

THE COMPLETE WORKS  
OF  
THOMAS MANTON, D.D.

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CONTAINING

SEVERAL SERMONS UPON HEBREWS XI.;

TREATISES ON THE LIFE OF FAITH AND ON SELF-DENIAL;

ALSO

SEVERAL SERMONS PREACHED ON PUBLIC OCCASIONS.

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# SERMONS

UPON THE

ELEVENTH CHAPTER OF THE HEBREWS.

# SERMONS UPON HEBREWS XI.

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## SERMON LXIII.

*By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land ; which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.*—HEB. xi. 29.

THIS chapter is a chronicle and history of the mighty acts done by faith. The instance which I shall now produce is that of the believing Israelites, who all together, with Moses, their leader, passed through the divided waters of the Red Sea; but the Egyptians, pursuing and trying to follow them, were overwhelmed and destroyed.

In the text you have two things—the preservation and safety of Israel, and the destruction of the Egyptians. The one illustrates the other; the one was the fruit of faith, and the other of presumption and unbelief. In the first, take notice of the act. (1.) *They passed through the Red Sea*; (2.) The success,—*As by dry land*. And suitably in the other part there is—(1.) The attempt,—*Which the Egyptians assaying to do*; and (2.) The issue,—*They were drowned*.

To understand which passages, we must remember the story recorded by Moses, Exod. xiv. The sum is this: When Pharaoh at last had consented to let the Israelites go, he soon repented of his grant; and understanding by spies how they were entangled in the jaws and straits of Pihahiroth, this occasion invited him to make pursuit after them. What should the poor Israelites do? Fight they durst not, being a multitude of undisciplined people of all ages and sexes, and pursued by a regular and potent army of enemies. Fly they could not, having the sea before them, the Egyptians behind them, the steep and unpassable hills on either side of them. This was the case, and in human reason nothing but destruction could be expected. But Moses, by special order from God, commandeth Israel to march forward, and expect the salvation promised. And when Moses gave the signal by his rod, the sea miraculously retreated, standing up like heaps of congealed ice on each side while they passed through. This is done, and they go on safely; the sea flanked them on both sides; the rear was secured by the cloudy and fiery pillar interposing between them and Pharaoh's army till such time as all were out of danger, and safely arrived at the further shore; and so neither man nor child was hurt. The Egyptians follow the chase, as malice is perverse and blind, and

those whom God designeth to destruction take the ready course to bring it upon their own heads; for at the signal again of Moses stretching forth his rod, the returning waters swallowed them all up in a moment. This was a strange and glorious work of God's almighty power and unspeakable mercy, and the fruit of their faith; and it teaches us both to believe and how to believe in God—to believe, since with respect to faith God produceth such wonders; and how to believe with an unlimited confidence in the greatest straits, for nothing is too hard for God to do.

But you will say the age of such miracles is long since past, and these are antiquated dispensations, now no more in use, nor reasonably to be looked for; and, therefore, what is this to us?

I answer—Their passage through the Red Sea may be considered three ways:—

1. Historically.

2. Sacramentally.

3. Applicatively, with respect to the use for which the apostle produceth this instance.

First, Historically, as a notable pattern of providence; and so it represents to us two things—

1. Unspeakable comfort to all believers in the midst of their extremities. God can disentangle and help them out, for he is with them in all their dangers. See how he promises his presence to his people: Isa. xliii. 2, '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 flames kindle upon thee.' For the waters, Israel is an instance; both in the Red Sea and in the river of Jordan, God preserved them: for the fire, the three children is an instance; when they were cast into the fiery furnace, they walked in it unsinged and untouched, nothing burned but their bands, Dan. iii. 27. Where God calls his people to be, there he will be with them; and therefore we must be content to follow God through fire and water. Surely he can secure his people in the greatest dangers and difficulties, and find a way of deliverance for them in the most desperate cases. As David, when Saul was eagerly hunting after him, Saul on this side of the mountain and David on that, yet God brought him off. There is no danger so great but God can deliver out of it; and many times God's deliverance is nearest when our danger is greatest. Only, those that look for such deliverances must be upright, for to such the Lord shows himself strong: 2 Chron. xvi. 9, 'For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect before him.'

2. It speaks terror to the wicked, and such as maliciously pursue the people of God, as the Egyptians did here. They were engaged in an evil design, they had neither command nor promise from God; yea, they went against God's command, for they acted out of malice, pride, cruelty, and desire of revenge, and so justly perished. So that here is a dreadful glass wherein to see the judgments of God against the enemies and pursuers of his people: Prov. xi. 8, 'The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead.' Pharaoh

would either kill them or drive them into the sea, and there all his chariots were overwhelmed. Daniel was cast into the lions' den, but the lions did not devour him, but devoured his accusers, Dan. vi. 22–24. That which was a preservation to God's people was the destruction of the Egyptians; passing through the Red Sea is the means of their safety, but of the others' ruin. Which should check the pride and daring attempts of wicked men, who pursue their evil designs to their own destruction, being blinded with malice and hatred, they neither remember things past, nor consider things present, nor foresee things to come, but are led by a fanatical spirit, which is furious and driving, till it hurries them to their own destruction. Thus, if we consider it historically, it is a notable passage to encourage us to trust in the Lord.

Secondly, Sacramentally. The apostle tells us, 1 Cor. x. 2, 'That they were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;' that is, in the cloud that hid them from the Egyptians, and in their passage through the Red Sea. This passage had the same signification that baptism hath. How were they baptized in the sea?

1. They were baptized unto Moses in the sea; that is, Moses' ministry was confirmed by that miracle, and so they were bound to take Moses for their leader and lawgiver; as the miraculous dispensations by Christ assure us that he was sent by God as our lawgiver, whom we should hear and obey.

2. It is called a baptism, because it signified the difference that God puts between his people and their enemies, or the deliverance of his people from the common destruction of mankind was sealed to them by this passing through the sea, for here God shows that he would put a difference between his people and others. For which respect baptism is said to be *ἀντίτυπος*, an answerable figure to the ark of Noah; so Peter urgeth it, 1 Peter iii. 20, 21, 'While the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us.' They that were in the ark were exempted from the deluge. So they that are baptized into Christ, that enter into covenant with God by Christ, they are exempted from the deluge of wrath which overwhelms the rest of the world. So that though we have not extraordinary ways of preservation, as the people of God had of old, yet we have special privileges by Christ which answer to it, and a deliverance of a far better nature.

3. They were baptized in the cloud and sea, because by submitting to God's command they gave up themselves to God's direction and the conduct of his providence by this initiating act, that he should lead them through the wilderness unto Canaan, and the land of promise; as we pass through the waters of baptism, that we may give up ourselves to be led through this world, which answers to the wilderness, to heaven, to Canaan, the land of promise, to be commanded and governed by him till he brings us to our rest.

Thirdly, Applicatively, with respect to the use for which the apostle brings these instances; and it is to confirm believers in the faith of Christ, though they were sorely pushed at, and endured great sufferings for Christ's sake. These examples of faith, which the apostle produces, serve for a double use—either to show the nature of that faith by

which the just do live, or else to commend the excellency of that faith, that we may get it, and exercise it, and be eminent in it; and so these instances of faith are of use in all ages, when the miraculous dispensations are ceased.

But now this instance that we have in hand serves not only for one of these ends, but for both uses—to show the true nature of faith, and also to commend the excellency of it. Therefore—

1. I shall show what is the nature of faith, which we may learn from this instance.

[1.] Faith inclined them to obey God's command, and upon obedience to expect the mercy promised: Go through the Red Sea and you shall be saved. Now this is the common nature of all faith: Ps. cxix. 66, 'Lord, I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments.' This is the great business of faith, as the Israelites were to obey God, and to wait for his salvation out of this imminent danger.

[2.] For the command, faith gives courage to obey God in the most difficult cases. If we be bidden to go into the Red Sea, we must not forbear; for none of God's commands must be disputed, how contrary soever they be to flesh and blood. If God will command Abraham to take his only son, and offer him for a burnt-offering, he must not stick at it: Gen. xxii. 2, 'Take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering.' If God commands us to sell all, that we may have treasure in heaven, we must not murmur as the young man did: Mark x. 22, 'He went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.' We must give up our lives and all our comforts into the hands of Christ, and nothing must be abated; whatever God commands we must do, though it be never so difficult.

[3.] For the promise, the Red Sea was as a grave to them in visible appearance, and for a considerable time they walked every moment in the valley of the shadow of death. But this is the nature of faith, it teaches us to depend upon God's promises in the greatest extremities. Going down to the Red Sea is as our going down to the grave, yet the promise of eternal life is sure to us, and the belief of it is required of all christians: John xi. 26, 'Whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die;' that is, never wholly die; 'believest thou this?' Faith can find a way to salvation through the great deep, and a passage to life through death and the grave; it can see a heaven when we are in the midst of the Red Sea. This passage through the Red Sea had a respect to baptism, and we are said 'to be buried with Christ in baptism,' Col. ii. 12. Now, among other senses implied in the phrase, one great sense is our willingness to die, out of a confidence to enjoy life in heaven, though they are killed all the day long.

2. This instance doth very much commend to us the excellency of this grace of faith, which was so necessary to believers in that age, when they were exposed to such great sufferings. Now, how it is manifested from this instance.

[1.] God's promise produces its miraculous effect through faith, and not otherwise. God could do it, whether the Israelites did believe, yea or nay; but their faith must concur: 'Through faith they passed through the Red Sea.' The apostle doth not mention the mercy, or

the power of God, but their faith. It is true the supreme original cause is the goodness and power of God, but the means is faith. So 1 Peter i. 5, 'Ye are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.' When we rest upon his word, who is faithful and able to save to the uttermost, then the power of God is exercised for us: Mark ix. 23, 'If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth;' that is, then thou art capable of having the glorious power of God exercised on thy behalf, beyond the ability of nature. On the contrary, nothing but unbelief puts an impediment in God's way: Mark vi. 5, 6, 'He could do no mighty works there,' &c., and 'he marvelled at their unbelief;' there was no occasion or opportunity, for where faith is wanting, how can the power of God be owned and seen? Now, since the promise of God produces its glorious effect by the means of faith, so that our faith must concur, this doth mightily commend faith.

[2.] Here is another circumstance which commends faith likewise: this faith was weak at first, and mingled with unbelief; for first they murmured, as you may see: Exod. xiv. 11, 12, 'And they said to Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness;' words of impatience and distrust, and very near to a plain revolt from God; and yet at length these murmurers, through faith they passed through the Red Sea, as if it had been firm land. There was a great mixture of unbelief, but where faith prevails, it is accepted with God. Though first they murmured, yet afterwards they believed. Now, when after such great faults God takes it so kindly, we will believe the promise, we should address ourselves to believe in him.

[3.] There is yet another circumstance in this instance; all of them were not true believers, but the faith of some made others partakers of the benefits. The ungodly receive many temporal benefits by the faith of others: Acts xxvii. 24, 'God hath given thee all them that sail with thee;' while yet many of them were infidels. The faith of some may save a community; 'through faith,' that is, the faith of Moses, and some of the eminent godly Israelites. We must not think all this multitude had faith; but it was so pleasing to God, that for their sakes the community passed safe, and did arrive at the opposite shore. Now this sheweth how much God esteemeth the faith of his children.

[4.] It is commended to us again by the distinction God makes between believers and unbelievers; the one pass through the sea as on dry land, and the other sink as lead, and are drowned. We see our privileges in their destruction. Salvation is not a common favour: John iii. 36, 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.' There is salvation for believers, and nothing but destruction for unbelievers. Presumption ruins, as faith saves. Oh! who would not then be of the number of those that believe in Christ

to salvation, since God makes such a distinction between them and others?

Having laid this foundation, the doctrine is this—

*Doct.* That they who, upon the belief of God's promises, do resolve to run all hazards with Christ in the performance of their duty to him, are only capable of salvation by him.

This is the end why the apostle produces this instance, to encourage the New Testament believers to constancy in the many sufferings they were exposed to for owning Christ; and to continue faithful to Christ, and depend upon the promises still, though they were butchered and slaughtered everyday. To evidence this, take these five considerations—

*First,* That true faith receives the promise of God, with the terms and conditions which it requireth. This proposition, I suppose, will not be questioned. If the Israelites in the text hoped to see the salvation of God, they must do what God directed them to do. And of all others the like is required; if they will believe, and expect any benefit from God, certainly they must do what God hath required in order to that benefit. All that can reasonably be supposed to invalidate the truth of this proposition is this: either that the gospel is no benefit, but a due debt from God, which we may expect from his natural goodness, and so that God hath not power to give it upon condition; or that he will give it without condition. One of these must be supposed. Now, if all these be false, then the proposition stands firmly.

1. The first supposition, that the gospel is no benefit, but a due debt from God, which we may expect from his natural goodness, do we whatever we will to the contrary, is an absurd conceit; for the privileges of the gospel are always represented as a benefit. 1 Tim. vi. 2, the apostle shows that christian masters should not be despised by their christian servants, 'but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved partakers of the benefit;' that is, of the privileges of the gospel: it is always represented as a benefit. And it is such a benefit as is called grace, and this oppositely to debt: Rom. iv. 4, 'Now to him which worketh is the reward reckoned, not of grace, but of debt;' for God is not bound by any merit to give this grace to any. Well, then, if it be God's free gift, then he hath a power to impose conditions; it is at the liberty of the donor to give it upon what terms he pleases, for who but the Almighty can prescribe conditions and laws of commerce betwixt him and his creatures? It belongs to every donor and free benefactor to make his own terms, and to dispose of his own gifts and donations according to his will. If it be a right which belongs to every ordinary person who is an owner to do with his own as pleaseth him, Mat. xx. 15, much more the great God may determine of his own gifts, and how a right to them may be conveyed to us. Well, then, thus far we go on clearly that the privileges of the gospel are a grace, and a grace to be disposed of by him according to the pleasure of his own will. But then—

2. I add further; either God will give them without any conditions, or he will give those benefits upon certain terms and conditions which he liketh to impose upon the creature. Now, to grant as much as may be granted, there are certain benefits indeed which God gives without asking our consent, or imposing any condition upon us on our part;



as the giving of a redeemer to take our nature and fulfil the law, and satisfy his provoked justice on our behalf, and to merit grace sufficient for our deliverance from sin, and death, and hell, and the devil ; this he did without our knowledge and consent, for he considered us as creatures in misery, and in more inextricable straits than the Israelites were when they were shut up between mountains and entangled in the land, as Pharaoh saith. But having laid this foundation, God having given a redeemer, then he doth enact and propound a covenant, without asking our consent, or treating with us in the making of it, that we may bring it down, and model it according to our humour. No ; the matter is not left free for us to debate ; the covenant is formed to our hands, and we are thankfully to accept of it, and submit to it, not to mould it to our turn ; for we must take it as we find it ; and so the saints are described, Isa. lvi. 4, ‘Those that choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant.’ The question now is, Whether there be any terms or no terms in this covenant ? Surely there are ; for these blessings are not given to all, as experience manifests, for some die in their sins. How shall poor creatures make out their interest, unless God hath declared upon what conditions we shall be possessed of these privileges ? Well, now, if God hath once declared the conditions, if we would have the benefit, we must consent to them ; as the Israelites, if they would be safe, they must take God’s direction, and pass through the Red Sea, though it seem to threaten apparent death. If we would have justification and adoption into God’s family, we must believe in Christ : John i. 12, ‘For to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them which believe on his name.’ If we would look for everlasting life, ‘we must by a patient continuing in well-doing seek for honour, and glory, and immortality,’ Rom. ii. 7. To expect a benefit without terms is to lay the foundation of a great building upon a shadow, and to deceive ourselves with a covenant of our own making, or to presume of that which was never given to us by God. Indeed, whence we have the grace to perform the condition, whether from God or ourselves, that is another question ; but a condition there is ; we are only proving the way and order of being instated into the benefits promised, and the necessity that true faith should submit to it. It is true we have the first grace from God ; the conversion of the heart is from God as a free lord ; it is his resolved gift to the elect. But we are speaking now, not of what God does as a free lord, but of a condition stated by our proper and rightful sovereign—the giving of the grace whereby we fulfil the condition that belongs wholly to his free dominion ; but appointing the condition, that belongs not wholly to his free dominion, but his being the supreme ruler and governor of the world. Now we must take the promise with the terms and conditions annexed.

*Secondly,* That the conditions which God requireth are, partly a belief of the promise, and partly obedience to the command annexed ; as the Israelites were to believe that God would carry them safe and sound to the next shore through the Red Sea as upon firm land ; and therefore, believing this, they were, upon the authority of God’s word, to resolve to go down into the great deep, and try what God would do

for them. Their faith was seen in trusting him with the event, without any anxiety and trouble of mind; and their obedience was seen in taking the course and way they were prescribed by God, even through the deep water; though it was so unlikely a way for their preservation, yet they ventured themselves. So we, that believe in Christ for eternal life, must first believe God's promise, that he will bring us to that blissful estate through the way appointed; and so we must resolve to take this way, and follow God whithersoever he leads us by his word and Spirit, that we may obtain this happiness. It is a great point, and a part of faith, to believe the promise; there is very much in that; for though we all desire to be happy, yet this happiness being promised by an invisible God, and lying in an invisible world, it is not easily assented unto; it is not received with that trust and strength of faith by us while we dwell in flesh, and have a corrupt nature within us, which is importunate to be pleased with present things or carnal vanities, which are nigh at hand, and therefore ready to be enjoyed. Therefore it is a great work of the Lord's grace 'to open our eyes, that we may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,' Eph. i. 18; to look to things unseen, which are eternal, and to overlook those that are seen, that are temporal: 2 Cor. iv. 18, 'While we look not at the things which are seen, which are but temporal, but at the things which are not seen, which are eternal.' This is a mighty act of faith. Most men mind earthly things, cannot take heaven for their whole happiness, or the word of God for their great security, for that is only done by a soul that sincerely believes: Ps. cxix. 111, 'Thy testimonies I have taken as an heritage forever, they are the rejoicing of my soul.' The next part is to resolve to seek this happiness in God's way, to follow it close whatever it cost us, to hold on in our journey, be our way safe or dangerous, rough or pleasant: Phil. iii. 11, 'If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.' A christian must come to this; whatever way it is that God leads me into by his word and Spirit, so I may attain happiness at last, I will hold on my course. And so it may fall out that we must 'hate our own lives, and forsake all we have,' Luke xiv. 26, 33; not as casting it away needlessly and unprofitably, but venturing it for God's sake, running the hazard of life, and leaving all we have, rather than miss of eternal life, and being unfaithful to Christ.

*Thirdly,* These being the conditions, the belief of the promise, and thorough obedience to submit to the appointed way; lest we deceive ourselves with a notion, God loves to try us, to see if we have received the promise sincerely, whether we thoroughly believe his word, and are fully obedient to his commands: James i. 12, 'Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.' The Lord loves a tried obedience, because it is most for his honour when his people are tried, and they are faithful to him; and it is most for our comfort to make our sincerity evident to us. Sometimes the difficulties lie against our assent to the truth of the promise; at other times, against our resolution to follow God's way, cleaving to him and Christ, and not looking back.

1. Against the strength of our assent, whether we can believe such unlikely things as God hath promised (for so it seems to carnal reason), as that he can carry his people through the deep waters, and they shall not overflow them. Certainly many doubts arise in our minds concerning unseen things, which we cannot enjoy till we shoot the gulf of death. Now Abraham, the father of the faithful, was so called because he could assent so strongly to the promises, and give glory to God 'by believing in hope against hope : ' Rom. iv. 18-20, 'And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body, now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb ; he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.' Faith can expect a deliverance when it seems impossible to reason. When Abraham was childless, and had been so for many years, yet he expects an issue that for number shall be as the sand upon the sea-shore. If there be not some difficulty in the thing to be believed, it is not an object of faith ; for things present within the view of sense, and things easy and next at hand, are, as it were, already enjoyed. It is no trial of your faith to look for probable things ; but if you can believe when the case is never so difficult, if you can depend and rest yourselves upon the word of God, that you shall be carried through the sea and not be drowned, because you have God's word for it, this is faith. Many difficulties may be objected against such things as God hath revealed in his word ; yet it is enough to a believer that God hath revealed them. Our inquiry, when we come to look into the things we are to believe, should not be, How can these things be ? No ; but, Are these things revealed by God, yea or nay ? How can these things be ? is the voice of unbelief, at the least, of a weak and staggering faith. Nicodemus said, 'How can these things be ? ' John iii. 9. We are to receive supernatural truths as men take pills, not chew, but swallow them, take them upon the credit of the revealer ; if the testifier be God himself, his word should be more to us than the greatest evidence in the world.

2. Sometimes the difficulties lie against our resolution to take God's way. A total resignation of ourselves to the will of God is required of all that will be saved. Now by dangers we are tried whether we will keep this resolution. Strength of assent excludes speculative doubts and errors ; strength of resolution fortifies us against worldly temptations, both on the right hand and on the left. On the right hand temptations do arise from worldly profit, pleasure, and glory ; on the left hand temptations do arise from fears of danger and terrors of sense. Now, when these come with full power upon the soul, they are ready to shake the most confirmed resolution ; but a christian is to maintain the vigor of his faith, and cherish such a confidence in God's promises as may check all fear, and cause him, when God calls him thereunto, to venture on the greatest dangers rather than quit his duty : Ps. xxiii. 4, 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.' It was a comfortless journey in the midst of waves for so many men, women, and children to hold it : yet a believer that ventures upon God's command fears nothing : Dan. iii. 17, 18, '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 unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.' Thus are we to show our undaunted confidence of God's protection and deliverance.

*Fourthly*, Because we are fickle creatures, God will have us, by the solemn profession of such a faith, visibly to enter into his covenant. As God meant to season Israel for after trials, therefore they were baptized in the cloud and in the sea, as was said before, that they might the better submit to his conduct throughout the wilderness, before he brought them into the land of promise; so all those that are willing to take Christ and his cross, Christ and his yoke, the Lord will not leave them under the tie of a bare purpose and resolution, but will have it solemnised in the baptismal covenant, wherein we profess a belief of God's promises, and vow to run all hazards with Christ in our warfare against the devil, the world, and the flesh. We cannot forsake the devil, but he will make as hard pursuit after us as Pharaoh did after Israel, to bring us back again into bondage; he doth violently assault new converts. We cannot renounce the world, and the vain courses thereof, but it will hate us, and be exasperated against us. The world only loveth its own, and those that are of a worldly strain, and will not part company with them; they hate others, speak evil of them, and do evil to them. The flesh will entice us to some unfaithfulness to Christ, and compliance with the world, and disobedience to God, and it will be troublesome to resist its motions. Therefore God will have us solemnly roll ourselves in this calendar, and as soon as we are baptized we put on our armour: Rom. vi. 13, 'Wherefore yield ye your members instruments, *ὄπλα*, weapons of righteousness;' and Rom. xiii. 12, 'Let us cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light.' Then we are solemnly listed in Christ's service. He was baptized as the captain of our salvation, and we as his soldiers: and when we are baptized soldiers we are to arm ourselves with this resolution, through many tribulations to enter into the kingdom of God. Christ's first work is to lead us into the waters, that we may be seasoned for other encounters, or that fight of afflictions and troubles we are likely to meet withal before we get to heaven: Heb. x. 32, 'After ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of affliction.' Baptism was heretofore called an enlightening, because there was wonderful grace given in the use of that ordinance in the primitive times. Now, when we are enlightened, we presently enter upon our warfare, and we must look for a fight.

*Fifthly*, Having thus solemnly entered into covenant with God, certainly we are bound to make it good, if we would have benefit by it. For it is not enough to make covenant, but all the promises run to him that keepeth covenant. Salvation is promised not to the undertaker, but the conqueror: Rev. ii. 7, 'To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God;' and ver. 11, 'He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death;' and ver. 17, 'To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it;' and ver. 26, 'He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations;' and chap.

iii. 5, 'He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my father and before his angels.' Therefore it is not enough to undertake, but we must perform; it is not enough to renounce, but we must overcome, not only forsake the devil, but resist him: James iv. 7, 'Resist the devil, and he will flee from you;' Peter v. 9, 'Whom resist, steadfast in the faith.' We must not only renounce the flesh, but we must mortify and subdue it by the Spirit: Gal. v. 24, 'They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof;' Rom. viii. 13, 'If ye, through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.' We must not only renounce the world, but overcome it: 1 John v. 4, 'Whosoever is born of God overcometh the world, and this is the victory whereby we overcome the world, even our faith;' and we must be crucified to it: Gal. vi. 14, 'The world is crucified to me, and I unto the world,' and so persevere in our duty to God.

*Use 1.* To inform us of the nature of true faith, so to believe the promises as to be ready to do what God commandeth, to obtain the benefit of them. It concerneth us very much to understand the nature of faith, for we live by it: Gal. ii. 20, 'I live by the faith of the Son of God;' and can we live by it and not know what it is? What is it then? It is such a trusting ourselves in the hands of Christ, upon a confidence of his promises, that we are willing to do anything and suffer anything rather than commit the least sin, and be unfaithful to him. Or a resolution to go on with our duty, trusting ourselves entirely in his hands, whatever dangers befall us. This is called a committing of our souls to him in well-doing: 1 Peter iv. 19, 'Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful creator.' And the apostle saith, 2 Tim. i. 12, 'I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.' The Israelites, when they went into the Red Sea, did entirely commit and put themselves into God's hands. It is a notable faith when we can so readily believe God, and hold on our duty with quietness, whatever evils do befall us, or whatever dangers threaten us: Ps. xxxvii. 34, 'Wait on the Lord, and keep his way, and he shall cause thee to inherit the land.' Obey God's directions, and see how God will make good his word.

*Use 2.* Reproof. It condemneth several sorts of persons—

1. Those that are always urging difficulties against their duty, and pretend danger when there is no cause: Prov. xxii. 13, 'The slothful man saith, There is a lion without; I shall be slain in the streets.' And again, Prov. xxvi. 13, 'The slothful man saith, There is a lion in the way, a lion is in the streets.' In those countries lions were frequent, and their range was in the night, when they went forth to seek for their prey: Ps. civ. 20, 21, 'Thou makest darkness, and it is night, wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth. The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God.' Now the slothful man's pretence was, that if he should go forth too early to his labour, he should meet a lion in the very streets. Now it is used proverbially of those that urge any slight danger against their

duty ; because sometimes the lions came into the cities and inhabited places, therefore he durst not go out of his house. There are some that will not venture a frown or a scorn for Christ, and dare not own religion, when there is no probable cause for fear ; and so are frightened out of their necessary duty, not only by real dangers, but by imaginary fears : the shadow of any trouble quite discourageth them.

2. Those that attempt anything without a lawful call. The Israelites had a good call ; they had a command from God to enter into the Red Sea, and they had a promise of God's protection. He that will undergo dangers, let him see how his matters stand with God, and what ground he hath both for his undertaking and for his confidence and courage.

[1.] For his undertaking. For these Israelites, who at God's bidding could enter the Red Sea, yet presuming against God's warrant to go up against the Canaanites, were beaten : Num. xiv. 44, 45, ' But they presumed to go up unto the hill top : nevertheless the ark of the covenant of the Lord and Moses departed not out of the camp. Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill, and smote them, and discomfited them, even unto Hormah.' The case was this, they had murmured at the report of the spies, and when they had smarted for that by a sore plague, they would all of a sudden go up and fight the Canaanites to expiate the suspicion of their cowardice. The ark removed not, but at the removal of the cloud, Num. v. 17, 21 ; and Moses would abide by the ark. But God showed his dislike of the action, because they went without the Lord, and the signs of his grace.

[2.] What ground there is for their courage and confidence ; for in particular events we have no assurance but from God's especial promise. Indeed, in all lawful undertakings we have the promise of God concerning eternal life to bear us up, and we may be confident of this : Luke xii. 32, ' Fear not, little flock ; for it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' But for other things we must refer them to God. For eternal salvation we may be sure, but for other things nothing but a particular promise can be the strong pillar of our confidence.

*Quest.* But if we have no express promise, may we not bear up ourselves against difficulties and improbabilities by believing in God ?

*Ans.* If believing be meant only of a confidence in God's power, not determining the certainty of the event, we may. Many times we are cast upon God's providence ; all human refuge and helps fail, there is no possibility of escape ; but then God forbiddeth despair : 2 Cor. i. 9, 10, ' But we had received the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God, which raiseth the dead. Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver, in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us.' It was when the furious multitude at Ephesus was let loose upon him. But the truer trust is showed in a ready adherence to his call and to our duty : Ps. xlv. 18, 19, ' Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way, though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death.'

3. It condemneth them who pretend to faith, and yet do not make a total resignation of themselves to God.

[1.] Some reserve their interests. Now you have not saving faith till you can sell all for the pearl of price: Mat. xiii. 45, 46, 'The kingdom of heaven is like to a merchantman seeking goodly pearls; who, when he had found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.' One cometh boldly to Christ: Mat. viii. 19, 'Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest;' but when he heard, ver. 20, 'The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head,' we hear no more of him. The young man came to Christ to know 'what good thing he should do to have eternal life,' Mat. xix. 16; but when Christ said to him, 'Sell all thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me,' ver. 21; when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions, ver. 22. Therefore faith being so necessary to salvation, cheat not yourselves with the image of it.

[2.] Some reserve their lusts; but true faith is inconsistent with the predominancy of any lust or sin; for a christian wholly giveth up himself to the will of God. Therefore he that continueth in his sins, not resolving in his heart to forsake them and to renounce all righteousness in himself, and wholly and solely to rely upon the mercy of God and merit of Christ, betaking himself to a new course of life, mistakes God's promise, and his faith will end in shame and confusion: Isa. lv. 7, 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.'

*Use 3.* Of exhortation. To exhort you to such an entire resignation of yourselves to the will of God, and dependence upon his promises, that you may be prepared to go on with your duty, whatever hazards you incur by it.

To press you to this, consider how obedience and dependence do mutually befriend each other. It may be made good by these two considerations—(1.) None can hope for salvation but he that keeps God's way; (2.) None can keep God's way but he that hopes for salvation. They each depend upon one another.

1. None can hope for salvation but he that would keep God's way, because God hath by a wise ordination conjoined ends and means. He hath not simply promised blessedness, but requires a qualification and a performance of duty in the persons to whom the promise is made: Ps. i. 1, 2, 'Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful: but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night.' And Ps. cxix. 1, 2, 'Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord: blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart.' There is blessedness; ay, but we must keep the way of the Lord, and that punctually, and be undefiled in that way. To look upon one side of the covenant, as upon the promises only, is a groundless presumption; so that whosoever live in any sin against conscience, they may take notice how fearful their estate is

for the present, how needful it is to begin a good course before they can have any good hope towards God.

Besides, there is no such course to damp our hope and weaken our confidence as sin. Surely we cannot trust him whom we offend freely and without restraint. Sin will breed shame and fear, as pain will follow upon the prick of a needle; and where it is allowed, you will soon find the effects of it. On the contrary, faith and love go together; faith that hopes in his promises, and love that seeketh to please God. Sin, that now weakens the faith we have in the commandment, will in time weaken the faith we have in the promises. It may be for the present our confidence in God's mercy and promises is not directly assaulted; we bear on with a little slight hope till the hour of death, or the time of some extraordinary trial; but when the evil day comes, the consciousness of any one sin which we have indulged, allowed, and lived in, will be of like force to withdraw our assent from God's mercies, as the delight and pleasure of sin is now to tempt us to transgress his commandments: 'For the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law,' 1 Cor. xv. 56. When we feel the stings of sin, then we shall doubt of the mercies of God. And that is the reason why dying persons, when they are serious, have so many troubled thoughts within them. And take the experience of the godly, they find this still; when they have been acquainted with a spiritual life, their hope increases by their diligence in a holy life. And the scripture tells us so: Heb. vi. 11, 'And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end.' The more diligent we are in a holy life, the more hope and the more confidence we shall have in God's mercy and in the merits of Christ; for then our qualification is more clear. So far as a man neglects his duty and abates in his qualification, so far does his assurance abate; it must needs be so. Therefore, mark, none can hope for salvation but he that will keep God's way, and that is resolved to be at God's direction.

2. None can keep God's way but those that hope for his salvation; for without this we can never have a heart or head to do anything for God. It is a notable passage of Bernard, *Peccator nihil expectat, indeque peccator est, quod bonis presentibus non solum detentus, sed etiam contentus*—A sinner hopes for nothing, and therefore he is a sinner, because he is not only withheld by present things, but satisfied with them. They that look for no great matters from God in another world, no wonder they are so negligent and careless of their duty; they can never be diligent in his service, or faithful and true to him. Besides, the difficulties and dangers which attend us, if we will be sincerely obedient, are so many and great, that if we begin with God, we shall not go on with him unless we surely depend on the blessedness he offereth to us: Heb. x. 39, 'We are not of them that draw back to perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul;' that is, who purchase the salvation of the soul with the loss of other things, as the word signifies. Well, then, let these always be coupled: if we would keep the commandments of God, we must hope for the salvation of God; and if we would hope for the salvation of God, we must keep the commandments of God. This is most acceptable to God, most comfortable to you, and most honourable to religion. It is



most acceptable to God: Ps. cxlvii. 11, 'The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.' Oh! when these two are coupled, the fear to offend him and dependence upon his grace in Christ, the Lord takes pleasure in them. And it will be most comfortable to you: Acts ix. 31, 'They walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost.' And it is most honourable to religion, for this is the religion of Christ's making; religion is then in its true constitution and frame: Mat. xi. 29, 'Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest for your souls.' When we reflect upon the proper ground of comfort, the mercy of God, the covenant of grace, and the merits of the Redeemer, and keep up a due care of obedience, this is christian religion. And it is an honourable thing in the world; and this will show that you are sincere and upright; and that after a while that you have gone on walking in his fear, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost, you shall enjoy his blessed presence in heaven.

## SERMON LXIV.

*By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.*—HEB. xi. 30.

IN the last verse we have represented the faith of Israel under the conduct of Moses, now we shall represent their faith under the conduct of Joshua. There we saw what was done in their passage out of Egypt, here we shall see what is done in their entrance into Canaan. 'By faith the walls of Jericho fell down,' &c. Here is—

1. The grace exercised—*Faith*.
2. The event that followed—*The walls of Jericho fell down*.
3. The manner how it was accomplished—*After they were compassed about seven days*. Where—(1.) The means, 'They were compassed about;' (2.) The time, 'Seven days.'

1. The grace exercised—Faith. The great skill of christians is to find out the new testament pre-signified in the old, and the old testament fulfilled in the new; both agree to tell us the way of living by faith in Christ. Joshua was a type of Christ, as his name shows, which in the new testament is always written *Jesus*: as Acts vii. 45, 'They were brought in with Jesus into the possession of the gentiles,' and Heb. iv. 8, 'If Jesus had given them rest;' that is, Joshua. Now this also was the name of our Lord: Mat. i. 21, 'Thou shalt call his name Jesus (which signifies a saviour), for he shall save his people from their sins.' Joshua was a great captain; and Christ is the 'captain of our salvation,' Heb. ii. 10. Joshua was to overcome strongholds, and whatever let the people's possessing the land of promise; so doth Christ demolish all strongholds, the devil and the grave, death and hell, that he may introduce us into the heavenly Canaan, the land of our eternal rest. Joshua overcame by God's appointed means, by

the priests marching before, and the ark of the covenant following, and then the people: Joshua vi. 8, 'And it came to pass when Joshua had spoken unto the people, that the seven priests, bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns, passed on before the Lord, and blew with the trumpets, and the ark of the covenant of the Lord followed them,' &c. So doth Christ overcome by the gospel; the ark of the covenant is our strength: Ps. cv. 4, 'Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his face evermore.' The priests blowing with trumpets of rams' horns is a figure of the power of the ministry; for so the apostle explains this: 2 Cor. x. 4, 5, 'For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.' As they by the blast of their trumpets were to throw down this strong city, the way to be partakers of this benefit is faith; they walked about with the ark of the covenant, and the priests blowing their trumpets, submitting to God's direction; they expected the event; and so the prayer of faith will do very much to the demolishing of the strongholds of Satan as we go to the promised land.

2. The event that followed—the walls of Jericho falling down; their hope was not frustrated. If we will believe God's promises, and execute his commands, we need no shifts, or artifices, or secular policy, or means of our own, to work deliverance for us. To evidence the greatness of the success, we must know—

[1.] That Jericho was a strong and well-fenced city, one of those which frightened the spies who were sent to view the land: Num. xiii. 20, 'The cities are walled, and very great.' And see how the people aggravate the report of the spies: Deut. i. 28, 'The cities are great, and walled up to heaven; and, moreover, we have seen the sons of the Anakim there.' Every rumour increases in the spreading. This city, amongst others, to men's eyes seemed impregnable, so much we gather from Joshua, chap. vi. 1, 'Now Jericho was straitly shut up, because of the children of Israel; none went out, and none came in.' In the Hebrew (and so it is noted in the margin), the city 'did shut up itself;' that is, it was strongly fortified in itself, both by its situation and by art, and was shut up by the obstinacy of the inhabitants.

[2.] It was a frontier town, the first that kept them from entering far into Canaan, being the first city of Canaan on the west side of Jordan, by which the people entered into the land; and until this rub and impediment was taken out of the way, they could not safely make any further passage. Now, if they should miscarry in their first attempt, it would, in the eyes of the Canaanites, bring a disreputation upon their arms and contradict the report of the mighty wonders that were wrought for them; and in the eyes of the Israelites it would be a great discouragement to their faith. Therefore, in this first attempt, God would open a safe and ready way and passage to his people, and by this victory give them a pledge of further mercy. And therefore, upon their faith and obedience to God, the walls fell flat to the ground, Joshua vi. 20, for nothing can stand before the power of God and the faith of his people. Now this gave great courage to Israel to see that God owned them in it; but it was a

great terror to the Canaanites; for in fighting against his people, they were to fight with God.

3. The manner, how it was accomplished—‘After it was compassed about seven days:’ where take notice of the means and time.

[1.] The means is intimated in the word, ‘They were compassed about.’ To understand which, we must have recourse to the story. They had a special command from God to walk about Jericho, and had a promise that it should fall down flat, Joshua vi. 4, 5. Now their faith was manifested by obedience to his command and dependence upon his promise. The means may be considered negatively or positively; what they did not, and what they did.

