought to hope and wait. They can tell others that temptations to sin must be resisted, and that by resisting of them they will be vanquished. They can set a catalogue of pro-

¹ Sec. 44.

² Spera in Domino, respondet conturbanti se animæ suæ, et quasi rationem reddenti perturbationis suæ propter mala quibus abundet hic mundus.—*Aug. Enar. in Ps.* 41.

¹ Inhærete illi qui fecit vos; state cum eo, et stabitis; requiescite in eo, et quieti eritis.—*Aug. Confess.* l. 4, c. 12.

² Sec. 43.

mises before others in their conflicts, and be plentiful and powerful in persuading others to bounden duties, and dissuading them from disgraceful vices. If thus they would deal with themselves, what good might they do to themselves? Thus should they never want (no, not when they are most retired, most private, even by themselves alone) an instructor, a director, a counsellor, a comforter. And no counsellor, no comforter, can be more powerful with a man's soul than himself.

Sec. 49. *Of the exposition and resolution of the eighth verse.*

Ver. 8. *For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.*

The forementioned kindness of God is here particularly exemplified by the deliverance which God gave him from his distress.

How his soul may be said to be delivered hath been before shewed on ver. 4, sec. 24.

Death is here put for such a desperate distress as threatened death.¹ In the case wherein he was, (to use the apostle's phrase,) 'he despaired even of life: he had the sentence of death in himself, and thus God who raiseth the dead delivered him from a great death,' 2 Cor. i. 8, 9. The words, therefore, are not literally to be taken of a miraculous raising from death, but his distress is thus by this word, *death*,² set out to aggravate his danger, and to amplify God's deliverance. Hereof see more on ver. 3, sec. 15.

The tears of his eyes are here mentioned to shew how he was affected with that affliction. Tears are outward effects and signs of inward anguish. When Jerusalem was carried captive into a strange land, 'She wept sore in the night, her tears were on her cheeks,' Lam. i. 2. Yea, Christ (who with the nature of our infirmities assumed the infirmities of our nature, 'yet without sin,' Heb. iv. 15) had in his bitter agony tears forced from his eyes.

God's delivering of this prophet's 'eyes from tears' implieth a removal of that distress whereof these tears were a sign, with which his soul was so troubled as his eyes gushed out with tears, so as the effect or sign is here put for the cause.³

Falling of his feet doth yet further aggravate the distress. The word translated falling, (כָּרַח), signifieth such a violent forcing of one as he cannot stand, as where it is said, 'In forcing thou hast forced me to fall,' Ps. cxviii. 13, (כָּרַח רַחֲמֶיךָ.) Now feet are the supporters of a body, when they fall, down falls all the body. Hereby is declared that the violence of his affliction was such, as like a boisterous storm, it was enough in his best strength to overthrow him, and it also so wasted his strength and weakened him as he could not stand, but was ready again and again to fall; it foiled him exceedingly. By removing that affliction God delivered his feet from falling. But this is spoken in an allegory. For, by his feet are meant his spirit; by falling, the fainting thereof. So as his very soul was preserved from being overwhelmed.

Some distinguish the three particulars thus: 'He hath delivered my soul from death,' by giving me a good conscience; 'mine eyes from tears,' by giving a quiet and a good conscience; 'my feet from sliding,' by giving a secure conscience.¹

This is the exemplification of the motive mentioned in the latter clause of the former verse.

Herein note—

1. The manner of expressing it.
2. The matter whereof it consisteth.

The manner is by² a direct turning of his speech to God, thus: 'Thou hast,' &c.

The matter consisteth in a particular enumeration of the deliverances which God gave him. So as here is expressed:

1. The author of his deliverances. Thou.
2. The kinds thereof. And these are three:
1. His soul from death.
2. His eyes from tears.
3. His feet from falling.

For the manner. In the former verse he spake of the Lord in the third person, thus: 'The Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee;' but here to the Lord in the second person, 'thou hast delivered,' which implieth a familiarity. The apprehension of

¹ Eripuit animam meam de morte, oculos meos à lachrymis, pedes meos à lapsu. De morte, dando bonam conscientiam, a lachrymis, dando tranquillam et bonam: à lapsu, dando securam.—Bern. *Scrm.* part i.

² Ἀποστροφή.

¹ Metonymia effecti.

² In abstracto.

³ Metonymia effecti vel adjuncti.

God's bounty had quickened his spirit, and made him in a reverent manner the more bold; so as,

1. By a due consideration of God's favour to us we are made more familiar with God.

This prophet's thus speaking to God, 'Thou hast delivered,' sheweth that,

2. Deliverances are to be ascribed to God.

The first kind of deliverance, 'my soul from death,' giveth evidence that,

3. God can deliver from the power of death.

The second kind of deliverance, 'mine eyes from tears,' implieth two points, one intended, the other expressed.

4. Saints may be much affected with afflictions.

5. God can remove all matter of mourning.

The third kind of deliverance, 'my feet from falling,' importeth also two points, viz.,

6. Great distresses may foil saints.

7. God establisheth such as are ready to fall.

The fit applying of deliverances to the distinct distresses, as soul or life from death; eyes from tears; feet from falling, demonstrateth that,

8. God's remedy is answerable to man's necessity.

Sec. 50. *Of the means to become familiar with God.*

1. *By a due consideration of God's favour to us we are made more familiar with God.*¹ Thus Moses having duly observed how God knew him by name, that is, took especial notice of him, is emboldened to desire further to know God, and to see his glory, Exod. xxxiii. 12, 13, 18. And David, well weighing that gracious message which by Nathan God sent to him, concerning the establishing of his throne, maketh this inference: 'Therefore hath thy servant found in his heart,' that is, been bold, 'to pray this prayer unto thee,' 2 Sam. vii. 27. So Isaiah, chap. vi. 2; so Hezekiah, Isa. xxxviii. 3; so Daniel, chap. vii. 19; x. 19; so many others.

Manifestation of God's favour worketh faith; the more that the evidences thereof are pondered, the more strength gathereth faith. Meditation on God's good-will to us, is to faith as a seasonable supply of oil to a lamp, which continueth to preserve the light thereof. Now 'by faith we have boldness and access with confidence,' Eph. iii. 12; and the stronger faith the more boldness.

¹ Sec. 49.

O let not any evidence of God's kindness pass by without due notice taken thereof. Do in this case with God as the servants of the king of Syria did with the king of Israel, diligently observe whether anything came from him, 1 Kings x. 33, that may demonstrate his good will to thee. Thus mayest thou gain assurance that thou art in the number of God's friends, 2 Chron. xx. 7; Isa. xli. 8; Cant. v. 1. This was it which made Abraham to be accounted the friend of God, because he believed, James ii. 23. God's kindness to men sheweth that they are his favourites. As wise favourites therefore are in a reverent manner familiar with their sovereign, so may such as know the Lord's mind be with him, and have free entrance into his presence, and assurance of gracious acceptance. A great privilege.

Sec. 51. *Of ascribing deliverances to God.*

II. *Deliverances are to be ascribed to God.*¹ This hath constantly been observed by such as have been guided by the Spirit of God, as by, Gen. xiv. 20, Melchizedech; chap. xxxii. 10, Jacob; Exod. xv. 1, 20, Moses, Miriam; Judges v. 1, Deborah, Barak; 1 Sam. xii. 11, Samuel; 2 Sam. xxii. 1, David; 2 Chron. xv. 11, Asa; 2 Chron. xx. 26, Jehoshaphat; Isa. xxxviii. 9, Hezekiah; Esther ix. 19, the Jews in captivity; Acts iv. 24, the apostles; and many others in all ages; yea, and Rev. xv. 3, the blessed spirits in heaven also.

All deliverances are wrought by God. Whatsoever the instrumental means be, he is the principal efficient and author. As he is the creator of all things, so the governor, the disposer, and orderer of all. And all creatures in the world are his servants, his instruments, used by him according to his will. If, therefore, by any right victory be ascribed, not to the munition, but to the general; recovery of health, not to the potion, but to the physician; good workmanship, not to the materials or tools, but to the artificer; by much more right, victory, recovery, all deliverances, all blessings are to be ascribed to God, who enableth generals, physicians, and all others to do what they do, and giveth all efficacy to the means that are in any way effectual. It is therefore most just and equal that that which is

¹ Sec. 49.

done by God be ascribed to him. His right it is, and shall he not have his right? Will subjects deal so unjustly with their king, soldiers with their general, servants with their master?

Fie on them therefore that either take no notice at all of such deliverances as they have, or else impute them to any other than to God; whether it be to themselves, to other men, to any secondary causes, to fortune, or to anything else. Three sorts of men do especially offend herein: idolaters, Dan. v. 22, 23, that ascribeth God's due to idols; flatterers, Acts xxiv. 2, that attribute it to men; ambitious persons, Isa. x. 8, &c.; Acts xii. 23, that take it to themselves. Two great evils are thus committed. The Creator is robbed of his due. To creatures is given more than their due. He, the only true God, is esteemed as no God. They that are not gods are accounted as gods. 'O my soul, come not thou into their secret: unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united,' Gen. xlix. 6.

Be rather of the communion of saints, whose understanding being rightly informed in the extent of the divine providence, whereby every good thing that is wrought, is wrought, they are so in their hearts affected therewith as they cannot conceal the same, but make their tongues their glory in acknowledging and making known what God hath done to their souls. This, though it be most due to God, yet he accepts it as a kindness, as an honour done to him. And in testimony of his gracious acceptance of this grateful remembrance, he will afterward on other occasions be ready to deliver. For he never repenteth any goodness shewed to such as duly acknowledge the same. If we thankfully commemorate his blessings we shall excite him to confer greater blessings upon us.¹ Behold, then, a ready way to give glory to God, and to gain good to ourselves.

Sec. 52. *Of God's delivering from death.*

III. *God can deliver from the power of death.*² He can deliver;—

1. In such cases as threaten death; wherein men have cause to fear death; as the Israelites had when Pharaoh with a mighty host pursued them, and

¹ Si Dei beneficia commemoremus, ad majorem illum benevolentiam excitabimus. *Chrys. Hom.* ii., in 2 Cor. i.

² Sec. 49.

they had no way to fly but through the sea, Exod. xiv. 2, &c., and again when they were besieged by the Syrians, 2 Kings vi. 24, &c.

2. When death hath begun to lay hold and to seize upon them, as a lion and a bear did upon the lambs which David kept, 1 Sam. xvii. 34. Thus it seemeth that death had seized on Paul, 2 Cor. i. 8, and on Hezekiah, 2 Kings xx. 1, who notwithstanding were both delivered.

3. When there is no possibility of avoiding death by any ordinary means. Thus was Jonah delivered out of the sea, Jonah i. 17; and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego out of the hot fiery furnace, Dan. iii. 26. God hath promised to be with his in fire and water, Isa. xliii. 2, in most desperate distresses.

4. When they are in the very power of death, and death actually seized upon them, and deprived them of life. Hereof we have many instances both in the old, 1 Kings xvii. 22; 2 Kings iv. 35, and xiii. 21; and the New Testament, Mat. ix. 25; Luke vii. 15; John xi. 44; Acts ix. 40, and xx. 10; Mat. xxvii. 52; Rom. i. 4. The vision of dry bones that came together, were knit with sinews, covered with flesh and skin, and had breath of life breathed into them, and lived, was a visible demonstration hereof, Ezek. xxxvii. 2, &c. But that evidence which far surpasseth all, is the general resurrection of all at the last day, John v. 28.

Supreme and absolute is the power and sovereignty of God over all, even grave and death, Rev. xx. 13, and 'him that hath the power of death, the devil,' Heb. ii. 14. They are all his vassals to hold or to let go whom he will.

1. Admirable is the comfort which hence ariseth to such as, being well instructed in the power of God, can in assurance of faith rest on him, as David did, who, when he, 1 Sam. xxx. 6, knew not whither on earth to flee for succour, encouraged himself in the Lord his God. For, nothing can befall us without the limits of his power; no danger can happen, out of which he is not able to deliver us.

Quest. May saints in confidence expect any deliverance that God is able to give?

Ans. Not simply; but with a willing subjection of themselves to his will, as they who said, 'Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the

burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us from thine hand, O king. But if not, he it known to thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods,' Dan. iii. 17. Herein then lieth the comfort which ariseth from God's power, that our God who is able to deliver us, will deliver us, if in his wisdom he see deliverance fit for us. For thus we may safely conclude;

What God seeth to be good for us, he will do.

What God will do, he can do.

What God can and will do, shall be done.

Therefore, what God seeth to be good for us, shall be done.

Just cause is here given unto us of looking to God, when death presents itself before our eyes; and to say unto him, 'We know not what to do; but our eyes are upon thee,' 2 Chron. xx. 12. Cast not therefore thine eyes too much downward. Fixing eyes aright on God worketh faith.

Sec. 53. *Of passion in saints.*

IV. *Saints may be much affected with afflictions.*¹ They may weep, Ps. vi. 6, as this prophet did; and 'cry, yea, with a loud and bitter cry,' Esther iv. 1, and 'roar all the day long,' Ps. xxxii. 3, and wail and howl,' Micah i. 8, and express other symptoms and signs of much anguish and great grief.

'Is their strength the strength of stones? Or is their flesh of brass?' Job vi. 12. Flesh and blood remaining in the best while they remain in this world, maketh them sensible of smart, of pain, of loss, of disgrace, of other crosses which lie heavy upon them, and press and pinch them sore.

1. Away with the senseless and blockish opinion of stoics, who say that no passion beseems a wise man. The heathen philosophers by that light of nature which they had, have sufficiently refuted that paradox.² To us that have the light of God's word, which commandeth expression of passion when there is just occasion, Joel i. 13, and hath commended it in such as have rightly done it, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 27, yea, and hath expressly recorded the passion of him that is the Wisdom of God, Mark iii. 5, and taxed the contrary in obdurate persons,

¹ Sec. 49.

² Cic. Tuscul. quest. lib. iv.—Lege Lactant. de vero cultu, lib. v. cap. 14, and Aug. de Civ. Dei, lib. xvi. cap. 8, 9, and lib. ix. cap. 4, and Quest. in Gen. lib. i. 30, contra Stoicorum ἀπαθειαν.

Isa. xxii. 12, 13, it cannot but seem a more than heathenish and brutish conceit.

2. Be not too censorious of other's passionate manifestation of their grief: especially when there is just cause, and a Christian mean is not exceeded. All that Satan could do against Job did not so deeply pierce to his soul as his friends' unfriendly censure of him.

3. Have compassion of such as (having cause) are in passion. 'Weep with them that weep,' Rom. xii. 15. Let us shew ourselves to be fellow-members of one and the same body, by a Christian sympathy, and fellow-feeling of one another's sorrows, 1 Cor. xii. 26, 27.

4. As for such as take occasion from the signs and effects of others' sorrows, to insult over them, let them well weigh the fearful imprecations made against them, Ps. lxxix. 10, 21, 22, &c.; and withal know that prophetic imprecations are divine denunciations of judgment. It much provokes the righteous Lord to give them just matter of sorrow, who laugh at others' sorrows.

Sec. 54. *Of God's turning sorrow into solace.*

V. *God can remove all matter of mourning.*¹ He here delivered this prophet's eyes from tears: he took away all occasion of weeping: in which sense he is said to 'Wipe away all tears from men's eyes,' Isa. xxv. 8; Rev. vii. 17; and to bid them 'Refrain their voice from weeping, and eyes from tears,' Jer. xxxi. 16; Luke vii. 13. Pertinent to this purpose are these proverbs, 'They that sow in tears shall reap in joy,' Ps. cxxvi. 5. 'Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning,' Ps. xxx. 5. Answerable hereunto have been saints' prayers, God's promises and performances. For instance of prayers take these, 'Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice,' Ps. li. 8. 'Make us glad according to the years wherein thou hast afflicted us,' Ps. xc. 15. Of promises these, 'I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice for their sorrow,' Jer. xxxi. 13. 'Their fasts shall be joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts,' Zech. viii. 19. 'Thou shalt weep no more,' Isa. xxx. 19. Of

¹ Sec. 49. Eripuit oculos eius a lachrymis. Fugit enim dolor, et tristitia et gemilus.—Amb. in Orat. de Obiit. Theod.

performances these, 'Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness,' Ps. xxx. 12. 'When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing,' Ps. exxvii. 1, 2. Were not the eyes of that woman, which so wept as with her tears she washed the feet of Jesus, delivered from tears, when Christ said to her, 'Thy sins are forgiven?' Luke vii. 38, &c. When Hezekiah heard this doom, 'Thou shalt die and not live, he wept with great weeping,' Isa. xxxviii. 1, &c.¹; but this second message from the Lord, 'I have seen thy tears; behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years,' did questionless wipe away all his tears. Most pregnant for the point in hand is the end of the commission given to Christ, thus expressed, 'The Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings, to comfort all that mourn, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness,' Isa. lxi. 1, &c.

That which God said to Hezekiah, 'I have seen thy tears,' Isa. xxxviii. 3, giveth the true and just reason of God's removing all matter of mourning. For the Lord being full of pity, 'The Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort,' 2 Cor. i. 3. His bowels are moved at the sight of his children's tears, as it is noted of Christ, 'When he saw Mary weeping, and the Jews also weeping, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, and wept,' John xi. 33, 35. And again, when he saw a widow weep, 'he had compassion on her,' Luke vii. 13. Upon that compassion he took away the occasion of her weeping. When God came to deliver Israel from the Egyptian bondage, he renders this reason of his purpose, 'I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows,' Exod. v. 7. Yea, further, to demonstrate the notice which the Lord taketh of his saint's tears, there is in Scripture mention made of 'a bottle,' Ps. lvi. 8, wherein they are put, as a liquor most precious in God's account, and of a book wherein they are registered, as things to be reviewed and not forgotten.

Learn hereby to set a mean to mourning, 'Sorrow not as others which have no hope,' 1 Thess. iv. 13.

Know that God taketh notice of thy tears; believe that God can and will wipe them away. Believe this when sense and smart of affliction makes thee weep and wail, but especially when with a deep apprehension of thy sins against God, and of his displeasure against thee, thou doest, as Peter did, 'weep bitterly,' Mat. xxvi. 75. In these and other like cases, thou mayest and must pray as the psalmist did, and say, 'O Lord give ear unto my cry, hold not thy peace at my tears,' Ps. xxxix. 12. For assuredly, he that putteth tears into his bottle and registereth them will wipe all tears from thine eyes. What he hath done to others, thou being like to them, in like cases mayest expect; for God ever remaineth like himself.

Sec. 55. *Of saints' fallings by affliction.*

VI. *Great afflictions may foil saints.*¹ Though they be not utterly overthrown thereby, they may be, as a man in a quagmire, out of which he hath much ado to come, much foiled. In such a case was he who said, 'My feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped,' Ps. lxxxii. 2; 'My foot slippeth,' Ps. xciv. 18; 'I am ready to halt,' Ps. xxxviii. 17; 'My flesh and my heart faileth,' Ps. lxxxiii. 26; 'My strength faileth,' Ps. lxxi. 9; 'My spirit was overwhelmed,' Ps. lxxvii. 3; 'My life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing,' Ps. xxxi. 10.

How it falls out that this thus befalls the saints, is shewed before, on ver. 7, sec. 44.

The apostle giveth a seasonable exhortation for preventing or redressing the danger of this infirmity, which is this, 'Lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet: lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed,' Heb. xii. 12, 13. Hanging hands and feeble knees are the signs of a fainting spirit, and here put for that whereof they are signs.² To lift up these is to rouse up our spirits and to quicken them. The danger which otherwise may follow upon fainting much enforceeth the exhortation, for these words, 'lest that which is lame be turned out of the way,' imply that a fainting may follow a falling away. A fresh-water soldier once fainting soon falls to the enemy; let us therefore well look to our standing, and well prepare

¹ בכי גדול ויבך בנתיבותיו et flevit fletu magno.

² Sec. 49.

² Metonymia effecti et adjuncti.

ourselves beforehand. The apostle giveth an excellent direction to this purpose, Eph. vi. 10, 11, &c.

For particular directions to keep from fainting, read 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. ii. part 5, sec. 22.

Is the forementioned weakness of saints and proneness to fall well weighed of them who, by reason of some gifts bestowed on them, wax insolent and secure? Surely this is one use which is to be made of saints' falls, that no man boast himself of his own good deeds, when he beholdeth the storms of such men to be taken heed of, and wrecks to be bewailed.¹

Sec. 56. *Of God's establishing the weak.*

VII. *God establisheth such as are ready to fall.*² This he did when he delivered this prophet's feet from falling. 'He that falleth,' saith the apostle, 'shall be holden up; for God is able to make him stand,' Rom. xiv. 4. Very fitly to the point in hand saith the psalmist, 'He brought me up out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings,' Ps. xl. 2. And again, 'When I said my foot slippeth, thy mercy, O Lord, held me up,' Ps. xciv. 18.

As God's power, so his pity and prudence are more clearly manifested hereby. Where the Lord saith, 'My strength is made perfect in weakness,'² 2 Cor. xii. 9, he meaneth that the lower men be brought, and the more weak and unable to be established they may seem to be, the more divine is the power manifested to be whereby they are established; and then doth pity and mercy most brightly shew itself when in falling a man is preserved, so as if then he had not been preserved he had perished. Thus, Christ shewed his pity in saving Peter even when he began to sink, Mat. xiv. 30, 31. This then must needs be a principal part of prudence. In these and other like respects, God is so ready to uphold him that is falling and to hold him that is departing, that he may seem to mind such alone, and to leave all others.³

1. Despair not now though thy foot be slipping,

¹ Se nequaquam recte suis factis jactare audeat, cum videat tantorum virorum et canendas tempestates et flenda uaufragia.—*Aug. de Doctr. Chr.* l. 3, c. 23. ² Sec. 49.

³ Sic paratus est Deus suscipere cadentem, et eripere fugientem, ut videri possit relictis omnibus aliis ei soli operam dare.—*Bern. in Ps. Qui habit.*, Ser. ii.

or thou sinking in a sea of sorrows. God is as near at hand in all our troubles as Christ was in that sea where Peter was, Mat. xiv. 30, 31. As a tender mother, though she suffer her weak and feeble child to go alone, yet will she not suffer it to be alone or out of sight. If it slide or fall she presently catcheth it up again. Yea, she will give her servants charge over it to keep it, and to take it up in case it fall. Thus deals thy heavenly Father with thee, poor, weak, feeble brat. 'He will not suffer thy foot to be moved (namely to thy ruin); he that keepeth thee will not slumber,' Ps. cxxi. 3. And lest thou shouldst think that by reason of his greatness he will not take care of thee, 'He giveth his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone,' Ps. xci. 11, 12. Despair not, then. Mercy, grace, and indulgency is promised. Who can despair that knoweth and believeth this?¹

2. When thou findest thyself sinking, and thinkest thyself lost, do as Peter did: 'Cry out to God, and say, Lord, save me,' Mat. xiv. 30. Call to mind his promise, 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee,' Isa. xliii. 2. Plead his dealing with others whose feet he hath delivered from falling. Persuade thyself that thy heavenly Father as far surpasseth earthly parents in pity and goodness, as he doth in majesty and greatness. Hereupon ponder with thyself, and consider if earthly parents can suffer their children, when they are fallen, to lie and cry, and not come and take them up. 'Yea, they may. Yet will not I, saith the Lord, forget thee,' Isa. xlix. 15.² If now being fallen thou liest still and criest not for help, dost thou not justly deserve to be let alone, even for punishment of thy stoutness? Surely it becometh every soul to eye God continually, not only as an help at a pinch, but also as one that taketh the care and charge of us upon himself.

Sec. 57. *Of God's seasonable kindness.*

VIII. *God's remedy is answerable to man's necessity.*³

¹ Noli desperare. Promissa est indulgentia tibi.—*Aug. Enar. in Ps. ci.*

² Expediit omni animæ Deum semper attendere, tanquam proprium non modo adiutorem, sed etiam inspectorem.—*Bern. loc. citat.* ³ Sec. 49.

That which was a cloud in the day to shelter his people from the scorching heat of the sun, was a pillar of fire to give them light in the night, 'that they might go by day and by night,' Exod. xiii. 21. When they had no bread he 'rained down manna from heaven,' chap. xvi. 4. When they had no water he 'opened a rock, and gave them water to drink,' chap. xvii. 6. When they had water enough, but it was so bitter as they could not drink of it, he made it sweet, chap. xv. 25. When their enemies infested them, he overthrew those enemies, chap. xvii. 8. According to all their needs he afforded them fit help. Thus, while his people were in the wilderness, he gave extraordinary but visible demonstrations of his more invisible but ordinary providence towards his in all ages. Hereby is accomplished that of the psalmist, 'The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night,' Ps. cxxi. 6. Which not unfitly may be applied to men's several estates of prosperity and adversity.¹

Remedies answerable to men's necessities are seasonable; seasonable remedies are profitable; profitable remedies are acceptable; acceptable remedies are most available to provoke men to all gratitude; gratitude makes them diligent in observing what may most make to the honour of God, and zealous in promoting the same. Thus the very kind of remedy which God affordeth, maketh most to man's good and his own glory.

Learn hence wisdom of this wise God; and that in two especial points:

1. Seek of him such things as are seasonable for thee to receive, as they who in the days of Christ's flesh came to him for succour—the blind for sight, the deaf for hearing, the dumb for speech, the lame for sound limbs, and so others for a remedy fit for their particular malady. Answerably, Art thou in danger of death? seek preservation from death with a reservation to God's good pleasure. Doth any anguish so work on thine inward passion as to force tears from thine eyes? pray to have those tears wiped away. Dost thou find thy feet sliding, thy spirit fainting, desire God either to keep thee from

falling or to raise thee again, and to revive thy spirit. Seek not unnecessaries; seek not superfluities; seek not to satisfy thy lusts. Well weigh what an apostle saith in this case, 'Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts,' James iv. 3.

2. Let thy kindness be as seasonable as thou canst. Give bread to him that is hungry, drink to him that is athirst. Endeavour to allay the passion of such as are in passion; raise up those that are fallen. Instruct the ignorant; bring into the way of truth such as wander. Comfort such as are troubled in conscience. Herein lieth a main difference betwixt a skilful physician and a deceitful empiric. The physician inquireth after the kind of disease, constitution of person, temperature of climate, season of year, and answerably prescribeth his remedy. The empiric gives his remedy without any respect to the forenamed respects. If it do any good, then it is well; if it do none, it was all that he could do: and by that *all* many more receive hurt than good by his prescripts. To be an empiric about the maladies that affect the soul, and endanger the eternal salvation thereof, is insufferable. Do, therefore, good. Do it, as David did, 'according to the integrity of thine heart, by the skilfulness of thine hands,' Ps. lxxviii. 72. For which end pray for wisdom of him that is wisdom itself, that so thou mayest 'be perfect as he is perfect,' Mat. v. 48.

Hitherto of the prophet's protestation for his inward disposition.

Sec. 58. *Of the meaning and parts of the 9th verse.*

Ver. 9. *I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.*

The prophet's protestation¹ for his outward conversation is here generally propounded.

This phrase, 'I will walk,' is taken diversely. Some take it for an expression of his confidence in the continuance of God's favour towards him; that God, who had freed him out of the jaws of death, would now continue him in the land of the living, there to remain and abide before the Lord. Ancient English translators inclining to this sense, thus interpret it: 'I shall walk,' in relation to the divine

¹ *Reddetur populo felicitas pristina quam aliquando habuerat in eremo, præcedente Domino eos per diem in columna nubis, et per noctem in columna ignis, ut nec in prosperis, nec in adversis aliquando turbentur.—Hier. Comment. in Isa. iv.*

¹ See sec. 2, 43.

providence whereby he should be preserved yet longer to live on earth; so as, according to this acception, to 'walk before the Lord' is to live to advance the glory of God. A pious interpretation this is. But this phrase of 'walking before the Lord' is in Scripture most frequently used to set out a duty on man's part rather than a kindness on God's part; for God requireth it of Abraham as a duty, Gen. xvii. 1, and commendeth David for it, 2 Chron. vi. 16, as for a duty performed by him. To this acception do the king's translators incline, and translate it as a promise made on the prophet's part to God, thus: 'I will walk.' By this manner of expressing his purpose under a solemn promise he bindeth himself to perform the duty promised. This word, 'walk,' importeth a motion, and a proceeding on in that motion, step by step, from place to place. Metaphorically it is taken for a practice of good or evil. The words joined with it will shew what kind of practice it importeth: 'To walk in the way of the wicked,' 1 Kings xv. 26, is to practise evil; 'To walk after other gods,' Jer. vii. 6, is to practise idolatry; but 'To walk in the law of the Lord,' Ps. cxix. 1, is to practise what that law requireth; 'To walk in righteousness,' Isa. xxxiii. 15, is to practise and deal righteously. The verb in the Hebrew is of the seventh conjugation,¹ which implieth a reciprocation or reiteration of an action. Some learned and judicious expositors, to express the emphasis of the conjugation, thus translate it: 'I will continually walk.'²

These words, 'before the Lord,' (לפני יהוה),—word for word, 'at the face,' or, 'in the presence of the Lord,'—do determine the kind of walking which he intendeth,—namely, such a one as he would not be afraid or ashamed that the Lord should see, but such a walking as the Lord should well like and approve. In other places to this kind of walking these phrases are added, 'with God,' Gen. v. 24, (את האלהים); 'after the Lord,' 2 Kings xxiii. 3, (אחר יהוה); 'worthy of the Lord,' Col. i. 10, (ἀξίως τοῦ Κυρίου); all which in effect import one and the same thing. He that 'walks with

God,' so carrieth himself as knowing God is by him. He that 'walks after the Lord,' behaveth himself as a servant following his master, and is ever at hand to do what his master requireth. He that 'walks worthy of the Lord,' so demeaneth himself as becometh a servant of the Lord, so as the Lord may be honoured by him. He that 'walketh before the Lord,' doeth all things as in the sight of the Lord, whom he knoweth to be 'everywhere present,' Ps. cxxxix. 7, to 'see in the dark as well as in the light,' ver. 12, and to be 'a searcher of the heart,' Jer. xvii. 10; and thereby he is moved in all places open and secret, at all times, day and night, in deed, in word, in thought, to have such respect to God as to do nothing but that he which seeth it may approve it, nor to make show of more than he intendeth, but to do the good which he doeth sincerely, 'heartily, as to the Lord,' Col. iii. 23; Heb. xi. 5. The apostle, that was guided by the same Spirit that he which penned Enoch's history was, having relation to that history, saith, 'Before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.' What Moses styleth 'walking with God,' the apostle expoundeth 'pleasing God.' The intent therefore of the psalmist here is to endeavour to please God.

That this intention of his may not seem to be put off till it be too late, and he in the grave, where none can walk, where no work can be done, he addeth the place where he would so walk, 'In the land of the living.' On earth there be divers divisions for habitation, and therefore he expresseth the word in the plural number thus, 'in the regions,' (בארצות, *in regionibus*), implying that in what place soever he should be, he would 'walk before the Lord.'

The living are here opposed to the dead; so as 'the land of the living' is a description of the place and time where and while men live in this world. In this sense is this phrase frequently used in the Old Testament. In another psalm this time of life is styled 'the light of the living,' Ps. lvi. 13, in opposition to death, which is thus described, 'A land of darkness, as darkness itself,' Job x. 22.

Thus this verse setteth out the duty of him that is delivered from a deadly danger; concerning which here is expressed,—

¹ Hithpael.

² אֲתֵלֵךְ. Indesinenter ambulabo.—*Trem. and Jun.* Triplex est significatio Hithpael: 1. Reciproca; 2. Passiva; 3. Frequentativa.

1. The matter—'I will walk.'

2. The manner—'Before the Lord.'

3. The place and time—'In the land of the living.'

This promise of walking, being inferred upon his former profession of his affection towards God, and resolution to rest on him, sheweth that,—

I. Man's inward affection to God must be manifested by his outward conversation.

The metaphor of walking, which is a going on and proceeding forward, and the conjugation where-in the word is used, which noteth a reiteration, giveth us to understand that,—

II. Saints must proceed in their approved practice.

The rule that he prescribeth to himself for his walking, which is this, 'Before the Lord,' teacheth that,—

III. Eye must be had to God in every action.

The description of the place, in this phrase, 'The land of the living,' declareth that,—

IV. This world is a place and time of life.

The end of describing this place and time thus, which is to set out the proper place and seasonable time of walking before God, importeth that,—

V. While men live they must endeavour to please God.

The manner of expressing this duty under a solemn promise thus, 'I will walk,' implicth that,—

VI. Saints must bind themselves to duty.

The inference of this verse, wherein his duty is declared, upon the former, wherein God's kindness is manifested, demonstrateth that,—

VII. Manifestation of God's good pleasure to man, must make man careful to please God.

Sec. 59. *Of practising duty.*

I. *Man's inward affection to God must be manifested by his outward conversation.* It is usual with the Holy Ghost to infer upon fear and love of God (which are the two principal affections whereby our high esteem of God and due respect to him are manifested) a walking in his ways, and keeping his commandments; thus, 'Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord, that walketh in his ways,' Ps. cxxviii. 1; 'Fear God, and keep his commandments,' Eccles. xii. 13; 'Love the Lord, and walk in his

ways,' Deut. xi. 22, and xix. 9; 'This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments,' 1 John v. 3. The duty comprised under this metaphor of walking is oft and much pressed throughout the Scripture, and that under this very word. It is commanded, Gen. xvii. 1, Deut. x. 12; commended, Gen. vi. 9, Luke i. 6; rewarded, Gen. v. 24; and thereupon conscientiously it hath been, 2 Kings xx. 3, and still must be, observed: and that in regard of—

1. God's glory.

2. Others' good.

3. Our own good.

1. By practice it is that the virtues or 'praises of him that hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light,' 1 Pet. ii. 9, are shewed forth. Thus 'men may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven,' Mat. v. 16. Good cause, therefore, had the Lord to say, 'Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit,' John xv. 8.

2. By practice it is that such as are called are stirred up to a holy emulation, Heb. xii. 1, (for they that walk aright become ensamples, 1 Thes. i. 7, 2 Cor. ix. 2, to others;) and such as are not called may either be won, 1 Pet. iii. 1, 2, or have their mouths stopped, ver. 16.

3. By practice it is, that sincerity of heart, integrity of conscience, soundness of faith, and truth of all graces are manifested, cherished, and increased. Yea, and the presence of God's Spirit in us testified.¹ Hereby inward assurance is gained, and outward evidence is given, of our election before the world, and of our salvation after the world. Many judgments are by this walking prevented, or removed, or mitigated, or sanctified, and everlasting perdition avoided. If motives may be of force to provoke us to perform a duty, motives are not wanting to provoke us to this duty of walking, as here it is professed.

What may now be thought of such as having attained to a sufficient measure of knowledge, and are with that which they know of God, and of his kind dealing with them, inwardly affected, and are thereupon moved to profess as much love as the prophet

¹ Fidem tuam dilectio animet, probet actio.—*Bern. super Cant.*, Serm. xxx. Testimonium presentie Spiritus probent opera.—*Idem de S. Andr.*, Serm. ii.

here doth, but yet fail in performance, in practice? ¹ They walk not. Their apprehension, affection, profession are all in vain, except to be as so many evidences against them, to make them the more inexcusable, and to aggravate their judgment the more. I deny not but that knowledge of God and of his favour towards us, a good liking thereof, and a cheerful acknowledgment and profession of what we know, are very needful and useful. For walking without knowledge must needs be preposterous and erroneous; without a good affection, hypocritical and vain; and without a free profession, too too timorous. So as these three are necessary, though not sufficient. Question may be made of the truth of them all, where they are not sealed and ratified by an answerable walking and practice. And adversaries of the truth will take the more occasion to slander the truth. Our adversaries do much urge against us and our profession that we walk not, that we practise not, and allege this against our profession, to impeach the integrity of our religion; which should make us more conscionable in shewing forth our good works, for stopping of their mouths. Our doctrine is even in this point, as in others, sound and orthodox. In schools, in churches, by preaching, by printing, we teach a necessity of walking, of practising, of doing good works, according to this rule of the apostle, Tit. iii. 14, 'Let ours learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.' And we acknowledge them to be so necessary, as without them we cannot be saved.²

The ground of their cavilling against our doctrine about good works is, because we do not set too high a price upon them and make them meritorious, which is to make them no good works, but proud, presumptuous, damnable, diabolical works. There be many forcible reasons for the necessity of good works, though that vain, frothy, windy, false, arrogant, impious, blasphemous reason of merit be not pressed. They are expressly commanded of God; therefore necessary. Though they be not the cause of reigning, yet they are the way to the kingdom, out of

which way we cannot attain to the kingdom;¹ therefore necessary. Though the faithful are not justified by them, yet by them is their faith justified, James ii. 22;² therefore necessary. Though the doing of them do not merit eternal life, yet the not doing of them meriteth everlasting death, Mat. xxv. 41, 42; therefore necessary. Though by the strict standard of the law, being found unperfect, they are rejected, yet by the gracious mitigation of the gospel, being found sincere, they are accepted; therefore necessary. Though when we shall have done all those things which are commanded us we are unprofitable servants, Luke xvii. 10, yet by doing according to our ability what we are commanded we shew ourselves grateful children; therefore are good works necessary. This last motive is of more moment with an ingenuous child than any merit can be; for, when the believer thoroughly pondereth the free grace and rich mercy of God in giving him Christ, in accepting him in Christ, in pardoning all his sins, in reserving eternal life for him, his heart is so inflamed with a desire of testifying all gratefulness, as he is ready with his uttermost power to do whatsoever he may know to be well-pleasing unto God. Now God's word declaring that 'to do good is a sacrifice well-pleasing to God,' Heb. xiii. 16, the forenamed desire doth more enforce him to do good than the merit of many heavens could. Gratefulness more worketh on an ingenuous spirit than reward can. And that which in way of gratefulness is wrought is much more kindly wrought than that which is done for recompence. Answerably it is also more acceptable to God, for it manifesteth a better respect towards him.

2. Ye that have tasted of the bounty of the Lord, and are well informed in his good-will towards you, and thereupon have your hearts inflamed with the heavenly fire of love, and are stirred up to purpose and promise to approve yourselves to him, have a care of your carriage, and ratify the truth of all by an answerable walking. Sweet is that melody and happy is that harmony where mind, heart, tongue, life, and all consent to make a concert. Say, there-

¹ Ne scientiam tibi satisfacere putes, propterea adiecit: Qui ambulat, &c.—*Basil. in Psalm cxvi.*

² Oro ut ad agenda bona opera festinemus. Neque enim aliter salvari nos possibile est.—*Chrys., Hom. 47, in Gen. xxii.*

¹ Via regni, non causa regnandi.—*Bern. de Grat. et lib. arbit.*

² Ut ad meritum satis est de meritis non presumere: sic carere meritis, satis est ad judicium.—*Bern. sup. Cant., Serm. lxxvii.*

fore, (and do as ye say,) I will walk; and that with such a mind as is set out in the next doctrine.

Sec. 60. *Of persisting in good courses.*

II. *Saints must proceed in their approved practice.*¹ They must not be 'weary in well-doing,' Gal. vi. 9. 'Mark them,' saith the apostle, 'which walk so as they have us for an example,' Phil. iii. 17. What kind of walking doth he mean? He himself hath plainly and fully expressed it in the verses before. It was this, 'To follow on,' ver. 12. 'To reach forth unto the things which are before,' ver. 13. 'To press toward the mark,' ver. 14. From this his walking and proceeding on he maketh this inference, 'Let us walk by the same rule,' ver. 16, or as some not unfitly translate it, 'let us proceed;' for the word² which the apostle useth properly signifieth to go on in order. The virtue of such as appertain to the kingdom of heaven is in this proceeding set out by many metaphors: as 'the shining of light more and more unto perfect day,' Prov. iv. 18; 'the waters of the sanctuary, which increased from ankle deep to knee deep, from thence up to the loins, and after to such depth as could not be passed over,' Ezek. xlvii. 2, &c.; an edifice, that from the foundation riseth higher and higher till it be a complete building, Eph. ii. 21; runners in a race, which run on till they come to the goal, 1 Cor. ix. 24; plants, palm-trees, and cedars, which all grow till they come to their full growth, Ps. xcii. 12; corn, Mat. iv. 27, and mustard-seed, which grow to ripeness, ver. 32; and a body, which groweth to the full stature thereof, Eph. iv. 16.

To leave all the metaphors but that which is in my text, the way wherein we must walk is a long way; while here we live we cannot attain to our journey's end; we must therefore walk as long as we live, and still go on. As we must not turn back again—'If any draw back, my soul,' saith the Lord, 'shall have no pleasure in him,' Heb. x. 38—so may we not stand at a stay. He that beginneth a building, and continueth not till it be finished, maketh himself ridiculous to all that see it, Luke xiv. 30. He that beginneth the Christian race, and giveth

over before he come to the end, doth not only lose the crown, but treasureth up wrath unto himself. This will assuredly fall out if we proceed not daily in our Christian course. For one of these two things will fall out: either to go on, or to fall back.¹

Let all that set foot in the race to heaven hence learn to take to themselves an invincible resolution to 'run the race that is set before them,' Heb. xii. 1, (τρέξαμεν τὸν ἀγωνα.) He saith not to run 'in the race,' but to 'run the race,' which phrase implieth a holding out till it be finished. All that run would willingly obtain. Yea, God would have us 'so run as we may obtain,' 1 Cor. ix. 24. But this cannot be without perseverance, and that to the end of our life; for the goal is set at the last period of life. Let our eye be thereupon, more minding what is to come than what is past. As many as will be perfect must be thus minded. A folesettled resolution is of great force to make us hold out; and that we may the more fully express that which is implied in the very conjugation² here used, which implieth a reiteration of the action, let us, year after year, month after month, Sabbath after Sabbath, yea, day after day, call to mind how we have the last year, the last month, the last week, the last day walked, and stir up ourselves to walk on. Every morning when we rise let us, as travellers and pilgrims in this world, think upon our journey to the heavenly Canaan, and make account of walking on forward towards it. This is it which the prophet here professeth to do. Now having taken to ourselves such a resolution, that we may not preposterously or deceitfully persist to walk, let us take for a further direction the third observation.

Sec. 61. *Of setting God before us in all that we do.*

III. *Eye must be had to God in every action.*³ All that was before alleged, for walking must be restrained to this kind of walking, 'before the Lord.'⁴ The Scripture doth so restrain it everywhere. The

¹ Unum necesse est e duobus, aut proficere scilicet, aut prorsus deficere.—*Ber. de 3 Ord. Eccl.*

² אֶתְהַלֵּךְ in Hithpael. Verba in hac conjugatione significant vehementiam aut frequentiam.—*Pagn. Instit. Hebr.*

³ Sec. 58.

⁴ In omnibus quæ agis Deum esse præsentem cognosce.—*Bern. Medit. Devot. cap. vi.*

¹ Sec. 57.

² στοιχείν στοιχος, dicitur ordo in acie, a fronte ad extremum agmen porrectus.—*Thuc.*, l. iv.

charge given to Abraham, Gen. xvii. 1, to walk, was thus qualified. The walking of Enoch, chap. v. 24; Noah, chap. vi. 9; Abraham, chap. xxiv. 40; David, 1 Kings viii. 25; Hezekiah, 2 Kings xx. 3; Josiah, chap. xxxiii. 3; Zacharias and Elizabeth, Luke i. 6; recorded and commended by the Holy Ghost, was thus qualified. Other walking, as after other gods, Dent. xi. 28; in the counsel of the wicked, Ps. i. 1; after the lusts of our own hearts, is a wretched, a cursed walking, Jude 16. It were much better to sit still than so to walk.

