

i. 13. 'Be sober,' and he giveth this reason of it; 'for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.' O! were we much taken up in beholding that blessed estate of life, which the souls of just men made perfect shall have with God, where we shall enjoy and yet not loath; there shall be an everlasting conjunction betwixt desire and enjoyment of him, who is the person beloved, so that it thinks never to receive satisfaction; all it doth receive, is more to provoke its appetite than to satisfy its desire.

There is this *last*, which is this, be much in the consideration of that day, when all the families of the earth shall appear before him in the valley of decision. This indeed would help us to much mortification to these things of the world; as is clear from Eccles. xi. 9. Had we the faith of that day engraven upon our spirits, that we must render an account of our ways, O! how wary should we be in engaging with vanity! I think the great cause why sin hath so universal dominion over the sons of men is, because we do not solidly believe that there is such a day approaching, when we shall appear before the judgment-seat of him, who shall judge, not after the seeing of the eye, nor shall reprove after the hearing of the ear, but shall judge righteous judgment. The terror of the Lord would certainly persuade us, if we did believe this. O! what a holy unwillingness should we have in walking after the paths of our idols.

Now we shall shut up our discourse with this, be persuaded once to begin that work of mortification, and especially in mortifying your love to the world; he that returneth victor after that war with his idols, we may call him Joseph, for he shall be as a 'fruitful bough, whose branches run over the walls.' If once you spoil that grand arch rebel, who doth so much oppose you in a manner, you shall stand alone, and sing a triumph, they should flee when none pursueth; 'and we ought to be strong as a lion, and who should rouse us up?'

TWO SERMONS

CONCERNING SPIRITUAL CONTENTMENT.

SERMON I.

PHILIP. iv. 11. *I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.*

IT was Adam's ignorance of this divine mystery of Christianity, 'to be content with every estate wherein he was placed,

that did bring him down from that high pinnacle of his excellency, and did degrade him from that primitive glory where with he was clothed; for he not being content with that precious and excellent lot wherein God had placed him, but coveting after a more noble and excellent being, he came exceedingly short of his design; and such is the Athenian and woful frame of spirit wherewith men are possessed, that they can fancy no blessedness in what they are, but imagine a great blessedness to be in what they are not: hence it is, that men do covet the lot of others, and are dissatisfied with their own estate and condition. And certainly the affections of men, while they are living under these spheres which are in perpetual motion, can never be satisfied, nor be at rest; which was the observation of that master of experience, Prov. xxvii. 20. 'Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied:' and as he saith, Eccles. i. 8. 'that the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing:' and we may likewise add, 'that the heart is not satisfied with enjoying:' and it is certainly through the deceitfulness of the spirit of man, and that invisible root of pride, that every lot and condition of life is subject to satiety and loathing: private men do envy the greatness of princes, and princes do envy the quiet repose of private men, though they will not descend nor reduce themselves unto that estate, but do always fear that, which sometimes they are constrained to desire. And believe me, a Christian's sitting down seriously, to contemplate and view what an infinite multitude of hopes, fears and desires, the spirit of man is possessed with; as likewise to behold, how that 'vanity and vexation of spirit' is engraven upon the choicest lot that a Christian can meet with here, he may be provoked to look out at the windows of his prison-house, and long for that precious day, when 'Christ shall be as a roe, or as a young hind, upon the mountains of Beher,' waiting to be exalted to that precious and excellent estate of life, where there shall be neither loathing nor longing. Abel, who hath been the first possessor of heaven, of all the house and family of Adam, and hath dwelt in it near six thousand years, yet there is not in him the least inclination or motion to change or alter his estate: there is nothing loathing in heaven, nor desire to flit there. And believe me, this divine mystery of contentment with every lot and condition, in which a Christian is placed, is not easily attained. O! what repinings hath the unmortified spirit of man to the dispensations of God, in regulating his lot and estate, which doth alone speak forth the atheism of our hearts? For it is, as it were, man proposing a model, and form unto God, how he should rule and govern the world. I think Christians are as much sub-

ject to the fashion of his contempt and pride as any. It was a noble saying of one, in the commendation of victory over a man's self, *Tunc omnia regna tenebis, cum poteris rexisse tui*, Ye shall then be made a possessor of all kingdoms, when ye shall be made a ruler and king of yourself. And, no doubt, one that is once mortified to this passion of discontent, he may dwell upon the mountains of Ararat, in the midst of all the revolutions and changes that are here below; such a Christian may sweetly contemplate the overturning of estates and common-wealths, and may patiently endure every lot that doth befall him, and possess his soul in patience. And certainly, if men knew but this one thing, that the whole circumference of the earth is but one point of the universe, and that all time that hath been, is, or shall be, is but one instant, in comparison of eternity: and what is man, but a part of that point? And what is his life, but a small part of that instant? And why then should man anxiously complain, to spend a part of a moment in enduring the most anxious and sad things that can befall him? And, (as Christ doth most divinely speak) 'Can a man, by taking thought, add one cubit to his stature?' What poor advantage hath a man by his discontentment and sorrow, if it be not to render himself more miserable? We may say of heavenly-mindedness and of contentment, they are like Hypocrates' twins, that live and die together, they are two sweet companions, that always go together, and cannot be divided.

But to descend a little more to the words, you have Paul in them, obviating any misconstruction, that the Philippians might have of his joy, which he expresseth in the former verse, as if he had been one who was coveting great things for himself, or desiring to be great in the world, no, saith he, 'I speak not these things because of want,' which formerly I had, and is now made up; for, saith he, 'I have learned in every state that I am, therewith to be content.' There is no lot, saith Paul, but I can patiently endure it, and can with a divine complacency carry myself under it: and this he proveth in the 12 verse, 'I know, saith he, how to be abased,' I am instructed in this divine art, how to walk soberly under debasement; and 'I know, saith he, how to abound.' I am not one that is puffed up with a prosperous lot in the world: and lest this assertion of Paul's should seem to be a boasting beyond his line, and of being exalted above measure, he doth sweetly subjoin that humble assertion, 'I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me:' as if he had said, do not mistake me, or conceive me under a more divine and high notion than ye ought; for I am but a poor and sinful man, who can do nothing of myself, but as I am over-acted by a divine and

supreme hand. I am enabled to triumph over the most adverse and sinistrous lot that can befall me.