(1.) Negatively, what they did not. (1.) They make no trenches to keep themselves safe. (2.) They stand not in battle array to repel the excursions of their enemies, but march on one after another in the order prescribed: Joshua vi. 9, ‘The armed men went before the priests that blew the trumpets; and the rear-ward came after the ark, the priests going on and blowing with the trumpets.’ (3.) They lay no formal siege to assault the city; set no engines of battery against the walls. (4.) The people raised no cry to create terror: Joshua vi. 10, ‘And Joshua had commanded the people, saying, Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall any word come out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout, then shall ye shout.’ It was meet that no noise should be heard, but that God’s voice should be attended upon with silence and quietness on the people’s part, that it might visibly appear their enemies were not overcome by the power of men, but of God. So that, by this negative view, we see the victory was not to be accomplished by force of arms, effusion of blood, or any other means which carnal reason or common sense would suggest; for God, without blow or bloodshed, can bring mighty things to pass.

(2.) Positively, what means they used: nothing but a procession of the ark, and armed men, and seven priests with seven trumpets of rams’ horns sounding to them. Silver trumpets were not used, though in a general case they were prescribed: Num. x. 9, ‘And if you go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresses you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets, and ye shall be remembered before the Lord your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies.’ And an instance of the success of it we have in the Jews’ war against apostate Israel, when they say, 2 Chron. xiii. 12, ‘And, behold, God himself is with us for our captain, and his priests with sounding trumpets to cry alarm against you: O children of Israel, fight ye not against the Lord God of your fathers, for you shall not prosper.’ This promise annexed to the signs was fulfilled, and was a type and pledge of God’s blessing when his ministers stir up his people against Satan, sin, and antichrist, wherein the Lord will be with them and bless their labours. This was to be ordinarily done by silver trumpets, but in this case God would try them by more despicable means, by trumpets made with rams’ horns. And then the ark followed the priests, which was a special evidence of God’s presence among them; for when the ark was lifted up, the priests were to cry, ‘Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate thee flee before thee,’ Num. x. 35. A type of Christ’s ascension and conquering the enemies of our salvation;

as ye shall see the same words are used, Ps. lxxviii. 1, 'Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered; let them also that hate him flee before him.' And that psalm is a prophecy of Christ's ascension, as appears by the 18th and 19th verses, compared with Eph. iv. 8-10. As the ark was among the Israelites, so is Christ among his people; and what ground the church had because of that pledge of God's presence to expect deliverance, we have the same ground, yea, a more sure ground of confidence in Christ. Whenever he begins to stir and show himself, woe be to those that oppose his kingdom and interest in the world; he hath the same care, power, and faithfulness towards his people that ever he had at first. When he ascended up to heaven, he went thither conquering and triumphing, and still can subdue and conquer a rebellious world to himself. Well, in this order they went round about the city for six days together; and the event succeeded: this was to prove their faith the more, and to try their obedience and patience.

[2.] We come to the time—'After they had compassed about the city seven days.' They were every day to make this procession once; and the event appeared not till the last and seventh day. No reason can be given why it must be the seventh day but God's will; only a septenary is a sacred number. On the seventh day, when the signal fore-appointed was given, the people gave a shout, and the event succeeded; the walls fell down.

Now, from the means thus positively considered, I might observe two things—

(1.) That the means seemed ridiculous in the eye of reason; for what could seven priests blowing of seven rams' horns be to overturn such great and strong walls? But God's command and promise will do great matters, for he can bring his ends to pass by means that have not any natural aptitude and fitness thereunto. And the apostle saith, 2 Cor. x. 4, 'The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.' And faith must use such means as God hath appointed, though they seem weak.

(2.) Though these means seem ineffectual at first, yet we must tarry God's leisure; they will succeed in time, and they shall do what God intendeth to do by them. The walls of Jericho shall not fall down till the seventh day. God hath his set time to bring his people out of Egyptian bondage, and he kept touch to a day, though he seemed almost to break his word, for it was night before they went forth: Exod. xii. 41, 'And it came to pass, at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt.' And so in many other cases. Our times are always present with us out of impatiency of the flesh, when it may be God's time is not yet come. But they that would faithfully promote the interests of Christ's kingdom must tarry God's leisure.

*Doct.* That it is the property of faith to adhere faithfully to the interest of Christ's kingdom, quietly waiting for his salvation.

The business of the apostle in this chapter is to confirm the minds of the believers in adhering to christianity against the temptations of that age, which were of two sorts—(1.) The slender appearance of the

growth and progress of that religion; the church of God being but as a grain of mustard-seed cast into the ground, and coming up at first but with a few slender stalks and branches, which promised no great increase. (2.) The other temptation was the manifold oppositions they met with; their profession exposing them to great troubles, therefore they were quite discouraged, some began to forsake the assemblies of the faithful, and to be weary of persecuted christianity. Now, to cure them of this disease, he shows them what faith hath done in all ages, and what great things have been accomplished by weak means, whilst God's people had a heart to depend upon him; and among the rest, he produces this instance of the taking and demolishing of Jericho by the blowing of rams' horns. If this instance were useful for them, it is so for us; for all ages have their discouragements, and feeble minds soon faint and give out upon the least opposition. Therefore let us see what we shall learn from thence. I shall lay down seven propositions—

*First*, That Christ's purpose after his ascension was to destroy the kingdom of darkness. This is evident: Ps. cx. 1, 'The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool.' Christ upon the throne hath enemies here in the world, but in due time they shall be his footstool. He shall gain upon opposition, and against opposition, and by opposition; and they shall be so far from overturning his throne, that his enemies shall be a step or footstool to get into it. The same is emblematically set forth, Rev. vi. 2, 'And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.' This is a notable representation of the rise and progress of Christ's kingdom; he comes forth upon a white horse, and his furniture is a crown and a bow. His crown notes his dignity, and his bow the armour and weapons whereby he promotes his authority: Ps. xlv. 3, 4, 'Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most Mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.' Christ is furnished to subdue and conquer, and bring as many as he pleases into a subjection to his kingdom; for it is added, ver. 5, 'Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee.' He hath weapons to wound the consciences of sinners, and pierce deep into their hearts. Having a grant of a kingdom over the nations, his design is to conquer and carry all before him, and he will do it.

*Secondly*, This kingdom of darkness is the state which is opposite to Christ's kingdom as mediator. The devils are said to be 'rulers of the darkness of this world,' Eph. vi. 12; and their power is called the power of darkness, as opposite to the kingdom of Christ, 'Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness,' Col. i. 13. The gospel kingdom is a kingdom of light, life, and love, where we have the clearest knowledge of God that begets life in us, and love to God and his people. Now opposite to light is ignorance and error; opposite to life is a religion that consists of shows and dead ceremonies; and opposite to love is uncharitableness, malice, hatred, especially of the power of godliness. Now, where these eminently prevail, there is an opposite

kingdom set up against the kingdom of Christ, and this is done by two sorts of people—(1.) By all those that continue in the old apostasy and defection of mankind from God; as all men in their natural state, and eminently by the gentiles and idolatrous heathen world, who live in ignorance of the true God, and are dead in trespasses and sins, and where envy, pride, malice, and ambition reign, instead of the spirit of goodness and love which the gospel would produce. Now these men oppose the light that shines to them: John iii. 19, ‘This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.’ (2.) It may be and is done by a second falling away from Christ, which is foretold: 2 Thes. ii. 3, ‘That day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;’ that is, the day of judgment will not come till there be a falling away first. Now this falling off from Christ’s kingdom is there where, in opposition to light, error is taught and ignorance is counted the mother of devotion, and people are restrained from the means of knowledge, as if the height of christian faith and obedience did consist in believing what men would impose upon them by their bare authority. And where, instead of life, men place their whole religion in some superficial rites and ceremonies, and some trifling acts of seeming devotion and exterior mortification; this is a kingdom opposite to that lively religion which Christ hath established. And instead of love to God and souls, all things are sacrificed to men’s private ambition; and conscience is forced by the highest penalties and persecutions to submit to the corruptions of the christian faith and worship. And wherever this prevails, there is a manifest perversion of the interest of Christ’s kingdom. Now this is the Jericho, the block in the way of God’s people in their passage to the heavenly rest. Now both these apostasies, the general apostasy from God, and the special apostasy from Christ, are defended by the authority and power of the world, and upheld by the interests of several nations which own and practise these things; and God’s people, in opposing them, are put to great difficulties. Therefore we are told that God’s witnesses are slain in the city: ‘And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified,’ Rev. xi. 8; that is, the city which answers to Sodom for impurity, to Egypt for idolatry, and to Jerusalem for persecution of the saints; for that is the city wherein our Lord was crucified; he would not say Zion, because that is the name of the church. And till the wall of the city fall down (as it is prophesied there the tenth part of the wall shall fall down), there is an impediment and block in the way of christianity.

*Thirdly,* To demolish this corrupt estate we are all to be active in our several places; for we are employed as soldiers under the captain of our salvation. Our great business in the world is to promote the kingdom of light, life, and love; to be sure we enter into it ourselves, and to bring as many as we can along with us. (1.) That we enter into it ourselves, for much of the kingdom of God is within us: Luke xvii. 21, ‘For behold the kingdom of God is within you.’ And we must all become light in the Lord: Eph. v. 8, ‘Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.’ And we that were dead

in trespasses and sins must be quickened in Christ: Eph. ii. 1, 'You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.' And then the love of God must bear rule in our hearts, and fill us with all meekness, purity, charity, goodness, holiness, and heavenly-mindedness; we must see we be not of the opposite party of Christ. Now Christ hath much to do with every individual person before he can settle his kingdom in their hearts. There is a mighty combat between Christ and Satan for the rescue of every sinner that is recovered to God. The strong man seeks to keep his castle till a stronger than he comes to dispossess him: Luke xi. 21, 'When the strong man armed keeps the house, his goods are in peace.' Satan is the strong man armed, and the heart of every unconverted sinner is his garrison, which he keeps shut up against Christ by prejudices, carnal interests, worldly inclinations, and sensual allurements; and this strong man must be cast out, and his fort stormed and demolished, before a sinner can be gained, and brought to change masters, and leave his obstinate impenitency. Christ draws one way, the sinner another; for many times we seem ready to repent, but then we are drawn off again, loath to quit our carnal pleasures and company, and we would sit down and be quiet in our sins, but Christ will not let us alone, till at last we leave the fort to him. (2.) When Christ's government is set up in the heart, where Satan reigned before, then we must most earnestly seek to promote his interest in the world, and that others be fellows with us in the same grace. Naturally 'all seek their own things, and not the things of Jesus Christ,' Phil. ii. 21. But when we are the Lord's, and really made partakers of his grace, every one in his place must be a priest to God, we must blow the trumpet; by our desires, prayers, endeavours, and holy example, we must seek to promote Christ's kingdom, and draw others into the divine life. For this is one great effect of the love of God planted in our hearts, to convert others when we are converted ourselves: Luke xxii. 32, 'When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.' We are to invite them to have communion with us, as we have with the Father and the Son: 1 John i. 3, 'That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.' Grace is and will be diffusive of itself; as fire turns all near it into fire, so every one in his capacity will endeavour to bring home others to God.

*Fourthly,* To do this we have means in the eye of sense very weak, whatever they are in the eye of faith. Our means are to appearance weak; like those in the text, they carried about the ark of the covenant, and made a blast with rams' horns. The preaching of the gospel, the prayers of the church, the faith and holy conversation of believers, and the patience of the saints, these are the means—by these and such like is the kingdom of sin, Satan, and antichrist demolished, and Christ's kingdom is set up in the world. These means are proper to the Mediator's dispensation, whose kingdom 'comes not with observation,' Luke xvii. 10. But his kingdom is not carried on in a way of external pomp, but by internal power and virtue. The word preached is one means, as the apostle tells us that by the preaching of the cross he was the great solicitor to proselyte, gain, and recover the world:

1 Cor. i. 18, 'The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.' Use this means, and see what it will do. So the prayers of the church; for Christ taught us to pray, 'Thy kingdom come.' Acts iv. 24, 'And when they heard that, they lift up their voice with one accord;' ver. 31, 'And when they had prayed, the place was shaken, where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.' So also the holy conversation of believers: Mat. v. 16, 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father that is in heaven;' 1 Peter ii. 12, 'Having your conversation honest among the gentiles; that whereas they spake against you as evil-doers, they may, by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation;' 1 Peter iii. 1, 'If any obey not the word, they may without the word be won by the conversation of their wives.' This overcomes prejudice, and endearth and reconciles religion, and represents the goodness of it to the consciences of men. Another means is by meek and humble sufferings: Rev. xii. 11, 'And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony: and they loved not their lives unto the death.' These were the means by which they got the victory over the pagan world. Thus is the opposition made by the kingdom of darkness against the kingdom of Christ borne down and demolished, and these strongholds brought to nought.

*Fifthly*, Though the means be weak, yet our faith must be strong; for there are mighty props to bear us up,—viz., the decree and designation of God, seconded with his mighty power, the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and the promise and power of the Holy Ghost.

1. The decree and designation of God, seconded with his mighty power. The decree of God: Ps. ii. 6, 'Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Sion;' that is, appointed Christ to rule over the nations; and they that set themselves against God's decree, they do but imagine a vain thing, ver. 1. Now this is a mighty encouragement to all those that seek in their place to remove the corruptions whereby Christ's interest is obstructed and interrupted in the world, that they act with God, and seek to advance that which his decree hath established and his heart is set upon. The other branch is, that this purpose of God is backed with his almighty power, which can easily remove all impediments; and when he will take to himself and put forth his great power, opposition gives way of itself. So the scripture speaks: Ps. cxiv. 3, 'The sea saw it, and fled; Jordan was driven back.' He alludes to the drying up of the sea and the water of Jordan to give his people passage; and when God puts forth his power, no opposition can hinder nor impediment stand in the way. Acts xii. 7, Peter's chains fell off from his hands when the angel bid him arise, and the iron gate opened on its own accord; so here the walls of Jericho fell down. We expect not miracles, yet still there are acts of wonderful power for the preserving and advancing of Christ's interest in the world, and when the season is come, opposition shall give way of itself.

2. You have the merit and intercession of Christ, the merit of his humiliation here upon earth, and the power of his intercession in



heaven. His merit on earth, for one end for which the blood of Christ was shed was to promote the interest of his kingdom, and to fetch men off from their inveterate prejudices and superstitions; and therefore the apostle saith, 1 Peter i. 18, 19, 'You are redeemed not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of the Son of God,' &c. How shall we bring men off from their opposition which is confirmed in them, and hath been the religion of their fathers and grandfathers for many generations? Oh! see what the blood of Christ can do; it hath a mighty virtue in it to take off this opposition. And so his intercession in heaven: Ps. cx. 1, 'The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.' Christ is at the right hand of God, and there he is to sit till all opposition be destroyed, which is a mighty encouragement to all that are factors and agents for his kingdom here below. He is at God's right hand, pleading for them before God the Father: John xvii. 10, 'All mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them.' They are those that take his part in the world; and he is their advocate and intercessor at God's right hand, to prosper their endeavours, to pardon their failings, to remove impediments that lie in their way,—there he is pleading with God.

3. The mighty and all-conquering spirit that proceedeth both from the Father and the Son. Of this Spirit of God I shall say two things—(1.) That he is invincible and almighty, and therefore his operations are suitable to the agent. Oh! what mighty things hath this Spirit done as to the demolishing strongholds! Heretofore by this Spirit the apostles and messengers of Christ wrought miracles, cured diseases, cast out devils, conveyed gifts by laying on of hands, silenced oracles, and so everywhere destroyed the kingdom and power of Satan, and convinced the world of the truth of this despised religion. And still his mighty force is seen in enlightening and convincing men's minds of the truth of the christian religion, and furnishing his people with gifts, and converting others, and changing them from sinners to saints: 1 Cor. vi. 11, 'Such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' (2.) This Spirit is promised to be with us in the faithful dispensing of Christ's ordinances: Mat. xxviii. 20, 'Lo, I will be with you always to the end of the world.' In the whole flux and course of the gospel kingdom he is with us. Now Christ is with us by his Spirit; for when he departed, the Comforter came to supply his absence: therefore, if he be with us, it is by his Spirit. Therefore, upon all these grounds, how mean and despicable soever the means appear, let us believe the Lord our God, who hath set his King on his holy hill, established him by his decree, which is backed by a mighty power, and the Lord Jesus represents his merit, and we have the presence and promise of a mighty conquering Spirit: 2 Chron. xx. 20, 'Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.'

*Sixthly,* If our whole dependence be upon God, we must be sure to keep God's direction, and use only regular and holy means, such as he hath prescribed as our duty to observe. Here the Israelites every day

were to make the procession about the city, and the seventh day seven times, and all in silence; unless it were with blowing the rams' horns, they were not to raise a shout till the signal was given. We cannot expect success in what is not of faith. By carnal and unlawful means we forfeit God's protection, and lose his blessing, for he is not bound to maintain us in our sin. Our dependence supposes obedience; if we trust in God we must be true to him: Ps. xxxvii. 34, 'Wait on the Lord, and keep his way;' 1 Peter iv. 19, 'Commit the keeping of your souls to him in well-doing.'

*Seventhly*, Keeping to God's direction, you must wait his leisure, or tarry for the time and season which God hath appointed. Six days the wall stands fast, not a stone stirred, and for a good part of the seventh, but upon the evening of the seventh day all comes tumbling down: Hab. ii. 3, 'The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.' Every dispensation of God hath its prefixed period; as the mercy, so the timing of the mercy is merely in God's hand. It is not always ready at our beck and call, but we must wait God's time, who hath his seasons of afflicting and trial as well as of delivering. We must not miscarry through weakness or haste, either give over as discouraged, or break out into any unlawful action to help ourselves: Isa. xxviii. 16, 'He that believeth will not make haste.' It is in vain to hope, but while we are waiting and acting in our place and calling. For the promoting of God's kingdom in the world we must tarry God's leisure. We can neither prevent nor put off God's time.

*Use 1.* The use is to encourage all those who wish well to the propagation of Christ's kingdom, and are troubled at the stumbling-blocks that are in the way. Consider what may be done, and what hath been done, and both will encourage you to wait upon God.

1. Consider what may be done.

[1.] Christ is the governor of the world; all power is put into his hands, to be employed for the good of his people: John v. 22, 'The Father hath committed all judgment to the Son.' He hath the government of angels, devils, men, and of all events in the world. Things are not left to their own arbitrament and uncertain contingency, but they are administered by our wise and powerful Redeemer. It is not Satan which governs the world, but Christ; therefore all that are of Christ's confederacy are of the surer side, for they are with the governor of the world, and then what may not be done?

[2.] He is the head of the church as well as governor of the world: Eph. v. 22, 'And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church.' He is more concerned than we can be. The church is not ours, but his; and he is fitter to be trusted with the concerns of it than we, and more tender of its welfare than we are or can be; therefore by the prayer of faith let us recommend his own affairs to him.

[3.] Christ's manner of governing should not be disliked by those that have faith, though sense despise it. His manner is not to subdue the world by the visible force of a strong hand, as an earthly conqueror, but by his word and Spirit, and the secret conduct of his pro-

vidence : Zech. iv. 6, 'Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.' The world dotes upon might and power, because that is the next visible means ; but God will do his business another way. A little key will open a door sooner than an iron bar. His holy and invisible means will do it better than all those ways which carnal wisdom suggests.

[4.] Considering the groundwork laid in his death and intercession, surely these means should not be contemptible. (1.) His word is a powerful instrument : Ps. cx. 3, 'The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion ; rule thou in the midst of thy enemies.' The word of the Lord is the rod of his strength ; and it is called the 'arm of the Lord,' Isa. liii. 1, and 'the power of God unto salvation,' Rom. i. 16. A mighty word it is, and doth mighty things in the hearts of God's people and in the world. Satan's kingdom is demolished, and so is antichrist destroyed by his word : 2 Thes. ii. 8, 'Then shall the wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth.' (2.) Then for the other branch, what can stand before the all-conquering Spirit of Christ ? You see it in that servant of God, Stephen : Acts vi. 10, 'They could not resist the wisdom and spirit by which he spake.' There is a spirit dispensed by the gospel that can turn a lion into a lamb : Isa. xi. 6, 'The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid ;' bring us to love what we hate : 'to delight in the law of God,' Rom. vii. 22. Whereas before, our carnal mind was 'enmity against God,' Rom. viii. 7, that can change us, that bore the image of Satan and the earthly one, into the image and likeness of God : 2 Cor. iii. 18, 'We all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' He can turn a 'thorn into a fir-tree, and the briar into a myrtle-tree,' Isa. lv. 13. All these expressions the scripture useth to set forth the mighty things and changes which the Spirit of God can make. Thus consider what may be done.

2. Let us consider what is past, and how the gospel was planted at first. When the Lord Jesus first came to set up the kingdom of light, life, and love, what did he do ? The gospel was planted at first not by force or human power, but only by the heavenly divine power of the Lord's grace. It was not the power of the long sword, but the demonstration of the Spirit, which converted the world. The apostles, when they were sent abroad, had no temporal interests to lean to, no worldly powers that were friendly to back them ; yet the gospel prevailed and got up in the world. These things were remarkable in the first spreading of the gospel—

[1.] The doctrine itself is contrary to corrupt nature ; it doth not court the senses nor woo the flesh by the offers of pleasure, or profit, or splendour of life ; but teaches us to deny all these things, and to expect persecutions, and to be contented with spiritual comforts, and the recompenses of the other world : Mat. xvi. 24, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.' Christ did not allure his followers, as Mahomet, with fair promises of security and carnal pleasure, but tells us of mortification and the cross. It teaches us to row against the stream of flesh and blood

and to bear out sail against all the blasts and furious winds of opposition. The stream runs smoothly when wind and tide go together, where a carnal doctrine is set afoot among carnal men. But in Christ's doctrine there is nothing lovely to move a carnal eye; this doctrine taught the proud world humility; the uncharitable world, love to all men, even to their enemies; the unchaste world, that a lustful glance is adultery; the revengeful world, to turn the other cheek to the smiter; the covetous world, to be liberal, not to cark and take thought for worldly things, but to lay up our treasure in heaven; the dissolute world, to walk circumspectly in all godliness and honesty. This was the doctrine that prevailed.

[2.] Who were the persons and instruments that were made use of to promote this doctrine? They were contemptible persons, a few fishermen, destitute of all worldly props and aids, of no power, and wealth, and authority, and other such advantages as are apt to beget a repute in the world; yet they preached, and converted many nations, though they had no public interest to countenance them, though they were not backed with the power of princes or the countenance of worldly potentates. We are told, Prov. xxix. 26, 'Many seek the ruler's favour.' But the gospel had a firm footing in the world long ere there was a prince to countenance it, and many to persecute it. And as the instruments were poor, so the first professors of the christian religion were generally poor also: James ii. 5, 'God hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith;' and 1 Cor. i. 26, 'Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called.' And therefore it is much, being so destitute of worldly succour and support, that the gospel should be able to hold up its head in the world; but it did.

[3.] The powers of the world, as they were not friendly to it, so they were set against it. Bonds, sufferings, and afflictions did abide for them everywhere that professed this way; yea, fires were kindled, horrible tortures invented; but no fire was hot enough to consume the gospel. When Satan made his hottest onset against it by his bands of persecutors, even in the midst of persecution did the church increase her strength and glory; and the martyrs' blood was the church's seed. No rage of man was strong enough to bear down Christ, no sword sharp enough to wound his truth to the death; never did war, pestilence, or famine sweep away so many as the first persecutions did; the poor christians were murdered, slaughtered, butchered everywhere, yet still they multiplied and increased, as the Israelites did in Egypt under their cruel bondage, or as a tree lopped sends forth more sprouts.

[4.] Not only the powers of the world were irritated by Satan, but he raised up the most learned philosophers to dispute against the gospel, and bend the force of their learning against it; yet it prevailed above all the power of their carnal wit. It was the purpose and design of God that the gospel should be sent forth, and set up in such a place and age, where and when there were the most learned enemies in all the world, that so all their learning might be nonplussed, and the gospel triumph over it. Never were there so many learned men as about the time of Christ and his apostles; and if ever reason and learning could have disgraced truth, it would have been then. They

pleaded with words, but Christ with mighty works; they used sophisms and lies to get into men's souls, and he shined into men's souls with an insuperable light; their weapons were weak and carnal, but his strong and spiritual; all was carried on in a plain way, without the pomp of words and secular arts, lest the cross of Christ should be of non-effect, and that the faith of the world might not stand in high-flown notions or the wisdom of men, but in the power of God, 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5. Those simple plain men were to deal with men of excellent parts and learning, some of which received the gospel, and suffered for it. Thus, as Aaron's rod devoured the magicians' serpents, so the gospel was too hard for the wisdom of the world, and in the mouths of babes did Christ show forth his praise, Ps. viii. 2.

[5.] Do but consider the wonderful success of the gospel; it did diffuse and spread itself like leaven in the mass and lump throughout all the parts of the known world, and that within the space of thirty or forty years, or thereabout. Saith Tertullian, *Hesterni sumus*, &c.—We are but of yesterday, and yet how are we increased! Look upon christians, and you shall find them in all places, in cities, villages, isles, castles, free towns, councils, armies, senates, markets; everywhere but where their religion forbids them to be, in the idols' temples. Such a wonderful increase and success the gospel had in such a short time, as the apostle tells the Colossians, chap. i. 6, 'The gospel is come unto you, as it is in all the world, and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you.'

[6.] There is this circumstance notable in it too; there were Jerichos to be demolished, the world was leavened with prejudices, and possessed with many false religions, wherein they and their fathers had been bred up and lived a long time. Christ did not seize upon the world, as a waste is seized upon by the next comer. No; the ark of God was to be set up in the temple that was already occupied and possessed by Dagon. Before Christ could be seated in the government of the nations, and settle his law, first Satan was to be dispossessed; the wolf was to be hunted out, that the flock might remain in peace. Superstitions received by a long tradition and prescription of time were to be removed. Men keep to the religion of their ancestors with much reverence and respect. People are loath to change their gods, though their worship be never so vain and foolish, the gods to whom they have prayed in their adversities, and whom they have blessed in their prosperities; to break their images that they have worshipped, and to destroy their temples and altars for which they had such veneration and reverence, this seemeth hard and severe. How dear idols are to their worshippers, and how people are habituated to those superstitions, appears by Rachel's stealing away her father's idols, Gen. xxxi. 34. Though she was one of them which built God's Israel, yet she had a hankering mind after her father's idols. Therefore these things stick by us, and no humours are so obstinately stiff as those which are found in religious custom. The Jews accused Stephen of saying, Acts vi. 14, 'That this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us;' and Paul, Acts xvi. 31, 'That he did teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive, nor to observe,

being Romans.' Certainly it is a very hard thing to bring men out of an old religion to a new one; yet, when the trumpet of the gospel sounded, down went all the altars, images, and superstitions of the gentiles, and the religion of Jesus took place.

[7.] I have but one consideration more, and that is, when Satan had raised up heretics in the church, to rend the body and divide it, as worms that breed in the body and devour it, that so by the church he might destroy the church, yet Christ confounded them, and a little time did break each sect in pieces, so that those which were the great scourge and vexation of one age were scarce known to the next but by their names and some obscure report. The church of Ephesus had Nicolaitans among them; but they hated their doctrine, and within a little while it came to nothing: Rev. ii. 6, 'But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.' And the church of Pergamus had those which held the doctrine of Balaam, yet there were 'those that held fast Christ's name, and did not deny the faith,' ver. 1; and so this heresy vanished and departed. So for others, where the light of the gospel did quickly disperse those fogs as soon as they arose. When any mists arose which did darken the kingdom of light, they were presently scattered and confounded. Well, then, here is encouragement for our zeal and fidelity to Christ, to support us in difficult cases whatever obstructions are made. Let us trust Christ's means, wait upon him with faith and patience, and in due time he will do his work.

*Use 2.* Let none of us build Jericho again. Joshua imposed a solemn curse on those that built the wall of Jericho, because thereby they would obliterate the memory of divine power and justice: Joshua vi. 26, 'And Joshua adjured them at that time, saying, Cursed be the man before the Lord that raiseth up and buildeth this city Jericho; he shall lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates thereof.' Which curse we find fulfilled: 1 Kings xvi. 34, 'In his days did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho; he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his first-born, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun.' Cursed are they that revive old superstitions.

## SERMON LXV.

*By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.—HEB. xi. 31.*

In this verse observe—

1. The person spoken of—Rahab, an harlot and a stranger, bred up among idolators.
2. The effect of her faith—*She received the spies with peace.*

3. The benefit—*She perished not with them that believed not.* Let us open these things.

1. The quality of the person, Rahab the harlot; she was a gentile before, and in that gentile estate an hostess (for the word signifies both an harlot and an hostess), and most probably an harlot, for so she is spoken of in scripture, and so defiled both in body and mind with idolatry and adultery.

2. Here is the effect of her faith—‘She received the spies with peace;’ that is, with good-will, and entertained them safely. Harboursing God’s persecuted servants is reckoned an effect of faith in scripture. The story is in the 2d chapter of Joshua, where take notice—

[1.] Of the coming of the spies to her house, which might be done on their part ignorantly, not knowing it to be a brothel-house; or by divine providence guiding them thither where he had a soul to convert; or they might choose it to avoid suspicion, and that they might have the greater liberty to espy all things, she living near the walls; but God makes use of it to another purpose, to be an occasion of saving her and her family.

[2.] The discovery of the spies by that watchful and jealous people; for it was told the king of Jericho that some of the children of Israel were come to spy out the land, chap. ii. 2, and he sends to her to bring them forth, so that she not only entertains them kindly, but conceals them, hazarding her life for their safety; as we are also ‘to lay down our lives for the brethren,’ 1 John iii. 16. She was willing to expose her life to danger to save her guests, rather than gain the favour of the king of the country by betraying them. Here we learn that the weakest faith is tried, and does expose us to some self-denial. For this young and raw convert is put upon this: the spies came to her house, and she in good-will conceals them, when the king sends to know what was become of them.

[3.] The course she took to hide them; partly by an honest means, covering them with stalks of flax in the upper part of the house; and partly by an officious lie, as if they were gone in the dark before the shutting in of the gate. Her lie was an infirmity, pardoned by God, and not to be exaggerated by men; as here the apostle mentions her faith, but not a word of her lie. There was some weakness in the action, but for the main of it, it was a duty expressing great confidence in God; and the Holy Ghost puts the finger upon the star, and, contrary to the guise of the malignant world, who overlook the good and reflect only upon the evil of an action, he takes notice of the good, but passeth by the evil.

[4.] Before the spies were gone from her, she makes a confession of her faith to them: Joshua ii. 9–11, ‘I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you: for we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when you came out of Egypt; and what you did unto the two kings of the Amorites that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you; for the Lord your God he is God in heaven above,

and in earth beneath.' Here is her profession of faith, which is very notable in this new convert. In it observe—

(1.) The ground of it, the rumours of the great things which God had done for his people. It is said, Rom. x. 14, 'How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?' This woman had heard of God, and the mighty wonders he had done for Israel, and this was the ground of her faith.

(2.) The efficient cause. God thereby touched her heart, and gave her some saving knowledge of himself. The Canaanites had heard, as well as she, of those mighty works of God, yet they believed not, but grew obstinate, and perished in their resolution to resist the Israelites, and therefore were exterminated. They heard to some degree of fear, 'for their hearts melted within them;' but they heard not to any degree of faith, for they submitted not, but prepared to resist the purpose of God, and his design of giving his people the land. Thus it was by the secret power of God's Spirit.

(3.) The fulness of her profession. It is well observed by Origen, *Illa, quæ aliquando erat meretrix, cum Spiritu Sancto repleta est, et de præteritis confitetur, de præsentibus vero credit, prophetat et prænuntiat de futuris*—The woman that was sometimes an harlot, when she was wrought upon by the Holy Ghost, she believeth what is past, she acknowledgeth what is present, she foretelleth what is to come. So that here is a full confession. For what is past, she acknowledgeth the truth of the miracles which God had wrought, to show his love and care over his people. For what is present, she believes God to be the true God. For what is to come, she believes confidently that God would give the land into their hand; though the people of the city think themselves safe within their city and walls, and think to carry it by mere strength, and fear not, and are not sensible either of their sins or dangers, yet she was confident of the future success of God's people, and destruction of her country. The consideration of God's mighty wonders, blessed by the Spirit of God, bringing such a confession from her.

(4.) She is careful to save the house she came of, and therefore takes an oath of the spies to save her and her father's house: Joshua ii. 12, 'Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the Lord, since I have showed you kindness, that ye will also show kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token.' And accordingly the bargain is made, if she did not betray them, that she was to hand out the line by which they were let down upon the wall. This shows that all believers have their assurance from a covenant, and that this covenant is confirmed by certain signs, which faith makes use of as the means of preservation. For she was to hang out the scarlet line by which she and all her house might be kept in safety. So much for the effect of her faith; she received the spies with peace.

3. Let us come to the benefit—'She perished not with them that believed not;' that is, when the incredulous and idolatrous people were destroyed, she and all her family were preserved; as God can, and often doth, save his people in the midst of general calamities. You shall see, when the city was taken, Joshua keeps faith with her: Joshua vi. 22, 23, 'Joshua said unto the two men that had spied out



the country, Go into the harlot's house, and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath, as you swear unto her. And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father and mother, and her brethren, and all that she had ; and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel ;' and when they had fired the city, ver. 25, ' Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had ; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day ; because she hid the messengers which Joshua had sent to spy out Jericho.' Thus I have opened the words. The notes from this instance the apostle gives are three—

[1.] From the quality of the person, observe that God shows wonderful mercy to penitent sinners, if they return to him, and believe in him.

[2.] From her faith, observe that true faith, wherever it is, will show itself by some eminent and notable effects.

[3.] From the benefit, observe that the rewards of true faith are excellent and glorious.

*Doct. 1.* That God is ready to show wonderful mercy to penitent sinners, if they return to him, and believe in him, how great soever their sins have been before. Rahab the harlot is an instance. She had been a gentile, and lived an unclean life, yet when she owned the true God she is pardoned, and placed in the catalogue of God's worthies who are eminent for faith. There are many such instances given us in scripture ; not to lessen the nature of their sins, but to amplify God's grace. In John iv. we have an instance of the woman of Samaria ; she was a vile woman ; for (ver. 18) Christ tells her, ' Thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband ;' yet afterwards she was a notable means of promoting the faith of Christ. Former sins will not hinder their acceptance with God who seriously come to seek grace. The same also may be observed in another woman ' which washed Christ's feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head,' Luke vii. 38. The woman was a heathen, and one that had lived in a sinful course, but she then relented, and lets fall drops of tears plentifully upon Christ's feet, which tears were the effects of sorrow and love ; and because she wept much and loved much, it argued a great expression of gratitude from her, because of the great mercy showed to her in the pardon of her sins: ver. 47, ' Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much.' The throne of grace is open for all sinners ; it admits of no exception of persons. ' Turn and live,' is the great tenor of the gospel: Ezek. xviii. 33, ' I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God ; wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye ;' Ezek. xxxiii. 11, ' As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked ; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways ; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?' And publicans and harlots, though infamous amongst men, yet they are not excluded, but accepted with God if they turn from their evil course. Nay, many times they enter into the kingdom of God before self-justiciaries: Mat. xxi. 31, ' The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.' For there is nothing that lies so cross to the spirit of the gospel as

self-righteousness. Now, when people pride and please themselves in an external righteousness, there is more hope of a publican than of them. Christ invites and calls such, and we must not keep them off: Mat. ix. 13, 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' But we must remember two cautions—

1. That they must break off the course of their sins. For our commission is this (and we cannot speak comfortably to you upon any other terms), 'Turn and live.' We call them not to confidence while they live in their sins, but to repentance, that they may break off the course of their sins. To tell them of trusting in God's mercy while they remain in their wickedness is a vile flattery, and the worst sort of flattery; but to invite them to repentance is charity. See Isa. lv. 7, 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon;' and Dan. iv. 27, 'Break off thy sins by righteousness, and thy iniquities by showing mercy to the poor.' He speaks this to a cruel oppressing king, Nebuchadnezzar, who had troubled all the world by his ambition, that he would let go his captives, and behave himself more righteously, restore the prey unjustly taken for the enlarging his empire and territory. And so I may say to all sinners; if their faith be unfeigned, if their repentance be serious and sincere, there are hopes of mercy for them, not otherwise.

2. There is another caution, and that is, to be as eminent in their repentance as they have been in their sins; so was Rahab, so was that gentile woman that came to wash Christ's feet, so was the woman of Samaria. The apostle requires it as an equitable proposal to all converts: Rom. vi. 19, 'I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh;' that is, which men will judge to be equal; that which, if you have but reason and conscience within you, you cannot but judge reasonable. I know how bad you are, and you cannot yield God such entire obedience as he doth require and as he doth deserve, and I have regard to the infirmity of your flesh; but 'as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness;' be as eminent in your sanctification as formerly you have been in serving your base lusts and vile affections; serve God as well as you have served the devil; and as you have been guilty of such foul sins as render you infamous among men, so serve God now exemplarily. It is equitable you should be as eminent in holiness as you have been in sins and wickedness.

The grounds of this, why the Lord shows wonderful mercy to penitent sinners, whatever their sins have been before, are—

[1.] The infiniteness of God's mercy, that can pardon all, even our greatest sins. We sin as men, but he pardons as a God: Hosea xi. 9, 'I am God, and not man; therefore Ephraim is not destroyed.' It was well Ephraim had to do not with revengeful men, but with a pardoning God. God acts like himself in the exercise of his mercy. Sure an emperor's revenue can pay a beggar's debt. Surely so great and infinite mercy can pardon and absolve our obligation to punishment. Alas for us men! it is tedious to think of forgiving seven times a day,

to forgive when still a man is perverse and multiplying his offences; but to forgive seventy times seven, it breaks the back of all our patience; but God will pardon like himself, after many and many offences.

[2.] The infiniteness of Christ's merit. Surely his blood can wash and cleanse out all these stains. An ocean can cleanse one nasty sink, be it ever so foul. 'The blood of Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin,' 1 John i. 7.