'The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good,' Prov. xv. 3; from his presence we cannot withdraw ourselves, Ps. cxxxix. 7. There is not a word in our tongue but he knoweth it; he understandeth our thoughts; he is acquainted with all our ways, Ps. cxxxix. 4, 2, 3. And as thus he is privy to all our thoughts, words, deeds, and ways, so 'will he bring every work to judgment, with every secret thing,' Eccl. xii. 14. What he approves shall be both accepted and rewarded, Mat. xxv. 21. Is there not now good cause to walk before the Lord? Is there not need of great watchfulness, living before the eyes of that Judge which seeth all things?¹

1. Woe be to you, atheistical fools, 'in whose thoughts God is not,' Ps. x. 4; who 'say in your heart, There is no God,' Ps. xiv. 1; or being convinced even 'by the things that are made,' Rom. i. 20, that there is 'an eternal power and deity,' scornfully say, 'how doth God know?' Job xxii. 13, 14, 'can he judge through the dark cloud?' This God is not far from you, Acts xvii. 27. He is before you though you see him not; and he will set you before himself, when to your terror you shall see him, and 'say to the mountains and rocks, fall upon us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne,' Rev. vi. 16.

2. Woe also to you, hypocrites, who do all that you do 'to be seen of men,' Mat. vi. 1, xxiii. 25. Ye fools and blind, whether is it better to be approved, accepted, rewarded of God, or man? What is man's applause, man's praise? Is it not a wind that passeth so soon as it cometh? Is it not as ice that melteth in the handling? If it continued, what could it do?

¹ Magna custodia tibi necessaria est, quoniam ante oculos Judicis vivis cuncta cernentia.—*Ber. loc. citat.*

Even as wind in your body—puff you up, make you swell: as the people's applause made Herod swell so big, Acts xii. 22, 23, as the angel of the Lord was fain to lance him; and what then issued from him? worms, that made him a terror to all that beheld them. Repent, therefore, O atheists and hypocrites, of this your wickedness.

3. And ye that have better understanding of God and of his all-seeing eye, who make more account of his approbation and remuneration, wheresoever thou art, whatsoever thou art about, whether alone or in company, whether about duties of piety or duties of civility, at your vocation or recreation, at table or in bed, lying down or rising up,—in all places, at all times, set the Lord before you: and 'walk before the Lord.' A heathen philosopher advised young men to set Cato, or Lælius, or some other good men before them, that so they might carry themselves and do all things as if he looked upon them.¹ This was but an imagination, and yet might it be of some use. But to see God before us is not a mere imagination. He is indeed always before us. If an imagination of a mortal man's presence be of any use, what is the apprehension of the true presence of the immortal God! Therefore, no better direction can be given to keep men in compass. For by this means,

1. We shall be restrained from many sins, whereunto secrecy of place, solicitation of superiors, or other temptations might otherwise allure us.² This restrained righteous Joseph, when, by his mistress in a secret chamber, they two alone together, he was tempted to folly. This answer, 'How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?' sheweth that he set God before him, and thereby was kept from yielding to that temptation, Gen. xxxix. 9; Ps. cxix. 168.

2. We shall be moved to keep our hearts upright. Where Hezekiah professeth that he 'walked before God,' Isa. xxxviii. 3, he addeth, 'in truth, and with a perfect (or upright) heart.' Hereby he implieth, that his setting of God before him made him more

¹ Aliquis vir bonus eligendus est, ac semper ante oculos ponendus, ut sic tanquam illo spectante vivamus, &c.—*Senec.*, ep. 11.

² Thales dixit, homines existimare oportere, Deum omnia cernere, Dei omnia esse plena: fore enim homines castiores.—*Cic., de leg.*

watchful over his heart to keep it upright. No such means as this to make a man upright; for he that walketh before God, knoweth that God is 'a searcher of the heart.' As the presence of men makes us careful of our outward actions, so the presence of God will make us 'keep our hearts above all keeping,' Prov. iv. 23, ככל משכר.

3. We shall be brought into a holy familiarity with God, so as he will account us his friends. Abraham was a man that 'walked before God,' Gen. xxiv. 40; and God himself giveth him this style, 'My friend,' Isa. xli. 8. This makes us seek how to please God; and answerably God most kindly accepteth this our mind and endeavour.

4. We shall have much confidence in God's providence, protection, and in all manner of divine blessing wrought in us. When Abraham's servant made some question of success in that business whereabout his master sent him, Abraham thus resolveth the doubt, and setteth the mind of his servant, 'The Lord, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way,' Gen. xxiv. 40. Because he walked before the Lord he assured himself of success.

5. We shall, with much assurance of faith, call upon God in our greatest distresses. Conscience of walking before God added much power to Hezekiah's prayer and faith, as is evident by his putting God in mind thereof, where he saith, 'O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee,' 2 Kings xx. 3.

6. We shall be encouraged against the slanders of malicious adversaries, Job xvi. 19; Joshua xxii. 22. For though such as have approved themselves to men may notwithstanding have cause to fear that God may have something against them, yet they who have been careful to approve themselves to God need not care what man can say against them. When David's enemies laid many matters unjustly to his charge he appeals to God, Ps. xxvi. 1, which he durst not have done if he had not walked before God.

7. We shall be emboldened against all that man can do against us. This is rendered as a reason why Moses feared not the wrath of the king, 'For he endured, as seeing him who is invisible,' Heb. xi. 27. This put life in Jehoshaphat's fainting spirit. For where he saith, 'We know not what to do,' he

bewrayeth a languishing spirit, 2 Chron. xx. 12; but where he addeth, 'Our eyes are upon thee,' he manifesteth a revived spirit.

8. We shall persevere and hold out so long as we live. For God before whom we walk ever liveth, ever remaineth the same, which men do not. While good Jehoiada lived, king Joash maintained true religion; when Jehoiada died he revolted, 2 Chron. xxiv. 17. Because he walked before a mortal man, with the death of that man he fell away. But Hezekiah, who walked before the immortal God, ever remained faithful.

Sec. 62. *Of the land of the living here on earth.*

IV. *This world is a place and time of life.*¹ Thus he that expected succour from the Lord in this world saith, 'I believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living,' Ps. xxvii. 13; and in the very same sense said to God, 'Thou art my portion in the land of the living,' Ps. cxlii. 5. And where it is said to the wicked man, whose memory God would destroy in this world, 'God shall pluck thee out of thy dwelling-place;' by way of exaggeration of the same judgment it is added, 'and root thee out of the land of the living,' Ps. liii. 5. When Hezekiah expected nothing but death, he said, 'I shall see the Lord no more in the land of the living,' Isa. xxxviii. 11; and to shew what he meant thereby he addeth, 'I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world.' Thus also is Christ's death set out, 'He was cut off out of the land of the living,'² Isa. liii. 8, that being dead in earth after that life which he had there lived he might for ever live in heaven. In this sense the time while we live in this world is called 'the day,' and 'the light of the living,' John ix. 4; Ps. lvi. 13.

Fitly is this world so called in relation to all kind of lives, natural, spiritual, eternal.

1. Natural life, which is subject to mortality, corruption, and all manner of infirmities, is here only in this world lived. After this life, 'corruptible must put on incorruption, and mortal must put on immortality,' 1 Cor. xv. 53. This life was meant

¹ Sec. 58.

² *Abscissus est de terrâ viventium, ut post vitam quam vixit in terrâ, mortuus terræ, cœlis viveret in æternum.—Hier. Comment., lib. xiv., in Isa. liii.*

when Hezekiah's departure out of this world was thus threatened, 'Thou shalt not live,' Isa. xxxviii. 1.

2. Spiritual life, which is the life of grace, is also lived in this world. For the apostle speaking of it thus saith, 'The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith,' &c., Gal. ii. 20.

3. In this world we first 'lay hold on eternal life,' 1 Tim. vi. 12. They that do not here get a right unto it shall not hereafter attain to the possession thereof.

How unmeet, how shameful, how odious a thing is it that dead men should be here on the face of the earth, which is 'the land of the living!' That there are such is too true. 'She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth,' 1 Tim. v. 6; 'Sardis had a name that she lived, but was dead,' Rev. iii. 1; 'The dead bury their dead,' Mat. viii. 22; all natural men are 'dead in sins,' Eph. ii. 1, 2 Cor. v. 14. Much more they that unto their natural corruption add profaneness, uncleanness, all manner of riotousness. These are as dead and putrefied carriages that infest the air round about them. To prevent noisome savours which might arise from dead corpses, we use to bury them under the ground. Though Sarah was a dear wife to Abraham, yet when she was dead he took order to 'bury her corpse out of his sight,' Gen. xxiii. 4. Note the care that was taken to 'bury Gog with his multitude,' Ezek. xxxix. 11, &c., because the stinking savour was so great as 'it caused them that passed by to stop their noses.' Assuredly if the spiritual sense of our souls were as quick in spiritual matters as the senses of our body are in earthly things, we should feel a more noisome and loathsome savour to arise from such as in relation to spiritual life are dead, than from such as are dead in relation to natural life. God, that is most sensible of this spiritual stench, is oft moved to sweep the land of the living with the broom of his judgments, and to remove noisome dead persons, especially when by their multitude they cause the stench to be too too intolerable; 'I will sweep Babel with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of hosts,' Isa. xiv. 23. Thus the Lord swept away the stinking carriages of the old world, Gen. vi. 7; and of Sodom and Gomorrah, chap. xix. 25; the rebellious carcasses of the Israelites in

the wilderness, Heb. iii. 17; the foul corpse of the nations, Lev. xviii. 28; yea, and the unsavoury bodies of all Israel, 2 Kings xvii. 6, and Judah, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16. Of Jerusalem, in another metaphor, thus saith the Lord, 'I will wipe it as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down,' 2 Kings xxi. 13. There is just cause to fear that the stench of the sins of this city and other places in this land was so rank in the nostrils of the Almighty as thereby he was provoked to sweep away so many as he did with the broom of the pestilence. If it be said that many righteous ones were swept away, who have presented even their bodies as well as their souls a sacrifice living, holy, acceptable, and of a sweet smelling savour unto God, and many wicked ones left; I answer, that God may take away in a common judgment many righteous ones, the more to aggravate the judgment, and yet therein shew mercy to those righteous ones by translating them to eternal bliss, and reserve wicked ones to bring them by that judgment executed on others to repentance, or else to make them the more inexcusable. The day of thorough cleansing the Lord's floor is not till the day of judgment: 'The harvest is the end of the world. Then shall the Son of man send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire,' Mat. xiii. 39, 41, 42. Yet, lest the stench of sin even in this land of the living should be too great, as in former ages, so now in our days hath he swept away many stinking carriages, and rid the city and other places of such as were spiritually dead, which he hath done for terror to those that remain.

2. As for such as are desirous to make use of all the evidences of God's fatherly favour to them, let this condition of this present world wherein they live, expressed under this phrase, 'the land of the living,' move them to carry themselves as in a land of the living, and that—

(1.) By nourishing and preserving natural life, both in themselves and others. For this end Christ hath prescribed to us this petition, 'Give us this day our daily bread.' To cast thyself, or to take another, out of the land of the living, before God doth manifest his good pleasure for thy departure,

is, for aught thou knowest to the contrary, to cast both into everlasting death.

(2.) By living a spiritual life. This is the time for attaining grace, wherein spiritual life consisteth. If it be not here had, it can never be had.

(3.) By making sure to thyself eternal life, that thus thou mayest more comfortably and joyfully leave this land of the living when the Lord shall call thee, upon assurance of going to another and to a better land of the living.

To enforce these duties, the first collection is of especial force.

Sec. 63. *Of pleasing God in this life.*

V. *While men live they must endeavour to please God.*¹ This the apostle intendeth under this phrase, 'As we have opportunity let us do good,' Gal. vi. 10. The word (*καιρός*) translated opportunity, signifieth, in a large acceptation, a seasonableness of circumstance, whether of time, place, or any occasion, but most properly a seasonable time, and so is it there taken by most translators and expositors, and thus turned, while we have time,²—that is, while here we live. Thus Hezekiah, speaking of the time past, the time that he had lived on earth, saith, 'I have walked,' &c., Isa. xxxviii. 3. The like is noted of all whose walking before God is commended in Scripture. Of Enoch it is expressly said, that 'before his translation he had this testimony, that he had pleased God,' Heb. xi. 5.

Where the Lord is, and manifesteth his presence, there must men 'walk before him,' and endeavour to please him. 'But the earth is the Lord's footstool, whereon he standeth,' Mat. v. 35; 'He filleth earth,' Jer. xxiii. 24; 'His eyes are in every place,' Prov. xv. 3. On earth, therefore, even everywhere, must men 'walk before the Lord.'

The rather must this be done on earth, because the earth is a place of probation, and the time that we live thereon a time of preparation to fit us for our perpetual abode with God in heaven.³ They that here learn to walk purely before God shall hereafter 'walk with him in white,' Rev. iii. 4:

¹ Sec. 57. ² Dum tempus habemus.—*Vet. Lat. Bez.*

³ See "The Plaster for the Plague," on Num. xvi. 43, Sec. 65. Sic in hoc mundo vivere debemus, ut cum corpus cœrit a verminibus devorari, anima letetur cum sanctis in cœlo.—*Ber. Medit. Devot.*, cap. 16.

namely, in the bright and pure robes of immortality and glory for ever. In this respect, we ought so to live in this world as, when the body shall begin to be devoured of worms in the grave, the soul may rejoice with the saints in heaven.

1. Extremely blind and egregiously foolish are they who dissolutely pass over their time in the land of the living, and lose the blessed opportunity that therein is afforded unto them for assuring them of the blessed fruition of God in heaven. Some pass over this precious time in idleness, as the 'foolish virgins,' Mat. xxv. 8, &c., who, when they were passing out of this land of the living, then thought of walking before the Lord; but it proved too late. Others pass it over in riotousness, and, not thinking that the Lord would come so soon as he cometh, are taken as the lewd servant was, Mat. xxiv. 50, 51, upon whom his master suddenly came and cut him off. Though all be uncertain of the time allotted unto them for remaining in the land of the living, yet most put off this duty of 'walking' therein 'before the Lord' from one time to another, and are oft cut out of this land before their supposed time be come. The 'rich fool,' in that night wherein he counted upon many years' abode, was taken away, Luke xii. 19, 20. They who are young imagine that they may abide in the land of the living till they come to ripe years, and then think it will be time enough to walk before the Lord; others, that are come to ripe years, conceive they may continue longer, till they come to their full strength; others, till they be old, and that then it will be time enough; and none almost so old but he thinks he may live a year longer¹ and so still puts off this duty, supposing that it will be time soon enough when they are going out of the world: and thus by these vain pretences they abide as dead men, men dead in sins, in the 'land of the living,' and so deprive themselves of that crown of life, for obtaining whereof a race is set before them in this 'land of the living.' So foolish are many, as they seek a blessed life in the region of death. But it is not there; for how can a blessed life be there, where there is not life?²

¹ Nemo est tam senex, qui se annum non putet posse vivere.—*Cic de Senect.*

² Beatam vitam quæritis in regione mortis: non est illic. Quomodo enim vita beata, ubi nec vita?—*Aug. Confess.*, lib. iv. cap. 12.

2. It will be our wisdom, who through the divine providence are yet in the 'land of the living,'—notwithstanding that many younger than ourselves have been taken out before us—even 'to-day, while it is called to-day,' to apply our hearts to wisdom, and to 'walk before the Lord.'¹ Our Lord Christ took the opportunity that he had in 'the land of the living,' and saith, 'I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day,' John ix. 4. He adds this weighty reason thereof, 'The night cometh when no man can work.' On this ground, the wise man adviseth us all so to do, 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest,' Eccles. ix. 10. Let this, therefore, be thy mind towards God, that though he cut thee off never so soon, yet he shall not cut thee off before thou hast walked before him, in that now, whilst thou art in 'the land of the living,' thou walkest before him. But if he preserve thee long in 'the land of the living,' thou wilt long 'walk before him.' And in this respect life is a sweet and a precious thing; and we may, with a willing submission of our will to God's, desire long to abide in 'the land of the living,' Isa. xxxviii. 11, that we may long 'walk before the Lord.' This was it that upon the summons of death perplexed Hezekiah, that he should 'not see the Lord in the land of the living,' Isa. xxxviii. 11. But, when his life was prolonged, then in a holy gratulation he thus singeth out to the Lord, 'The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day,' Isa. xxxviii. 19, whereby he teacheth us a lesson that he ratified by his own example, that it is the duty of the living, while they are in the 'land of the living,' to praise the Lord. O blessed land, that affordeth us opportunity to perform such a duty! O blessed inhabitants, that take the opportunity of such a land to perform such a duty!

Sec. 64. *Of binding ourselves to duty.*

VI. *Saints must bind themselves to bounden duties.*²

¹ *Salutem nostram instanter cremus, neque presentis vite perdamus occasionem.*—*Chrys. ad Pop.*, hom. 25. *Legs ibid.* hom. 39, hac de re plura.

² There being in the 14th verse express mention made of the prophet's vow, and a solemn promise to God coming near to a sacred vow, the application of such points as shall there be

I say bounden duties,¹ because such a one was that which here the prophet binds himself unto, to walk before the Lord; and because otherwise we may bring ourselves into needless snares, by overmuch forwardness in binding ourselves. This manner of absolute promising such duties hath ever been usual among saints, Exod. xv. 2; Joshua xxiv. 15; Ruth i. 16; Ps. ix. 1. Some have gone so far, as to express their promise in form of a sacred vow, Gen. xxviii. 10. Others, by a solemn covenant, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 31. Holy ardency hath moved others to add an oath thereto, Chron. xv. 14, Ps. cxix. 106. Yea, and an execration also, Neh. v. 13.

Quest. Is it in man's power to perform that bounden duty he oweth to God? If not, how can he absolutely promise to do it?

Ans. 1. That which saints in this case promise, is to do their best and uttermost endeavour. More we are not bound to promise. More will none that are wise promise. This is that which the apostle thus professeth of himself, 'Herein I exercise, or endeavour myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men,' Acts xxiv. 16.

2. The things which God by virtue of the gospel requireth of us, he hath promised to work in us. The sum of his promise is this, 'I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them,' Ezek. xxxvi. 27. Now saints resting in assurance of faith on God for accomplishing of this, and other like promises, are emboldened to promise that which God hath promised to enable them to do, Jer. xxxi. 33, 34, and xxxii. 39, 40.

3. All the promises of obedience which saints make to God, they make with reference to the assistance of God's Spirit, whereof they assure themselves. As when they promise any temporal civil matter, they do it, either expressly or implicitly, with relation to God's will and leave, as they ought, James iv. 15, so in holy duties to the work of God's Spirit in them.²

delivered about a vow, will be the same that should here have been delivered about a sacred and solemn promise. I do therefore refer a further prosecution of this point to that place.

¹ Sec. 58.

² *Attende quod non dixerit, speravi, aut spero, sed sperabo. Hoc, inquit, est votum meum, hoc propositum meum, hac intentio cordis mei.*—*Bern. in Ps. Qui habit.* ser. 2.

Thus in the absolute promises which saints make, they arrogate nothing to themselves above their ability, and yet manifest an unfeigned heart, and unalterable resolution to God-wards. So as where they say I will walk, I will hope, I will do this and that, it is as if they had said, this is my desire, this is my purpose, this is the intention of my heart.

By the means, as true intention, earnest desire, prudent jealousy, and holy zeal are manifested, so is a dull spirit much quickened, and the weak, wayward, revolting flesh bridled and curbed, yea, and bound to her good behaviour.

Sec. 65. *Of man's answering God's mercy with duty.*

VII. *Manifestation of God's good pleasure to man must make man careful to please God.*¹ Where God saith, 'I will be their God,' Jer. xxiv. 7; which is an evident manifestation of God's good will to them, this is thereupon inferred, 'they shall be my people;' which, as it noteth a dignity, for it is a prerogative to be God's people, so also a duty; for it is added, 'They shall return unto me with their whole heart.' Yea, in another place where God is brought in to say to them, 'It is my people,' they are brought in to answer, 'The Lord is my God,' Zech. xiii. 9. More plainly, Hezekiah having thus expressed God's good will to him, 'The Lord was ready to save me,' maketh this inference, 'Therefore will we sing,' Isa. xxxviii. 20. And the psalmist yet more directly to the point in hand, saith to the Lord, 'I will praise thy name for thy loving-kindness,' Ps. cxxxviii. 2.

Gratefulness and all equity requireth that they who taste of the sweetness of God's kindness and goodness should so 'walk before God' as to seek in all things to please him.² Kindness requireth kindness; goodness, goodness; especially such kindness and goodness as the Lord sheweth and doeth. But all the kindness or goodness that we possibly can shew or do to God is to please him. God's good pleasure is the ground of all our hope,—the spring from whence do flow all the good things

which in any kind we have or can expect. Thereby God manifesteth his mind and respect toward us. Our care to please him is the best evidence that we can give of our good mind and respect to God. We can really give nothing to him; wherefore the more and greater good things we receive from God, the more careful we ought to be to please him.

That this general duty may be the better performed, three or four particulars are duly to be observed.

1. Take due notice of God's good will to thee, and distinctly observe the several evidences that he giveth thereof. Kindness not observed is as no kindness. But when thou canst in truth say of God's goodness, as he did who said, 'That my soul knoweth right well,' Ps. cxxxix. 14, then will thy judgment be convinced of the equity of the duty which thou owest to God, which is a foreible means to bring the will to yield thereunto. For this end learn to make a catalogue of God's mercies, and to set them in order.¹

2. Inquire what can be done by thee that may be pleasing and acceptable to him. Many are the admonitions of Scripture hereunto, as, 'Understand what the will of the Lord is,' Eph. v. 17; 'Prove what is the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God,' Rom. xii. 2. This doth the Holy Scripture expressly and distinctly declare. Well acquaint thyself with God's word, and thou mayest be well instructed in God's will.

3. Being thus instructed, stir up thy spirit and whole man to do that which thou knowest ought to be done. 'I exhort you,' saith the apostle, 'by the Lord Jesus, that as you have received of us how to walk and to please God,'—thus they were sufficiently instructed,—'so you would abound more and more,' 1 Thes. iv. 1; thus he would have them to stir up themselves to do what they had learned to do.

4. Because 'we are not sufficient to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;' 'It is God which worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure,' 2 Cor. iii. 5; Phil. ii. 13; to thine own endeavour add faithful prayer for God's assistance. We have for this the pattern of an apostle, who, when he had declared a great evi-

¹ Sec. 58.

² Tanto amplius timere Deum, et magis sollicitus esse debuerat, quanto majora ejus munera perceperat.—*Bern. in Ps. Qui habit.*, ser. 1.

¹ See 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. iii. part 2, secs. 63, 64, 69.

dence of God's kindness to the Hebrews,—namely, their redemption by the blood of Jesus Christ,—he prayeth that God would 'work in them that which is well-pleasing in his sight,' Heb. xiii. 21.

If by these and other like means we shall indeed answer God's mercy with doing our duty, and so 'walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing,' Col. i. 10, he will never repent him of any kindness shewed to us, but will rather delight in doing more and more goodness.

Sec. 66. *Of the meaning and doctrine of the tenth and eleventh verses.*

Ver. 10. *I believed: therefore have I spoken. I was greatly afflicted.* Ver. 11. *I said in my haste, All men are liars.*

These two verses are a digression from his fore-mentioned profession, which is prosecuted in the verses immediately after these, so as they may not unfitly be included in a parenthesis.

The prophet in penning this psalm was even ravished with a holy admiration of the great deliverance which he had, and that beyond his expectation; hereupon, as men in such cases use to do, he falleth into digressions concerning the greatness of his distress, the weakness of his flesh, yea, and of his recovery of himself after that weakness, which is here noted in the first place; thus, 'I believed,' &c.

Some¹ take this of the prophet's too much credulity in the case betwixt Ziba and Mephibosheth, 2 Sam. xvi. 3, 4, or of his too much credulity to Absalom, Ahithophel, and other flattering courtiers which were the cause of his flying from Absalom. But that sense can be nothing to the prophet's purpose in this place; besides, the word thus set alone, 'I believed,' will not well bear that sense. As the first word of this psalm² thus set, 'I love,' so this 'I believed,' hath an especial emphasis. It sheweth that the greatness of his affliction could not quell his faith. St Paul expressly sheweth that the prophet here means by this phrase, 'I believed,' 2 Cor. iv. 13, a steadfast confidence in God; such a confidence as by the Spirit of God is wrought in saints' hearts; therefore some for more perspicuity insert this word 'God,' thus, 'I believed God.' This faith so quickened

¹ Lyranus, Aignanur, Rickelius.

² See Sec. 5.

his spirit, and wrought such a holy zeal in his soul, as he could not contain himself nor conceal his mind, but was in a manner forced to express himself and to utter his thoughts, whereupon he maketh this inference, 'Therefore have I spoken.' Some¹ turn it in the future thus, 'I will speak,' and in the Hebrew (אָדַרְבָּר, *loquar*) it is so, simply considered; but it is usual in that tongue to express things past by the future, especially in rendering a reason of that which is past, as in the first verse of this psalm, כִּי וּשְׂכִינִי.

Quest. What, then, was it that his faith made him utter and speak?

Ans. All that is mentioned in this psalm. His faith made him call upon God in his deadly distress; his faith made him acknowledge God's grace and mercy; his faith made him promise and vow praise and obedience to God.

This clause, 'I was greatly afflicted,' may have a fit relation either to that which goeth before, or that which followeth.

In the former respect, it is added as an amplification of the great measure of his faith, which, notwithstanding the greatness of his distress, could not be extinguished. If a discretive conjunction, *although*, be prefixed, the emphasis of this clause will appear thus, 'I spake although I was greatly afflicted.'

In the latter respect it is premised as an extenuation of his weakness, shewing that this was a cause thereof, namely, his sore affliction. If this casual particle, because, be prefixed,² the force of the reason will be evident, thus, 'Because I was greatly afflicted, I said in my haste,' &c.

I take the former relation to be here especially intended by reason of that note of distinction which is betwixt this clause and the verse following.

Ver. 11. *I said (בְּחַפְזִי) in my haste.*

The word translated haste, (חַפְזִי), properly signifieth, to fly for fear. It is used to set out the fearful flight and haste of the Assyrians, when they thought that the Hittites and Philistines were suddenly coming upon them, they cast away their garments in their fearful flight, 2 Kings vii. 15,

¹ Vatabl. in annot. ad hunc loc.

² *Silut sive Soph pasuc est pausa perfectæ sententiæ, quæ usurpari solet in fine versuum.*

(בַּחֲפוּזִים) Hebrew interpreters do sometimes translate it, 'to make haste,' as in the place quoted, and sometimes to be affrighted, as where it is said, 'At the voice of thy thunder they hasted away,' Ps. civ. 7, (יִחַפוּזוּ); they translate it, 'They shall be terrified.' Whereas, therefore, there seemeth to be a difference betwixt interpreters, some translating this clause thus, 'in my haste;' others¹ thus, 'in my fear;' both interpretations may well stand together and be thus composed, 'in my sudden fear,' or 'in my fearful haste;' so as unadvised, rash, sudden fear was the cause of this conceit and censure, 'all men are liars.'

A difference also there is in the interpretation of this clause; for some expound it as a speech of faith, opposing men to God, who only is true, as if he had more largely thus expressed his mind: The Lord is without all question most true, faithful, and constant in all his promises; and where men oft make question thereof, it is by reason of that vanity and weakness which is in them, for all men are liars. This difference betwixt God and man is most true, expressly noted by the apostle in these words, 'Let God be true, and every man a liar,' Rom. iii. 4. But this interpretation in this place cannot well stand with this clause immediately going before, 'I said in my haste.' For to pronounce all men liars, in opposition to God's truth, is no rash, passionate speech, but a true, advised, apostolical speech.

Others,² therefore, expound it as a speech of incredulity, and refer this general particle, all, in special to such messengers of God as were sent to him, to comfort him in his afflictions, and to promise him deliverance and advancement. Now, though at first he might believe them, yet when he was in the extremity of his perplexity, so as he doubted of all recovery, then he made question of the truth of their words, and in his sudden fear said to this purpose: Certainly, as the common sort of men, so even these servants and prophets of God are liars; all men, not these excepted—all men are liars. Now where he layeth the blame on men, therein, notwithstanding

this his great weakness, he testifieth a reverent respect towards God, in that he doth not question the truth of God's word, but rather imagineth that the prophets did not well take their errand, but brought a wrong message; and in that respect chargeth not God but men with falsehood, and saith, All men are liars. In the original the words of this clause are in the singular number, thus: Every man is a liar (כֹּל-הָאָדָם כּוֹזֵב); but the generality in the singular number is of as large an extent as in the plural, and for sense truly and fully thus translated: All men are liars.

In this digression there is a mixture of faith and fear.

The parts are two:

1. The evidence of his faith, ver. 10.

2. The instance of his fear, ver. 11.

The former is propounded—amplified.

In the proposition we have to note:

1. The expression of his faith, I believed.

2. The confirmation thereof, 'Therefore have I spoken.'

The amplification is taken from the extremity of his distress, 'I was greatly afflicted.'

The latter—namely, his fear—is

1. Implied by this phrase, 'In my sudden fear.'

2. Exemplified by this instance, 'I said, all men are liars.'

The expression of his faith hath relation to the time of his trial; for he saith not of the time present wherein he was freed from his troubles, I believe, but of that time which before he described in the second and third verses, whereby he giveth demonstration that—

I. Faith remains firm in troubles.

The confirmation of the truth of his faith by his acknowledging God's mercy, calling upon God, promising to walk before God—which is the speaking here meant—giveth evidence that—

II. Faith makes men freely utter their mind.

The amplification of the truth of his faith by the sore trouble wherein he was, thus set out, 'I was greatly afflicted,' giveth proof that—

III. No affliction can utterly suppress faith. If not great affliction, what affliction?

The implication of his hasty, rash passion under

¹ Vatab. Annot. in 2 King vii. 15, sic exponunt בַּחֲפוּזִים dum trepidantes fugerent. Athanas. de Passion. Dom. Gratian. de Penit.

² Calvinus Comment. in hunc loc. Sic et Lorinus, alique Commentat.

this phrase, 'in my haste,' or in my sudden fear, giveth instance that—

IV. Saints are subject to sudden passions.

The uttering of his mind in this his passion—for saith he, 'I said in my haste'—further sheweth that—

V. Distempered passion causeth unadvised speech.

The matter of his speech, which is to account such as brought him promises of his deliverance to be liars, implieth that—

VI. Extremity of distress causeth saints to account promises of release to be vain.

The object of his imputation, men, (not God, though those men were sent of God,) men are liars, importeth that—

VII. Saints in their most disturbed passion bear a reverent respect to God.

Yet withal his unjust blaming of men (which he here acknowledgeth to be an effect of his weak flesh and distempered passion) declareth that—

VIII. Man must not unjustly be blamed.

The extent of that object noted by this note of generality, all, intimateth that—

IX. Passion makes men judge all alike.

The connexion of the two parts of this digression, whereof the former is an evidence of his faith, the latter an evidence of his fear, giveth assurance that—

X. Faith and fear may be mixed together.

The first and third of these doctrines are of near affinity. The third compriseth the first in it, as a greater the less. Upon the proof of the third follows the proof of the first. I will therefore put off the first to the third.

Sec. 67. *Of that boldness of speech which faith worketh.*

II. *Faith makes men freely utter their mind.* To shew that this was not proper to this prophet only, but is common to other believers also, the apostle maketh this inference, 'We also believe, and therefore speak,' 2 Cor. iv. 13. Well weigh the ardeny, the instancy, the importunity of the prayers of Abraham, Gen. xviii. 24, &c., Jacob, chap. xxxii. 26, &c., Moses, Exod. xxxii. 11, Hezekiah, Isa. xxxviii. 11, Daniel, chap. ix. 18, 19, and others, and you will find this verified in them, that they also believed, and therefore spake. The like may be noted of the solemn protestations of David, Ps. cxix. 106 ;

and of the Jews in Asa's, 2 Chron. xv. 14, and Nehemiah's time, chap. v. 13 ; and of the congratulations of David, Ps. lvii. 7, &c., 136, 148 ; and of the people in Ezra's time, Neh. viii. 6.

Faith worketh in man assurance of God's gracious acceptance, and so ministereth unto his soul a holy boldness, according to that of the apostle, 'We have boldness and access with confidence by faith,' Eph. iii. 12.

Faith is the first of the mighty works of God's Spirit that are wrought in man ; the mother of all sanctifying graces ; that which addeth power and efficacy to all the rest, and therefore must needs in itself be powerfully operative. It is so spiritually hot as it cannot be smothered, much less extinguished ; like a hot fiery vapour, the more it is suppressed, the more violent it waxeth.¹ Philosophy teacheth that hot vapours by a repulsion of contraries wax violent, whence proceedeth the violence of thunder, of winds, of earthquakes, and such other meteors. And theology teacheth, that the fervent graces of God's Spirit, among which faith is most principal, wax the more spiritually violent by opposition.

1. Trial is hereby made of the truth and measure of faith. If they that believe speak, what may be thought of them that speak not ? Will charity (that 'believeth all things, that hopeth all things,' 1 Cor. xiii. 7) suffer to believe and hope that faith is in him, who hath no heart to pray, no boldness to profess the name of God, no spirit to praise him ? He that is altogether silent, hath assuredly no faith. He that speaketh faintly and coldly, hath but a fainting and cold faith. This is one of those works whereof we ought every one to say, as we are taught by an apostle, 'I will shew thee my faith by my works.'

2. Be persuaded now to give this evidence of thy faith. Speak, man, speak if thou believest, be not tongue-tied, 'Open thy mouth wide,' Ps. lxxxi. 10. God hath promised to fill it. Speak to God secretly in thy closet. Speak of him openly before men. Speak to him and of him in thy family, in assemblies of saints, at all times, in all places. Speak in the poor's cause. Speak in matters of charity and

¹ Per Antipristasin. Vide Aristot., Meteor., lib. ii. cap. 8 and 9.

justice. In supplication 'pour out thy soul before the Lord,' 1 Sam. i. 15; 'Set all thy desire before him,' Ps. xxxviii. 9. In profession of his name be not ashamed, Ps. cxix. 46; note for this the apostle's inference: 'I am not ashamed,' 2 Tim. i. 12, saith he. Why? 'I know whom I have believed.' If thou beest ashamed of Christ here, he will be 'ashamed of thee when he cometh in the glory of his Father,' Mark viii. 38. In gratulation, 'With a loud voice glorify God,' Luke xvii. 15. Herein the tongue of that man, Ps. lvii. 8, who was a man after God's own heart, was his glory, Acts xiii. 22. Oh that magistrates, subjects, ministers, people, household-governors, parents, neighbours, all of all sorts, would do this! That magistrates who believe would boldly speak in the cause of God and man! Speak boldly for maintaining truth and purity of religion; speak freely in executing good justice and righteous judgment! That subjects would be bold and free in consenting to the holy covenants and wholesome ordinances which their pious and good governors make! That ministers who believe would 'open their mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel,' Eph. vi. 19, and pray and give thanks zealously, cheerfully! That people would testify their faith by manifesting a joint consent, and saying, Amen; amen! That parents and householders would 'command their children and household to keep the way of the Lord!' Neh. viii. 6; Gen. xviii. 19. That neighbours would admonish, exhort, and (as just occasion by sin is offered) reprove, and every way edify one another! Had men faith, God's word would be in their heart as a burning fire shut up in their bones: they would be weary with forbearing. Their mouth would be opened, their heart enlarged, Jer. xx. 9; 2 Cor. vi. 11. Much would God's glory be advanced, much good would be done to man, if every one of us in our places could in truth say, 'I believed, therefore have I spoken.' Yea, doubts arising against that which is meet to be uttered would be suppressed. Faith would soon quell them all. He, therefore, gave a good advice that said, when inextricable doubts do trouble thee, let faith be ready to make resolution and to give satisfaction.¹

¹ ὅταν σὺ ἀπορία τις ἐπέλῃ, πρόσφερε τοῖς ζητούμενοις ἐτοιμῆ λύσιν τὴν πίστιν.—Justin Mart. *Evros. Fid.*

Sec. 68. *Of faith's stability in trials.*

I. *Faith remains firm in troubles.*¹

III. *No affliction can utterly suppress faith.* How firm in the uttermost trial was their faith that said, 'Though he slay me yet will I trust in him,' Job xiii. 15; 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear none evil,' Ps. xxiii. 4; 'We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed: we are perplexed, yet not in despair,' &c., 2 Cor. iv. 8, &c.; 'I am persuaded that neither life,' &c., Rom. viii. 38, 39. That these instances may not be thought to be so extraordinary as they should not be exemplary, note the apostle's ample extension thereof: 'We having the same spirit of faith'—he saith not in the singular number, *I*, as speaking of himself alone, but in the plural, *we*, as speaking of many, and that indefinitely, as excluding none—'we also believe and therefore speak.'² It is noted of the ancient Christians that many cruel strokes and much affliction long raging could not overcome their impregnable faith.

The true faith of all saints is 'rooted in Christ,' Col. ii. 7, who is able to minister virtue and vigour, and refreshing unto it in the most blustering, blasting, and nipping times that can be: 'If a tree that is planted by the waters, and spreadeth out her roots by the river, shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit,' Jer. xvii. 8; how much more shall they flourish who are 'planted in the house of the Lord,' Ps. xcii. 13, and rooted in Christ, who will be in them 'a well of water springing to everlasting life'! John iv. 14. It is said of hope, the daughter of faith, that 'it entereth within the veil which is above,' Heb. vi. 19. As hope herein is different from other anchors, which are cast downward, so faith from other trees, which grow downwards. Though they therefore that are planted in the most fertile soils, and by the best rivers, may wither, yet will not faith fail, Luke xxii. 32.

Admirable is the benefit of faith. It sheweth itself in all seasons; it serves for all turns. It cheers

¹ Sec. 66.

² Inexpugnabilem fidem superare non potuit sæviens diu plaga repetita.—Cypri. *Epiet.*, lib. ii. ep. 6.

us in prosperity, it revives us in adversity.¹ It ever keepeth us in a golden mean, so as we be not too much puffed up with prosperity, nor too much dejected with adversity. In prosperity, it moveth us to acknowledge the bounty and magnificence of the Lord, 1 Chron. xxix. 11, &c.; in adversity, it maketh us roll our eyes up to God, 2 Chron. xx. 12, and to sustain and comfort ourselves in him, 1 Sam. xxx. 6; yea, when the clouds of crosses hide the brightness of his favour from us, it maketh us wait till those clouds be driven away, Hosea vi. 1, 2.

Among and above other gifts and graces get faith. Having gotten it, keep it. In keeping it, nourish it so as it may increase. All these are implied under this metaphor, 'Take the shield of faith,' Eph. vi. 16: whereof having published a large treatise, it shall be sufficient here to have pointed at them. See more in 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. 2, part 6, sec. 16, &c.

Sec. 69. *Of sudden passion whereunto saints are subject.*

Ver. 11. *I said in my sudden fear, All men are liars.*

IV. *Saints are subject to sudden passions.*² So much in another place acknowledgeth the psalmist of himself: thus, 'I said in my haste, I am cut off,' &c., Ps. xxxi. 22. The very same word is here and there used, כַּחֲפִז. It was a sudden and distempered passion that Moses and Aaron manifested at the water of Meribah, Num. xx. 10; and David at Nabal's churlish answer, 1 Sam. xxv. 22; and Jonah at God's mercy shewed to Nineveh, Jon. iv. 10; and James and John at the Samaritans' refusing to receive Christ, Luke ix. 54; and Paul and Barnabas about receiving John Mark, Acts xv. 39.

The flesh remaineth in such as have the Spirit in them.³ By virtue of the Spirit's abode in them they are saints, true saints; but by reason of the mixture of the flesh, they are subject to symptoms, effects, and infirmities of the flesh, among which sudden passions may well be reckoned. For passions are like to lusty, pampered horses, which, if they be not held

in with the bridle of reason and curb of discretion, will run with a career to their own and rider's hazard.

May it not now be thought a most unjust censure, to judge all those to be carnal and unregenerate who speak in haste, who betray sudden passions of anger, of grief, of fear, of joy, or of any the like? Saints having been proved to be subject to sudden passion, to censure them for men unregenerate who on a sudden are in passion, what is it but to call good evil, and to make light darkness and sweet bitter? Isa. v. 20. Surely these kind of censures arise from sudden passions. If these, then, be infallible signs of an unregenerate estate, such censures are a demonstration that the authors of them are not regenerate. Yea, demonstrations enough may be made against every one that beareth the name of a saint, that he only beareth the name of a saint, but is no saint. Thus shall all be brought into the labyrinth of despair, out of which they cannot know how to wind themselves. But learn to distinguish betwixt infirmities and obstinacy, and notwithstanding the infirmities that in this world thou art subject unto, thou mayest cheerfully go on in that course which will bring thee to that condition wherein 'the spirits of just men made perfect' are, Heb. xii. 23.

Yet take heed of nourishing and cherishing, of bolstering up and justifying passion; but rather do what in thee lieth to suppress and keep them down. For though, so long as we abide in the tabernacle of this body, and are compassed about with frail flesh, we cannot clean cut off all afflictions and passions, yet we may moderate and rule them, which, if we do not, passions will soon wax violent and grow unto excess, if with prudence and diligence they be not kept under.¹ They are like weeds, which grow apace if they be suffered. They are like beasts and birds, that being naturally wild, if they be not narrowly watched, kept in dark, kept awake, kept from light and sleep, and taught to obey, will ever be wild, never tame. Experience of all ages hath verified this adage, (whereof before,)² 'Passions are bad masters but good servants.' If they rule over

¹ See 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. 2, part 6, sec. 69, 70.

² Sec. 66.

³ Sancti cum mente sint spirituales, adhuc tamen isto corruptibili corpore quod aggravat animam rectè intelliguntur esse carnales.—*Aug. cont. Jul. Pelag.*, lib. vi. cap. 11.

¹ Nos affectus et perturbatoines, quamdiu in tabernaculo corporis hujus habitamus, et fragili carne circumdamur, moderari et regere possumus, amputare non possumus.—*Hier. ad Demetr. de Virg. serv.*

² Sec. 4.

reason they will be as lords of misrule, outrageous disturbers of all order. It will be in man's little polity, consisting of body and soul, as it was in Israel when there was no king in Israel, 'Every man did that which was right in his own eyes,' Judges xxi. 25; whence it came to pass that some tribes in Israel were little better than Sodom. There is more need of means to weaken than to strengthen passions, to famish than to cherish them, to curb them in than to spur them out, and to hold them back than to give them head. Though they be in such as are justified and sanctified, yet may they not by any means be justified or countenanced as things lawful. To justify a sudden distempered passion, is 'to call evil good, to put darkness for light, and bitter for sweet,' Isa. v. 20, against which a woe is denounced. To countenance them is to make them violent and irresistible in their rebellion, as Absalom and Adonijah were, 2 Sam. xv. 10; 1 Kings i. 5. Thus an infirmity is turned into obstinacy. As therefore men are watchful over powder in their houses to keep fire from it, both because it soon takes fire, and also being once set on fire it is suddenly all on flame, and by that means very violent and pernicious; so on those very grounds we have need to be as watchful over passions, and to keep them from all occasions that may stir them up; for they are soon stirred, and being stirred wax vehement and violent. Yet I will not deny but that passions may have their use and commodity if there be a very watchful heed had over them.¹ But for instance of their violence, if not well watched, note the next collection.

Sec. 70. *Of unadvised speech arising from distempered passion.*

V. *Distempered passion causeth unadvised speech.*²

Instance the speeches recorded in Scripture to come from the distempered passion of those who were mentioned in the former section. As from Moses and Aaron, Num. xx. 10; David, 1 Sam. xxv. 22; Jonah, chap. iv. 1; James and John, Luke ix. 54; and others. Of him that was 'provoked in spirit,' it is said that 'he spake unadvisedly with his lips,' Ps. cvi. 33.