The words which we have read, in the original they are most significant and emphatic; that word which is here rendered *content*, is *all-sufficient*; and so the words they sweetly run thus, 'I have learned in every state wherein I am, to be all-sufficient;' of which that word, Prov. xiv. 14. is a sweet commentary, 'The backslider in heart shall be filled with the fruit of his own way;' but a godly man shall be satisfied from himself. In a manner, there is a well-spring of everlasting consolation within the Christian, which maketh him endure every anxious lot. And no doubt that word, 'I have learned,' both speaketh the difficulty of attaining this mystery of divine contentment; as likewise, it speaketh out that ignorance of this divine and noble end, wherewith Paul was once possessed: I was once, saith he, as rude as any in the knowledge of this thing, but now through the understanding and wisdom of God, I am made perfect in the knowledge of these things. And that word, 'in every state,' doth exceedingly commend that great pitch of Christianity unto which Paul had attained, there was no lot that could befall him wrong. And we shall only say this by the way, continuance of affliction is one of the greatest occasions of impatience that is imaginable. A Christian, when first he meets with a cross, may be provoked to salute it, and embrace it; but if it be lengthened out upon him, then he crieth out, 'Hast thou found me, O thou mine enemy?' And then beginneth to call in question the loving-kindness of the Lord, and to complain, that he hath shut up his mercies in everlasting forgetfulness. Though we may say, in the day that a Christian shall be passing through the valley of the shadow of death, he shall be sweetly convinced of his impatience: when a Christian shall be constrained to engrave that motto upon the door of his everlasting rest, 'He hath done all things well.' What thoughts will ye have of these risings and debates of spirit wherewith ye have been possessed? We may imagine, and not without some ground, that a great part of eternity shall be spent in interrogations: Christ shall interrogate us, if we lacked any thing while we were here below, and we shall be constrained to answer, nothing; even in that day when he sent us without scrip, or money, or without sandals, or any thing; and those that did belong to us, we shall be constrained to subscribe to the infinite wisdom of God in regulating of our lot.

Now, in speaking upon this divine quality and duty of divine contentment, (which we conceive is a duty most requisite in these days) we shall not insist long in pointing out what this divine grace of contentment is; but we conceive, it includeth not

only this, a sweet and composed frame of spirit, under every anxious lot and dispensation with which we meet, of which that word is a commentary, Lev. x. 3. where it is said of Aaron, when his sons were cut off, 'He held his peace.' And that word, Psalm lxii. 1. 'Truly my soul waiteth upon the Lord;' but the words in the original are thus, 'Truly my soul be thou silent unto God,' as they are rendered in the margin of the book; as if he would have said, 'Do not fret nor be disquieted because of any thing that he carveth out unto thee.'

But likewise this grace and duty of contentment, includeth a holy complacency, and sweet serenity and calmness of spirit under every lot; of which that word is a commentary, James i. 2. 'Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;' and that word, Rom. v. 3. 'We glory in tribulation.' Neither shall we dwell long upon this, to prove that it is the duty of a Christian to be content with every estate wherein God shall put him; this is clear, 1 Tim. vi. 8. 'Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content; and Heb. xiii. 5. 'Be content with such things as ye have;' and James iv. 7. and Luke iii. 14. And we may say, if a Christian made the world but his servant, a little would content him; but if once he make the world his master, and lord of his affections, then his desires will be infinite, and cannot at all be satisfied. We shall not stand long to inveigh against that too much addictedness of man to those passing and transient vanities of the world. We conceive there are these three things, which men do most earnestly covet, there is pleasure, and riches, and honour. And certainly, these are below an immortal spirit, to fix their desires upon them: would ye have Solomon's verdict of riches, O! ye that trust in uncertain riches, ye have it sweetly in Prov. xxiii. 5. 'Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not?' In a manner riches they have not a being, for 'they take wings to themselves, and fly away;' as Solomon doth most sweetly speak, Eccles. v. 11. 'If riches increase, what profit, saith he, is there to the owner thereof, save to the beholders of them with their eyes?' All that the owners of the riches hath, is the seeing of them; which a man, who is a passer by, may likewise have, though he be not possessor of them. And hence is that word, Luke xiv. 18. where the man desiring to be excused for not coming to Christ, saith of himself, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it:' all his enjoyment of it was comprehended in that one poor thing, 'to behold it.' And as for honour and glory, which spirits that are more refined, and are not so much wedded to the things of a world, pursue after, I would only have them knowing that one word, Psalm lxii. 9. 'Men of high degree are a lie, and men of low de-

gree are vanity.' As if he would have said, any pre-eminency that one hath, that hath an excellent lot in the world above a poor one, doth consist in this, the one is a vanity, and the other is a lying vanity, speaking somewhat to be in him which is not really in him: and that word, Acts xxv. 23. where, speaking of Bernice that came in with great pomp and glory into the senate-house, the word that is there rendered 'pomp and glory,' is this, He came in with a great fantasy, *Meta polles phantasia*, with a great shout and image, without any thing in reality. (And as for pleasures of the world, which these Epicurean spirits of the world are so much besotted, know that verdict of Solomon which he hath of these things, 'Vanity of vanities, and all things are vanity and vexation of spirit.' And what can the man do that cometh after the king? If Solomon found no more, no doubt none that cometh after him can find any more.

But that which we shall speak to the first upon this, shall be what are the causes and principles from whence discontentment of one doth flow, under an anxious or sad lot that doth befall him? And we conceive that it either doth proceed from this, a Christian not being much in the exercise of self-examination; as it is clear from that word, Psalm iv. 4. 'Examine yourselves upon your bed, and be still;' speaking so much, that the compendious way unto submission and contentment under any lot, is to be much about self-examination. And certainly self-examination hath much influence upon contentment under every lot, because such a one doth most accurately take up these imperfections and blemishes that are in him; so instead of complaining, he is constrained to cry out, 'Why should a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sin?' Likewise one that is much in self-examination, is a man that can take up the intendment of the rod; as likewise the advantage of it; and so he is constrained patiently to bear the rod in his youth, and to sit down and adore the unsearchable wisdom of God, in dispensing such things to him. That word, Prov. xix. 3. is oftentimes verified to us, 'The heart of man perverteth his way,' and then he 'fret-teth against the Lord,' when he is chastened for it. O! but if a Christian were dwelling much at home, he might wonder that yet he had a being in the world, and is not cut off from the right hand of the Lord. O! bless him eternally, that ye are not sent away to be reserved in everlasting chains.