[3.] The covenant of grace exempts no sin but the sin against the Holy Ghost: Mat. xii. 31, 'All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.' There is no sin but this one which hath not been forgiven, or may not be forgiven, in one person or another; therefore, though they have fallen very foully, yet we should not despair of them.

[4.] The power of the Holy Ghost can change and sanctify the vilest heart, and can turn a dunghill into a bed of spices; for nothing is too hard for the hand and power of God. He that made all things out of nothing, he can make a graceless heart to become gracious; for what is too hard for the Almighty? When the Lord speaks, all things are possible to God. He can make sometimes 'the last to be first,' Mat. xix. 39. He can make those that set out last for heaven to do more than an early professor; indeed, they must be more earnestly diligent. When Celsus objected against Origen that christianity was a sanctuary for flagitious persons, because of the large terms of the gospel, he made this answer—'The gospel,' saith he, 'is not merely a sanctuary to receive them, but it is an hospital to cure them.' There is a mighty Spirit that can turn them from those sins, and change their hearts; they come to it as to an hospital to cure them of their foul diseases, which no other physician can do but Christ.

*Use.* To check despair for ourselves or others.

*First,* For ourselves. There is a twofold despair—a raging and a sottish despair. Raging despair is when we are filled with terror, and are afraid of the wrath of God, that we think we shall never be forgiven, having daily offended him. Sottish despair is when we think of sin, and go on to please our lusts.

1. This point serves to cure the raging despair. This is spoken of in Cain: Gen. iv. 13, 'My punishment is greater than I can bear;' and Judas, who said, Mat. xxvii. 4, 5, 'I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood; and he cast down the thirty pieces in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.' To cure this raging despair, consider, if you have but a mind to return from your great and infamous sins, the Lord is more ready to receive and pardon you than you can be to return. While the prodigal was yet a great way off, 'the father ran to meet him,' Luke xv. 20. And when David had fallen foully, and his conscience was full of trouble, Ps. xxxii. 5, 'I said I will confess mine iniquities unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.' When he did but conceive the purpose, the Lord renewed the pardon. Oh! do not stand aloof from a pardoning God; you have a sure and sufficient remedy before you in Christ Jesus, and in the covenant of grace. The Lord saves none as innocent, but

he excepts none as penitent: Therefore to say, My sin is greater than can be forgiven, is to please the devil and cross God's design in the work of redemption. Is your disease so great that the physician of souls cannot cure it?

2. There is a sottish despair, when men are not much troubled for their sins, but think they shall never be converted, and be brought to love this strict, holy, and heavenly life, and so resolve to go on and make the best they can of a carnal course, and drive off all remorse of conscience. This is spoken of, Jer. xviii. 12, 'And they said, There is no hope, but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart;' and Jer. ii. 25, 'Thou sayest, There is no hope: No, for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go.' They think there is no possibility of their ever being reduced or reclaimed to a holy and heavenly life, and so past cure, past care; and are resolved to live as they list: The case is desperate, say they, and I am at a point; and thus they are resolved to continue, and go on in their evil course. These are obstinate in their infidelity and impenitency, and therefore they are worse than the former. Despairing fears are not so bad as these desperate resolutions, because they do not only doubt of God's mercy, but question his sovereignty, and refuse subjection to him, and despair of sanctification rather than pardon, and draw wilful rebellious conclusions from it. Oh! do not cherish such a thought, nor yield to such despondency. God can turn and pardon you; and though with men it is impossible, yet not with God.

*Secondly*, This is of use to check our despair for others; for when you find some of your relations, after many warnings, to relapse into gross sins, certainly we are bound to do all we can to reclaim them from them. Give not over praying and warning; you ought still to represent to them the danger of such courses, but cut them not off from all hopes, for God can reclaim the most odious sinners; and show them that there may yet be hope of mercy for them, and that no past sins can hinder our conversion to God if the Lord pleases; and that they ought to put themselves into a posture to seek his grace; though still you are always to represent the danger of those desperate courses wherein they are engaged.

*Doct. 2.* From her act—'By faith the harlot Rahab perished not,' &c. Observe, that true faith, where it is weakest, will show itself by some eminent and notable effect. We, in the latter age, to excuse ourselves from duty, have involved all things into controversy; therefore it is good to look to the ancient faith. How did the holy ones of God live heretofore? Here is an instance of an ancient faith, and the lowest of the kind; it is a firm belief of such things as God hath revealed to us, so as to make us fruitful and faithful in obedience to him. And I would have you observe, that in all this catalogue and chronicle of the faithful and eminent believers, no instance is propounded to us of an idle and barren faith, and always the apostle shows what was done by faith; for surely the working faith is only the true faith: Gal. v. 6, 'Faith which worketh by love.' Rahab's faith was no dead faith, but manifested by works; therefore the apostle James saith, chap. ii. 21, 'Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered

Isaac his son upon the altar?' and ver. 25, 'Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?' In this raw and young convert faith was not without its effect.

To make this more evident, let us consider the temper of her faith, since it is so good to live by the ancient faith.

1. The ground of her faith was the fame and the report of God's wondrous works which he had done for his people. She had heard of the true God, as much as was necessary to acknowledge his power against his enemies and his grace towards his people, and this was sufficient as a means to beget saving faith in her soul. And if so, then we have greater grounds of faith than she had; for we have heard of the stupendous wonders of our redemption by Christ. Now, where more is given, the more we must account for: Luke xii. 48, 'For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.' The more light God bestows, the greater improvement he expects. We have not only general rumours to build upon, as she had, but the sure word, where these things are more certainly and clearly discovered to us; and therefore God expects a better tempered faith from us.

2. She makes a confession of that faith which was wrought in her heart; for to the spies she acknowledges God to be the only true God, both in heaven above and the earth beneath; and she acknowledges the Israelites to be his peculiar people, whom he had owned and loved, and that she could not be saved but as gathered to that people under the head, Messiah; and in heart and affection she was already become one of God's servants, and this she professed to the spies. And the same is required of us: Rom. ix. 10, 'If thou confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus Christ, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.' Let us own the true God in Jesus Christ, and love him, and own and love his people. When once we are brought to this, to run hazard and take our lot with them, then we are in the right posture.

3. This faith and confession was evinced by some effect; for she entertained the spies, which was all she was capable of doing at present, and she entertains them as some of the people of God, as members of the true church, or as of the number of them who worshipped that God whom she believed to be the true God. And truly much faith is shown in harbouring the saints and being kind to God's people. Many shall be tried at the last day by this: Mat. xxv. 35, 'I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in,' &c. Everything is accepted with God according to the principle from whence it flows. Now, what might it have been, for anything in the nature of the act, but her trade, an entertaining and being kind to her guest, for she kept a house of public entertainment? or what might it have been but a bare act of civility? Yet, because of her faith in God, and love to his people, it is counted an act of love and obedience, not civility, but religion. So our Lord hath told us, Mat. x. 41, 'He that receiveth a prophet in the name of

a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward: and whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.' It is accepted of God if it be in Christ's name; and if we give because we believe they are Christ's disciples, who is our Lord and Saviour, it is respected as done to himself, and shall be accounted as a fruit of faith. But now those that love a gospel without charges, and whose faith shows itself by talk and high-flown and curious notions of religion, rather than by any solid fruit, their faith is but an imaginary delusion, a shadow of faith, not any true grace. Faith that is true is a plain thing—to believe in one God, and that this God hath a people with whom I must travel to heaven; they are to be my everlasting companions. If I am true to this God, and kind to his people, the thing is put to a plain issue.

4. This effect was accompanied with much self-denial, which was seen in two things—(1.) In preferring the will of God before the safety of her country, and cherishing those guests who were strangers before the gratifying and pleasing her own citizens. We are bound to love, and we are bound also to seek the welfare of our country; but we are bound to love God more than our country. Therefore we owe fidelity to him first, and then to the place we live in, and we are to promote their welfare so far as is consistent with our fidelity to our supreme Lord. (2.) The other instance of her self-denial was her venturing her life rather than betraying those messengers of Joshua, that were the worshippers of the true God. It was an action that might have been of dangerous consequence to her; but, to manifest her fidelity to God, she overlooks the threatenings and cruelty of her citizens, the promiscuous events of war, and the burning of the city in which she and her parents lived; and so in the effect, by her faith, she renounced all to serve the true God. It is not every act will manifest true faith, but acts of self-denying obedience, in which we do deny ourselves for God, check our natural love, and thwart our lusts and hazard any interests. When God calls us to it, can we part with our conveniences of life, all that is near and dear to us in the world, upon the proper and sole encouragement of faith? This is a mighty evidence of faith.

5. I observe there was a mixture of infirmity in this act, an officious lie, which cannot be excused, though God in mercy pardoned it. This is not for our imitation, yet it is for our instruction; and it shows us this, that faith in the beginning hath many weaknesses. Those that have faith do not altogether act out of faith, but there is somewhat of the flesh mingled with that of the spirit. But this is passed by out of God's indulgence; he accepteth us notwithstanding our sins before faith, and notwithstanding our weaknesses in believing. Before faith she was a harlot; in believing she makes a lie. God doth reward the good of our actions and pardon the evil of them, not to encourage us in sinning, but to raise our love to him who forgives us so great a debt, and receives us graciously, and pardons our manifold weaknesses.

But why is this the true believing? The reasons are—

[1.] From the nature of faith, which is such an apprehension of the love of God, and of the blessedness that he offers to us, as makes us

willing to do whatever we can for him, and that in some eminent way of self-denial. Faith works both by love and hope, as it looks backward and forward. As it looks backward, the love of Christ is so great and condescending that it moves us to gratitude; as it looks forward, the blessedness hoped for is so glorious that it draws off our hearts from all other things, and lessens our esteem of them, that this gratitude may more self-denyingly be expressed by parting with them, yea, by the loss of all that is near and dear to us, to show our fidelity to Christ. They are nothing in comparison of our love to Christ: Phil. iii. 8, 'I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.' Here are the two considerations which faith works upon—what Christ hath done for us, and what he will yet do for us. And if we consider these two things, faith may well afford self-denying obedience, and forsake all easily for Christ's sake. This great love of Christ overcomes all our natural self-love to our interest and worldly comforts, that we may own Christ, and be faithful to him.

[2.] The gospel requires such a kind of faith, and therefore we must exercise it. All that will enter into life should hate father and mother, &c., so far as they may stand in competition with Christ: Luke xiv. 25, '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;' and ver. 33, 'Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.' He that had found the pearl of great price sold all to buy it, Mat. xiii. 45, 46. He did not only cheapen it, but he did go through with the bargain. Let all go that is inconsistent with your trust and love.

[3.] This is that faith which honours God and Christ in the world, and assures us of salvation: 2 Thes. i. 11, 12, 'We pray that God would fulfil the work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him.' Would you honour Christ, and have Christ glorified in you, then you must mind the work of faith. He speaks not of the illicit, but imperative acts of faith. Self-denying obedience is the imperative act of faith: then the name of the Lord Jesus Christ is glorified in you, then you are glorified in him, and then you have the assurance of salvation. A faith that rests in the heart only, and is discovered by no self-denying act, brings Christ no glory in the world, and will bring us little comfort and peace; but faith which shows itself in acts of love to God and his people, and that with self-denial, is more evident, and doth much honour God in the eyes of the world. When we are willing to do and suffer so much for him, this brings us comfort, and doth show this faith is real, that we are true to God, whom we own and acknowledge.

*Use.* The use is to press you to see whether you live by this ancient faith.

1. It is not a bare assent to the report of God's love in Christ. Many may think it true that Christ died and rose again, that yet feel no force of it upon their souls. Surely a dead opinion is not that lively faith that enableth the people of God to do such great things for him. The devil knows there is a God and Christ,—will you put your salvation

upon this? No; 'Faith without works is dead,' James ii. 20. If you do not feel the force of it upon your hearts, to make you deny yourselves, and give up all your interest for God, and run all hazards for him and his people, you do not truly believe.

2. It is not a bare confession, nor a loose owning the name of Christ. Rahab made a confession, but rests not there. So, many own him as the God of the country, and cry up his name, but neglect his office; as the Jews made much ado with the names of Abraham and Moses, but they were of a quite different spirit; they did neither do the works of Abraham: John viii. 39, 'If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham;' nor hearken to the words of Moses: John v. 46, 'Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me.' So you believe there is a Christ, and own him; but if you be christians, you would do works becoming christians.

3. It is not a confidence in God's mercy; that is not enough, if we will do nothing for him. For faith is such a trusting in God, through Christ, for eternal life, that we are willing to forsake all rather than be unfaithful to him; and we care not what we lose, and what hazard we run, so that we may have a portion among God's people, and obtain the heavenly inheritance. When the apostle distinguisheth the true believers from the false, what saith he? Heb. x. 39, 'We are not of them that draw back to perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.' There are some that believe, yet will save the flesh; but others that will save the soul, though their interests in the flesh be hazarded. Now, the apostle shows there that there are some will purchase the saving of their soul with the loss of other things. God tries us in some necessary part of confession, which may expose us to loss, shame, and hazard in the world; now, if we will not spare the flesh, but save the soul, this is to cleave to him.

4. Nothing then remains to justify our faith but such an acknowledging of the true God as causes us to confess his name and to prefer his interest before our own, and so to be willing to endure anything for his sake, and be ready upon this faith to show all self-denying acts of obedience; to part with what we have for the relief of others and the advancement of religion, when we cannot keep it without betraying religion. Alas! that religion which costs nothing is worth nothing; it is idle, empty, and foolish; that, when you come to die, will bring terror, and never yield solid peace.

*Doct.* 3. There is one thing more in the text, and that is the benefit which affords us this point, that the rewards of faith are excellent and glorious. Rahab is an instance of this also, for when she by faith entertained the spies in peace, 'she perished not with them that believed not;' that is, she was not destroyed with the Canaanites. Let us a little see her privileges.

1. From a child of the devil, she is made a daughter of God, and adopted into God's family. And so, if you be sincere in the faith of the gospel, you shall be also; the Lord will take you for his children, that were the children of wrath before: John i. 12, 'To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.'

2. From a citizen of Jericho she is reckoned among the people of



Israel, and incorporated into the body of God's church : Joshua vi. 25, 'She dwelleth in Israel even unto this day.' So, if we have the sincere faith, we are not only of the visible church of professing christians, but are reckoned among the elect, and have our names written in heaven ; that is a matter of great joy : Luke x. 20, 'Rejoice in that your names are written in heaven ;' for this is a 'better name than of sons and daughters,' Isa. lvi. 5,—a name that shall continue to all eternity.

3. We find, when there was a destruction of all the rest, she was not destroyed with the Canaanites, but God by his servant Joshua took great care for her preservation. So believers are saved from everlasting destruction : John iii. 16, 'Whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.' They are not involved in the wrath and destruction which shall light upon the unbelieving and impenitent world. This is the portion of all those that fly to the true God, and to the communion of the true church. If it be sure that the unbelieving world shall perish (as sure it is, as sure as God is true), then it is a great mercy we shall not perish with them. Certain it is that all that come not out of the apostasy shall perish forever. But we that are willing to return to our duty to God, to trust God, and trust his promises, and take his way, blessedness will be our portion.

4. Another privilege which Rahab had was, that she was honourably married to a prince in Israel, and one of the ancestors of Christ, namely, to Salmon, father of Boaz : Mat. i. 5, 'And Salmon begat Boaz of Rachab.' Laying all ends together, we certainly find it is the same Rahab, that Salmon married her, who was one of the spies, a head and prince of Israel. Thus God can heap honour upon those that trust in him : her name is mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Now they that sincerely believe have a better marriage, they are married to Christ himself : Rom. vii. 4, 'Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law, by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.' They are taken into a nearer relation to him, our covenanting with him being a kind of marriage. If we believe as Rahab did, we shall have the reward Rahab had. But how can we reconcile the two apostles ? Paul ascribes it here to her faith, but James to her works : James ii. 25, 'Was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and sent them out another way ?' Here is no contradiction ; the apostles fairly agree together, for they speak not of the same faith. Paul speaks of the lively, James of the dead faith ; Paul speaks of the faith working by love, and so she was justified by faith, but James speaks of an empty naked profession of faith without works ; so that a man is not justified by an empty faith without works. A dead faith little profits us, but a living faith makes us obedient to God, and ready to every good work ; that justifies us, and qualifies us for this blessed and glorious reward.

But let us see the general case. What are the privileges and the rewards of faith ? (for hitherto we have only considered them with respect to Rahab). It justifies, sanctifies, glorifies.

[1.] It justifies : Rom. v. 1, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.' O sinners ! do you know what it is to be condemned by the law of God ? for sinners impleaded, and that justly, in the court of God's justice, and to be condemned to everlasting wrath ? If you did, then you would see that it is a mighty privilege to be justified, to be accepted with God, and freed from the deserved condemnation, or that dreadful punishment which sin hath made our due. Now, this generally in scripture is ascribed to faith.

[2.] It sanctifies, or is the Spirit's great instrument in sanctification. For, Acts xv. 9, it is said, 'Purifying their hearts by faith.' It is faith that promotes purity and sanctity. It is the first stone in the spiritual building : 2 Peter i. 5, 'Add to your faith virtue,' &c. Faith is made the bottom of all, as that which gives life and strength to all the rest ; without which virtue would be nothing but a little dead and cold morality, however it is cried up in our age, if not enlivened by the love of God in Christ, and hopes of eternal glory, as it is when it proceeds from faith. Christ prays, John xvii. 17, 'Sanctify them through thy truth.' We are sanctified by the truth of the gospel. But now what makes the gospel operative but faith ? 1 Thes. ii. 13, 'Ye received it, not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.'

[3.] It glorifies ; because they that believe eternal life so as to seek after it, and that whatever it cost them, they shall have it. You may always observe, in all God's dispensations of grace and favour, he would do nothing for men till they believe ; he could not, or rather would not, do it for them. We find it true of God's dispensation to the old church, and in the life of Christ upon earth—Can you believe ? Mark ix. 23, 'If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.' So it is true of eternal life. But then this belief is supposed to be operative, and that we are resolved to take the way God hath appointed. As soon as we believe, we have a right and title : John v. 24, 'He that heareth my words, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death to life.' And when we verify our faith by taking God's way, though others neglect it, then our right is confirmed : Mat. xix. 28, 'Ye that have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' Take regeneration either for a new state of the church (as some few do), when all things are new in the church, and old things are passed away, you shall be elders in the church (so some expound it) ; but I think properly and principally it is taken for the regeneration at the last day, when we shall have new bodies and new souls ; then we shall have all that our hearts can wish. When our service is over, we shall receive the end of our faith : 1 Peter i. 9, 'Receiving the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls.'

*Use.* Let this commend faith to us, which is the great grace ; we must still exercise it in this world. Where we know God by hearing, faith is of use to us ; when we know him by vision and sight, the use of it ceases, but the fruit remaineth, for sight is the fruit of faith : John xx. 31, 'These things are written, that ye might believe that

Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name.' You shall have life in his name if you will believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. All that I shall press you to is a faith like Rahab's. Rahab heard the rumours of God's gracious works for Israel, and of his judgments upon their enemies, and upon this she owns the true God, and runs hazards for his people.

1. You have heard that God hath sent his Son into the world to save sinners; believe it, and believe it strongly; here is the grand truth you must live by.

2. This God hath given a law of grace, that we may be partakers of these benefits. Possibly the spies might inform Rahab of God's giving a law upon Mount Sinai; for it is not likely she would join herself so suddenly to Israel, if she knew not what laws they should live by. If that be uncertain, we are sure the Lord hath given a law of grace from Mount Zion, or the new covenant, wherein God hath showed us how we shall attain eternal life. Now heartily consent to stand to this covenant.

3. Upon this faith be sure to demonstrate by some real effects that it hath prevailed in your heart. For if you believe God's great promises, what do you venture upon them? Surely we do not believe great things if we do nothing to obtain them. I ever look upon this as a truth, that there is much more of unbelief in neglect than there is in humbling trouble or despairing fears. For the troubled person believes indeed the covenant of God, but he cannot make out his title, therefore he lies under despairing fears. The neglecter sheweth that he accounts these things a fable, else he would more look after them, and exercise himself self-denyingly in godliness: 2 Peter i. 5, 10, 16, compared together; ver. 5, 'Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue,' &c.; ver. 10, 'Give diligence to make your calling and election sure;' ver. 16, 'For we have not followed cunningly-devised fables, &c. They that do not give diligence to grow in grace, they that do not give diligence by all self-denying acts to make their calling and election sure, they count the gospel a fable, and neglecting their duty, they show themselves to be unbelievers.

4. That which you do, let it be some self-denying act for God and his people. I join both together, because if a man love the one he will love the other, and the Lord's interest is only upheld by his people here in the world; his interest liveth and dieth with his people. And therefore, when we are willing to deny ourselves that we may own God's people, and join with them in all their sincere endeavours to advance the kingdom of Christ, then we shall know we believe in God, and that we have this true faith God requireth of us.

A TREATISE  
OF  
THE LIFE OF FAITH.

## A TREATISE OF THE LIFE OF FAITH.

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*And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.*—GAL. ii. 20.

THERE are two parts of a christian's duty—dying to sin and living to God. They are both in the text ; the first part, dying to sin, in that mysterious expression, 'I am crucified with Christ ;' the second branch, living to God, in the following clauses, in which a spiritual and holy riddle is propounded, and then solved and opened : 'I am crucified, yet I live,' and though I live, yet I live not, 'for Christ liveth in me ;' and then he openeth the whole riddle and mystery in the latter part—*And the life which I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.*

Many things might be observed—

1. They that are crucified with Christ nevertheless live. They that partake with Christ in one act partake with him in all ; if they are mortified with Christ, they are also quickened by him.

2. In the spiritual life of a christian, Christ hath the greatest hand and stroke—'Not I, but Christ liveth in me.'

3. Believers live in the flesh after they are called to grace, but they do not live after the flesh.

4. That besides the animal life, there is a spiritual life, and these two are distinct. The animal life is the life of the rational soul void of grace, accommodating itself to the interests of the body : Jude 19, 'Sensual, having not the spirit ;' and to the power and pomp of the world, highness of rank and place, riches, pleasures, honours ; it consists in the exercise of the senses. The spiritual life is a principle that enableth us to live unto God, to act and move towards God as our last and utmost end, to serve his glory as our great scope, and enjoy his favour as our chief good. Both these two lives are governed by a distinct guide and ruler—the animal life by sense, the spiritual life by faith ; so that man's reason is either brutified and debased by sense, or refined, sublimated, and raised by faith. If a man be debased by sense, he walloweth in all manner of brutish sensuality, he liveth in pleasure, and maketh the profits and pleasures of the world his only scope and aim ; if refined and elevated by faith, his soul worketh after God, and is carried out to the concerns of the world to come.

But quitting all these, here is a life within a life, and a life overruled by a life, and that overruling life is called the life of faith.

*Doct.* Those only live spiritually that live by faith; or, the great means on our part whereby we receive the influences of the spiritual life is faith in Christ.

Living by faith is a point of large and universal concernment, therefore I shall in a few discourses insist upon it. And I shall treat of it—

1. In the general.

2. In particular, in all duties, acts and conditions of this life.

I. In the general. Here I shall inquire—

1. What faith is.

2. Why and how we are said to receive life from it.

3. Give you some observations concerning this life.

*First*, What is this faith by which the just shall live? Faith is a grace by which we believe God's word in the general, and in a special manner do receive Christ, and rest upon him for grace here and glory hereafter. This may serve for a short definition or description of faith. Here is assent, consent, and affiance.

1. There is assent, by which we believe God's word in the general: Acts xxiv. 14, 'Believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets.' There is the first work of faith, which is to assent to the scriptures and all things contained therein. The general faith goeth before the particular; there is no building without a foundation.

2. There is consent. Faith doth in a special manner receive Christ; that is, the faith that saveth: John i. 12, 'To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.' When I take him as God offereth him, and to the ends for which he offereth him, that he may do that for me, and be that to me, that God hath appointed him to do and be in the gospel.

3. There is affiance. Faith doth rest upon him; besides choice, there must be a recumbency: Isa. xxvi. 3, 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee.' That is a special work of faith. Now, what do we rest upon him for? For grace here—all kinds of grace, justification, sanctification: Acts v. 31, 'Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a prince and a saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins.' For privileges, qualifications, duties, Christ is all to us. And then for glory hereafter: 1 Tim. i. 16, we are said to 'believe on him to life everlasting.' There is the end which faith aimeth at, or the main blessing which it seeketh, and upon the hopes of which the life which it begetteth is carried on: 1 Peter i. 9, 'Receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls.' Those that fly to Christ by faith do eye this as the prime benefit to be had by him, by which temptations of sense are defeated.

*Secondly*, How and why we are said to live by it. Distinct graces have their distinct offices; in scripture speech we are said to live by faith, but to work by love; there must be life before operation. Now we are said to live by faith—

1. Because it is the grace that doth unite us to Christ. Other

graces make us like Christ, but this maketh us one with Christ principally and primarily. For the understanding of this reason, you must know that the author and fountain of the spiritual life is Christ. He is called 'the Prince of life,' Acts iii. 15. Christ liveth in a believer, and a believer liveth in Christ; he is in us by his Spirit. Before we can have anything from Christ, we must first have Christ himself: 1 John v. 12, 'He that hath the Son hath life.' Now we have Christ when we are strictly united to him, as members to the head, from whence they receive sense and motion: Col. ii. 19, 'And not holding the head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God;' as the root to the branches from whence they receive sap and influence: John xv. 5, 'I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing.' Christ is the principle of life and motion, as united to us by the Spirit on his part. But what is the bond on our parts but faith? Eph. iii. 17, 'That Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith.' Jesus Christ doth make his first entry into, and dwelleth in believers by his Spirit: 1 John iv. 13, 'Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.' Whereby he uniteth them to himself, and quickeneth them, and worketh the grace of faith in them; as bees first make their cells, and then dwell in them; and when faith is so wrought, we do thereby lay hold upon Christ, and receive daily supplies from him, and make use of him as a fountain of life and grace upon all occasions. This uniteth us to him, and keepeth him with us, and us with him, so that he never withdraweth that influence which is necessary to the being and life of grace. The habit of faith in our heart is the pledge of his presence, and as it is exercised daily, it draweth from him strength and comfort, to support us in all conditions, and to excite and enable us in every duty.

2. Because all other graces are marshalled and ranked under the conduct of faith. As the stars in their order fought against Sisera, so all graces are brought up in their order and season. There are several divine qualities that have their office and use in the spiritual life; but all are regulated and quickened by faith; and therefore the whole honour is devolved upon this grace: 2 Peter i. 5-7, 'Add to faith, virtue; to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly-kindness; and to brotherly-kindness, charity.' Saving faith, which taketh hold of Christ for pardon and strength, and daily flieth to him for both, that is the root which must be cherished, increased, and kept in exercise by all that would thrive in any other grace, and be fit for any duty. That is the first stone in the spiritual building, to which all the rest are added. Without faith virtue would languish, our command over our passions be weak, and the back of patience quite broken, and our care of the knowledge of divine things very small. It is faith acting upon Christ and heaven, and the hopes of a better life, that sets all the wheels at work in the soul; temperance, in moderating sensual delights; patience, in bearing the miseries of the present life: Heb. xi. 2, 'By faith the elders obtained a good re-

port.' In every verse it is said, By faith, by faith. Some of the effects there spoken of do directly and more formally belong to other graces; but though the private soldiers do worthily in the high places of the field, yet we say the general won the day; the honour of the victory is put upon him, because it was achieved under his conduct. So it is here; all graces have their use in the holy life. Love worketh, hope waiteth, patience endureth, zeal quickeneth to own God's truth and cause, obedience urgeth to duty; but faith, remembering us of our obligations to Christ, and presenting the hopes of a better life, hath the greatest stroke in all these things. 'Faith worketh by love,' Gal. v. 6; 'faith feedeth hope,' Heb. xi. 1; 'faith is ὑπόστασις τῶν ἐλπιζομένων, the substance of things hoped for;' faith teacheth patience to wait and submit to God's will for the present; it is but a little time: Heb. x. 38, 'Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him,' So that faith is like a silken string that runs through a chain of pearl; or rather, like the spirits that run with the blood through all the veins. If love constraineth, it is faith working by love; if hope be exercised, it is faith that showeth it the riches of the glory of the world to come; if patience be contented to tarry God's leisure, it is because faith assureth us of the blessing to come.

3. Because whatever is ascribed to faith redoundeth to the honour of Christ. The worth lieth in the object, as the ivy receiveth strength from the oak about which it windeth. Faith doth all, not from any intrinsic worth and force in itself; but all its power is in dependence upon Christ—*Fidei mendica manus*. We are said to live by faith, as we are said to be fed by the hand; it is the instrument. It is very notable what the apostle saith of the miraculous work of faith: James v. 15, 'And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up.' Faith is said to do it, because the Lord doeth it; and faith setteth his power a-work. The like concurrence and use of faith there is in other gracious works: 1 John v. 4, 5, 'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith; and who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?' Christ hath and will overcome the world; therefore faith, that apprehendeth this, and encourageth us by it, is said to do it. Christ is the fountain, and faith the pipe and conveyance; it is the grace that bringeth most honour to him.

4. Because faith removeth obstructions, and openeth the passages of grace, that it may run more freely. Expectation is the opening of the soul: Ps. lxxxvi. 10, 'Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.' He hath power and readiness to give us abundance of all things, if we could come and depend upon him for it. It is the narrowness of our faith which hindereth our felicity; we are not straitened in God, but in ourselves; we will not enlarge our expectations to take in and seek as much as God offereth. Unbelief *ponit obicem*, puts a bar in the way: Mark vi. 5, 'And he could do no mighty work there.' It is like a dam to a river, it hindereth the passage of grace. God's grace is given out to the creature according to its expectation. Unbelief is a kind of restraint to almightiness; he could not because he would not; for so it is, Mark xiii. 58, 'And he did not many mighty works there, because



of their unbelief.' That power which we distrust is justly hidden from us ; but confidence opens a free passage for grace into our souls.

*Thirdly*, The observations concerning this life.

*Obs. 1.* This life must be extended, not only to spiritual duties, and acts of immediate worship, but to all the actions of our natural and temporal life ; "*Ὁ δὲ νῦν ζῶ ἐν σαρκί*. That natural life which we live, and those things which concern that life, they are ordered by a virtue drawn from Christ by faith in him. A true believer sleepeth, and eateth and drinketh in faith ; and in the lawful occasions of his calling, as well as religion, faith hath an influence to order them to God's glory, and with respect to eternal happiness : 1 Cor. x. 31, 'Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God ;' and, Heb. xi. 33, 'Who through faith subdued kingdoms, fought battles.' Take God's directions, and order all things to his glory : Col. iii. 17, 'Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.' Every action must be influenced by religion, looking to the promises : Heb. xi. 13, 'By faith Sarah received strength to conceive seed ;' by her faith in the promise. Christians are not left to their own nature, neither in things necessary nor in things indifferent in their own nature, neither in words nor deeds ; they are to look to Christ's command, and to be looking for his help, and aiming at his glory, still consulting with God, and seeing God in every little work of his. There is not a gnat, nor pile of grass, but discovers its author. And as there is a providential influence, so a gracious influence ; as when we use such holy fear and heavenly-mindedness that every one may see heavenly-mindedness in all our actions, and so the poorest servant, being under this divine influence, liveth by faith as well as the greatest monarch.

2. We never act nobly in anything till we live the life of faith. There is a twofold life—the animal life, and the spiritual and divine life : 1 Cor. ii. 14, 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.' The human soul accommodateth itself to the interests and concerns of the body ; but the divine life is animated by heavenly things, and is carried out to look after more noble things than back and belly concerns.

3. We never live comfortably till we live by faith. While we are guided by sense, we are tossed to and fro, according to the variety of accidents in the world ; but a believer in the greatest straits doth not only make a poor and sorry shift to live, but hath a comfortable means of subsistence : Hab. ii. 4, 'The just shall live by his faith.' For whilst he dwelleth under the shadow of imputed righteousness, to cover all his defects and sins, and to hide him from death and wrath, and can draw virtue from Christ to enable him to do every good word and work, and hath the power of God to make use of for his inward and outward support, and the hopes of glory to comfort him when this life is ended, what should hinder his rejoicing even in the hardest dispensations ? He is well at ease that hath wholly given up himself to this kind of life : Heb. x. 38, 'Now the just shall live by faith ;' that is, in the hardest trials, when they suffer the spoiling of their goods, and look for loss of life every day. By life we are to understand a happy and a comfortable life : *non est vivere, sed valere vita*. We are enabled to

hold on cheerfully and comfortably in a holy course, notwithstanding troubles.

4. That the life of faith is glory begun. First we live by faith, and then by sight, 2 Cor. v. 7. Faith now serveth instead of sight and fruition: Heb. xi. 1, 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.' Though it doth not affect us to the same degree that the life of glory or the beatifical vision will, yet somewhat answerable it doth. The life of glory is inconsistent with any misery; but the life of faith maketh us to rest as quietly upon God and his gracious promise as if there were no misery, where it hath any efficacy and vigour, so as no allurements or terrors can turn us aside, but we follow our Lord in all conditions with delight and cheerfulness. The expectation cannot affect us as the enjoyment; but in some measure it doth: Rom. v. 2, 3, 'We rejoice in hope of the glory of God; and not only so, but we glory in tribulation also.' We are contemptible in the world, but we hope for a glorious estate, and so can forego those transitory contentments which worldlings so much magnify. This quieteth and comforteth God's children in the meanest condition.

The use of this is to persuade you to live this life of faith, if you would live indeed, and live nobly and happily. To this end—

1. Take care that this life be begun in you.

2. Improve this life to a cheerful walking with God in all conditions. For the—

First, If you would have this life begun in you—

1. Study the grounds of faith; for if the foundation be not well laid, all the building will be like a bunching wall or a tottering fence. Now what are the grounds of faith? The promises of the gospel. Therefore consider seriously what is said in the gospel—(1.) To whom, and (2.) By whom.

[1.] What is said in the gospel. The sum of the gospel is abridged and contracted to our hands in many places of scripture; these especially: 1 Tim. i. 15, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.' Is this true indeed, that God hath sent his Son to save us from hell, and to pay our debt and procure salvation for us? And why shall I stand out? The gospel excludeth none, why should I exclude myself? I am sinner enough, shall this discourage me from looking after Christ? That will be in effect as if a beggar should say, I am too poor to receive alms: or the sick man should say, I am too sick to go to the physician; or as if one should say, I am too filthy to be washed, or too cold to go to the fire. Your discouragement should be a motive; I am the chief of sinners, and therefore I will put in for a share. God inviteth us, not because we are worthy, but that we may be worthy. So Acts x. 43, 'To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him should receive remission of sins.' What do all the prophets and holy men of God give witness to? That there is such a benefit prepared for all that will lay hold of it; and I profess to believe the scriptures, and shall I not put in for a share? Lord, I have sins to be pardoned as well as others, and I believe thou art the

Son of God, and the Lamb of God that came to take away sin. So Heb. v. 9, 'He is become the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him.' Will Christ give eternal life to all that obey him? I have too long stood out against thee, Lord. I now lay down the weapons of my defiance, and say, Here I am; what wilt thou have me to do?

[2.] To whom God offereth this mercy. To every creature: Mark xvi. 15, 'Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.' And am not I in the rank of creatures? But to whom especially? To 'the weary and heavy laden,' Mat. xi. 28. To them that are lost: Mat. ix. 13, 'I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' To such as have most feeling of their sins. I have a burden too heavy for me to bear; since Christ calleth me, I will come to him for ease.

[3.] Who it is that calleth: Christ, who is able, willing, and faithful. Able; for all authority and power is given to him in heaven and earth, Mat. xxviii. 18; 'All judgment is given the Son,' John v. 22. They said to the blind man, Mark x. 49, 'Be of good comfort; arise, he calleth thee;' that mighty HE that hath the disposal of every man's eternal state. And willing he is: 2 Peter iii. 9, 'Not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance;' if you will believe him on his call: Ezek. xxxiii. 11, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his ways and live.' And you have God's truth for it: Ps. cxxxviii. 2, 'He hath magnified his word above all his name.' Now take him at his word; nay, we have his oath: Heb. vi. 18, 'That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation.' His word was enough; but since he hath added his oath, what contumely do you do him to refuse his offers! 1 John v. 10, 'He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar.'

2. Wait for God's power to settle your hearts upon these grounds: Faith is his gift, Eph. ii. 8; and Phil. i. 29, 'To you it is given on the behalf of Christ to believe in him.' And he worketh it: Heb. xii. 2, 'Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.' Without him it cannot be done: John vi. 44, 'No man can come unto me except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him.' And this by his almighty power: Eph. i. 19, 'And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power.'

3. Look not for a transient act; that his Spirit should work upon us as a stranger, but dwell in us as an inhabitant. After believing, the Spirit cometh to dwell in us and work in us, as a pledge and earnest of eternal life: Eph. i. 13, 14, 'After ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance.' He remaineth constantly, and flitteth not, but taketh up a fixed and unmovable habitation, not as a wayfaring man, for a night: 1 Cor. vi. 19, 'Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost that is in you?' He dwelleth there not as an inmate or underling, but as lord of the house, and is worshipped and revered there. This is the great evidence: 1 John iv. 13, 'Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.' Magnificent words! Who may entitle themselves

to such a privilege? They that have the Spirit, not to come upon them at times, but to remain there as a principle of life: John iv. 14, 'Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.' It shall quench his thirst after vanity and earthly delights, and make them tasteless; they not only get a draught, but the Spirit of Christ is as a fountain to make this grace enduring in itself and in its effects. It is not a stream or a pond, that may be dried up; but a well, and a springing well, and maketh us fruitful in all well-doing; yea, at length it becomes an ocean.

4. Look for the effects of it. If you have such a life begun in you as the life of faith, then you will have—

[1.] Spiritual senses, taste, and feeling: 1 Peter ii. 3, 'If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious;' and Ps. cxix. 103, 'How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!' You will relish spiritual things, which to others have no savour; then promises begin to be savoury and to rejoice the heart, when others are no more moved with them than with common histories. You will then be sensible of good and evil suitable to that life you have; more sensible of sin than any affliction: Rom. vii. 24, 'Oh, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?' more sensible of God's hiding his face. It was as a sword in David's bones, Ps. xlii. 10. More sensible of providence: Jer. v. 3, 'Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved.'