¹ Passiones habent utilitatem suam, si per eas considerantis pervigil currat intentio.—*Chrys.*, hom. 2, in Heb. i.

² Sec. 66.

'Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,' Mat. xii. 34. For the tongue is a most ready interpreter of a man's inward temper. The mouth is the door of the soul. If the fire of passion be once kindled therein, the flame thereof will soon break out at the mouth.

The consideration hereof addeth weight to the admonition given in the former section for watching over our passions, in that the evil arising from thence is not only inward, such as may be kept close within the bowels and breast of a man, but also outward, such as will break forth in words especially, to the offence of others, and to the greater disgrace of our profession and dishonour of God. Words that proceed out of passion are oft violent, and cause much mischief. Many think they extenuate the matter when they say, 'Words are but wind.' Let the violence of wind in a man's head, stomach, belly, veins, guts, or other parts of his body, yea, and in the open air on sea and land, be considered, and it will be found that enough is said of words when they are said to be wind. St James, chap. iii. 3, &c., in regard of the violence of the tongue, resembleth it to other very strong and forcible things—as to the bit of a bridle, whereby the rider maketh a lusty horse to turn this way and that way, as he list; to the helm of a ship, wherewith a pilot turneth a huge vessel on the sea whithersoever he will; to a fire, which kindleth a great matter.¹ Yea, it is like a burning furnace, which is most violent. And the apostle addeth, that 'it setteth on fire the course of nature, and it is set on fire of hell.' Yea, he maketh it more fierce than the wild beasts: 'For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: but the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.' What orator could more lively have set out the violence of so little a member than the apostle hath done? No marvel now that where a man hath two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, two arms, two hands, and many other members double, he hath but one tongue, one being enough, if not too much, to rule, and that the fabric of that one tongue is so ordered by nature, or rather by the God of nature, as it is—that it should

¹ Quotidiana fornax nostra est humana lingua.—*Aug. Confess.*, lib. x. cap. 37.

be placed in the highest part of the body, the head, as in a castle on a hill, and be there bound with the roots of it as with strong bars, and kept within the two-leaved gate of the lips, and the portullis of the teeth—notwithstanding all which, straight charge is given to him ‘that desireth life, and loveth many days that he may see good, to keep his tongue,’ Ps. xxxiv. 12, 13; for, ‘death and life are in the power of the tongue,’ Prov. xviii. 21. And ‘whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue, keepeth his soul from troubles,’ Prov. xxi. 23; and the psalmist, well knowing that he of himself was not able to rule that un-ruly evil, thus prayeth to God, ‘Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, and keep the door of my lips,’ Ps. cxli. 3. Seeing passion openeth up the gate, pulleth up the portullis, and maketh a passage for this wild beast, and not only so, but stirreth up the rage of it, and sharpeneth the deadly point of it, surely this one effect is motive sufficient to make men do what possibly they can to moderate passion. For the tongue is as slippery as an eel: it being placed in moisture, it must needs soon slip.¹

Hereby take notice of the corruption of man in soul and body. As the eyes and ears are windows to let in corruption into the soul, so the mouth is a door to let it out, whereby it comes to be the more infectious, to the damage of others; for evil words corrupt good manners in ourselves and others. Thus the tongue, that is the pen of a ready writer in one, is a sword in another, not in its own nature, but by the different use of it;² for the nature of this and that man’s tongue is the same, but the use is not the same, which should make us the more watchful over our tongue.

Sec. 71. *Of saints questioning God’s promises in distress.*

VI. *Extremity of distress maketh saints account promises of release to be vain.*³ Which that worthy saint did, who said in his heart, ‘I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul,’ 1 Sam. xxvii. 1; and again, speaking to God, ‘I am cut off from before thine eyes,’ Ps. xxxi. 22. After that God had promised

¹ *Lingua non frustra in udo est, nisi quia facile labitur.—Aug. Enar. in Ps. lxxxiii.*

² *Illa quidem gladius, calamus, at hæc erat non secundum propriam naturam, sed secundum utentium electionem. Lingua enim natura et hujus et illius una erat, operatio autem non una.—Chrys. ad Pop., hom. 4.*

³ Sec. 66.

to Abraham that he would ‘make of him a great nation,’ Gen. xii. 2, and ‘make his seed as the dust of the earth,’ chap. xiii. 16, he and his wife being both old, he thus said, ‘Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless?’ chap. xv. 2. Did not this speech shew that he accounted God’s promise to be vain? Yea, and this speech also of Moses, ‘I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me. And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand,’ Num. xi. 14, 15; and this, ‘Shall the flock and the herds be slain for them to suffice them? or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together to suffice them?’ ver. 22. Did not Christ’s disciples, and others that believed in him, account the promises of his resurrection to be vain? Luke xxiv. 11, 25. Too evident fruits of the great weakness of those worthy saints were these; for not to be steadfast in faith is a great weakness.¹

Afflictions do oft so stir the corrupt humour of the flesh which is in every saint, as it sendeth up such abundance of vapours of infidelity, as they cause a great mist to spread itself before the eyes of men’s understanding, so as they cannot clearly see the light of God’s promises, whereby they are brought to make question of the truth thereof, even as children and fools do think there is no light in the sun when a thick cloud hath overspread the face of the sky, and hindereth the beams of the sun from shining on the earth. The best many times, through the violence of temptations, in the things of God shew themselves as children and fools.

Let us all learn by such patterns of the weakness of the flesh, even in the best, to suspect ourselves, and to ‘fear lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of us seem to come short of it,’ Heb. iv. 1. Before the time of trial come, let us pray, as Christ did for Peter, ‘that our faith fail not,’ Luke xxii. 32; and according to the promise made to Paul, that God’s ‘grace may be sufficient for us,’ 2 Cor. xii. 9; and that the Lord would ‘not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able,’ 1 Cor. x. 13. Above all, take we heed of presumptuous self-conceit, that we be not like him who, in too much confidence of his own strength, said to

¹ *Dicitur infirmitas, non esse solidatum in fide, simpliciter neque perfectum esse.—Chrys., hom. 23, in 2 Cor. xiii.*

Christ, 'Though all men should be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended,' Mat. xxvi. 33; and again, 'Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee,' ver. 35. A worthy profession and resolution this was, if it had not been uttered upon too great a confidence of his own ability to stand and withstand all temptations. But it being uttered on presumption of his own strength, the issue thereof was most woeful. Nothing more provokes God to leave men to themselves, and to suffer Satan to prevail against them, than a high conceit of themselves. It is most meet that such should know their own weakness. But nothing can give to man a more evident demonstration of his frailty and weakness than his slips and falls when he is brought to the trial. This will make him say, 'Behold, I am vile, what shall I answer thee?' Job xl. 4; 'I abhor myself, I repent in dust and ashes,' chap. xlii. 6.

Sec. 72. *Of saints' reverent esteem of God in their greatest straits.*

VII. *Saints in their disturbed passion bear a reverent respect to God.*¹ So did they who said to God, 'Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee,' &c., Jer. xii. 1; 'I will lay my hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken, but I will not answer; yea, twice, but I will proceed no further,' Job xl. 5. And he who said of God, 'How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out,' Rom. xi. 33; and thereupon made this inference, 'O man, who art thou that repliest against God?' chap. ix. 20. Though the apostle were not disturbed in his passion when he uttered these speeches, yet the occasion which made him utter them was such as did amaze many; but his respect to God made him admire and adore that which others excepted against.

1. There are certain principles against which men of understanding will not oppose or dispute; no, nor search after the reason of them.² Among and above all other principles those which concern the infiniteness and perfection of God's essence, properties, word, and works are most infallible and undeniable. Saints, therefore, who have a true and

right understanding of God dare not impeach God's truth, justice, wisdom, power, mercy, or anything else in God, though the works of God and God's dealing with them do seem very strange unto them. Knowledge of God's perfection works such reverence in them towards God as they had rather remain as in a maze, not knowing what to say, than impute any blame to God. If they lay any blame it shall be rather on man than on God.

2. The Spirit never wholly leaveth the saints. Though the weakness of the flesh be very great, yet will the Spirit keep them from falling from their God. 'The spirit is ready when the flesh is weak,' Mat. xxvi. 41; yea, 'the spirit lusteth against the flesh,' Gal. v. 17, and restraineth it from fulfilling the lusts thereof. So as when the flesh would rise against God, the spirit keepeth it down.

Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded. Let us testify our high esteem of the Lord, our reverent respect towards him, by not daring to entertain a thought, or to suffer a word to slip out of our mouth which may any way be derogatory to any of his excellencies; or to think anything of him otherwise than indeed he is:¹ 'Wilt thou condemn him that is most just? Is it fit to say to a king, Thou art wicked? or to princes, Ye are ungodly? How much less to him that accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor?' Job xxxiv. 17, &c. To admire and adore the unsearchable ways of the Almighty may well beseeem sons of men. But to think a thought or to utter a word that may lay any blame upon them is sensual and diabolical.

To have thine heart well seasoned with a due respect of God, be well informed in his excellencies, and oft meditate thereon. Ignorance of God is it that causeth many base and unmeet thoughts of him to enter into our hearts. Want of meditation maketh what we know not to be remembered, or not to be regarded. Add therefore to the means of information which God affordeth, serious and settled meditation. Thus thy mind being filled with divine thoughts, will not suffer impious and blasphemous thoughts to harbour there.

¹ Sec. 66.

² *δὲ ἐν ταῖς ἐπισημοῖσι καὶ ἀρχαῖς ἐπιστρέφει τὸ διὰ τλ.—Arist. Analyt., lib. i. cap. 1.*

¹ *Quisquis Deum cogitat pie caveat quantum potest aliquid de Deo sentire quod nou sit.—Aug. de Trin., lib. v. cap. 1.*

Sec. 73. *Of blaming men unjustly.*

VIII. *Men must not unjustly be blamed.*¹ God made an express law against it, and said, 'Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour,' Exod. xx. 16. Many like prohibitions are in the word, chap. xxiii. 1; Prov. xxiv. 28; Mat. vii. 1; Titus iii. 2. Though the wrong be done to man, yet the fact is abominable to God, Prov. vi. 16, 19, who to restrain men from it, hath enacted severe laws against such as transgress therein, Deut. xix. 19. Yea, they are accounted unworthy to 'dwell in God's holy hill,' Ps. xv. 3.

The wrong which by unjust accusing and blaming of men is done, is one of the greatest wrongs that can be done against man; because thereby, that which of all other things is the most precious to man, his good name, is impeached. In which respect this sin, though it be a direct wrong against man, is styled blasphemy, Eph. iv. 31; Col. iii. 8; and they who speak evil of men unjustly, are said to 'blaspheme them,' Titus iii. 2; 1 Pet. iv. 4; 2 Pet. ii. 10, which is, according to the notation of the Greek word, to 'hurt a man's fame,' *βλασφημεῖν, τὴν φήμην βλάπτειν, fuman ledere*; or otherwise, to 'assault one with tales,' *βαλλεῖν τοῖς φήμασι, impetere rumoribus*; to gall and vex him with rumours and reports. Not without cause therefore hath the Holy Ghost resembled the tongues of such men to 'the tongue of a serpent,' Ps. cxl. 3, which is very poisonous; to 'a razor,' Ps. lii. 2, which is very sharp; and to 'a sharp sword,' Ps. lvii. 4, that pierceth deep; their teeth to 'spears and arrows,' which are mortal instruments; their throats to an 'open sepulchre,' Ps. v. 9, that devoureth much; and their words to 'the poison of adders,' Ps. cxl. 3, which is a most venomous and pestilent poison.

How watchful now ought we to be over our tongues, whereby so great wrong may be done to man! The tongue stands in a most slippery place; words are out of the mouth many times before a man is aware of them; the more watchful therefore we ought to be. With the tongue 'we bless God,' James iii. 9. Shall we therewith 'blaspheme men, who are made after the similitude of God? Shall there proceed out of the same mouth blessing and

¹ Sec. 66.

cursing? My brethren, these things ought not to be so.' As we make conscience of dishonouring God by impious and profane speeches directly uttered against his divine Majesty, so let us take heed of collateral blasphemy against such as bear his image. He that said, 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain,' said also, 'Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.' Now if thou blaspheme not the name of God, yet if thou belie thy brother, 'thou art become a transgressor of the law.' Let, therefore, that reverent respect which thou bearest to the name of God work in thee a due respect to the name of man, that thou do no wrong thereto.

Sec. 74. *Of censuring all alike.*

IX. *Passion makes men judge all alike.*¹ True it is that by reason of that natural corruption which hath infected all mankind, all are alike. 'There is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,' Rom. iii. 22, 23. Thus a prophet, and an apostle also, Ps. xiv. 3; Rom. iii. 10, not in passion, but by immediate instinct of the Spirit, said, 'There is none righteous, no not one.' Yea, in this sense the apostle useth the very words that are here used, 'Every man is a liar,' chap. iii. 4, and yet no man unjustly blamed. But to judge such as have the Spirit of God in them, and are in what they speak guided by the Spirit of God, yea, and bring their message from God, to judge them to be as natural unregenerate men are, 'liars,' this is a most unjust imputation. Yet thus did passion make this prophet judge the prophets of the Lord that came to him in the name of the Lord, with the word of the Lord, to be. Both passion and hardness of heart made Pharaoh, Exod. vii. 11, judge Moses and Aaron to be like to the sorcerers and magicians of Egypt. So did Sennacherib, 2 Kings xix. 11, judge Hezekiah and his people and kingdom to be no better than the kings, people, and kingdoms of other nations. It is oft noted of the Jews—Jer. v. 31; Lam. ii. 14; Zech. xiii. 4; Micah iii. 5—that they gave no more heed to such faithful prophets as the Lord sent than to such false prophets as ran of themselves, and were not sent; who spake a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the

¹ Sec. 66.

Lord. Yea, many times more credit was given to such false prophets than to true ones, 1 Kings xxii. 8; Jer. xviii. 18, xxxvii. 19.

Passion in the soul is as colour in glass. Now by experience we know that what a man looketh upon through coloured glass appears to him to be of the same colour that the glass is of, though it be in truth of another colour. All objects are presented through such a glass in one and the same colour. So to a man in passion all men seem alike—all liars, all deceitful, all unjust, all unmerciful, all as one. Hence these or such like speeches oft come from them, I will believe no man; I will trust no man; no man will deal faithfully with me; none can do me any good.

It is on this ground very requisite that men in passion, or overwhelmed with affliction, learn to suspect themselves, and to suppose that they may be deceived. We use thus to persuade men that by sickness are distempered in their taste, and cannot discern any difference betwixt meats, but loathe all alike, to believe others that have both good understanding of what is wholesome and hurtful, and also a taste well tempered, and accordingly against their own distempered humour to take and eat that which those others do offer unto them for their good. Many that in passion have had a very ill opinion of their best friends, and been moved to inveigh against them most bitterly, when the passion hath been over have been very sorry for that wrong they did, and much repented the same. If such would have suspected themselves they might have prevented that occasion of after-repentance. It is a kind of madness not to think and know that lies cannot long deceive, and that it is night while¹ the day shineth out.² Knowledge of truth doth as evidently discover a lie as the sun dispels darkness.

If such general censures proceeding from men in passion be blameworthy, (for here the prophet acknowledgeth it so to be,) what are they when they come from men in cold blood, (as we speak,) when there is no affliction to vex and grieve them, no occasion to anger them, no great cause to stir up any passion in them, except a malevolent humour in

themselves? Too too frequent are such censures, and that most commonly when such as by function, profession, or any other like relation, have dependence on God. Thus if some ministers be observed to be proud, covetous, licentious, or otherwise vicious, a general imputation shall be laid upon all: All ministers are thus and thus; so, on like grounds, all professors are hypocrites, all frequenters of sermons are busybodies, all that make conscience of swearing are liars, &c. Thus in other cases, All tradesmen are cozeners, all citizens are usurers, all physicians are hard-hearted, all lawyers are unconscionable, all officers are bribers, all patrons are simoniacal, all courtiers are proud, all scholars are vainglorious, all husbands are slaves, all wives will be masters, all servants are idle. Yea, it is usual thus to impeach all of a nation, : as, All Spaniards are proud, all Italians are Machiavellians, all Frenchmen are false-hearted, all Dutchmen are drunkards, all Scotchmen are treacherous, all Englishmen are fantastical. Such general censures cannot be but unjust censures, and yet too too frequent they are.

Sec. 75. *Of the mixture of faith and fear.*

X. *Faith and fear may be mixed together.*¹ After Abraham had so believed as 'his faith was counted to him for righteousness,' Gen. xv. 6; he said, 'They will slay me for my wife's sake,' Gen. xx. 11, which argued much fear. Of faithful Jacob it is said, 'He was greatly afraid,' Gen. xxxii. 7. He that said, 'I will call upon the Lord and he shall save me,' Ps. lv. 5, 16, an undoubted evidence of faith, said also in the very same psalm, 'Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me,' an apparent sign of fear. Oft doth Christ upbraid fear even to his believing disciples, Mat. viii. 26, xiv. 31; Luke xxiv. 37. Of Peter it is noted, after that he was endued with an extraordinary measure of faith and other gifts, that he feared them which were of the circumcision, Gal. ii. 12.

That which the apostle saith of knowledge, 1 Cor. xiii. 9, is true of faith, and of all other graces for the time of this life, 'We believe in part.' So much as wanteth in man of the perfection of faith, fear filleth up: as air filleth up so much of a vessel as

¹ That is, 'until.'—Ed.

² Hæc est vere dementia, non cogitare, nec scire quod mendacia non diu fallant; noctemque tamdiu esse, quamdiu illucescat dies.—*Cypr. Epist.*, lib. i. ep. 3.

¹ Sec. 66.

wanteth water or other liquor. Fear to the soul of man is as Amalek to Israel: and faith as Moses, Exod. xvii. 8, &c. Fear is ready on all-occasions to invade the soul. If faith wax faint, and let down her hand, fear prevails. Yea, as the two houses of David and Saul were together in Israel, 2 Sam. iii. 1, and maintained war one against the other, so do fear and faith in the same souls. But as faith waxeth stronger and stronger, fear will wax weaker and weaker.

This mixture putteth us in mind of sundry duties, as,—

1. To bear with the infirmities of saints, Gal. vi. 1.
2. To be watchful over ourselves, Mat. xxvi. 41.
3. To beware of presumption, Mat. xxvi. 35.
4. To take heed of grieving the Spirit, Eph. iv. 30.
5. To pray for increase of faith, Luke xvii. 5.
6. To stir up the gift of God in us, 2 Tim. i. 6.
7. To check ourselves for doubting, Ps. xlii. 5.

Much comfort may hence arise to such as mislike this fruit of the weakness of the flesh in them, and thereupon use what means they can and do their endeavour to cast off this fear. If notwithstanding their grief for it, and strife against it, they find themselves still subject thereto, let them not thereupon question the truth of their faith because of that fear which appears to be in them. Their case in this case is no other than hath been evidenced to be the case of many of God's ancient worthies. Such fear coming not from malice, nor from pride, or contempt of any charge given unto them by the Lord, but from the infirmity of the flesh, God would not impute it to his people.¹

Sec. 76. *Of the interpretation and resolution of the twelfth verse.*

Ver. 12. *What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?*

Here the prophet returneth to his protestation: which being generally manifested, ver. 9, 'I will walk, &c., is here more particularly expressed.

This is set out.²—

¹ Timorem non de malitia, neque de superbia, vel contemptu præcepti dominici, sed de animi infirmitate venientem noluit Dominus imputare.—*Aug. Quæst. sub. Jos.*, lib. vi cap. ult.

² Sec. 2.

1. By way of profession in relation to himself, 'I will,' &c.

2. By way of provocation in relation to others, ver. 19, 'praise ye,' &c.

His profession is propounded, repeated.

In his first propounding of it we may note,—

1. The manner, ver. 12.

2. The matter, ver. 13.

3. The motives, ver. 14–16.

The manner of expressing his profession is very elegant by a rhetorical addubitation, (*ἀπολογία*), wherein he reasoneth with himself about the duty to be performed.

Of this addubitation and kind of reasoning there be two parts,—

1. A question, ver. 12.

2. An answer, ver. 13, which declareth the matter.

As the English word, *render*, so the Hebrew **שׁוּב** importeth a kind of requital. It is attributed to God and man, and that in relation to a good thing done, and signifieth to *reward*; or to an evil, and signifieth to *revenge*.

Where David saith of God, 'According to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me,' Ps. xviii. 20, he useth this word, **יָשׁוּב**; and where he prayeth to God for vengeance on the wicked, thus, 'Render to them their desert,' Ps. xxviii. 4, **הַשֵּׁב**. This word is also used where the brethren of Joseph say of him, 'He will certainly requite us all the evil which we have done unto him,' Gen. l. 15;¹ and where the king of Israel giveth this charge for the Shunammite, 'Restore all that was hers,' 2 Kings viii. 6, **הַשִּׁיב**. Here it is attributed to man in relation to God, but not as importing any possibility of satisfaction, but only a forwardness to do anything that might be acceptable to God.

The word translated *benefits*, **תְּנוּבוֹת**, is derived of that verb which, in the 7th verse, is translated *dealt bountifully*, **נָבַל**. These in relation to God he styeth **HIS**, *his benefits*, to testify his acknowledgment of the good things which he had received to come from God, and to be given by him.

He addeth that general particle **ALL**, to shew that, from that present benefit which God had conferred upon him, his heart was extended unto a considera-

¹ **יָשׁוּב הַשֵּׁב** reddendo reddet.

tion of other favours which the Lord from time to time had done him.

The word translated *towards me*, עָלַי, properly signifieth *over* or *above me*: for it cometh from a verb that signifieth to *ascend*; and to express the emphasis thereof some thus translate it, *All thy benefits go over me*.¹ But the preposition doth oft signify, as our English translateth it, *towards me*; and it may very fitly be so taken in this place.

The former part of the verse, set out interrogatively by way of question, 'What shall I render to the Lord?' manifesteth both an earnest desire to be truly and thoroughly informed of whatsoever may be acceptable and pleasing to the Lord, and also a settled resolution indeed to perform whatsoever he shall be informed of concerning that point.

The latter part, 'All his benefits are towards me,' are added as a reason of his resolution. The first participle, *for*, is not in the original. It maketh the sense somewhat doubtful. Some set it down as a preposition, without any stop betwixt the former and this part, making but one entire clause of all, and setting the interrogative point in the end of all, thus, 'What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?'² Others make two distinct sentences, and place the interrogative in the end of the first clause, thus, 'What shall I render to the Lord? all his benefits are towards me.'³ The king's translators set a colon betwixt the two parts, which doth so distinguish them as two sentences: this difference is not great. Howsoever the sentences be pointed, it is evident that the latter is added as a reason of the former. He was inquisitive what to render to God, because God had been beneficial to him.

Behold here a grateful disposition, which is manifested,

By his inquisition, profession.

In the former there is considerable

1. The subject, or matter inquired after, 'What shall I render?'

2. The object, or person concerning whom the inquiry is made, 'The Lord.'

The latter manifesteth the just occasion of the former, 'his benefits;' which are set out,

1. By an amplification, 'all;'

2. By an application, 'towards me.'

These several branches note out sundry properties of a grateful mind.

The inquisition, 'What shall I?' &c., sheweth that—

I. Gratefulness makes men inquisitive.

The thing inquired after being indefinitely set down, ('What?') implieth that—

II. A grateful mind is ready to do anything.

The person (the Lord) for whose sake this inquiry is made declareth that—

III. True gratefulness hath especial relation to the Lord.

The reason hereof being his benefits, 'giveth evidence that—

IV. A right understanding of God's benefits worketh gratefulness.

The ample mention of God's benefits in this general participle, 'all,' manifesteth that—

V. Gratefulness raiseth the mind from some favours to all.

The application of these benefits to himself in this phrase, 'towards me,' giveth proof that—

VI. Sense of God's kindness to one's self doth most enlarge the heart to thankfulness.

The prophet's profession of God's benefits, thus: All his benefits are towards me, demonstrateth that—

VII. Gratefulness works acknowledgment of kindness.

Sec. 77. Of the property of gratefulness to make men inquisitive.

I. *Gratefulness makes men inquisitive.*¹ All manner of gratefulness, whether to God or man, hath this property. When David thought on Jonathan's kindness to him, though Jonathan were dead, yet he inquireth whether 'any were left of the house of Saul, that he might shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake,' 2 Sam. ix. 1. And when he considered how God had established peace to his people, first he inquireth and consulteth about bringing the ark to the tabernacle, 1 Chron. xiii. 2, and then adviseth about building a temple for the Lord, chap. xvii. 1. Hypocrites had learned this of the upright, and therefore they from teeth outward are inquisitive, and say,

¹ עָלַי Omnia beneficio tua superant me.—Trem. et Jun.

² Genev. interpr.

³ Trem. et Jun.

¹ Sec. 70.

'Wherewith shall I come before the Lord?' &c., Micah vi. 6, &c.

In grateful persons there is a good and high esteem of the kindness that is shewed to them. With this esteem the heart is affected. True affection of the heart is of a hot temper. It can no more be suppressed and kept within the heart than a hot vapour, which, the more it is suppressed the more violent it waxeth, till it have got vent. Such an affection, therefore, will shew itself. And that it may manifest itself in the best manner, to the best content of him to whom they intend their thankfulness, they content not themselves with that which may first rise in their mind, or offer itself to their thought, but diligently inquire what may give best content and what may be most acceptable;¹ which they are the rather moved to do because they can do or give nothing worthy of God and his kindness to them.

By this outward evidence may men give evidence of their inward disposition, and make others see how they are affected with the kindnesses that are done to them. They who care not to know what may be acceptable to such as do good to them have assuredly an ungrateful heart. How can it be thought that they would do the things that please, when they care not to know what may please? By this may grateful subjects, people, children, servants, friends, and neighbours be known; yea, by this may grateful subjects, people, children, and servants of the great Lord of heaven and earth be known, if, at least, their inquiring after that which may be acceptable to God come from an upright and honest heart, and from a full and faithful purpose to perform what they shall be rightly informed in, and indeed to render what they shall learn to be acceptable to the Lord.

They who are so minded have an excellent help to be well informed. That help is God's word, which distinctly and sufficiently revealeth what is the 'good, acceptable, and perfect will of God.' Let all such, therefore, as are entirely provoked to inquire after that which may be pleasing to God by the Holy Scriptures, 'prove,' Rom. xii. 2, and 'understand,' Eph. v. 17, the same. 'Search the Scriptures,'

¹ Dabo quidem quicquid in me primum est; sed nihil dignum dare poterō.—*Jerome, Comment. in Micah vi.*

saith our Lord Christ, 'for they are they which testify of me,' John v. 39. They testify of him what he is. They testify of him what he accepteth, what he approveth, in what and by what he accounteth himself honoured, and sufficiently recompensed for the kindness he sheweth.

Sec. 78. *Of a second property of gratefulness to do anything.*

II. *A grateful mind is ready to do anything.*¹ The prophet doth not here determine any set and particular things which he would be willing to render, but without limitation or exception of anything, saith indefinitely, 'What, what shall I render?' When Ahasuerus had heard out of the Chronicles what a great good turn Mordecai had done him, in revealing a dangerous treason plotted against his life, in true desire of thankful requital he saith, 'What shall be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour?' Esth. vi. 6. He prescribeth not any particular thing, but inquireth wherein he may make the best requital; and it appeareth that he did make that inquiry with a true intent to do anything; for though Haman through his ambition (supposing that the honour should have been done to himself) advised the king to do more than was meet to be done to a subject, yet the king commanded all to be done to Mordecai. Though David was not permitted to build a temple for the Lord, yet such was his desire to testify his grateful mind to God, as he prepared what he could, even with all his might, for the building thereof, 1 Chron. xxix. 2. Zaccheus was so ravished with that favour and honour that Christ did him in coming to his house, as in way of gratefulness he giveth half of his goods to the poor, Luke xix. 8, and promiseth to restore fourfold to all whom he had wronged.

Gratefulness so enamoureth the soul of a man, as it makes him think that he can never do enough, and therefore he is ready to do anything that he may and can do. It will not suffer a man to hold anything too dear for him on whom his thankful mind is set,—especially when such a mind is set on God, who every way infinitely surpasseth us; who is so absolutely perfect in himself, as he needeth nothing that we have or can do, nor can receive

¹ Sec. 76.

anything but that which is his own, yet daily ladeth with all manner of blessings us who are less than any of his mercies, most unworthy of the least. Who, then, would not willingly and gladly have what he might render to the Lord his God?¹

Behold here the most ready way that possibly can be prescribed to bring men to endeavour with the uttermost of their power in all things to please the Lord. Work in them such an apprehension, a sense of God's kindness to them, as their hearts may be stirred up to thankfulness. Then nor hope of reward, nor fear of revenge, can so incite or quicken them up to any duty, as their own grateful disposition. An ingenuous and generous mind (as every grateful mind is) will do much more in thankfulness for a kindness done, than in expectation of a kindness to come. Persuade men, therefore, of the goodness and kindness that God hath done for them, as you desire that they should be willing, ready, and forward to do any duty to God.

Sec. 79. *Of a third property of right thanksgiving, to render it to God.*

III. *True gratefulness hath especial relation to the Lord.*² A man that is well instructed in the right form and due manner of thanksgiving will especially return all thanks to God, whether it be for such benefits as come immediately from himself, as all those extraordinary benefits, whereof any that took due notice might say, 'This is the finger of God,' or, 'This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes,'—(for such as these, Moses and the men of Israel, Exod. xv. 1, Miriam, ver. 20, and the women of Israel gave solemn thanks to God,)—or those ordinary benefits, to the conferring whereof man addeth no help, as the shining of the sun, the courses of the moon, the former and latter rain, the bounds set to the sea, the sweet springs and rivers of water passing through the earth, and many other such as are reckoned up in Ps. civ., for which praise is there given to God, or for such benefits as are conferred upon us by the ministry of man. Thus Melchizedek, Gen. xiv. 20, blessed God that victory which

Abraham had gotten over his enemies; David, 1 Sam. xxv. 32; 1 Chron. xxix. 13, blessed God for that counsel which wise Abigail gave him; and for those bountiful gifts which he, his princes and people, contributed towards the house of God; and the saints, 2 Cor. ix. 13, gave thanks to God for the liberality of the Christians at Macedonia. So clear is the point of returning thanks to God for all manner of benefits, as besides the many simple forms of giving thanks to God set down throughout the whole Scripture, but especially in the book of Psalms, when man cometh in any competition with God about this matter, he is utterly excluded, as where the psalmist,¹ negatively of man, but affirmatively of God, saith, 'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory.' If ye well observe the precepts of Scripture for performing this duty of thanksgiving, ye shall find this object, the Lord, either plainly expressed, or necessarily understood. How frequent are these phrases, 'Praise the Lord; give thanks to God.' Yea, to demonstrate that God is the proper object of praise, these words, 'Praise ye the Lord,' הללו יהוה, are so compounded together, as they make but one word in Hebrew, which is this Hallelujah.

All manner of benefits do originally come from God.² If we receive any mediately by the ministry of man, or of any other creature, they are therein the instruments and hands of God, whereby he reacheth out unto us, and conferreth upon us his benefits. The benefits which we receive from a wise king, just magistrates, faithful ministers, conscientious lawyers, skilful physicians, honest tradesmen, industrious husbandmen, or which any receive from good husbands or wives, provident parents, merciful masters, diligent and trusty servants, or any other persons, are God's benefits. It is therefore most due that we inquire what may be rendered to the Lord for them.

Learn we hereby in all manner of benefits to roll up our eyes to God, and as we taste of the sweetness of them, so to lift up a thankful heart to him that giveth them. It is a swinish part to eat the mast

¹ Quis non appetat gaudebundus et lætus in quo aliquid et ipse Domino suo retribuat?—*Cyp. Epist.*, lib. ii. cap. 25.

² Sec. 76. Semper habende gratiæ, et nemini alteri nisi soli Deo.—*Chrys.*, hom. 2, in 1 Cor. i.

¹ Ps. cxv. 1, Totum supernæ gratiæ tribuamus.—*Chrys.*, hom. 21 in Gen. 5; Ps. cxlviii.; Eph. v. 20.

² See 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. 3, part 2, sec. 60, 61.

that falleth from a tree, and not to lift up an eye to the tree whence it falleth. It is not enough to render anything to man, or to any other creature, for the benefits we have. The prophet's query is, 'What shall I render to the Lord?' To render anything to the creature and nothing to the creator, is to neglect the principal donor; yea, to think more highly of the servant than of the master, of man than of God, which is no better then idolatry. When therefore thou hast a thought of rendering, inquire what thou mayest render to God, what may be pleasing and acceptable to him; for which we had a direction before.¹

Sec. 80. *Of the consideration of God's benefits working gratefulness.*

IV. *A right understanding of God's benefits works gratefulness.*² On this ground, that the psalmist's soul did right well know God's works, Ps. cxxxix. 14, he maketh this inference, 'I will praise thee.' When the Israelites, Ps. cvi. 12, had such evidence of God's providence over them, as they believed his words, then they sang his praise. To induce men to be 'thankful unto God, and to bless his name,' Ps. c. 3, 4, the psalmist adviseth men to take notice of the kindnesses of God towards them.

Hereby is man convinced of the equity of the duty; which is an especial means to work upon the conscience, and provoke him to perform that which in his judgment he seeth to be most just and meet that it should be performed.

By this take notice of a main reason of man's ingratitude. The benefits of the Lord which occasion matter of thanksgiving are either not at all observed, but passed over without regard; or else soon forgotten. When the Lord by his prophet upbraideth to the Israelites their great ingratitude, he rendereth this reason thereof, 'Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider,' Isa. i. 3. And when the psalmist speaketh of their like ingratitude, he rendereth this reason, 'They forgat God their Saviour, which had done great things in Egypt,' Ps. cvi. 21. Where there is no knowledge of a benefit, there can be no good esteem thereof. What is not esteemed cannot be affected. No man will inquire what he may render for that which he

¹ Sec. 77, 78.

² Sec. 76.

affects not. Again that which is forgotten is as not known, as not esteemed, as not affected. They therefore that either take no notice of God's benefits or soon forget them after they have once known them, must needs be ungrateful. But without all doubt, remembrance of kindness incites gratefulness.¹

To prevent this crime of ingratitude, a crime most odious to God and man—

1. Be diligent in observing God's benefits, Ps. lxxxv. 8.

2. Oft and seriously meditate thereon, that they may not slip out of thy mind and memory, Ps. lxxvii. 11, 12.

3. Speak of them to others, as he that said, 'Come here, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul,' Ps. lxxvi. 16.

This is the way to make thee see and say, 'God's benefits are toward me,' and thereupon in testimony of gratefulness heartily to inquire, 'What shall I render to the Lord?'

Sec. 81. *Of a fourth property of gratitude, by one kindness to be put in mind of many.*

V. *Gratefulness raiseth the mind from some favours to all.*² This general particle, *all*, is not so strictly to be taken as if no favour or benefit were to be left out, for so many are the benefits which God from time to time doth bestow upon us, as it is not possible to fasten our mind upon them all, but it is to be taken of the several kinds of God's benefits, as general, particular, public, private, temporal, spiritual, &c., and of as many several and distinct branches of these as we can. Thus, when David was settled in his kingdom, and thereupon took occasion to praise God, in his psalm of praise—compare 1 Chron. xvi. 8, &c. with Ps. cxv. 1, &c.; read Ps. lxxviii. to the end—he reckoneth up all those kindnesses which God had done to his people from the time of their first fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; yea, he giveth this express charge, 'Talk ye of all his wondrous works,' Ps. cv. 2; so Jehosha-

¹ Non dubium quin excitet ad laudandum beneficiorum recordatio.—*Bern. super Cant.*, serm. 10.

² See sec. 76.

phat, 2 Chron. xx. 21, when he consulted, upon the promise of victory which God by his prophet had given him, to praise the Lord, the 136th psalm, which containeth a catalogue of all God's mercies, was appointed to be sung. That sweet singer of Israel, who well knew how to order his forms of praise to God, as affirmatively he promiseth to 'shew forth all God's marvellous works,' Ps. ix. 1, so he giveth a negative charge to his soul 'not to forget all,' or any¹ 'of his benefits,' Ps. ciii. 2.

As more fuel added to fire maketh the flame the greater, so more benefits brought to a heart set on fire to praise the Lord, enlargeth it the more, and inflameth it with a holy zeal.

This pattern is worthy our imitation, and affordeth an excellent rule to stir us up heartily, cheerfully, and zealously to praise the Lord. The rule is this, to be so acquainted with the several kinds of God's benefits, as on all occasions they may be presented to our minds. Without all question, the prophet's mind was upon many and sundry sorts of benefits when he said, 'all his benefits are towards me.' He did not confusedly use this general particule, 'all, as many do when they profess to thank God for all his benefits, and yet, have none at all in their minds. His spirit was otherwise disposed than to content itself with such a general, indefinite, cold, loose, formal form of acknowledging God's benefits. If we would accustom ourselves to make diaries of God's blessings on us, and when we are before God recount them in order, and oft call to mind how 'from our mother's womb he hath been our God,' Ps. xxii. 10, how, in every state and degree of our age he hath blessed us, and that with all manner of blessings, temporal and spiritual, privative and positive, conferred on ourselves and those that belong unto us, yea, on the nation, city, parish, or family where we live, then would not such a general clause as this, 'all his benefits are toward me,' be an idle clause, but the mind which is large in apprehension, where it is well informed, would comprise much matter on it, even so much as would set the heart on fire with zeal.²

¹ A בל, per transpositionem et transmutationem ב in ד fit *ullus*.

² See in 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. iii. part 2, secs. 64, 65, &c., a catalogue of benefits.

Sec. 82. *Of particular sense of kindness whereby the heart is stirred up to thankfulness.*

VI. *Sense of God's kindness to one's self doth most enlarge the heart to thankfulness.*¹ Words of particular relation betwixt God that is praised and the persons that praise him, used in forms of praise, give good proof to this point. Such are these: 'O Lord, my God,' Ps. xxx. 12; 'My strength, my defence, the God of my mercy,' Ps. lix. 17; 'My rock, my fortress, my deliverer, my buckler, the horn of my salvation, mine high tower,' &c., Ps. xviii. 2. That which here is generally implied under this clause, 'All his benefits towards me,' is in sundry particulars exemplified throughout the whole book of Psalms. Take a few instances for many: 'Thou hast maintained my right, and my cause,' Ps. ix. 4; 'He took me, he drew me out of many waters, he delivered me, he was my stay,' &c., Ps. xviii. 16, 17. In particular, let the five first verses of the 103d Psalm be well observed for this purpose.

Men are most sensible of kindnesses done to themselves, the sweetness whereof their own souls do taste. Now, according to the taste and sense of a kindness is the heart quickened and stirred up to thankfulness. Though it be an effect of natural self-love, to affect the heart with such good things as a man himself is made partaker of, yet is it not against spiritual love to make an advantage thereof, and to use that affection of the heart to kindle and inflame our zeal unto a more fervent manner of praising God.

Among other mercies take especial notice of such as in particular concern thyself, as he that said, 'I will declare what God hath done for my soul.' In this consideration first mark such as are most proper and peculiar to thyself, whereof thou mayest say, 'He hath not dealt so with others,' Ps. lxxvi. 16. So did he who said, 'He chose David his servant,' &c., Ps. lxxviii. 70. Then observe what part thou hast in such as are common with others. And here consider what relation there is betwixt thee and those others, whether they be such as are committed to thy charge, nearly united to thee, of the same family, or alliance, or parish, or incorporation, or

¹ Sec. 76.

nation, or profession. Near relations will affect our hearts for benefits bestowed on them to whom we are united, as if they were bestowed on ourselves. Instance that affection which was wrought in the heart of Abraham's servant, Gen. xxiv. 17, for the good success of his master's business, and the praise which he gave to God for the same. If in common blessings we find ourselves to have a share, we shall be the more quickened to give thanks for the same, as the people that rejoiced at the coronation of Solomon, 1 Kings i. 40.

Who are they that are now best settled to give praise to God for this admirable decrease of the sickness? Not they who thought it not infectious, nor they who thought they had such antidotes as the plague could not seize on their vital parts; nor they who thought themselves safe enough in the country. But they, who conceiving themselves to be in as great danger as others, perceived a special care of God over them in preserving them. That benefit which a man knows himself to receive from the light of the sun, influence of the heavens, sweetness of the air, and other like common blessings, will make him heartily to bless God for them. Search, therefore, narrowly, wherein God's benefits have been towards thee in special. Do this daily and hourly, not only about common benefits, which the maker of all conferreth on all, but about private and daily blessings,¹ and thou wilt diligently inquire what thou mayest render to him.

Sec. 83. *Of a fifth property of gratitude to be provoked thereby to make profession of benefits.*

VII. *Gratefulness works acknowledgment of kindness.*² All the acknowledgments which in Scripture are recorded to be made by any of the saints of God's benefits and mercies towards them, are demonstratious hereof: as of Noah, Gen. viii. 20; Abraham, chap. xii. 7; Melchizedek, chap. xiv. 20; Sarah, chap. xxi. 6; Abraham's servant, chap. xxiv. 27; Isaac, chap. xxvi. 22, 25; Jacob, chap. xxxii. 10; and many others.

Acknowledgment of kindness maketh much to the

¹ *Unum hoc obsecro, singulis diebus et horis suppetemus nobiscum, non communia tantum beneficia, que toti nature omnium opifex contulit, sed et privata et quotidiana, &c.—Chrys., hom. 26, in Gen. viii., et hom. 72, ad Pop.*

² *Sec. 76.*

honour of him that hath done the kindness. But he that indeed hath a grateful mind desireth to do all the honour that he can to the author of the kindness wherewith he is affected. We heard before (sec. 77) how he requireth what he may render. Will not then that mind which maketh him so inquisitive to be further instructed in what he may do more, provoke him to do that which he cannot be ignorant to be acceptable? As for the Lord, he requireth thanksgiving in our words, not that he hath any need thereof, but that he may teach us to be thankful, and to acknowledge the donor of so great good things as he bestows.¹

Can we now imagine that they who conceal all kindnesses done to them are grateful persons? Were the nine lepers, that, being cured of their leprosy, made no profession thereof, thankful? If they were, wherein consisted the difference betwixt them and that one of whom Christ thus saith, 'Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger,' Luke xvii. 17, 18. As great an evidence of ingratitude it is to keep close, not to make known, not to acknowledge benefits, as can be given.

Shew me then thy gratitude by the effect thereof: 'Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.' Even to men are these benefits to be acknowledged. Thus Deborah acknowledged Jacl's kindness, Judges v. 24; David, Abigail's, 1 Sam. xxv. 33; Saul, David's, chap. xxiv. 19; and many other, other men's. Much more to God must his benefits be acknowledged, in regard of the multitude, greatness, freeness, needfulness, profitableness, and continuance of them, together with many other circumstances whereby they are much amplified. And so much the rather, because acknowledgment is all that we can render to God; and it is all that God doth expect, which yet he doth most graciously accept. Make this holy profession therefore of the Lord's benefits to God himself and to men; make it to God in secret and in public; make it at all times, in all places; make it while the

¹ *Dominus in sermonibus gratiarum actionem exigit, non quod ea ipse opus habeat, sed ut nos doceat gratos esse, et agnoscere tantorum honorum suppeditatorem.—Chrys., hom. 26 in Gen. viii.*

benefits are fresh before thee; lay up his benefits in thy memory, that thou mayest in future times again and again make it. Acknowledge the benefits which thou hast received, and thou shalt be sure to receive more. The tenth leper, which returned to give glory to God, received thereby another and a greater benefit, which was the cleansing of his soul from the leprosy of sin, as this phrase importeth, 'Thy faith hath saved thee,' Luke xvii. 19. He was cleansed of his bodily leprosy before he returned. There was then somewhat more intended by the pronouncing of this after his returning to glorify God. The other nine that returned were cleansed in their bodies. This was said to him as an evidence of a greater benefit than that which they received. For God's sake, therefore, who is thereby honoured, and for thine own sake, who gainest thereby more benefits, acknowledge God's benefits, and say, 'His benefits are towards me.'