There is this likewise that doth occasion discontentment under our lot, and it is, want of that divine preparation to meet with every lot that can befall us before it come. We think a Christian ought to be general in his resolution, to bear every cross that Christ will carve out. And certainly, there are

these two advantages that a Christian hath of general and universal resolutions: *first*, He hath this advantage, that when he is chastened, as it were, in his goods, or any other thing that belongeth to him, he beginneth to sing a song of praise, because it is not worse with him; there can no lot befall a man who is universal in his resolutions, but he will sing a song of praise unto God because of it. *Secondly*, He hath this advantage, that foresight and resolution to meet with any cross, doth exceedingly dispose the Christian for meeting with it. We conceive that word, which is, Job iii. 25. on Job's patience, 'For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me.' Afflictions do oft-times surprise us, and so we faint in the day of adversity, and so prove our strength to be but small.

There is this likewise, which occasioneth our discontentment, and it is this, that little heavenly-mindedness that is in a Christian when he meeteth with his rod. O! but a Christian, when he sitteth down upon mount Pisgah, to behold that promised land, might with patience bear his rod. This is clear, 2 Cor. iv. 16. compared with verse 17. where Paul giveth this reason of his courage and constancy under his rod, that he had an eye unto those things that are eternal; did ye never know what such things meant, as to drown the thoughts of your present misery in these precious depths of eternity; to be beholding so much in heaven; as might infinitely solace, yea, and make up all your losses here? I confess, that opinion of the Stoicks, that did commend indolency and want of passions unto men, that they should not be moved with grief for the want of any thing, nor be moved with joy for the having or possessing of any thing, is in some sense good; hence was it, that in some sense they spoke divinely, *Nihil boni vel mali accidit homini, nisi bonus vel malus animus*; that there was no evil nor good that did befall man, but only a good and evil mind; if the heart was in a divine and spiritual frame, they know not what any other sad or anxious lot could do to them.

There is this likewise which occasioneth discontentment, and it is this, the want of the taking up God, as the cause and author of those sad evils which befall us; which, if it were once believed, we should be ashamed to dispute and murmur so much as we do; this is clear, 1 Sam. iii. near the close, that word of Eli, 'It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good;' and that word, Psalm xxxix. 9. 'I was dumb and opened not my mouth;' and the reason is given of it, 'because thou didst it;' and that word, Isa. xxxix. 8. 'Good is the word of the Lord.' And certainly the murmurings and repinings of our hearts do speak that gross atheism that dwelleth with us. O! durst we debate with him who is Almighty, or put him to make an account of

his ways, who is that *supreme and absolute One*; is it fit to be said to such a prince as he is, thou art ungodly, and to condemn him who is most just! O! be much in the study of the sovereignty of God, when he, as it were, doth call, as in a solemn assembly. all your terrors round about.

There is this likewise which doth occasion it, which is, our little being in the meditation and serious thoughts of the brevity of our life and of time: if a man knew that it were but for an hour, or for ten days that he were to endure tribulation, he might patiently submit and bear with his rod; this is clear, 1 Cor. vii. 29. compared with the following verses, where, from that doctrine, that time was short, he doth infer this exhortation, 'Let those that weep, be as tho' they weeped not;' as if he would have said, 'Let them not be much moved with those things, time will have a close.' Believe me, it is not long before the small period of time that hath intervened betwixt eternity before, and eternity after shall be sweetly swallowed up, and there shall be nothing but eternity.

And there is this, *lastly*, which doth occasion our great discontentment under our rod, which is, that unmortifiedness and unsubduedness of spirit: pride being the great predominant evil: and if we may allude to that word, 'only by pride cometh contention;' we may certainly say it holdeth well here, that only by pride are these contendings that we have with God, concerning his dispensations towards us. In sum, it is this, it is impossible for a Christian not humble, to be content. Pride is one of the greatest opposites unto divine contentment under any rod that we meet with: O! but if a Christian were humbled, he might sit in the dust, and sweetly adore the infinite love and patience of God.

Now we shall, in the *second* place, propose some considerations that may hinder a Christian, or any other, from being discontent with any lot that doth befall them. And the *first* is this, that there are many sad and woful companions of a Christian's discontentment and repining against any dispensation of God. And we conceive, it is not only this bad companion that a Christian hereby is indisposed and unfitted to go about spiritual duties, especially these two, of prayer and praise. It is impossible for a Christian, that is under the exercise of discontentment, to pray or praise; there is somewhat of this pointed at, 1 Tim. ii. 8. where there is a qualification of a right prayer, that he should be *without wrath*, not having any murmurings or repinings within his heart: as likewise it is clear concerning praise, Psalm lvii. 7. 'My heart is fixed, it is fixed,' which speaketh so much as this, that praise doth require a divine and composed frame of spirit:

and it is most certain, that discontentment doth impede prayer; for there are three sweet ingredients of the exercise of prayer, which discontentment doth exceedingly cut off; there is love, fervency, and faith, which no doubt, discontentment doth abridge; a discontented Christian cannot be a Christian burning with love; jealousy is such a predominant with him, that love cannot be his exercise. And certainly, if prayer do not proceed from the precious principle of love, it wants that one arm which it ought to have. Neither can a Christian exercise faith, because he hath now, as it were, taken up so bad an opinion of God, that he cannot repose his confidence nor hope in him: and as for fervency, they are so much in poring upon their present lot, that they can, as it were, be fervent about nothing, but only in the removal of that. It is certain, that let a Christian examine himself, there is nothing that cuts the neck of prayer so much as discontent; in a man, the spirit, as it were, is turned brutish, being uncomposed for any spiritual converse with God.

There is this bad companion likewise which accompanieth discontentment, we are incapacitated and rendered altogether unable to resist temptations while discontentment is in exercise. It is impossible for a Christian to be a mortifier, or resister of lust, when discontentment is once in exercise; and are these two evils, that get most marvellous advantage over those that are under discontentment, and these are the predominant lusts of such a one, be what it will, and pride, these two evils do spring apace. And certainly, all other lusts do get much victory over such a one: a Christian may lose more by one hour's discontentment under a cross, than he can regain in many months, yea, on this side of eternity: and it is no wonder that temptations do prevail upon such a one, he is off his watch: and his strength is gone. In a manner temptations speaketh that, 'Their strength is gone from them, let us go up, and put them to flight.'

There is this bad companion likewise that doth accompany discontentment, want of tenderness of spirit, and the loss of it. It is most certain, that there is nothing that doth cut off tenderness so much as discontentment; for a Christian that is such, is not living under the impression of the fear, or of the love of the Almighty, which are the two great principles of tenderness of spirit. Certainly, let one examine, they will find, that by their anxiety and bitterness of spirit, they have made their hearts to die as a stone within them, and have made their bands strong upon their spirits.