[2.] Spiritual affections, being dead to sin and the world, and alive to God: 1 Cor. ii. 12, 'Now we have received, not the spirit of this world, but the spirit which is of God, that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God;' desiring to be with Christ, Phil. i. 23; and having an heart set on things above, Col. iii. 1.

[3.] You have spiritual strength: Eph. ii. 10, 'We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them;' and Phil. iv. 13, 'I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me.'

Secondly, Improve this life to a cheerful walking with God in a course of obedience. To this end—

1. Meditate on the promises: 1 Tim. iv. 8, 'Godliness is profitable to all things, and hath the promise of this life and that which is to come;' and Ps. lxxxiv. 11, 'He is a sun and a shield; the Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly;' and Ps. xxxiv. 9, 'There is no want to them that fear him;' and Rom. viii. 28, 'All things shall work together for good to them that love God.' We shall have whatever is expedient to bring us safely to heaven. God hath made promise of more than we could ask or think—protection from all evil, a comfortable supply of all blessings, temporal, spiritual, and eternal. Consult with these promises: Ps. cxix. 24, 'Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors;' Ps. xlviii. 12, 13, 'Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof; mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces.'

3. Sue out your right at the throne of grace; there the promises are

put in suit : Heb. iv. 16, ' Let us come with boldness to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in the time of need.' Promises are given us, not only to plead with ourselves, but to put them in suit, and plead them with God.

3. What is wanting in the creature, see it made up in God ; that is living by faith : Ps. xci. 1, ' He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty ;' 2 Cor. vi. 10, ' Having nothing, yet possessing all things.' In every strait do this—make God all in all : Ps. xci. 9, ' Because thou hast made the Lord which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation.' This is not a senseless stupidity, but a lively exercise of faith.

4. Counterbalance things—as thus, set God against the creature : Mat. x. 28, ' Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul ; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell.' The covenant against providence : Ps. lxxiii. 16, 17, ' When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me, until I went into the sanctuary of God, then understood I their end.' Things eternal against things temporal : Rom. viii. 18, ' I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us.' So 2 Cor. iv. 18, ' While we look not to the things that are seen, but to the things that are not seen ; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.' The use and profit of afflictions against the present smart of them : Heb. xii. 11, ' Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous, nevertheless afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.' All trouble cometh from not right sorting and comparing things ; seeking that on earth which is only to be had in heaven, and seeking that in the creature which is only to be had in God, and looking for that from self which is only to be found in Christ, and seeking that in the law which is only to be had in the gospel.

II. Now I come particularly to treat of the life of faith ; let us see how this life of faith is exercised and put forth. The life of faith may be considered either—

*First*, With respect to its object, the promises of the new covenant ; as our justification, sanctification, the supplies of the present life, or everlasting blessedness.

*Secondly*, With respect to its trials, or the opposite evils that seem to infringe the comfort of these promises ; as deep afflictions, great temptations from the devil, the world, and the flesh.

*Thirdly*, With respect to its effects—as holy duties and the exercises of grace ; as with respect to the ordinances by which it is fed and increased—as the word, prayer, and sacraments ; and the duties of charity, of public and private relations—as to the honouring God in our generation or in our callings.

First, To begin with the life of faith as to justification, or those promises wherein Jesus Christ and his righteousness is offered to us for the pardon of our sins and our acceptance with God. Here I shall do three things :—

1. Prove that justification is one main or chief part of the life of faith.

2. I shall show you how we live by faith, or what is the work of faith in order to justification.

3. What we must do that we may so live.

1. That this is a main part of the life of faith.

[1.] It is included in the expression, as it is applied and expounded by the apostle. I shall bring two places : Rom. i. 17, 'For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith ; as it is written, The just shall live by faith.' He giveth a reason why he was not ashamed of the gospel, because of that great blessing revealed in it, the righteousness of God ; that righteousness which God imputeth without the works of the law, by virtue of which we are accepted with God ; and how doth he prove it, that there is such a righteousness of God ? He proves it by that saying, 'It is written, The just shall live by faith.' The other place is Gal. iii. 11, 'But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident ; for the just shall live by faith.' So that we cannot handle living by faith, unless we take in this branch.

[2.] There are many promises made of this benefit. Now it is faith that receives the promises : Jer. xxxi. 34, 'I will forgive their iniquities, and will remember their sins no more.' Now, wherever there is a promise there must be faith ; for as the law, with its threatenings to the fallen creature, is the strength of sin—1 Cor. xv. 56, 'The strength of sin is the law,'—so the gospel, with its promises, is the strength of faith ; and therefore our comfort thence ariseth. If we would live and act comfortably on the promises, we must live by faith.

[3.] Because there is a daily use of faith for the continuance and the increase of the sense of this benefit, therefore this is a great part of our living by faith. It is said, Rom. i. 17, that 'the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith ;' from first to last, from one degree of faith to another ; not only the beginning of justification is by faith, but the whole progress of it. Many think that this kind of faith on God's free justifying grace in Christ is necessary to give us comfort at our first conversion, as if then it had finished all it should or could do ; at other times faith is laid aside, unless we fall into some notable decay, or may be plunged into some deep doubts, or fall into some great offences, or be exercised with some sharp afflictions, when we are forced, as it were, to begin all again. Oh, no ! there is a continual use of it ; for faith is not only *obstetratrix*, the midwife to the new birth, but *nutrix*, the continual nurse and cherisher of it, and of all the comfort and peace that we have thereby ; it is still necessary to our communion with God, and continuance and increase of comfort, for as soon as we take off our eye from Christ, the remembrance of former sins will trouble and vex the conscience. And therefore we must every day humble ourselves for sin, and seek pardon, and cry out with David, Ps. cxliii. 2, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight no man living shall be justified ;' as not the greatest sinner, so not the best saint, neither before regeneration nor after. There is no other way of maintaining comfort but by flying to grace, and seeking favour and pardon according to the new covenant. Yea, those evils mentioned before, as notable decays, great offences, deep doubts, sharp afflictions, they are all occasioned by the discontinuance of the exercise

of faith, and because we do not cherish a warm sense of the love of God in pardoning our sins for Christ's sake. The more we keep the grounds of comfort in constant view, the more uniform and even we are in our course of walking with God, as fire once kindled is better kept burning than when it is often quenched and often kindled again. And therefore this should be our daily task, to live by faith with respect to justification.

[4.] Because this is the ground of all other parts of the life of grace, take it either for the life of sanctification, or our present living to God, or take it for the life of glory, or our living with God hereafter.

(1.) It is the way to the life of sanctification, or our present living to God and converse with him. Take it either for his influences upon us, or our duty to him, for Christ lives in us by his Spirit, and we live in him by faith, as Christ liveth in us by his Spirit, and we receive his influences. The holy God will have no communion with us while the guilt of sin standeth in the way: Isa. lix. 2, 'Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you.' Sin, and nothing but sin, doth raise up a wall of separation between us and God; poverty, sickness, reproaches, these are evils, but none of these shall separate us from the love of God in Christ; but sin breedeth a strangeness between us and God; so that till sin be taken away, there can be no communion between God and us, and we are cut off from the blessed influences by which the life of grace might be maintained: Jer. v. 25, 'Your sins have withheld good things from you.' Till sin be removed, the cock is, as it were, turned, and the course of the blessing stopped. But take it for our acting grace, and living to God; we are careless of our duty unless we be interested in this benefit; the more love we have to God, the more sense we have of his pardoning mercy: Ps. cxxx. 4, 'There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.' We can neither have hand nor heart to serve and obey God without this encouragement; the more we believe him to be gracious, the more we fear to offend him; and by experience none are so cautious of sin, as those that seek after daily pardon. Who is more careful not to run into new arrears than he that desireth to have his debts paid and cancelled and blotted out? So they that are solicitous to make even reckoning between God and their souls are most cautious that they do not interrupt their peace with new sins; and whilst they plead so hard for mercy, they have the greater sense of duty and obedience. So that we cannot carry on the life of sanctification without looking after the life of justification.

(2.) For the life of glorification, we are incapable of that, and cannot hope for it with any comfort till we are pardoned: Rom v. 18, 'The free gift came upon all to justification of life.' Life follows justification, as death doth condemnation. All men by nature are dead in law, and by justification this sentence is repealed, and men are invested with a new right to everlasting life: John v. 24, 'He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death to life.' They are not only put into a living condition by sanctification, but have a sentence of life passed in their favour, for justification is a sentence

of life ; so that if we would live the life of grace, or hope for the life of glory, we must be put into a condition for both by justification.

2. What doth faith do with respect to this benefit?

[1.] It assents to the truth of the gospel offering this benefit to us, and causeth the soul to be fully persuaded that God is appeased in Christ with all those that cast themselves upon his grace, and seek God's favour in and through him. This is the work of faith, to believe that it is the good pleasure of God revealed in the gospel to pardon and justify all them that do believe in Christ : 1 Tim. i. 15, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.' Assent goeth before pursuit ; first we must believe that this is a true and faithful saying, before we shall look after such a benefit from him. So Heb. xi. 13, 'They saw the promises afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them.' When a man can be persuaded that it is even so, that God will be gracious to them that believe in Christ, then he will hug and embrace these precious promises. And Eph. i. 13, 'In whom also ye trusted, after ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.' You see under what notion they took up the gospel ; first we must be persuaded that the gospel is a word of truth, before we stir either hand or foot to look after any benefit by it. I do the rather press this, because the justification of a sinner is the great secret revealed in the gospel, which was hidden from nature till God revealed it. And therefore doth the apostle so operously prove the truth of this in the three first chapters to the Romans. His argument stands thus—that all the world being guilty before God, they must either be condemned, and that will not consist with the mercy and goodness of God, or there must be some way of justifying a sinner ; but his wisdom hath found out that way : Rom. iii. 21–23, 'But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets ; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all that believe ; for there is no difference : for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.' All the world was at a loss about this, how the sinful creature should get rid of the dread of God's justice ; for every man that hath a conscience knoweth that it implies a law, and a law implies a judgment for the breach of the law. Now all the world was afraid of this judgment of God ; the apostle proves this both of Jews and gentiles. Now faith looks into the gospel, and there finds this secret revealed by the holy men of God ; and therefore, whenever the gospel is spoken of, and this mystery of justification, you shall find there is some addition or note of assurance added, that it is a word of truth, or a faithful saying, because the heart of man is apt to doubt of the truth of this glorious mystery.

[2.] Faith exciteth us to put in for this benefit of being justified in God's sight. We fell from God by unbelief, and nothing exciteth us to seek after God again but faith. Now this faith doth by setting before us, on the one side, our own sinful and cursed estate, and on the other side, God's promises of pardon and free justification by Christ. In Heb. vi. 18, the heirs of promise are described to be those 'who fly for refuge to lay hold upon the hope that is set before them.'



There is a plain allusion to the avenger of blood and the city of refuge. A man that had killed another, if he were taken before he came to the city of refuge, he was to be put to death; now such a man, when his life was concerned, he would fly to the city of refuge. Such are the heirs of promise; they run to take hold of the hope set before them; the curses of the law drive them, and the promises of the gospel draw and allure them; and we never put in seriously and in good earnest for a share in this benefit till faith stirreth up active and lively thoughts about these things, and then we never leave till we see ourselves interested therein.

(1.) Faith worketh in us a serious thoughtfulness about our sinful and cursed estate; that driveth us to Christ, as the other consideration draweth us, and sweetly allureth us to close with him. The first consideration of our sinful and cursed estate driveth us out of ourselves, when we consider how 'all the world is become guilty before God,' Rom. iii. 19; and liable to the curse, Gal. iii. 10, 'As many as are of the works of the law, are under a curse;' that we are 'children of wrath,' Eph ii. 3; that this curse is no slight one; that it is an eternal separation from God, and being cast out with the devil and his angels into everlasting fire. Now, when this is represented by faith, the sinner beginneth to 'fly from the wrath to come,' Mat. iii. 7, which otherwise is looked upon but as a fable and vain scarecrow. Sense and natural reason cannot judge aright, neither of its own misery, nor of the way of recovery from it; but faith, improving the scriptures, shuts up the sinner, that he hath no evasion, nor way of escape: Gal iii. 22, 'The scripture hath concluded all under sin;' shut them up as in a prison, as the word signifieth. This is the work of faith. Conscience will tell men of a law, and a law of a judge and a judgment-day, and that he doth not stand upon sound terms with this judge, that he dareth not seriously to think of death and the world to come, without horror and amazement: but faith, working upon scripture, doth make him more distinctly to understand it, and to be most sensibly affected with it: Jonah iii. 5, 'The people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them.' There is a faith required to believe the threatenings of the law, as well as the promises of the gospel, to convince men of their cursed estate by nature, without which it is not effectual.

(2.) It draweth us to close with Christ by the promises of pardon. It spreadeth before the soul all the melting offers of the word, and his invitations of sinners to return to him; such as that, Isa. lv. 7, 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy on him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon him.' And he prays us to be reconciled to him: 2 Cor. v. 20, 'Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.' And shall all this be spoken in vain? 2 Cor. vi. 1, 'We beseech you receive not the grace of God in vain.' Shall all the sweet offers of grace in the gospel be as dry chips or withered flowers to me? This makes a poor distressed creature to stir up himself, to believe if this be certain, that God is not

willing that any should perish, but rather that they should repent, and be converted, and healed. And hath he made such a general offer, that I am sure that I am contained under it? Why shall I hang back and not come to him for pardon, and wait for his grace? I am condemned already, and shall I pull upon myself new woes, by despising God's mercy so freely offered to sinners? Shall my unbelieving heart draw back when God inviteth me to come to him? What did God mean when he said, Acts x. 43, 'To him gave all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth on him should receive the remission of sins'? Wherefore did Christ send abroad his apostles with the glad tidings of salvation in their mouths? Luke xxiv. 47, 'And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations.' Why hath he said, 1 John ii. 1, 2, 'If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins'? Surely God did not intend to flatter and delude his creature with a vain hope, nor to entice and court him into a fool's paradise; certainly he is in earnest in what he saith. I need mercy, and he hath promised to give it; I thirst after it, and he will give it me, for he is faithful; therefore let me see what God will do for my poor soul.

(3.) It directeth us to use the means which God hath appointed; namely, to humble ourselves before God, and to sue out this blessing: Luke xviii. 13, 'Lord, be merciful to me a sinner;' and 1 John i. 9, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.' It is a great part of faith to put God's bonds in suit: Jer. iii. 12, 13, 'I am merciful; only acknowledge thine iniquity.' This is God's prescribed course, and we must use it in faith; he cannot be offended with that which himself commandeth, nor deny what he hath promised. Doth not he command thee thus to come into his presence, yea, beseech thee? and why art thou afraid? Hath he not said, that if we cast ourselves at his feet with brokenness of heart, confessing our sins, he will forgive them, and cast them into the depths of the sea? Refusal of means argueth despair; therefore go and plead the promises with him, and urge him upon his own word.

(4.) The work of faith is to make application; not only to see that sin may be pardoned, and how, but that our sins are or shall be pardoned for Christ's sake. There are degrees in this application; sometimes God's children apply promises in the humbling way, and creep in at the backdoor of a promise: 1 Tim. i. 15, 'Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.' There I can put in for a share; I am sure I am sinner enough, if Christ came to save sinners. They put their mouths in the dust, yet look up, because there is hope. And sometimes they express their confidence for the future; though they are not persuaded of their good estate at present, yet they hope they shall at length be pardoned and accepted: Ps. lxxv. 3, 'As for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.' He can and will do it. So Micah vii. 19, 'He will turn again, he will have compassion on us, he will subdue our iniquities; thou wilt cast all their sins into the depth of the sea.' At other times they express their confidence of pardon as an act past: Ps. xxxii. 5, 'Thou forgavest the iniquity of my transgression; and Isa. xxxviii. 17, 'Thou

hast cast all my sins behind thy back.' To say so is an act of experience of a sinner now justified by faith; and though every self-condemned sinner cannot thus apply his pardon, nor thus lay hold upon this benefit, and apply it to himself, yet he should endeavour it.

(5.) It is a work of faith to wait the Lord's leisure, though comfort doth not succeed and flow as soon as we would have it. You must not throw up all, as if God were beholden to you, or at your beck and command. As soon as you have used the means, you must be satisfied and contented with his word till the promise be made good. Many give the lie to God when they find not at first what they hope for; but we must be satisfied with God's word till it be made good to us: Isa. xxvi. 8, 'In the way of thy judgments we have waited for thee: the desire of our souls is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.' Whatever desires we have after comfort and the enjoyment of this benefit, we must be contented to tarry the Lord's leisure; though we be not answered, his word is sure; though we do not presently feel the comfort and effect of it, his word is gone forth in truth. 'I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance,' Ps. xlii. 5. There may be a grant where there is no sense of it. We do not live by sense or actual comfort, but by faith.

3. What must we do that we may so live and set faith a-work? To this end and purpose directions are several, according to the different state and posture of the soul. As for instance, if the heart be sluggish, and your desires cold and dull towards this benefit, then there is one course to be taken; but if the heart be comfortless and dejected, then there is another course to be taken; and then, if you find your hearts too slight in the work of pardon, and you make a small matter of it, another course must be taken.

[1.] If the heart be sluggish, and your desires cold and faint, and you cannot be earnest in the pursuit of so considerable a blessing, then you must quicken and awaken the heart by considering the danger on the one side, and the profit and utility on the other.

(1.) The danger of security, or not prizing of a pardon, and of the comforts of a justified estate. Let me tell you, it is as ill a sign as can be when a man esteemeth not of pardon, or of God as a pardoner; it argues deep carnality and security in those that were never acquainted with God, and a strange witchery and fascination of soul that is fallen upon them that are regenerate, and will in time cause them to smart for it.

1st. It argues deep carnality and security in those that are strangers to God. For this is the first notion that rendereth God amiable, because he is so necessary to our consciences. Guilt and bondage are natural to us; but it is a sign men are hardened in fleshly delights when they have lost their actual sense of this, and are past feeling. Therefore consider how dangerous their condition is, if God put the bond of the old covenant in suit, and require their souls at their hands: Luke xii. 20, 'Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.' Oh, miserable they! when they shall be haled to hell, and the direful sentence shall be executed upon them, 'Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.' And consider, there is nothing but the slender thread of a frail life between you and this; and how soon is that fretted asunder!

2d. Or if this evil should fall upon God's own children, a man that is spiritual, that he be listless and careless about his justification, it argueth some sore spiritual disease, and it will cost them much bitterness before they get rid of it; and if the Lord meaneth them mercy, they shall again taste the vinegar and gall of the law's curse; and is it nothing to you to be liable to the wrath of God?

(2.) To awaken the sluggish heart, consider the utility and profit of it; if once you could clear up your justification, what sweet, happy lives might you lead! Ps. xxxii. 1, 2, 'Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.' In the original it is, Oh! the blessedness of the man. But the blessedness of such a man is more fully set forth by the apostle, Rom. v. 1-5, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through Christ.'

1st. The very first-fruit of it is peace with God. Sin had broken off all friendship and amity, and procured enmity between God and the creature; and is it nothing to have God for an enemy, and to be in dread of him every day, lest he should bend his bow, and shoot his arrows at us? If all the world were at war with you, and God were your friend, you were happy men; but if all the world be at peace with you, and God your enemy, you may be soon miserable enough; till you can make a wall between you and heaven, you can never be secured. All that is truly good and truly evil dependeth upon our peace and war with God. I shall illustrate it by that place, Acts xii. 20, 'The men of Tyre and Sidon had offended Herod, but they made Blastus their friend, and desired terms of peace, because their country was nourished by the king's country.' Tyre was an island on the sea, and could not subsist without supplies from the king's country. Certainly we cannot subsist a moment without God, and therefore it concerns us to be at peace with him. Till we are justified, we are utterly out of God's favour, and liable to his indignation; but when we are justified, there is an everlasting peace concluded between us and him.

2d. Free and cheerful access to God. So it follows, Rom. v. 2, 'By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand.' If you have any dealings with God, and know anything of this kind of traffic, you will be glad to hear how you may think of him comfortably, and come to him with assurance of welcome. Wicked men cannot endure to think of God; their thoughts of God are a torment to them. But to have a free access to him upon all occasions, and cheerfully to lay forth your whole case to him, is not this a blessed privilege? To be in like favour with God as Joseph was with Pharaoh, to ask and have, and be assured of welcome whenever we come to him, that, ask what we will, we may be assured it shall be done for us.

3d. Joy of salvation. So it follows, 'We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.' Though our estate be poor and contemptible in the world, yet there is glory enough provided for us in heaven; and seemeth it a light thing to be the King's son-in-law? to be heirs of God, and co-heirs with Christ? Well may we forego all transitory preferments, which worldlings so magnify, for these hopes. Well may we despise the shame, and endure the cross, if such a glory be set before us. To have a glimpse of it here in the world is very comfortable;

the very preparatives are sweet. Now this glory is but revealed to us, and our hearts have received a little of it; what will it be when this glory shall be revealed in us? Rom. viii. 18, 'I reckon that the sufferings of this present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us,' when we shall have glorious bodies, glorious souls, glorious company, glorious sights, glorious exercises. Nothing can be desired here to be compared with it.

4th. Comfort in afflictions: ver. 3, 'We glory in tribulations.' Some make it an enlargement of what he had said before: 'We rejoice in hope of the glory of God;' and tribulation doth not weaken this joy. And others interpret it, 'We do not only rejoice in the glory of God, which is the best part of our estate, but, which is much more admirable, we find matter of rejoicing in our afflictions and tribulations, which are the worst part of our estate:' James i. 2, 3, 'My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trial of your faith worketh patience;' and 2 Cor. xii. 10, 'I take pleasure in my infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then I am strong.' Those things that are so unwelcome to the natural man, that spoil all his rejoicings, they are the matter of a godly man's rejoicing. A wicked man will part with God, and Christ, and peace of conscience, and the hopes of eternal life, and all to shun the cross; but such is the temper of a godly man, he cleaves closest to God in the worst of times, and finds matter of rejoicing in the worst condition.

5th. And this is backed with a reason, which makes a fifth benefit—a further increase of patience: 'Tribulation worketh patience.' Grace is so welcome that they are willing to exchange outward comforts for inward grace. By nature we are like untamed heifers, very unruly at first yoking, but after a while we come quietly to bear the yoke: James i. 3, 'Knowing this, that the trial of your faith worketh patience.' At first a new cart squeaks and creaks, but afterwards goes away silently under a heavy load. At first we complain the cross is very heavy and burdensome to us, but afterwards we quietly submit to the will of God.

6th. And this bringeth on another benefit, and that is experience: ver. 4, 'And patience, experience.' We learn many sweet experiences of God by afflictions. A man that hath been at sea, and endured storms and tempests in foul weather, is not so easily dismayed nor afraid of the rolling of every wave and the tossing of the ship as one that never hath been at sea. So when we have had experience of God and ourselves, and of the course and issues of things, we are not so easily discouraged as others are.

7th. The hopes of everlasting life are increased and strengthened, and so we are the better able to bear the inconveniences of the present life. If a poor man be robbed of twenty or thirty shillings, no wonder if he cry and take on, because he hath no more to help himself with; but now, if a rich man be robbed of such a sum, he is not much troubled, because he hath more at home. So a man that is justified by faith, and hath assurance of the favour of God, he can comfortably bear up against all the troubles and crosses he meets with in his way to heaven.

8th. Sweet tastes of God's fatherly love: ver. 5, 'The love of God is shed abroad in their hearts.' God hath his comforts for his afflicted ones. His people are never so assured of his love as then, for there is love seen in their afflictions. Oh! it is no mean thing to live by faith. Come and see; will you be a stranger to all this?

[2.] If the heart be dejected and comfortless—

(1.) Consider what grounds we have to hope for pardoning mercy from the Lord. Partly from the nature of God: Micah vii. 18, 'Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.' Never did we take more pleasure in the acting and committing of sin, than he in the pardon of it. No man is backward to do that he delights in. God's purpose is to make his grace glorious: Eph. i. 6, 'To the praise of the glory of his grace.' He everlastingly purposed this within himself, and, as a wise God, accordingly hath suited means to that end. His justice cannot complain, having received full satisfaction in Christ, who paid the full price: Rom. iii. 24, 'Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ;' Isa. xxx. 18, 'Therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you; and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the Lord is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him.' And partly from the name of God: Isa. l. 10, 'Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay himself upon his God.' Now the name of God is at large described: Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7, 'The Lord, the Lord God, gracious and merciful, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,' &c. These names are given to God that we may take notice of his graciousness, and that we might stay our hearts on the name of God. Why doth he invite us with such earnestness? He that waited upon thee when thou wentest astray, will he not pardon thee when thou returnest?

(2.) To answer all discouragements: What is it that keepeth thee off? Thy unworthiness? that indeed maketh us the fitter objects of his grace and mercy. God giveth this freely without worth; for grace doth all things gratis, without any worth in us. If we were not unworthy, how should God show forth the riches of his grace? And when we have a sense for it, and a heart broken for it, it is a good preparation to the work. If any man were bitten with the fiery serpent, he might look up to the brazen serpent and be healed. It matters not what the disease be, so Christ be the physician. If any feel sin a burden, and do truly and earnestly desire to be eased of it, he is invited to ask, that by asking he may receive: Mat. xi. 28, 'Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' Oh! but, saith the poor troubled, humbled soul, I am not humbled enough. Remember, it is not the deepness of the wound, but the soundness of the cure that we should look after. If you are weary of sin, and unfeignedly willing to part with it, and everything that would separate between you and Christ; if Christ be precious to you, and you are willing to give up yourselves to the Lord's use, the end is wrought. Humiliation is not required for itself, but for these ends.

[3.] If you have cause to suspect that your hearts are too slight in the estimation of pardon, and that you make too easy a work of it, and pass it over too lightly, then consider—

(1.) What it cost the Lord Jesus Christ to bring it about. It cost the precious blood of the Son of God: Rom. v. 9, 'Being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.' Did it cost the blood of Christ to procure it, and shall I have slight and mean thoughts of it? The apostle did urge this as an argument to press ministers to have a care of the flock, because 'they were purchased by the blood of God,' Acts xx. 28. It was not an impostor that died at Jerusalem, but the very Son of God. By the same argument we may press men to look after justification by faith in Christ, because Christ hath purchased it with his precious blood.

(2.) It is a work wherein eternity is concerned; justification is but that act done privately which you expect God will do publicly at the last day: Acts iii. 19, 'Repent, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshment shall come from the presence of the Lord.' Your act is nothing, unless it be ratified by Christ at that day. Everywhere the scripture puts us upon this task. Boldness at his coming is made the test of the strength of our faith: 1 John ii. 18, 'And now, little children, abide in him, that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and may not be ashamed before him at his coming.'

(3.) If you go about this work with brokenness of heart, you cannot be slightly in it, if indeed the heart be wounded for sin; there is no dallying with broken bones; surely such will mind a cure.

(4.) Take heed of an heart purposing to continue in sin: Heb. x. 22, 'Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.' If you have fallen into sin, you must humble your souls deeply before the Lord: Hosea xiv. 2, 3, 'Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously.' You will not beg that God would take away this plague, but take away this sin, that you may not sin again, but that you may be more serious than ever you have been, that you may have a new heart, and sin may never live in you more.

Secondly, I shall speak of the life of faith as it respects sanctification. This also must be regarded.

1. These two must not be severed; justification and sanctification must carefully be distinguished, but not separated: 1 Cor. vi. 11, 'Such were some of you, but you are washed, but you are justified, but you are sanctified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God: 1 Cor. i. 30, 'Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption.' They always go together in God's dispensations: 1 John i. 9, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' Sin is considerable in the guilt and filth of it, as it renders us obnoxious to God's justice, or as it tainteth our faculties and actions, and indisposeth us for his service; and both must be done away. Christ came to do both; he was sent into the world to restore God's image in us; but the image of God consisteth in the participation of holiness, as well as the participation of blessedness.

For God, that is happy and blessed, is also holy and good; the filth of sin is opposite to holiness, and the guilt of it to blessedness. So that Christ must restore but half the image of God, or he must give us this double benefit; if he should give us the one without the other, many inconveniences would follow. If he should free us from the guilt of sin, and give us impunity without holiness, then *bonum physicum*, a natural good, would be consistent with *malum morale*, a moral evil; and if he should give us sanctification, and deny impunity, the highest natural evil would be consistent with a moral good. And therefore he giveth us both; he justifies that he may sanctify, and he sanctifies that he may glorify. It is not consistent with God's wisdom and justice to give us pardon and let us alone in our sins, nor with his wisdom and mercy to give us holiness without pardon. Yea, justification (if it could be said to be alone) would only give us freedom from hell; but without sanctification we should remain unqualified for heaven or the life of glory. It is true, such an one would be exempted from *pœna sensus*, the punishment of sense, but not from *pœna damni*, the punishment of loss. We cannot enjoy heaven, nor see the face of God till we are sanctified: 'For without holiness no man shall see the Lord,' Heb. xii. 14. And therefore both must go together; and wounded souls, those that are affected with their condition, look for both; as he that hath his leg broken desireth not only to be eased of the present pain, but to have it set right again. Those that are sensible of their condition before God would not only have their sins pardoned, but would have their hearts enlarged to serve God with more cheerfulness and freedom. Well, then, both is desired by a broken heart, and Christ is made both to us: 1 Cor. i. 30, 'He is made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption.' And it is his work not only to turn away God's wrath, but to turn us from our sins: Acts iii. 26, 'Unto you first, God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities;' and Acts v. 31, 'Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a prince and a saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.' Now, what Christ giveth, faith receiveth; and therefore if we would live by faith, faith must be exercised in this great blessing of sanctification.

2. Sanctification is the greatest benefit of the two, if you compare them together. Many will cry up justification, but neglect sanctification, but preposterously; for, of the two, sanctification is the greater privilege. I prove it thus—

[1.] Justification freeth us *à malo naturali*, from pain and suffering; but sanctification *à malo morali*, from sin and pollution; for sin is worse than misery, and holiness is to be preferred before impunity; and therefore justification, which frees us from misery, is not so great a privilege as sanctification, which frees us from sin. And the saints here have chosen the greatest sufferings rather than the least sins; as Moses 'chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season,' Heb. xi. 25. And God hateth sin, as being against his very nature. God may inflict punishment, but he cannot infuse sin. Now, as misery and punishment is less than sin, so justification, which frees us from misery and



punishment, is not so great a blessing as sanctification, which frees us from sin.

[2.] The end must needs be more noble than the means. Now, sanctification is the end of justification, as glorification is the end of sanctification. God's end in justifying is to sanctify, or to promote holiness; and therefore, Heb. ix. 14, Christ is said to 'purge our conscience from dead works, that we may serve the living God;' and Luke i. 74, 75, 'He hath delivered us out of the hands of our enemies, that we might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our lives.' Therefore we are purged from the sentence of death, therefore we are delivered from the curse of the law, and from hell. Certainly the end must needs be more noble than the means: now the wisdom of God hath appointed justification to promote sanctification.

[3.] This is that which is nearest to the life of glory. Ends are more noble, as they are nearest the last end. Justification is the pledge of the life of glory; but sanctification is not only a pledge, but a beginning. Indeed justification is *causa removens prohibens*; it takes away that which hinders, namely, guilt, or the sentence of condemnation, which is that which hinders our entering into glory; but sanctification beginneth that life which is perfected in glory, and differeth from it as an infant from a man. When we know God perfectly, and love God perfectly, then our happiness is completed, and not till then. Complete holiness and conformity to God is the great thing that God designeth; and therefore, the more of that the more are we advanced towards eternal happiness: Eph. v. 25-27, 'Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.' First he doth cleanse and sanctify, and then he doth perfect all in glory; when they are fully freed from all sin, then they are fully freed from misery.

[4.] Real perfections are above relative. Sanctification is a real moral perfection, but justification is but a relative one; our state is changed by it, but not our hearts; that is done by this other privilege of sanctification. Real moral perfections make us like God: Exod. xv. 11, 'God is glorious in holiness;' he counts that his highest and chiefest glory. Moral perfections exceed natural; and of all moral perfections, holiness is the greatest. It is better to be wise than to be strong, and to be holy than to be wise. Beasts have strength, and man hath reason, and the devils have cunning and knowledge; but angels are holy, and God is glorious in holiness; that is their perfection, and herein we most resemble God, in that which is his chiefest glory.

[5.] This is that which renders us most amiable in the eyes of God, and therefore it is the greatest privilege. Now God loveth us for holiness; he delighteth in it, as the reflex of his own image upon us; he doth not love us as pardoned, but as holy. We love him indeed for pardoning: Luke vii. 47, 'She loved much, because much was forgiven her;' but God delights in the pure and upright. God is the first

object of his own love; and next, 'the saints and excellent ones upon earth, in whom is his delight,' Ps. xvi. 3. So that though we love him for pardoning, yet he loveth us for holiness. There is *amor complacentiæ*, as the scripture witnesseth, Prov. xi. 20, 'Such as are upright in their way are his delight.'

[6.] God's interest and honour is to be preferred before our comfort and personal benefit. Justification, though it sets forth the glory of God's grace, yet it doth more immediately concern our comfort. In sanctification, besides our personal benefit, which is the perfection of our nature, God's honour and interest is concerned in our subjection to him; and this, besides the honour of his grace for our sanctification, springs only from grace, as our justification doth, and is the fruit of Christ's merits. Well, then, we need to look after this benefit, as well as justification, which is of such use and service to us, lest the main disease be left uncured.

3. It is a great part of the glory which God expecteth from us, to believe in him as the only Holy One of Israel, and the sanctifier of his people, viz., that he will sanctify our natures, and enable us to the practice of that holiness which he requireth of us: Lev. xx. 8, 'I am the God that sanctifieth you;' and Isa. xliii. 15, 'I am the Lord, your holy one;' and Hab. i. 12, 'Art not thou from everlasting, O Lord, my God, my holy one?' He is not only our merciful one, to pardon us; but our holy one, to sanctify us; and he taketh it to be a principal part of his honour and glory to be so.

4. It is needful to exercise faith upon this privilege of sanctification, that we may not be discouraged, and grow cold and negligent, when we find the difficulties of obedience. There is none that hath had to do with God and his own heart, but he finds strong oppositions, little prevailing against his lusts, and the work of God is often interrupted. Now if there were not promises to bear him up, he would throw off all as impossible, and be discouraged, that he should never bring his heart to any good purpose in the things of God. And therefore God hath undertaken in his promises, as sin is filthy, to cleanse and purge it out: Ezek. xxxvi. 25-28, 'Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them.' And as there is strength in it, so he hath promised, Micah vii. 19, 'He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us, he will subdue our iniquities.' A christian may encourage himself in his God; he will help him. Our own strength is too weak to govern our hearts, to conquer our lusts, to defeat temptations; but God will do it for us: and therefore we should not give over all as a desperate case, but cheer up our hearts in the sense of God's love and help; though we can never hope to overcome sin in our own strength, yet God will do it for us.

My next business is to show how faith doth concur, or what influence it hath upon sanctification. I shall first speak of sanctification in the general, and then of the parts of it—mortification and vivification.

1. What influence it hath upon sanctification in the general. I shall show you that in two distinctions. Sanctification may be considered as to its beginning, or as to its increase and progress.

[1.] As to the beginning of sanctification, what influence hath faith upon the first work? Certainly there is need of faith; for the first work falls under a promise: Heb. viii. 10, 'This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts.' There are promises of grace, and promises to grace, that where he hath given grace he will give more—absolute and conditional promises. Now faith and the promises are correlatives. Now all the business is to know what use we can make of these absolute promises of grace: the conditional promises they point out what we must do; but as to the absolute promises what shall we do there?

(1.) These absolute promises show the power of God to all those that take hold of his covenant, and his willingness to make use of his power for their good; for God will use his power this way, so that we may come to him, and plead as the leper did, 'Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.' Mat. viii. 2. God can do it, and therefore there is some comfort; and we have no reason to despair, as if the work were impossible. So that what difficulties do arise, they should drive us to God to put these promises in suit. Though we do not know how it will succeed with us; though we have such sinful hearts, that we do not know which way they should be subdued, and our headstrong corruptions mortified; yet the Almighty, who hath promised it, is able to do it for us, as that place sheweth, Mark x. 27, 'With God all things are possible.' God can change our crooked perverse hearts, and make them willing in the day of his power, Ps. cx. 3.

(2.) These absolute promises encourage us to come to God, and set his power a-work by prayer; as Ephraim, Jer. xxxi. 18, 'Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God.' Though Ephraim had a stubborn and rebellious heart, like a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, yet he was encouraged to go to God because he was the Lord his God. These absolute promises may be pleaded in prayer.

(3.) These absolute promises engage us to wait upon God till they be accomplished. God hath undertaken to take away the old heart; so that we may say, as in Ps. cxxiii. 2, 'Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden are unto the hand of her mistress, so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us.' They engage us to persevere with diligence in the use of means, though we do not know what will come of it. So Prov. viii. 34, 'Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.' Though it be long ere God look upon us, long before we find any preparation towards this work, yet this engageth us to lie at the pool.

(4.) These absolute promises engage us to wait with hope, looking up still with confidence that he will accomplish the things promised. But you will say, What hope can a man have of the absolute promises? There is this hope, that I am not excluded, that I, as well as others, am invited to take hold of God's covenant; and there is the same

favour shown to me that there is to all ; and it is some hopeful presage, that God hath inclined my heart to look after it ; that I am weary of my sins, that I am troubled with my lusts, though it be but a natural weariness, because of the inconveniency of them ; that I desire grace, though it be but a natural desire of ease and happiness ; that I pray, though it be but literally, and not spiritually : ‘ Take with you words, and turn unto the Lord, and say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously,’ Hosea xiv. 2. It is well that there is some affection and natural fervency ; we are in grace’s way, and lie more obvious to the Lord’s grace. But, most of all, there is this hope, that we have a general confidence of God’s all-sufficiency ; as the woman that had an issue of blood twelve years, Mat. ix. 21, ‘ And came behind Christ, and touched the hem of his garment ; for she said within herself, If I may but touch the hem of his garment, I shall be made whole.’ When all remedies fail, and we are still troubled and burdened with our lusts, yet we have this general propositional persuasion, that if we come to Christ, and get into him, we shall be the better for him ; though we have tried many means, and have been nothing the better, but rather the worse, yet when we thus do, there is some hope. Thus these promises have their use ; for God doth not only propound them to faith, but by them worketh faith : 2 Peter i. 4, ‘ Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust ;’ enabling a graceless sinner to believe and apply the pardon, grace, and blessedness offered in them. So soon as a sinner gets grace to believe and apply them, the Lord worketh in the heart the things promised, and infuseth those divine qualities in which the life of grace consisteth.