Sec. 84. *Of the interpretation and resolution of the thirteenth verse.*

Ver. 13. *I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.*¹

The second part of the prophet's rhetorical addubitation is here expressed, which is an answer to his former question; whereby he sheweth that he made not the question simply on ignorance, as if he knew not what to render, but purposely to set out the great desire he had, and the forwardness that was in him to do, what he saw most meet to be done.

This phrase, 'cup of salvation,' is the most difficult and doubtful phrase of all the psalm. It is here figuratively used, and in that respect more subject to various interpretations. According to the divers significations of this word *cup*, (כוס) some take it one way, some another.²

1. It is taken for a part or portion; for in a cup

¹ Sec. 76.

² There was one John Lodwick, a Spaniard by nation, a monk by profession, who lived ten years together in England, lodging in a house by Bishopsgate, London, who day after day went forth in a beggar's attire, and as occasion was offered, belched forth most impious blasphemies against the blessed Trinity, especially against the sacred person of our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, whom he ordinarily called Devil, and against the Holy Scripture, for which he was convented before authority, and being convicted by witnesses

useth to be such a set portion of beer or wine, or physical potion, or such like thing, as may be thought fit for him to whom it is given; as where the psalmist saith, 'My cup runneth over,' Ps. xxiii. 5, his meaning is, the portion which thou hast given me is an abundant potion, even like a cup that runneth over.¹ On this ground, some² expound this place thus, 'I will thankfully take that portion which the Lord allots me, and use it to my salvation, calling on his name and worshipping him,' Isa. li. 17, 22; Mat. xx. 22.

2. A cup is put for affliction. For of old³ they were wont to put poison into cups, and make such as were adjudged to death, to drink thereof. After this manner were Soerates, Psammenitus, Phocion, Theramenes,⁴ and others put to death. Bitter things also are put into cups for medicines; and because afflictions are bitter, and as it were given to us by our wise and heavenly Father to drink, they are set out by a cup. Some therefore⁵ according to that signification thus expound this text, 'I will willingly drink the cup of affliction, which the Lord shall be pleased to give me, yea, though it be death, which will assuredly turn to my salvation.'

3. The passion of Christ is styled a cup, Mat. xxvi. 39; whereupon many⁶ imagine that the prophet hath here relation thereunto. An ancient father,⁷ saith that the Hebrew thus hath it, 'I will take the cup of Jesus;' which an angel thus interprets, 'thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall

and by his own confession, was sent over to Spain, there to be proceeded against, in the year of our Lord 1618. This blasphemous heretic accounting the things that were written by the prophets and apostles to be mere dotages, said that David was one of the worst, and that in penning this psalm, he shewed himself to be a drunkard and a liar, by reason of this and the tenth verse. As if by taking the cup of salvation, he had intended the drinking of a health, as drunkards use to do. Whereby we see how dangerous it may be to take that literally, which is meant metaphorically.

¹ Per calicem mensura intelligitur, &c.—*Jerome, Comment. in hunc loc.* ² Trevet., Genebrad.

³ Sollicitoque bibas veluti doctissimus olium,

In perturbato quod bibit ore reus.—*Ovid. in Ibid.*

⁴ Herod., lib. iii.; Cic. Tusc., lib. i.; Pluta. in vit. Phoc.

⁵ Origen, Hieron, Augustine, Plac., Parm.

⁶ Lorinus alique Papist.

⁷ In Hebræo ita habet, calicem Jesu accipiam, &c.—*Jerome, Comment. in hunc loc.*

save his people.' Indeed, the Hebrew name translated Jesus, יהושע, is derived from a root that signifieth to save, ישע; but the word here used, ישועת, is of the feminine gender and plural number. Yet by that which follows it may be gathered that by this very Hebrew word, the same thing is meant as by the name Jesus, namely salvation. They who apply the cup of salvation to Christ's passion, take it passively for martyrdom, or suffering for Christ, and so it little differs from the former interpretation. They who in these senses expound this text, say, that thereby is rendered the greatest thing that can be rendered by man, even his life.

4. In Holy Scripture there is mention made of drink-offerings, Gen. xxxv. 14; Lev. xxiii. 13; Num. xv. 5; which were a certain quantity of wine that used to be poured out before the Lord; as the very notation of the word importeth, coming from a root נסך *effudit*, that signifieth to pour out. As the meat-offerings, so the drink-offerings were brought to the Lord in way of gratulation and thanksgiving. Some¹ therefore in allusion hereto so expound this text, as a promise and vow of the psalmist, to testify his public gratitude by such an external and solemn rite as in the law was prescribed. This he termeth a cup, because that drink-offering was contained in a cup, and poured out thereof; and he adds this epithet 'salvation,' because that rite was an acknowledgment of salvation, preservation and deliverance from the Lord.

5. After their solemn gratulatory sacrifices they were wont to have a feast. When David had brought the ark of God into the tabernacle, they offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, which being finished, 'he dealt to every one of Israel, both man and woman, to every one a loaf of bread, and a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine,' 1 Chron. xvi. 3. Hereby is implied that he made so bountiful a feast, as he had to give thereof to all the people there assembled. In this feast the master thereof was wont to take a great cup,² and in lifting it up to declare the occasion of that feast, and then in testimony of thankfulness to drink thereof to the guests, that they in order might pledge him. This

was called a cup of salvation, or deliverance, because they acknowledged by that use thereof that God had saved and delivered them. Almost in a like sense the apostle stytleth the sacramental cup, the cup of blessing.³

Here the prophet useth the plural number, thus, 'cup of salvations,'² whereby, after the Hebrew elegancy, he meaneth many deliverances, one after another; or some great and extraordinary deliverance which was instead of many, or which comprised many under it. The word translated *take* (נשא *a* נשא) properly signifieth to lift up, and in that respect may the more fitly be applied to the forementioned taking of the festival cup and lifting it up before the guests. Most of our later expositors³ of this psalm apply this phrase, 'I will take the cup of salvation' to the forenamed gratulatory drink-offering, or to the taking and lifting up of the cup of blessing in the feast, after the solemn sacrifice. Both of these import one and the same thing, which is, that saints of old were wont to testify their gratefulness for great deliverances with some outward solemn rite.

The former interpretations of this phrase, 'cup of salvation,' applied to a portion, or affliction, or martyrdom, or the passion of Christ, though simply considered in themselves they be truths, yet they are not so pertinent to this text as the two latter, of a gratulatory drink-offering or a festival cup: for, without question a solemn thanksgiving is here intended, as is afterward in the 17th verse plainly expressed.

The other clause that is added, 'and call upon the name of the Lord,' is the same that was before used, ver. 4, and expounded. Here again it is repeated, partly to shew that in the forementioned gratulatory rite he would worship God.⁴ He would do it piously and religiously; for prayer is an especial part of God's worship, partly to shew that though by God's delivering him he were now safe, and so had just occasion to praise God, yet would he not cease to pray unto God for continuance of his favour

¹ τὸ ποτήριον τῆς δωροδοκίας.—1 Cor. x. 17.

² כוס ישועות. Calicem salutum.—*Vatab.* Omnis salutis.—*Tremel.*

³ Calvin; Vatab.; Muscul; Moller; Montan; Aliique.

⁴ Nomen Dei colam.—*Vatabl.*

¹ Cajetan. Genebr.

² In mensa laticum libavit honorem, &c.—*Virg. Æn.* 1; *Turneb.* lib. xii. cap. 13; *Athe.*, lib. xi. cap. 11.

and blessing. He would both praise God and also pray unto him. Thus is the phrase of 'calling upon the name of the Lord' most properly taken.

This very duty of 'calling upon the name of the Lord' is again promised, and that as an appurtenance to thanksgiving, being added thereto in the 17th verse,¹ where I purpose to handle it in the general acception, as it signifieth worship done to God. Here I consider it in the particular and most proper signification, which is petition.

This verse being added as an answer to this clause, 'What shall I render to the Lord?' setteth out man's recompence to God.

It consisteth of two parts :

1. Gratulation.
2. Invocation.

The former is set out by a most solemn rite of rejoicing.

The latter is expressed by the action, 'I will call,' and by the object, 'upon the name of the Lord.'

The two main parts are joined together by a copulative particule, *and*.

Of the substance of solemn gratulation or thanksgiving sufficient hath been before delivered.²

The inference of this profession upon the former inquisition, this being an answer thereto, sheweth that—

I. Gratitude is the best recompence that man can render to God.

The manner of expressing it by a public rite of rejoicing teaches that—

II. Our inward motion of praising God must be manifested by some outward action of rejoicing.

Of the substance of invocation, even as it is here expressed, sufficient hath been delivered on the 4th verse.

The connexion of these two points, gratulation and invocation, importeth that—

III. With gratulation invocation must be joined.

The different manner of expressing invocation from that which was in the 4th verse,—for there it was set down as a thing performed in his trouble, 'Then called I,' &c. Here it is noted as a duty to come, which he promiseth to perform, 'I will call,' &c.; and that after his deliverance—implieth that—

IV. Prayer to God is to be continued after the thing prayed for is granted.

Sec. 85. *Of praise the best that man can render unto God.*

I. *Gratitude is the best recompence that man can render unto God.*¹ Surely this prophet that made such inquiry of what he might render unto God, if he had known a better would have here mentioned it. Where bulls, goats, and such like sacrifices are refused, it is said, 'Offer unto God thanksgiving,' Ps. l. 13, 14. Praise is one of the sacrifices with which 'God is well pleased,' Heb. xiii. 15, 16. Expressly it is said of praising God, that it 'pleaseth the Lord better than an ox or bullock,' Ps. lxxix. 30, 31, yet were those ordained for solemn sacrifices under the law; praise therefore is it which the psalmist doth especially vow to God, ver. 17.

God standeth in need of nothing that we can do or bestow. But we stand in need of all that is his.² Our thanks which we give him adds nothing to him, but makes him the more to respect us. By it, if it be rightly performed, God is acknowledged to be what he is, to give what he gives, and to do what he doth. More than this the creature cannot do; more than this the Creator nor exacteth nor expecteth, provided that it be not a mere lip-labour, but come from a heart thoroughly affected with his excellencies and kindnesses, and be ratified by an answerable carriage towards him.

More than monstrous in this respect must the sin of ingratitude needs be. It being only an acknowledgment of a truth, of such a truth as is most just and meet to be acknowledged; and this acknowledgment being all that the creature can do, and all that the Creator requireth, yet that wherein the Creator resteth fully contented, and that which he doth most graciously accept and highly esteem, what will they do or give that will not yield praise and give thanks to God? One would think that no man

¹ Sec. 83. *Aute omnia Deo gratias agamus, cui nihil gratius, nihil acceptius est.—Chrys., hom. 2, in 1 Cor. i.*

² *Deus alicujus nostri non eget, sed nos omnium quos illius sunt indigemus. Siquidem gratiarum actio illi quidem nihil omnino addit, nos autem illi magis familiares ponit.—Chrys., hom. 26, in Mat. viii.*

¹ See sec. 112.

² See sec. 76, &c., to this section.

should be guilty of this crime. But who is not guilty thereof more or less ?

For redress of this out-of-measure sinful sin, take due notice of the many, great, free, and constant mercies of God; and when through serious meditation thereon thou findest thine heart inflamed with desire to render something to the Lord, and thereupon art moved to inquire and say, 'What shall I render unto the Lord?' think of this answer made by the prophet. Vow praise to God. Give praise to God. Let praise be thy daily and evening sacrifice. It being the sweetest incense that by man can be offered to God, the best in the kind thereof, and the best also in God's account, let it never be wanting. 'In all things, at all times, give thanks unto God,' Eph. v. 20.

Sec. 86. *Of manifesting inward gratitude by outward gratulation.*

II. *Man's inward affection of praising God must be manifested by some outward action of rejoicing.*² For this we have precept and practice under the law and gospel. For the time of the law, Psalm lxxxi. giveth an excellent prescript. Answerable thereto was the practice of 'Moses and the men of Israel,' Exod. xv. 1, &c., who 'sung a song,' of praise to the Lord in testimony of their thankfulness for the great deliverance which God gave them from the Egyptians through the Red Sea, and of Miriam and the women following her 'with timbrels and with dances;' and of the women of Israel who, with singing and dancing and instruments of music, came to meet Saul and David after the overthrow of Goliath and flight of the Philistines, 1 Sam. xviii. 6; yea, and of David, who, after the settling of the ark in the tabernacle, had solemn offerings, and gave to all the people 'a loaf of bread, a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine,' 1 Chron. xvi. 3; and of Asa who, after his great victory over the Ethiopians, offered great offerings to the Lord, 2 Chron. xv. 11, &c.; and of Jehoshaphat, chap. xx. 28, who, with his people after their victory over the Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites, returned to Jerusalem 'with viols, harps, and trumpets.' So the Jews in Esther's time, and in Ezra his time, and at many

other times, Esth. ix. 17; Neh. viii. 10.¹ As the Jews were commanded with every sounding instrument to praise the Lord, so ought we with eyes, tongue, ears, hands, and all the body.

For the time of the gospel, St James giveth this advice, 'Is any merry? let him sing psalms,' James v. 13. St Paul, also, where he speaketh of giving thanks to God, he premiseth this direction, 'Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,' &c., Eph. v. 19, 20. In the primitive times of the church Christians were wont to have at that solemn time of thanksgiving, when the blessed sacrament of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus was celebrated, certain feasts, whereunto St Paul alludeth, 1 Cor. xi. 21, and which St Jude expreseth by the very name which was then given them, translated, love-feasts, or feasts of charity.²

By outward actions of rejoicing, if at least they be in their kind warrantable by the word of God, and for the manner of using them, if they be used moderately and temperately, as, and when they ought to be used, which are limitations that the heathen by the light of nature saw fit to be observed in matters of delight—I say, by outward actions of rejoicing.³

1. God himself is the more glorified; for we are commanded 'to glorify God in our body and in our spirit,' 1 Cor. vi. 20. 'God is indeed a Spirit, and they which worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth,' John iv. 24. Yet this hindereth not but that he may and must be also worshipped in body and in outward actions. He must ever be worshipped in spirit, whether with the body or without the body. Spiritual worship may be without bodily worship, and also stand with bodily worship; but bodily worship cannot stand without spiritual worship.

2. The spirits of others are stirred up to join with us in congratulation and mutual thanksgiving. When the people saw and heard Ezra blessing the

¹ Sicut Judei jubebantur omnis organi sono laudare Dominum, sic nos omni corpore laudare properemus; oculis, lingua, auribus, manibus hoc debemus efficere. — *Chrys.*, hom. 4, in Ps. cl.

² ἀγάπαι Jude 12. — *Cena nostra de nomine rationem suam ostendit; vocatur ἀγάπη, id quod dilectio penes Græcos est. — Tertul. Apol. advers. Gent. cap. 39.*

³ ἐπιθυμεῖ ὁ σὸφρων ὡν δεῖ καὶ ὄρα, καὶ ὄρα. — *Arist. Ethic.*, lib. cap. ult.

¹ See 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. ii. part 2, sec. 70, 71.

² Sec. 84.

Lord, they 'answered, Amen, amen, with lifting up their hands,' Neh. viii. 6. When Hezekiah made it known that he meant to celebrate a solemn passover, 'many of Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulon came thretho,' 2 Chron. xxx. 5, &c. This is one principal end of external rites of gratulation—mutually to stir up one another's spirit.

3. Our own spirits are much roused and quickened hereby. Outward gratulatory actions, as they manifest an inward grateful affection, so they are means, as it were by a reflection, to increase the heat of gratitude, and inflame our zealous affection the more. Now our dullness and coldness in all pious duties giveth evidence that all means that can be used for quickening our spirits, are little enough.

Too austere and severe are they who censure as unlawful, and condemn all cheerful rites and actions of gratulation. Their main ground is the evil consequence which followeth from thence. But that followeth not from a lawful use of warrantable rites, but from an abuse of them, which is indeed unlawful. If abuse of a thing were sufficient to prohibit the use of it, the use of the most necessary and bounden duties which the word commandeth should be prohibited. It is an especial point of wisdom to discern whence every evil ariseth, and accordingly to be so circumspect in avoiding the evil as a warrantable, commendable, needful, useful duty be not forborne thereby. The wise farmer neglecteth not to sow his ground because weeds use to grow among the corn. No wise man will forbid the drinking of wine because some by intemperancy are made drunk. Evil consequences arising from good things, give just occasion to be watchful over ourselves in the doing of those good things, that by our carelessness they prove not pernicious. So as it is not a sufficient plea for intemperancy, to say the thing that we do is lawful. He that hath warranted a thing to be done hath prescribed rules for the manner of doing it, by a due observation whereof good things will be well done.

In general, outward gratulatory actions must be—

1. Such as are approved by God himself, as those were which we noted in the proof of the point. For how can we think that those things which he approveth not will please him?

2. Such as may besem the occasion; even such

cheerful actions as may revive men's spirits; such also were those that are before mentioned. As outward rites of humiliation must be such as may humble the soul; so of gratulation, such as may quicken it, Ps. lxxxi. 1, &c.

3. Such as are not offensive; nor occasions to any corruption; as are drinking healths, especially on bare knees, and in measure above that which sober men are able to bear; lascivious dancing, revelling on the Lord's-days, and other the like.

Among other external rites of gratulation, that which is here intended (feasting) is a principal one. Thereof see 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. iii. part ii. sec. 73.

Sec. 87. *Of joining prayer with praise.*

III. *With gratulation invocation must be joined.*¹ As with our petitions we must join praises; so, with these, those. Prayer and praise are like two twins, which, though they have each of them their several and distinct members, yet by the navel are from their birth knit together, and so grow together, as if you force them asunder you kill them both; one without the other cannot live.² They are therefore in sacred Scripture oft joined together; sometimes one, sometimes another set in the former place, thus, 'In every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God,' Phil. iv. 6; 'Pray without ceasing; in every thing give thanks,' 1 Thes. v. 17, 18; 'Give thanks unto the Lord: call upon his name,' Ps. cv. 1; 'Praise the Lord: call upon his name,' Isa. xii. 4. Observe the forms of praises and of prayers noted in Scripture, and you shall find where the principal occasion hath been gratulation, supplication to be added; and also where the principal occasion hath been supplication, gratulation to be added.

Such is our estate here in this world, and such is God's dealing with us, as there never wanteth occasion of both. Never was any saint brought into so desperate a distress but that through the mist of his misery sweet beams of God's mercy have shined upon him. Nor ever was there any set in so bright

¹ Sec. 84.

² *Vide* Hippocrat de Nat pueri. Sec. 44, de Gemellorum partu. Item, lib. i. de Dieta. Sec. 23, ubi tres reddit rationes ob quas Gemelli fiunt similes inter se.

and clear a sunshine of God's favour but that some clouds have let fall showers of sorrows; if not in outward troubles, yet in regard of inward corruptions, yea, and in the thought or fear of some eclipses of that sunshine. Thus in greatest occasion of hearty thanksgiving there is just occasion of humble petition. And where there is most cause of humiliation, there is also much cause of exultation.

Herein lieth a main difference betwixt men's estates here and hereafter. Hereafter in heaven is nothing but matter of gratulation; in hell is nothing but matter of exclamation and ejaculation; on earth there is a mixture of both.

As for adding invocation to gratulation, which is the particular here expressed, thereby our sacrifice of praise is sanctified. 'As every creature of God is sanctified by the word and prayer,' 1 Tim. iv. 5, so the actions that we perform, not pious and religious duties, and among them not the most principal, praising of God, excepted. The word sheweth it to be a warrantable duty. Prayer presented to God in the name of Christ maketh it an acceptable duty. And whereas everything that passeth from us is not only imperfect through the defect thereof, but also polluted by that sink of corruption which is in us; by faithful prayer the defect is supplied, the pollution is purged away.

'What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder,' Mat. xix. 6. Let us for removing evils, or for conferring any good thing, give all due thanks, and never forget the one or the other; but withal give ourselves to prayer, to continual supplications, and much piety.¹

Sec. 88. *Of praying after God hath heard our prayer.*

IV. *Prayer to God is to be continued after the thing prayed for is granted.*² After that the psalmist, in testimony of God's hearing him, had said, 'I will praise thee, for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation,' he addeth, 'Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord: O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity,' Ps. cxviii. 21, 25. Many such passages

there be, as in the Psalms, so in other books of Scripture. Indefinite exhortations to pray—'in every season,' Eph. vi. 18, (*ἐν παντί καινῶν*); 'always,' Luke xviii. 1, (*πάντοτε*); 'without ceasing,' 1 Thes. iii. 17, (*ἀδιάλειπτως*);—give good evidence to the truth of the doctrine. For if after God hath heard us we cease to pray, how can we pray 'without ceasing,' 'always,' 'in every season'? None can doubt but that God heard the prayers of his faithful servants in all ages, yet never did any faithful servant of God thereupon cease calling upon God so long as he lived. It is the style of a true saint 'to call upon God,' 1 Cor. i. 2; Acts ix. 14; 2 Tim. ii. 19. If they should cease to call upon God, they would shew themselves most unworthy of that dignity.

1. Some things there be, which, though on God's part they be granted, yet are we not so settled and satisfied in the grant of them, but that we may waver and doubt in our faith about them; as remission of sins, reconciliation with God, justification in his sight, conquest over our corruptions, sanctifying graces, and such like. Other things there be whereof we stand in daily need, as food, sleep, apparel, and other bodily necessities, means of spiritual edification, and the assistance of God's Spirit. And many evils there be whereinto we may fall again and again after we are delivered from them, as sickness, pain, imprisonment, captivity, &c. Yea, and all manner of sins and temptations to sins. In these respects, for the settling of our faith in that which God hath granted, for the continual supply of such things as we continually stand in need of, for keeping us from falling again into such evils as we have been delivered from, it is needful, it is useful to call upon God again and again even after he hath heard our prayer.

2. All those general motives that are of force to incite us to call on God before he hath heard us—as God's command, God's worship, God's honour, the necessity, utility, efficacy, and dignity of prayer—are also of force to provoke us to call on him after he hath heard us, yea, as long as we live.¹

3. God's hearing our prayers is so far from making us cease to pray, as, among other motives,

¹ See 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. iii. part 1, sec. 15, 16, &c.

¹ Gratias Deo agamus propter teutonium resolutionem, et harum nunquam obliviscamur: orationibus vacemus, supplicationibus continuis, pietati multa.—*Chrys. ad Pop.*, hom. 17.

² Sec. 84.

it is a very forcible one to draw us to God again. For it giveth special evidence of God's readiness to hear and ableness to help, yea, and of his mind and goodwill to us in particular whom he hath heard.

How many are of a far other mind than this prophet was! If God have once heard them and delivered them from a distress, they have no care to call on God again, especially when they find and feel themselves safe. What! do they think that there is but one thing wherein God can do them good? Do they imagine themselves so secure as they cannot again fall into such need of God's help as they were in before? or can God be, as man, weary of doing good? Are many supplications and petitions troublesome to God? Fie of all such atheistical conceits! If any that have better understanding of God and of their own frailty, do notwithstanding fail in this duty, having had good success in their former performing it, they are either as beasts, which are affected only with that which is present, or worse than beasts, using God only for their own turns, and so care not to call on him but when they sensibly discern an absolute necessity for their own need and good.

For God's sake, for our own sake, let us in season and out of season, in distress and out of distress, to remove and prevent evils, to obtain and retain the things that are good for us, before and after God hath heard us, call upon his name. Let us that have called upon him say, 'We will call upon the name of the Lord.' Let this purpose be in our hearts; let this profession be in our mouths; let an answerable performance be in our deeds, and that so long as we shall abide in the land of the living, where the Lord is called upon, that so we may indeed be in the number, and of the number, of those that call upon the name of the Lord.

Sec. 89. *Of the sense and parts of the fourteenth verse.*

Ver. 14. *I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people.*

The first motive which the prophet useth to quicken him the more to perform the fore-mentioned duty of solemn praise is laid down in this verse.¹ It is taken from that bond whereby he had voluntarily tied himself, his vow.

¹ Sec. 2.

The argument may be thus framed,—

That which by vow I am bound to pay, I will pay.
But by vow I am bound to take the cup of salvation, &c.

Therefore I will take the cup of salvation, &c.

It appeareth by the manner of expressing this point, that in his distress he had vowed a solemn, public sacrifice of praise unto the Lord, if the Lord would be pleased to release him. For he saith not, I vow to pay this and that, but, I will pay what I have vowed.

The word thus translated, *I will pay*, אֶשְׁלַם, signifieth to finish and perfect a thing, and is here fitly used to shew, that a vow, till it be performed, is as an imperfect thing; performing of it is the perfecting of it, if at least it be rightly made, and rightly accomplished.

He mentioneth *vows*, נְדָרִי, in the plural number for emphasis' sake; either because he oft vowed one and the same thing, or because he vowed many things, or one solemn thing accompanied with many circumstances about the manner of performing it. Neither of these do so cross the other, but that all of them or many of them may stand together.

By a kind of property he applieth them to himself, ('my vows,') because he himself was the author of them; they were not imposed upon him, but he voluntarily bound himself thereto; and thereby he made them his own proper debt, which he himself stood bound to pay.

These vows were for performing of divine services, such as appertained only to the true God. Wherefore, as they were made, so he promiseth to perform them to the only true God, the Lord.

The latter clause setteth out the manner of performing the said vows; wherein—

1. He implieth the time when he would do it—now. This signifieth the present time, and is opposed to all procrastination and delay.

2. He intimateth the place—in the presence of people; in such places where people meet, which are public assemblies, and those not the least, but the greatest and solemnest assemblies, where not a few, but all the people meet. And that it might not be thought that he intended any profane assemblies, he adds this particle of limitation, *his*, which hath relation to the Lord; so as he meaneth all God's

people, who were wont all to meet together at the tabernacle, where God was most solemnly worshipped.

In this pattern we have the disposition of a saint delivered out of a distress.

His disposition is manifested two ways.

1. While he was in distress.
2. When he was delivered out of it.

The former is implied under the mention of vows. For from thence we may well infer that in his distress he made vows.

Here observe—

1. What was done : vows.
2. To whom? To the Lord.

The latter is expressed. In which expression is noted—

1. The matter or thing to be done : ‘I will pay my vows.’

2. The manner of doing it : and that in three branches :—

1. The time—without delay, speedily, now.
2. The place—in a most public place : ‘In the presence of all the people.’
3. The persons—saints, whom he styleth his people.

The thing implied, and taken for granted to be done, importeth that—

I. Vows may be made.

The object to whom they are directed, the Lord, declareth that—

II. Sacred vows must be made to God.

The promise of performing them, I will pay, sheweth that—

III. Vows made must be paid.

The time here set down being the present, now, importeth that—

IV. The first opportunity to pay a vow must be taken.

The place where he professeth to perform this duty is ‘in the presence of all people.’ It is very probable that his vows were made in secret betwixt God and himself. This promise, then, to perform them openly and publicly, intimateth that—

V. Vows secretly made may be openly performed.

The limitation of the persons with this particle of relation, *his*, which hath reference to God, doth us to wit that—

VI. Saints are fittest witnesses of sacred duties.

Sec. 90. *Of making vows to God.*

I. *Vows may be made.*

II. *Sacred vows must be made to God.*

Though these be two distinct points (for vows are made to others than to Jehovah, the true God. Idolaters make vows to their idols, Jer. xlv. 25, and men make vows one to another, and that not only impiously, but piously and justly also, as husband and wife one to another, and subjects to their governors, servants to their masters, and other to others) yet the vow which is here mentioned, and which throughout the Scripture (for the most part) is approved, being a sacred vow, which hath direct respect unto God, I will not sever these two doctrines, but handle them as one. For all that I shall speak of vows shall be of sacred ‘vows to the Lord.’ For proof whereof we have both divine precept and approved practice : Ps. lxxvi. 11 ; Isa. xix. 21 ; Gen. xxviii. 20, 21 ; Ps. lxi. 8.

According to the words of the second doctrine (under which the first is comprised, as the general nature¹ of a thing under every species and particular kind thereof) I intend to touch upon these two points :—

1. The nature of a vow. 2. The directing of it to God.

1. To a vow properly so called, two things are especially requisite : 1. Intention ; 2. Obtestation ; or, to speak more plainly, a deliberate purpose and an absolute promise. The former first bringeth on the latter. The latter fast bindeth the former. A true intention and deliberate purpose must of necessity go before, because otherwise a promise will not be made, (for who will promise that which he intends not,) or if it be made, there is little hope it will be performed ; or if it should be performed, yet the very making of it without an intention and purpose is a plain mocking of him who is a ‘searcher of the heart,’ Acts. i. 24, and ‘understandeth our thoughts afar off,’ Ps. cxxix. 2. This, therefore, is necessary, but not sufficient. For a vow bindeth, as we shall hereafter shew, but every purpose bindeth not. After St Paul was minded to come to Corinth, 2 Cor. i. 15, &c., he altered his purpose upon just occasions. Many purposes come into men’s minds

¹ Genus sub specie.

time after time. If they had the force of a binding vow, who should be loose? Nay, with how many bonds would every saint be bound? Their case would be inextricable. They would have so many fetters, and manacles, and chains on them, as they could not tell how to shake them off, how to rid themselves. Many weak Christians, that take every purpose for a vow, are exceedingly perplexed, partly through their care to perform those purposes, and partly through their grief at their failings in those performances, supposing that they have broken so many vows. But to the essence of a vow must be added an absolute promise. Absolute, I say, in relation to man's faithful endeavour with his uttermost power to perform it, not in relation (or rather opposition) to God's purpose or providence, to his will or leave. For so can no man make an absolute promise. God can cross and hinder him. St James doth justly tax such as in this case make absolute, or rather peremptory, promises, James iv. 13, &c. This absolute promise I expressed under this word, *obtestation*, which is a fit word to express the nature of a vow. It signifieth a taking of God to witness, and that in particular for performing his purpose. This obtestation maketh it indeed a vow.

Object. Many vows recorded in Scripture are conditional: as Jacob's, 'If God will be with me,' &c., Gen. xxviii. 20; and Hannah's, 'If thou wilt indeed,' &c., 1 Sam. i. 11; and others.

Ans. A conditional sentence doth not necessarily import a doubtful matter, but is oft used as a ground of an absolute and undeniable conclusion: as where Elijah saith, 'If the Lord be God, follow him,' 1 Kings xviii. 21. Doth he here make any question of the Lord's being God? Far be such a thought. But hereby he brings them the more evidently to see their folly, and draws them from Baal to follow the Lord; as will clearly appear if we bring it into the form of a syllogism, thus: If the Lord be God, follow him; but the Lord is God, therefore follow him. A condition or supposition respecteth the manner rather than the matter of a vow. When, in making a vow, a necessary supposition is used, the vow is never a whit the less absolute, but the more discreet; as when I thus vow, If the Lord assist me, I will every morning pray before I go out of doors. Such a vow was Jacob's.

2. Hannah and Jacob, and others like to them, might have by special and divine instinct some assurance of that which they expressed in form of supposition, and in that respect their vow be absolute. Questionless Hannah had assurance that the Lord would give her a man-child, which made her in such particular and express terms vow to 'give him to the Lord all the days of his life,' and that there should 'no razor come upon his head,' 1 Sam. i. 11.

3. When a vow is made upon a condition, if the condition hold, and be, as it is supposed, accomplished, then the vow remaineth as absolute as if there were no condition; and the maker of the vow is as much bound in this case to perform it as if it had been made in the most absolute terms that can be. Yea, the condition may be such as it will more bind a man to his vow than if there had been no condition; as when the condition is a kind of consideration or a benefit in consideration whereof the vow is made. Thus, if in a storm on sea a man vow to give so much to the poor if he be brought in safety to his country, this providence of God in keeping him safe and bringing him home, more binds him to that work of charity than the most absolute vow that he could have made. Jacob, Gen. xxviii. 20, having made such a vow, neglected to perform it in due season. God, therefore, cometh to him, chap. xxxv. 1, and putteth him in mind thereof, that so he might not overlong lie drenched in that sea of ungrateful oblivion.

Thus, then, it is evident that a vow is an absolute promise of a deliberate purpose. Such a promise on such a ground doth as much order and bind the promise-maker as the command of one in authority doth order and bind him that is under authority.¹

2. Such promises of sacred duties are to be directed unto God, to whom vows are most properly due. The charge of making vows mentioned in Scripture directeth us to God only: 'Vow and pay unto the Lord your God,' Ps. lxxvi. 11; 'They shall vow a vow unto the Lord,' Isa. xix. 21; 'When thou vowest a vow to God,' Eccles. v. 4. To God are all the approved vows in Scripture directed. In this respect are vows entitled God's vows. 'Thy

¹ Sicut homo, imperando ordinat quodammodo quid sibi ab aliis fiat; ita promittendo ordinat quid ipse pro alio facere debeat.—*Thom. Sum.*, ii. 2, q. 38, art. 1.

vows,' saith the psalmist to God, 'are upon me,' Ps. lvi. 12.

We heard that a vow ariseth from a true intention. Who can discern that but he who searcheth the heart? To whom do we owe such absolute homage as to bind ourselves in such a sacred and inviolable band as a vow is, but only to God, especially in such divine duties as are proper to a vow?

In regard of this object to whom our vows are to be directed, it is not necessary that they be uttered with words or manifested by signs.¹ When Hannah vowed her solemn vow unto God, it is said, 'She spake in her heart,' 1 Sam. i. 13. Indeed, the earnestness of her affection made her move her lips, and use such outward motions as Eli discerned her to be in some passion; but those were no signs of a vow. No creature could certainly have known thereby that she vowed a vow. As true and full a resolution, yea, and obtestation and promise too, may proceed from the soul by the very thoughts thereof, and be as well known to God, and as strongly bind a man as by words or signs.

Words and signs are of good use to testify to man such vows as we make to God, that thereby we may be held somewhat the closer to them; yea, and to quicken our own spirits the more, words are of use. But to the being of a vow they are not necessary. He that defined a vow to be a testification of a willing promise which ought to be made to God,² &c., came nigh the mark in directing a vow to God, but fell short in restraining a vow to an outward testification, if he meant only an outward testification.

But to return to the point. God being the proper object to whom sacred vows are to be directed, what may be thought of those vows which papists, not unlike to the idolatrous 'Israelites who vowed vows to the queen of heaven,' Jer. xlv. 25, vow to her whom they style the 'queen of heaven,'³ and to other saints, and that in the same manner as they vow to God, namely, thus, 'I vow to God, and to blessed Mary, and to all the saints, that I will obey

such and such a prelate.'¹ Hereof they give this reason, that glorified saints are mediators and intercessors by whom we receive good things from God; yea, they are gods by participation. Thus they add blasphemy to blasphemy; ratifying a blasphemous position by a more blasphemous confirmation.

Concerning the position itself of making vows to saints.

1. The holy Scriptures give no intimation of any such matter; but where it maketh any mention of vows it directeth them to God: whereof the papists are not ignorant; for they who write of this controversy bring no show of any proof out of God's word for making sacred vows to creatures.

2. All, both ancient and later divines, both protestants and papists, that treat of vows, define it to be a promise whereby he that makes it binds himself in a sacred and solemn manner to God.

3. None deny but that a sacred vow is a religious act and a part of divine worship, and in that respect due only to God. To make it to any other is plain and palpable idolatry; yet ordinarily their vows use to be made to this saint and that saint.

For our parts let us so wisely avoid their detestable excess in making vows to whom they ought not, as we fall not into a careless neglect of the duty by making no vows at all. It is a fool's part so far to fly from one extreme as to fall into another.² As occasion is offered, and as we find any need, let us, among other evidences of that respect which we owe and bear unto God, give this of vowing and voluntarily binding ourselves to do that which we see meet and behoofeful to be done for the honour of his name, and our well-pleasing of him; especially if we have just cause to suspect ourselves, that if we be left loose and at liberty, we shall (through the temptations whereunto we are subject, or through our own indisposition and backwardness to the duties which in our judgments we conceive to be most behoofeful) fail to perform them. In such cases to bind ourselves by a sacred vow to a bounden duty, as it testifieth a wise jealousy and holy fear that we have of the proneness of our flesh to start back from

¹ In te est quod voveas et reddas.—*Aug. Enar. in Ps. lv.*

² Votum est testificatio quadam promissionis spontaneae quae Deo, &c.—*Magist. Sent.*, lib. iv, distinct. 33.

³ B. Maria Reginae appellationem singulariter meretur.—*Bellar. de bon. oper.*, lib. i, cap. 15.

¹ Voveo Deo et B. Marie et omnibus sanctis, &c.—*Dellar. de cult. Sanct.*, lib. iii, cap. 9.

² Dum vitant stulti vitia, in contraria currunt.—*Hor. Sat.*, ii, lib. i.

good intentions and motions of the Spirit, so it manifesteth our true and earnest desire of doing that which we are persuaded will be pleasing and acceptable to the Lord: yea, so true and earnest a desire, as we will not have it left to our liberty to do it, or not to do it: lest anything might fall out to alter our mind. Zealous martyrs, upon a settled resolution not to start in show from that profession which they are about to seal with their blood, being jealous of their weak flesh, and sensibleness of pain, have desired to be fast bound to the stake. A sacred vow is as an iron gin to a tender and good conscience. By it the will is unmoveably set and fastened upon that which is good: which questionless is a very commendable resolution.¹ The philosopher² through that light of natural reason whereunto by diligent study and experimental observance he had attained, discerned the equity hereof. He that so bindeth himself to that which he knoweth to be pleasing and acceptable unto God, as he will not leave a show of liberty to his unruly flesh to start from it, thereby fortieth himself against the temptations of Satan, and frailties of his weak and wavering flesh. In which respect, he that hath so tied himself hath no cause to repent himself thereof;³ but he hath cause rather to rejoice that he is so restrained from that, which through supposed freedom might prove very dangerous and damageable.

Sect. 91. *Of paying vows to God.*

III. *Vows made must be paid.*⁴ This is true of all manner of lawful vows, even such as are made to mortal men, much more of such as are made to the living God. Where in Scripture a charge is given for making a vow, there, for the most part, a charge also for paying it is annexed. 'Vow and pay,' Ps. lxxvi. 11. 'Pay that which thou hast vowed,' Eccles. v. 4. 'They shall vow a vow and perform it,' Isa. xxix. 21. Yea, there are more strict charges for

paying than for making vows. So as, when thou vowest, thou bindest thyself, namely to performance.¹ We read not of any penalty threatened for not making vows. But for not paying vows it is said, 'The Lord thy God will surely require it of thee: and it would be sin in thee,' Dent. xxiii. 21. They who vow and pay not, are counted such fools as God hath no pleasure in, Eccles. v. 4, 5. It is therefore better that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay. Frequent are the professions which the psalmist maketh of paying his vows, in these and such like protestations: 'I will pay my vows,' Ps. xxii. 25; 'Thy vows are upon me, O God, I will render praises unto thee,' Ps. lxxvi. 13; 'I will sing praise unto thy name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows,' Ps. lvi. 12, and lxi. 8. Among other instances, take notice of the solemn vow he made for bringing the ark of the Lord into a settled place, Ps. cxxxii. 2-5; and withal take notice of his care to perform it, 1 Chron. xiii. 2, &c., and xv. 1, &c., and xvii. 1, &c. Hannah having vowed to give her son unto the Lord when she had weaned him, she brought him and gave him to the Lord, 1 Sam. i. 11, 24, &c.

1. Sacred vows have immediate respect to God; they are or ought to be made to him, as we shewed in the former section. But 'God is not mocked,' Gal. vi. 7. His sovereignty, his dignity, his majesty, his omnipotency, his integrity, his jealousy, and other like infinite excellencies in him, are forcible motives to press performance of promises to him. The wise man, where he is earnest in urging this point, rendereth this reason, 'God is in heaven, and thou art upon earth,' Eccles. v. 2.

2. Solemn vows consist of many bonds. There is in them, 1. The bond of a good intention, yea, and motion of the Holy Ghost: such intentions and motions must not be suffered to vanish away in vain.² 2. The bond of a single promise, which bindeth the conscience to performance. 3. The bond of an obtestation, and taking God to witness. Now, 'a threefold cord is not quickly broken,' Eccles. iv. 11.

¹ Per votum immobiliter voluntas firmatur in bonum.—*Thom. Sum.*, 2, 7, q. 88, art. 6.

² τὰ κατὰ τὰς ἀρετὰς γινόμενα δικαίως πράττειται, ἐὰν βεβαίως καὶ ἀμετακινήτως ἔχωσιν πρᾶττειν.—*Arist. Eth.*, lib. ii. cap. 4.

³ Non te novisse peniteat, immo gaude jam tibi sic non licere, quod cum tuo detrimento licuisset.—*Aug. Epist.* 45, ad *Arment.*

⁴ Sect. 89.

¹ Quia iam vovisti, iam te obstrinxisti.—*Aug. Epist.* 45 ad *Arment.*

² Melius fuerat te non vovisse et facere, quam vovere et non facere.—*Amb., lib. ad virg. de vot. cap. 2.*

Better were it not to vow what thou doest, than not to do what thou vowest.

1. What matter of humiliation is here ministered unto us for breaking this strong cord, for mocking God by our too much carelessness in keeping our vows, yea, and impious profaneness in breaking them! Who hath not cause to be much humbled in this respect! Some, it may be, will say, We never made any vows, and therefore cannot be guilty of breaking vows. Let such consider that most sacred vow which every of us made in baptism. Let them consider the like sacred vows made and renewed so oft as we have celebrated the Lord's supper. Let them consider the solemn vows that we have made in days of humiliation and fast. Let them also consider the public vows which, in the assembly of saints, have week after week been made. And as for others which are more conscionable in their duty, let us consider the private vows which in our daily prayers we make,¹ especially those which, upon some heinous sins lying heavy upon our conscience, in sickness or any other distress, in earnest desire of some special blessing, we have vowed. Consider these and other vows whereby we have fast bound ourselves to the Lord, and we shall see that the Lord hath cause enough to account us all sons of Belial,² refractory children, that will be kept under no yoke, no, not under those yokes that we have voluntarily put upon our own necks. We come in this respect too near to them who say, 'against the Lord and against his anointed, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us,' Ps. ii. 2, 3. Thus do we justly deserve that God should disannul his promise and covenant of mercy and grace with us. Let these things be laid close to our consciences, that the wounds thereof may humble us, and, being penitently humbled, we may earnestly crave mercy and pardon for this sin especially. Sins against the third commandment, as blasphemy, perjury, and breach of vows, pierce deep into a sensible conscience. But though they make deep wounds, yet is there sufficient virtue in the blood of Christ to heal them: 'The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin,' 1 John i. 7. Apply that precious blood to the wounds of thy soul.

¹ Surrexi, redditisque Deo quotidianis votis, ire cœperamus, &c.—*Aug. de Ord.*, lib. i. cap. 8.

² בלי-על absque jugo.

Seeing that which is past and done cannot be recalled and undone, it is not meet that the wounds of thy conscience should continually be kept open, till all the life thereof be clean wasted. Therefore, in craving pardon for this sin, believe that it is pardoned; and then be more watchful over thyself, that thou fall not again and again into that sin.