And there is this *last* bad companion of discontentment, a Christian undervaluing all the former mercies which he hath re-

ceived; when once a Christian meeteth with that which contradicteth his humour, and he loseth his esteem of every thing that formerly hath been bestowed upon him. There is something of this pointed at, Gen. xxxvii. ult. in Jacob's impatience in the loss of Joseph, where he doth undervalue all his brethren beside; and it is most clear in that word, Gen. xii. 13. where, though it be spoken of a wicked man, yet by proportion it holdeth of a Christian; because Mordecai did not bow his knee, he cried out concerning all his other mercies, 'They avail me nothing;' he knew not what it was to put a price upon mercies that he had received; but because this, which was the great lust of his heart, was away, he did undervalue the rest: and it is most certain, that there is nothing doth so heighten a Christian's disrespect unto the most precious and excellent things of God, as this of discontent: and this is one subtilty and device of Satan's, that a Christian may, with great ease, and with less conviction do it; they do ordinarily construct their choicest mercies to be delusions, and so, upon that account, begin to undervalue and misprise them.

There is this consideration which may move you to wrestle against discontentment, it is a character and distinguishing mark of a Christian from a reprobate. I would have murmurers seriously to meditate upon that sad word, which is in Jude, 19th verse compared with the 15th verse, where, speaking of Christ's coming to judge and execute vengeance, the first put in the roll are these, 'These are murmurers and complainers;' and that word, 1 Cor. x. 10. 'Be not murmurers, as many of them were, and were destroyed of the destroyer.' And certainly, it is no wonder that murmuring pass under so bad a notion, not only because it is indeed that sin which speaketh out our atheism most, but because it is that sin which doth declare most a Christian, or any others desire to be independent and not in subjection unto God; in a manner, such is the woful ambition of our spirit, that we desire not to depend upon him, but that we should have our own lot in our own hand, to carve out unto ourselves. O! we know not what it is to give Christ any one vote in the dispensations which doth befall us; we would be co-ordinate with God, and not subordinate to him, to put a blank in his hand, desire him to fill it up with what he liketh; Christ doth oft-times put a blank in a Christian's hand; as in that word, 'what will ye that I should do unto you?' There is Christ's blank that he doth give us, and though through our ignorance we cannot fill it up, it is best to give it back to himself, that he may fill it up with what he listeth.

There is this consideration also, that may persuade you to desist from discontentment, it is the sin which doth interrupt the accomplishment of the promises. As likewise, it doth inter-

rupt the exercise of faith upon the promises; this is clear, Numb. xiv. 27. compared with the 8th verse, where that promise that was given to them of entering into the land of Canaan, they were cut short of it because of their murmuring: and it doth interrupt the exercise of faith upon the promises; as is clear, Psalm cvi. 24, compared with verse 25, where it is said, 'They believed not his word:' and the ground of it is given, 'for they were murmurers.' And it is no wonder that murmuring interrupts the exercise of faith upon the promises, for it is impossible for a murmurer either to have the faith of the omnipotency of God, or to have the faith of his goodness or love, which are the two precious pillars of faith upon which it must build itself. O but those that begin once to debate with him, do quickly put faith out of exercise. And I would have you knowing this, that there is a discontentment of judgment, and a discontentment of the will and affections, and oftentimes a Christian will get over the discontentment of judgment and reason, when he cannot mortify the discontentment of his will and affections; for the sovereignty of God, and the sinfulness of our nature, will silence our reason: but no doubt it must be his own immediate hand, that must silence the murmurings of our will; this is clear, Psalm xii. 5. where David is convinced of the unreasonableness of his discontentment, and yet he is forced to debate with his will concerning the quieting of it.

There is this consideration likewise, which may provoke you to desist from discontentment under your lot; it is a most unreasonable evil for a Christian to be discontent: for as Christ speaketh, Matth. vi. 27. 'Whatprofit have you by taking thought? Can you add one cubit to your stature?' It is a poor thing when a man hath lost his goods, to lose his patience also; what a poor revenge is that which a man taketh of himself? And certainly the unreasonableness of impatience under the rod doth not only appear in this, that it hindereth and interrupteth a Christian's seeing of any mercy that is in the rod, it is impossible for a discontented one to take up mercy in the stroke: but also that impatience is the compendious way for the prolonging of your strait, and the involving of you in greater miseries and thraldoms: as likewise impatience doth heighten and increase the cause of your bondage, and multiplieth your iniquities. O but it is a sweet and excellent study for a Christian to endeavour patience under every lot! And, in a manner, when we cannot read love in his hand, nor in his face, because of his frowns and strokes, yet by faith to draw aside the vail, and read love in his heart, and cry out, 'I know the thoughts of his heart, that they are thoughts of peace and not of evil.' Certainly it is through

discontentment that we cry out, 'Though his word be as soft as oil and butter, yet war is in his heart!' we do charge him with contradictions, betwixt his profession and his purposes.

And there is this consideration likewise, which may deter you from discontentment, which is this, it is impossible for a Christian to profit by his rod, while he is discontent; all the time that a Christian is under the fit of impatience, he spendeth so much of his time most prodigally; not employing it, not promoting that which is the great design of the rod, *to take away sin*, but studying to involve himself in a greater captivity and bondage, and to subject himself under the hand of his iniquities. Oh! that ye might be persuaded to exercise more divine contentment under your lot, and that ye may be more exercised in contemplating and beholding those precious and excellent things that are above. That is a most remarkable word which Jacob had to Esau, Gen. xxxiii. 11. 'I have enough:' the word in the original is this, *I have all*. And as critics do observe, that word which Esau had in the 9th verse, *I have enough*, is not that which Jacob hath in the 11th verse, *I have enough*; that though Jacob was a poorer man than Esau, yet *he had all*; such a Christian as hath Christ for his portion, may sweetly sing, 'though I be poor, yet I do possess all things; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things; as sorrowing, and yet always rejoicing; as poor, and yet behold we are rich.' It is not long before that day shall come, 'when Christ shall make up his jewels,' when there shall be a clear and most palpable difference made betwixt the precious and the vile; behold he is upon his way, and therefore do not murmur nor repine. A Christian must not expect two heavens, it is enough if he possess one; we must not travel to heaven through a bed of roses, it is not much though we go to heaven in a fiery chariot, having afflictions and calamities our companions all along the way; when our feet shall be passing through the threshold of the door of our everlasting rest, then our chains shall fall from our hands, and our fetters from our feet, then might we lift up our heads, with joy and rejoicing. O! but when those heavens which you behold shall be rolled up as a scroll, when these two great vails, the visible vail of the heavens, and the invisible vail of iniquity, shall be rent from the top to the bottom, and we shall have most clear and precious discoveries *of that noble plant of renown*, when we shall sit down at the well's head and drink, and forget our misery, and remember our poverty no more; let hope vanish into fruition, and faith into possession, and let time sweetly vanish into eternity.