(5.) There are many considerations as means which may uphold and encourage our hearts in waiting for this work of grace to be begun in us, and faith makes use of them. As—

1st. That many that have been as vile and obstinate against God, and as much hardened in a way of sin as we are, yet the promise hath taken hold of them. Men that have been bond-slaves to the devil and their own lusts, yet they have been caught in their month, and the Lord hath wrought upon them : as Zaccheus, who had formerly lived in a course of oppression, Luke xix. 8, 9 ; Mary Magdalen, who had lived in whoredom, Luke vii. 37 ; and Saul, a persecutor and blasphemer, and an injurious person, 1 Tim. i. 13. Instances and examples encourage faith as well as promises, for they are patterns of what God will do : 1 Tim. i. 16, ‘ For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them that should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.’ These instances are as masterpieces of grace. As artists hang up their masterpieces in their shops to draw customers, so God sets forth these instances to show what he will do for poor returning sinners.

2d. There is an encouragement that Christ hath purchased the spirit of grace for us, to promote this work in our hearts : John xvii. 19, ‘ For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified by the truth.’ He hath set apart himself as a sin-offering, that we might be sanctified : all the means of grace are sprinkled with the blood of Christ

that promote and help on the work of grace in our hearts: Eph. v. 26, 'He gave himself for the church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.' Christ hath given himself as a sacrifice and offering to God, that we might come to duty not only in obedience, but in faith, and that we may with the more comfort depend upon him in the use of the means of grace that he hath appointed.

3d. He hath filled himself with all grace for the same end, that we might be filled with the abundance of that grace which is in him: Ps lxxviii. 18, 'He hath received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them;' not to keep them to himself alone, but to communicate them to us. So it is said, John i. 16, 'Of his fulness have we all received grace for grace.' There is a fountain of grace set up in our nature, that we might repair to him. He is God that freely giveth life to all things, and he is God in our nature, that we might not think him strange to us.

[2] Let us consider sanctification in its progress and increase; and there let us see what promises are made to faith, and what faith must do with these promises.

(1.) Let us see what promises are made to faith. And so it is a great relief and encouragement to poor creatures, that are troubled with the relics of sin, and the remainders of corruption, to consider what is propounded to faith. Christ hath undertaken to subdue sin wholly, and to sanctify us throughout: 1 Thes. v. 23, 24, 'And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved blameless to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.' The work is but begun, but God will carry it on to perfection: Phil. i. 6, 'Being confident of this very thing, that he that hath begun a good work in you, will perfect it unto the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.' The same power that begun will finish it. It was said of the foolish builder, that he began and could not make an end; but the work of grace hath its beginning, progress, and final consummation and accomplishment from God. And where God hath begun his work in any heart, it is a pledge that he will do more. And so, Rom. vi. 12, the apostle propounds it as a precept, 'Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof;' and after it is propounded as a promise, ver. 14, 'Sin shall not have dominion over you; for you are not under the law, but under grace.' Well, then, these are the promises, so that if we would increase and grow up in this holiness intimated in the promises, we must increase in faith, and believe that Christ will be as good as his word.

(2.) Let us see what faith must do as to these promises.

1st. The work of faith is to encourage us in our conflicts. We are many times wrestling with sin, and find it too hard for us; but then the believer should look up to the power of God engaged and assisting in this work, and so can triumph in victory before the battle. In outward cases the chance of war is uncertain, and that is a good caution, 'Let not him that puts on his harness boast as he that puts it off;' but it is not so in the spiritual warfare. Paul mingled thanksgivings with his very groans, Rom. vii. 24, 25. He complains and groans

'Oh wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from this body of death ?' But he comfortably cheers up his heart in the next verse, 'I thank God through Jesus Christ our lord ;' that through the power of the Spirit of Christ he should be able to subdue the body of sin, which otherwise would carry him headlong to death and destruction. And the same Paul, when buffeted with a messenger of Satan, he prayed three times ; he would fain have been rid of the temptation, 2 Cor. xii. 9. He knocked once, and again, and a third time, as Christ prayed thrice ; but all the answer he could get was, 'My grace is sufficient for thee.' When this is our case, that we are discouraged in our resistance of sin, because our endeavours at first succeed not, the promise should bear up our hearts.

2d. The work of faith is to encourage us to wait in the use of means for our growth and improvement ; for God, that fulfilleth promises, fulfils them in his own way. Faith is not a devout sloth and idle expectation ; we must up and be doing, praying, hearing, meditating, debating these promises with ourselves, that this work may go on and prosper, until we come to the full of our hopes. God hath greater things to do for us and by us. All increase is by God's blessing upon our labour and diligence, and so is the increase of grace too : Luke xix. 26, 'For to every one that hath shall be given ;' that is, he that tradeth, and improveth his talent well, shall have more ; that which God hath given him, he shall find a great increase of it, if he use well what he hath received. And therefore christians, that have these promises, are to labour after a great increase of grace, and to improve Christ to a further use, John x. 10, 'I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.' We should not only be living, but lively christians ; not only make a hard shift to get to heaven, but labour that grace may abound yet more and more, that an abundant entrance may be given to them into Christ's kingdom : 1 Thes. iv. 1, 'Furthermore, we beseech you, brethren, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk, and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.'

3d. The office of faith is to increase our confidence and enlarge our expectations, according to the extent of the promises : for the more we expect from Christ, the more we receive from him : Ps. lxxxi. 10, 'Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.' The larger thoughts we have of Christ's fulness and excellency, the more do we experience it in ourselves ; if we would increase in love, and zeal, and patience, we must increase in faith. It is a preposterous care in many to seek the growth of other graces when they do not seek the growth of faith ; this is as if we did water the branches of the tree, and not the root.

2. I come now to speak of sanctification more particularly ; namely, the two parts of it—mortification and vivification. Faith hath a notable influence upon both these.

[1.] As to mortification—the mortifying of fleshly lusts. The flesh is our great enemy ; so the apostle telleth us, 1 Peter ii. 11, 'Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.' And therefore, unless, we mean to run the hazard of the loss of our souls, the flesh must be subdued, which is our great clog and hindrance in our way to heaven. But how doth the flesh prevail against us ? *Ans.* The flesh prevai-  
leth

two ways; both are specified, James i. 14, 'Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.' There are two words, *ἐξελκόμενος καὶ δελεαζόμενος*, sometimes we are drawn away by our own lusts: at other times we are enticed.

(1.) Sometimes we are drawn away by the flesh; it hurries men into sin by its violent motions: Jer. viii. 6, 'Every one turned to his course as the horse rusheth into the battle:' like a headstrong horse, hearing the noise of the trumpet, his rider hath no command of him; so fleshly lusts put reason out of the throne, that his affections cannot be governed; checks of conscience, restraints of the word, profession, resolutions, all bonds and cords are too weak to hold us to our duty; the flesh moves, and then we are carried away to fulfil the lust thereof.

(2.) It enticeth us by the pleasure and satisfaction that we expect in gratifying carnal nature, or by hope of mercy and repentance after it is committed; or by some other means it deceiveth the sinner into rebellion against God. Now faith is of great use to purge us from these lusts; for it is said, Acts xv. 9, 'Purifying their hearts by faith.' What doth faith do to purify our hearts and weaken our fleshly lusts?

1st. It applieth the blood of Christ: 1 John i. 7, 'The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.' Christ's blood cleanseth us, but so as faith applieth it to us. Look, as water cleanseth and soap cleanseth, but both are applied by the hand of the laundress that washeth, so the blood of Christ cleanseth as it is applied by faith. We may look upon the blood of Christ as the price by which the Spirit was purchased to cleanse us from sin: 1 Peter i. 2, 'Through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.' The blood of Christ is applied and received by faith, and so the heart is cleansed.

2d. Faith purifies the heart, as it excites the new nature to break the force of fleshly lusts, and puts a rub in our way: 'The spirit lusteth against the flesh,' Gal. v. 17. It stirs up the new nature to draw the mind another way: 1 John iii. 9, 'Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.' There are dislikes and counter-buffs arising from the new nature, that sin shall not carry it so freely. But how doth faith excite the new nature? Partly as it presents the threatenings of the word, when lusts are sturdy and will not be broken: Rom. viii. 13, 'If ye live after the flesh ye shall die;' and Gal. vi. 8, 'He that sows to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption.' Now these things being represented and realised by faith, it stops the career of sin. And partly by representing the promises: 1 Peter ii. 1, 'I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts.' We are for another country, and shall we trouble and pester ourselves with anything that should hinder us in our journey heavenward? We expect a room among the angels, and shall we live as slaves in the world? Thou art in the way to Canaan, and why art thou in love with the flesh-pots of Egypt? 2 Cor. vii. 1, 'Having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God;' and 1 John iii. 3, 'He that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself as God is pure.' Faith excites the new nature by fear and hope, by terrors and promises. And then partly as it sets love a-work: Gal. v. 6, 'Faith worketh by love,' and so begets an

hatred of sin : Ps. xcvii. 10, 'Ye that love the Lord, hate evil.' Partly as it represents the great things Christ hath done for us : 'Christ hath loved me, and gave himself for me.' Now, shall I sin against this God that sent his Son to die for me? All this is to prevent the act, and break the force of sin.

3d. It improveth all the means instituted by Christ for the weakening of sin and the abating the corruption of our natures. It is said, Eph. v. 26, 'He gave himself, that he might sanctify us by the washing of water through the word.' Christ did not only die to sanctify us, but to sanctify us in such a way that we might receive grace by the institutions of the gospel, that the word and sacraments and prayer might stir us up to mortify sin. Faith maketh use of the word : Ps. cxix. 9, 'Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word;' and ver. 11, 'Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.' By the word we learn wisdom and spiritual counsel; that makes us discern the wiles of sin, that we may not be enticed nor enslaved by it: John xv. 3, 'Now ye are clean, through the word which I have spoken unto you.' It is the work of the Spirit and faith to apply the efficacy of Christ's blood for the cleansing of sinners; but the word hath its use, as a glass to discover sin, and as it quickens us by new arguments to work it out. He that daily makes use of the word of God, and doth attend with conscience upon the ordinances, he hath some new consideration or other suggested to him to work out sin. So for the sacraments. For baptism, 'Ye are dead;' therefore 'mortify your members,' Col. iii. 2, compared with ver. 5. You that are baptized have engaged yourselves to be mortifying sin, and to employ the strength of Christ for the subduing of it. So for the Lord's Supper: 1 Cor. v. 7, 8, 'Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened: for even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.' The remembering and applying Christ's death is a means to weaken sin yet more and more. The word and sacraments are the means by which Christ applieth the virtue of his death. In the word we have the charter, the promise and grant of Christ and all his benefits, from God unto every one that will receive him; but in the sacraments there is a seal annexed to this grant, whereby we are confirmed in this grant; and by every new act we oblige ourselves to mortify sin more and more. And then (lastly) prayer; for faith sets the soul a-praying that God would create in us 'a clean heart,' Ps. li. 10, and so makes good his promise of washing and cleansing us from all sin.

[2.] For vivification. By nature we are dead in trespasses and sins: Eph. ii. 1, 'You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.' Christ came to help us out of this estate, and purchase grace and life for us, and to work it in us: John x. 10, 'I am come that they might have life.' And therefore he is called 'the Prince of life,' Acts iii. 15, because he is the principal cause of it; and 'a quickening spirit,' 1 Cor. xv. 45. A spirit from his better part, his godhead, and a quickening or life-making spirit, because of the effects of his power on the hearts of believers: for we can never live to God till we are



quickened by him. And he is said to be our life: Col. iii. 4, 'When Christ, who is our life, shall appear,' &c. He is our life, not only *meritorie*, as he hath purchased life for us; but *effective*, as he works it in us. There is not only an everlasting merit, but a constant influence, for our life is a fruit of his: John xiv. 19, 'Because I live, ye shall live also.' Then we begin to live to God, when by faith we are united to Christ: 1 John v. 11, 'God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.' It is in Christ, and we have it by virtue of our union with him. And then faith doth continually derive vital influences from Christ for the supporting, and maintaining, and strengthening this spiritual life in us, as the branches have their sap and influence conveyed to them from the root. John xv. 5, 'He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.' And as the members of the body have strength and sensation by their union to the head: Eph. i. 22, 23, 'He is head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.' Here then is the use of faith, to look up to Christ, and depend upon him for the constant supplies of spiritual strength, to enable to the operations of the spiritual life: Phil. iv. 13, 'I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me.' But the influence of faith on the particular operations of the spiritual life will be handled hereafter.

Thirdly, The life of faith, as it respects glorification, or the promises of eternal life. And here I shall show you—

1. That this is a necessary part of the life of faith.
2. What are the acts of faith with respect to this life.
3. How we may bring our hearts so to live.

1. We cannot exclude this from being a branch of the life of faith; and that for these reasons—

[1.] Because eternal life is one of the principal objects of faith; and it is the first motive that inviteth us to hearken after the things of God. The apostle telleth us, Heb. xi. 6, 'He that cometh to God must believe that God is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.' He that would have anything to do with God must be persuaded of his being and of his bounty. In the choosing of a religion, we look after a right object, whom to worship, and a fit reward; for that induceth us, and maketh up the match between our hearts and that object. Now God, that knoweth the heart of man, and what wards will fit the lock, doth accordingly deal with us; as he propounds himself as the first cause, and highest being, to be revered and worshipped by us, so also as the chiefest good, to be enjoyed by us in an everlasting state of blessedness. All the doctrines of the christian faith tend to establish this hope in us; and therefore the salvation of our souls is called 'the end of our faith,' 1 Peter i. 9. This is the main blessing that faith waiteth for, all our believing, waiting, working, striving, is to this end: so John xx. 31, 'These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have life through his name.' All that is written in the gospel is to establish faith in Christ the Messiah, and that in order to eternal life. This is the upshot of all, that we might have a true and well-grounded hope of eternal life.

[2.] Because this is always matter of faith, never of sense, in this world : 2 Cor. v. 7, 'For we walk by faith, and not by sight.' Other privileges propounded in the promises are sometimes matter of sense ; as sanctification and the comforts of this world ; but this life and blessedness which is to come, and is hid with Christ in God, is always matter of faith, and never of sense, unless it be of spiritual sense, which is nothing but the result of faith, or some foretastes of blessedness to come, when we are firmly persuaded of the certainty of it.

[3.] This is that which indeed puts life and strength into us, and that which mainly constitutes the difference between us and others ; and therefore, if there be such a thing as life spiritual, as certainly there is, it is fed and maintained by reflecting upon everlasting happiness, and the interests of the world to come : 2 Cor. iv. 16-18, 'For which cause we faint not ; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen ; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.' There is an outward man and an inward man, or the animal life and the spiritual and divine life. The animal life is that which is supported, cherished, and maintained by the comforts and delights of the present world ; as lands, honours, and pleasures ; and when they are out of sight, they are in darkness that have nothing else to live upon, and are at a loss, and dead while they seem to live ; but now the spiritual and divine life is supported by the comforts and delights of the world to come, and they that live by faith, they live in heaven, and have an anchor within the vail. And therefore, when we believe this, another spirit cometh upon us, and there is such a life and strength derived into our heart, that we bear up with joy and courage, when the outward and animal life is exposed to the greatest difficulties and decays ; for we are for another world. And therefore we are said to live by faith, because it apprehends those great and glorious things which are kept for us in heaven. Yea, as soon as the spiritual life is begun in us, it presently worketh this way : 1 Peter i. 3, 'Who hath begotten us to a lively hope.' It is the immediate effect of the new life, which is given in regeneration ; and by this the heart is kept up, till all that God hath promised be brought about. This is the staff and stay of the spirit.

[4.] We need press this part of living by faith, because, whatever men pretend, eternal life is little believed in the world. The most part, even of those that live in the common light of christianity, are purblind, and 'cannot see afar off,' 2 Peter i. 9, or look beyond the grave. God's own children have many doubtful thoughts, not such a clear and firm persuasion of things to come, but that it needeth to be increased more and more. The apostle prayeth for the converted Ephesians, 'That the eyes of their understandings may be enlightened, that they may know what is the hope of their calling, and the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,' Eph. i. 18 ; that is, that they might more clearly see and firmly believe those good things which they should enjoy in heaven. Alas ! we are so taken up with trifles and childish toys, that our faith is very weak about those excellent bless-

ings. But I shall give you some evidences that these great and excellent blessings are little believed.

(1.) Because we are far more swayed with temporal advantages, than we are with the promise of eternal blessings. These blessings are more excellent and glorious in their nature, more certain in their duration : 2 Peter i. 4, 'Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature.' And yet they have less influence upon us than perishing vanities. What should be the reason ? Who would prefer a cottage before a palace ? a lease for a year before an inheritance ? There is no compare between the things themselves, but we are not equally persuaded of things to come, and things in hand, and of a present enjoyment. As in a pair of scales, though the weights be equal, yet, if the balances be not equal, a thing of less weight will weigh down a greater. Cyprian bringeth in the devil vaunting against Christ, 'I did not die and shed my blood for them ; I had not heaven to bestow upon them, nor eternal happiness to reward them ; I only propounded a carnal satisfaction in the pleasures of sin, that are but for a season, which, when they are gone, it is as nothing ; and yet among all thy pensioners, O Christ ! show me one that is so ready to follow thee as they are to follow me.' If we had faith, we would say with Paul, Rom. viii. 18. 'For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us ;' and as Moses, Heb. xi. 26. 'Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt ; for he had respect to the recompense of reward.' But alas ! how many are there that pretend to believe as christians, and yet a little profit or pleasure in the world is enough to sway with them, to run the hazard and forfeiture of all their hopes in the world to come.

(2.) Surely men do not believe heaven, because they are so little affected with it. If a beggar were adopted into the succession of a crown, he would please himself in thinking of the honour, and happiness, and delights of the royal estate ; or, to put a more likely supposition, if any poor man did understand that some great inheritance were bequeathed to him, he would often think of it, rejoice therein, long to go and see it, and take possession of it. But there is a promise of eternal life left us in the gospel of being heirs with God, and co-heirs with Christ ; and who puts in for a share, thinketh of it, rejoiceth in the hopes of it, longs for it, taketh hold of this eternal life ? 1 Tim. vi. 18. Certainly if we were persuaded of these things, we would embrace them : Heb. xi. 13, 'These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them.'

(3.) Because we do so little labour after it. For outward advantage, let it be certain or uncertain, men will endure great pains. If the things be certain, a man toileth hard all day for a small piece of money, for a shilling or two ; do we seek heaven with the like earnestness ? They that do believe will do so : Acts xxvi. 7, 'Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God night and day, hope to come.' Others do not. Or if the thing be uncertain, as with merchants : how many hazards do they run ? *Impiger extremos currit mercator ad Indos.* These are not uncertain ; and why do we no more abound in the work

of the Lord? 1 Cor. xv. 58, 'Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.'

(4.) Because we are contented with so slight assurance as to our title and interest: 2 Peter i. 10, 'Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure.' In matters of weight men love great earnest, great assurance. Do we labour to make all so sure and clear as to heavenly things? Heb. iv. 1, 'Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.' We should put it out of all question; as we should not come short, so we should not seem to give any appearance of coming short. Alas! any fond presumption or slight hope serveth our turn.

(5.) The pretended strength of our faith about future recompenses doth in some measure show the weakness of it, and that it is but a slight and overly apprehension. Most men will pretend to be able to trust God for their heavenly inheritance, and yet cannot trust God for their daily maintenance; they find it difficult to believe in temporals, and yet very easy in spirituals or eternal: what should be the reason? Heaven and things to come are greater mercies, and the way of bringing them about more difficult; and they are not so commonly dispensed by God as temporals are, and there lie more natural prejudices against these mercies when men are serious. What! can you easily believe that you shall live, though you die? John xi. 25; that your scattered dust shall be re-collected and raised up into a beautiful and glorious body? that a clod of earth shall shine as the stars? What is more easily believed than this, that God will give you daily bread? The whole earth is full of his goodness, and God feedeth all his creatures, not a worm but is sustained by his providence; but he pardoneth but a few, saveth but a few, and blesseth but a few with spiritual blessings. But here is the mistake; bodily wants are more pressing, and faith is put there to a present exercise. Men are careless of their souls, and content themselves with some general desires of ease and hopes of eternal welfare; and therefore it is they say they find no difficulty in believing their salvation and eternal life. Eternal life is sought in jest, talked of as a plausible fancy; but worldly things are desired in good earnest.

(6.) Because we will venture so little upon our everlasting hopes. Where men have an expectation they will make adventures, for they know it will turn to a good account. God hath made many great and precious promises; he hath told us, 'Give alms, and you shall have treasure in heaven,' Luke xii. 33. Leave anything for his sake, you shall have 'in the world to come eternal life,' Mark x. 30; 'Mortify the deeds of the body, and you shall live,' Rom. viii. 13. Now, when we will not venture anything upon God's bond, it is a sign we do not count him a good paymaster, and so make him a liar in all his promises.

2. What is the work of faith with respect to this life of glory.

[1.] To assent firmly to the promises, that offer this eternal blessedness, and to convince the soul of the truth of what they offer. Assent needs to be strengthened, that we may believe more firmly. Foundation-stones can never be laid with care and exactness enough. Many

hang between believing and unbelieving: neither assent to the truth of the promise, nor directly deny it. Though you do believe, believe it again, with more certainty and assurance of understanding. As when a picture waxeth old, we refresh the colours; so work up your hearts to a full assurance of the truth and certainty of these things. What is the great work of the gospel, but to establish our faith of eternal life? Here it is revealed to us: 2 Tim. i. 10, 'And hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.' Here it is promised to us: 1 John ii. 25, 'This is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.' Why hath God made so many promises? What need had he to flatter and deceive us, to promise more than he will perform? He can strike us dead if we do not please him, and crush us easier than we can crush a moth or a worm. In all other parts of scripture God standeth to his promises, even those of a present accomplishment, *et in ultimo non deficiet*; surely he will not fail you at last, he is so faithful and punctual. The same God that gave the commands, which you find so powerful on your consciences, this same God gave the promises. And God is willing to give us a pawn and pledge of these blessings promised in the joys of the Spirit: 2 Cor. i. 22, 'Who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.' It is not *donum*, a gift, but *pignus*, a pledge; and not only *pignus*, but *arrha*, an earnest: therefore work up faith to this assent. It is a notable assent that is described Heb. xi. 1, 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen;' it is 'the substance of things hoped for.' Faith openeth a light into the other world: it is the perspective of the soul, by which we look within the veil. Faith hath an eagle-eye; it can see things at a distance, and pierce through all the mists and fogs that intercept the eyes of others. 'Abraham rejoiced to see Christ's day, and he saw it, and was glad,' John viii. 56. And yet there were many successions of ages between Christ and Abraham; but he saw Christ with the eyes of faith. So the patriarchs saw things afar off by faith: Heb. xi. 13, 'These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off.' As the devil showed Christ the glory of the present world in a map and representation, so doth faith, which is the evidence of things not seen, represent to the soul the glory of the world to come in a map; they have a Pisgah-sight and view of heaven, so as they apprehend it as a real thing. Other men have but a general guess and tradition about heaven, a dream of elysian fields, or a surmise of happiness; but a believer has a sight of it by faith. As Stephen's eyes were opened, so are their eyes by the Spirit of wisdom and revelation. Others have an empty notion; they a real prospect. The other expression is, that 'faith is the evidence of things not seen;' that is, it bringeth in the comfort of it to the soul. There is an intromission of the object, as well as an extramission of thoughts. How is it the substance? Things absent and to come, by the real persuasion and expectation of the believer, are made real and present with the soul, as if already enjoyed; and so faith defeateth sense, which prevaileth with us because of present temptations, dangers, and delights. Faith is an anticipation of our blessedness, or a pre-occupation of our everlasting estate; as the air and winds carry the odours and sweet smells of Arabia into the neighbouring provinces, so faith,

believing the promises causeth us to feel something of heaven in our own hearts. It is not a naked sight, but some foretaste and beginning of heaven

[2.] There is need of faith to apply and make out your own interest; not only that there is such an estate, but such an estate reserved for you: 2 Tim. iv. 8, 'Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness;' and 2 Cor. v. 1, 'And we know that if this earthly house of our tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;' and 1 Tim. vi. 18, 'That they may lay hold of eternal life.' Faith hath an eye to see, and a hand to lay hold and claim it as your patrimony. It is comfortable with us when we can make out our own title and interest. Many catch at it by a fond presumption, but they cannot hold it fast; it is an hope that will leave them ashamed. But upon clear and fair grounds we are enabled to apply and take home the promises, as so many conveyances of our inheritance. There is a charter written with Christ's blood, sealed by the Spirit, and offered to us by God himself. Now have you ever dealt with God about it, that you might make out your claim and title? I would not grate upon tender consciences, therefore, if you cannot apply it absolutely, because you have not assurance, yet the conditional offer should encourage you to work and wait, and deal with God about it: Rom. ii. 7, 'To them which, by patient continuing in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life.' He will give it to all, and so to me; do God's work cheerfully, and continue with patience; be the more earnest to be such as may apply this general promise. And to help you to apply conditional promises, consider in whose disposal all this glory is, even in the disposal of a bounteous God, and a faithful and compassionate Saviour, who is ready to do good to thy poor soul: Jude 22, 'Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, to eternal life.'

[3.] There must be 'earnest expectation,' that is the next work of faith, looking and longing for this blessed estate. I join both together, because the apostle speaks of the 'earnest expectation of the creature,' Rom. viii. 19, *ἀποκαταδοκία τῆς κτίσεως*; the word signifieth the stretching out of the head of the creature, as Sisera's mother and her ladies looked through the lattice for the return of her son: Titus ii. 13, 'Looking for the blessed hope, &c.' Faith, having a promise looks to see the blessing a-coming in the midst of the labours and crosses of this world, not mounting up to heaven by fits; but this is the posture of a gracious soul, to dwell upon the thoughts of God and the world to come, and to live in the constant expectation of it. The spiritual life is abated as this is abated: Rom. viii. 23, 'And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies;' and 2 Cor. v. 3-5, 'If so be that being clothed, we shall not be found naked: for we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality may be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for this selfsame thing is God, who hath given to us the earnest of the Spirit.' Can a man believe blessedness to come, and not long to enjoy it? No; the mind and heart will be set at work; a taste will

make a man long for more. The little seeds in the earth will break through the clods to come to stalk and flower. As the clusters of Canaan put heart into the Israelites, and made them long to come to the possession of that good land ; so the beginnings of the spiritual life will set you a-longing and groaning that you may be at home with God.

[4.] There is a waiting and tarrying the Lord's leisure with patience and perseverance, notwithstanding the distance of our hopes, and the difficulties of the present life: Job xiv. 14. 'All the days of my appointed time I will wait till my change shall come.' It is but a little while and we shall have full possession ; and the reason why we have not full possession sooner is, not because heaven is not ready for us, but we are not ready for it ; for it was prepared by the decree and designation of God before the world was, Mat. xxv. 34 ; it was bought and purchased when Christ died, Heb. ix. 15 ; and it is possessed by Christ in our name, John xiv. 2. Our nature is already in heaven, though not our bodies ; we shall not sleep long in the dust ; as soon as God's number is full, 'he that shall come, will come.' Therefore tarry God's leisure. *Omne peccatum impatientiæ est ascribendum*, saith Tertullian—Every sin is to be ascribed to impatience. Men, like the prodigal, must have their portion presently: Luke xv. 12, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me.' They must have their good things in this life, Luke xvi. 25 ; they cannot be contented to wait for God : Heb. x, 36, 'Ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God ye may receive the promise.' There is a time when God hath work for us to do in the world, to do and suffer his will. Whatever grace we can spare, we cannot spare patience : Luke viii. 15, 'The good ground bringeth forth fruit with patience.' It endureth the plough, the harrow, the cold, the frost, that in due time the seed may spring up and flourish. So we, after a little patience, shall be received into an inheritance which our Father hath prepared, and Christ hath purchased for us.

[5.] The work of faith is to 'breed joy' in the hopes of this blessedness, and those tastes that we have of it. The apostle saith, Heb. iii. 6, we are Christ's, 'if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of hope firm unto the end.' When we first believe in Christ, we do by hope take hold of the promised glory, and find a great deal of comfort and sweet encouragement therein. Now as this delight abateth in you, so doth the spiritual life. As in the outward life taste decayeth and is lost, so the animal life decays, and languishing and death come on. It was a comfortable thing to be working for heaven at first, it should be so still ; therefore keep up the rejoicing of your hope. It should do our hearts good, and make them leap within us for joy, every time we think what God hath provided for us in Christ. If worldly men cannot think of a little self, or any petty interest in the world without comfort, shall we think of the promises, and not be affected with them ? Carnal men indeed, who have no spiritual appetite and savour, whose joy is intercepted and prepossessed by the vanities of the world, and delights of the flesh, the promises are as dry chips and withered flowers to them ; but our hearts should leap for joy, because 'great is our reward in heaven,' Luke vi. 23. What ! do we look for such great things, and no more rejoice in the Lord ?

[6.] All this that faith doth is to be improved, to encourage us in a way of holiness, and to overcome the world.

(1.) To encourage and quicken us in the way of holiness. Hope sets all the wheels a-going: Phil. iii. 14, 'I press towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ.' We have no reason to begrudge God's service when we consider what wages he giveth. Certainly we do but talk of eternal life, we do not believe it, if we do no more in order thereunto. What labour and hazards do men expose themselves unto to be built one story higher in the world. Now saith the apostle, 2 Cor. v. 9, 'Wherefore we labour,' &c.—*φιλοτιμοῦμεθα*, we have an ambition to,—'that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.' Surely did we believe things to come, our industry, and care, and thoughts, would be laid out more upon them. A man that spendeth all his time and care in repairing the house where he dwelleth for the present, but speaketh not of another house, nor sendeth any of his furniture thither, will you say such a man hath a mind or a thought to remove? A man that spendeth the strength of his cares on worldly things, surely he doth not believe eternity! We work as we believe; if indeed we are persuaded of such an estate, why do we no more prepare for it?

(2.) To overcome the world. The world is the great let and hindrance to the keeping of the commandments, and the victory that we have over the world is by faith, 1 John v. 4; even that faith which doth counterbalance things temporal with things eternal.

1. This giveth us victory over the afflictions and troubles that we meet with in the world; these are bitter to sense. Nature and grace teach us to have a feeling of our interests, and to be affected with God's providence when he maketh a breach upon them. We must neither slight the hand of God, nor faint under it: Heb. xii. 5, 'My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him.' There are extremes on both hands; when our Father is angry, we ought to lay it to heart, and to humble ourselves under his mighty hand; and yet we must not be like men without hope, altogether broken with difficulties. Now what keepeth us from fainting, which is the other extreme? 2 Cor. iv. 18, 'While we look, not to the things which are seen, but to the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.' This must bear up our hearts against all sorrows: Heb. x. 34, 'Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that you have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.' Our happiness is not gone, and therefore we may bear it, not only patiently, but joyfully against all fears: Luke xii. 32, 'Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's pleasure to give you the kingdom.' We must look for hardships here in the world, but all will be made up when we get home to God. And therefore bear up with a generous confidence; if God will whip us forward, that we may mend our pace to heaven, in the issue we shall have no cause to complain; if we have an anchor that 'entereth into that which is within the veil,' Heb. vi. 19, this should keep us from being tossed and shaken, at least from being overwhelmed with the miseries of the present life. Nature will work, and have a feeling of these things, but grace must support us.



The beauty and glory of the life of faith is never seen while all things succeed according to our heart's desire ; we do not know whether we live upon God or the creature, the encouragements of earth or heaven, till we be reduced to some necessities. Paul said, 'None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself,' Acts xx. 24.

2. That we may despise the pleasures, and profits, and honours of the world. Affectation of worldly greatness is the great expression of the animal life, but the spiritual life, or the life of faith, inclineth us to look after the happiness prepared for us by Christ. The great use and end of it, is to keep us from aspiring after, and admiring great things here below ; it quencheth the delights of the flesh, and begets a holy weanedness in us : Heb. xi. 13, 'They confessed themselves strangers and pilgrims here upon earth.' To be carnally disposed argueth little faith. In a pipe, if there be a leak, the water gusheth out, and runneth not forward ; our affections are diverted from things above, if they leak out to present comforts. They are the most active faculties, they cannot remain idle in the soul ; either they leak out to present things, or they run forward to heaven and heavenly things ; and if they do so, the esteem of the world is abated. And therefore this is the use of faith, to reject those fawning pleasures that would beguile us of those pleasures which are at God's right hand for evermore, those deceitful and vanishing honours that would bereave us of the glory, from whence we shall never be degraded.

2. How or what shall we do that faith may have its perfect work with respect to this life of glory ?

1. Keep the eye of faith clear. When we are to see things at such a distance, and to see them with such affection, we had need of clear eyes. It is said, Heb. xi. 13, 'They saw them afar off.' The world is a very blinding thing : 2 Cor. iv. 4, 'In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine upon them.' It is as dust cast into the eyes. A man may discourse of heaven, and talk at the same rate that other christians do, but he hath not such a lively affective sight of it. If we do not take heed of the suffusions of lust and carnal affections, these brutify us insensibly, and make us judge of all things according to present interest, and so molehills seem mountains.

[2.] Consider the harmoniousness of all the declarations that God hath made concerning eternal life, how they suit with the doctrine of God the Father, Son and Spirit.

(1.) As to God the Father, it suiteth his decrees ; he hath determined to bestow everlasting happiness on some, to the praise of his glorious grace : Rom. viii. 30, 'Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called ; and whom he called, them he also justified ; and whom he justified, them he also glorified : ' 2 Thes. ii. 13, 'God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.' And it suiteth to his covenant : God hath not only purposed out of his own love, but is under bonds to give us eternal life. A covenant is God's solemn transaction with his subjects, and consists of precepts, and laws invested with the sanction

of promises and threatenings. His commands, all of them, imply such an estate, and some express it. All of them imply it; for they are work in order to wages, or a reward to be given, and it is not fit we should have our wages till our work be over. And some express it: John vi. 27, 'Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you;' and Mat. vi. 19, 20, 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal;' and Luke xiii. 24, 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate.' And so for his promises: John vi. 47, 'He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.' If there were no such thing, then all those commands and promises were given in vain, and would the wise and faithful God flatter us with lies? And for his threatenings: Mark xvi. 16, 'He that believeth not, shall be damned.' And are all the threatenings of God a vain scarecrow?

(2.) Look upon the doctrines concerning Christ. Look upon Christ in his person, and states of humiliation and exaltation; his coming from heaven shows it; his going there again was to prepare a place for us; his sitting at the right hand of God, is to promote our interest in heaven; his coming to judgment is to take us to himself. Consider Christ in his humiliation: why was Christ apparelled with our flesh, but that we might be clothed with his glory? If Christ were in the womb, and in the grave, why may not we be in heaven? It is more credible to believe a creature in heaven, than God in the grave. And then for his exaltation: when he had purchased a right and title, he went to heaven to prosecute and apply it. As the high priest went into the holy of holies with the names of the twelve tribes upon his breast; so Jesus Christ is gone into heaven with the names of all the saints upon his breast. And then consider his benefits: justification is our release from the curse, and sanctification is to fit us for God. All ordinances tend to this, to nourish in us hopes of everlasting life. The word: Isa. lv. 3, 'Hear, and your soul shall live.' The Lord's supper is food for our souls.

(3.) And then for the Spirit: his graces are life begun. Faith seeth it, love desireth it, hope looks for it: Rom. viii. 23, 'We, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves,' &c. The first-fruits show a harvest to come. And 2 Cor. i. 22, 'Who hath sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.' Would God give us earnest, and not make good the whole bargain? give us a taste to mock us, and no more? Is the whole scripture false, and a very fable? God's covenant a mockery? Christ's miracles a dream? and were the wisest men in the world fools?

[3.] Clear up your interest, otherwise your hope is but a fancy. The madman at Athens, was he ever the richer for saying all the ships were his that came into the harbour? 'The hope of the hypocrite shall perish,' Job xxvii. 8. There must be an acceptance of the general covenant before there can be of particular promises. Did you ever choose God for yours, and give up yourselves to serve him? that you might be able to say, as David, Ps. cxix. 94, 'I am thine, save me;' and Ps. lxxxvi. 2, 'Save

thy servant, that putteth his trust in thee.' A covenant supposeth both parties engaged ; it doth not leave one bound and the other at large.

[4.] Exercise meditation, mind it more seriously, think of it oftener — 'Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also,' Mat. vi. 21. Thoughts of heaven should be more familiar and sweet to us, and not lie by as neglected or forgotten. But alas ! most are of the earth, and think of the earth and speak of the earth. Thoughts are the first-born of the soul, and if we did observe them, we should soon discover the temper of our souls. If they be set upon getting gain, carnal projects discover a carnal heart ; as they, James iv. 13, 'Go to now, ye that say, to-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain.' Or the rich fool in the gospel : Luke xii. 18, 'This I will do, I will pull down my barns and build bigger, and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.' These thoughts will engross all our time. But we should do as Abraham was bidden, Gen. xiii. 14, lift up our eyes, and take a view of the good land aforehand, and solace our souls with the contemplation of it.

[5.] Improve the Lords supper. When we are assembled there, and sit down at his table, it is a pledge of our 'sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and drinking of the new wine in our Father's kingdom.' Mat. xxvi. 29. When Christ instituted the Lord's supper, he discoursed to them of a kingdom : Luke xxii. 30, 'That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom.' Here we come to think of that kingdom that cannot be moved, the purchase of Christ's blood, and to raise our affections to heaven and heavenly things, that we may be more confirmed in our hope. Here we come to taste of the cup of blessing which Christ hath prepared for us, even his own precious blood.