2. To redress, for the time to come, what hath been heretofore amiss, let these following rules be carefully observed:—

1. On those vows whereunto, by virtue of thy Christian profession, thou art bound, being solemnly made at thy baptism, at receiving the Lord's supper, and in public prayer, oft and seriously meditate, day and night, when thou liest down and when thou risest up, when thou tarriest at home and when thou goest abroad; especially when thou undertakest any duty of piety, and art about in prayer to present thyself before God; but most of all when thou art present at others' baptism, and hearest the very vow which thou thyself madest before God. Frequent meditation on vows is an especial means to keep them fresh in memory: a fresh remembrance of them putteth life into the conscience, and maketh it sensible; a quick and sensible conscience is afraid of wounds; fear of wounds makes careful, in avoiding the things which make wounds, as breach of vows doth. This, therefore, must needs be a good help for keeping vows, and performing them.

2. Oft renew thy vows, and so bind thyself again and again thereto. A vow renewed is as new made. Men use to be very tender of their vows when they are new made, or while they remain fresh; as they are of a new suit of apparel, or of the linen while it is clean and neat.

This direction of renewing vows is to be applied to vows of necessary and bounden duties.¹ But if vows made be of such circumstances as are not necessary, yet very difficult and cannot easily be performed, and much trouble and entangle the conscience, then, they being through weakness broken, the wisest and safest course is earnestly to crave pardon, as we heard before, for that which is past, and to take heed of the like folly in ensnaring ourselves for the time to come. If a thing be pre-

¹ Si præpropere facta fuerit, magis est corrigenda temeritas quam persolvenda promissio.—*Aug. epist. 45, ad Arment.*

posterously done, rashness is rather to be redressed than the promise performed.

3. When thou art tempted to a sin, bring that sin to the touchstone of thy vows, and try whether it be not against them. This trial will be a means to make thee think of thy vows, and to be more careful in keeping them, and in resisting temptations against them. When the Rechabites, Jer. xxxv. 6, &c., were tempted to drink wine, they considered that it was against an ancient vow, and thereupon were restrained from doing it. They were not ignorant of the damage of breaking vows.

Object. If there be such danger in breaking vows, it will be a man's safest course not to vow at all.

Ans. This is no good consequence; for, a good thing is not therefore to be wholly omitted because there is danger in an ill performing of it, or in a careless neglect of prosecuting that which is begun. 'He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination,' Prov. xxviii. 9. Is it therefore the safest not to pray at all? Fie upon such a consequence. The just consequence to be thereupon inferred is this, therefore turn thine ear to the law, and so pray. Such a consequence from such a ground doth the apostle make, for where he had said, 'Whosoever shall eat the bread, and drink the cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord,' 1 Cor. xi. 27, 28; he addeth, as a just consequence following thereupon, 'Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.' He saith not, Let him forbear to come to the Lord's table. In like manner the danger and damage of breaking vows ought not to restrain us from making needful and useful vows, but it ought to make us careful and conscionable in performing them.

4. Concerning voluntary vows, that thou mayest with comfort, confidence, and good conscience perform them, be very wary and well advised in making them. 'Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God,' Eccles. v. 2. In nothing doth rashness sooner cause repentance than in this. Wherefore, for an advised making of vows,—

1. Consider what moveth thee to vow; what is the ground and occasion thereof. As an oath must not be taken without a just and weighty cause; so,

nor a vow made. A vow is a matter of much moment.

2. Take a view of thy condition, whether thou art in place, and hast power to make the vow which thou intendest,¹ and whether thou art not under such authority as may keep thee from performing it: if thou be in such subjection, how canst thou say, I will pay my vows?

3. Examine the matter which thou art about to vow, and be sure that it be such a thing as thou mayest lawfully and canst comfortably perform, otherwise thou bringest thyself into a labyrinth; for, the making of a vow bindeth a man to performance; performance of an evil vow bindeth a man to judgment. Thus, he that voweth an evil thing is as he that holdeth a dog by the ears. He knoweth not whither to turn.

4. Search thy heart and see how that stands affected; whether there be in thee a single, simple, full, resolved purpose to perform what thou vowest. An invincible resolution is an especial means to make good what is vowed.

5. Make thy vow with confidence on the assistance of God's Spirit to enable thee to keep it, suspecting thine own weakness. Peter's purpose was questionless sincere, Mat. xxvi. 33, 35, and his resolution was good, but self-confidence was his fault. He presumed too much upon his own ability, which, that he might the better discern, he was left to himself. Ye cannot accomplish such matters by your own strength; ye will fail if ye presume of yourselves, but if ye rest on him to whom ye vow, vow in the name of God, and ye shall assuredly perform it.²

6. In making thy vow, pray for ability to keep it. Yea, time after time, till it be performed, pray for this grace. So oft as thou makest a solemn prayer betwixt God and thyself, let one petition be for keeping thy vow. And if thy vow be of some duty to be in performing all thy life long, all thy life long pray for this in particular.

On these grounds go on in doing thy uttermost

¹ Quae possunt et debent voveri docet.—Aug. *Enar. in Ps.* lxxv.

² Viribus vestris non implebitis, deficientis si de vobis praesumitis. Si autem de illo cui vovetis, vovete; securi reddetis.—Aug. *loc. citat.*

for making good thy vows, and that as thou desirest to have the covenant of grace in Christ made good to thee. Perform what thou hast vowed, perform it to the full. Of all sacrifices that which was brought for accomplishment of a vow, Lev. xxii. 21, 23, must be most perfect. Such defective sacrifices as might be offered for a free-will offering, would not be accepted for a vow.

Sec. 92. *Of speed in paying vows.*

IV. *The first opportunity to pay a vow must be taken.*¹ The law saith, 'Thou shalt not slack to pay it,' Deut. xxiii. 21. 'Defer not to pay it,' Eccles. v. 4, saith the wise man.

By delay the occasion that moved a man to make a vow may be forgotten. The occasion that set the heart on fire to make it being forgotten, zeal will soon wax cold, as water when fire is taken from the vessel in which it is, or iron taken out of the fire. Nor iron, nor water, nor any other thing naturally cold, is more inclinable to coldness if the cause of heating be removed, than man's heart is to wax heavy and dull when the occasions of quickening them are either removed, or, which is all one, out of mind and memory.

This, then, questionless is an especial occasion of not performing many vows; that they are not performed in their season, but opportunity is let slip. Had not God himself prevented Jacob, Gen. xxxv. 1, it is very likely that he would have failed herein; for he let slip his opportunity. We may observe it in all men's affairs, that by procrastination their resolution waxeth more and more slack. In nothing is this more verified than in matters of piety, matters wherein we have to do with God; and that both by reason of Satan's subtlety and sedulity, endeavouring with might and main to hinder us in all pious courses, and to weaken all the helps we have therein, (among which, vows are none of the slightest;) and also by reason of our own backwardness and dulness thereunto. Satan by time gains great advantage; and we by time lose as much, in that our zeal is prone to slack in the heat of it.

Strike the iron therefore, as it is in the proverb, strike it while it is hot. It is then fit to be wrought upon for anything. Take the first opportunity,

¹ Sec. 89.

which is the fittest season.¹ If in anything thou wilt make speed, and manifest forwardness, do it in performing thy vows. Hast thou made a vow whilst thou art at sea? pay it so soon as thou comest to land, if thou canst pay it so soon. Hast thou vowed in sickness? let the payment of it be the first thing thou doest upon thy recovery. So on other like occasions. Hast thou by vow bound thyself to read the word and pray every morning? let this be the first work thou doest being up. If thou hast any weighty business to do betimes, rise the sooner, that thy vow may be first done. Let all things give place to it; it, to nothing. A man that is able and willing to pay a debt, accounts no money his own till the debt be paid. He will keep in mind and memory the day of payment, he will watch for it; his money (as we say) burneth in his bags till it be paid. Account thy vow a debt. No debt can be more due; no bond more binding. A man of his word had as lief forfeit a bond, as fail of his word. Be thou a man of thy word with God. Pay thy debt, perform thy vow, and that on the day of payment, in due time; even now, if the now be come, defer not to pay thy vows. Very pertinent to this purpose, and emphatical, is this phrase of the psalmist, 'Thy vows are upon me, O God,' Ps. lvi. 12. Though he made the vows, yet he styles them God's vows; because, being made to God, they were as a debt due to him, as a bond made by a debtor to a creditor is not now the debtor's, but the creditor's. Thus, then, he accounts his vow as a due debt unto God. Thereupon he adds, 'Thy vows are upon me,' whereby he shews, that as a faithful debtor, who hath a mind to discharge his bond, oft thinks of the time of payment; and in that respect his debt lieth as a burden upon him, neither can he be quiet till it be paid; as a porter that hath a burden on him is not at rest till he be freed from it; so this psalmist had the vow which he had made to God as a debt, as a burden on him, whereby he shews that his mind and desire was, with the first opportunity to be eased thereof, which could not be but by performing the same. Such respect let us have to the vows that we make to God; such let our care be in performing

¹ Libenter vovent, et celeriter reddat, et in hoc quod votum reddit meliori semper conatu proficiat.—*Aug. de Fide. ad P. Diaconum, cap. 3.*

of the same, and that with all speed, so as we may truly use these words, 'Thy vows are upon me, O God.'

Sec. 93. *Of performing vows openly.*

V. *Vows secretly made may be openly performed.*¹ This is to be limited according to the nature of the vow. Such things may be vowed, as in the performance of them, it is not meet that 'the left hand know what the right hand doeth,' Mat. vi. 3. The doctrine, therefore, saith not, Must be, but 'May be openly performed.' So were most (if not all) of the approved vows in Scripture: 'I will praise thee in the great congregation,' saith the psalmist, 'and pay my vows before them that fear thee,' Ps. xxii. 25; and again, 'I will go into thine house with burnt-offerings: I will pay thee my vows,' Ps. lxxvi. 13. Hannah, 1 Sam. i. 24, &c., brought her son, which she vowed to the Lord, unto the tabernacle at a festival time, when all the people assembled thither. Jacob, Gen. xxxv. 7, built an altar, a visible and open memorial of his vow. The Israelites, Num. xxi. 2, 3, gave a name, as a public proof of the performance of their vow, to the place where their vow was performed.

1. Hereby God is more glorified. An open testimony of that respect which saints bear to God, and of that care they have to bind themselves to do service to him, maketh much to his honour.

2. The church is hereby much edified. Instances of saints standing to their holy resolutions, and performing their pious purposes, cheer the strong, strengthen the weak, and thus is the church built up.

3. They that make the vows by this open manner of making them good cannot but be much more cheered in spirit, when they see their good intentions so much to tend to the advancement of God's glory and others' good.

They who in testimony of their due respect to God, and in way of gratitude, are moved to make vows to the Lord, let them here learn what are the best kind of vows, and by what vows they may give most honour to God, and do most good to themselves and others, even such as may be openly performed in public assemblies. For a prince, a

¹ Sec. 89.

nobleman, a magistrate, or any other of great esteem, of high place, of good note and name, to vow to join himself with assemblies that use to worship God together, to vow to maintain truth and purity of religion in the places where he liveth, is a worthy vow. For ministers to vow to preach the word where people are gathered together diligently and faithfully, a worthy vow. For such as are taken captives, in danger on the sea, imprisoned, visited with sickness, or any other way so distressed, as they are restrained from the public places of God's worship, to vow, when they are delivered, openly, publicly to give thanks to God, a worthy vow. In common judgments, especially of plague, of famine, of sword, such vows of public gratitude are to be made, and publicly to be performed. It is not enough to vow secret duties betwixt God and ourselves, nor yet private duties in our families, but by this pattern we have direction and incitation for more open, common, and public duties, which are more honourable kinds of vows. Yet that herein is a limitation the next doctrine will shew.

Sec. 94. *Of performing holy duties in holy assemblies.*

VI. *Saints are fittest witnesses of sacred duties.*¹ That which in this verse is implied under this particle of restraint, his, 'in the presence of all his people,' is elsewhere more expressly noted by a more apparent description, thus: 'I will pay my vows before them that fear him,' Ps. xxii. 25. None but true saints do truly fear God.²

1. This property of God's people, that they fear the Lord, sheweth that they will make the best use of such sacred, solemn duties performed in their presence. They will glorify God for this your zeal; they will join their spirits with your spirit in this open performance of duty; they will become followers of you, and learn of you to vow and pay unto the Lord, and that openly, publicly.

2. As for others, they are no better than such hogs and dogs as are not meet to have such precious pearls and holy things cast before them, lest they trample them under their feet.³

¹ Sec. 89.

² *Confiteor non tantum coram te, Domine, &c. Sed etiam in auribus credentium, filiorum hominum, sociorum gaudii mei, &c.—Aug. Confess., lib. x. cap. 4.*

³ Mat. vii. 6.

Be wise now, ye that are moved to give open and public testification of your inward and private resolution. Be wise in making choice of your company. You that have escaped sundry dangers on sea and land, that have had victory over enemies, that have been eased and recovered of any maladies, that have been preserved from the plague, that have had any other evidence of God's special providence and favour, let not play-houses, let not taverns, ale-houses, and tobacco-houses, let not assemblies of profane persons, of swearers, of drunkards, of riotous and licentious persons, be the places whither you resort to recount the deliverances which God hath given you. This rather besemeth such as have vowed vows to Bacchus, to Ceres, to Priapus, to Venus, yea, and to devils, than to the great Lord of heaven and earth. Associate yourselves with the saints, with such as fear God, with such as may encourage you in that which you do well, and instruct and direct you in that whereof you are ignorant and wherein you do amiss. Go to that place where that God who hath preserved, delivered, or any way blessed you, delighteth to be; where he most manifesteth his presence, where he expecteth that your vow should be paid to him. Let your heart be set upon that place while by force you are kept from it, as David's was, Ps. lxxxiv. 1, &c. So soon as possibly you can, come to it. You captains, soldiers, merchants, mariners, travellers, or others that come from the sea, or other dangerous places; and you women safely delivered in child-bed, you that have been sick and are recovered, you that have been cut of the stone, or cured of any other malady, you that are loosed out of prison, you that after any restraint have liberty, let this be the first public place that you come unto. So soon as you can say, say it in truth, say it and do it, 'I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people.' Amen.

Sec. 95. *Of the meaning and method of the 15th verse.*

Ver. 15. *Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.*

The second reason¹ to enforce the equity of the duty before mentioned, 'to praise the Lord,' is here expressed, being taken from the high account which God had of his life. This is here indefinitely set

¹ Sec. 2.

down in the third person, (*κατὰ θεόν*), without any express application thereof to himself, yet so as by the precedent and subsequent matter it may evidently be gathered that he meant himself as well as others; for in the verses before and after he useth the first person, and expressly speaketh of himself, thus: 'I will pay,' &c. 'I am thy servant,' &c. To good purpose is this tender care of God thus indefinitely set down, as—

1. To shew that his case was no other than the case of others. Others, and those saints too, might be brought even to death as well as he.

2. To declare the impartial respect of God to all; to others as well as to him, to him as well as to others.

3. To intimate the ground of that care God had of him, even because he was a saint; and yet not himself to give that title to himself, lest he might seem to do it on vainglory.

Thus we see how this change of person from the first, ver. 14, to the third, ver. 15; from the third, ver. 15, to the first, ver. 16, as it hath an elegancy in it, so also an especial emphasis.

The persons among whom implicitly he reckons himself, styled saints, are in the original set out by a word (*חסידים*) that importeth an especial respect of God towards them. The root whence that word issueth signifieth *mercy*, (*חסד consecravit, benefecit.*) Whereupon the Hebrews have given such a name to a stork,¹ which kind among fowls is the most merciful; and that not only the old to their young ones, as most are, but also the young ones to the old, which they use to feed and carry when through age they are not able to help themselves. This title is attributed to men in a double respect: 1. Passively, in regard of God's mind and affection to them; 2. Actively, in regard of their mind and affection to others. God's mercy and kindness is great towards them; and their mercy and kindness is great towards their brethren. They are, therefore, by a kind of excellency and property styled 'men of mercy,' Isa. lvii. 1.² In regard of this double acceptance of the

¹ *חסידה*. Ciconia. Avis benefica, et grata. Quantum temporis Ciconiae suis fetibus educandis elargiuntur, tantum et ipse a pullis suis invicem aluntur.—*Solinus*.

Petronius appellat Ciconiam pietatis cultricem.

² *אנשי חסד*. Homines benignitatis.

word, some translate it, 'merciful, tender, or courteous,' Ps. xviii. 25.¹ Others with a paraphrase with many words, because they have not one fit word to express the full sense, thus, 'Those whom God followeth with bounty,'² or to whom God extendeth his bounty. This latter I take to be the most proper to this place; for the word being passively taken for such as are made partakers of God's kindness, it sheweth the reason of that high account wherein God hath them, even his own grace and favour. We have a word in English that in this passive signification fitly answereth the Hebrew, which is this, *favourite*.

By death he meaneth their soul or life which is subject to death; for in another place he saith, 'Precious shall be their blood in his sight,' Ps. lxxii. 14. What here he calleth death, there he calleth blood. And in Scripture phrase blood is said to be the life (Gen. ix. 4; Lev. xvii. 14) of living creatures. Very fitly is this privative, death, mentioned in setting forth God's care over their life, because by their death it is manifested, partly by preserving them from death, and partly by providing for them in death. A trope not much unlike to this is used where God saith, 'I will be merciful to their unrighteousness,' Heb. viii. 12; that is, to them in freeing them from their unrighteousness.

The word translated precious, (יקר) is in Scripture attributed to things—

Rare or scarce: 'The word of God was precious,' 1 Sam. iii. 1.³

Sweet: 'A good name is better than precious ointment,' Eccles. vii. 1. The preciousness of an ointment is in the savour of it.

Pure or holy: 'Take forth the precious from the vile,' Jer. xv. 19.

Honourable: 'Kings' daughters among thine honourable' (word for word, precious) 'women,' Ps. xlv. 9.

Dear or beloved:⁴ 'Ephraim my dear' (word for word, precious) 'son,' Jer. xxxi. 20.

Much set by or of great account: 'His name was much set by' (word for word, precious), 1 Sam. xviii. 30.

Of great value or worth: Such were the stones

which the queen of Sheba brought to Solomon, 'precious stones,' 1 Kings x. 10.

The souls of saints are every way precious to God; especially in the three latter respects, as they are dear, much set by, of great worth, being redeemed by the precious blood of Christ; for he deals with them as men do with things dear, much set by, of great value.

Men use to keep precious jewels safe. They make more esteem of them than of all other things. They will not be prodigal of them. They will see good cause why they should part with them, or else they will not part with them. This is God's mind towards the souls of his favourites. Saul acknowledged that 'his soul was precious in David's eyes,' 1 Sam. xxvi. 21, because he did not take it away when he had opportunity. Surely then their souls must needs be precious to God, who doth not only not take them away when he may, but also preserve them when they are in great hazard of death. On the contrary, when St Paul esteemed not his life in comparison of the gospel, but was rather prodigal thereof, he saith, 'I count not my life precious'—or dear—'to myself.'

This phrase, 'in the sight'—word for word, in the eyes, Acts xx. 24, (בעיני)—'of the Lord,' is used by way of resemblance, to shew that God taketh notice of our life and death, and is watchful over the same, as men take notice of the things which are before them, and by fixing their eyes on things do manifest a watchfulness; or otherwise it may indefinitely be used as a note of application only; and so, 'in the sight of the Lord,' imports no more but 'to the Lord,' as if it had been thus said, 'Precious to the Lord is the death of his favourites.'

In this verse is set out, God's esteem of men.

More particularly here is noted,—

1. What these men be—'His favourites.'

2. Wherein that esteem consisteth—'Their death is precious in his sight.'

These two parts give evidence of these two points,—

I. God hath favourites.

II. God is tender of his favourites' death.

Sec. 96. *Of God's favourites.*

I. *God hath favourites.* Without all question they

¹ Cum benigno benignum te exhibes.

² Quos ipse benignitate prosequitur.—*Tremel. et Jun.*

³ Hebrew, יקר. Targum כס' occultum.

⁴ LXX., ἀγαπητός.

were his favourites that had these testimonies following: 'The Lord had respect to Abel and to his offering,' Gen. iv. 4. 'Enoch was translated that he should not see death; for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God,' Heb. xi. 5. 'Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord,' Gen. vi. 8. 'Abraham was called the friend of God,' James ii. 23. 'The Lord spake to Moses face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend,' Exod. xxxiii. 11. 'The Lord said to Joshua, I will be with thee; I will not fail thee nor forsake thee,' Josh. i. 5. And to David, 'I have found David, a man after mine own heart,' Acts xiii. 22. Solomon was called Jedidiah, 2 Sam. xii. 25, (יְדִידָהּ, *dilectum Deo*. *Componitur ex ידיד et יהוה nomine Dei*), 'because of the Lord: the Lord loved him.' 'Daniel, a man greatly beloved,' Dan. x. 11. 'Zerubbabel, as a signet,' Haggaïi ii. 23. 'John, the disciple whom Jesus loved,' John xxi. 7. The rest of the disciples he called 'friends,' John xv. 15. And 'Paul, a chosen vessel,' Acts ix. 15. Yea, to the whole communion of saints these titles are given: 'A peculiar treasure above all people,' Exod. xix. 5; 'A chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation,' 1 Pet. ii. 9; 'The apple of God's eye,' Zech. ii. 8; 'Dearly,' or only 'beloved children,' Eph. v. 1, (ἀγαπητά τέκνα); 'First-born,' Heb. xii. 23; 'Heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ,' Rom. viii. 17; 'Begotten again to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven,' 1 Pet. i. 4. If they that are made partakers of such prerogatives be not compassed about and followed with mercies, if they be not favourites, and that in regard of the favour of the great Lord and King of heaven and earth, surely there can be no favourites at all.

These and other like to these being 'chosen in Christ,' Eph. i. 4, are 'given,' John vi. 39, of the Father to him, and by him are 'redeemed,' Eph. i. 7, 'reconciled,' chap. ii. 16, 'sanctified, cleansed, made holy and without blemish,' chap. v. 26, 27, and 'made accepted,' chap. i. 6. The beloved One of God hath taken these for 'his wife,' 2 Cor. xi. 2; Rev. xxi. 9, and made them 'members of his body,' Eph. v. 30; by virtue of which mystical and real union, God loveth them with that love he beareth unto Christ, John xvii. 23, and so maketh them his

favourites. The very word of this text is primarily attributed to Christ, Ps. xvi. 10; Acts ii. 27, &c., and xiii. 35; and in and through him to others.

Good and great ground of comfort have saints by reason of this prerogative that they are the favourites of the great King. What needful thing do they want that they may not confidently expect from this their liege? What hurtful thing need they fear? Is not the King who favours them able to supply all their necessities? Is he not able to protect them from all enmities? If he be, what doubt can be made of the one or of the other? Consider what mortal monarchs do for their favourites. They invent, they consult how to do them honour, Esth. vi. 3, &c. Though it oft fall out that they have unworthy favourites, (instance Haman,) yet a king can deny his favourite nothing. Let a favourite ask honours, manors, offices, immunities, for himself or for his friends, he soon obtaineth what he asketh. 'In the light of the king's countenance is life,' Prov. xvi. 15; 'and his favour is as a cloud of the latter rain, and as the dew upon the grass,' Prov. xix. 12. He is therefore counted a happy man that may come to be a king's favourite. Such a one scorneth the envy, the disdain, the backbiting, and all that the vulgar can do against him. As for all his enemies, he puffeth at them. If it be thought a happiness to be a mortal king's favourite, what is it then to be a favourite of the King of kings? Kings on earth are not always able to do what they will. Their favourites may desire, and they may be willing to grant, more than they can. They have not always understanding to know what is best for their favourites. Their favourites may beg, and they give, that which is pernicious. They do not always retain the same mind. Their favour may be clean alienated from their old favourites, and cast upon new. They do not always live. They may die before their favourites, and their favourites then be the worse dealt withal, even for that favour sake which by the deceased king was shewed unto them. Most of these may be exemplified in Ahasuerus and his favourite Haman. But the Lord our God is subject to none of these. He is able to do what he will, and what his favourites can justly ask. He knoweth what is good, what not good, to be granted to his favourites. He is always of the same mind.

His favour is stable and perpetual. He ever liveth. It never did, it never shall, it cannot repent any to have been this King's favourite. As Christ himself, that high and chief favourite said, so may every one that is in him accepted for a favourite say, 'The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage,' Ps. xvi. 5, 6. If thou wilt acknowledge the truth, God is thy delight, thy rest, thy health, thy joy, thy happiness, thy refreshing, thy glory; and whatsoever thy soul may piously desire, God will be all that to thee.¹

Boldly and safely may we also on this ground encourage ourselves against all the envy, malice, ill-language, and evil entreating of the men of this world. What if the world account us forsaken, desolate, so long as God saith to us, 'Hephzibah, my delight in them?' Isa. lxii. 4.

That we may the more soundly and safely comfort and encourage ourselves in this great prerogative of being God's favourites, let us distinctly note what evidences of God's favour towards his favourites the Holy Ghost doth expressly set down, and that in one book, the book of Psalms.

1. 'The Lord sets apart him that is a favourite² to himself,' Ps. iv. 3.

2. 'Every favourite shall pray unto God in a time when he may be found,' Ps. xxxii. 6.

3. 'God's praise is in the congregation of favourites,' Ps. cxlix. 1. They are incited to 'sing to the Lord,' and 'to bless him,' Ps. xxx. 4, and cxlv. 10.

4. 'The Lord will speak peace to his favourites,' Ps. lxxxv. 8.

5. 'He preserveth the souls of his favourites,' Ps. xcvii. 10.

6. 'He exalteth the praise of his favourites,' Ps. cxlviii. 14.

7. 'Favourites shall shout aloud for joy,' Ps. cxxxii. 16.

¹ Si vis verum agnoscere, Deus est deliciæ tuæ, requies tua, sanitas tua, gaudium tuum, felicitas tua, refrigerium tuum, amantitas tua, et quicquid sancte possit desiderare anima tua, totum tibi Deus erit.—*Aug. ad Frat. in Evem.*, ser. 55.

² In all the places thus following, the word (חַסִּידִים) used in this text is expressed, though translators do diversely turn it.

8. 'This honour have all his favourites,' Ps. cxlix. 9.

That we be not puffed up with this prerogative, but rather provoked to 'walk worthy of the Lord,' Col. i. 10, 'worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called,' Eph. iv. 1, our care must be—

1. 'To understand his will,' Eph. v. 17.

2. 'To love him with all our soul,' Deut. vi. 5; Ps. xxxi. 23.

3. 'To cleave to him,' Joshua xxiii. 8.

4. 'To give thanks to him,' Ps. xxx. 4.

5. 'To do that which is well-pleasing in his sight,' Heb. xiii. 21.

6. 'To be followers' of his ancient favourites, Heb. vi. 12.

God hath been pleased to choose us in their room, they being translated; he bears such a mind to us as he did to them.¹ Is it not then most just and equal that the same mind should be in us, that was in them, towards God; that the faith of Abel, conversation of Enoch, uprightness of Noah, obedience of Abraham, meekness of Moses, courage of Joshua, devotion of David, repentance of Solomon, constancy of Daniel, love of John; such readiness to follow Christ as was in the disciples, and other like properties in other favourites of God, may be in us, that so it may never repent the Lord that he hath cast his favour upon us, and made us his favourites? God still remains the same; the same in his essence, the same in his mind and affection, to such as are so minded and affected towards him as his ancient favourites were. Wherefore though Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and other favourites be dead and gone, yet let their spirit appear to live in us; that, while we live, God may not want favourites on earth; but that we for the present may shew that we have so set before us the life of our predecessors, as we become examples and patterns to our successors.

Sec. 97. *Of God's account of saints' death.*

II. *God is tender of his favourites' death.*² Their blood he accounts precious, Ps. lxxii. 14. If he

¹ Si voluntatem Dei nosse quisquam desideret, fiat amicus Dei. Non autem quisquam efficitur amicus Dei, nisi purgativis moribus.—*Aug. cont. Manich.*, lib. ii.

² Sec. 95.

have a bottle for their tears, what hath he for their blood? Ps. lvi. 8. Christ doth forcibly infer his Father's care of the life and death of his favourites, by arguments from the less; as first from one of the meanest of creatures, thus, 'One sparrow shall not fall on the ground without your Father,' Mat. x. 29-31. Then from the meanest accident that is inherent in man, his hairs, which are no essential parts, but excrements of his body, thus, 'The very hairs of your head are all numbered.'¹ Thence he maketh this inference to his favourites, 'Fear ye not therefore.'

God's high account of his favourites' life, and tenderness over their death, is many ways manifested.

1. By promise of long life,² Ps. lxli. 16.

2. By preserving them in extraordinary need; whereof we have a particular instance in Elijah, 1 Kings xvii., and a more general promise, Ps. xxxiv. 10.

3. By keeping them from such things as may endanger their life; thus the Lord hid Jeremiah and Baruch, Jer. xxxvi 26, and sent his Son into Egypt, Mat. ii. 13.

4. By pulling them out of the very snares of death, wherewith they were even caught. This the psalmist oft acknowledgeth, as Ps. xvi. 3, 8, xviii. 4, 5, and cxv. 7. Thus Jeremiah, chap. xxxviii. 6, &c.; Hezekiah, Isa. xxxviii. 4, 5; the Israelites, Exod. xiv. 9, &c., and many others have been delivered.

5. By not suffering them to perish before they come to their maturity and ripeness. This is set out in the parable of the seed that grew till the harvest. Then, 'when the fruit is ripe,' and not before, the Lord putteth in the sickle, Mark iv. 26, &c.

Objec. Many die young. Many are taken away suddenly, yea, by unjust and violent means, before their time.

Ans. The Lord knoweth what measure of grace is fittest for every one; answerably he hath determined it; and so ordereth their estate as they come to it. One may be perfect in one measure, another in another, as the several fingers or toes,

¹ Ant. Ulmus: De duplici usu humane barbe.

² Of long life, how far promised, see 'Domestic Duties,' on Eph. vi. 3, treat. 1, sec. 104, &c.

and other members of the body; and as several pints or other measures; a pint may be full with half that quantity which filleth a quart. The saint, therefore, that dieth young, hath attained to that measure which is appointed to him. And as for such violent or sudden means which to men may seem to take away saints before their time, that untimeliness and immaturity is only in man's apprehension. In God's disposition their time was come, and they come to their ripeness.

6. By revenging their death when they are unjustly taken away. 'God is known by revenging the blood of his servants which is shed,' Ps. lxxxix. 10. The revenge that followed the blood of Naboth, 1 Kings xxi. 19, &c., and the blood of Zechariah, 2 Chron. xxiv. 21, &c., is memorable.

7. By sending his 'angels to encamp round about them,' Ps. xxxiv. 7, 'to keep them in all their ways, and to bear them up in their hands, lest they dash their foot against a stone,' Ps. xci. 11, 12, and to watch their souls when they depart from their bodies, to 'carry them into Abraham's bosom,' Luke xvi. 22.

That which before was noted of God's respect to the persons themselves, whom he so compasseth with his favour, as he maketh them his favourites, sheweth the true and proper cause of this account wherein he hath their life, and of the care he taketh of their death. He that much esteemeth such and such persons, cannot but much esteem their life and death.

Great courage against death, and much comfort in death, doth this work.

1. What need they beforehand be afraid of death, who have the Lord to take such care about it as he doth? We may safely without presuming, we ought securely without wavering, to rest upon this, that our blood being precious in God's eyes, either it shall not be spilt, or it is seasonable, and shall be profitable to us to be spilt. On this ground, 'The righteous are bold as a lion,' Prov. xxviii. 1. 'Neither do they fear what man can do unto them,' Heb. xiii. 6. Martyrs were, without question, well instructed herein, and much supported hereby.¹ When fear of death hindereth from any duty, or draweth to any evil, then call to mind this saying, 'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his favourites.'

¹ Quis non pretiosam in conspectu Dei et fortiter et constanter mortem excipiat.—*Cyp. Epist.*, lib. iii. ep. 23.

For who would not valiantly, without fainting, take such a death as is precious in God's sight?

If death may not affright us from good nor enforce us to evil, shall reproach, shall restraint of liberty, shall loss of profits or preferments, shall anything less than death be more forcible than death? Assuredly their name, estate, liberty, and everything else is precious to him, to whom their life and death is precious.

2. Admirable is the comfort which, on the fore-named ground, God's favourites have, or may have, in their death. Natural men account death the most terrible thing that can befall a man, because they conceive it to be the period of a man's happiness.¹ But they whose 'death is precious in God's sight' cannot conceive it to be so terrible, much less such a period. For then would God keep them from death. In that their death is precious, 'Blessed are they that die in the Lord,' Rev. xiv. 23. When they die, there is good cause they should die. The wise God will not let go a precious thing without cause. Yea, he will not let it go without advantage. Their death is advantageable to God, to themselves, to others.

This may surviving friends apply to the death of such as are taken away, be they magistrates, ministers, husband, wife, parent, child, neighbour, kinsman, or any other, especially if they have left any evidence of God's favour towards them. Such are but gone before us, not clean gone away from us. Missed they may be; they may not be lamented as lost. Occasion is not to be given to Pagans of just reproof in that we lament those as perished and lost, whom we avouch to live with God,² and so by the expression of our inward affection disannul that faith which by word we profess.

3. This high account which God maketh of his favourites' death, is a forcible motive to stir us up to give all diligence to be of the number of these favourites, that so our tears may be kept in God's bottle, our complaints in his bosom, our cries in his ears, our bodies within the guard, even in the hands of his angels, our souls bound in the bundle of life,

¹ φοβερωταρον ὀθάνατος, πέρας γάρ.—*Arist. Ethic.*, lib. iii. c. 6.

² Occasio non est dauda Gentibus, ut nos merito reprehendant, quod quos vivere apud Deum dicimus, ut extinctos ac perditos luceamus, &c.—*Cypri.*, ser. 4, *de Mortal.*

our life and death in the treasure of his jewels, as a precious thing. For, 'precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his favourites.' Yea, the soul of one saint is more precious to him than infinite multitudes of sinners.¹ Let us covet therefore, and with our utmost power endeavour, to be of this blessed society of saints, and not consorts of sinners.

Sec. 98. *Of the exposition and resolution of part of the sixteenth verse.*

Ver. 16. *O Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid.*

The third reason² whereby the prophet was the rather induced to render solemn praise to God, is here laid down; and it is taken from the constant favour of God towards him. God of old had taken him, even from his mother's womb, to be his servant, and still continued that grace to him; therefore he would praise him. The argument may be brought to this brief form—

God's ancient servants must praise him;

But I am God's ancient servant;

Therefore I must praise him.

I deny not but that this acknowledgment of God's ancient kindness to himself in particular may be referred to the argument indefinitely set down in the former verse, and here added as an application thereof; for, having indefinitely noted how the death of God's favourites was precious in his sight, here he giveth instance thereof in himself, and saith, I am God's servant, and my death was precious to him; for 'he loosed my bonds.' This reference is not impertinent. But I take this for another distinct argument, rather than for an application or confirmation of the former.

There is in the original a word³ premised, which is diversely expounded, because in Scripture it is diversely used, namely, as a note of attention, or obsecration, or demonstration, or asseveration, and translated, Behold, truly, I beseech thee. But in all the acceptations thereof it hath an emphasis; and

¹ Preciosior est unius sancti anima, quam infinite multitudines peccatorum.—*Jerome, Com. in Ps. cxliii.*

² See sec. 2.

³ הַנֵּן et הַנֵּן est particula incitantis: affectum significat et impetum. Est semper in initio sententiæ, per Αφθε-resin ΝΣ, quæ semper postponitur.

here questionless it is used for emphasis' sake, as every of the other clauses are. For first, here is an apostrophe to God, 'O Lord.' 2. A note of asseveration, 'truly.' 3. An ingemination of the relation betwixt God and him, 'I am thy servant, I am thy servant.' 4. A calling to remembrance of his native condition, 'the son of thine handmaid.'

The former title whereby he sets out himself, 'servant,' doth signify both a condition and a disposition.¹ A 'servant in condition' is he that is under the authority and command of a master. A 'servant in disposition' is he that is willing to do anything for the good of another. Thus Christ, though in condition, he never were under the authority of any master on earth, yet is said to take on him 'the form of a servant,' Phil. ii. 7, and he did offices of a servant to his servants, John xiii. 4, &c., his disciples. St Paul, 1 Cor. ix. 19, where in regard of condition he professeth himself to be 'free from all men,' acknowledgeth himself in disposition to be 'servant to all men.' The prophet here intendeth both these, that as he is God's servant in condition, so he is also in disposition.

The doubling of this phrase thus, 'I am thy servant, I am thy servant,' is not a superfluous tautology, or an idle repetition of the same thing; for in sacred Scripture there is not a tittle in vain.²

Repetitions commonly have respect to the point repeated, or to the persons that do repeat it, and to whom it is repeated.

In regard of the point itself, a repeating³ of it importeth—

1. The infallible truth of it, Gen. xli. 32.
2. The excellent matter of it, Ps. xxiv. 7-10.
3. The profitable use of it, Ps. cxxxvi. 1, 2, &c.
4. The absolute necessity of it, John iii. 3, 5; Luke xiii. 3, 5.

In regard of the person that repeateth the point, it importeth—

1. His assured persuasion, or rather knowledge of the truth and worth of the point. To shew that that which he uttered fell not suddenly or rashly

¹ Of several kinds of servants, see 'Domestical Duties,' on Eph. vi. 5, treat. i. sec. 124.

² See sec. 107.

³ Repetitio confirmatio est: ut illud, Abraham, Abraham: et alibi, Ego sum, Ego sum qui deleo iniquitates tuas.—*Amib. de Bono. Mort.*, cap. 12.

out of his mouth, but that advisedly, upon good and sure ground, he uttered it; even so as he dares stand to it, he repeats it again, Gal. i. 8, 9.

2. His desire that they that hear it or read it should give the more earnest heed to it, and not let it slip, Heb. ii. 1.

In regard of the person to whom a point is repeated it argueth—

1. Their need. Some through ignorance and dullness to conceive; others through carelessness and negligence in attending; others through weakness and slipperiness of memory; some one way, some another way, have need to have that which is delivered to them pressed and inculcated, Isa. xxviii. 10.

2. Their good. By repeating one and the same thing memory is helped, affection is wrought upon, and matters of moment are better minded, Phil. iii. 1.

The other title, 'Son of thine handmaid,' Exod. xxi. 4, sheweth the kind of condition and the continuance thereof.¹ For the kind, it hath reference to the law, which determined that children born of a servant should be the master's, even his servants by virtue of their birth. Hereby the prophet acknowledgeth that his mother was God's servant, and that he himself was born in God's house, in his church, and there trained up all his days, even from his birth, which noteth the continuance of his condition.

In this text is a declaration of the relation which was betwixt God and the prophet, wherein is set out—

1. The matter wherein that relation consisted, 'I am thy servant.'
2. The manner whereby it is expressed. Hereof are four branches:—
 1. An apostrophe, O Lord.
 2. An asseveration, Truly.
 3. An ingemination, 'I am thy servant, I am thy servant.'
 4. An intimation of the kind and cause thereof, 'The son of thine handmaid.'

The relation itself, which is here plainly expressed, demonstrateth that—

¹ οἰκονομίας verna. Et emptus est, et vernaculus est.—*Aug. Enar. in Ps. hunc.*

I. Saints are God's servants.

The apostrophe, which is expressly directed to God, implieth a holy familiarity with God, whereof before on the 4th verse, see. 22, and on the 8th verse, see. 50.

The asseveration is a note of confidence, so as—

II. Saints may confidently profess that relation which God is pleased shall pass betwixt him and them.

The ingemination importeth an earnestness in that which he professeth, and giveth instance that—

III. Confidence in the interest which saints have in God maketh them earnest in pressing it.

The continuance of the mutual relation betwixt God and him, even from his birth, is added as a prop to his faith. Therefore—

IV. Faith is much strengthened by constant evidences of God's favour.

The express mention of his mother, which is for honour sake, sheweth that—

V. It is an honour to children to descend from pious parents.

Sec. 99. *Of saints being God's servants.*

I. *Saints are God's servants.* As this prophet here so styleth himself, so are the three great patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Exod. xxxii. 13; so also Moses, Num. xii. 7; Job, chap. i. 8; all the true prophets, Jer. vii. 25; the apostles, as Paul, Rom. i. 1; Peter, 2 Pet. i. 1; Jude, ver. 1; yea, and Christ himself, styled, Isa. xlii. 1.

Sundry are the respects wherein saints may truly and properly be termed God's servants.

1. As all creatures are, Ps. cxix. 91, being made, sustained, ordered, and governed by the Lord.

2. As many natural men, Jer. xxv. 9, being deputed by the Lord to special functions and services.

3. As many in the church, Mal. i. 6; Isa. xlii. 19, making profession of God to be their Lord.

4. As true, faithful professors, who do indeed take God for their Lord. In the three former respects (as God's creatures, as deputed to select functions by God, as professors of the name of God) others are servants of God as well as saints, but the fourth respect, which is the most honourable, profit-

able, and comfortable respect, is proper and peculiar to saints, and that two ways:—

1. By reason of God's affection to them.

2. By reason of their disposition to God.

1. God accounts them members of his house, and answerably affects them as of his household. In regard of such an affection he thus saith of Moses, 'My servant Moses is faithful in all my house,' Num. xii. 7. Yea, as united unto Christ, and in him adopted and accepted, he saith to saints as to Christ, 'Behold my servants, whom I uphold: mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth,' Isa. xlii. 1.

2. They are affected to the Lord as dutiful, faithful, grateful servants. A heathen monarch observed thus much, and thereupon saith, 'O Daniel, servant of the living God, whom thou servest continually,' Dan. vi. 20.

This relation thus taken affordeth matter of gratulation and direction to such as can truly and justly apply it to themselves.

Gratulation, by reason of the dignity of it.¹

Direction, by reason of the duties that are thereupon expected.

1. It is here as a dignity expressed and made the ground of gratulation, and that not without cause; for though this title, servant, be in itself a mean title, yet in relation to God it is a high, an honourable title. The greatest nobleman in a kingdom thinks himself honoured with this title—the king's servant. But what are mortal monarchs to the immortal and incomprehensible King of kings? Not only patriarchs, kings, prophets, and apostles, but Christ the Son of God, thought himself dignified with this title, servant, in relation to God. It is, therefore, a noble service whereof David here saith to God, 'I am thy servant,' &c., and blessed Mary to the angel, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord.' Moses also and other saints were such servants. Neither is it any marvel that holy men were dignified with this title, whereas the Father thus speaketh to his Son, 'It is a great thing for thee

¹ Nobilis servitus de qua et David ad Deum loquitur, Ego servus, &c.; et beata Maria ad angelum, Ecce ancilla Domini. Hanc servitatem habuit et Moyses, &c. Nec mirum quamvis sanctos homines tamen Dei servos nobiliter appellari, cum per Esayam Pater loquatur ad Filium, Magnum tibi est vocari te puerum meum.—*Serome, Com. in Tit. i.*

to be called my servant.¹ Such is the majesty, omnipotency, immutability, perpetuity, integrity, clemency, mercy, bounty, and excellency every way, of this Lord, as it nor will nor can repent any one to have any relation to him, or dependence upon him; which the royal prophet well understood when he said to this Lord, 'A day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness,' Ps. lxxxiv. 10.

The particular dignities and prerogatives of the Lord's servants are such as these:—

1. They are all free, 1 Cor. vii. 22.
2. All the services which the Lord enjoineth are fair services, Ps. xix. 7, &c.; 1 John v. 3.
3. The Lord gives ability to do the work which he expects and exacts of us, Joel ii. 29; Phil. ii. 13.
4. He accepteth and approveth what he enableth his servants to do, Mat. xxv. 21; Job i. 8, 9.
5. He bountifully rewardeth every good thing. His wages are good and great, Mat. x. 42, xix. 29, and xxv. 21.
6. God's servants get favours even for others also, Job xlii. 8.
7. They are sure of safe protection from all hurtful things, and of sufficient provision of all needful good things, Isa. lxxv. 13, 14.
8. The Lord taketh care of his servants' seed, Ps. lxxix. 36.