SERMON II.

PHILIP. iv. 11. *I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.*

IT is an ordinary and usual error and delusion among Christians, that they place the exercise of religion in those duties that are most sublime and high unto their apprehensions, as faith, hope and prayer; but undervalue the exercise of those lower duties, as contentment, mortification to the world, and charity to the poor, as not being so essentially necessary for the being of a Christian. I am persuaded, that if any of you had been a hearer of the apostle James, when he was discoursing upon that divine subject, wherein pure religion and undefiled did consist, no doubt ye would have imagined, that he would have brought forth some divine and profound thing, in the exercise of which pure religion before *God and the Father* did consist; but believe me, religion doth more consist in practice, than in speculation; and more in obedience, than in refined notions; what conceive ye of such a definition of pure religion and undefiled, as that which is, James i. 27. 'Pure religion and undefiled,' doth consist in mortification to the world, and in charity to the poor, these two low undervalued duties. And this may further ingratiate and commend the exercise of those low and undervalued duties, that in the day when Christ shall appear to judge the quick and the dead, the ground of the approbation of the saints shall be founded upon this low and contemptible duty, 'Charity to the poor;' and shall be that ground which is given of that eternal blessedness, which approbation of Jesus Christ, no doubt, is a confirmation of James' doctrine, and that which shall be the ground of the reprobation of the wicked, shall be the neglect of this low duty, want of 'charity to the poor, and visiting of the fatherless.' And believe me, in the exercise of this divine quality of Christian contentment, not a little of religion doth consist; Paul saith, 'Godliness with contentment is great gain.' It is by faith that a Christian enjoyeth God; it is by love that he enjoyeth his neighbour; and by contentment that he enjoyeth himself. We confess, it is a most mysterious and difficult lesson for a Christian, in each lot he is placcd in, to be crying out, 'It is good for me to be here, let me make a tabernacle here.' Ordinarily we have strong desires to have the carving out of our own lot. Solomon maketh mention of three things that are not satisfied, and of four that never say, 'it is enough; the grave, the barren womb, the earth that is not filled with water, and fire.' And we may add unto these four, this one fifth, the most

part of men who are unsatisfied in their lot: it is no wonder that men, unlimited in their desires, meet with great disappointments; for those that have exorbitant and excentric desires, must have great hopes, as likewise great disappointments: therefore it were certainly your advantage to be studying to comprehendize and abridge your desires after these things that are here below: for as one spoke well, "He conceived that the greatest riches of a man did consist in poverty of desires, and in being content with that lot wherein God had placed him." There are only these three things that befall a Christian, under which it is great difficulty for him to attain to contentment; there is the loss of his predominant lust and idol, especially if it be any whit refined, and veiled under the vail and vizard of any virtue; as if one be given unto the seeking of the applause of the world, there is nothing under which there is so great a difficulty to exercise contentment, as in the losing of that applause, our hearts oft-times crying out, 'They have taken away my gods, and what have I more?' And certainly oft-times our lusts die unto us, before we die unto them; which is the occasion that our living lusts do sit down and lament over the graves of our buried idols, and wish that they may awake and stand up from the dead. And we shall only say to such, 'Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you,' which may hinder people from pursuing after that idol; but much more especially that word, John v. 44. 'How can ye believe, that seek glory one of another?' Which words seem to import an inconsistency betwixt the exercise of faith, and betwixt the exercise of pursuit after idols.

There is this likewise that befalleth a Christian, under which it is a great difficulty for him to attain to contentment; and that is, the continuance and lengthening forth of any affliction that doth befall him: oft-times a Christian, when first he meeteth with his cross, will salute and embrace it, and will cry out, 'This is a grief, and I must bear it:' but when the thread of our affliction is spun out unto any length, then we begin to be discontent, and cry out, 'Hast thou found me, O thou mine enemy?' This was clear in the exercise of Job, who, when first he met with his cross, did express divine contentment under a most eminent way, crying out, 'Blessed be the name of the Lord;' when he was made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights were appointed for him, then he crieth out, 'I choose strangling and death, rather than life.' And we shall only say to such, be much in the meditation of that precious and immense hope, and go up to the top of mount Pisgah, and there be with Moses in the viewing of that land which is afar off. As likewise, study to seal that divine conclusion, 'That he doth all things well.'

There is this, *thirdly*, which befalleth a Christian, under which he hath a great difficulty to exercise contentment, which is, poverty and want in the world. Agur, who was well acquainted with his own heart, and knew well his unsuitableness to bear such a cross, crieth out, Prov. xxx. 8, 9. 'Give me not poverty, lest I steal, and take the name of my God in vain.' It is certain, that to exercise faith upon God for the receipt of common mercies, is more difficult than to exercise faith on God for our eternal salvation, and for our interest in Jesus Christ. And we conceive, that the reason why a Christian findeth greater difficulty to exercise faith upon God for the receipt of these common mercies, than for the receiving of that cardinal and unspeakable mercy, salvation through Jesus Christ, to be either this, that faith, when it is exercised upon the one, must simply and immediately rely upon the omnipotency and faithfulness of God, abstracted from all other props and considerations; for their sense and reason doth contradict the exercise of faith; but when Christians do exercise faith upon God, for righteousness and salvation, they ordinarily have either somewhat of sense, or somewhat of holy reason, that doth underprop and help their faith; and this likewise is the occasion of it, that not so ordinarily a Christian is put to the exercise of the one, as unto the exercise of the other; but, believe me, it is no small difficulty for a Christian to act in confidence upon God, when he is reduced unto a low and pinching estate in the world. And we shall only say to such, who murmur and repine under such an estate, cast your eyes upon him who was the heir of all things, of whom it is recorded, 'That he had not so much as where to lay his head.' As likewise, cast your eyes upon a number of that precious cloud of witnesses, who are now entered into the everlasting possession of that precious and excellent lot, who are constrained to wander in dens and caves of the earth, having sheep and goats skins for their clothing. Ye are now in the state of your minority, and therefore ye are rich but in hope and expectation, and so ye may dispense, though ye be not rich in possession: though we may say, a Christian that hath 'him, who is all in all, must of necessity enjoy all in all.