Fourthly, I now come to treat of living by faith, as to the promises and blessings of the present life. Here I shall,

1. Show you the necessity of pressing this branch.
2. Give you some maxims and principles of faith, that have an influence upon this life.
3. Show what are the acts of faith, with reference hereunto.
4. How we shall bring our hearts thus to live.

1. There is a necessity of pressing this part of the life of faith.

[1.] Because there are promises of this kind of blessings, as well as of eternal blessings : 1 Tim. iv. 8, 'Godliness is profitable to all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.' It is not only profitable at the end of the journey, but by the way ; when we come to die, it will be no grief of heart to us that we have been godly ; for when we are about to set sail for eternity, then we shall receive the fruit of all our labours. Ay, but now where it seemeth to expose us to so many troubles, now when godliness is upon its trial and exercise, it is not left destitute and shiftless, it hath the promise of the life that now is, that is, of this life and the comforts of it, as health, wealth, favour, peace, and safety. Why hath God multiplied so many promises of this kind, but that we should trust him with our secular as well as our eternal concerns ? Mat. vi. 33, 'First seek the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, and all these things shall be added to you ;' that is, given in by way of overplus, cast into the bargain. He doth not say, Seek the world as hard as you can, and

grace and glory shall be added unto you; but, Seek the kingdom of heaven, and then earthly things will not be stood upon, but cast in as paper and pack-thread.

[2.] These are necessary for our maintenance during the time of our service: Mat. vi. 32, 'Your heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of these things.' We consist of a body as well as a soul, and they have both their necessities. Now our heavenly Father knoweth our frame and make, and how serviceable these things are in our journey to heaven; will he be so unkind as to deprive us of our necessary supports? Will any man send a message, and cut off the feet of them by whom he sendeth? Will God employ us in this world, and not give us a subsistence? Hezekiah took care that the Levites might have their portion, 'that they might be encouraged in the law of the Lord,' 2 Chron. xxxi. 4. Would God take care of our souls only, and as to the support of our bodies leave us to shift for ourselves? No, God is in covenant with the whole believer, his body as well as his soul; that is one ground and reason from which Christ proveth the resurrection of the body, because he is the God of Abraham: Mat. xxii. 32, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead but of the living.' And if he be Abraham's God, if he will be an infinite and eternal benefactor to Abraham, he must raise Abraham's body as well as his soul. And the mark of circumcision was in his flesh, as the water of baptism is sprinkled upon our bodies, therefore he will take care of the bodies of his saints. And further, Christ purchased both body and soul. 1 Cor. vi. 20, 'Ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.' And this is not only an enforcement of our service, but doth also infer his care over us; for Christ will be tender of what he hath purchased. He did not only purchase us to service, but to a blessing. When God aimed at a new interest in us by redemption, it was such an interest as might be comfortable and beneficial to us; otherwise he had a full interest in us before, which we could not make void by sin; but it was such an interest as did oblige him to chastise us for our sins and rebellions. I speak this to show that Christ's purchase doth not only infer our duty to him, but his care of his people. And our bodies are united to Christ as well as our souls: as whole Christ is united to us in the mystical union, so whole we are united to Christ, bodies as well as souls. The outward man is a part of the mystical body as well as the soul, and accordingly the body is seized on by the Spirit, and used as his temple: Rom. viii. 11, 'He shall quicken our mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in us.' It is true, these considerations are most concludant of the glorious estate of the body hereafter, but yet they do proportionably evidence God's care of the body for the present, as long as he will use us for his glory.

[3.] Without this part of the life of faith we should be encumbered with a world of destructive and distracting cares and troubles, which would much infringe the happiness of the spiritual life, and weaken the duty of it so that we could not attend the service of God with any freedom and cheerfulness. Therefore to ease us of this burden and clog, God would have us depend upon his care and all-sufficiency, and take no thought what we shall eat, and what we shall drink, and

wherewithal we shall be clothed: Prov. xvi. 3, 'Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.' As the spiritual life is the most noble kind of life, so it is the most comfortable; for God taketh all our cares upon himself, and easeth us of those anxious and tormenting thoughts which otherwise would eat out all our comfort and vigour: so 1 Peter v. 7, 'Casting all your care upon the Lord, who careth for you' The care of duty, that is ours; but the care of events, that is God's work. Do your work, and as for success, and support, and maintenance, commit it to God's faithfulness and all-sufficiency, and submit it to his sovereign will. God would not have us overburdened and discouraged, and therefore he hath undertaken to do what is necessary for us.

[4.] There is a necessity of this part of the life of faith, because we are trained up to believe in God for eternal things, by waiting upon him for temporal. As we try how to swim in the shallow brooks before we venture into the deep waters, so before we trust Christ with our eternal estate we must try how we can trust him for temporal mercies. Experience confirms us in waiting upon God; his word is now put to a present proof and trial: Ps. xviii. 30, 'The word of the Lord is tried.' When you put it in suit, you see God standeth to his promises, and certainly he will not fail you in greater things. Faith would be but a notion, and we should never know the strength and comfort of it till we die, if there were not some present proof as to the intermediate promises, before we come to receive our final and consummate happiness. So that if we cleave not to the promises of God concerning temporal things, we shall adhere to the promises of eternal life with less certainty and assurance. Both promises flow from the same fountain of God's everlasting love, and are established in the same mediator, and received by the same faith. Yea, the promises of everlasting life are more spiritual, and farthest removed from sense, and are more difficult to be believed, and therefore first we must begin with easier things. And the Lord, by giving us outward things, would nourish our faith in things spiritual and heavenly; for when we see his care over us in these lesser things, we may be sure he will not neglect us in things of a greater moment; they are pledges to the soul that if God be so punctual in the lesser things, he will not fail in the greater.

[5.] This part of the life of faith is necessary, not only for the supplies of the outward man, but for the sanctifying of our outward condition, that it may not be a snare to us. If we have outward blessings, we should see them coming from the covenant; and so they are sweeter, and turn to a better use, when we receive them from the promise by faith; for it is said, 1 Tim. i. 4, 5, that 'all the creatures are sanctified by the word of God and prayer to them that believe and know the truth.' There is but a sour taste in these outward comforts, meat, apparel, riches, honour, favour of men; if they be not received and improved by faith, they soon taint and pervert the heart, and withdraw it from God and heavenly things. But when we see his love in them, and they come from our heavenly Father, they are much sweeter and better. To be carved to by a great person is counted as great a favour as affording the meal itself. To take these things out of God's hand, to

see that he remembereth us, and sendeth in our provisions at every turn, this endeareth the mercy, and raiseth our thankfulness. So on the other hand, if we want these blessings, it keepeth us from a snare to find them in the covenant. Distrust in temporal promises hath driven the faithful servants of the Lord to many hard and dangerous shifts, and hath occasioned their falls more than other things. Abraham thought to save his life by a lie, and David by dissembling, when he could not trust God. And daily experience shows it, what a shrewd temptation this is, even to the godly.

2. Let me give you some maxims, grounds, and principles of faith, which, being well digested, will help us to depend upon God for this kind of blessings.

[1.] That God hath the sole disposing of this life, and the interests thereof. It is by his providence that everything is ordered, when, where, and how we shall live—‘He hath determined aforehand the times, and the bounds of our habitation,’ Acts xvii. 26. The land of Canaan was divided by lot, and the partage thereof was merely by God’s decision, and his governing the chance of the lot. So it is true of all other countries; a man hath not a foot of land more than God hath set out for him by his all-wise providence; so all the wealth that we enjoy: Deut. viii. 18, ‘Thou shalt remember the Lord, who giveth thee power to get wealth.’ It is God appointeth who shall be wise, and who shall be rich; who shall have great gifts of the mind, and who shall have great and ample revenues by the year. The world is not governed by blind chance, but by his wisdom. However wealth cometh to us, it is from God as the first cause, whether it come by donation, purchase, labour, or inheritance. If it come by gift, the hearts of all men are in God’s hand; he that sendeth the present is the giver, not the servant that bringeth it to us; it was God that made them able and willing. If it come by inheritance, it is by the providence of God that a man is born of rich parents, and not of beggars. He hath cast the world into hills and valleys, put some in a high and some in a low condition. If by our own labour and purchase, it is God gives the ability, the skill to use it, and the success in our callings; the faculty, the use, the success, are all from God. He doth not leave second causes to their own work, as an idle spectator, but interposeth in all the affairs of the world. So for favour and respect in the eyes of enemies, or people averse from us: Prov. xvi. 7, ‘When a man’s ways please the Lord, he maketh his enemies to be at peace with him.’ There is a great deal of difference between pleasing God and pleasing men—please men, and yet God may be angry with you, and blast all your happiness; but please the Lord, and that is the way to be at peace with men too. So for favour in the eyes of princes: Prov. xxix. 26, ‘Many seek the ruler’s favour, but every man’s judgment is from the Lord.’ Among the multitude of suitors and expectants, the event is as God casts it, who is the great judge and umpire in human affairs. And humble prayer doth more than ambitious affectation. Notwithstanding all our blowing, the fire will not burn without the Lord.

[2.] Another principle that hath an influence upon our faith is this, that he is ready and willing to distribute and dispense the blessings of this life to his people; for his fatherly providence is ever watching

over them for good. He is liberal and open-handed to all his creatures, but much more to his saints. There is not a poor worm but feeleth the benefit of his providence ; all the beasts of the field are provided for by him ; he sendeth showers of rain and fruitful seasons, and filleth the lap of the earth with blessings, that they may have food ; the fishes of the sea, that multiply in such furies and shoals, yet they are fed ; the fishes, that are but mute creatures, that cannot so much as make a sound, yet have a voice to proclaim a bountiful God : Job xii. 7, ‘ Ask the beasts, and they shall tell thee ; the fowls of the air, and they shall teach thee.’ God sends us to school to the beasts of the field. Go and ask them if God be not liberal and open-handed. St Luke instanteth in the ravens : Luke xii. 24, ‘ Consider the ravens, that they neither sow nor reap, that have neither storehouse nor barns ; yet God feedeth them. How much better are you than fowls ?’ Shall a kite be more dear to him than a child ? But why is the raven mentioned ? Some say it is *animal cibi rapacissimum*, the most ravenous fowl ; yet they are supplied. But there seems to be some other reason, for they are elsewhere instanced, in Job xxxviii. 41, ‘ Who provideth for the raven his food ? when his young ones cry unto God, they wander for lack of meat ;’ so Ps. cxli. 9, ‘ He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry.’ Why should the raven be propounded as the great instance of providence ? The naturalists tell us, *τοὺς νεοττοὺς ἐπιβιάλλει ὁ κοραξ*, that the ravens expose their young ones as soon as they are hatched, but they are fed either by the dew of heaven, or by a worm that breeds in the nest, one way or other they are provided for. Surely the Lord of hosts never overstocks his common ; where he sends mouths, he will send supplies, but especially to his people : Ps. xxxv. 27, ‘ He taketh pleasure in the prosperity of his servants.’ The Lord delights to see his servants do well in the world ; and it is no pleasing spectacle to him to see his people in a suffering, afflicted, ruinous condition. Oh then ! why do not we rouse up our faith ? If God hath said he takes pleasure in the prosperity of his people, shall we not rouse up ourselves, and wait upon him for these outward things ?

[3.] When God withholdeth any degree or measure of earthly blessings from us, it is for our good : Ps. xxxiv. 9, ‘ Oh fear the Lord, ye his saints, for there is no want to them that fear him ! They that fear the Lord shall not want any good thing.’ They may lack many things which others enjoy, but no good thing ; so Ps. lxxxiv. 11, ‘ The Lord will be a sun and shield, he will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.’ Good is not to be determined by our fancies and distempered appetites, but God’s wisdom. We say this and that is good for us, as children desire greenfruit, but our Father saith not so. Every distemper affecteth the diet that feedeth it, but we must be contented with God’s allowance, who is faithful to our souls, and taketh away those comforts that would hurt us, and eclipse our graces, and hinder us in serving him in the way he requireth. Every man’s present portion given him by providence is best ; not what we would have, but what God thinks good to give us. That is best which is fittest for us, not that which is largest. If you were to choose a shoe for your child’s foot, you would not choose the largest, but the fittest. A garment too short will not cover our nakedness, and a gar-

ment too long will soon become a dangling dirty rag. Goliath's armour may be too big for little David.

[4.] The best way to get and keep worldly blessings is to get and keep in with God. This is a paradox to the world; a strict, severe holding to the truth is the ready way to expose us to dangers, and doth often bring great loss and inconvenience upon those that do so; and yet it is a truth for all that; for sin bringeth a curse, and righteousness a blessing: Deut. v. 33, 'You shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God has commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess.' Our reward lieth not in this world, and yet here God is not altogether wanting to his people.

[5.] There are certain qualifications wherein if we do excel we shall not want, as to instance in three, justice, mercy, and honouring of parents. God, that is the patron of human societies, is so well pleased with the respects of inferiors to superiors, and with equity and justice between man and man, and relieving the indigent, by which the world is kept in order and harmony, that if these things be in you, and abound, you shall not want the comforts of this life: Prov. xxi. 21, 'He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honour;' so Ps. xxxiv. 12, 13, 'What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.' But more particularly, see how the Lord doth reward justice: Isa. xxxiii. 15, 16, 'He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppression, and shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing of evil, he shall dwell on high, his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks; bread shall be given him, his water shall be sure;' and Prov. x. 6, 'Blessings are upon the head of the just, but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked;' and Deut. xxv. 15, 'But thou shalt have a perfect and just weight; a perfect and just measure shalt thou have, that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.' So for mercy: he that watereth shall be watered himself: Eccles. xi. 1, 'Cast thy bread upon the waters, and after many days thou shalt find it;' and Ps. cxii. 3, 'Wealth and riches are in his house, and his righteousness endureth for ever.' And this is spoken of the merciful man, for so the apostle doth apply it: 2 Cor. ix. 8, 9, 'And God is able to make all grace abound towards you, that ye, always having all-sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.' As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad, he has given to the poor, his righteousness remains for ever.' And so for honouring of parents: Exod. xx. 12, 'Honour thy father and mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.' This is the way to live well and long in the world. God having such a love to human society hath made these promises here specified.

[6.] The more we trust God, and look to him in all things, the more we have; for trust is a very endearing, engaging thing: Ps. xci. 9, 10, 'Because thou hast made the Lord which is my refuge, even the Most High thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.' There shall no evil befall the



man that always liveth upon God ; so 2 Chron. xx. 20, ' Believe in the Lord your God, so shall you be established ; believe his prophets, so shall you prosper ; ' and 1 Chron. v. 20, ' They cried unto the Lord in the battle, and he was entreated of them, because they put their trust in him. ' How did they trust ? What ! had they particular confidence in God ? No, they committed the affair to him with submission to his will. Or had they a particular revelation ? No, but they sought to God, and put the case into his hands.

[7.] That temporal promises, if they are not made good to our persons, are sometimes made good to our posterity. The blessing lieth asleep for a while, and then it riseth up to their seed, in great abundance—' The just man walketh in his integrity, and his children are blessed, after him,' Prov. xx. 7. It may be he is afflicted and greatly oppressed in the world, and maketh a hard shift to run through it ; but then his children are provided for, and have a strange blessing of providence accompanying them ; so Isa. xlv. 3, 4, ' I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground ; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring ; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as the willow by the water-courses. ' David was a great student in providence, and observed God up and down in the traverses of his dispensations, and gives this as the result of his inquiry and observation. Ps. xxxvii. 25, 26, ' I have been young, and now am old, yet I never saw the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. He is ever merciful and lendeth, and his seed is blessed. ' God hath a blessing for them and theirs, so as to bestow necessities upon them ; and Prov. xiii. 22, ' A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children, and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just. ' They that thrive by the oppression of others, and seek to grow great in the world, lay up for the heir of a poor, godly man.

[8.] God will provide many times when we are at an utter loss ; as Abraham answered his son Isaac, when he asked his father ' Where is the lamb for a burnt-offering ? ' Gen. xxii. 7, ' God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering,' ver. 8. So we may quiet our hearts in God's promises for our supplies. God hath means that come not within our ken and perceivance : John vi. 4-6, ' And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh at hand. When Jesus lifted up his eyes, and saw a great multitude coming unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we have bread, that all these may eat ? And this he said to prove him, for he himself knew what he would do. ' Such straits many times befall poor believers. There are many mouths, and little meat ; trading dead, and means of supplies cut off : but this he doth to try us what we will do in such a case of straits and great necessities. But God will find out means of supplies that we could never think of ; and when we have it out of the hands of God's providence immediately, it is the sweeter, and doth more evidence God's love and care of us : Zech. viii. 6, ' If it be marvellous in your eyes, should it therefore be marvellous in mine eyes ? saith the Lord of hosts. ' Ps. lxxviii. 41, ' Yea they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel. ' This was the fault the Israelites were taxed with, they limited the Holy One of Israel within the circle of human probabilities. Thus we should

not be : 2 Peter ii. 9, 'The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly.' This should answer all our doubts, *οἶδεν ὁ Κύριος* : we know not, nor cannot see. When all lawful means have been tried unprosperously, then is the time for the Lord to show forth his skill and power.

[9.] Our faith must be tried in these things as well as in others. Look, as in all other the promises, God tries our faith before he gives us the blessing. How shall we know that we believe, and depend upon God for outward supplies, unless we be reduced to some straits, and have but from hand to mouth, and be cut short in our temporal conveniences? There are times of trial in which God will try all his children—'The Lord tries the righteous,' Ps. xi. 5. Thus he tried them, Heb. xi. 36, 37. God tried them whether they would live by faith upon him when they were 'destitute, afflicted, and tormented, when they were stoned, and sawn asunder, slain with the sword, and wandered about in sheep-skins, and goat-skins.' And thus he tried Israel in the wilderness, before he had them into a land flowing with milk and honey : Deut. viii. 2, 'And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments or no.' God will try us whether we serve him for love or wages ; whether we live merely upon the creature or the promises, and can depend upon his all-sufficiency.

[10.] We cannot be absolutely confident of success as to temporal things ; that is not the faith required of us, for they are not absolutely promised ; but with exception of the cross, and as God shall see them good for us. God hath reserved a liberty of showing his justice in punishing a sinning people : Ps. lxxxix. 32, 'He will visit their iniquity with the rod, and their transgression with stripes' The world shall know that he doth not allow sin in his own people and children ; it is as odious to God in them as in others, yea more, and therefore they feel the smart of it. When we go out of the way in which the blessing falls, it is no marvel it falls beside us. But here is a doubt that might be largely discoursed upon, Why then are temporal blessings so often expressed in the covenant?

I answer—

(1.) Partly because it is the ordinary practice of the Lord's free grace to supply his people with things comfortable and necessary ; while he hath work for them to do, he will give them protection and maintenance. I observe two different speeches of Paul whilst he was in the middle of his work : he saith, in 2 Cor. i. 10, 'Who has delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver, and in whom I trust that he will yet deliver,' but when his work began to draw to an end, he speaketh at another rate : 2 Tim. iv. 6-8, 'For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith ; henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.' God by a secret instinct begat a confidence in him. But when he began to call him off, and the time of his departure was drawing nigh, he speaks more faintly, as one that was sensible that God was calling him off from his service in the world.

(2.) Partly, because these blessings are adopted into the covenant that they may be a ground of prayer and praise.

1st. It is a ground of prayer. We go the more confidently to God when we have a particular promise of the blessing we ask; as Ps. cxix. 49, 'Remember thy word unto thy servant, wherein thou hast caused me to hope.' When God hath given out a promise, and enables us to apply it, and then to challenge him upon his word, then we are the more borne up to prayer. A general intimation is not so clear a ground of trust as an express and particular promise. Our necessities lead us to the promise, and the promise to God, that we may put his bonds in suit. We have somewhat to urge and plead, and have a greater hold-fast upon God; it is a sweet argument that increaseth our earnestness in prayer.

2d. It is a ground of praise. It is a greater comfort when we can see our mercies coming out of the womb of the covenant. What others have by common providence, they have by special mercy; others have by simple donation and indulgence, they have everything by promise; others receive from a creator, they from a loving father; though for substance the gift is the same, yet the cause and end differ. 'God blesseth them out of Zion,' Ps. cxxviii. 5. Mercies wrapt up in the bowels of Christ, and dipped in his blood, are a ground of praise indeed.

3d. We now come to the third thing,—What faith is required? or what are the acts of faith about these promises? In the general, to depend upon God's all-sufficiency, that he is able, and his promises, that he is willing to provide for us; for if God were not willing, why hath he multiplied so many promises concerning temporal things? Now this dependence is to be manifested several ways.

[1.] By recommending our case to God in prayer. We may lawfully pray for temporal things; for Christ hath made it one of the petitions in his perfect form; 'Give us this day our daily bread,' next to 'Thy will be done.' Such things are to be asked as are necessary to the being of the subjects. Prayers to God for spiritual things are most acceptable, but these are not despised. A child pleaseth his father most when he desireth him to teach him his book rather than give him an apple; yet he is not refused when he desireth food; both requests are allowed, though one be preferred. Well then, pray we must, and in prayer we act faith: Ps. lxii. 8, 'Trust in him at all times, ye people; pour out your hearts before him;' and 1 Sam. xxii. 3, 4, 'God is my rock, in whom I trust; I will call upon the name of the Lord, so shall I be saved.' If we trust God, we will be often with him at the throne of grace, for there we act our trust, and encourage ourselves in our belief of God's hearing. Whenever we feel ourselves pinched with any earthly necessity, we run to God, and spread his promises before him. This is trust, for it always keepeth up an acknowledgment of God as the giver of corn, and wine, and oil, and the comforts of this life: Hosea ii. 8, 'She did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold.' It easeth the heart of the burden of distracting cares: Phil. iv. 6, 'Be careful for nothing, but in everything let your requests be made known unto God.' When the wind is gotten into the bowels and caverns of the

earth, it shaketh, and heaves, and causeth terrible earthquakes, till it get a vent, then all is quiet ; so we are full of unquiet tossings in our minds till we go and pour out our hearts before the Lord.

[2.] This dependence is manifested by keeping us from the use of unlawful means, and base shifts. Faith can rather trust God though we have nothing, than step out of the way for a supply : Prov. xvi. 8, ‘ Better is a little with righteousness, than great revenues without right.’ That proverb expresseth the disposition of a gracious heart: though a man might easily help himself out of his straits by bending a little to some sinful way, yet he rather waiteth upon God, and looks for his blessing in his own way. They that use ill means, and do not tarry God’s leisure, they live upon the creature, not God. The protection of the law is only for them that travel in the day, and upon the road ; a man never gets anything by going aside out of God’s way. Therefore faith looketh upon unjust gain as a certain loss, like the flesh stolen from the altar with a coal in it, that fireth the bird’s nest. Besides peace of conscience which we lose, faith seeth a ruin in the estate: Prov. xx. 17, ‘ Bread of deceit is sweet to a man, but afterwards the mouth is filled with gravel ;’ they think to find a great deal of comfort in that bread they have gotten by deceit, but it proveth gravel in the belly. To make haste to be rich is to make haste to be poor, to bring a curse upon ourselves and families.

[3.] By doing our duty without distraction, and referring the event, issue, and success of every business to the Lord.

Because this is the sum of the whole duty of trusting upon God for temporal things, I shall show you—

(1.) That duty must be done by us without distraction, with quietness and a contented mind.

(2.) That events must be left to God.

1st. Duty must be done. God would not put the trouble of the event upon us, but only requireth us to perform the subservient duty : Phil. iv. 6, *μήδεν μεριμνᾶτε*, ‘ Be careful for nothing ;’ and 1 Peter v. 7, ‘ Cast all your care upon the Lord ;’ he is willing to take the burden upon him, all of it. What! must we leave all things to sixes and sevens, and let wife and children shift for themselves? There is *σπουδή* and *μεριμνά*, anxious solicitude and holy diligence ; as in a pair of compasses one foot is fixed in the centre, whilst the other wandereth about the circumference. The work of faith is not to abate industry, but to fix the heart ; the dependence of faith is not an idle and devout sloth, but an industrious waiting. Not to labour is to tempt providence, and to cark is to distrust it. Miracles are not to be multiplied without necessity. When we neglect means, we discharge God of the obligation of his promise. If you starve for want of industry, you can blame none ; God hath not undertaken that sin shall not be your ruin, rather the contrary. By a quiet use of means you enter into God’s protection ; do your duty, and then take no thought what you shall eat, and drink, or wherewith you shall be clothed, nor how sustained ; that is to take God’s work out of his hands.

2d. Events must be left to God. There are two acts of faith, committing and submitting all our affairs to God.

First, Committing all your affairs, persons, and conditions, and all

events that concern you, to the will, wisdom, power and goodness of God. Put them into his hands, and see what he will do for you. We are directed to do so in two places, each of which hath a distinct promise, the one of ease, the other of success. The one is in Prov. xvi. 3, 'Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established;' the other place is, Ps. xxxvii. 5, 'Commit thy way unto the Lord, and he shall bring it to pass;' this will bring success, or else ease us of a great deal of unnecessary trouble. Some do not understand the weight and burden of their affairs, because they are restless, and foolish, and have slight spirits; others that have a sense of their business and difficulties, take all the burden upon themselves, and so through their own distrust are eaten out with piercing cares. But the believer that is sensible of his own weakness, and acknowledgeth the wise and faithful conduct of God's providence, after he hath done his duty leaveth the event of all things to God. Into how many inconveniences, temporal and spiritual, do we plunge ourselves, till we do so. Let God alone, for he will guide all to his own glory and our comfort, for he is a faithful God. This is the true depending upon his providence, when we put all our comforts into his hands.

Secondly. Submit your thoughts and affections to God in the disposal of your condition. As Jesus Christ our Lord—'Not my will be done, but thine,' Luke xxii. 42. Lord, if thou wilt bring about this comfort, I will bless thee; if not, here I am, let the Lord do to me as he will: 2 Sam. xv. 25, 26, 'If I find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and show me both it and his habitation: but if he say thus, I have no delight in thee, behold here am I, let him do as seemeth good unto him.' When a man puts himself and all his interests as a die into the hands of God's providence, to be cast high or low, as he pleaseth; as those in Acts xxi. 14, 'When they saw he would not be persuaded, they ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.' When we cannot by lawful means avert evil, let us acquiesce in his providence; he knows what way is best to bring us to heaven. Whether is it most equal for us to desire that the will of God should be subject to our affections, or our wills and affections subject to God's providence? If things fall out contrary to our inclinations, they are agreeable to his wisdom; and though they are against our wills, yet not against our salvation; for God in all the ways of his providence aimeth at his own glory and the salvation of his people. Therefore what is against our will, is not against our profit, and it is not fit the wheels of providence should move according to our fancies, as if we could guide things better than God. We ascribe too much to ourselves when we would prescribe to God. It is man's duty to submit, admire, not quarrel at providence; if things are not as we would have them, they are as God would have them. We all condemn the blasphemy of Alphonsus, who said, *Si Deo a consiliis adjuisset in creatione mundi, se consultius multa ordinaturum*—If he had been by when God made the world, he would have ordered things a great deal better than now they are. Yet we are guilty of the same blasphemy in our murmurings; we think if we had the reins of government in our own hands, we would order the affairs of the world in a better way. Foolish creatures! thus are we offended, because we know not God, and do not consider the end and meaning of his dispensations.

But you will say, There may be obedience in this submission, but how is it an act of dependence?

I answer, thus: when we believe that God is so good and faithful that he will do what is best, though we see not how. Certainly murmuring is the effect of unbelief: Ps. cvi. 24, 25, 'They believed not, but murmured in their tents.' So submission is an act of faith. Could we believe that the wise and faithful God is carrying on all things for our good, that would make us in quietness and silence to possess our souls, till we see the end of the Lord, and what he purposeth by all the straits he reduceth us unto.

[1.] This dependence is manifested by using all comforts vouchsafed with reverence and thankfulness. There is a living by faith in prosperity as well as adversity; and it is a part of the divine and spiritual life 'to learn how to abound' as well as 'how to be abased,' Phil. iv. 12. Faith must be exercised when we have comforts as well as when we want them. 1 Tim. iv. 3, it is said, 'the creature is to be received with thanksgiving of them that believe;' and ver. 5, 'Every creature is sanctified by the word and prayer.' We are to take all our comforts out of the promise, and to seek God's blessing upon them, giving thanks for the use. Alas! otherwise when we have earthly things, we have them not with God's blessing; and then the creatures will be like a deaf nut, when we come to crack it there is no kernel in it. Compare Prov. x. 4, with Prov. x. 22; in one place it is said, 'The diligent hand maketh rich;' and in the other place it is said, 'The blessing of the Lord maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.'

Well then, it will not be amiss to treat of living by faith when we have these outward supplies, and the comforts of this life. Now the acts of faith when we have these blessings, are these—

(1) 'To look up and acknowledge God, the donor of all that we have: 1 Tim. vi. 17, 'Charge them that are rich in this world that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.' These blessings do not come by chance, but from the God of heaven. You shall find your betters made conscience of this duty: Jesus Christ ever gave thanks, when he made use of the creatures, John vi. 11; though he were heir and lord of all things, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God, he gave thanks to God; and that not for the choicest dainties which we enjoy, but for sober and coarse fare, five barley loaves, and two small fishes, ver. 9. And it seemeth Christ had expressed himself very affectionately, for mark, it is said, ver. 23, 'When they came nigh unto the place where they had eaten bread, after the Lord had given thanks.' He doth not say, where the Lord wrought the miracle, but where the Lord had given thanks; he characteriseth the place, not by the miracle, but the thanksgiving. Christ's way of expressing himself made some deep impression upon them, therefore it is repeated. Well then, so much faith we should express, as to acknowledge the donor of all our comforts, and have our minds raised thereby; and therefore the spouse's eyes are compared to 'dove's eyes,' Cant. v. 12. Doves sip and look upward, so should we; not like swine that raven upon the acorns, and never look up to the oak from whence they drop; especially at your full and well-furnished tables, where such clusters of

mercies crowd in before your eyes and observations: Deut. viii. 10, 'When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord.' They are great mercies, and sweetened and sanctified to you when you acknowledge them to come down from heaven; though the matter of the provision be fetched from the field or the sea, yet it comes from God as the first cause.

(2.) This piece of living by faith is necessary too, not only to take them out of the hands of God as a creator, but to take them out of the promise. It is said they are 'to be received with thanksgiving of them that believe and know the truth,' 1 Tim. iv. 3. It is good to see by what right and title you have your mercies, comforts, and supplies. There is a two-fold right, a providential right, and a covenant right—*Dominium politicum fundatur in providentiâ, et dominium evangelicum fundatur in gratiâ*; by a providential right, wicked men as well as the godly possess outward things as the fruits and gifts of God's common bounty; it is their portion, Ps. xvii. 14. They are not usurpers of what falleth to their share in the course of God's providence, and are not responsible merely for possessing what they have, but abusing what they have. They have not only a civil right by the laws of men to prevent the encroachment of others, but a providential right before God, and must give an account to him for the use of them. But then there is a covenant-right from God's special love; so believers have a right to their creature-comforts; and that little which the righteous have is better than the treasures of many wicked: as the mean fare of a poor subject is better than the large allowance of a condemned traitor. This we have by Christ who is the heir of all things, and we by him, in his claim—'All are yours, for you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.' 1 Cor. iii. 23. This covenant-right then is that we should look after, that we may enjoy all things as the gifts of God's fatherly love and compassion to us, and take all out of the promise, as a part of our portion in Christ, which doth very much better the relish of our comforts.

(3.) That we may have the comfortable use of them, with God's leave and blessing. The natural, comfortable use is the fruit of faith; for 'Man liveth not by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,' Mat. iv. 4. The power of sustaining life is not in the means, but in God's word of blessing. As God hath a creating word, by which he made all things, so a providential word, by which he preserveth and upholdeth them from falling into nothing. He may give the means, when he doth withdraw the blessing; when they do not prosper to continue us in health, and strength, and vigour, and blessing, and fitting us for the service of God: Ps. cvi. 15, 'He gave them their requests, but sent leanness into their souls;' that is, no comfort in that which they obtained; and therefore the apostle maketh it an argument of God's bounty to the heathens that he gave them not only food, but 'gladness of heart,' Acts xiv. 17, and cheerfulness. And in scripture there is a distinction between bread, and 'the staff of bread,' Lev. xxvi. We may have bread, and yet not 'the staff of bread:' we may have worldly comforts, but not with a blessing.

(4.) We must act faith in the promises, that we may have a sanctified use of them, that our hearts may be raised the more to love God

for every taste of mercy: Hosea ii. 8, 'They did not know that I gave them corn, and wine, and oil.' The creatures live upon God, but they are not capable of knowing the first cause; man only is capable, and God giveth him an heart to love him as the strength of our lives and 'the length of our days,' Deut. xxx. 20; and to serve him cheerfully and 'with gladness of heart for the abundance of all things,' Deut. xlviii. 47. Alas! they that live by sense, all their meals are but a sacrifice, a meat or a drink-offering, to their own lusts; but when we live by faith, we use all these comforts for God. 'Holiness to the Lord' was written in all the pots in Jerusalem, Zech. xiv. 20; not only upon the vessels and utensils of the temple, but upon the very pots and horse-bells. All blessings that come from God must return to God again; as all rivers come from the sea, and in all countries, discharge themselves into the sea again. The most part of the world abuse these gifts of God, as occasions of sinning against the giver, and so we fight against him with his own weapons—'Their table is their snare,' Ps. lxxix. 22, and that is a heavy judgment. We think the want of worldly comforts is a great judgment, but the abuse of worldly comforts is a greater, for that is a spiritual judgment; and this not only when they are grossly abused to surfeiting and drunkenness, and open contempt of God, but when they are abused to security, hardness of heart, forgetfulness and neglect of God, which is the more secret and common evil. Christ giveth a caution to his own disciples: Luke xxi. 34, 'Take heed, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life.' Take these words in the vulgar and gross notion of them, they are not unseasonable. We had two common parents, Adam, the father of all mankind, and Noah, the preserver of all mankind, and both miscarried by appetite, the one by eating, the other by drinking. The throat is a slippery place, and had need be well guarded. But I suppose the words are to be taken in a more spiritual notion; the heart may be overcharged, when the stomach is not, when we are less apt to praise God, or when we settle into a worldly, sensual, careless frame of spirit, and from an inordinate delight in our present portion are taken off from minding better things, and are fully satisfied with these things.

4. How shall we bring our hearts thus to live by faith?

[1.] We must empty our hearts of covetous desires: Heb. xiii. 5, 'Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be contented with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee'—implying, that he that will depend upon God, and receive the comfort of the promise, that God will not leave him nor forsake him, must so do. He that would cast himself upon God's providence, he must be content with God's allowance. We do but ensnare and perplex our thoughts while we would go about to reconcile the promises with our lusts, and crave more than God ever meaneth to bestow. Many men set God a task, to provide meat for their lusts: Ps. lxxviii. 18, 19, 'They tempted God in their hearts by asking meat for their lusts: yea, they spake against God, they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?' And what was the issue? their carnal affections and hopes did but make trouble to themselves. Though it be the ordinary practice of God's free-grace and fatherly care to provide



things comfortable and necessary for his children, whilst he hath work for them to do, yet he never undertook to maintain us at such a rate, to give us so much by the year, such portions for our children, and supplies for our families. We must leave it to the great shepherd of the sheep to choose our pastures, bare or large. This is the way to breed faith: Luke xii. 15, 'Take heed, and beware of covetousness; for man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.' That is faith's principle: I shall never be the more safe and happier, nor the better provided for, in a spiritual sense, nor the more comfortable, because I have abundance. Faith looketh to heaven, and a little serveth turn to keep us by the way. He is not poor that hath little, but he that desireth more. Enlarged affections make want.

[2.] Secure your great interest, and then it will be easy to wait upon God for temporal supplies: Mat. vi. 33, 'First seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and these things shall be added.' That once sought after, and well secured, draweth other things along with it; and then you need not be anxious about food, and raiment, and protection, and maintenance, and such like things. When this is our care, to live eternally, our desires of other things are abated, and so are our fears about them. Yea, this will assure us that in some measure we shall have them. Provide for the soul, and the body shall not want its allowance; provide for the body, and we cannot have assurance for our souls. Men carry it so, as if it were their work to provide for their bodies, and leave their soul at all adventures. If God take care for it, well; if not, they are not troubled. Indeed it is quite contrary. It is true, we are to serve God's providence for both, but first for our souls. A man may have a little provision in the world without so much ado; these things are cast into the bargain, and by way of overplus. He that giveth a jewel will not stand upon a trifle; God that blessed the house of Obed-edom for the ark's sake, 2 Sam. vi. 11, 12, will bless you, and keep you, because Christ is received into your hearts: 1 Kings iii. 11-13, 'Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life, . . . ; lo, I have done according to thy words, . . . And also I have given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honour,' &c.

[3.] Be persuaded of the particularity of God's providence; that he doth not only mind the greater affairs of the world, but is conscious to everything and every person that liveth here. Christ knew when virtue passed out from him in a throng: Luke viii. 45, 'Somebody hath touched me,' saith he. It is a notable passage which we have in Acts ix. 11, 'Arise, go into the street, which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus; for behold he prayeth.' God knoweth where we are, what we do, what we think, and what we speak; as where Saul was, in what street, in what house, and what he was doing. God seeth all in what posture we are, whether we fear or rejoice, whether we are sad or merry, whether angry or pleased, whether we are toying or praying. God doth not only look after the preservation of the species, or kinds of things, but after every individual, and careth for them, as if he had none to care for besides them. Every child that is born into the world, God taketh notice of it; and therefore Paul is said to be 'separated from his mother's womb,' Gal. i. 15.