2. This relation directeth us unto such duties as here follow:—

1. To honour our Lord, Mal. i. 6.
2. To obey him, Mat. viii. 9; Col. iii. 22.
3. To fear him with a holy trembling, Eph. vi. 5.
4. To be faithful to him, Num. xii. 7.
5. To do all that we do on duty, Luke xvii. 10.
6. To be no men-pleasers, Gal. i. 10.
7. To serve him only; not to serve Mammon, or any other master, save the Lord, Mat. vi. 24.

Sec. 100. *Of saints' confidence in God's mind to them, and theirs to God.*

II. *Saints may confidently profess that relation which God is pleased shall pass betwixt him and them.*² This

confidence is manifested sometimes in the acknowledgment of that part of the relation which is on man's part, and other times that which is on God's part. In this text that on man's part is professed: 'Truly I am thy servant.' So, where he saith, 'We are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hands,' Ps. xcv. 7. People and sheep are notes of relation on man's part. So are clay, and work of God's hands, where the prophet saith, 'We are the clay, and the work of thy hands,' Isa. lxiv. 8. On God's part he saith, 'O Lord, thou art our Father, and thou our potter.' To like purpose are other like notes of relation on God's part with confidence professed thus, 'Thou are my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation,' Ps. lxxxix. 26; 'Thou art my King, O God,' Ps. xlv. 4; 'Thou, O Lord, art my glory,' Ps. iii. 3. In these and other like places, though the note of asseveration, truly, *NON*, is not expressed, yet the manner of expressing the notes of relation, on the one and the other part, import much confidence.

These and such other relations betwixt God and man give assurance of God's gracious acceptance and favour. If God meant not to deal with us, as a father with children, as a husband with his wife, as a king with subjects, as a master with servants, as a shepherd with sheep, as a potter with pots, (for all these and other like notes of relation betwixt God and us are expressed in Scripture,) would God have suffered such relations to be betwixt him and us? They are not complimentary and mere titular phrases, but expressions of true, real unions and communions.

Take notice here of the ground of true holy boldness and confidence. Wisely and diligently observe how God offers himself unto thee, what bond of relation he suffereth to pass betwixt him and thee. As saints in former times have done, do thou in thy time. Plead them before God. Confidently plead them, to sharpen thy prayer, to strengthen thy faith. Say to God, Thou art, O Lord, truly thou art my God, my king, my father, my master, my maker, my shepherd, &c. And, on the other side, I am of thy people and of thy flock, thy child, thy servant, the work of thy hands. Behold thy people, which have of old been called thy people.¹ These sure

¹ It is strange that Dr Gouge should have followed Jerome in such a mis-quotation and mis-application of Isa. xlix. 6.—Ed. Sec. 98.

¹ *Respicias populum tuum, qui quondam tuus est appellatus populus.—Jerome Comment. lib. xvii. in Isa. lxiv.*

grounds of faith will enlarge thine heart and open thy mouth, and embolden thee both to pray to God, and to expect from God what thou prayest for.

That thou mayest do this with the more steadfastness of faith, search thine heart, examine thy disposition; try how thou standest affected towards God. If thou have the mind of a child, a servant, a creature, a sheep, towards God, thou mayest rest upon it: God hath an answerable mind to thee. Yea, because God hath the mind of a father and master to thee, thou hast an answerable mind to him. The reflection of his respect to thee on thy heart, worketh respect in thee towards him.

Sec. 101. *Of saints' earnestness in pressing their interest in God.*

III. *Confidence in the interest which saints have in God, maketh them earnest in pressing it.*¹ It maketh them again and again to press the same thing, which is an undoubted evidence of great ardency. Did not the fire of a zealous spirit even flame out of the mouth of him that doth thus redouble a like relation before God? 'Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O Lord, art our father, our redeemer,' Isa. lxiii. 16. The like is manifested by the multiplication of several words to the same sense, thus, 'Behold and visit this vine: and the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted; and the branch which thou madest strong for thyself,' Ps. lxxx. 14, 15. Vine, vineyard, branch, import one and the same thing.

Such confidence as is rightly grounded on an assured interest in God, persuadeth a man's heart that God cannot suffer him to call and cry upon him, and not hear him. Therefore if God at first hear not, he will not presently give over, but rather cry the more earnestly and instantly till the Lord do hear him. Indeed, they that know no title that they can make to God, nor believe any interest they have in him, may soon be driven away; as Saul, who, when the Lord answered him not, 1 Sam. xxviii. 6, 7, presently inquired after a witch. But they that well knew their interest in God took another course. When God seemed to be angry against their prayer, Ps. lxxx. 4, &c., they humbly expostulate the case

¹ Sec. 98.

with God; they press the former favours that God shewed to them, and that title which they had in him, and thereupon once and again most earnestly they pray that God would cause his face to shine upon them, resting on this, that they shall be saved.

By that ground of faith (whereof in the former section) labour to be strengthened in faith. Get confidence in God; and that by considering, as what he is in himself, a potent, prudent, faithful, merciful God; so what he is to thee, thy God, thy king, thy Father, &c. And give evidence of this thy confidence, by stirring up thy spirit to depend on him, who gives so just cause to make thee depend on him. Oft and seriously meditate on those grounds; and when thou art before God, whether it be in humiliation or gratulation, call them to mind, press them again and again. Imitate the worthy patterns that in this case are prescribed unto us in God's word. If thus with understanding we do inwardly in our souls, or outwardly with our tongues, inculcate our right, title, and interest in God's word, urging the same again and again, thereby our dull spirits will be much quickened, our blunt prayers much sharpened, and our weak faith much strengthened—especially if with patience we can rest upon God. Saints of old, by their patient expectation and steadfast confidence, attained what was promised. If therefore to trust confidently be the way to receive, we also may so receive.¹

Sec. 102. *Of the vigour which is preserved in faith by the constancy of God's favour.*

IV. *Faith is much strengthened by constant evidences of God's favour.*² Herewith did he support his faith that said to God, 'Thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breast. I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly,' Ps. xxii. 9, 10. 'Thou art my trust from my youth. By thee have I been holden up from the womb: thou art he that took me out from my mother's bowels,' Ps. lxxi. 5, 6. It was not only the disposition of Obadiah towards God, but also the evidence that thereby he had of God's affection

¹ Acceperunt reprimissiones expectando atque confidendo quod acciperent. Si igitur confidere sit accipere, possumus sic accipere.—*Chrys.*, hom. 23, in *Heb.* xi. ² Sec. 98.

towards him, that made him with confidence say to Elijah, 'I fear the Lord from my youth,' 1 Kings xviii. 12.

By long continuance of ancient favour many demonstrations are given of a fast, fixed, and unremovable affection. So as if, by reason of temptations, one or more evidences should be questioned, yet others would remain to uphold faith, and to keep it from an utter languishing, and a total falling away. As when a house is supported by many pillars, though some be taken away, yet by the support of them which remain, the house will stand.

1. Be admonished hereby, O parents,¹ to initiate your children betimes, and from the cradle, yea, from the womb, to dedicate them to the Lord, and to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, so soon as they are capable of instruction, that when they are grown even unto manhood, they may on all occasions, with much comfort and strong confidence, say in the same sense that the prophet here doth, 'I am the son of thine handmaid,' being born under the covenant, and having in their infancy received the seal of the covenant, and from their childhood known the Holy Scriptures, being taught when they were tender, and thereby brought from their youth to fear the Lord. It is a glorious and blessed prerogative to be born a servant in God's house.² This is no slavish condition, but the best freedom and most happy immunity that possibly can be. Such as are born servants in God's house, are by virtue of that their birth sons, and free from the instant of that their birth.³ Christ's servant, and the Lord's freeman, are reciprocal terms; either may be said of the other. Christ's servant is the Lord's freeman, and the Lord's freeman is Christ's servant, 1 Cor. vii. 22. A good inducement this is to provoke parents to suffer this word of exhortation.

2. Be ye also, O children, exhorted and persuaded to yield yourselves pliable, from the time that you have any capacity, to the good instruction of your parents, that by your continuing to grow in grace answerably

to the means which, by the divine providence, have been afforded you, you may, with the greater comfort and stronger confidence, both in time of humiliation, when, for preventing or averting some judgment, or obtaining or regaining some blessing, you pour forth your souls to God; or in time of gratulation for some judgment removed, or some blessing bestowed, you enlarge your hearts and open your mouths; you may say to God, 'I am the son of thine handmaid, and thou hast been my God from my mother's womb.' Take heed that, being born in God's house, and by your parent, the son of his handmaid, you become not a bond-slave, and have the flesh, a bond-woman, for your mother. They that serve the flesh in the lusts thereof are such. What can such expect but the doom denounced against the bond-woman and her son, which was this, 'Cast out the bond-woman and her son; for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free-woman,'¹ Gal. iv. 30, a woeful doom, for such as are born in God's house, to be so cast out, thereby they may know that they have nothing in common with the true sons of God. Nothing, I say, in regard of those spiritual privileges which belong to God's free-born children. So walk, therefore, O children that are born in the church, so carry yourselves all your days, as you may on all occasions say to the Lord, 'I am the son of thine handmaid.'

Sec. 103. *Of children's honour by pious parents.*

V. *It is an honour to children to descend from pious parents.*² This is true in relation to ancient progenitors, for it was a great honour to the Jews in all succeeding ages that they descended from the pious patriarchs. But the nearer such parents are, the more honourable it is to children; most of all honourable when their immediate parents, from whose loins, and out of whose womb they proceed, are pious. Of such a one the prophet here speaketh, 'I am the son of thine handmaid.' For, questionless, he here calleth his mother God's 'handmaid,' as he called himself God's 'servant,' in a spiritual respect, in regard of God's grace to her and in her. Such were Solomon's parents, of whom for honour's

¹ Of parents' duty in this kind, see 'Domestical Duties,' treat. vi. sec. 4, 17, 37.

² οἰκότροφ.—*Verina.*

³ Qui hominis servus est, liber est Deo, et qui hominibus liber est, servus est Christi: ambo ergo unum sunt.—*Jerome, Comment., 1 Cor. vii.*

¹ Ejice ancillam hinc et filium ejus. Discat, inquit, jam quod nihil commune habebit filius ancillæ cum filio meo Isaac.—*Chrys. hom. 46, in Gen. 21.*

² Sec. 98.

sake, he maketh frequent mention, Prov. iv. 3, and xxxi. 1; 1 Kings viii. 17; such was, as Lois the grandmother, so Eunice the mother, of Timothy, 2 Tim. i. 5.

Nothing, in truth, can make any more honourable than piety. Whatsoever men's outward condition be in this world, though never so mean, yet if they excel in virtue, they are most honourable in God's eye. What man before God more noble than Peter, who was but a poor fisherman? What woman more illustrious than blessed Mary, who is set out to be a carpenter's wife?¹ Pious persons for birth are born of God. For dignities, they are God's favourites, of God's court, the most honourable therein; they are the spouse of his Son. For revenues, the exchequer of God's treasures is always open for them to have out of it his most precious jewels; yea, they are the true heirs of this world and of the world to come.

1. Such parents as desire that their children should all their days make an honourable mention of them, let them here take notice of the only right course to have their desire accomplished. Let them so walk before their children as they may have sure evidences that they are God's servants: that when children make mention of their father before the Lord, they may have cause to say of him, as Solomon did of his father, 'Thy servant my father,' 1 Kings viii. 25, and of their mother, 'Thy handmaid,' Ps. lxxxvi. 16. For a child to style himself the son of a duke and duchess, earl and countess, lord and lady, or any other like, is not in truth such an honour as this, 'Son of God's servant and handmaid.' By this, poor, mean, despised parents in this world may make their children honourable, and may make their own names honourable to their children.

2. Such children as would have just cause not vaingloriously to brag, but divinely to glory in their parents, let them here know what kind of parents do give that just cause. If, indeed, their father be God's servant, and their mother God's handmaid, let them not be ashamed of them because they be poor, of mean condition, not esteemed in this world, but heartily thank God that they are born of such

parents as may give them occasion to say, I am the child of God's servant and of God's handmaid. It is a hard task to persuade most children hereunto. But they that know God, and the dignities and immunities of his servants, will, without all question, yield to the truth and equity hereof.

Sec. 104. *Of the resolution and instructions of the last clause of the sixteenth verse.*

Ver. 16. *Thou hast loosed my bonds.*

The fourth reason¹ which stirred up the prophet to give public thanks to God, was the kindness which God had done to him. That kindness was a gracious deliverance from a grievous distress, thus expressed—

'Thou hast loosed my bonds.' The argument may be thus framed—

They whose bonds thou, O Lord, hast loosed, are bound to praise thee;

But thou hast loosed my bonds;

Therefore I am bound to praise thee.

Thus these words have a relation to the principal duty promised in this psalm.

They may also have an immediate reference to the other part of this verse, and that as an effect following from the cause. The Lord accounted him his servant, and therefore loosed his bonds. To make this reference the better discerned, some join this part of the verse with the former in one entire sentence, which they express in form of a petition, thus, 'I beseech thee, O Lord, seeing I am thy servant, I am thy servant, the son of thine handmaid, loose my bonds.'² But the mood and tense³ whereby this last clause is expressed admitteth not the form of petition.

And the very matter whereabout he now is, namely, gratulation, sheweth it rather to be a profession of a former, than a supplication for a future deliverance.

Besides, the inference of the 17th verse immediately on this clause doth demonstrate that he speaketh of a thing past, a favour done, and succour received; and that mention is here made thereof as

¹ Summa apud Deum est nobilitas clarum esse virtutibus. Quid apud Deum in viris nobilibus Petro, qui piscator et pauper fuit? Quid in feminis beata Maria illustrius, quae sponsa fabri describitur?—Jerome ad Celant. de Instit. Matris fam.

¹ Sec. 2.

² Observo, Jehovah, cum ego sim servus tuus, sim servus tuus, filius ancillae tuae, solveres vincula mea.—Tremel. et Jun.

³ פתחת. Indicat. praeter-perfect. solvisti.

of the cause of praising God. For if the question should be asked why mention is here made of loosening his bonds, the 17th verse giveth a ready answer, 'I will offer,' &c. As if it had been more fully expressed, Because the Lord hath loosed my bonds, therefore I will offer a sacrifice of praise.

Wherefore, to take the words as our English hath truly and properly translated them, thus, 'Thou hast loosed my bonds;' the word translated *loosed*, (פָּתַח,) doth properly signify *to open*; and thus it is diversely applied, as to the parts of one's body, 'mouth,' Ezek. xxxiii. 22; 'eyes,' 1 Kings viii. 29; 'ears,' &c., Isa. l. 5. To the earth, and that when ordinarily it openeth itself to receive rain, or seed, chap. xlv. 8; or extraordinarily, as when it opened itself to devour 'Dathan and his associates,' Ps. cvi. 17; to the 'engraving of stones,' Exod. xxviii. 9; 'metals or any like thing,' 1 Kings vii. 36; to 'doors,' Isa. xxvi. 2; 'gates,' 2 Kings xv. 16; 'treasures,' and such like, Deut. xxviii. 12; Gen. xli. 56; to 'the drawing out of a sword,' Ps. xxxvii. 14; and to the undoing, opening, and loosening of such things as are bound. Thus this word is used to express the undoing of a girdle wherewith a man is girt, Isa. v. 27; the opening of a sack that is tied, Gen. xlv. 11; and the loosening of cords and chains wherewith one is bound, Job xxx. 11, and xii. 8. Where Nebuzaradan saith to Jeremiah, 'I loose thee from the chains,' &c., Jer. xl. 4, this word is used. In this sense is it here used. Afflictions and calamities are as bonds, cords, and chains which fast tie and bind men, which girt and gall, pinch and pain them, yea, and oft strangle and kill them; and in these respects called bonds, as in this and many other places, where the very word that is here is used in the same sense, Ps. cvii. 14; Eccles. vii. 26; Isa. xxviii. 22, and li. 2; Jer. ii. 20, and xxx. 8; Nah. i. 13. Yea, because death holdeth men down as fast bound so as they cannot stir, it is said to have cords, as was before noted on ver. 3, sec. 15; and when one is delivered from death, the grave is said, in the word of this text, to be 'loosed or opened,' Ezek. xxxvii. 13.

This phrase, then, 'thou hast loosed my bonds,' is metaphorical. It implieth two things:

1. That he was in sore and grievous afflictions, wherewith he was as it were bound, as a man that

is taken by robbers and pirates, or by enemies, and fast bound by ropes, chains, or other like bonds. Thus Jeremiah, chap. xl. 1, among other Jews that were taken captives by the Babylonians, was bound.

2. That the Lord delivered him from those afflictions, which deliverance was a kind of loosening those bonds, so as they continued not to bind him as before. Thus Nebuzaradan said to Jeremiah, 'I loose thee this day from the chains which were upon thine hand,' chap. xl. 4.

The occasion of mentioning this deliverance is to convince his soul of the equity of that which he was now in doing, to praise the Lord.

Thus we have a profession of a great deliverance.

This may be considered two ways:

1. Simply, in and by itself.
2. Relatively, in and with reference to the occasion thereof.

In the former consideration, one thing is implied, another expressed.

1. The thing implied is, that he was in great distress. The mention of bonds, together with the loosening of them, importeth that bonds were on him; he was bound with them.

2. The thing expressed pointeth at—

1. The author, or deliverer, thou.
2. The kind of deliverance, hast loosed.

The reference hereof is partly immediate, to the very next words; partly remote, to the words further off.

The immediate reference sets it down as an effect of that relation which was betwixt God and him. He was God's servant, therefore God loosed his bonds.

The remote reference expresseth it as a cause of his praising God. 'God loosed his bonds,' therefore he would praise God.

So also doth the immediate inference of the 17th verse: 'Because thou, O Lord, hast loosed my bonds, I will offer praise to thee.'

The thing implied, bonds, intimateth that—

I. Saints may fall into inextricable perplexities; even such as they fall into who are bound with cords and chains, and know not how to unloose them. Hereof before on ver. 3, sec. 16.

The author acknowledged to be his deliverer, *thou*, giveth proof that—

II. God is a deliverer from distress.

III. Deliverances are to be ascribed to God. Of both these before. Of the former on ver. 6, sec. 35, 36; of the latter, ver. 8, sec. 51.

The kind of deliverance, hast loosed, giveth evidence that—

IV. God can deliver out of inextricable straits. Hereof before on ver. 6, sec. 39–41, and on ver. 8, sec. 52.

The immediate reference importeth that—

V. God taketh especial care of his servants.

This prophet was God's servant, and God loosed his bonds. Yea, the inference importeth that therefore, even because he was his servant, he loosed them.

The remote reference and immediate inference, imply that—

VI. They that are delivered from distress are especially bound to praise the Lord.

Sec. 105. *Of God's respect to his servants.*

V. *God taketh especial care of his servants.*¹ As here under a metaphor he is said to loose his bonds, so elsewhere his care is in other phrases set down, thus—

'The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants,' Ps. xxxiv. 22.

'He delivereth his servants from the hurtful sword,' Ps. xlv. 10.

'He revengeth the blood of his servants,' Ps. lxxix. 10.

'He sent plagues among them that dealt craftily with his servants,' Ps. cv. 25, &c.

'He hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servants,' Ps. xxxv. 27.

As the affection and respect which he beareth to them, which moveth him to make them his favourites;² so the honour which he bringeth to himself thereby, moveth him so and so to deal with his servants. This reason God himself thus expresseth and presseth, 'For my name's sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain,' &c., Isa. xlviii. 9, 11. 'For mine own sake, even for mine own sake will I do it. For how should my name be polluted?' Ezek. xxxix. 25, &c.

¹ Sec. 104.

² Sec. 96.

They who have assured evidence that they are God's servants, have good ground to 'cast their care on him who careth for them,' 1 Pet. v. 7. And in their distress to remember this their condition, and with the remembrance thereof to support their faith, and that by pleading it before God, as he who said, 'Make thy face to shine upon thy servant; save me for thy mercies' sake,' Ps. xxxi. 16. 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant,' Ps. cxliii. 2. 'Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live and keep thy word,' Ps. cxix. 17. 'Destroy all them that afflict my soul; for I am thy servant,' Ps. cxliii. 12. Believe God's word, and then say to God, 'Remember the word unto thy servant,' Ps. cxix. 49. See more hereof before, sec. 96.

Sec. 106. *Of their forwardness to praise God who have been succoured by God.*

VI. *They that are delivered from distresses are especially bound to praise the Lord.*¹ This only is in special enjoined to them, Ps. cvii. 2, &c.; and where it is enjoined, this pathetic exclamation of desire is as the staff of a divine hymn four several times repeated, 'Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wondrous works to the children of men,' Ps. ciii. 1. On this ground doth the psalmist vehemently incite his soul to this duty. And it hath been the constant practice of God's servants, after God hath delivered them from danger and loosed their bonds, to praise him: as Moses and Miriam, Exod. xv. 1, &c.; Barak and Deborah, Judges v. 1, &c.; David, 2 Sam. xxii. 1, &c.; Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xx. 26; Hezekiah, Isa. xxxviii. 9; and many others.

1. Praise is that which God expecteth for his kindness in delivering us; for saith he, 'I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me,' Ps. l. 15; so as if any just occasion can be given for performing this duty, this is especially a most just occasion.² Yea, this being the end why God delivereth thee, it lieth on thee as a debt, a most due debt which thou art to pay. The psalmist there—

¹ Sec. 104.

² Propheta dicit, immola Deo sacrificium laudis. Et eur hæc faciat adject, quoniam eripuit animam meam de morte.—*Jerome, Comment. in Ps. lv.*

fore where he speaketh of praising God, gives this reason thereof, 'Thou hast delivered my soul from death,' Ps. lvi. 12, 13.

2. Distress makes men to call upon God. If upon deliverance from distress they are not careful to praise God, they shew that they perform duties of piety for their own advantage; and give just cause to suspect, that if it were not to reap benefit to themselves thereby, they would perform no duty at all to God.

To satisfy God's expectation, and to testify that respect you owe him, and bear to him, O ye kingdoms and nations that have had those bonds loosed, whereby you have been bound by your enemies, render that unto the Lord which is most due, solemn, hearty thanks and praise. Do so, ye countries and people that have been bound and pinched with the bonds of dearth and famine. And ye, O cities and societies that have had the deadly bonds of the plague, and other contagious sicknesses (wherewith multitudes lie still bound) loosed. Ye also that have been in prison, but are now loosed, praise the Lord. Ye that have gone forth against your enemies, and having been compassed about by them before and behind, (as Abijah and his armies were, 2 Chron. xiii. 13.) are loosed and freed, be forward to perform your bounden duty, praise the Lord. Praise the Lord, ye that go down to the sea in ships, and have there been bound with vehement and violent storms, and in great hazard of death, but are loosed. Especially if ye have been taken by pirates, made bond-slaves, bound to galleys, or bound in dungeons, and are loosed. Yea, and ye principal debtors, or sureties, that have been fast bound to hard and cruel creditors, whereby your whole estate hath been in hazard, and you have feared your own, your wives', and children's utter undoing, but are loosed from those bonds, offer to the Lord your sacrifice of thanksgiving. And ye, O women, who have been bound with the strait and painful bonds of travail, which are loosed, and whereof you are eased. All ye also that have been hard girt with the bonds of the stone, the strangury, the gout, the colic, or any other painful malady, or have been fast tied to your beds with the cords of any sickness, and are loosed, give thanks unto the Lord. Whosoever ye be that

have with any manner of bonds been bound, say unto the Lord, 'Thou hast loosed my bonds;' and as you say it, so know the end why ye ought to say it, namely, to convince your souls of the equity of giving thanks to God, and to provoke them to do it the more readily and cheerfully.¹ When you are about to render solemn praise to God, do as this prophet did, think of your bonds which God hath loosed. Meditation thereon will much inflame your holy zeal of praising God. When the thought of your bonds which God hath loosed cometh to your mind, then withal inquire (as Ahasuerus did when he heard of the kindness done to him by Mordecai) what hath been rendered unto the Lord? what is to be rendered to him? This will make thee, with such a mind as the prophet did, use these words to the Lord, 'Thou hast loosed my bond, I will offer to thee a sacrifice of thanksgiving.'

Sec. 107. *Of the resolution of the three last verses.*

Ver. 17. *I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord.*

Ver. 18. *I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people,*

Ver. 19. *In the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the Lord.*

In these three last verses of this psalm the prophet returneth to his profession of rendering praise unto the Lord, wherein some things that were before set down are repeated, and other things are added thereto. For the better discerning whereof, take notice of two main points expressed therein:—

1. A protestation to praise the Lord himself.
2. A provocation to others so to do.

In his protestation we have—

1. The matter thereof.
2. The motive thereto.

The matter consisteth of two duties:—

1. Giving thanks to God—'I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving.'
2. Calling upon God—'And will call upon the name of the Lord.'

The motive is taken from his vow, where we have to consider—

¹ Unusquisque nostrum excitet et exhortetur animam suam, et dicat ei Benedic anima mea Dominum, &c.—*Aug. Enar. in Ps. cii.*

1. The general matter thereof—'I will pay my vows unto the Lord.'

2. The particular manner of performing it.

The manner is set out by two circumstances,—

1. The time, now.

2. The place; which is largely described, and that—

1. Indefinitely—'In the presence of his people.'

2. Determinately, by a description of the place where God's people met. This is here described—

1. By the relation it had to God—'In the courts of the Lord's house.'

2. By the situation of it—'In the midst of thee, O Jerusalem.'

The provocation to others is in the very last clause of all thus expressed, 'Praise ye the Lord.'

The first duty in the protestation was before set down, ver. 13, 'I will take the cup of salvation.' Here it is in other words repeated, thus: 'I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving.'

The second duty is here repeated in the very same words wherein it was expressed before, ver. 13, thus: 'And I will call upon the name of the Lord.'

The matter of the motive, and the amplification thereof by the time and by the place, as it is indefinitely set down, are all, word for word, repeated in this 18th verse, as they were before expressed in the 14th verse, thus: 'I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people.'

The determinate description of the place in the 19th verse by the relation it hath to God and by the situation of it,—thus, 'In the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem,'—is for substance the same that was noted before in the latter end of the 14th and 18th verses.

Concerning these repetitions, we may not think that he which used them used them in vain.¹ He was guided by that divine Spirit, which would not suffer the least tittle to be in vain. By repetitions good doctrine are fast fixed in men's minds. Besides other ends before noted² for repeating of one and the same thing, whether in the same or differing words and phrases, this is a principal one, to testify and express the more lively, how deeply the soul is

affected with such and such a thing. Fit and not affected repetitions are clear expressions of deep affections; yea, they are also forcible incitations to incense holy passion in him that useth them, and in them that hear or read them so used. These are the ends why rhetoricians have invented figures of all manner of repetitions, as—

1. By repeating the same words (*επιρροή*) immediately together in the same sentence, as in the verse before, 'I am thy servant, I am thy servant;' and in the psalm before this, 'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us,' &c., Ps. cxv. 1.

2. By repeating the same (*ἀναδ' ἐπιλασίς*) in the end of one sentence and beginning of the next, thus: 'Sing unto the Lord with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm,' Ps. xxviii. 5.

3. By repeating the same (*ἀναφορά*) in the beginnings of several sentences, as where every verse of a psalm endeth with this clause, 'Bless the Lord, O house of Israel. Bless the Lord, O house of Aaron,' &c., Ps. cxxxv. 19, 20.

4. By repeating the same (*επιστροφή*) in the ends of several sentences, as where every verse of a psalm endeth with this clause, 'His mercy endureth for ever,' Ps. cxxxvi.

5. By repeating the same (*επαναλήψις*) in the beginning and in the end, as where the same psalm beginneth and endeth with this clause, 'O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!' Ps. viii. 1, 9.

6. By repeating the same (*επάναδος*) in the beginning, midst, and end, thus: 'Sing praises to God, sing praises, sing praises unto our King, sing praises,' Ps. xlvii. 6.

Sec. 108. *Of a soul so ravished with God's praises as it cannot be satisfied in setting them out.*

By the repetitions noted in the close of this psalm the prophet manifesteth a divine passion, (*πάθος, affectus concitatus*), through a deep apprehension of God's favour and success shewed unto him; wherewith he was so ravished as he could not be satisfied in setting it out, nor thought that he could ever say enough thereof. Wherefore he loves to speak of it again and again, and oft to declare his purpose thereof, sometimes in some other words, and sometimes in the very same. Hereby he giveth instance, that,

¹ Bonorum repetitio doctrinam in animabus bene stabilit.
—Chrys. Serm., de fide et lege.

² Sec. 98.

A deep and due apprehension of God's mercies makes a soul unsatisfied in setting forth God's praises. The divine hymns that were penned by such as did indeed deeply ponder on God's mercies are evident demonstrations thereof. Among other the book of Psalms; and in that book the xlvi., ciii., cvii., cxxxv., cxxxvi., cxlviii., cxix., and cl. psalms.

God's mercies, the more they are pondered are the more admired, especially when the greatness, freeness, seasonableness of them, and other like circumstances, together with our unworthiness, and therewithal the need that we have thereof, the sweetness that we taste, and benefit that we reap thereby, are duly and deeply weighed. They are like a bottomless sea, which, the further it is sounded, the deeper it appears to be; or like to the bright sun, which, the more it is gazed upon, the more it dazzleth the eye. Yea, further, God's mercies are so linked together, as when we have occasion to meditate on one, many of them instantly present themselves to the view of our mind; as he that in a clear night lifteth up his eyes to see one star, hath millions on a sudden in his sight; or as he that in a bank of a deep river maketh a gut for a little water to pass through, maketh way for a flood to follow after. Thus was this prophet moved a little before to say, 'All his benefits are upon me.' A pious mind will hereupon say, I will daily rise, I will go to church, I will sing praise in the morning, I will do so again in the evening.¹ In my house will I do so again and again, daily offering up sacrifices of praise.

What now may be thought of such as having great and just occasion to set out the praises of the Lord with the uttermost of their power, find in themselves no heat of affection to do the same; and thereupon or wholly omit the duty, or do it so coldly as they were as good not do it at all? Surely such backwardness to perform this duty, such coldness and deadness in performing it, as is in most men, betrayeth an ill disposition, a base affection. The fire that descends from heaven hath not fallen upon the altar of their heart. If it had it would, as the

fire which fell on Elijah's altar, 1 Kings xviii. 38, lick up the Lethean waters and sluggish slime that lieth about their heart, and soon kindle and inflame their sacrifice of praise, and 'turn it to ashes,' Ps. xx. 3; that is, God's Spirit would stir up them with such cheerfulness to perform this duty, as God would most graciously accept the same. Great cause there is much to complain of men's want of zeal to, and in performance of, this duty. For of those whose 'bonds are loosed,' if their disposition should be observed, they would be found like the lepers whom Christ cured, Luke xvii. 17, nine to one to go away with their cures without returning back to give glory to God; and of those who do return back, though such a number of them should be gathered together as came through the Red Sea, even six hundred thousand who sang praise to God, yet scarce two in such a number would be found, as among them only Caleb and Joshua, inflamed with such a fervent spirit as this prophet had, so ravished with God's favours, so unsatisfied with giving praise to him. That small, cold thanks which most give, much provoketh God to repent what he hath done, and to withhold his helping hand for the time to come. Due notice is to be taken hereof, that we may be humbled for what is past, and be more quickened for the time to come.

As for you whose understandings are enlightened and judgments convinced about the equity, not of the duty only, that thanks is to be given to God, but also of the manner of doing it, with life, with spirit, with zeal, 'with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, with all thy strength, and with all thy mind,' Luke x. 27, (for praise is an especial fruit of love: as God, therefore, is to be loved, so is he to be praised), rouse up your spirits, come with souls ravished, with hearts inflamed to perform this duty, as he that said, 'My heart is prepared, O God, my heart is prepared: I will sing and give praise. Awake up my glory,' &c., Ps. lvii. 7, &c. Zeal is not more requisite for any other duty than for praising God, neither can the spirit be more quickened up in the performing of any other duty than this, if it be rightly performed. Praising of God is a spiritual mirth, and words of mirth are in Scripture used to set it out, as: To 'sing unto the Lord,' Exod. xv. 1; 'to sing aloud, to make a joyful noise

¹ Surgam quotidie, pergam ad ecclesiam, dicam unum hymnum matutinum, alium vespertinum, tertium aut quartum in domo mea, quotidie sacrificio sacrificium laudis.—*Aug. Enar., in Ps. xlix.*

unto God,' Ps. lxxxi. 1; 'to be glad and rejoice in God,' Ps. ix. 2. And all instruments of music, rites, and gestures of mirth were of old wont to be used in praising God, Ps. lxxxi. 2, &c., cl. 1, &c. Now mirth, and such things as tend thereto, are effectual means to quicken the spirit. Elisha, therefore, being somewhat heavy in spirit and vexed in soul by reason of the abominations of the times wherein he lived, when he was moved to prophesy, that he might be the more revived and quickened thereto, he said, 'Bring me a minstrel,' 2 Kings iii. 15. It is then evident that praise must be given to God with a quick and zealous spirit.

That we may with such a spirit perform this duty, take a view of such things as in this very psalm are noted to incense the heart and ravish the soul of this prophet.

1. In his distress he called on God, ver. 4, and that most earnestly. The more earnest men are in praying, the more zealous they will be in giving thanks for that which they have prayed for.

2. In his distress he vowed, ver. 14, to give praise to God. A vow is of special force to incite a man heartily to perform that which he hath vowed.

3. He believed that God heard his prayer, ver. 1, 2. They that believe that God hears their prayers cannot but hold themselves much bound to testify all possible thankfulness.

4. He keeps his distress in mind and memory, ver. 3. So long as a man's mind is fixed on his danger and distress, his heart remains on fire with desire of gratitude.

5. He was well instructed in God's goodness, ver. 5, which doth most of all enlarge a man's heart unto all gratefulness.

6. He acknowledgeth God to be his deliverer, ver. 6-8, whereby he saw himself so engaged to God as he could not but acknowledge all thanks to be most due unto him.

7. His love was settled on God, ver. 1. Nothing can more inflame zeal than love.

8. He sets God always before him, ver. 9. The presence of him that doth a kindness doth more and more egg a man on to praise him.

9. He remembered his own weakness, ver. 10, 11, in making question of God's promises, whereby he

is moved the more to bless God for bringing that to pass whereof he doubted.

10. He observed that his death was precious in God's sight, ver. 15, and is induced thereby to have God's name in high esteem, and to praise him with the uttermost of his power.

11. He was assured of the mutual relation betwixt God and himself, ver. 16, which obliged him the more to God, and made him the more fervent in praising God.

12. By this benefit all God's benefits came to his mind, ver. 12, which much increased the heavenly fire of zeal in him.

13. He knew nothing to render by way of satisfaction to God, ver. 12, therefore he is the more stirred up to praise him.

14. He useth outward rites to quicken his spirit the more, ver. 13. No marvel then that he is so full of life in performing this duty.

15. He goeth to the courts of the Lord's house, where God's people were assembled together, ver. 19 — an especial means to quicken his spirit.

16. He provokes others to praise God, ver. 19, and thereby incites himself the more to that duty.

Sec. 109. *Of expressing the same thing in differing phrases.*

The first branch of the repetition of the prophet's protestation concerneth the principal duty here promised, thus expressed,

'I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving.'

Though the prophet for substance of matter intends no more than he did before, ver. 13, yet the different manner of expressing the same affordeth some other useful instructions, which, that we may the better discern, let us take a view of the different phrases.

1. What he styled before, 'cup of salvations,' here he termeth, 'sacrifice of thanksgiving.'

2. Where before he said, 'I will take,' or lift up, here he saith, 'I will offer up.'

This latter manner of expressing his mind is the more plain and perspicuous, and serveth as a commentary to the former, in which respect it is not in vain, but to very good purpose, added.

In and by this pattern a useful rule for repeating one and the same thing in different words is set out,

which is, In the latter place to use such words and phrases as are in themselves more easy, and better known than the former, and which may give some light for a better understanding of the former ;¹ for why are phrases added to phrases in and about the same thing but for illustration's sake, to make the point more perspicuous? That, therefore, which is added for this end must be more clear and evident, otherwise multiplication of words and phrases is idle and absurd.

Sec. 110. *Of offering a sacrifice of praise.*

Where the prophet saith, 'I will offer,' he useth a word that signifieth to slay, (*זָבַח*), but is most usually applied to the slaying of beasts or birds for feasts or sacrifices: a noun, therefore, derived from that verb is here and in many other places put for a 'sacrifice.' Our English, as well as other tongues, can well express this derivation thus, 'I will sacrifice the sacrifice of thanks,' (*זֶבַח תּוֹבָה*). The express relation of this oblation to God in this phrase, 'to thee,' (*לְךָ*), importeth a kind of donation, that thereby something was given to God. The attribute of 'thanksgiving' distinguisheth the kind of sacrifice. The word signifieth 'confession,' *תְּרוּרָה*, and it is applied sometimes to man's sins, and sometimes to God's properties and works. Joshua useth this word where he saith to Achan, 'Make confession to God,' Josh. vii. 19, (*תִּתֵּן לַיהוָה תְּרוּרָה*) meaning confession of sin. And the psalmist useth this very word where he saith to God, 'I will publish with the voice of confession,' (or thanksgiving), 'and tell of all thy wondrous works,' Ps. xxvi. 7, (*בְּקוֹל*). (*תְּרוּרָה*.) In this sense this word is oft used. That staff of the psalm of praise which is four several times repeated, by this word doth set out praise and thanksgiving to God, thus, 'Let men confess before the Lord his goodness, Ps. cvii. 8, 15, 21, 31, (*יִדְרוּ לַיהוָה חֲסֵדוֹ*), *Confiteantur Domino*, &c., vet. transl.) Hereupon that sacrifice, which was offered up when men recounted and acknowledged God's mercies towards them, was called a 'sacrifice of confession,' Lev. vii. 12, (*זֶבַח הַתְּרוּרָה*), which phrase is here used in this text, and translated, 'sacrifice of

¹ Debet id, quod illustrandæ alterius rei gratia assumitur, ipsum esse clarius eo quod illuminat.—*Quintil.*, lib. viii. cap. 3

thanksgiving,' or sacrifice of praise. The signification of the Hebrew word is the rather to be observed, because it doth excellently set out the nature of 'thanksgiving,' or 'praise,' as it hath reference to God, which is, to confess and acknowledge God to be what he is, to do what he doth, and to give what he giveth.¹ To offer a sacrifice at such a confession, or thanksgiving, added much to the solemnity thereof, and made it more honourable in itself, and more acceptable to God, which, that we may somewhat the more distinctly discern, let us take a brief view of the several sacrifices which were appointed by the law to be offered.

Sect. III. *Of the several sacrifices of the Law.*

A sacrifice (as the word is usually taken in the Law) was 'a pious rite whereby something was offered to God.' I term it a rite, because it was one of those external ceremonies which God ordained to be used in his church till the fulness of time should come. I add this attribute, 'pious,' unto it, to shew that it was an action of piety, a part of divine worship. In every sacrifice something, either with or without life, was brought, and by the priest, in the name of him that brought it, offered to the Lord. Herein lieth a main difference betwixt this and other rites, and in special betwixt a sacrifice and a sacrament. The essential action of a sacrament is a receiving from God: of a sacrifice, an offering to God. They which entered into the ark, and abode therein, they which passed through the Red Sea, and they which were under the cloud, (all which were sacramental rites, answerable to our sacrament of baptism, 1 Pet. iii. 21; 1 Cor. x. 2,) received thereby preservation, protection, and direction from the Lord. So they which were circumcised received the seal of remission of sins. They which celebrated the passover received the seal of deliverance from bondage. They also which ate manna, and drank the water that flowed out of the rock, (which answered to the sacrament of the Lord's supper,) 1 Cor. x. 3, 4, apparently received both spiritual and temporal blessings from the Lord. But in all manner of sacrifices something was brought and offered to the Lord, as will more evidently appear

¹ See 'The Guide to go to God' on the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer, sec. 239.

by a particular enumeration of the several sacrifices, which may thus be distinguished :

Two ends there were of sacrifices—

One, to pacify the wrath of God provoked against man for his sin. On which ground David giveth this advice to Saul, ‘If the Lord have stirred thee up against me, let him smell an offering,’ 1 Sam. xxvi. 19.

Another, to gratify God for some favour received. Thus Asa and his people, 2 Chron. xv. 11, having gotten victory over the Ethiopians, that came against him with an army of ten hundred thousand, offered of the spoil to the Lord.

According to these ends sacrifices were,

1. Expiatory, for expiation of sin.
2. Gratulatory, for testification of thanks.

Expiatory sacrifices were express types of the sacrifice of Christ, by which only sin could be taken away. Under this head are comprised, whole burnt-offerings for atonement, Lev. xvi. 6, &c.; several sorts of sacrifices for the sins of several persons, Lev. iv. 3, &c., as of priests, whole assemblies, princes and private persons; and all kinds of sacrifices for cleansing such as were legally unclean, Lev. xiv. 4, &c., xv. 14, &c., as lepers, those that had running issues, or had touched a dead corpse, or any unclean thing, with the like.

Gratulatory sacrifices were visible representations of that praise, Heb. xiii. 15, obedience, Rom. xii. 1, and benevolence, Phil. iv. 18, Heb. xiii. 16, which all God’s people are bound unto. Of these there were two sorts—

1. Such things as had life, and were slain.
2. Such as had no life, and were offered to God.

Many peace-offerings, free-offerings, vow-offerings, and firstlings of living creatures, were slain for gratulatory sacrifices; and that to shew, that even in gratulation expiation must be made, and that by the blood and sacrifice of Christ all things are made acceptable to God. The word, therefore, that importeth slaying is attributed to gratulatory sacrifices, Lev. xxii. 21, (זבה.) Heb. xiii. 15, (δυστα.)

Their meat-offerings, Lev. ii. 1, &c., and drink-offerings, Exod. xxix. 40, many free-offerings and vow-offerings, first-fruits, tithes, and such like, were of things without life. These are usually expressed by a word that properly signifieth a gift, Lev. ii. 1,

(בנחה.) Heb. v. 1, (δωζα,) which we translate offering, because in way of gratitude they were given to the Lord, and offered up to him.

Gratulatory offerings were ordinary, or extraordinary.

Ordinary, were those which were constantly offered every morning and evening, Exod. xxix. 40, &c., and at other times in their seasons were brought, as first-fruits, tithes, &c.

Extraordinary, were such as for removing some great and imminent judgment, 2 Sam. xxiv. 25, or conferring some special blessing, were brought and offered unto the Lord, 2 Chron. xv. 11.

1. The offering up of these extraordinary sacrifices set out a most solemn and extraordinary manner of praising God. And this is the substance of that which the prophet here intendeth under this phrase, ‘I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving.’ For they offered to God, not in regard of any need that God had, but as giving thanks for what he gave, and as sanctifying the creature.¹

Of an extraordinary manner of praising God for extraordinary favours, sufficient hath been before delivered, sec. 3.