Now that which we shall further speak upon this divine quality of contentment, besides those things which we spoke of at the last occasion; we shall point out a little the difficulty of attaining unto contentment under every lot and estate that a Christian falleth in: the difficulty of it is fully shown in that word, 'I have learned,' as it were, in speaking so much as this. Once Paul was as ignorant of this mysterious lesson of divine contentment, but he was instructed by him, who is the Prince of pas-

tors, by whom he did attain to the knowledge of this: and this speaketh forth the difficulty of it, that a Christian must be much in self-examination, and self-searching, before he can attain unto contentment: there is somewhat of this pointed at, Psalm iv. 4. 'Examine yourselves upon your beds;' and there is a promise annexed to this, 'and ye shall be still, or be still.' And the influence that self-examination hath upon this divine quality of contentment, may not only appear in this, that a Christian, who is much in reflecting upon himself, taketh up ordinarily a suitableness betwixt the cross and his humour; as it were, he seeth infinite wisdom shining, in carving out such a lot and dispensation unto him, and so is constrained to adore the unsearchable riches of the wisdom of God: as likewise, its influence may be shown in this, that a Christian, who is much in self-examination, doth behold such spots and blemishes in himself, that he is forced to wonder that it is no worse with him, and so is constrained to 'glorify God in the fire.' I confess it may be a wonder, that this is not a wonder unto a Christian every day, that he is not consumed, and cut off from his right hand. O that ye would once be much in the study of yourself! That ancient advice of a heathen, *Gnathki seauton, know yourself*, were worthy to be practised by all Christians; we are too much roving abroad, and too little at home. It is reported of some beasts, that they have eyes to see abroad, but have no eyes to see at home; which, no doubt, is the case and exercise of the most part who have lived in these days.

This likewise pointeth forth the difficulty of attaining to this duty of contentment, that a Christian, before he can attain it, must be much in the exercise of these two cardinal graces, 'faith and love:' certainly, till once we be studying the exercise of them, contentment will be at a low and weak standing with us. And, no doubt, the exercise of faith, not only concluding our interest in Jesus Christ, and in sealing that conclusion, that 'he is ours,' is most necessary for attaining of contentment, but likewise the exercise of faith for attaining of contentment, may be shown in this, that faith is that grace, which is the best interpreter of the dispensations of God: this may be recorded to the commendation of that grace of faith, that it knoweth not what it is to bring up a bad report unto God. And certainly, as long as we consult with these three bad counsellors, sense, reason, and misbelief about the dispensations of God, this will be the result of that counsel, to have sorrow in your heart daily; but study to employ that wise counsel for faith, for which sometimes, because it is so intelligent a grace, is called *understanding*; as is clear from Col. ii. 2. Now this is clear, that faith hath

influence upon contentment, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. where David from this, that God had made with him an everlasting covenant, he crieth out, 'I am not much anxious, though other things should fail, and though my house should not be so with God.' As likewise it is clear, Psalm cxlii. 4, 5. where the exercise of faith upon this, that God was his portion, made him with patience to submit, 'Though all refuge should fail him, and none should care for his soul.' As likewise, Psalm xxxvii. 1. compared with verse 3. where he presseth that duty of trusting in God, by which they may obviate the exercise of discontent and fretting. Love likewise, no doubt, must be exercised before a Christian do attain unto this divine quality of contentment. There are these two precious properties of love which are given, 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5. "Love endureth long, and love thinketh no evil:" which, no doubt, have great influence upon contentment. We confess, love sometimes is the most impatient grace of a Christian, and sometimes the most patient grace of a Christian; in a manner, love, when it is in its most vigorous exercise, will endure more sad afflictions than faith: faith sometimes will be languishing, and giving over, when love will support and strengthen it; it being afraid to conceal that woful conclusion, 'That he is not ours; love knoweth not what it is to entertain jealous thoughts of him, who is the lover, 'it thinketh no evil;' and certainly, when the grace of love is in its vigorous exercise, it is most tender to act any thing by which the person that is loved may be wronged, or a bad report may be brought up upon him. A Christian may be united unto precious Christ, by that golden and invisible chain of his beauty, and transcendent excellency, can with patience endure the loss of all things beside Christ. Love is peremptory in nothing but this, the enjoyment of the loved; and love is sorrowful for nothing, but the loss of him who is loved; he moveth in so high a sphere, and is so far elevated above all things that are here below, that, in a manner, he possesseth his soul in patience in the midst of all the revolutions and changes that are here below; in a manner, the grace of love doth incorporate a Christian in Jesus Christ, and doth make him to dwell in Christ as his mansion-house, and so he is not much taken up with those things that are abroad.

There is this likewise, which speaketh forth the difficulty of attaining unto divine contentment, and it is this, a Christian must be in the exercise of the grace of mortification to all the passing and transient vanities of the world. Do not these risings and murmurings of the Spirit, speak the little exercise of mortification that is amongst us? For if we were once mortified to the world, we should then exercise contentment under every

lot; this is clear from the comparing of these two places, Psalm cxix. 96. where David saith, 'I have seen an end of all perfection;' which speaketh forth that distinct discovery that he had of the vanity of the world; in a manner, he had it brought within his sight, which is one of the most unerring senses; compared with that most remarkable place, which breathes forth much of divine contentment in him, 1 Sam. xv. 25, 26, where he saith, 'But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.' Here, in a manner, is David making a resignation of his crown, and seeing an end of the perfection of that glistening and passing vanity. As likewise, it may be shown from the paralleling of these two places, Gal. iv. 14. where Paul saith of himself, 'I am crucified unto the world, and the world is crucified unto me.' In a manner, Paul and the world made a sorrowless parting, as two dead men parting one from another: and the words that we have read, where he breathed forth this divine quality of contentment. I think certainly, a Christian reflecting upon the changeableness, inconstancy, and vexation of things here below, will not be much moved with the loss of them. It was upon this ground that heathens did attain unto such a length in this divine quality of contentment; for they, beholding that fear and desires were the two inseparable companions of those that had most of these fancied delights of the world; for even those, that have the greatest abundance, are vexed betwixt these two passions, fear and desire; fear to lose what they have attained, and desire to attain more. We conceive, that it is a remarkable thing that is recorded of Sesostris king of Egypt, who was so ambitious, that he would needs have his chariot drawn with four kings, one of which had his eye continually upon the motion of the wheel of the chariot, which the king observing, did ask him the ground why he did so exercise himself? He did most fitly reply, "It putteth me in mind of the mutability and changeableness of the things of the world; for, saith he, the highest part of the wheel is instantly the lowest part, and the lowest part of the wheel is instantly the highest;" which moved the ambitious prince to desist from so ambitious a practice. And, believe me, if ye would read that inscription upon the forehead of all things, 'Vanity and vexation of spirit,' ye might easily attain unto contentment.