As soon as a child is born, God is making way by particular acts of providence, for some hidden purpose and design of his about that child, fitting the temper, &c. But you will say, Paul was a notable instrument of God's glory ; but he takes care, not only for great and notable instruments of his glory, but poor and despicable persons: Ps. xxxiv. 6, 'This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him ;' one of no account and reckoning in the world, such a one as was forgotten, or never thought of in his neighbourhood. Yea, the beasts and fowls are known of God : Ps. l. 11, 'I know all the fowls of the air, and the wild beasts in the field are mine.' Though there be such innumerable flocks, yet God knoweth them particularly, yea, all their motions: Mat. x. 29, 'Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father.' And if God be at leisure to look after all the beasts of the field, and the fowls of heaven, and the fishes of the sea, will he not look after his saints and servants? Yes, they and every thing about them is cared for: Mat. x. 30, 'The hairs of your head are numbered ;' not only the head itself, or hands and feet, which are *partes integrantes*, but the hairs of your head: excrementitious parts, rather for conveniency and ornament, than necessity. Well then, be settled in the belief of this truth of God's particular providence. There is not only a common providence to be ascribed to God, that he doth in the general furnish the world, and store it with sufficiency, and so leaving us to our own industry, catch that catch can, and so make it our own ; no, but he hath a personal eye upon every one of us. He doth not leave us scattered upon the face of the earth to forage for ourselves, but we all live upon his finding, and he appoints to every one their lot and portion. In common plenty he can punish with personal scarcity, as he did the prince of Samaria ; and in general scarcity he can furnish with personal plenty, as Elijah did the Sareptan widow. Many will allow God a general inspection, that he upholdeth the pillars of the earth, but believe not that he taketh care of particulars, and so resolve to shift for themselves ; but be once persuaded of his particular notice and care, and that will help you to live by faith.

[4.] Feed trust with arguments, and reason sometimes from the greater to the less. He hath given us his Christ and his Spirit: Rom. viii. 32, 'How shall he not with him give us all things else?' Sometimes from the less to the greater—'If he clothe the lilies and feed the ravens, how much more will he provide for you, O ye of little faith,' Mat. vi. 26, 30. Reason from things past to things present: as David: 1 Sam. xvii. 37, 'The Lord hath delivered me from the paw of the lion and the mouth of the bear, and he will deliver me out of the hands of this uncircumcised Philistine.' And then reason from things past and present to things future: 2 Cor. i. 10, 'Who hath delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver ; in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us.' God hath provided for me hitherto, even when I lay in my mother's womb ; it was he prepared thy swaddling-clothes when thou wast not able to shift for thyself. He provided two bottles of milk for thee before thou wast born ; and he provided for thee when thou hadst no reason, no grace, no interest in him ; certainly he will provide for thee now. And on the other side, reason from things to come to things present: Luke xii. 32, 'Fear not, little flock, it is your

Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' If he will give heaven, why not daily bread? Thus may we help faith by reasoning. Christ hath taught us this skill.

[5.] Consider your relations to God, and improve them to increase your confidence. The apostle saith, 1 Tim. v. 8, 'He that provideth not for his own is worse than an infidel.' God is your creator, and you are his creatures; and God is bountiful to everything that he hath made: Ps. cxlv. 15, 16, 'The eyes of all things wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season; thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living creature.' He that is so tender of all his works, will he forget you and forsake you? The apostle saith, 1 Peter iv. 19, 'Commit your souls unto him, as unto a faithful creator.' They were in a great deal of danger, they carried their lives in their hands from day to day, and therefore the apostle gives them this advice. And then he is a shepherd, that is his relation to the visible church, and you may draw conclusions from it: Ps. xxiii. 1, 'The Lord is my shepherd, I shall want no good thing.' And then he is your father. Mat. vi. 32, 'Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.' And will a father be unmindful of his children? Yea, he is your God, in covenant with you: Ps. xxxi. 14, 'I trusted in thee, O God; I said, Thou art my God.' A man must make sure his personal interest, and then it will be more easy to live by faith, and draw comfortable conclusions from thence.

[6.] Consider the vanity of carking: Mat. vi. 27, 'Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to his stature?' We cannot change the colour of a hair, nor make ourselves a jot taller or stronger. A man is pierced through with worldly cares, and yet the world frowneth upon him: Ps. cxxvii. 1, 2, 'Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it. It is in vain to rise early, and go to bed late, to eat the bread of sorrows; for so he giveth his beloved sleep.' There is a general and a particular meaning in this psalm. The general sense is this: there are many that follow their business close, with great wisdom and dexterity; they labour and toil, live sparingly, do this and that, and yet are destitute of these outward things; it is the Lord must give the blessing. But then there is a more particular meaning in this psalm, concerning Solomon, who was called Jedidiah, the beloved of the Lord, 2 Sam. xii. 25, who was a builder: 1 Chron. xxii. 9, Adonijah and Absalom thought to have stept into the throne, but it is in vain. The Lord giveth his beloved rest. The kingdom is for Solomon, do what you can, so it is in vain for us to cark, and care, and trouble ourselves. The Lord giveth these things to whom he pleaseth; Luke. v. 5, our Saviour Christ bids his disciples 'cast out the net.' They had toiled all night and wearied themselves, and caught nothing; but at his command they cast out the net, and enclosed a multitude of fishes. Our diligence and toiling cometh to nothing without God's blessing. Thus do, and usually God prevents us with the blessings of his goodness; or if we be pinched, and feel want, it is to make our supplies the more glorious. 'How many loaves have ye?' and they said, Seven, and a few little fishes,' Mat. xv. 34, 35. Here Christ, to supply the wants of the multitude, wrought a miracle; he will have it seen what he will do, though he hath never so little to work upon.

*Secondly*, I come now to the second thing propounded—the opposites

of this life ; or those things which would seem to infringe the comforts of the spiritual life, temptations from the devil and the world, and sharp afflictions.

First, I begin with the life of faith with respect to the temptations of Satan. And here I shall (1.) Prove that this is a considerable part of the life of faith ; (2.) I shall show you what props and supports faith hath, that we may overcome the temptations of the devil. (3.) What are the acts of faith, with respect to these temptations.

I. That this is a considerable branch of the life of faith. Two considerations will evidence that—(1.) The necessity of temptations ; (2.) The necessity of faith to grapple with those temptations.

[1.] This must be considered in the life of faith, because of the necessity of temptations. And without this part of the life of faith, the spiritual life would not be guarded against all inconveniences, and the molestations of it; for whosoever doth unfeignedly dedicate himself to the service of God must expect to be assaulted by Satan. We took an oath in our infancy to fight under Christ's banner. Baptism is *sacramentum militare*, an engagement to the spiritual warfare ; and the grace that is infused into us is not only called clothing, but 'armour of light,' Rom. xiii. 12, and 'armour of righteousness,' 2 Cor. vi. 7, because Christ arrayeth us *non ad pompam, sed ad pugnam* ; not to set us out in a vain show, but to furnish us and secure us for the spiritual combat. A christian's life is a warfare, and we cannot discharge the duties of it without a battle or conflict. We do evil easily, but we must fight for the good that we do ; they that think this unnecessary, scarce know what christianity meaneth. Many are never acquainted with any such thing as temptations, because they know not what christianity meaneth. When wind and tide go together, the sea must needs be smooth and calm. 'The strong man keepeth the house, and all the goods are in peace,' Luke xi. 21. Satan and they are agreed. They that are least troubled may be most hurt ; they are quiet and secure, because Satan hath gotten them into the snare, and hath a quiet dominion in their souls. Many there are that are contented to bear his image, being conformed to him in infidelity and love of temporal good, in pride and malice, and the like ; they embrace his principles, are guided by his counsels, do his will and works ; they strive for the establishing of his kingdom, hating those that oppose it. It is in vain to comfort those against temptations. But whosoever doth seriously purpose to live to God will be molested with the devil ; and they cannot serve God cheerfully, unless there be provision made against it, which Christ hath abundantly done : Luke i. 74, 75, 'That being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.' Such encounters are to be expected. Certainly there must be temptations ; for God in wisdom permits it, and Satan in malice and policy effects it.

[2.] God seeth it fit that we should be tempted.

(1.) Partly, that we may be the oftener with him. We keep off from the throne of grace, till temptations drive us thither. When the sheep are apt to wander from the fold, the shepherd lets loose the dog upon them ; so doth God let loose Satan to drive us to himself for mercy and grace to help.

(2.) And partly, because such a dispensation is necessary, to prove and humble us, that we may not be proud of what we have, or conceited of more than we have. Paul was buffeted with a messenger of Satan, 'lest he should be exalted above measure,' 2 Cor. xii. 7. A ship laden with precious wares needs to be balanced with wood or stones; spiritual evils need a spiritual cure; outward afflictions are not so conducive to humble a gracious heart as temptations to sin. And—

(3.) Partly to conform us to Christ, that we may pledge him in his own cup. For he himself was tempted: Mat. iv. 1, 'Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.' Now the disciple is not above his Lord. The devil that did once set upon Christ will not be afraid of us.

(4.) And partly, that we may be pitiful to others: Gal. vi. 1, 'Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.' We are fierce and severe upon the failings of others; now when we are tempted ourselves, we learn more pity and compassion. When we know the heart of a tempted man, we are more compassionate to others.

[3.] Satan in malice effects it, out of envy to mankind who enjoy the happiness which he hath lost; and out of hatred to God, the devil is always vexing the saints, and sending abroad the sparks of temptations, either with hopes to recover the prey taken out of his hands—as Pharaoh made pursuit after the Israelites, thinking to have brought them back again, or else to discourage and weary and vex the children of God, and make their lives uncomfortable. The enemy will be tempting, either to draw us to sin or to trouble. Now two ways doth Satan assault us—either by his wiles: Eph. vi. 11, 'Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil;' or by his fiery darts; ver. 16, 'Take the shield of faith, that you may be able to quench the fiery darts of Satan;' those poisoned and envenomed arrows—their lusts and their consciences are sometimes set a-raging; he seeketh to stir up despairing fears; or he inflames their lusts and corruptions, that he may draw them to dishonour God, or lose their own peace.

(1.) He hath wiles; and if we descry them not, we are soon surprised and taken. The immoderate use of carnal pleasures is accounted christian cheerfulness. The apostle tells us that 'he turneth himself into an angel of light,' 2 Cor. xi. 10. Would Peter ever have made a motion for Satan to our Saviour, if he had seen his hand in it? Mat. xvi. 22. He covereth his foul designs with plausible pretences: carnal counsel shall be pity and natural affection; revenge shall be zeal: Luke ix. 53, 54, 'Wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, as Elias did?' Immoderate use of pleasure shall go for cheerfulness, and covetousness for frugality, and licentiousness for christian liberty. The devil observeth our humours and inclinations, and suits his baits accordingly. He can preach up the gospel to beat down the price of it; as he came crying after Christ: Mark i. 24, 'I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God;' to render the person of Christ odious, and his doctrine suspected. He urgeth the comforts of christianity, to exclude the duties thereof, and to rock us asleep in ease, and carnal pleasure, till conscience be benumbed. At other times he urgeth duties to exclude comforts, and so to keep us in

a dejected frame, and under bondage and fear : 2 Cor. ii. 11, ' Lest Satan should get an advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices.' He doth not only abuse the inclinations of our concupiscible faculty, but the inclinations of our irascible faculty : Gal. v. 24, ' They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof.' By lusts he meaneth vexing, troublesome passions ; and by affections, sorrow, grief, fear. He observeth us in our duties, and ' catcheth the word out of our hearts,' Luke viii. 12. As soon as we begin to be serious, and to have any good motions within us, he diverts us by one business or delight or other.

(2). He hath ' fiery darts,' either setting a-work in us despairing fears, as he did in Cain : Gen. iv. 13, ' My sin is greater than I can bear ;' and Judas : Mat. xxvii. 4, 5, ' I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood. And he departed and hanged himself,' or casting in blasphemous thoughts against God and Christ, and the truths of the gospel and world to come. David was sorely shaken : Ps. lxxiii. 13, 14, ' Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency, for all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.' Even good David thought that all religion was in vain. The envious one will be flinging his darts into our souls, and casting over the seeds of many noisome plants into the heart, that is new ploughed up and broken, or inflaming our lusts and corruptions ; he sees our looks, affections, speeches, gestures, and behaviours, observes our humours, when we are inclined to wrath, or lust, or any other transport of soul ; he knoweth what use to make of a frown, or an angry look, or a wanton glance : 1 Cor. vi. 5, ' That Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.' ' Give not place to the devil,' Eph. iv. 27. He sets some lust or other a-boiling. Or to draw us to some gross sin, thereby to dishonour God : 2 Sam. xii. 14, ' Because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.' Or to disturb their peace : Ps. xxxii. 3, 4, ' When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long ; for day and night thy hand was heavy upon me, my moisture is turned into the drought of summer.' Or by some extreme grief, to stir up murmurings, repinings, and distrust of God. Well then, you see a necessity of some remedy for this great annoyance of the spiritual life.

2. Now the great remedy is faith, without which we are at an utter loss ; yea, a great part of the work and life of faith is to resist Satan : 1 Peter v. 9, ' Whom resist, steadfast in the faith.' That is the way of resisting Satan, to keep up our courage against him. Bernard hath a saying, *Increduli timent diabolum quasi leonem, qui fide fortes despiciunt quasi vermiculum* ; that unbelief feareth Satan as a lion, but faith treadeth on him as a worm. And that is a good step to victory when we have courage to stand to it. Stand your ground, and Satan falleth. In assaulting us he hath only weapons offensive, he hath none defensive ; but a christian hath defensive and offensive weapons, a sword and a shield ; therefore our security lieth in resisting with assurance of help and victory. In the next place observe that of the apostle Paul : Eph. vi. 16, ' Above all, take the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of Satan.' We are bidden to ' put on the whole armour of God,' ver. 11. No faculty of the soul or sense of the body must be left naked and without a guard ;

there must be not one saving grace wanting. The spiritual soldier is armed cap-a-pie. The poets feign of their Achilles that he was vulnerable only in his heel, and there he got his death's-wound. A christian, though never so well furnished in other parts, yet if any part be left naked, he is in danger. Our first parents, and Solomon, who had the upper part of the soul so well guarded, were wounded in the heel, miscarried by sensual appetite. Many have great sufficiencies of knowledge, yet are intemperate and unmortified. Well then, a christian must be completely armed. The apostle there reckoneth up, 'the helmet of salvation,' which is hope; 'the breast-plate of righteousness, the girdle of truth, the feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, the sword of the Spirit,' and lastly, 'the shield of faith.' There is no piece of armour for the back-parts, because there is no flight in this spiritual warfare. We must stand to it—'Resist the devil and he will flee from you,' James iv. 7. Now which is the choicest piece of this armour? 'Above all, ἐπὶ πάντων, take the shield of faith.' Why? Because it giveth life, and being, and vigour to other graces; it preserveth all the rest, and therefore is fitly compared to a shield which covereth the whole body. The apostle beginneth with 'the girdle of truth,' or sincerity; or an honest intention to live according to the will of God: when a man endeavoureth to be, both to God and man, what he seemeth to be. Satan useth wiles, but we must be sincere. It is dangerous to fight against him with his own weapons; we cannot match our adversary for craft and policy; our strength lieth in truth and plain-dealing. A girdle strengtheneth the loins, so this giveth courage and boldness. Then there is 'the breast-plate of righteousness,' or that grace that puts us upon a holy conversation suitable to God's will revealed in the word, whereby we endeavour to give God and man their due. This secureth the breast, or the vital parts; that seed of inherent grace, or an honest, fixed purpose to obey God in all things. And then 'the feet must be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.' We shall meet with rough ways as we are advancing towards heaven. And what is the 'preparation of the gospel of peace?' A sense of the peace and friendship made up between God and us by Christ; without this we shall never follow God in ways of duty, when we meet with difficulties and hardships. Then 'the helmet of salvation,' which is the hope of eternal life: 1 Thes. v. 8, 'And for a helmet the hope of salvation,' which maketh us hold up our heads in the midst of all blows and sore assaults, and is our great motive and encouragement in the christian course. Then 'the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,' dwelling in us richly, furnishing us with arguments against every particular temptation. These do all worthily. But 'above all, take the shield of faith,' which covereth all the other armour. Who would care for the girdle of truth, if he did not believe there was a God to see and reward all that he doth. The breast-plate of righteousness would lie by neglected if faith did not persuade us this is the way to please God, and attain our own happiness. We should never learn to put on the shoes of the gospel of peace if we were not justified by faith in Christ's death; for so we come to have peace with God: Rom. v. 1, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.' Hope would languish did not faith give us a real and an effective sight of the world

to come. And 'the sword of the Spirit,' or word of God, is only managed by faith persuading us of the truth of the threatenings, and promises, and precepts, that these are of God. So that it is faith, or a constant adhering to the truth of the gospel, that quickeneth, and covereth, and enableth us to make use of all the other parts of the spiritual armour. And therefore in another place it is said, 'Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold of eternal life,' 1 Tim. vi. 12. The whole spiritual combat is a fight between faith and sense, faith and Satan. The great thing for which we fight is faith: 2 Tim. iv. 7, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.' And the great thing by which we fight is faith; this is evident in those words of Christ to Peter: Luke xxii. 31, 32, 'Satan hath desired to winnow you as wheat, but I have prayed that thy faith fail not;' implying that we shall be able to abide the encounter while faith holdeth out. Why?

[1.] Because by faith we set God before us as the spectator and helper in the conflict: Heb. xi. 27, 'He endured, as seeing him that is invisible.' And so we see more for us than against us: 2 Kings vi. 16, 'Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.'

[2.] By faith we believe that God is true in all the promises of the gospel; and so temptations are defeated, whether they tend to atheism, blasphemy, unbelief, despair, or any sensual practice. Man fell at first by believing the devil rather than God, Gen. iii. 3; and we stand now by believing God rather than the devil. When we are tempted to any unworthy thoughts of God, or unseemly practices against him, while we keep close to his word, because God cannot lie, this giveth us victory.

[3.] And by faith we set the merit and power of Christ a-work for us, and so are encouraged to make resistance. Satan is not only called *ὁ ἐχθρὸς*, the enemy, that assaults by strength and force, but *ὁ ἀντιδικός*, our adversary, 1 Peter ver. 8, in point of law and right, he is both a tempter and an accuser. Now in point of law Satan would carry it against all that come of Adam, were it not that Christ hath freed us from the curse of the law. Now without faith we are destitute of Christ's imputed righteousness; for that is 'unto all, and upon all them that believe,' Rom. iii. 22. And only received by faith: Phil. iii. 9, 'And be found in him, not having our own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.' And so we are not only exposed to the dint of sin-pursuing justice, or the wrath of God: John iii. 36, 'He that believeth not the Son, hath not life, but the wrath of God abideth on him;' but to all the bitter accusations and challenges of the devil our adversary. But when we are possessed of it by faith, then, 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? it is Christ that justifieth,' Rom. viii. 33. We may silence Satan by the righteousness of Christ. Again, as he opposeth by strength and power, faith engageth the power of God on our behalf: Eph. vi. 10, 'Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.' Without this, if we stand by our single strength, we are exposed as a prey to every temptation; but when we set Christ against the tempter, we are not so weak in the hands of Satan as Satan is in the hands of Christ. He that sideth



with us against Satan hath an absolute command over him. If he will be our second, why should we fear? Satan hath no more power in him than any other creature, which may be taken away at God's pleasure, and is in the meantime limited by him. The unclean spirits obeyed Christ in his lifetime upon earth, Mark i. 27; if Christ do but say the word, at his rebuke they vanish.

Well then, you see temptations from Satan must be, will be; and the means to resist him is not by spells, but by faith, or confidence in the death, intercession, and power of Christ. This evil spirit is not driven away with crosses, and holy water, and charms, and relics, but by a steadfast faith in Christ, according to the promises of the gospel:

II. Having showed the necessity of living by faith in an hour of temptation, I now come to show what are the grounds, props, and supports of faith against Satan's temptations.

I. Christ's victory over Satan. Christ hath obtained a fourfold victory over Satan, all which doth encourage our faith.

[1.] By his personal conflict with him in his own temptations. Jesus Christ himself was tempted, Mat. iv. and therefore we should not be dismayed when we are tempted. It becomes good soldiers to follow the captain of their salvation; he is the more likely to pity and succour us: Heb. ii. 18, 'For that himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted;' as a man troubled with the stone, or gout, his heart is entended to pity others labouring under the same exquisite and racking pains; as Israel was to pity strangers, because they themselves were once in the same condition. *Non ignara mali, miseris succurrere disco.* He hath pulled out the sting of temptations by submitting to be tempted in his own person. He sanctified every condition that he passed through: his dying hath pulled out the sting of death; so his being tempted hath made that condition the more comfortable. He hath directed us how to stand out, and by what kind of weapons we are to foil Satan. He that is a pattern in doing and suffering is also a pattern in resisting; and not only so, but he hath overcome Satan. Our general in whose quarrel we are engaged, hath already vanquished Satan; he got his victory over Satan for us. *Christus diabolum vicit*, saith Austin, *et pro te vicit, et tibi vicit, et in te vicit.* Christ hath beaten Satan to our hands. Christ's victory over Satan, though it be by himself, yet it is not for himself, but for his members, that we may have the victory over him, and comfort in all our temptations; as he hath shown us the way to fight, so he hath assured us of the victory, that we shall overcome.

[2.] Another victory he obtained over him was by his death: Heb. ii. 14, 'Through death he destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil.' Never was such a blow given to the kingdom of darkness as then; not to take away his immortal life and being, but his power and strength to hurt. Then was Satan disarmed, and afterwards by his Spirit Christ cometh and dispossesseth him; so Col. ii. 15, 'And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it;' and Eph. iv. 8, 'He hath led captivity captive.' Upon the cross he overcame his and our enemies, and triumphed over them; satisfying his Father's justice, he spoiled the devil of that power which he once had over the souls of men through

the law's curse ; so that though the devil doth tempt believers, yet he cannot overcome them—*Non pugnâ sublatâ sed victoriâ*. The devil may molest us, not totally vanquish us ; Christ will not exempt us from a battle, yet it is a spoiled adversary we fight with, he hath secured us the victory ; he may hold us in exercise, but he cannot hinder our salvation ; he may bruise our heel, but he cannot break our head. The wounds we receive from Satan may be painful, but not mortal so as to quench the life of grace ; though he foil us sometimes, yet we are kept by the power of God to salvation. A man may be bruised in the heel by divers temptations, and slip into sins thereby ; but it is but in the heel, far enough from any vital part.

[3.] He prevailed over the devil by his gospel, when he first sent abroad his disciples to the lost sheep of Israel : Luke x. 18, 'And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven ;' but especially after his ascension, and the pouring out of the Spirit, when he sent abroad his disciples into the world, casting down the idols of the gentiles, under which the devil was adored : 1 Cor. x. 19, 20, 'What say I then ? that the idol is anything ? or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is anything ? but I say, The things which the gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God.' And he still goeth on conquering and prevailing, putting Satan out of possession : Luke xi. 21, 22, 'When a strong man armed keepeth the house. his goods are in peace ; but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils ;' as he doth enlighten, reclaim, and sanctify all the elect, and subdue those lusts by which Satan ruleth in the hearts of men. If Christ conquereth Satan by his word, and by the preaching of the gospel establishing his kingdom, his word should dwell richly and abundantly in our hearts, that we may oppose the commandments of God and his counsels to the counsels and solicitations of the devil, and look that this word that prevaleth over all the world should prevail with us also : Col. i. 6, 'This word is come into all the world, and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you.'

[4.] The last victory that Christ shall have is at the day of judgment : Phil. ii. 10, 'That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth,' compared with Rom. xiv. 10, 11, 'We must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ ; for it is written, as I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me.' Then 'the devil shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone,' Rev. xx. 10, and all the saints, together with Christ, shall triumph over him : Rom. xvi. 20, 'The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly ;' as Joshua and his followers set their feet on the necks of the Canaanitish kings in the cave. So that our absolute and final victory is near and sure ; God will do it, and shortly. Then we shall never be troubled more with a busy devil, all his power shall be broken in pieces. This will be a glorious conquest indeed. and a mighty comfort and relief to us in the sharp conflicts we now have.

2. There are many promises that concern this warfare : promises of strength, of victory, and of the reward of victory.

[1.] Of strength, or such supplies of grace as we may be enabled to

stand out against the powers of darkness. Paul was buffeted with a messenger of Satan, and he knocked at the door of grace thrice, 2 Cor. xii. 7, all the answer he could get was, 'My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.' This promise was particularly made to Paul, but the reason is general; God's power is perfected, that is, manifested to be perfect, in the weakness of the creature. It is his glory to give 'power to the faint; and to them that have no might he giveth strength,' Isa. xl. 29, that they may rejoice in the Lord their strength. Jesus Christ, who is the head of the church, will also be the saviour of the body, that the glory may redound to him alone. He hath a tender sense of our danger, and is never more at work for his people than when they are most assaulted by Satan. He doth in effect say, 'They are undone if I help them not: Zech. iii. 1, 2, 'And he showed me Joshua the high-priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan, even the God that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee. Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?' And thereupon he puts forth the strength and efficacy of his mediation. Our friend in heaven, and advocate, is pleading for new grace for us. When a town is besieged, they are not left to their standing provisions, but relief is sent to them. Christ will engage and fight for us.

[2.] Promises of victory; there are many in scripture: Gen. iii. 15, 'The seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head.' It is not only true of Christ, but of his seed; they shall prevail at length and conquer, together with Christ: so Mat. xvi. 18, 'Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' In the gates was their munition and defence, and there they sat in council and judicature; so that the expression intimateth that all the power and policy of hell shall not prevail against the church of God, nor any member thereof, to destroy utterly the work of God's grace in their hearts; so 1 John v. 18, 'He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not;' that is, *tactu qualitativo*, as Cajetan speaks, with a deadly, mortal touch; and James iv. 7, 'Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.' Though he cometh ramping and roaring, and seeking to devour us, yet if we seriously resist, Satan will depart; whereas, the more we yield, he tyranniseth the more, Mat. xii. 44. These and many other promises there are made, to assure us that if we will but stand to it, Satan shall not prevail.

[3.] Of reward upon victory: Rev. ii. 10, 'Be faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life;' that is, a garland of immortality, if we will be faithful, seriously own God's cause, and make a stout and peremptory resistance, without thinking of flying from him, or yielding to him in the least. So in many other places—'He that overcometh, shall not be hurt of the second death,' Rev. ii. 11; and Rev. iii. 21, 'To him that overcometh I will grant to sit with me upon my throne, as I also overcame, and am sat down with my Father upon his throne.' Stay but a while, and there will a time of triumph come, and you shall be able to say, 2 Tim. iv. 8, 'Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall

give me at that day.' He that is now a soldier, shall then be a conqueror, and the danger of the battle will increase the joy of victory. Travellers, when they come into their inn, can sweetly remember the troubles and dangers of the road.

III. What are the acts of faith about these temptations?

1. To cause us to renounce our own strength, and to look up to the Lord for help: 2 Chron. xx. 12, 'We have no might against this great company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are unto thee;' it is a good address in spiritual cases as well as temporal. There must be a renouncing of our own strength before we can expect help from the Lord; for 'God giveth grace to the humble,' James iv. 6. And you shall see in the next verse, it is that whereby we resist, not only natural corruption, but the devil's temptations: ver. 7, 'Submit yourselves therefore unto God, resist the devil, and he will flee from you.' Here he explains who are the humble, they 'that submit themselves to God.' It is not to be understood morally of those that are of a lowly carriage towards men, but spiritually of those that in the brokenness of their hearts do acknowledge their own nothingness and weakness. God withholdeth and withdraweth his influences when we do not acknowledge the daily and hourly necessity of grace, when we do not desire it with such earnestness, nor receive it with such joyfulness as we were wont. In the Lord's prayer, the word *σήμερον*, daily, though it be only mentioned in the fourth petition, yet it concerneth all the rest, especially the two following petitions, 'daily bread,' and 'daily pardon,' and 'daily strength' against temptations, they are all alike necessary: Ps. xvi. 8, 'I have set the Lord always before me, because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved;' we must set God before us in point of reverence, and in point of dependence. As a glass without a bottom falleth to the ground, and is broken as soon as it is set out of hand; so doth a sensible christian apprehend himself to be in such a condition out of God's hand that he falleth, and is broken to pieces. If the new creature could live of itself, God would seldom hear from us; therefore every day we must come for new supplies.

2. To keep us from discouragement and fainting under temptations. Wherefore have we armour, but to use it when we are called to fight? For what use serveth Jesus Christ, but 'to destroy the works of the devil'? 1 John iii. 8. He came into the world to grapple with our enemy, that by the fall had gotten an hand and power over us. If he hath conquered the devil, and that for our sakes, why should we be afraid? Satan cannot tempt us one jot further than the Lord will permit him; his malice is limited and restrained. If you be in Satan's hands, Satan is in God's hands; he could not enter into the herd of swine without leave, Mark v. 12; and will God suffer him to worry and destroy the sheep of his flock without any regard or pity? God gave him a commission to afflict Job, chaps. i. and ii. Hath he not engaged his faithfulness, that we shall not be tempted more than we are able to bear? 2 Cor. x. 13; he will give strength. If he let him loose upon you, look upon Jesus Christ, with all his merits, value, virtue, and power. Is he not able to defend thee? It is true in general, Christ as mediator hath done nothing apart, wherein all his mem-

bers have not an interest with him. Did he overcome Satan for himself? No, he hath overcome, and his people overcome with him: 1 John iii. 13, 'I write to you, young ones, because ye have overcome the wicked one.' Christ needed no such combat with Satan, nor victory over him, for anything that concerned himself, seeing he had in the beginning cast him down to hell, where he holdeth him still in chains of darkness.

3. But this is not all the work of faith, to keep us from fainting; it should also fill us with courage, and assurance of victory: Rom. viii. 37-39, 'Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ our Lord.' Before the battle a believer is sure of victory. In other fights the event is uncertain; *Non æque gloriatur accinctus, ac discinctus*; but a believer when he goeth to fight, he is sure to have the best of the war, because the Father and Christ are stronger than all their enemies, and they cannot pluck him out of their hands: John x. 28, 29, 'And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.' They may have many shakings and tossings in their condition, yet their final perseverance is certain. Christ is so unchangeable in his purpose, so invincible in his power, that when once he taketh a man into his custody and charge, who can destroy him? 'Περνικῶμεν we do overcome, are sure of victory before we fight. Believe and prosper: 2 Chron. xx. 20, 'Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.' In temporal cases a man doth not presently conquer those he shall fight with; though he doth believe he shall conquer them, yet a particular impression doth much. But here is a promise made by God; there is a covenant passed between us and him; to what end? We have his bond for it, that if we fight against Satan, we shall overcome; resist and he will fly. You will say, Is it no more but believe the promise, and Satan is gone?

*Ans.* Yes; if it be with a right faith, such as quickeneth us to a serious and thorough resistance, then thou hast nothing to do but to remember that thou fightest God's battle, in God's sight, and he will crown thee.

4. To engage us to use all the means God hath appointed for the vanquishing temptations, namely, watching, and striving.

[1.] Watching: 1 Peter v. 7, 'Be sober and watchful; for your adversary the devil goeth about seeking whom he may devour.' Watch, that you may not give Satan an advantage, 2 Cor. ii. 11, or an occasion, 1 Cor. vii. 5; and Gal. v. 13, 'Use not your liberty as an occasion to the flesh.' They cannot stand long that lay themselves open to Satan's snares, and ride into the devil's quarters. Therefore we must guard the senses, take off occasions leading to sin.

[2.] Striving, and resistance: 1 Peter v. 9, 'Whom resist, steadfast in the faith;' James iv. 7, 'Resist the devil, and he will fly from you.' We make but a faint and cold resistance. Some kind of resistance

may be made by common grace; but it must be earnest and vehement, as against the enemy of our souls—‘Get thee behind me, Satan,’ Mat. iv. 10. A merchant that hath a precious commodity, and one biddeth a base price, he foldeth up his wares with indignation. As the olive-tree said in Jotham’s parable, ‘Shall I leave my fatness to rule over the trees?’ so say, Shall I leave my soul open, without a guard, for every temptation to make a prey of me? A thorough resistance there must be; yielding a little bringeth on more mischief.

Secondly, The life of faith discovers itself with respect to temptations from the world. That faith hath a great use and influence upon our victory over this kind of temptations appeareth by that scripture which we have in 1 John v. 4, ‘Whosoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.’

1. I shall explain this maxim.
2. Show the necessity of this part of the life of faith.
3. Show what are the acts of faith.
4. How we may bring our hearts to such a frame.
- I. To explain this maxim.

1. What is meant by ‘the world?’ All worldly things whatsoever, so far as they lessen our esteem of Christ and heavenly things, or hinder the cheerful performance of our duty to God, namely, honour, riches, pomp, pleasure, the favour or fear of men, their wrath, praise, or dispraise; as these prevail and find entertainment in our hearts, so far they hinder the life of faith: John v. 44, ‘How can ye believe which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?’ and John xii. 42, ‘Nevertheless, among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue, for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God;’ 1 John ii. 15, ‘Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him;’ 2 Tim. iv. 10, ‘For Demas hath forsaken me, having embraced the present world;’ and so far as faith prevaieth, the heart groweth dead to these things; in short, to the delights and terrors of the world, the fears and snares of it, 2 Cor. vi. 7. A christian should have on the ‘armour of righteousness, on the right hand and on the left.’ Man is apt to be wrought upon both ways, by the fears of evil, and hopes of good. Accordingly, in the world to come, where lie the great objects propounded to faith, there is something to outweigh the fears of this life, Mark x. 28–30; something to outweigh the pleasures of this world; set the recompense of reward against the pleasures of sin. *Contemptus à me est Romanus, et favor et furor*, said Luther, I despise both the pope’s favour and fury. But chiefly that scriptural instance of Moses is remarkable: Moses had temptations of all kinds, Heb. xi. 24–27. There were temptations on the right hand and on the left; if honour would have tempted him, he might have had it; but ‘by faith he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter,’ ver. 24. If pleasures would have tempted him, he might have enjoyed them; but ‘he chose rather to suffer afflictions with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season,’ ver. 25. If the riches and treasures of this world

would have enticed him, he might have flowed in them; but 'he esteemed the reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt,' ver. 26, than left-hand temptations, or the terrors of the world—'By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.' Thus we must stand out against all temptations: 2 Peter i. 6, 'Add to temperance, patience.' A christian that would hold out with God must have a command over all his passions, of anger, fear, and grief, and over his affections of love and delight, that he may not be corrupted with sensual delights, nor discouraged with the crosses and trials that he meeteth with in the world. We must observe both, lest we be, like Ephraim, a 'cake not turned,' that we do not forfeit our integrity, as Joab did, who turned not after Absalom, but turned after Adonijah, 1 Kings i. 19. On the other side, some may bear up against boisterous temptations out of stubbornness, humour, and interest, and the pre-engagement of credit, the expectation of applause, or to carry a name, yet are lost in the lusts of the flesh, and vanities of the world. Again; all are not called to the afflictions of the gospel, and so are not tempted to apostasy. In the parable of the sower there is the stony ground that withered in persecution, Luke viii. 13, and the thorny ground that brought forth no fruit to perfection, being choked with the cares, riches and pleasures of the world, Luke viii. 14. Here is our daily conflict; the holding on of profession is an external thing, the victory is less over outward inconveniences than inward lusts. It is the sharpest martyrdom for a man to tear his own flesh, more than to give his body to be burned, 1 Cor. xiii. 3. The secret and sly victory of the world is over our will and affections, and if we do not prevent this, our profession is as good as nothing; though we should keep on a profession, whilst we secretly gratify our lusts, all our sufferings are but like swine's blood offered in sacrifice, which was an abomination to the Lord.

2. In what sense we are said to have victory over the world. Faith is said to be the victory over these things by a metonymy of the effect for the instrumental cause; it is the means whereby we overcome. However the force of the expression is to be noted: faith is not only said to be the means of overcoming, but the victory itself. But when may it be called a victory?

[1.] We are said to overcome the world when we stand our ground, and are not overcome by it; it lieth not in being free from troubles and temptations, but in a courageous and resolute resistance. Though the temptation cease not, yet if we keep what we fight for, 2 Tim. iv. 8, 'I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith,' Rom. viii. 37, *ὑπερνικῶμεν*, 'We are more than conquerors;' and Rev. xii. 11, 'They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death;' when a man abideth constant with God, notwithstanding the flatteries or threatenings of the world, and is not drawn to apostasy, as the Levites left their possessions for the sake of God's pure worship, 2 Chron. xi. 14.

[2.] When we get ground by the temptation, and this either externally or internally.

(1.) Externally, when our profession is glorified and commended to

the consciences of men by our resolved defence and avowing of it : Rev. xii. 11, 'They overcame by the word of their testimony, not loving their lives to the death.' *Sanguis martyrum semen ecclesie* — The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church ; by their steadfast profession and adhering to the truth they defeated the devil and propagated the gospel. So Paul : Phil. i. 12, 'The things that have happened unto me have fallen out rather for the furtherance of the gospel ;' his suffering for the truth conduced as much to the propagation of it as his preaching.

(2.) Internally, when we are more confirmed in the truth of the gospel and the pursuit of heavenly things, and gain strength by every conflict ; as the apostle telleth us, Rom. v. 3-5, that 'tribulation worketh patience ; and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts.' The more we are assaulted, the more the habit of grace is perfected ; as David when scoffed at by Michal : 2 Sam. vi. 22, 'I will yet be more vile.' It often falleth out that our courage groweth by sufferings, and those that were ready to faint are at least more rooted by being shaken ; and so christians are 'more than conquerors,' Rom. viii. 37, as they thrive by opposition. A staff is held the faster by how much it is sought the more to be wrested out of our hands.

3. What faith is this that overcometh the world ?

*Ans.* It is not a naked assent, or a cold opinion, or that which the scripture calleth a 'dead faith,' James ii. 17, but such as is lively and operative. It is described, 1 John v. 5, 'And who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God ?' That is the great vital or enlivening truth, that Christ is God ; therefore when Peter made his confession : Mat. xvi. 16-18, 'Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God,' Christ telleth him that 'flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church.' This truth, that Jesus is the promised Messiah, very God and man in one person, and the anointed Saviour of the world, is a truth that cannot be attained by any human means, and is the corner-stone upon which the faith of all believers is founded, and whosoever doth indeed build his hope upon it, the gates of hell shall not prevail against him. Many take up this opinion upon human credulity, or as the current and avowed truth of the age and country in which they live ; the universal consent of the christian world hath taken up such a principle. But those that do indeed receive it, and put all their hopes of salvation upon it, these overcome the world. More particularly—

[1.] It is such a faith as receiveth whole Christ, as king, priest, and prophet : John i. 12, 'To as many as received him ;' that doth so believe Jesus to be the Messiah and Saviour of the world, as to believe his promises, and fear his threats, and obey his precepts ; for such a one hath far stronger allectives and encouragements to piety than the world can afford to the contrary. Christ hath promises of life and immortality with which this world with all its emoluments is not to be compared, or brought into reckoning the same day, Rom. viii. 18. Christ hath threatenings, Mark ix. 44, in comparison of which all the



punishments and tortures in the world are but a flea-biting, or a thing not to be mentioned. His commands of bearing the cross and denying ourselves may be well digested, and will outweigh all the allurements and terrors of the world, if we indeed cordially believe them; but when men stick at these poor inconsiderable vanities, surely they do not take Christ to be the Messiah, or Son of God. No comforts, no terrors like his; no commands like his, because they are his commands: Ps. cxix. 48, 'My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved, and I will meditate in thy statutes.'