2. The testifying of his gratitude by an outward warrantable rite, was before expressed, ver. 13, sec. 86.

3. The kind of sacrifice whereby the prophet would testify his thanksgiving, was a duty of piety, an especial part of God’s worship, prescribed by God, and of force in those days; from which particular we may safely infer this general—

I. True gratitude to God is to be testified by performing due worship to him.

4. This rite being such an one as in and by it that which God by his law required was given to him, it giveth instance that—

II. What is warrantable must in gratitude be given to God.

Sec. 121. *Of testifying gratitude by piety.*

I. True gratitude to God is to be testified by performing due worship to him. As this is implied under offering of sacrifices, (whereby the Jews were wont

¹ Offerimus Deo nou quasi iudigentes, sed gratias agentes donationi ejus, et sanctificantes creaturam.—*Iren. advers. Her.*, lib. iv. cap. 34.

to testify their gratefulness when they had more than ordinary occasion to do so,) so is it in other places more plainly and expressly set down; as where the psalmist saith, 'I will come into thine house in the multitude of thy mercies, and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple,' Ps. v. 7; 'I will sing praise unto thee: I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy loving-kindness,' Ps. cxxxviii. 1, 2. As he promiseth for himself, so he stirreth up others after the same manner to testify their gratitude, saying, 'Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: worship the Lord,' Ps. xxix. 2; xcv. 2, 6; xevi. 8, 9. Where Jacob, in his vow of thanksgiving, useth this phrase, 'This stone shall be God's house,' Gen. xxviii. 22, what else doth he mean, but that that place should be consecrated to duties of piety for worshipping God? Thus Abraham's servant, in testimony of his thankfulness to God for the good success which he gave him, 'worshipped the Lord,' Gen. xxiv. 26; so did the Israelites after Moses had brought them news of their deliverance from Egypt, Exod. iv. 31; xii. 27. So Joshua, Josh. v. 14; Gideon, Judges vii. 15; Jehoshaphat with his people, 2 Chron. xx. 18; Hezekiah with his also, chap. xxxix. 29; and many others. Yea, the celestial spirits do use in praising God to worship him, Rev. iv. 10; v. 14; vii. 11; xi. 16; xix. 4.

1. A main end of praising is to glorify God; for, saith the Lord himself, 'Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me,' Ps. l. 23. But there is nothing wherein and whereby we may more glorify God than by worshipping him. Witness the practice, not only of them who on earth are instructed by the Spirit of illumination in the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God, but also of them in heaven, who are made perfect in all knowledge and understanding thereof.

2. Works of piety, wherein the worship of God consisteth, are the works wherein God most delighteth, and which he best accepteth. The spouse, therefore, of the Lord, that the King might greatly delight in her, hath this advice given to her, 'Worship thou him,' Ps. xlv. 11.

3. By works of piety all other actions of rejoicing are seasoned and sanctified. This moved the pious Jews to begin their weighty affairs with sacrifices,

which were then, as we have heard, principal parts of piety and of divine worship, and therewith to end the same, compare 1 Sam. x. 8 with 1 Chron. xvi. 1.

4. By giving thanks in and by such duties as are prescribed for God's worship, we shew that our hearts are set on God, and prepared to do service to him who hath done kindness to us.¹ Yea, the duties wherein service is done to God will raise our minds unto God, and fix them the more steadfastly on him. So as this kind of sacrifice is unquestionless the best and greatest that we can offer up, a perfect oblation in the kind of it. And this will prove an occasion of much confidence to us.

As occasions of thankfulness are offered unto us, and as by God's Spirit we are moved to take those occasions for giving thanks, let us here learn how to order, how to sanctify, how to make the same acceptable to God. Though the particular ceremony of worshipping God by sacrifices be now abrogated, yet the general equity of performing due worship to God doth still and ever shall remain in force. Take notice, therefore, of that manner of worshipping God which now under the gospel is warrantable. The parts of divine worship are prayer, singing of psalms, reading, preaching, hearing the word, and celebrating the sacraments. These are as sacrifices of bullocks and calves, goats and kids, sheep and lambs, turtles, pigeons, sparrows; and all manner of meat and drink-offerings.² By a pious, devout, reverent, and upright manner of performing these, thou testifiest and sanctifiest thy thanksgiving to God. When these holy duties of piety are performed for gratitude's sake, when in, with, and by them thanks is given to God, then are they, for substance, in a spiritual respect, sacrifices of thanksgiving, and the Lord will accept them as sacrifices of thanksgiving.

Sec. 113. *Of giving to God.*

II. *What is warrantable must be given to God.* The sacrifices, whereof mention is here made, were by

¹ Continuum gratiarum actionem Domino exhibete. Hoc maximum est sacrificium, hæc oblatio perfecta. Hoc fiducia nobis fiet occasio.—*Chrys. ad Pop.*, hom. 72.

² Hoc est sacrificium acceptabile; hoc est holocaustum pingue, ut laudetur Deus, &c.—*Jerome, Comment. in Ps. xlix.*

¹ Locus dignus qui consecratur precibus fundendis Deo.—*Trem. et Jun. in Schottis.*

the law prescribed; and in all manner of sacrifices by the law prescribed something was given to God. They, therefore, that appeared before the Lord without a sacrifice are said to appear 'empty,' Deut. xvi. 16, (רִיקִי); which was expressly forbidden. The many precepts, Deut. xii. 11; Exod. xxii. 29; Neh. x. 32, &c., of bringing oblations, vow-offerings, freewill-offerings, first-fruits, tithes, and other gifts unto the Lord, and God's gracious acceptance thereof, 2 Chron. xxxi. 5, 10; yea, and the many threatenings, Mal. iii. 8, 9, against those who brought not those gifts unto the Lord, and judgments executed upon them, give sufficient proof to the fore-mentioned *must*. 'What is warrantable must be given to God.' The pious Jews manifested herein much zeal to the Lord. When the tabernacle was first to be made, the people were so free-hearted and bountiful in bringing rams' skins, badgers' skins, shittim wood, oil, spices, sweet incense, fine linen, blue, purple, and scarlet, brass, silver, gold, and all manner of precious stones, as they brought more than enough, Exod. xxxvi. 5, 6; a proclamation was made to restrain them. Wonderful, great, and precious were the treasures which 'David and his princes prepared for the Lord towards the building of his house,' 1 Chron. xxix. 1, &c. At that time 'they offered burnt-offerings to the Lord, a thousand bullocks, a thousand rams, and a thousand sheep, with their drink-offerings, and sacrifices in abundance,' ver. 21; 'Asa and his people offered seven hundred oxen, and seven thousand sheep,' 2 Chron. xv. 11; 'Hezekiah and his people, two thousand bullocks, and seventeen thousand sheep,' chap. xxx. 34; 'Josiah and his people, three thousand and eight hundred bullocks, and thirty-seven thousand six hundred small cattle,' chap. xxxv. 7, &c.; Solomon went beyond all these, and offered a sacrifice of 'two and twenty thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep,' chap. xxxvii. 5. Behold here what testimonies of gratitude were given to the Lord.

Obj. To what end were such oblations, whenas God required them not, nor cared for them? Ps. xl. 6.

Ans. 1. Singly and simply in themselves, as external and earthly things, God took no delight in them, Ps. l. 8.

2. As mere ceremonies, separated from the sub-

stance and truth which they typified, God neither enjoined nor required them, Ps. xl. 6.

3. As cloaks for hypocrites, to cover and colour their impieties and iniquities, God detested them, Isa. i. 10, &c., and lxvi. 3.

But as external evidences of true piety, as types of heavenly truths, as parts of that outward worship and service which God prescribed, as visible demonstrations of gratitude, he was well pleased with these sacrifices; they caused a sweet savour to enter into his nostrils, Gen. viii. 21; Exod. xxix. 18; Lev. i. 9.

Though God, the Creator of all things, stand in need of nothing that the creature hath, or can offer to him,¹ yet by giving to him the things which in his word we find to be acceptable to him, we manifest a willing and ready mind to do what lieth in our power; and give evidence that if anything which we had could stand the Lord in any stead, or do him any good, we would with all our hearts gratify him therewith, which mind God doth as kindly and graciously accept, as if indeed he were profited by that which we offer unto him.

Be liberal and bountiful to the Lord, whosoever ye be that have anything to give to the Lord.² And who is it that hath not something, yea, that hath not much to give, if he be no niggard of what he hath? The poorest that be have as many calves as Solomon had to offer to the Lord, 'calves of their lips,' Hosea xiv. 2. These are sacrifices which may be offered up to God, Heb. xiii. 15. The poorest that be have a body, which they may present as 'a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God,' Rom. xii. 1. The poorest that be may every day, morning and evening, and at other times also, 'direct their prayer to God as incense,' Ps. cxli. 2. Yea, they may mix therewith the sweetest incense of the intercession of Christ, and offer all up 'upon the golden altar which is before the throne,' Rev. viii. 3. The poorest that be may bring to God 'a broken heart and a contrite spirit,' which is 'a sacrifice that

¹ Dedit populo preceptum faciendarum oblationum, quamvis non indigeret eis, ut disceret Deo servire.—*Iren. advers. Hær.*, lib. iv. cap. 34.

² Quisquis bene cogitat quid voveat Domino, que vota reddat, seipsum voveat, seipsum reddat: hoc exigitur, hoc debetur.—*Aug. Enar. in Ps. cxv.*

God will not despise,' Ps. li. 17. The poorest that be may 'do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly before God,' which the Lord preferreth before 'burnt-offerings, and calves of a year old;' yea, before 'thousands of rams, or ten thousand rivers of oil,' Micah vi. 8. These and other like offerings have all of all sorts (not the poorest excepted) now under the gospel to bring and give unto the Lord. These sacrifices saints offer to God.¹ These sacrifices they solemnise without intermission day and night, especially that of giving themselves to God. All good works are sacrifices fit for God and acceptable to him. There are also several talents given to several persons, though not to all alike, (for to one are given five, to another two, to another but one,) yet to him that hath the least so much is given, as by a good improvement thereof he may bring some increase and advantage to the Lord,² and that so acceptably as the Lord thereby will be moved to say, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things,' &c., Mat. xxv. 21. As for rich men, they may yet further 'honour God with their substance,' Prov. iii. 9; they may 'do good and distribute, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased,' Heb. xiii. 16. They may so 'communicate to the necessities,' not only of the poorest saints, but also of the ministers of God's word, as what they do in this kind may be 'an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable and well-pleasing to God,' Phil. iv. 18. Thus, as there were sacrifices of old, there are sacrifices still; as oblations of old, so oblations still. Only the kind of them is altered.³

These sacrifices allowed, approved, accepted, under the gospel, 'please the Lord much better than oxen and bullocks that have horns and hoofs,' Ps. lxi. 31, yet to us they are nothing so chargeable, as the oblations and sacrifices were to the Jews. Why then do we return so little to the Lord? are his mercies fewer in number or less in worth to us under

the gospel, than they were to his people under the law? If the difference betwixt the old and new covenant, betwixt God's dealing with his church before and since Christ was exhibited, were thoroughly discerned, we should find just cause to say, 'He hath not dealt so with the Jews as he hath dealt with Christians.' We want those zealous affections which the pious Jews had. Were our inward disposition answerable to theirs, we would not, we could not come so short as we do of outward expressions of gratefulness. Let us by due meditation of God's surpassing kindness to us, be stirred up willingly and cheerfully to give what we shall understand to be acceptable to him. God gives all: to God again let all be returned.¹

Sec. 114. *Of vowing praise to God.*

Ver. 18. *I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people.*

The immediate inference of this verse upon the former, sheweth the principal matter of the prophet's vow, for he maketh mention of his vow as of a motive, the more to provoke him to offer up a sacrifice of thanksgiving.² But if he had not vowed such a sacrifice, what motive could his vow have been thereto? This approved pattern of the prophet giveth evidence that—

Praise to God is a meet matter to be vowed.

Where mention is made of performing vows, express mention useth there to be of this very matter, and that where directions are given for vows, thus, 'Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows,' Ps. l. 14; and where performance is promised, thus, 'My praise shall be of thee, I will pay my vows,' Ps. xxii. 25; 'Thy vows are upon me, O God; I will render praises unto thee,' Ps. lvi. 12; 'I will sing praise to thy name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows,' Ps. lxi. 8.³ The praises which he sang to the Lord tending to this end, 'that he might perform his vow,' evidently proved that he had vowed so to do. Where Jacob vowed that the stone which he set for a pillar should be 'God's house,' Gen. xxviii. 22, what intended he thereby

¹ Hoc vos sacrificium Deo offertis; hoc sacrificium sine intermissione die ac nocte celebratis; hostiæ facti, &c.—*Cyp. Epist.*, lib. iii. ep. 25.

² Apta Deo sacrificia sunt opera virtutis.—*Amb. de Cain et Abel*, cap. 6.

³ Oblationes et illic, oblationes et hic. Sacrificia in populo, sacrificia et in ecclesia, sed est species immutata tantum.—*Iren. advers. Hæc.* lib. iv. cap. 34.

¹ Deo datori omnia tribuenda.—*Chrys.*, hom. 10. in 1 Cor. iii.

² See ver. 14, sec. 89.

³ Hæc sunt vota prophetæ, ut laudem dominicam celebrat.—*Jerome, Comment. in Ps. lv.*

but that public and solemn praise should be given to God! This was the main substance of Jephthah's vow, Judges xi. 31, that in way of thanks he would give something to the Lord. If his vow had not too far extended itself, even to such things as might not be offered to the Lord, it had been a warrantable and commendable vow.

1. A vow rightly made is of something to be done for the Lord's sake, and to testify our respect to him. If a vow be made against any sin, or against temptations or occasions that lead thereto, it is because by sin God is offended and dishonoured. Now to vow against that whereby God is offended and dishonoured, is implicitly to please and to honour God. If a vow be made for performing any duty, that is made somewhat the more directly to the honour and praise of God, for all good duties tend thereunto. Now, because there is nothing wherein and whereby we can more honour God, or better testify our respect to God than by giving praise to him, to praise God must needs be a very fit subject for a vow; yea, the best that can be.

2. In making a vow something is aimed at, either as received or as expected from the Lord, which occasioneth the making thereof. When in distress a vow is made, it is in expectation of deliverance from that distress. When to avoid sin a vow is made, it is to gain assurance of pardon for that sin before committed, and assistance against it for the time to come. Though in these and other like cases a vow be made before the kindness for which it is made be received, yet it is to bind us unto gratitude for the kindness which we desire and expect. If after a kindness conferred a vow be made, then it is an apparent testimony of gratefulness. But what duty more proper to gratitude than praise of God? wherefore, to praise God is a matter most meet to be vowed.

3. Those duties whereunto we are most bound, from performance whereof no superior power on earth may hinder us, which by the gift of grace that God useth to give to his children we are able to do, we ought especially to vow. But in the uppermost rank of all such duties, praising of God is most justly to be placed. So as, if any be meet to be vowed, this is of all most meet.

4. A vow must always be joined with prayer.

Commonly when men earnestly desire the removal of some evil, or the obtaining of some good thing, in opening their desire to God, they will vow something to him. At least, when a vow is made, prayer must then be made for grace to keep it. Now, when in making any petition to God, the mind is fixed on rendering something to God, and is thereby brought to vow praise unto him, this vowing of praise will much enlarge the desire of a man's heart, and settle his soul in assurance of obtaining what he desireth.

A vow of praising God in craving any blessing from God is like to this protestation, 'As we forgive them that trespass against us,' annexed to the fifth petition, whereby we are stirred up more earnestly to crave, and more steadfastly to believe, pardon of our sins. The thought of praising God, especially when it is ratified by a vow, works much confidence in God's favour towards him that is in truth resolved to perform that vow. Is not this, then, a very meet matter to be vowed?

Do ye now inquire what ye may vow, what ye may render? Whether such creatures as were sometimes offered on altars? Thou needest offer no such thing. There is in thee what thou mayest vow and render. From the ark of thy heart bring forth the incense of praise.¹ Now, therefore, ye who are well informed in the lawfulness, meetness, excellency, and utility of this duty of making vows to God, (whereof before,) and are thereupon moved to put the duty in practice, here take notice of this main matter of a vow, and be forward in vowing praise to God. When for themselves men crave in sickness, recovery of health; in penury, supply of their necessities; in restraint, liberty; in sterility, children; in oppression, protection; in their labours, success; in any danger, safety; or in any other case, any needful blessing; yea, when they pray in the behalf of others, whether for the church in general or such parts thereof as are in distress, or for their own nation, city, town, parish, family, children, or any others; when they pray for any more than ordinary blessing and favour from the Lord, let

¹ Quid voveatis, quid reddatis! An forte animalia illa quæ offerbantur apud aras aliquando! Nihil tale offeras. In te est quod voveas et reddas. De cordis arca profer laudis incensam.—*Aug. Enar. in Psalm lv.*

them in making that prayer vow to render praise unto the Lord, that when the Lord giveth any evidence of hearing their prayer they may say, 'I will praise thee, O Lord, that I may perform my vow.'

See more of this verse before on ver. 14.

Sec. 115. *Of the meaning and method of the last verse.*

Ver. 19. *In the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem.*

In these words¹ the prophet determinately and expressly setteth down the place where he vowed to praise the Lord. In the former verse, and before that in the 14th verse, he generally professed to do it 'in the presence of all God's people.' Here he describeth the place of the presence of God's people, where they assembled together, and that—

1. By the relation thereof to God.

2. By the situation of it.

The place in relation to God is styled the Lord's house. This title is in Scripture used to express a select place, or an elect people.

As it hath reference to a place, it is taken indefinitely or determinately.

1. In an indefinite acception, any place where God is pleased to afford an especial representation of his presence may be named God's house. Thus that place where Jacob in his journey lay and slept is called 'the house of God,' Gen. xxviii. 17, because of that divine vision wherein the Lord there appeared to him. The reason of this name given to that place is expressly rendered in these words, 'Surely the Lord is in this place,' ver. 26. On a like ground the places where the Lord appeared to Moses, Exod. iii. 5, and to Joshua, are called holy ground, Josh. v. 15.

Determinately, this title, God's house, is attributed to places on earth or in heaven.

On earth it was given to two places, the tabernacle and the temple, Judges xviii. 31, and xx. 26; 1 Sam. i. 24, and iii. 15; both that which was built in Solomon's time, 1 Kings vi. 37, 38, and that also which was built after the captivity, Ezra vi. 7; Hag. i. 14. These in their several times were places where were especial representations of God's presence, and whither God's people by his appoint-

ment assembled to worship him, and in those respects were called God's house.

2. The tabernacle continued to be God's house for the space of four hundred and eighty-seven years, from the first making of it in Moses' time till the temple which Solomon built was finished. Then was the tabernacle carried into the temple, and after that remained no more to be of use for a house of God, 1 Kings viii. 4.

3. The temple which Solomon built continued to be God's house for the space of four hundred years, from the time when it was first built till the burning of it down in Zelekiel's time, 2 Kings xxv. 9.

4. The temple built after the captivity continued for the space almost of five hundred years, from the time of Zerubbabel, Ezra iii. 8, till it was utterly ruined by the Romans, Mat. xxiv. 2.

5. The highest heaven, John xiv. 2, is called God's house most properly, because the most perspicuous manifestation of God's presence that can be given is there given.

6. The elect people, who are styled the house of God, are those that are comprised under this title, church, which is the communion of saints. In this communion, all that profess the true Christian religion, and subject themselves to the ordinances thereof, 1 Cor. i. 2; 1 Pet. i. 2, are, in the judgment of charity, reputed. To these St Paul, having given this title, 'house of God,' to shew whom he meant thereby he addeth, 'which is the church of the living God,' 1 Tim. iii. 15. These St Peter meaneth where he saith, 'Judgment must begin at the house of God,' 1 Pet. iv. 17. For as the whole church jointly considered in itself, so also every particular member, is counted and called God's house. Thus is this phrase taken where the apostle, in relation to the Lord, saith, 'Whose house we are,' Heb. iii. 6; and again, 'Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them,' 2 Cor. vi. 16. So as every one may account himself to be a spiritual house of God, so he walk not in the flesh, but in the Spirit.¹

Concerning the particular house of God which is here in this psalm mentioned, it can hardly be de-

¹ Domum Dei spiritualem seipsum quisque agnoscat, qui tamen non in carne ambulet, sed in spiritu.—*Bern. super. Cant.*, serm. 46.

¹ See sec. 107.

terminated for certain which it should be, because the author and time of penning this psalm are not expressed. If the psalm were penned by any prophet after David's time, then questionless he meant the temple. If David, as it is most probable, were the penman of it, then can it not be meant of the temple, which was not then built, but rather of the tabernacle.

But hence ariseth another doubt. In David's time there were two sacred tabernacles. One made by Moses, called the tabernacle of the Lord, which was in the high place at Gibeon, 1 Chron. xxi. 29; 2 Chron. i. 3. The other made by David for the ark of God, 1 Chron. xv. 1, and xvi. 1; 2 Sam. vi. 17. In both these tabernacles there were ministers appointed to perform daily services to the Lord, 1 Chron. xvi. 37-39, &c. Which, then, of these tabernacles is here meant?

They were in several places. Gibeon was one of the cities of Benjamin allotted to the priests, Josh. xviii. 25, and xxi. 17. There was the tabernacle; but the ark was in the city of David, which was Zion, in Jerusalem, 2 Sam. v. 6, 7, 9.

The title, 'house of God,' and the courts applied to that house, give some evidence that he meant the tabernacle made by Moses. For that is usually styled the 'house of God,' Judges xix. 18; 2 Sam. xii. 20; the 'tabernacle of the Lord,' Num. xvii. 13, and xix. 13; Josh. xxii. 19; 1 Kings ii. 28, 29; 1 Chron. xvi. 39. But the tabernacle that David made is never so called. Besides, we read of a spacious court appertaining to the tabernacle made by Moses, Exod. xxvii. 9, &c.; Lev. vi. 26. For that tabernacle, as afterwards the temple after the pattern thereof, was divided into three parts.

1. The innermost, called the *sanctum sanctorum*, Exod. xxvi. 33, the most holy place, whereinto the high priest only was to enter, and that but once a year, Lev. xvi. 2.

2. The middlemost, called the 'holy place,' Exod. xxxix. 1, wherein the priests performed their daily services, in which respect it was called the 'court of priests,' 2 Chron. iv. 9.

3. The outermost, called the 'court of the tabernacle,' Exod. xxvii. 9. Into this came all the people, 2 Chron. xxiii. 5, in which respect it was called 'the great court,' chap. iv. 9. Hither they

brought their sacrifices; here they stood and beheld the priests offering them: for the great altar whereon the ordinary sacrifices were offered stood at the partition betwixt this court and the 'holy place,' Exod. xl. 6. Hence was it that the people are said to 'compass the altar,' Ps. xxvi. 6, and to 'lay hold on the horns of the altar,' 1 Kings i. 50, and ii. 28. But we read not of any such courts appertaining to the tabernacle which David made. Yea, after David had made a tabernacle for the ark, 1 Chron. xvi. 40; 2 Chron. i. 3, the most solemn assemblies were notwithstanding at the other tabernacle. It is therefore most probable that by 'the courts of the Lord's house' he here meant that public and solemn place of assembling at the 'tabernacle of the Lord.'

Object. That tabernacle was in David's time at Gibeon, 1 Chron. xvi. 39; 2 Chron. i. 3; how can that stand with the situation of the place here mentioned, 'In the midst of Jerusalem'?

Ans. It is not necessary that both those clauses be applied to one and the same place. But as he mentioneth two duties, so he noteth two places, fit for each duty. The first duty is to 'offer sacrifice of thanksgiving.' This was most fit to be done in the tabernacle at Gibeon, which was 'the court of the Lord's house.' The other was to 'call upon the name of the Lord.' This was most fit to be done before the ark, which was in the tabernacle that David had made for it in his own city, even 'in the midst of Jerusalem,' 1 Chron. xv. 29.

Jerusalem was the most famous city that ever appertained to the Jews. It was the place where Melchizedek, the first, most ancient, and best king that we read of after the flood, even that king who by reason of his integrity was called 'a king of righteousness,' Heb. vii. 2, and by reason of the peace which he preserved, the place where he reigned was called Salem, Gen. xiv. 18. That Jerusalem was this Salem, both the notation thereof, and also the title Salem, Ps. lxxvi. 2, (after it was called Jerusalem,) given to it, do give sufficient proof. The Hebrews,¹ Gen. xiv. 18, do use the name Jerusalem where this Salem is mentioned. This title Jerusalem is compounded of two words. One is taken from that proverbial name which Abraham gave to the place where he was about to

¹ שלם, Targum, ירושלם. Item Ps. lxxvi. 2.

sacrifice his son, 'Jehovah-jireh,'¹ the Lord will provide,' Gen. xxii. 14. The other is taken from the name of the place where Melchizedek was king, which was Salem, peace. So as the meaning of the name of Jerusalem is, 'He will provide peace,' or 'the vision of peace.' The Hebrew word is oft set down in the dual number, a number that signifieth two, because of the two places whereon it was built, which were Salem, before mentioned, and Moriah, the place whither God sent Abraham to sacrifice his son. This place being the chiefest of all the cities that were among the Jews, the only people of God under the law, wherein the ark then was, wherein the temple was to be built, was an especial type of the church of God; and as in the Old Testament the militant church is oft set out by that name, Ps. li. 18, and cxxviii. 5; Isa. xxiv. 23, xl. 9, and lxii. 1, 7; Jer. iii. 17; so in the New the triumphant church, Rev. iii. 12, and xxi. 2, 10. Though therefore I cannot but think that the prophet here meaneth literally the city which was called Jerusalem, yet I doubt not but that under this title may also typically be meant the 'church of God.'²

The substance of that which he intendeth by this description of the place is to shew that he would perform the forenamed duties in public and populous places. Such were the 'courts of the Lord's house,' where all the people of the Lord met together; such also was Jerusalem, the metropolis and chief city of the kingdom, where the king's court was, and whither all of all sorts resorted. And that he might not be thought to intend to do it in a private corner of the city, closely and secretly, he addeth, 'in the midst,' in the most open and populous part of that ample and populous place—which implieth a holy boldness; he would not be ashamed to bind himself publicly to perform such bounden, public duties. Yea, further to shew how his heart was set on that place where 'the ark of the Lord' was, by a most elegant and familiar kind of turning his speech to that place, (*ἀποστρέφεται*), as speaking to a most familiar friend in whom he delighted, he saith, 'Thee, O Jerusalem. In the midst of thee.'

In this pattern of the prophet is declared—
A fit place for solemn and public duties.

Of this description both the matter and the manner are distinctly expressed.

The matter pointeth at two places:—

1. That which was consecrated to sacred duties;
2. That where the most glorious representation of God's presence was set.

The former is set out—

1. Generally, by the use of it: 'In the courts,' Courts are places for assemblies.

2. Particularly, by the quality of it: 'House of God.' God's house is a sacred house, where sacred duties of piety are performed to him.

The latter is expressed by the name of it, 'Jerusalem;' and amplified by that part thereof where he would perform the forementioned duty, 'the midst.'

The manner of setting out this latter is by an apostrophe, turning his speech to the place itself, and speaking to it as to an intelligible¹ creature, 'Thee, O Jerusalem.'

The first branch, 'In the courts,' sheweth that—

I. Public duties must be performed in public places. The 'sacrifice of thanksgiving' which he professeth to offer was a public duty. The 'courts' which here he meaneth, in which he would offer that sacrifice, was a public place.

This style, 'of the house of God,' (which was given by reason of the divine service that was there performed to God,) giveth evidence that—

II. Places set apart for God's worship are God's houses.

'The midst' of that populous city, Jerusalem, being here so expressly mentioned, implieth that—

III. God's praises must be boldly set forth.

The manner of directing his speech to Jerusalem, which was a type of the church of Christ, as to one in whom he much delighted, intimateth that—

IV. Our delight must be in God's church.

Sec. 118. *Of performing public duties in public places.*

I. *Public duties must be performed in public places:*² I say public duties, both because such a one was the sacrifice of thanksgiving which is here intended, and

¹ That is, 'intelligent.'—Ed.

² Sec. 115. See 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. iii. part ii. sec. 82, &c.]

¹ יהוה יראה, Jehovah providebit. Jerusalem est visio pacis.—Ber. in Dedic. Eccles., ser. 5. ירושלים.

² In atris, &c., id est, in ecclesia.—Trem. et Jun., in Annot. in hunc loc.

also because of private duties Christ saith, 'Enter into thy closet, shut thy door,' Mat. vi. 6; 'appear not unto men' to do this or that, ver. 18. But for public duties, as here the prophet protesteth to do them in 'the courts of God's house,' so elsewhere the Holy Ghost commandeth so to do: 'Bring an offering, and come into his courts,' Ps. xvi. 8; 'Enter into his courts with praise,' Ps. c. 4. That charge which under the law was given for bringing sacrifices to 'the door of the tabernacle,' Lev. xvii. 4, concludeth the equity of this duty. So doth the frequent mention of 'praising,' Ps. xxii. 22; 'blessing,' Ps. xxvi. 12; giving 'thanks to God,' Ps. xxxv. 18; and 'not concealing God's kindness from the congregation,' Ps. xl. 10. 'The coming together in the church,' and 'into one place,' 1 Cor. xi. 20, wherof the apostle maketh mention, was a public assembly.

1. Public places have a promise of God's special presence in them, 1 Kings ix. 3; Mat. xviii. 20. As a visible evidence hereof in the tabernacle, Exod. xl. 20, and temple there was the ark and mercy-seat, 1 Kings viii. 6. Now where can we with better confidence expect to have duties of piety accepted than in those places where God after a special manner is present, expecting such duties to be performed to him, and accepting them when they are in a right manner performed? In confidence hereof the devout Jews did not only frequent, Ps. cxxii. 4, those public places when they had liberty to go to them; but also when they were in other lands, so as they could not personally come to them, they would pray towards them, Dan. vi. 10.

2. Public places use to have many people assembled together in them. Where many are assembled there are many eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses of the things that are there done. Where many such witnesses are, many spirits will be stirred up to glorify God for that which they see done by others. They who are moved to glorify God for that which they approve in others, will be moved to do the like themselves, that others may likewise glorify God for that which they do. They which discern such a blessed fruit to sprout from the public services which they perform in public places cannot but be much cheered in their souls, and also encouraged to take all occasions of doing the like again and again.

Object. Christ and his apostles performed public duties in private places.

Ans. Difference must be put betwixt duties, persons, times, and places.

1. There are some duties which may and must be performed both publicly and privately, as prayer, reading the word, catechising, &c. The manner of performing these make them to be accounted public or private.

2. There are persons ordinarily and extraordinarily called. They who are extraordinarily called may have such a special instinct and peculiar warrant as can be no pattern for ordinary persons.

3. There are times of founding new churches and edifying settled churches. Planters and founders may have more liberty than such as find churches planted and settled in good order.

4. There are places of persecution, where no liberty is granted for public assemblies; and places of peace, where churches have much rest and great liberty. In places of persecution bounden duties must rather be performed in private than omitted; for matter of circumstance must give place to matters of substance, matters of conveniency to matters of necessity.

Wherefore, to leave extraordinary persons to their extraordinary warrant, we that live in well-settled churches, where through the divine providence we have public places for divine services set apart, whereunto we have much liberty on all occasions to resort, ought to be of his mind who 'was glad when they said, Let us go into the house of the Lord,' Ps. cxxii. 1, and was exceedingly perplexed when by force he was kept from thence, Ps. lxxxiv. 1, &c. It was of old foretold that this should be the disposition of saints under the gospel in the kingdom of Christ, to say, 'Come ye, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,' &c., Isa. ii. 13. Christ and his apostles, though they had just cause and good warrant to perform many public duties in private places, yet did they much frequent those public places where public duties were in their time performed. Of Christ it is expressly recorded, that, 'as his custom was,' Luke iv. 16, 'he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath-day.' Of the apostles also, and of them that continued in their doctrine and fellowship, it is said, 'They continued daily with one accord in the temple, praising God,' Acts ii. 46. Herein beth a main dif-

ference betwixt such as, like Christ, do all to edifying, ('He ever taught in the synagogue and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort,' John xviii. 20.) and such as do all for their own ends, seeking to beguile others, ('They creep into houses, and lead captive silly women,' 2 Tim. iii. 6.) Wherefore to manifest a mind that aimeth at God's glory, the edification of the church, the quickening of our own spirits, let us take the occasions that are offered to go into the courts of the Lord's house, and perform duties of piety according to their kind—public duties publicly, solemn duties solemnly. This is a good Christian decorum, agreeable to that apostolical rule, 'Let all things be done decently and in order,' 1 Cor. xiv. 40. Let us, therefore, be every one of his mind who said, 'In the midst of the faithful people I will praise thee, I will publish thee, O Lord.'¹

Sec. 117. *Of God's houses.*

II. *Places set apart for God's worship are God's houses.*² More than five hundred times is this title, 'house of God,' or 'house of the Lord,' in holy Scripture attributed to places deputed unto divine service; and because worship is done to God, not only in material temples, but also in the communion of saints, yea, and in the bodies and souls of particular Christians, they are also called 'God's houses,' Heb. x. 21, and iii. 6.

1. Though the Lord in his infinite essence be everywhere present, 'filling heaven and earth,' Jer. xxiii. 23, 24, and have 'the eyes' of his providence 'in every place, beholding the evil and the good,' Prov. xv. 3, yet the special presence of his grace and favour abideth in the places where he is truly and duly worshipped, 1 Kings ix. 3; Mat. xviii. 20. These places, therefore, are to him as kings' palaces and houses, which most properly they account their own.

2. God's greatest care is over these places. He bringeth light into them by his word; he beautifieth them by his ordinances; he continually repaireth them, and keepeth them from ruin by holy discipline. In them are the treasures of his graces. Orders, offices, all needful provision, the bread of life, the wine of spiritual consolation, and other like

blessings of a house are there. There God dines and sups with his people. All things fit for a house are there, which, whosoever observeth, cannot but say of such a place, It is 'the house of God.'

3. God is very jealous over such places. He cannot endure to have them defiled, profaned. It was one cause of the Jews' captivity, that 'they polluted the house of the Lord,' 2 Chron. xxxvi. 14.

Oh how enamoured should we be with such places! If we be where we cannot come to them, nor join with God's saints in worshipping the Lord, how should it grieve us! Ps. lxxxi. 1, &c. No place in the world, were it every way as fair, as fertile, as pleasant, as profitable in all earthly commodities as Eden or Paradise was, should give us content if God's house be not there—if no place be there for saints to assemble to worship God. In nothing is any part of the earth made more like to heaven, than in having God's house situated on it. The prophet foretold that the mountain of the Lord's house should be established in the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills. Why should it not be accounted the hill of hills, where there is such plenty of all delectable things, where there is such a plenitude of plenty? It is a hill of peace, a hill of joy and hill of life, a hill of glory.¹ We count cities and towns that have kings and noblemen's houses in them happy, by reason of the great provision and all manner of commodities that are brought to them. Much more happy may we account those cities and towns where there are many houses of God, if indeed they be true houses of God. External buildings made with stone or brick, timber, lead, iron, and other such materials, though never so pompous and glorious without and within, cannot justly be accounted God's houses, if God's people assemble not in them to worship God, if God's ordinances be not there duly observed, if there be no prayers made to God, no word of God preached, no sacraments administered, no divine discipline exercised in them. But where these are, there are God's houses; and happy are the places where God's houses are.

Ye that desire to dwell in cities or towns, be sure

¹ Quidni montium mons ubi tam multiplex omnium delectabilium copia, ubi copiarum omnium plenitudo? Erit enim mons pacis, mons gaudii, mons vitæ, mons gloriæ, &c.—*Ber. Serm. de Verbo, Ps. xxiii.*

¹ In medio credentium populorum Laudabo te, prædicabo te.—*Jerome, Comment. in Ps. xxi.*

² Sec. 115.

that God's houses be in those cities or towns. What are best ordered companies without the communion of saints? what the best merchandises without such as are brought from the celestial Canaan? what all sort of wares without such as the wisdom of God setteth out?

And ye that desire to have your houses stand by themselves in the open air, be sure that a house of God be so near them, as on all occasions ye may resort to them. What is the sweetest air without the breath of God's Spirit? What the most fertile soil without the fruitful word of God? What the clearest springs and brooks without the current of grace? What the best grown woods without God's plants? What the most melodious singing of birds without saints singing hymns and spiritual songs, making melody to the Lord in their hearts? What all country or city commodities without divine ordinances? But in God's houses (rightly and justly so called) are all these to be had. There is a kind of fatness of God's house, that is a fulness and sweetness, whereby all that duly frequent the same shall be satisfied. Be therefore, if possibly ye can, where God's house is. 'Blessed are they that dwell there,' Ps. xxxvi. 8, and lxxxiv. 4. The psalmist, in a rhetorical amplification of this point, seemeth to envy the sparrows and swallows which roosted and built their nests about the house of God, whereunto he could not come, though his soul longed and even fainted for it.

Finally, ye that have that favour and honour to dwell where God's house is, esteem it as a great favour and high honour, and testify as much by your answerable carriage.

1. Frequent God's house on all occasions. The Christians of the purer primitive times of the church 'continued daily with one accord in the temple,' Acts ii. 46. This one thing did the man after God's own heart desire, and professeth more and more to seek after it, even 'to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of his life,' Ps. xxvii. 4; that is, as an inhabitant, to have recourse unto it on all occasions. For, saith he to the Lord, 'I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth,' Ps. xxvi. 8.

2. 'Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God,' Eccles. v. 1; that is, keep thine heart, which

is to thy soul as thy foot to thy body, to carry it this way and that way. Go, therefore, to God's house with a well-prepared heart. There is he present, who searcheth and trieth the heart.

3. At the very entering into God's house let a holy trembling and awful fear possess thy soul. The great God, the King of glory, is there. When Jacob, by a divine vision, which was shewed him in a place where he slept, perceived that 'the Lord was in that place, he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God,' Gen. xxviii. 16, 17.

4. When thou art there keep thy thoughts from wandering. Let not thy soul be fixed on any other thing than on God, and his holy ordinances which thou performest, lest thou be reckoned in the number of them 'who draw near to God with their mouth, and with their lips do honour him, but have removed their heart far from him,' Isa. xxix. 13, and so thy service be rejected of God.

5. Profane not God's house with merchandises, for which Christ's indignation was so incensed against the Jews in his time, 'as with a scourge he drave them out,' John ii. 14, &c. Profane it not with worldly communications or actions, much less with any impious or unrighteous words or deeds.

6. Pervert not God's house by making it a pretext for any impiety or iniquity. As if having God's house by thee, thou shouldst thereby be justified, or bolstered up against evil. 'Will ye steal, commit adultery, swear falsely, and walk after other gods; and come and stand before me in this house, saith the Lord, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?' Jer. vii. 9, 10.

Sec. 118. *Of holy boldness in praising God.*

III. *God's praises must be boldly set forth.*¹ We may not be daunted, or ashamed therein, as men which do things secretly in a corner, but by doing this duty in the midst of populous places, manifest holy boldness, as he that said, 'I will praise him among the multitude,' Ps. cxi. 30. 'I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed,' Ps. cxix. 46. 'Before the gods will I sing praise unto thee,' Ps. cxxxviii. 1. Thus St

¹ Sec. 115.

Paul, though as a malefactor he was brought before king Agrippa and Bernice sitting in great pomp, with Festus, the chief captains, and principal men of the city, Acts xxv. 23; where were great multitudes of people, yet in declaring the admirable work of God in his conversion, saith, 'I speak freely,' Acts xxvi. 26. Herein hath the Lord Christ made himself a worthy pattern; for in this case thus he saith, 'In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee. My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation,' Ps. xxii. 22, 25; Heb. ii. 12.

1. Such is the excellency, such the necessity of praising God, so honourable, so acceptable unto God, so useful and beneficial is it to us, by so many bonds are we bound thereunto, as if all the things in the world which can be pretended to make any ashamed or afraid thereof, whether reputation, promotion, riches, friends, liberty, life, or anything else, were put into one balance, and the inducements to move us boldly to perform it put into another, they would be found beyond all comparison too light.

2. By saints' boldness in praising God, as they who are like minded are much affected and stirred up to bless God, so the weak and faint-hearted are strengthened and encouraged, and gain-sayers, scornors, and all sorts of adversaries daunted and put to silence.

Great cause of just complaint may hence be taken, not only against impious and profane persons, who care not to give any praise at all to God, either in private corners, or in the midst of assemblies, but also against such as in their judgments are convinced of the equity of the duty, and in their consciences persuaded of the necessity thereof; and thereupon are moved inwardly in their hearts, or secretly in their closets, or other like places, to praise the Lord; but to do it in assemblies, in the midst of populous places, they are ashamed. What is this but to prefer man to God, and applause of men to God's approbation? May it not be said of such, 'They have their reward'! Mat. vi. 2. Surely their own judgment and conscience are terrible witnesses against them. Fearful is the doom which Christ hath denounced against them; for, saith he, 'Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my

words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels,' Mark viii. 38. If therefore we stand before kings and governors for the Lord, we ought not to be ashamed, but resolute and constant.¹

Be bold, be bold, ye servants of the Lord, in sounding forth the praises of your God. Go into presses of people; and in the midst of them praise the Lord. Wicked men are over-bold in belching forth their blasphemies to the dishonour of God; they care not who hear them. They stick not to do it in the midst of cities. Shall they be more audacious to dishonour God, than ye zealous to honour him? Assuredly Christ will shew himself as forward to confess you, as you are, or can be to confess him, Mat. x. 32. This holy boldness is the ready way to glory. To add an edge to this exhortation, well observe these few rules following:—

1. Duly consider the difference betwixt God and man. It is disrespect of God, and too much respect of man, that maketh many ashamed and afraid to declare before men that duty which they owe to God, Dan. iii. 16, 17.

2. Take an invincible resolution to do what you see just cause to do, Acts xxi. 13, 14. Want of a settled resolution makes men, when they meet with any discouragements, to turn back, and to cease prosecuting that which in their conceit causeth fear and shame.

3. Pass not for praise or dispraise of men; but 'By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report,' 2 Cor. vi. 8, approve yourselves to be God's servants, bound with the uttermost of your power to set forth his honour. He that said, 'In the midst of the church will I praise thee,' Heb. ii. 12; said also, 'I receive not honour from men,' John v. 41. But 'They which loved the praise of men more than of God, though inwardly they believed in Christ, yet openly durst not confess him,' John xii. 42, 43.

4. Contemn the world. Love of the world quencheth the heat of the love of God. The world is an enticing bait. Many are driven back thereby. Demas, that old disciple Demas, having left his

¹ Si ante reges et presides propter Dominum stemus, non confusi, sed constantes esse debemus.—*Jerome, Comment. in Ps. cxviii.*

heart on the world, which he loved too much, grew ashamed and afraid to confess Christ, 2 Tim. iv. 10.

5. Give not reins to licentiousness. Turn not the grace of God into wantonness, Jude 4. Such unworthy walking of the profession of the gospel cannot but make ashamed to appear in the midst of such congregations as are fit to have God's praises sounded forth among them.

Be not companions with impious and profane persons, Eph. v. 7. They will keep thee out of the midst of the forementioned congregations.

7. Associate yourselves with them that are pious and zealous, Ps. cxxii. 1, that are not ashamed themselves in the most solemn manner that they can to praise God. Such companions will put life into you, and provoke you to do as they do. In them especially are these proverbs verified, 'As iron sharpeneth iron, so man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man,' Prov. xxvii. 17, 19.

Sec. 119. *Of delighting in God's house.*

IV. *Our delight must be in God's church.*¹ It was usual with the prophets familiarly with much delight to direct their speeches to Jerusalem and to Zion as types of God's church, after this manner, 'Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem,' Ps. cxxii. 2; 'I will seek thy good,' ver. 9. 'If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy,' Ps. cxxxvii. 5, 6. Then especially did they cheerfully manifest their mind to her when they had good tidings to tell her, thus, 'Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city,' &c., Isa. lii. 1. 'Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee,' &c., Zech. ix. 9. In her misery they could not refrain tears; for thus they say, 'We wept when we remembered Zion,' Ps. cxxxvii. 1. 'Mine eyes do fail with tears, my bowels are troubled, my liver is poured upon the earth, for the destruction of the daughter of my people,' Lam. ii. 11. This compassion in misery is a great evidence of much love and delight, where-

¹ Sec. 115.

upon it is said, 'Thy servants take pleasure in thy stones, and favour the dust thereof,' Ps. cii. 14. Yet a greater evidence thereof are the many passionate words which are used in reference to her, as love of her, Ps. xxvi. 8; desiring and longing after her, Ps. xxvii. 4; fainting for her, Ps. lxxxiv. 2; rejoicing and glorying in her, Ps. cvi. 5.