There is this, *fourthly*, which speaketh forth the difficulty of attaining unto contentment, that a Christian, before he win to it, must necessarily be mortified unto the innate and co-natural idol, pride. Pride must be once brought low, before contentment can be attained. We conceive, discontent and pride have

sworn a covenant of agreement, that they shall be undivided in their life, and undivided in death. they are chained together by an unchangeable chain of amity: and, believe me, it is impossible for a Christian to be discontent, but he must of necessity be proud. And, upon the contrary, a Christian that is proud, he must of necessity be a discontented one; for there is nothing that is the mother of contentment so much as humility, which moveth a Christian silently to bear his yoke, and to sit down, and put his mouth in the dust, because he hath done it. In a manner, a humble one, and one that hath distinct knowledge of his own baseness, knoweth not what it is to cry out, 'Why am I thus?' Such a one is much in admiration, and little under murmuring; much in praise, and little in complaint.

There is this, *lastly*, which pointeth forth the difficulty of it, a Christian cannot win to contentment, without he be much in heavenly-mindedness, and have his spirit in a spiritual and heavenly frame. There is somewhat of this pointed at, John xiv. 1. compared with the 2d verse, where Christ, proposing a remedy unto the discontentment of the disciples, 'that their hearts should not be troubled,' he doth begin a discourse of heaven, 'that in his Father's house were many mansions,' and that they had an interest into it. As likewise, there is somewhat of this pointed at, Matth. vi. 25, 26, where, to obviate their taking thought what they should eat, or what they should drink, or wherewith they should be clothed, he desireth them 'to seek first the kingdom of God.' And certainly one that is much taken up in the contemplation of eternal life, and who is viewing these precious and endless delights that are at his right hand, moveth in a most composed and divine frame; in a manner, he drowneth the thoughts of his present miseries in those precious depths of eternity: he knoweth that one moment of the enjoyment of precious Christ shall fully recompense and make up all those sorrows that he hath met with. I know not what shall be the thoughts of Christians, when that volume of the mercies of the Lord shall be presented unto them, which they have met with here below: how may they be filled with admiration, to see that book written within and without, of the receipts of most singular demonstrations of his love!

We shall, *secondly*, speak a little to provoke you to the pursuit of this divine quality, and so to the advantages that a Christian hath by exercising contentment under every lot. We conceive, it is so excellent a grace, this grace of contentment, that it is indeed a compound of these five graces, faith, humility, patience, hope, and mortification; in a manner, contentment is the result of all these graces, exercising themselves in one; and

except those be in a most vigorous exercise, that absolute contentment is not easily to be attained: but, no doubt, it must be an excellent thing, that deriveth its pedigree and descent from so high and excellent things, as those precious graces of the Spirit. But the first advantage that a Christian hath by divine contentment under his saddest lot, is this, it doth advance a Christian unto most nigh fellowship and correspondence with God; as likewise, a contented one receiveth most sweet manifestations of the presence and fellowship of God with him under his cross: it is most certain, that contentment, when it is attained, is ordinarily accompanied with most nearness and correspondence with him; there is somewhat of this pointed at, Heb. xiii. 5. where, pressing this doctrine of contentment, he saith, 'The Lord will not leave you nor forsake you;' which, though we confess it be principally understood of his providence, yet it may include the manifestation of his presence. As likewise that in James iv. 10. 'Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord,' which he is pressing from this duty of contentment, 'and he shall lift you up.' And, no doubt, that invitation doth oft-times come to a contented Christian, 'Come unto me from Amana, and from the top of Shenir, and from the mount Lebanon,' Song iv. 8. Christ loveth to dwell with one that walketh with a composed and silent frame of spirit: and the reason why a contented Christian enjoyeth much of God under his cross is, because he is much in prayer. It is impossible for a discontented Christian to pray to any purpose under his cross, for he wanteth that divine qualification that is required in prayer, 'To lift up his hands without wrath;' the soul is in such a confused and distempered frame, 'It is so troubled, that it cannot speak. This is clear from Psalm lxxvii. 4. where David had this advantage by his discontent, 'I am so troubled, saith he, that I cannot speak.' Though, we conceive, that there is that which is imitable to David in that case, that a Christian, when he cannot speak, he may make this prayer, 'I am so troubled that I cannot speak,' which was David's practice in that Psalm. There is this second advantage that a Christian hath by the exercise of divine contentment, the want of it doth exceedingly obstruct and hinder a Christian's improving of the cross for his advantage: a Christian that is discontent, cannot receive any advantage by his cross. There is somewhat of this pointed at, Heb. xii. 11. where 'the peaceable fruits of righteousness' flow to a Christian that is exercised under his cross; which, no doubt, doth take in the divine quality of contentment. There are these three precious advantages that a Christian may have by his cross, which discontent doth exceedingly obstruct, there is the exercise of humility, and the exercise of prayer, and the exercise of

mortification: one that is discontent doth obstruct that great advantage of the cross, even humility: he is so much in repining against the dispensations of God, that he cannot at all sit down, and fold his feet, and quietly bear his yoke. O! but contentment includeth in its bosom much divine humility: in a manner, a Christian, when he is content, is clothed with it: discontentment is the mother of pride, and doth add fuel unto that fire: discontentment doth likewise obstruct mortification and conformity with God, which is the precious end of the cross. ‘He doth chastise us, that we may be partakers of his holiness:’ and this is the fruit of all these things, to take away our sins. And certainly, a discontented Christian cannot be a Christian taken up in mortification: yea, it is most certain, that a Christian may lose more by one hour’s discontent, than he may gain in many days, yea, on this side of eternity. O to what length may discontent lead one! likewise it doth obstruct the exercise of prayer, which is a precious end of the cross, ‘In their affliction, then they will seek me early, and when my chastening hand is upon them, they will then pour forth their prayers into my bosom;’ but one that is in a distempered and discontented frame, is incapacitated to go about this duty of prayer; he is so much conversing with his cross, that he cannot be much in conversing with God. And that is certainly one great defect in a Christian, that they are more taken up in studying the disadvantages of the cross, than in studying the advantages of it; the most part of us will be orators like Cicero, in declaiming our calamities, and in setting them forth to the full; as is clear in Job, who proved a most elegant orator in setting forth his calamities, but in the exercise of praise, our tongues cleave to the roof of our mouth, and we are silent unto God. There is this *third* advantage that a Christian hath by the exercise of contentment, it doth obviate and obstruct many temptations that a Christian is liable unto by his discontentment. I know not any sin in scripture that hath produced such bad and woful effects, as the sin of discontentment. What made Ahithophel to seek a cord, and go hang himself, was it not his discontent? Discontent is the mother of most sad and desperate resolutions, for we cannot submit unto our cross, and therefore we study to extricate ourselves out of our cross, by involving and entering ourselves into that endless and unsupportable cross. Therefore we would desire you, under your afflictions, to study contentment. O! what atheistical thoughts will lodge in the bosom of one that is discontent; we may see them clearly in the practice of David, who cried out under his discontentment, ‘I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.’ Certainly there is nothing that will oc-

casion the want of the faith of the existence of a Deity, and that there is not a God, so much as this of discontentment.

There is this *fourth* advantage that a Christian hath by his contentment, it maketh the cross most easy to a Christian. Would you know what is the greatest ingredient of the heaviness of any cross? It is discontent. It is certain, by it we make our chain more heavy, and more unsupportable upon our necks: while as, if we were studying this divine quality of contentment, it should abate much of the bitterness of the cross. We may say to one that hath attained to contentment, they may cry out, 'The bitterness of death is past,' and may thus triumph over their cross, 'O cross! where is thy sting? and O affliction! where is your victory?' Certainly, discontent is that which maketh us to sit down and cry out, 'My stroke is heavier than my groaning.' Did you never know what it was to bear your affliction with much inward joy and peace of mind, when you had this grace of contentment.

There is this advantage likewise that a Christian hath by exercising contentment under his cross that he meeteth with, it is a compendious way for a Christian to win to an out-gate under his cross. Would you know what is the most compendious way to have the thread of your afflictions spun out unto a long length? Then study discontentment. But would you know what is the most spiritual and compendious way to have the rod taken off, and to have God no more to turn about the face of his throne? Then study contentment. In a manner, the cross hath gotten and obtained that end and errand why it was sent, when you do attain to contentment and humility under it. We may say of the sin of discontent, that it is a most irrational and reasonless sin; for you cannot, by your discontent, extricate yourselves out of your calamities; all the advantages that you have by it, is this, to make your bonds stronger upon your spirit, and to have your fetters and chains lying more heavily upon you.

There is this advantage likewise that a Christian hath by the exercise of contentment under every rod that he meeteth with, it is that divine quality of the soul, by which a Christian doth attain to mortification unto the pleasures and vanities of a world. O! how sweetly will a contented Christian, under the loss of things here below, speak to the dispraise of these fancied images? It is a poor sight, to behold a living substance tied unto shadows, by these two iron chains of love and delight. Ought we not to study so much holy ambition, and spiritual generosity, as to undervalue all things that are below God, as being below? In a manner, as Jonadab spoke to Amon, 2 Sam. xiii.

4, 'Why art thou, being the king's son, lean from day to day?' We may likewise bespeak the heirs of the promise, and those that are begotten by a lively hope, who being the children of him who is the King of kings; do you wax lean for the loss or want of those things that are here below? Have ye not a kingdom? And why then should you repine at the loss of these things, which are but passing and transient vanities? That which is the great idol of the world, silver and gold, what is it, but more refined dust? It is white and yellowed clay; and we conceive, that much of the excellency of it doth consist in the estimation of men, that they have so valued it; but one that hath the assurance of eternal life, and that God is theirs, may walk through the wilderness with joy. We confess, it is an evil amongst the heirs of the promise, that they love to go to heaven through a most easy and pleasant way; they love to walk to that, alas! of everlasting rest, through a valley of roses; but we must not meet with two heavens, it is abundance if we have that one eternal and everlasting heaven. And as for the cause of discontent under our cross, or any calamity that we meet with, we conceive, pride and want of mortification are the two catholic and general grounds of all our discontent and impatience.

We shall shut up our discourse upon this divine quality of contentment, desiring those men, who have abundance of this world, to study contentment; though this may seem a paradox unto many, why those who have enough should yet be desired to pursue after contentment? We conceive, there are none more discontented than those who have the greatest occasion of contentment; their desires are so much wedded unto the things here below, that this voice is never heard among them, 'It is enough,' and 'I am satisfied.' I conceive, that may fully confute that vain opinion which Christians, and others do entertain, that if they had such a competency of the world, they would be discontent no more, but would silently make on their way; and that which is the ground of their discontent is (as they alleged) the want of a competency of subsistence. I shall only say to you, that which is recorded of Alexander, who, after he had purchased the possession of the world, he was so far from attaining to contentment, 'That (as it is recorded of him) he sat down and wept, because there was not another world to purchase.' And believe me, this is most undeniable, that if you cannot attain unto contentment under your present lot, it is impossible for you to attain to contentment when your lot is better. It is only the delusion of Satan under which the evil of your discontent is veiled. But as for those who have abundance of these worldly goods, we shall press this exhortation

upon them, which is, Prov. xxiii. 4, 'Labour not to be rich;' which is a thing that ye will not easily close with, though certainly, 'Riches (as he there most divinely speaketh) are a thing that is not.' Now this is most clear, that there is a necessity of pressing those, who have abundance of the world, to be content, where Paul doth subjoin in the following word, 'I know, saith he, how to abound.' People might have imagined, that is no great lesson; but, believe me, it is a great, if not greater, than the other, which is that by which we would press contentment to those that are poor in each lot and estate that they fall in here below: know this, the day is coming when ye shall acknowledge infinite Wisdom in guiding you to heaven by that way. O! give Christ a negative vote in the dispensation of your lot, and be content to be regulated by him, 'who is that wonderful Counsellor,' who, though he lead you by a way that you know not, yet take Christ's advice upon implicit faith; for he knoweth not what it is to disappoint any of their expectations. Study contentment, for it is heaven brought down to earth: for what is the happiness and blessedness of those that are above? It is confined in this one word *contentment*. They have now all anxiety, and all loathing, and all desires, save one, taken away from them. O what a life must it be, to drink of the rivers of pleasures! Did you ever know or read of such a river, the waters whereof are pure delight and pleasure? When we shall sit down and be overjoyed with those consolations that flow from his face; when we shall draw forth that endless line and period of eternity, in having joy and delight flowing in, admiration and praise flowing out. Believe me, the gleanings of a Christian are better than the vintage of a reprobate. 'A little that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked;' for it is a messenger of hope of that enduring substance which Christ shall give. And since it is the exercise of those that are above, let it be the exercise of those that are below, that there may be a sweet conformity and harmony betwixt the practice of that higher house, and the practice of this lower house; that we may have our souls united unto him, 'who is perfumed with all the powders of the merchant, and whose garments do smell of myrrh and aloes.' Believe this, time shortly is to have a period, and eternity is to come. Let a Christian comfort himself in this, eternity is at hand, when they shall hear that voice, and truth sealed by the oath of an angel, 'Time shall be no more.' Let that precious day come, and let all other days pass away.