All things that may work true delight are in the church. Therefore the Holy Ghost hath set her forth by most amiable titles and ornaments, as queen, king's daughter, Ps. xlv. 9, 13; virgin, Jer. xxxi. 4; bride adorned for her husband, Rev. xxi. 2; spouse, Cant. iv. 8; wife, Rev. xix. 8; fairest of women, Cant. i. 8; 'all glorious within, her clothing also of wrought gold,' Ps. xlv. 13. Within the church is adorned with the dignity of her husband.¹

In the temple, which was a type of the church, typically were figured such things as are of force to draw a man's mind and heart thereunto.

1. God did there in a most gracious manner represent himself sitting on a 'mercy-seat,' Exod. xxv. 22. So as in the church is 'a throne of grace whereunto we may go boldly, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need,' Heb. iv. 16.

2. Under this mercy-seat was an 'ark,' Exod. xxv. 21, which, being a kind of chest, figured that in the church are all God's treasures to be had. Christ is this ark. 'In him are hid all God's treasures,' Col. ii. 3.

3. There was a high priest who appeared before that mercy-seat 'to bear the names of the children of Israel for a memorial before the Lord continually,' Exod. xxviii. 29, and 'to make an atonement for all the congregation of Israel,' Lev. xvi. 17. Christ Jesus is that true High Priest, who continually 'appeareth in the presence of God for us,' Heb. ix. 24, and 'is the true propitiation for our sins,' 1 John ii. 2.

4. There was an 'altar for all manner of offerings,' Exod. xxxviii. 1, &c., and 'for sweet incense,' chap. xxx. 1, &c.; figuring that God, who accepteth the sacrifice of his Son for our sins, accepteth our freewill-offerings, and by the sweet savour of the incense of Christ's intercession is well pleased therewith.

5. There was a 'table,' Exod. xxv. 23, to pre-

¹ *Intrinsicus sui viri dignitate ornata est Ecclesia.—Aug. advers. Jud., lib. i. cap. 22.*

figure a holy communion 'betwixt the Lord and his people,' Luke xxii. 30.

6. There were 'lights,' Exod. xxv. 37; 'bread,' ver. 30; 'water,' chap. xxx. 18, &c.; to shew that in the church there are means to enlighten us, to feed us, to cleanse us, and to do all things requisite for us.

7. Out of the outward court there was passage into the 'holy place,' chap. xxvi., and out of it into the *sanctum sanctorum*, the most holy place, to shew that first we must be in the church, in the number of those who profess the true religion, so may we come by the grace of effectual calling to be priests unto God, and having served our time, to enter into the true heavenly holy place.

Not without cause, therefore, doth the psalmist style the church, 'The place where God's honour dwelleth,' Ps. xxvi. 8.¹ He thought it not enough to say, 'The place where God dwelleth, but where his honour dwelleth, which maketh much to the glory of the church.'

Do not these things make the church worthy to be sought after, to be loved, to be delighted in? Many many more are the prerogatives thereof which make it most amiable; but these may be sufficient to such as are not of a stoical disposition, very blocks, sensible of no delightsome object.

The affection of our prophet towards Jerusalem, the church of God, is even for imitation worthy of all due observation; that our hearts also may be so enamoured with her as not to think or speak of her but with delight.

For this purpose two points shall briefly be declared:—

1. How such a delight may be wrought.

2. How it may be manifested.

I. To work it—

1. Be well instructed in those privileges and prerogatives which make the church worthy to be delighted in. Thus will thy delight be more solid and stable.

2. Oft meditate thereon, so will thy delight be the more inflamed. Serious meditation on that which works affection is as bellows to a fire, it enkindles it, and makes it flame out.

¹ Non sufficit dicere, locus habitationis Dei, sed locus habitationis gloriæ Dei.—*Aug. Enar. in Ps. xxv.*

3. Withdraw thy heart from other contrary objects which work a corrupt delight therein. As the heart of him that is set on strange women will thereby be alienated from his wife; so delight in the world and the vanities thereof will dim, yea, clean put out our delight in the church.

II. To manifest thy delight in the church—

1. Be a member of that blessed communion.

2. Be a companion of the other members thereof.

3. Let her praises be ever in thy mouth.

4. Pray for her peace.

5. Seek her good.

6. Rejoice in her prosperity.

7. Mourn for her misery.

Sec. 120. *Of provoking others to praise God.*

Ver. 19. *Praise ye the Lord.*

The prophet having abundantly testified his own readiness and forwardness to praise the Lord, contenteth not himself therewith, but, that the more praise might redound to God, in the close of his hymn he stirreth up others, even all of all sorts, without any limitation or exception of any, to do the like, in this compound word, 'Praise ye the Lord.'¹

Of the duty implied in this phrase, which is to praise the Lord, sufficient has been spoken before. It remaineth here to speak of the means of spreading abroad and propagating the praise of God, by inciting others to praise him. This cohortation being added to his profession, two useful observations hence arise.

I. We must provoke others to praise God.

II. We must ourselves practise what we provoke others unto.

1. For the first, the duty of provoking others is in Scripture applied to all points of piety, justice, and charity; for what we find behoeful for ourselves to do, we must thereunto incite others. In general, therefore, it is said, 'Consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works,' Heb. x. 24; 'Exhort one another,' chap. iii. 13; 'Edify one another,' 1 Thes. v. 11. But more particularly for inciting others to praise God, as other books of Scripture, so

¹ Of this word, see 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. iii. part ii. sec. 72. Exhortamur vos, fratres, ut laudetis Deum, et hoc est quod vobis omnibus dicimus, quando dicimus Alleluiah, &c.—*Aug. Enar. in Ps. clviii.*

especially the book of Psalms doth abound with incitations thereto, stirring up angels, kings, princes, judges, priests, Levites, Ps. cxlviii., cxxxv. 19, &c., cxlix., cl., old, young, male, female, all of all sorts, yea, by a rhetorical apostrophe he turns his speech unto unreasonable and senseless creatures, and calls on them to praise the Lord, thereby the more to quicken sensible and reasonable creatures thereunto. The 136th Psalm was purposely penned, and appointed to be sung time after time, both daily in the temple, 1 Chron. xvi. 41, 2 Chron. v. 13, and vii. 3, 6, and on extraordinary occasions, chap. xx. 21, Ezra iii. 11, to incense the spirits mutually of one another to praise God. The celestial spirits, (though they be every one most forward to praise the Lord, and need no incitation, yet) to shew their earnest and insatiable desire to have it continually done by all, they cry one to another, 'Hallelujah, praise ye the Lord,' Rev. xix. 1, 3, 4, 6. When we receive a good turn from man, we use to stir up others to thank him in our behalf; much more ought we to invite and incite others to praise God with us and for us.¹

The zeal we ought to bear to God's glory, the love we owe to our brethren, the comfort that we reap to our own souls, by provoking others to praise the Lord, are as a threefold twisted cord to hold us fast to the performance of this duty.

1. The more persons are brought to praise the Lord, the more is God's name hallowed. Now, it is an evidence of a great zeal of God's glory, not only with the uttermost of our own power to praise him ourselves, but also to be a means to draw on others so to do; as he that said, 'I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever,' Ps. xlv. 17.

2. It is an evidence of much love to our brethren to incite them to praise the Lord, both in regard of the great need wherein they stand thereof, and also in regard of the great benefit they may reap thereby. All have great need to be daily stirred up to this duty, by reason of their natural backwardness thereunto.

¹ Cum ab hominibus beneficium accepimus, alios quoque provocamus ad communem gratiarum actionem, multo magis ad Deum invitandi sunt, qui pro nobis gratias agant.—*Chryso.*, hom. ii., in 2 Cor. 1.

The more excellent any duty is, the more backward we are by nature thereunto; but of all duties, none more excellent, none more divine, none wherein we come nearer unto the celestial spirits, than this of praising God, which maketh our earthly, perverse disposition to be so dull to it as it is. Can heavy things of the earth be forward to ascend upward? But in praising God our spirits ascend to heaven, where God is. Hence, also, is it that, though we are at some times quick and forward thereunto, yet we soon wax dull therein, and, as it were, fall downward, as heavy weights, which, though they be pulled up, by their own heaviness fall down again; or as water, which, though with fire it be heated, of its own nature waxeth cold again. Therefore, as weights are oft to be pulled up, as fire is oft to be put under water and blown up, so our spirits are oft to be quickened and stirred up by mutual cohortations. The benefit whereof is very great, by reason of the true virtue and efficacy of incitations. As soldiers, even fresh-water soldiers, and all that strive for masteries by running, riding, rowing, shooting, wrestling, &c., are much animated and whetted on by acclamations and incitations, so Christians, by holy exhortations, are much quickened to praise the Lord.

3. We give evidence to others, and gain assurance to ourselves, of the spirit of grace abiding and bearing rule in us, by drawing on others with us to praise the Lord. This spirit is called the 'anointing,' 1 John ii. 20, 27. It is as an 'ointment poured forth,' Cant. i. 3, which so diffuseth the sweetness of the savour that is in it, as all that are near it carry away some of the sweetness of it. And is it not a great comfort to have assurance of such a spirit? What now can be more blessed than not only to glorify the good God with our own tongues, but also to stir up others by our means to glorify him?¹

Certainly these, with other like motives, were of force with him who said to God 'I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart: I have declared thy faithfulness, and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy loving-kindness and thy truth from the great congregation,' Ps. xl. 10. And again, 'I will declare

¹ Quid beatius nobis foret, si glorificemus non solum lingua nostris bonum Deum, sed ut proximis quoque ut nostro nomine eum glorificent, incitemus.—*Chryso.*, hom. 27, in Gen. viii.

thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee. I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise thee among much people,' Ps. xxii. 22.

The application of this point concerns all of all sorts. Especially it concerns ministers, to whom are committed in a peculiar manner the words of exhortation. The priests and Levites, Ps. cxxxv. 2, 3, 19, 20; 2 Chron. vii. 6, were of all most of all bound, as to praise the Lord themselves, so in the midst of great assemblies to incite others, and to sing and say, 'Praise ye the Lord.' Next to ministers, magistrates, who are as generals and captains in the Lord's army, are bound, by virtue of their authority over others, to provoke them to praise the Lord. Thus 'Moses and the children of Israel,' Exod. xv. 1, not he alone, but he with them, he directing and inciting them, 'sang unto the Lord.' So Deborah and Barak said to the people, 'Praise ye the Lord,' Judges v. 1. The like I might instance in David, Solomon, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Isaiah, Nehemiah, and other pious magistrates. And because governors of families, whether husbands, parents, or masters, are in their houses as kings and priests, to them also it belongs to see that such as are under their charge do praise the Lord. Thus Elkanah, 1 Sam. i. 7, for this very end, took his wives along with him when he went to the temple. Thus, for this very end also, Jacob, Gen. xxxv. 2, calleth upon his whole household, wives, children, servants, and all that were with him, to prepare themselves solemnly to praise the Lord. And Joshua, chap. xxiv. 15, undertaketh for himself and his household, to 'serve the Lord.' Finally, it appertaineth to neighbours, friends, and all sorts even of private Christians, by virtue of the common bond of nature whereby all are 'one flesh,' Isa. lviii. 7, and that nearer bond of spiritual union whereby all are 'one body,' 1 Cor. xii. 12. For these mutual duties of exhorting one another, of provoking one another, of edifying one another, before mentioned, are not restrained to any particular sorts or kinds of people, but extended to all sorts. This was wont to be the saints' phrase, 'O come, let us sing unto the Lord,' Ps. xcv. 1. And as a property of all that are of the Christian church, it was of old foretold, that 'many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,' &c., Isa. ii. 3. This

is an especial means of promoting and advancing God's glory, to do it by many tongues.¹ They which are guided by Satan's spirit have their 'Come:' their mutual cohortations and provocations. They use to say, one to another, 'Come ye, we will fill ourselves with strong drink,' Isa. lvi. 12; 'Come with us, let us all have one purse,' Prov. i. 11, 14; 'Come, let us take our fill of love,' chap. vii. 18. Hence is it that the number of wicked ones so increaseth, that they are so audacious and impudent in their courses, and that they carry all before them, as a violent stream, occasioned by the gathering together of many waters. They do, without all question, aggravate their condemnation hereby; yet do they hereby become witnesses against many that profess themselves to be the servants of God, in that the spirit of Satan which ruleth in them is more effectual in them to advance Satan's throne, than the Spirit of grace, in many of them which profess themselves to be the servants of God, to promote the glory of God.

But as for such as are willing and forward to give evidence of their zeal of God's glory, of their love to their brethren, and of that assurance they have of the reign of the Spirit of grace in them, by inciting others to praise the Lord, let them well note the next doctrine.

Sec. 121. *Of practising ourselves what we provoke others unto.*

II. *We must ourselves practise what we provoke others unto.*² We may, and must, as we heard in the former section, desire saints to give thanks for us, but withal we may not fail ourselves mutually to give thanks for ourselves and praise the Lord. So did this prophet, as we have seen at large from the beginning of the 12th verse to this last clause of this psalm. Observe the patterns of such as in Scripture are approved for their zeal in stirring up others, and you shall find them forward to do themselves what they incited others unto. 'We will arise and go to Bethel,' &c., saith Jacob, Gen. xxxv. 3. 'As for me and my house,' saith Joshua, chap.

¹ Ista est clarissima Dei magnificentio quando per innumeras linguas glorificationem offerimus.—*Chrys.*, hom. 26, in Gen. viii.

² Obsecremus sanetos ut pro nobis gratias agant, et ipsi pro nobis hoc agamus mutuo.—*Chrys.*, hom. 2, in 2 Cor. i.

xxiv. 15, 'we will serve the Lord.' It is a usual phrase of such as heartily desire to advance the glory of God to express their desire in the first person of the plural number, whereby they shew that they intend themselves to do what they require of others, and therefore incite themselves as well as others, thus, 'Let us offer to God the sacrifice of praise continually,' Heb. xiii. 15; 'Let us sing unto the Lord,' Ps. xcv. 1; 'Let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,' Isa. ii. 3; 'We will praise thy name, O God, for ever, Ps. xlv. 8; 'We will give thee thanks for ever,' Ps. lxxix. 13; 'We will shew forth thy praise. Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, do we give thanks,' Ps. lxxv. 1.

1. Thus, our care to stir up others to praise God will indeed appear to arise from a true zeal of God's glory, from true Christian love, and from the Spirit of grace dwelling in us, when we ourselves do what we persuade others unto.

2. Thus shall we add an edge to the exhortations we give others, when they see us leading the way before them. If soldiers see their captains forward to those enterprises whereunto they incite them, they will be much more encouraged and heartened thereunto. Wherewith can a physician better persuade a patient to observe the diet which he prescribes, than by observing it himself?

3. Refusing to practise ourselves what we exhort others to do, maketh our exhortations to be profitable neither to others nor to ourselves.

Not to others, because the edge of our exhortations must needs be much blunted thereby; for people will be ready to say, 'Physician, heal thyself,' Luke iv. 23. Hardly will they be brought to think that we speak to them from our hearts, or that we ourselves are well persuaded of the equity, excellency, necessity and benefit of that whereunto we persuade them.

Not to ourselves, because thus they are made evidences against us, witnessing that we knew the right course which we refused to take; whereby we make ourselves worthy of 'more stripes,' Luke xii. 47, and aggravate our damnation.

4. This great mischief, beside many others, ariseth from not practising what we persuade others to, that impious men's mouths are opened to disgrace our profession, and blaspheme the name of our God. 'Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thy-

self? The name of God is blasphemed through you,' Rom. ii. 21, 24.

Ye, therefore, that desire to manifest a true intention of heart in advancing the glory of God after the best manner that you can, and to give proof that a holy zeal of God's glory possesseth your soul, and setteth you on work to do what you do in inciting others to praise the Lord; ye that desire to have your pious endeavours therein to be of good use, not to prove frustrate and vain, but to be effectual to the end you aim at; ye that would not pull down with one hand what you seem to build up with another—nor afford occasion to them whom you stir up to so weighty and bounden a duty, to think that by-respects move you to incite them in that wherein ye yourselves are so cold and careless; ye that would have comfort in performing so warrantable and profitable a duty; take due notice of the direction here prescribed. Upon your own performance (as the psalmist here doth) provoke others to be followers of you, and to do as you do. First say, and say it from the heart to him that searcheth the heart, in truth to him that desireth truth in the inward parts—say unto the Lord, 'I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving;' and then say unto others, 'Praise ye the Lord.'

Oh that ministers, magistrates, governors of families, and all that have either function or disposition to call upon others to praise the Lord, would first take notice of the many just and weighty occasions that themselves have to praise him, and answerably bind themselves so to do, and be careful to perform what they are bound to perform, having their own hearts filled with matter of praises, and their mouths wide opened to utter the same; so might they with much courage and confidence speak to others and say, 'Praise ye the Lord.'

Sec. 122. *Of God's present mercies to England.*

For a particular application of the general sum and scope of the psalm, and of the two last mentioned duties of praising God ourselves, and of provoking others so to do, let us take a view of the special occasions which the Lord doth now, even at this present time, give us to quicken our own and others' spirits to render all possible thanks unto him

for his unspeakable blessings on our own and other nations.

1. We here in England do still enjoy the great blessing of peace, together with that far greater blessing, the gospel of peace, and a free use of all God's holy ordinances requisite for our spiritual edification and eternal salvation.

At this time this blessing ought to be the more highly esteemed, because it is in a manner proper to us. For most of the parts of Christendom are now, or lately have been, exceedingly annoyed with bloody war.

Of this blessing, Scotland, Ireland, and all the parts of his most excellent majesty our sovereign lord King Charles, do partake.

Of the benefit of this blessing I have elsewhere treated; so as here I need no longer to insist upon it.¹

2. The last year there was great scarcity of corn everywhere in this land. Corn rose to a greater price than hath been known in our memories. And where in former times supply in like cases hath been made by the plenty of other countries, all the nations round about us were pinched with penury; so as there was too great cause of fearing a famine.

But the Lord was pleased to hear the heavens, whereupon the heavens heard the earth, and the earth heard the corn, the grass, and all manner of fruits, and they heard England, and the cry of the poor therein.

Thus by the divine providence our land brought forth such a plentiful harvest, and the heavens afforded so fair a season for gathering it in, as scarcity is turned into plenty, dearth into cheapness. Our floors are now full of wheat; we eat in plenty and are satisfied.

The misery of famine giveth sufficient proof of the great benefit of plenty.

3. There was also the last year great fear of much sickness, and that of the infectious, pestilentous sickness which some few years before had, month after month, week after week, day after day, destroyed such multitudes, as the fear of the return thereof was the more terrible.

Physicians gave up their opinion that the air was infected.

The famous university of Cambridge was so smitten

therewith as for the space of half a year and more colleges were dissolved, students dispersed, readings and acts intermitted, that populous place made desolate, and the poor that remained much pinched with poverty.

Other great market towns round about in the country were also the last year much infected with the plague; and many people were thereby destroyed, or brought into great exigencies.

But now hath the Lord healed our land; sickness is removed, and health restored to our borders.

If the miserable desolation that the plague maketh in many places—taking away magistrates from their subjects, ministers from their people, husbands and wives one from another, parents from children, children from parents, dear friends, helpful neighbours, one from another, and then especially depriving persons of the comfort of their best friends when they stand in most need of them; if (I say) the miserable condition occasioned by the plague be well weighed, we shall find our deliverance and freedom from the same to be a great blessing.

To amplify this blessing the more, God's more than ordinary providence, not only in abating the violence of that extraordinary sickness which in the year 1625 so fiercely raged, but also in his speedy suppressing and utter removing it, is frequently and seriously to be considered. A distinct narration thereof is before set down.¹

The more terrible the three evil arrows of war, famine, and plague are, the more remarkable are the blessings of peace, plenty, and health.

4. We in our days have such a blessing conferred upon us as hath not fallen out in England fourscore and thirteen years before, which is the birth of a prince, heir to the crown.² Blessed in this respect be the nine and twentieth day of May 1630. On that day was Prince Charles born.

From the 12th of October 1537, whereon Prince Edward (who was Edward VI. King of England) was born, to the said 29th of May 1630, England was not honoured with such a blessing. This is an incomparable blessing to this present age, and to future ages also, as we steadfastly hope, and from our hearts, with the most humble devotion and the most earnest affection that we can, we daily pray.

¹ See 'The Church's Conquest,' sec. 96.

² See 31.

² The birth of Prince Charles.

Sec. 123. *Of the present liberty of the reformed churches in France.*

Christian charity requireth that we be affected with the blessings conferred on others, especially such as are of the same faith and profession that we are. Let us, therefore, cast our eyes on other churches and their present condition, which, if we duly observe, we shall find God's gracious providence to be more than ordinarily extended towards them in these our days.

We will begin with the reformed churches in France.

When Henry IV., styled the Great, deceased, by that favour he had shewed and peace he had given to those of the reformed religion in his kingdom, they were made so safe and secure, in man's opinion, as it was supposed that no power was able to wrest their liberty from them.

They had above two hundred walled and fenced towns for their refuge and safety.

Many of the greatest nobility in France were their partisans, and seemed most affectionate to the religion.

They had troops and armies of men well disciplined in arms, with many brave commanders and old-beaten soldiers.

They were well provided with all store of ammunition. Nothing requisite for defence and safety was wanting, in man's imagination.

It is to be feared that they were too confident in the arm of flesh : which that they might the more thoroughly discern, the Lord withdrew his protection, and left them to defend themselves against the power of their own sovereign, which at first they too much slighted.

Soon after that their now sovereign had raised and brought his forces against them, many of their chiefest commanders revolted, their soldiers were slain, their treasures exhausted, their cities and towns of defence were violently wrested from them or treacherously given up, many bloody massacres were made among them, and the miserable effects of war so depopulated their country and destroyed their persons, as they were left destitute, without all succour or hope of relief. And since the last taking in of Rochelle, the king, who was of a contrary

religion to them, became an absolute master of them.

What now in man's eye could be looked for but that utterly they should be deprived of the liberty of their religion, and by little and little be enforced to the idolatrous superstition of the Romish church, or at least be bred up in blindness and ignorance, being left without the light of the gospel to guide and comfort them in that their miserable condition ?

Yet now in these happy days of deliverances, behold how in their greatest extremity, when all human means failed them, the Lord of hosts hath beyond all hope afforded them much peace and quietness, and provided for them new churches, built with their king's good leave, yea, and at his cost and charges, because they had been demolished by the fury of impious soldiers, and by the outrage of superstitious people.

Through that liberty which now they enjoy, their churches are diligently frequented, and all God's ordinances duly observed, and their religion with less scorn and derision professed than formerly.

Their peace and security is now greater than when they had the forementioned means to embolden them to stand upon their own guard.

This is the Lord's doing. It is marvellous in our eyes.

They had no Moses, no Joshua, to work for them.

As they had no power within to defend them from the might and malice of their enemy, so they could expect no aid from abroad to encourage them to stand out against their enemies. All the aid that from abroad was afforded unto them proved altogether in vain.

God is all in all to them. He that said, 'The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them; and the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den,' Isa. xi. 6, &c., hath wrought this concord betwixt them and the adversaries of their religion.

'The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord as the rivers of water : he turneth it whithersoever he

will,' Prov. xxi. 1. To his churches, therefore, hath the Lord turned the heart of that king for their good.

What the inward affection of the king to those of the reformed religion is, is a secret. Whether the peace that those churches enjoy be occasioned by reason of that supreme power, which now he hath obtained over them, or by reason of his embroilments at home and undertakings abroad, little skilleth for the matter in hand. Sure it is that the Lord hath ordered all things that have fallen out in France for the good and peace of his churches there.

Should not due notice be taken hereof?

Sec. 124. *Of God's late mercies to the Low Countries.*

From reformed churches in France we will pass to the Low Countries, who are of the same profession.

In recounting God's late mercies to them, (which is the task that we have undertaken, thereby to shew what great cause we now have to set out the praises of the Lord,) it would be too far a digression to begin with those extraordinary deliverances which they had when first they recovered their liberty against the cruelty and tyranny of Duke d'Alva.

Later mercies are these that follow.

1. A strong faction of Arminians being raised up, and dispersed throughout all their provinces, whereby the truth and purity of religion was much corrupted, and the tranquillity and security of their state put into great hazard, a National Synod, not without the counsel and consent of our royal Defender of the Faith, King James, was assembled at Dort, whereunto most grave, learned, and judicious divines, out of all the reformed churches in Christendom, came, who, all with one unanimous consent, determined sundry fundamental points of our Christian religion against the contrary errors of the adversaries of God's free grace,—a mercy not to be forgotten.

2. The enemy having gathered such an army as made him master of the field, whereby he so strongly besieged Breda, (a frontier town of great command every way round about,) as no succour could be afforded it, but it was forced to yield; at which

time also Grave Maurice, Prince of Orange, their brave general, died. Great fear there was of much mischief, if not of utter ruin, to befall that state; but, by God's providence, their great enemy Spinola was called into another country, and a supply made of the loss of their former general by substituting in his room his own brother, whose prudence and prowess success hath crowned; so as they are now better secured than they were before.

3. Spain provided an exceeding great treasure for the foresaid States, which it never intended to them. The whole fleet of gold, silver, and other rich merchandises which the Spaniards, by the help of the West Indians, had been sundry years gathering together, the Netherlanders took on a sudden; whereby their enemies were much disurnished, and they themselves so plentifully furnished, as they were the better enabled, not only to defend themselves, but also to offend their enemies.

4. The States being now well prepared, they quickly become masters of the field, and with much resolution attempt that which the enemy little feared they should attain; namely, to take in the Bosche, a very strong frontier town, well fenced, well manned, and every way well prepared and provided for. But they so besiege it, as no relief can be afforded to it; they so assault it, as there is no standing out against them; they take it, and keep it.

5. While they lay at this siege, another booty falls into their hands. Wesell, the magazine of their enemy, wherein all warlike provision was in great abundance stored up, sending out some of their garisons abroad, notice thereof comes to the army of the States in siege at the Bosche, they forthwith send some troops to surprise Wesell on a sudden; they come to it unexpected, and quickly take it. Thus are the States again furnished with their enemy's provision; they take a strong town of great consequence, which is as an inlet for them into the Palatinate; and by this means an enemy that, with a great army, was entered into their country, and burned and spoiled all before him, was forced back again.

6. This last year, while the army of the States is quiet at home, the enemy having plotted some mischievous design against them, unexpectedly sends an army by water into their territories, which (like

a flock of foolish birds) flew into nets that were not laid for them, and were taken.

What can we think, but that the finger of God hath been in the ordering of these successful matters, for the better security of them who profess and maintain the true religion against the professed enemies thereof?

Sec. 125. *Of the seasonable succour afforded to oppressed Germany.*

Among other evidences of the divine providence towards the reformed churches, the late seasonable succour afforded to the churches in Germany is most remarkable.

Many years together hath Germany been sore vexed with intestine and civil war.

Who can without a melting heart think on the much blood that hath been spilt; the ruins of many fair cities, towns, castles, churches, and other edifices that have been made; the distresses that many exiles of all sorts, princes and subjects, noble and mean, clergy and laity, male and female, old and young, have been brought unto; the miserable bondage under which such as have remained in their own territories and habitations have groaned; the heavy and undue taxes that have been laid on such as have not had their titles, dignities, inheritances, callings, and liberties by violence wrested from them: who can without much compunction and compassion hear of or think on those and many other pressures and oppressions?

The princes of the reformed churches in Germany¹ were forced to put up a joint complaint and remonstrance of their grievances, and to consult about means, at least of some ease (for their burdens were intolerable) if not of full redress.

But their complaints proved like to the complaints of the Israelites put up to Pharaoh for easing their heavy burdens. 'Their savour thereby came to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants,' Exod. v. 21. They were in a worse case than before.

So proud was the enemy by reason of the great armies that he had gathered together, and so flushed he was in the conquests that he had made, as he re-

¹ See the narration of the Protestants' Diet at Leipsig, Feb. 8, 1631.

garded no complaints, he feared no revenge. He deemed his power to be invincible.

When thus the reformed churches in Germany were brought to the lowest ebb, and so near to the pit's brink as they were upon tumbling down to their utter ruin, that man's extremity might appear to be God's opportunity, in a most seasonable time the Lord raised up, and sent unto them a deliverer, Gustavus of Sued, in whose title is couched Augustus and Deus: Gustavus importing, by transposition of letters, *Augustus*; and Sued, read backward, *Deus*.

If the small army with which he came into Germany, and the great things which he hath done since he came thither, be duly weighed, we shall see cause to acknowledge that the Lord of hosts was with him.

That which is by experience noted of the snow, that by being tumbled up and down, of a little ball it comes to be a great heap that can hardly be stirred, is likewise by experience found verified in his army.

We read of a dream, Judges vii. 13, &c., which a soldier of the huge host of the 'Midianites, that for multitude was as the sand by the sea-side,' thus related to his fellow, 'I dreamed a dream, and lo, a cake of barley-bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it, that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along.' The interpretation, which in the event proved true, was this, 'This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel: for into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host.'

A fit allusion thereunto, which hath likewise in the event proved to be most true, may be this; the sword of the king of Sued, a defender of the true religion, hath smitten the armies of the enemies of the gospel; and into his hand hath the Lord delivered his church's enemies.

This king proves to be as another Cyrus, 'the Lord's anointed, whose right hand the Lord hath holden to subdue nations before him. He shall perform the Lord's pleasure,' Isa. xlv. 1, and xlv. 28.

Cyrus, the Persia monarch, though he were to admiration victorious, yet did he not with such expedition gain in and bring under his power so many forts, castles, walled towns and cities, every way well manned, fenced, and fortified, (no, nor that

hammer of the world, great Alexander,) as this anointed of the Lord hath done in so short a time.

The enemy spent more years in subduing cities and towns in Germany, than this deliverer hath spent months in reducing them.

Conquering Cæsar came even into this country whereinto victorious Gustavus is come, and with such celerity subdued one principality after another, as the orator is bold to say that he passed over places by victories more speedily than another could have done by paces.¹ This is indeed a hyperbolic speech, but yet thereby exceeding great celerity is set out; which also is implied by another hyperbolic phrase used by Cæsar himself in a letter to his friend, in these three words, *Veni, vidi, vici*, I came, I saw, I overcame,—meaning thereby that so soon as he came to a place, and took a view of it, he forthwith took it.

Yet in much shorter time hath Gustavus subdued and taken in more towns and cities than Cæsar did, and that after another manner than Cæsar did.

Had Cæsar when he came into Germany such an adversary as Tilly?

Were there raised such armies of men and horse against Cæsar as against Gustavus?

Were there such garrisons, such ammunition, such provision of all things requisite to repel an enemy, in the places which Cæsar subdued, as in those which Gustavus took?

Never did Cæsar, at least for the time that he was in Germany, meet with so strong opposition as Gustavus hath met withal.

Never was that general brought unto such hazards as this king hath been brought unto.

In no part of Germany did Cæsar ever meet with such a pitched field or such a set battle, as Gustavus did on God's Acre, near Leipsig. Nor ever was a battle maintained with such prudence and providence, with such courage and constancy, against an enemy that was so strong and stout, so seldom foiled, so much prevailing; against an army supposed invincible by reason of former successes and present preparations; against all the advantages that an enemy could desire, as the battle at Leipsig by valorous Gustavus. And all this after a great,

¹ *Nec citius cujusquam passibus quam suis victoriis, &c.—Cic. Orat., pro M. Marcel. Plut. in vit. Cæs.*

if not the greater part, of his own army was put to rout, and the enemy thereupon made so confident, as he cried, Victory, victory, follow, follow; but with such success as the Benjamites had, when in the beginning of the battle they had smitten the Israelites, and thereupon cried, 'They are smitten down before us,' Judges xx. 32, &c.

On the seventh day of September, the birthday of victorious Queen Elizabeth, was this never-to-be-forgotten victory obtained. And on the seventeenth day of November, the coronation-day of the said puissant princess, was the high and mighty king of Sweden entertained in the imperial city of Frankfort-on-Maine, the city where the German emperor useth to be elected.

Since the forenamed incomparable victory at Leipsig, all things with very good success have fallen out.

Sec. 126. *Of the causes of the Swedish king's entering into Germany.*

The conquests made by the victorious king of Sweden are in their kind very glorious; but much more glorious in the cause of undertaking them.

All confess that it is not so much the punishment that maketh martyrdom glorious, as the cause.¹

So is it in war. The cause rather than the event makes it warrantable and praiseworthy. Good success in just war brings much glory to the undertakers thereof.

In this respect victorious Gustavus carrieth away more glory than Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, Darius, Cyrus, Alexander, Cæsar, or other the great conquerors among the heathen.

Of those conquerors who are commended by the Holy Ghost, it is said that they 'subdued kingdoms' and 'wrought righteousness.'

Might and right must go together. Right without might may be much wronged. Might without right may do much wrong.

Take we therefore a brief view of the causes of sundry other conquerors, and we shall find might without right.

Take we a view of the causes which moved the conquering king of Sweden to undertake his wars, and we shall find might regulated by right.

¹ *Causa non poena facit martyrem.—Aug., epist. 61.*

The cause which moved conquering monarchs in former times to enter into other men's dominions and to subdue nations, was especially the pride of their heart, and their ambition to have the supreme sovereignty over the whole world, if possibly they could achieve it.

It is said of Alexander the Great, that when he heard the philosopher's conclusion concerning the unity of the world, he wept because there were no more worlds for him to overcome. Behold the ambition of men's minds, how boundless, how unsatiable it is!

The forementioned Caesar invaded Germany, France, England, and other nations, to enlarge the dominion of the Roman empire. So did other Roman generals before and after Caesar.

True it is that God in his unsearchable wisdom stirred up many of them to be his instruments to punish people's rebellion against God. In which respect they are called the 'rod' of the Lord, Isa. x. 5; his 'staff,' Jer. xii. 12; his 'sword,' Ezek. xxx. 24. Yea, God is said to put 'his sword into their hands;' and because the Lord useth them as his instruments, they are in that respect styled 'the Lord's anointed,' Isa. xlv. 1; his 'servants,' Jer. xxv. 9; his 'shepherds,' Isa. xlv. 28. Yet notwithstanding this secret intent of the Lord, which he by their ministry brought to pass, they were stirred up by pride and ambition to do what they did. So saith the Lord of Ashur, 'O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, &c. I will send him against a hypocritical nation, &c. I will give him a charge to take the spoil, &c. Howbeit he meaneth not so, &c. For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom,' &c., Isa. x. 5-7, 13. And further to shew that they by their inward wicked disposition were set on work, it is said 'that when God gave people into their hands they shewed them no mercy,' Isa. xlvii. 6; and again, when 'the Lord was a little displeas'd they helped forward the affliction,' Zech. i. 15.

But the pious and righteous king of Sweden hath made it manifest to all the world, that no ambitious thoughts, no desire of enlarging his own dominions by forcing away other men's rights from them, hath embroiled him in these German wars.

Great wrongs were done to him by the enemy,

and fear given of greater, if he looked not the better to himself. So as he was forced to take up arms to secure his own dominions and his neighbours' bordering upon him.

It is noted of the Philistines that 'they came up to seek David,' 2 Sam. v. 17. Whereby is implied that they first provoked him to war; and his setting upon them and destroying them is thereby justified.

It is also recorded of the Syrians that they helped the Ammonites, who had most despitefully used David's ambassadors,' 2 Sam. x. 4, &c. Thereby David's warring against the Ammonites and Syrians is justified. Against the Ammonites for wrong done to David; against the Syrians for aiding David's enemies.

Such provocations had king Gustavus to enter upon these latter wars. He was first fought by the enemy. His ambassadors were basely used. This latter enemy sent armies under his own ensigns in aid of the Pole, his former enemy, with whom he was then in war.

Besides these wrongs done to himself, complaints and invitations were made to him by sundry oppressed princes and states, and particularly of those to whom he was engaged by ancient alliances and confederacies. By these also he was drawn into these wars, wherein the divine providence hath given him so good success and so great glory.

Abraham, Gen. xiv. 14, on such a ground as this latter is, was moved to take up arms against those that spoiled Sodom where his brother Lot was; wherein the Lord gave him good success.

Joshua also on such a ground made war against the five kings of the Amorites, who encamped against Gibeon, Josh. x. 6, &c. The Gibeonites were at that time in league with the Israelites. Thereupon Gibeon being invaded by the Amorites, sends unto Joshua to the camp, saying, 'Slack not thy hand from thy servants, come up to us quickly and save us and help us.'

Thus Gustavus in affording succour to such as were oppressed and craved his aid, they being also his confederates, hath done that which such as were guided by God's Spirit have done before him; and that as well for securing his own dominions, as for relieving others. For had that flood of war, which overflowed, and in a manner ruined, the greater

part of Germany, been suffered to swell and run longer and further, it might have made an irrecoverable breach even unto the very kingdom of Sweden.

Where that flood of war had a current, it carried away the true religion before it; it bare away princes out of their principalities, other governors out of their jurisdictions, ministers of God's word from their charges, owners from their possessions, and others from their places and callings; it deprived free cities of their immunities and privileges; and brought many mischiefs and inconveniences to many others.

Wherefore to preserve true religion where it was in great hazard to be suppressed; to re-establish it where it was removed; to restore princes, other governors, ministers, owners, and others to their own rights; to recover to free people their privileges; to bring home the banished; to take off the heavy yoke of bondage and intolerable burdens from their necks on whom they were unjustly laid; and finally to prevent cruel massacres and persecutions for the gospel's sake, hath this contrary stream of war been opposed; so as violence by violence, as necessity required, hath been resisted; and a strong stream of sweet water hath beaten back a great flood of salt waters.

Sec. 127. *Of the effects of the Swedish king's wars.*

The blessed events that have followed upon the king of Sweden's wars in Germany do give evident proof to the truth of the ends and intents before-mentioned. For thereby true religion is in many places re-established, and a free liberty for exercise thereof procured to the professors of it. Ancient immunities and privileges are recovered; princes, other governors, ministers of the gospel, states, polities, private lords and owners, are restored to their dominions, dignities, charges, callings, inheritances, and possessions. Many people are eased of their heavy burdens and grievances.

There hath also hereupon followed a great abatement of the greatness of the house of Austria, and such a diminution of the power thereof, as that they who have been the chief pillars of the church of Rome, are by these late victories got against them, disabled, as we hope, from helping forward

the pope's design of reducing the Christian world to an absolute obedience unto his chair, yea, and from further promoting their own ambitious desires of the monarchy of Europe.

By the forenamed success there is also procured much addition and great strength to the protestant parties, by digesting all Germany into their body; and a great means effected for facilitating the unions betwixt those that, to the great scandal of the profession, and dishonour of those worthy lights of the church, Luther and Calvin, have been distinguished by these factious titles, Lutherans and Calvinists.

Great security is hereby further brought to the reformed churches in France, who could never be reduced to the terms wherein they now are, so long as the protestant princes in Germany retained freedom and power in their own dominions.

A way is also hereby opened to the very gates of Rome, whereby the threatenings against the seven-headed beast may in the Lord's appointed time be accomplished.

Finally, there is great hope given of establishing much peace and security to all the true churches of God; and many other blessings are expected, which the Lord grant to his people!

Sec. 128. *Of praising God for the foresaid mercies.*

To make a brief recapitulation, and to gather up the sum of all, for the better application of the main point intended:—

The Lord having secured our peace, and removed from us his judgments of plague and famine;

The Lord having restored to the reformed churches in France a gracious liberty for exercising their religion;

The Lord having with more than ordinary success prospered the affairs of our nearest neighbours, the States General of the united provinces in the Netherlands;

The Lord having succoured his oppressed churches in Germany, and given to their deliverer victories beyond expectation, unto admiration;

The Lord having given very many clear evidences of his fatherly care over his churches everywhere, and of his gracious providence towards them, even now in these our days:

Should not our souls be affected with all and every of these mercies? Should they not be incensed with an ardent zeal of setting forth the honour of his name?

We, and others of the same profession, of the same religion, enjoy the comfort and benefit of the forementioned mercies, and of many other mercies flowing from the divine providence; and shall not the Lord, who so ordereth his providence for our good, have the praise and glory thereof?

Who can give sufficient thanks—nay, whose soul can be satisfied in rendering praises—to so good and gracious a God for so many and so great blessings, so seasonably and so freely conferred on his churches?

Should not all ministers of the gospel make their churches to ring again with sounding forth God's praises?

Should not publishers of books make mention of these mighty works of the Lord, to the further publishing of his name?

Should not the wits of all divine poets be set on work to indite due forms of praises, for the better magnifying of his name who hath done so glorious things for us?

Should not every Christian soul, in the best manner that it can, add something to the magnifying of God's name, as every one brought something to the building of the tabernacle?

Did we not, while the Lord was time after time shooting out against us and others his three deadly arrows of plague, famine, and sword, humble our souls before him, and call upon him instantly, continually, to spare his people, to remove his wrath, to take away his judgments?

Should we not now, the Lord having graciously heard our prayers for ourselves and others, be hearty and zealous, instant and constant, in rendering all possible praise and thanks unto him?

It hath been before declared¹ how true gratefulness hath especial relation to God, and ascribeth the glory of all deliverances to him, and that praise is the best gift that can be given him,² and that thereupon saints are never satisfied in setting forth God's praises.³ They content not themselves with an in-

ward affection of praising God in their own souls, or secretly betwixt God and themselves, but they must needs break forth into praises of God, and manifest their inward gratitude by outward gratulation,¹ and that publicly, boldly, among much people, in the midst of great assemblies,² exhorting and inciting others to praise God with them,³ and themselves conscientiously practising what they incite others unto.⁴

Now we have so great and just grounds at this time to praise God, let us take the occasions of stirring up our own and others' spirits to do it heartily and zealously, that God finding his blessings conferred on a grateful people may never repent any kindness done; but may go on to add victory to victory, success to success, blessing to blessing, till he have finished the good work done for his churches, and accomplished the promises which he hath made for destroying the kingdom of Antichrist, calling the Jews, bringing in the fulness of the Gentiles, and consummating all things by his last and most glorious coming.

Wherefore, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise. Awake up, my glory: I myself will awake early. My tongue shall speak of thy righteousness, and of thy praise all the day long.'

'Behold, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord. Give unto the Lord glory and strength: give unto the Lord the glory due to his name.'

'O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so: whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy.' Let them that were exiled say so, whom he hath brought to the place of their habitation. Let them that were oppressed say so, whom he hath eased of their heavy burdens. Let them that are freed from the infectious plague, and from pinching famine, say so. So let them say who are restored to a free exercise of their religion. Praise ye the Lord who quietly sit on your thrones of judgment, to execute righteous justice and judgment. Praise ye the Lord that freely go to your

¹ Sec. 51, 79.² Sec. 85.³ Sec. 108.¹ Sec. 86.² Sec. 116, 118.³ Sec. 120.⁴ Sec. 121.

churches to preach and hear God's word, and to observe all his holy ordinances. Praise ye the Lord that peaceably exercise your callings, possess your lands and inheritances, eat the fruit of your labours, enjoy mutual communion one with another, and partake of other benefits of the divine providence. Praise ye the Lord all ye members of the true church. Blessed be the Lord out of his church. Praise ye the Lord.

And now, good Lord, as thou hast given such occasions of praising thy name, perfect this praise by perfecting the good work which thou hast begun for thy churches. Leave not him whom thou hast raised up to be thy church's deliverer to the malicious and mischievous plots of his enemies.

Be thou his strength, his rock, his fortress, his deliverer. Uphold him with thy right hand, till he have performed all thy pleasure. Amen. Amen.

THE END.