[2.] It is such a faith as receiveth Christ with the whole heart, a cordial assent: Acts viii. 37, 'If thou believest with all thy heart.' A naked opinion is easily begotten in us; but we must so believe Christ as to profess his name, to hope for the things promised by him, and under that hope to follow his precepts and directions; such an effectual faith overcometh the world.

[3.] Such a faith as 'worketh by love,' Gal. v. 6; as draweth us to love God above all, and to make the enjoyment of him our chief scope and happiness. This will excite us to observe what conduceth to this enjoyment of God, and eschew the contrary. Our first sin was a turning from God to the creature, and our conversion is a turning from the creature to God, to love him above all, as our reconciled God and Father in Christ. He that hath such a faith may with ease overcome the world, and the terrors and temptations thereof; and he that is carried captive to the world hath not such a faith, is not a cordial believer.

II. The necessity and profit of this part of the life of faith.

1. It is by the world that our spiritual enemies have advantage against us. Satan lieth in ambush in the creature, and seeketh to work us off from God by the terrors and allurements of the world; therefore it is said, 1 John iv. 4, 'Ye are of God, and have overcome him, because greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.' Conquer the world, and the tempter is disarmed, and disabled from doing that hurt to you which otherwise he would. He blindeth as 'the god of this world,' 2 Cor. iv. 4; he troubleth as 'the prince of this world,' John xiv. 30, 'The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.' He findeth it no hard matter to entice a sensual worldly mind to almost anything that is evil. He may do what he lists with them; but when once these inclinations are mortified and broken the cord is broken by which he was wont to bind and lead you. The strength of temptations lieth in the bent of our affections. Let a man be in love with wealth, or honours and pleasures, and how soon will the devil draw him to betray, and cast away his soul for any of these things! The world is the bait and provision for the flesh: 1 John ii. 16, 'Whatever is in the world' is in 'the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and pride of life.' The lust is put for the object, either riches, pleasures, or honours. It is the world that fits us with a diet for every distemper, and a bait agreeable to every appetite. A proud corrupted mind must have honour and high place, and be supplied with pomp of living; an inordinate, sensual appetite must have pleasures and meats and drinks; so the covetous must have wealth and bags of gold. So that conquer but the world, and you may pluck up temp-

tations by the root ; lusts will wither and come to nothing. The flesh is furnished with its prey from hence.

2. It is the great let and hindrance from keeping the commandments, and keeping them cheerfully. Worldly lusts and allurements soon tempt us to transgress, till faith gets the upper hand : Tit. ii. 12, ‘That, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live righteously, soberly, and godly in this present world.’ The world soon maketh a breach upon sobriety, or justice or godliness. Denying worldly lusts must first be done, and as a means to the other, or else your hearts will never be free for God and his service. It is the world that hindereth you from duty, and hindereth you in duty, and from walking sweetly and comfortably with God in your whole course. While these fetters and clogs are upon you, you cannot run the race that is set before you : Heb. xii. 1, ‘Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.’ You have no heart, no life for holy things, because your affections are diverted : Ps. cxix. 36, ‘Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity.’ Inordinate desire of, and delight in worldly things, divert our minds from the pursuit of heavenly things.

3. This constituteth the great difference between the animal and the spiritual life ; the rational soul, being void of grace, accommodateth itself to the interests of the body, and the difference lieth in being addicted to the world or vanquishing the world. A mere animal man is one that merely looketh after the concerns of this life, and is swayed by the interests of this life, as power and pomp, and greatness of rank and place in the world ; but a spiritual man is one that looketh after the world to come : 1 Cor. ii. 12, ‘For we have not received the spirit of this world.’ And these two lives are distinguished again : Rom. viii. 5–7, ‘For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh ; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally-minded is death ; but to be spiritually-minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.’ A mere animal life is the same with the carnal life ; for those that do not live the life of grace are sometimes described by their worsèr, and sometimes their better part ; they are called *ψυχικὸς* and *σαρκικὸς*. So John iii. 6, ‘That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.’ Christ sheweth the necessity of being born again before a man can enter into the kingdom of God ; they can never else be spiritual in their dispositions, motions, and inclinations. The mere animal life is wholly bent to please the flesh, and to seek the interests and concerns thereof, as riches, honours and pleasures ; for reason is either brutified and debased by sense, or elevated and refined by faith.

4. We have a daily conflict with the world. If we are not daily put upon dangers and difficulties, in which respect the apostle saith, ‘I die daily,’ 1 Cor. xv. 31, yet we are daily put upon snares and temptations, and the pleasant baits of the flesh. These things are suitable to our natures, and comfortable to our senses, and necessary to our uses. We have a fleshly part as well as a spiritual ; so that if we do not continually watch and guard our hearts, we are overcome, and that to our

utter ruin. It is the case of many men; the good word is choked in them by the pleasures and cares of the world, Mat. xiii. 22, 23, and Luke viii. 14, so that they are never thorough christians, whatever proficiency they have attained unto, or whatever profession they make of the name of Christ. Multitudes are thus deceived that make a profession of religion, whilst their worldly lusts remain in full strength; as thorns draw away the strength of the earth from good seed, and overtop it, and keep it down. Many have a form of godliness, but are lovers of pleasures, lovers of riches and honours, more than God. God hath but the flesh's leavings.

### III. The acts of faith in this victory over the world.

1. It overcometh the world, as it digesteth and applieth the word of God. The word of God is the sword of the Spirit, the great weapon against the world, the devil and the flesh; and the more richly we are furnished with the knowledge of it, the more we are prepared for a victory over Satan and the world: 1 John ii. 14, 'I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.' There are notable counsels, pure precepts, rich promises, powerful directions, and sundry considerations to draw us off from the world, that we may look after the world to come: that is the drift of the whole scripture. Now all must be digested and applied by faith, or it worketh not: Heb. iv. 1, 2, 'Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them; but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.' In the word of God there are 'precious promises, that we may escape the corruption that is in the world through lust,' 2 Peter i. 4: promises that contain spiritual and eternal riches. If we can believe the pardon, grace, and blessedness that are offered in them, then these things will keep us from being ensnared by the world. Among all these promises, the chiefest is the promise of entering into his rest. Meat will nourish us if it be eaten, and water will quench thirst if we drink it, and receive it into our bodies: so will these promises where they are applied.

2. As it receiveth the Spirit, or strength from Christ, whereby to overcome the world. He died to purchase this grace for us: Gal. i. 4, 'He gave himself for us, to deliver us from the present evil world;' that is, to purchase the Spirit to dwell in our hearts for this end and purpose: 1 John iv. 4, 'Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.' We must not rest upon our own strength in our war against the world, but by faith lean upon Christ, who worketh in us by his Spirit, and beateth down Satan under our feet.

3. It prepossesseth the mind with the glory of the world to come—Moses had an eye to 'the recompense of reward,' Heb. xi. 26; and 2 Cor. iv. 18, 'While we look not to the things which are seen, but to the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.' The more sight we have of the worth and excellency of spiritual things, the more is our esteem of the world abated, and consequently the force of the temptation. Diversion is the cure of the soul; while the mind is kept intent upon the greater matters of everlasting life, the heart and affec-

tions are drawn off from present things. The world will not be cast out of our affections but by the real sight of something better than itself. Till faith hath opened heaven to you, and evidenced things invisible, and showed you that they are not shadows but substances, which the promise revealeth and believers expect, you will still be catching at present things as your portion. No eye can pierce so far as heaven, but faith: Heb. xi. 1, 'Faith is the evidence of things not seen.'

4. It improveth Christ's victory over the world, and applieth it for our comfort and encouragement: John xvi. 33, 'In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.' He overcame the world in his personal conflict, and by his death. Now the victory of Christ our head concerneth his members; for he did not overcome the world for himself, but for us: 1 Cor. xv. 57. 'But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.' He overcame the world in our name, and when we are interested in him, he maketh us conquerors together with himself, and in all our conflicts and sufferings assureth us of a certain victory. So that his suffering people need not be dismayed with the power and policy, the threats and terrors of the world, for though Christ will not exempt them from a battle and exercise, yet they are partakers of his victory by faith, and shall, abiding in him, find they have to do with enemies already vanquished. He would have us so certain, that yet we should not be secure; and doth so exhort us to fight, that first he promiseth the victory before we go to the battle. *Non a què gloriatur accinctus, ac discinctus.*

5. Faith enlighteneth the mind to see things in another manner than the world seeth them, and maketh that evident to a christian which the world seeth not; not only things to come, or the riches of the glory of the inheritance of the saints, but things present—the vanity of earthly things, that 'man in his best estate is altogether vanity,' Ps. xxxix. 5. To see it so as it begets a weanedness from the world, and maketh us 'use the world as if we used it not,' 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30. Others have empty notions, so as to be able to discourse of the vanity of the creature, but not an affective sight; eyes to see, but not a heart to see. But in faith there is not only notional apprehension, but spiritual wisdom and prudence, Eph. i. 17. It is opposed not only to ignorance, but folly—'O fools, and slow of heart to believe!' Luke xxiv. 25. It affects us suitably to the things we know. Carnal men know all things after the flesh, and are affected with them according to their present interest. They have false practical conceits of the world, and so are enamoured upon a dream; they do not consider, and therefore admire flesh-pleasing vanities; they do not weigh things in the balance of reason, nor improve those general notions that they have. The sight that faith hath of the world is as the apprehensions of a dying man, serious and piercing; those that worldly men have are like the notions of a disputant.

6. It enableth us with patience to wait upon God for his salvation: Lam. iii. 26, 'It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.' Sense is all for present satisfaction, and so it undoeth the soul; but faith can tarry God's leisure till those better things which we do expect do come in hand; and though they

are oppressed with afflictions for a while, yet it is but a little while, and all shall be made up to our full content: Isa. xxviii. 16, 'He that believeth shall not make haste.' Where there is a certain expectation, we can bear a little inconveniency for the present. We are but tarrying in the place where God hath set us for the present, till he bring us into his kingdom: Rom. viii. 25, 'That which we hope for, we do with patience wait for.' Impatience and precipitation is the cause of all mischief. What moved the Israelities to make the golden calf, but impatience in not waiting for Moses, who remained too long, according to their fancy and mind, in the mount with God? What made the bad servant, Mat. xxiv. 48, to 'smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken,' but this, 'My lord delayeth his coming'? Hasty men are loath to be kept in doubtful suspense. David said in his haste, 'I am cut off,' Ps. xxxi. 2; and Ps. cxvi. 11, 'I said in my haste, All men are liars;' Samuel, and all the prophets that had told him he should enjoy the kingdom. All carnal men cannot wait for the time when they shall have pleasures at God's right hand for evermore, and therefore take up with present delights; like those that cannot tarry till the grapes be ripe, but eat them sour and green. Solid and everlasting pleasures they cannot wait for, therefore choose the pleasures of sin, that are but for a season. A covetous man would wax rich in a day, and cannot tarry the leisure of God's providence: Prov. xx. 21. 'An inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning, but the end thereof shall not be blessed.' The covetous man will not stay till God doth give crowns, and honours, and glory in his kingdom. Revolts and apostasies from God proceed hence; they cannot wait for God's time, and tarry for the fulfilling the promises; finding themselves pressed and destitute, the flesh, which is tender and delicate, groweth impatient. It is tedious to suffer for a while; but they do not consider that it is more tedious to suffer for evermore; thence come murmurings, and unlawful attempts, stepping out of God's way, as if troublous waters would only heal them. As an impetuous river is always troubled and thick, so is a precipitate, impatient spirit always out of order, and ready for a snare.

IV. How shall we bring our hearts into such a frame?

1. Engage in no business but what you have Christ's warrant for, for truth and duty to him: Heb. xii. 4, 'Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.' We must be sure it is sin we strive against, for we cannot expect God's blessing upon our private quarrels, or that he should be the patron of our faction, and lacquey upon our humours. When conscience is clear, we may comfort ourselves in all the opposition we meet with. When there is no medium between sin and suffering, then we ought to bear up with courage and cheerfulness, as the only and best course for us, and that which God calleth us to: 1 Peter iii. 17, 'For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well-doing, than for ill-doing;' again, 1 Peter iv. 15, 'Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.' Conflicts with the world, and sufferings, are not to be taken up lightly or rashly. We are accountable to God for our temporal interests and opportunities of service; but when the cause is clear, then cheerfully lay down all at Christ's feet;

not upon other men's humours and fancies, nor pre-engagements of our own: 1 Peter ii. 19, 20, 'For this is thank-worthy, if a man for conscience towards God, endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye are buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.'

2. Consider, he is able to bear you out, and will do so, whilst he hath a mind to use you for his glory. For what cannot the Son of God do? Fears in Christ's company argue little faith. When they embarked with him in the same vessel: Mat. viii. 23, 26, 'Why are ye so fearful, O ye of little faith?' So when engaged with Christ in the same cause, why should we perplex ourselves with vain fears? It is said, Heb. xi. 27, 'By faith Moses forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible.' Pharaoh was incensed against him, a potentate of mighty power, yet Moses had his call, his supplies and helps, though invisible to others. All the power in the world is nothing to this, and it was by faith, and you see there how his faith wrought. Therefore we should fortify ourselves against the greatest and most enraged adversaries.

3. You can suffer no loss by Christ. Why hath he made such great promises to you? We think much of our petty interests: Mat. xix. 27, 'Behold we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?' A great all: what had Peter to forsake?—a small cottage, a net, a fishing boat; and yet, 'What shall we have?' You need not seek another paymaster—*ἐν παλιγγενεσίᾳ*, in the great regeneration, you shall receive an hundred-fold, Mark x. 29, 30. You shall be recompensed abundantly in kind or in value.

4. Temptations from the world should the less prevail with us, because it is the whole drift of religion to call us off from the world; so that if we be baptized into the spirit of our religion, we should be quite of another temper, not apt to be wrought upon by temptations of this kind. Do we profess to believe in our crucified Lord? and what is the great effect his death hath upon us? Gal i. 4, 'He gave himself, that he might deliver us from the present evil world.' Who have interest in him? 'They that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof,' Gal. v. 24. He doth not say they are Christ's that believe he was crucified, or that he died for sinners, but they that feel the power and efficacy of his death in mortifying their sins. What! a christian, and so worldly? a christian, and so vain and frothy? It is a contradiction. You that are carried out after the pomp and vanities of the world, do you believe in Christ, whose kingdom is not of this world? False christians are branded: 1 John iv. 5, 'They are of the world, and speak of the world, and the world heareth them;' they are engulfed in the world, and they would fain draw others to be as bad as themselves.

5. Consider Christ's example: Heb. xii. 3, 'Consider him that endured such contradictions of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied, and faint in your minds.' Christ himself was exercised, his religion was counted an imposture, his doctrine blasphemy, his miracles questioned as a cheat, and yet he endured this without fainting; so should we. Weariness is a less, and fainting an higher degree of defi-

ciency. The devil's design is to weary and tire us out in God's service; but let me persuade you to be dead to the world and the delights of the world. To the world: have you lost your credit for Christ in the world? remember that Christ made himself of no reputation. Are you driven from your habitations? Christ had not a place where to lay his head. Are you reduced to great straits in the world? Christ was hungry and thirsty. Are you forced to live upon ordinary fare? Christ was contented, and blessed God for a few barley loaves, and two fishes. And then, to the delights of the world: whatsoever this world affordeth, must be left on this side the grave; pomp, honour, pleasure, estates, must be left behind us: Job i. 22, 'Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked must I return again' Here we bustle for rank and greatness, and death endeth the quarrel. Open the grave, and thou canst not discern between the rich and the poor, the king and the peasant. Skulls wear no wreaths and marks of honour in the grave; all are alike obnoxious to stench and rottenness.

Thirdly, I am treating of the life of faith with respect to the opposites of it, and have handled it with relation to temptations from the devil, and from the world, and now I come to speak of the life of faith as to afflictions. And here I shall show you,—(1.) That there is need of faith; (2.) The grounds, or principles of faith; (3.) What are the acts of faith as to this branch.

1. The need of faith will be seen if we consider—

[1.] The troubles and afflictions of the people of God—'Man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward.' Ali have their crosses and sorrows, much more God's own people: Ps. xxxiv. 19, 'Many are the afflictions of the righteous;' though it be those whom God dearly loveth, their afflictions may be many, great, and long. This is often the lot of God's children, and heavy to be borne: Job vii. 20, 'Thou settest me up as a mark, so that I am a burden to myself,' and Job xvi. 14, 'He breaketh me with breach upon breach.' That expression (chap. vii. 20), as it implieth some comfort, that affliction doth not hit the saints by chance, but by aim and direction—we are 'appointed thereunto,' 1 Thes. iii. 3; so it expresseth much terror. A mark is set up on purpose to receive the darts, arrows, and bullets that are shot at it. Now what shall relieve us in such a case but faith? Sense seeth no good in all this, because it judgeth by the outside and present feeling: Heb. xii. 11, 'Now no chastening for the present seemeth joyous but grievous.' When we feel nothing but pain, and smart, and blows, how can God love us? Sense telleth us of nothing but wrath and anger, and is not able to unfold the riddles of providence. Will natural courage bear us out? 'The spirit of a man will bear his infirmity,' Prov. xviii. 14. For a while this will hold out; but when God redoubleth his blows, many and great troubles will quite break it. The stoutness of the creature is soon borne down by a few trembling thoughts, or a spark of God's wrath falling upon the conscience; therefore faith will only help us to bear crosses in the right manner: Ps. xxvii. 13, 'I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.' It is believing keepeth us from being overcome by our troubles, whilst it helpeth us to wait for gracious experiences in them, or a comfortable issue out of them

2. The many sins that are incident to this condition show the need of faith ; as—

[1.] Impatience when our will is crossed : Gen. xxx. 1, 'Give me children, or I die.' To be sick of the fret is a disease incident to us : Ps. xxxvii. 1, 'Fret not.' We murmur and repine against God, and that even for small matters ; as Jonah for a gourd : 'I do well to be angry,' Jonah iv. 9, so strangely are we transported.

[2.] A spirit of revenge against instruments. Christianity establisheth a universal and diffusive charity, even to enemies ; to pray for them, and seek their good. Now we are vindictive and transported into uncomely passions when wronged by men : 2 Sam. xvi. 9, 'Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king ? let me go and cut off his head.' No, saith David, 'let him alone, God hath bid him curse.' No man is troubled at a shower of rain that falleth ; but if any cast a bucket, or a bason of water upon us, we are presently all in a rage against them.

[3.] Waxing weary of our duty, and being quite tired and discouraged in our service : Heb. xii. 3, 'For consider him that endured such contradictions of sinners, lest you be weary, and faint in your minds.' Weariness and fainting belong to the body properly, and they differ gradually ; weariness is a lesser, and fainting a higher degree of deficiency ; as when labour, or hunger, or travail abateth the strength, weakens the active power, or dulleth the spirits and principles of motion ; and from the body, it is translated to the mind. When troubles are many and long-continued, then we faint, and begin to be weary of the faith and service of Christ, and sink under the burden. It is the devil's design to tire and weary us out.

[4.] Closing with sinful means for an escape : 1 Sam. xxviii. 7, 'Look me out a woman that hath a familiar spirit.' Carnal shifts are very natural to us, and if we cannot trust God, and wait upon him, we are apt to take indirect courses. Afflictions are often compared to a prison, and the sorrows that accompany it to fetters and chains. Now God that puts us in can only help us out, for he is the judge and governor of the world ; but now we attempt to break prison ; we are not able to hold out till God send an happy issue, but take some carnal course of our own. The devil will make an advantage of our afflictions ; he tempted Christ when he was an hungry : Mat. iv. 3, 'When he had fasted forty days, he was an hungry ; then came the tempter to him.'

[5.] Despairing and distrustful thoughts of God. David, after all his experiences, said, 1 Sam. xxvii. 1, 'I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul.' He had a particular promise and assurance of a kingdom, and had seen much of God's care over him ; yet after all this, David doubteth of the word of God, so Ps. xxxi. 22, 'For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes ;' God hath no more care and thought of me ; and this at that very time when deliverance was coming—'Nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee ;' so Ps. lxxvii. 7, 'Will the Lord cast off for ever ? and will he be favourable no more ? Is his mercy clean gone for ever ? doth his promise fail for evermore ?' Questions, to their appearance, full of despair ; yet there is some faith couched under them. Will the Lord cast off ? it implieth the soul cannot endure to be thrust from



him. Will God be favourable no more? it implieth some former experience, and desire of new proof. 'Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore?' Faith maketh some defence, he hath a conscience of sin; I have deserved all this, but God is merciful; will not mercy help? But to appearance despair carries it from faith.

[6.] Not only despairing thoughts do arise, but atheistical thoughts, as if there were no God, no providence, no distinction between good and evil: Ps. lxxiii. 13. 'Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.' When there is so little enjoyed, and the flesh is so importunate to be pleased, we question all.

[7.] Questioning our interest in God by reason of the cross. Our Lord hath taught us to say, 'My God,' in the bitterest agonies; but few learn this lesson: Judges vi. 13, 'If God be with us, why is all this befallen us?' Sometimes we question the love of God because we have no afflictions, and anon, because we have nothing but afflictions, as if God were not the God of the valleys, as well as of the mountains. Well then, if all these distempers be incident to the afflicted, there is great need of faith, which is the proper cure and remedy for them. If we had faith, we would be more submissive to God and meek to men, constant in waiting without using ill means, or yielding to distrustful, despairing thoughts and atheistical debates.

3. There is need of faith because of our duty under troubles, and that equal temper of heart that is necessary for the right bearing of them. There are two extremes, slighting, and fainting, and they are both prevented by that exhortation: Heb. xii. 5, 'My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him.' To despise them is to think them fortuitous, and to bear them with a stupid and a senseless mind, not considering and understanding that they come from God, that their end is repentance, and their cause is sin; or if we understand these things, we do not lay them to heart, or regard God's chastising hand, so as to make a right use of our sufferings. A sense we must have of our Father's displeasure. We owe that reverence to his anger as that we should humble ourselves; as Miriam: Numb. xii. 14, 'If her father had spit in her face, should not she be ashamed seven days?' Men cannot endure to have two things despised, their love and their anger. Their love: when David thought his kindness despised by Nabal, he in his fury resolved to cut off all those that pissed against the wall, 1 Sam. xxv. 36; and Nebuchadnezzar, when his anger was despised, he was in a rage and said, 'Heat the furnace seven times hotter.' Now faith keepeth us from slighting the hand of God; it seeth the hand of God in the affliction. The world ascribeth things to blind chance, but faith seeth God in it; for an invisible hand can only be seen by faith: Job v. 6. 'Affliction doth not come out of the dust, nor trouble spring out of the ground.' It doth not come by chance, nor by the stated course of nature, as all things grow in their season, but it hath a cause from above; a wise God hath the ordering of it. The other extreme is that of fainting. To faint under these is to be weary of our profession, and to incline to apostasy, because our sufferings are numerous, and of long continuance. Therefore faith and patience are necessary for us, Heb. vi. 12, that we may hold out with

God, and keep up a holy confidence. The former principle is of use here too; God hath the whole guiding and ordering of the affliction, and while the rod is in his hands, there is no anger in his heart; he is a wise God, and cannot be overseen; he afflicteth no more than is needful: 1 Sam. ii. 3, 'For the Lord is a God of knowledge; by him actions are weighed;' he weighs every drachm and scruple of the cross. And he is a just God, and afflicteth us no more than is deserved: Job xxxiv. 23, 'He will not lay upon man more than is right, that he should enter into judgment with God.' Man can never commence a suit or have a just pretension to except against his providence. He is a good God—'He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men,' Lam. iii. 33, but as a tender father, hath tears in his eyes when the rod is in his hand. It is only what our need and profit requireth; therefore faint not. Well then, there is need of faith.

II. I shall show you what are the grounds and principles for faith, that will bear it up under afflictions.

1. That God hath a hand in all the afflictions that do befall us: Amos iii. 8, 'Is there evil in the city, and I have not done it?' God is not the author of the evil of sin, but there is no evil of punishment but he hath a hand in it: Job i. 23, 'The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken.' It is Chrysostom's gloss upon the place: he doth not say the Chaldean hath taken, the Sabeian hath taken, but the Lord hath taken. Job doth not look to the instruments, but to God.

2. That he chasteneth us but as our need and profit requireth. There is a vain conceit that possesseth the minds of men, as if the godhead were envious, and had no pleasure in the happiness of men, and therefore did delight to cross and thwart them. *Τὸ θεῶν φθονερόν*, was a principle among the heathens. Job alludeth to this conceit when he saith Job x. 3, 'Is it good unto thee that thou shouldst oppress and despise the work of thine hands, and shine upon the counsels of the wicked?' Doth God take delight to torment his creature? or doth it do him good to grieve and afflict his own children? We have hard thoughts of God. The devil seeketh much to weaken the opinion of God's goodness in our hearts; for if God be not good, he is no longer to be regarded and trusted; he seeketh to insinuate into our first parents a distaste of God, and so still he doth in us. Therefore it concerneth us to cherish good thoughts of God; that when he correcteth, it is but as our need and profit requireth. Our need: 1 Peter i. 6, 'Ye are for a season, if need be, in heaviness.' All the afflictions that come upon us are needful for us, to reclaim us from our wanderings, and to cut off the provisions of our lusts, and restrain us from doing evil or growing evil. It is a sad and woful thing for a child to be left to himself, and to give him the reins upon his own neck; but more sad for a man to be suffered to go on in sin without any chastisement or correction. Those whom God corrects not he seemeth to cast them off, and deliver them to their own lusts, and then they must needs perish. And then he correcteth us as our profit requireth: Heb. xii. 10, 'They verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure, but he for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness.' Our earthly parents many times act out of passion, rashly, not considering what is meet for their

children ; their chastenings may be arbitrary and irregular : they for a few days chastened us, or for fancy ; God for the whole term of life, till he hath made us perfect, and done his whole work upon us. His corrections are regulated by his perfect wisdom, issue from the purest love, tend to and end in our highest happiness ; it is no ways arbitrary, for he never chasteneth us but when he seeth cause, and knoweth certainly that it will be good for us—‘He for our profit ;’ not that we may increase in the world ; no, no, but in some better thing, some spiritual and divine benefit. That we may be more like God, capable of communion with him, that is true profit.

3. That the afflictions he bringeth on his people come from love : Heb. xii. 6, ‘For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth ;’ and Rev. iii. 19, ‘As many as I love I rebuke and chasten :’ it is good to see whence our evil cometh. Afflictions upon God’s own children mostly come from God’s paternal love, for mere love, for the increase and trial of grace. God may punish others, but he chasteneth none but sons ; that is an effect of his fatherly love, or else from mere anger ‘an evil, an only evil,’ Ezek. vii. 5. In a design of vengeance ; not to fan or purge, but to destroy. So upon the reprobate, all their troubles are the beginnings of sorrow, the suburbs of hell. Or else from anger mixed with love, or fatherly displeasure ; as the corrections that follow sin. David’s child was taken away, 2 Sam. xii. 10-12. Anger beginneth, but love tempereth the dispensation. Or else from love mixed with anger ; as Job out of love was put upon trial, that his patience and faith might be manifested ; but he mingleth corruption, some murmurings, and then God puts in a drachm of anger, and speaketh to him out of the whirlwind.

4. That he corrects in much measure. His love sets him a-work, and then his wisdom directeth and tempereth all the circumstances of the cross, that they may suit the effect which God aimeth at : Isa. xxvii. 8, ‘In measure when it shooteth forth thou wilt debate with it. He stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind.’ God meteth out their sufferings in due proportion, in weight and measure ; as physicians in prescribing pills and potions to their patients have a respect to the ability of the patient, as well as the nature and quality of the disease : Jer. xxx. 11, ‘I will correct thee in measure.’ This moderation and mitigation of evils is seen, either in proportioning the burden according to our strength, or in proportioning the strength according to the burden ; sometimes the one and sometimes the other. By mitigating the temptation according to our strength : 1 Cor. x. 13, ‘But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able.’ A merciful man will not overburden his beast ; so God will not lay a man’s burden upon a child’s back. Sometimes in proportioning the strength to the temptation ; if he layeth on a heavy burden, he will give strength to bear it. He is ready to help us and support us : Rom. viii. 26, ‘The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities.’ When we begin to sink, the Spirit beareth a part of the burden with us : Ps. xxxvii. 24, ‘Though he fall he shall not utterly be cast down ; for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.’ He may seem to be pressed down, but not quite lost : Phil. iv. 13, ‘I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me ;’ bearing strength is there spoken of. So Col.

i. 11, 'Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience, with long-suffering and joyfulness.' There is a gradation : the power of God doth not only strengthen us to patience, but to *all* patience. We may have patience in some afflictions, and not in others. Those may bear loss, perhaps, that cannot bear affronts or disgraces. Long-suffering is patience extended. Not only the weight of afflictions is considerable, but length ; we may tire under a long affliction. He goeth on to joyfulness. We may endure a heavy affliction, and endure it long, but yet go drooping and heavily under it ; but God will give strength to bear it cheerfully.

5. The affliction shall not always last ; yea, it shall be very short. His wrath on the church abideth but for a little moment : Isa. xxvi. 20, 'Come, my people, enter into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee ; hide thyself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.' A moment is the smallest part of time ; that point of time that is but indivisible, we call a moment. Now the time by which misery is set forth is called a moment, yea, a small moment, which is a great comfort to us. Our afflictions are bitter but short. If it be distress of conscience ; God 'will not always chide : ' Ps. ciii. 8, 9, 'The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy ; he will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger for ever.' He will not pursue the dry stubble. If it be Satan's rage, 'he hath great wrath, because he knoweth he hath but a short time,' Rev. xii. 12 ; dying beasts bite shrewdly. Pains of body cannot last long : Phil. iii. 21, 'Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.' Church distresses will at length be over. All our toil and labour, it is but till dust return to the dust, during the pre-eminence of enemies, or when rulers are unfriendly : Ps. cxxv. 3, 'For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous, lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity.' The rod is the ensign of power. Do not murmuringly cry, How long ? within a little while we shall be as well as heart can wish. Let us therefore humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God : Hosea vi. 1, 2, 'Come and let us return unto the Lord, for he hath torn and he will heal us ; he hath smitten and he will bind us up.' The afflictions of the church are from God, and his hand ; and so the healing must come alone from him. But when ?—'After two days he will revive us ; in the third day he will raise us up.' It may seem long to sense, but it is short to faith. As Christ's death lasted but for a while ; the church hath her resurrection as well as Christ. Nay, but one day ; Ps. xxx. 5, 'Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.' If we make a right reckoning, our sufferings are very short ; so Isa. xvii. 14, 'And behold at evening-tide trouble, and before the morning he is not ; this is the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us.' A tempest whirlleth and roareth in the night ; but when the sun ariseth in its strength, it is gone.

*Obj.* But common sense and experience is against this.

*Ans.* So it contradicts all matters of faith. But to clear it, how it is long and how it is short.

1. How it is long.

[1.] It is long because of present smart ; it is irksome to sense.

Men in a fever reckon hours, and quarters, and minutes. Winter nights, to one that sleepeth not, seem tedious in the passing; though when they are past, they are as a thing of nothing: Ps. xc. 4, 'A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.' A child would fain pass over his hard lesson.

[2.] It is long, because of our earnest desire of the blessings hoped for. To an hungry stomach the meat seemeth long a-dressing: Prov. x. 26, 'As vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to them that send him.' The least delay to earnest expectation is tedious—'Hope deferred maketh the heart sick,' Prov. xiii. 12.

[3.] We measure things by a wrong rule, not by the standard or scripture computation. The longest time to eternity is nothing: Ps. xc. 4, 'A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday.' What the point or prick in the centre is to the circumference, that is time to eternity. *Sapienti nihil magnum est, cui nota est eternitatis magnitudo*—He that is acquainted with the vastness of eternity accounts nothing great.

2. How it is short.

[1.] It is not so long as it might be in regard of the enemy's rage: Zech. i. 15, 'And I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease; for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction.' Satan and wicked men know no bounds when God sets them a-work to correct his people; they go about it with cruel minds, and destructive intentions. God intended to correct and purge them; they intend to root out and destroy them.

[2.] Not so long as it may seem to be in the course of second causes. In a natural way no end can be seen, when those that hate them seem to be fortified with a strong back of secular interests, and stand upon an immutable foundation: Mat. xxiv. 22, 'And except those days shall be shortened, there shall no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.' Though they shall run out to the full length of the prophecies, yet as to the course of second causes they are nothing so long as they appear.

[3.] Not so long as the merits of our sins would seem to call for: Ezra ix. 13, 'And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve.' In justice it might be for ever; as the punishments of the wicked in hell, these flames might never be quenched. The evil of one sin cannot be expiated in thousands of years; but yet though our suffering be sharp and bitter, yet it is but short, not so long as sin would make it. God relents presently: Isa. xl. 1, 2, 'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins;' not as if they had suffered more at God's hand than they have deserved, but they had endured so much as God deemed fit to be inflicted.

[4.] Love to God doth not count them long: Gen. xxix. 20, 'Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days, for the love he had to her.' All our afflictions and troubles are nothing

to love. Shall not we endure a few years affliction for our Christ, who lived a life of sorrows, and died a cursed death for our sakes? Surely if we had any love to him, it would not be so tedious.

[5.] Not long with respect to our reward in heaven: Rom. viii. 18, 'For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us;' no more than a feather to a talent; and 2 Cor. iv. 17, 'For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;' it is but as drop of vinegar to an ocean of sweetness, a rainy day to an everlasting sun-shine. As the forty martyrs in Basil, that were put out naked in a cold winter's night, and to be burned the next day, comforted themselves thus, saying, *Δριμύς ὁ χειμὼν, κ. τ. λ.*—Sharp is the cold, but sweet is paradise; it is but a night's enduring, and to-morrow we shall be in the bosom of God.

[6.] It shall turn to good. This is the comfort of the people of God, that all that befall them is either good or shall turn to good: Rom. viii. 28, 'All things shall work together for good to them that love God.' If we have but a little faith, we may know it for the present, and be assured of it before we see it; and if we have but a little patience, we shall know it and find it by experience. All things work *together* for good; singly and apart they may be against us, but *omnia simul adjumento sunt*. Poisonous ingredients in a medicine, take them singly, and they are destructive; but as they are tempered with other things by the hands of a skilful physician, they prove wholesome and useful. So all things that befall us, are tempered and ordered by God for good. There is no beauty in a building till all the pieces be set together. We view God's work by halves, and then his providence seemeth to be against us; but all together it worketh for our good. How for our good? Sometimes for good temporal, usually for good spiritual, but certainly for good eternal.

(1.) Sometimes for our good temporal, or for our greater preservation: Gen. i. 20, 'Ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good, to bring it to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.' The Egyptians and Israel had wanted a preserver if Joseph had not been sold and sent into Egypt. If a man were to go to sea, in a voyage upon which his heart is much set, but the ship is gone before he cometh; but afterwards he heareth that all that were in the ship were drowned; this disappointment is for good. Crassus's rival in the Parthian war, when he heard how that army was intercepted and cut off by the craft of the barbarians, had no reason to stomach his being refused. Many of us have cause to say *Periissem, nisi periissem*—We had suffered more if we had suffered less. In the story of Joseph there is a notable scheme and draught of providence. He is cast into a pit; thence drawn forth, and sold to the Ishmaelites; by them brought into Egypt, and sold again. What doth God mean to do with poor Joseph? He is tempted to adultery by his mistress; refusing the temptation he is falsely accused, sent to prison, kept for a long time in ward and duress; all this is against him. Who would have thought that in the issue all this should have turned for his good? that the prison had been the way to preferment? that by the pit he should come to the palace of the king of Egypt, and exchange his party-coloured coat for a royal

robe? Thus in temporal things we gain by our losses, and God chooseth better for us than we could have chosen for ourselves.

(2.) For our spiritual good. All affliction is made up and recompensed to the soul; it afflicts the body, but bettereth the heart: Ps. cxix. 71, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes.' There is more to be learned in the school of affliction than in the vastest libraries; Bodley and the Vatican cannot furnish us with a book that will teach us as much as a little experience under God's discipline. Madmen are cast into prison, kept in the dark, and under all hardships, to bring them to their mind again; so to cure us of our spiritual frenzy, and dementation in a course of sinning, God is forced to use us a little hardly. Thou darest not pray, Lord, let me have worldly comforts, though they damn me; let me not be afflicted, though it do me good. And if thou darest not pray so, wilt thou murmur when it falleth out to be so? If a man break an arm or a leg in pulling us out of the water wherein we shall certainly be drowned, would we be angry with him? and shall we fret against the Lord when he taketh away the fuel of our lusts? Is it not a good exchange, to part with outward comforts for inward holiness? certainly that will be of more gain to us than all the affliction, pain, and loss which we suffer will do us hurt. Learning God's statutes by heart is a good lesson, though it cost us trouble in learning. We lose nothing but our rust by scouring. If God will take away our outward peace, and give us peace of conscience; our worldly goods, and give us true riches, have we any cause to complain if our outward wants be recompensed by an abundance of inward grace? 2 Cor. iv. 16, 'But though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day:' and we have the less of the world that we may have more of God, and are kept poor that we may be 'rich in faith,' James ii. 5. Who is the loser, if we have a healthy soul in a sickly body, as Gaius had? 3 John 2. And an aching head maketh way for a better heart; doth not God deal graciously and lovingly with us? Afflictions are compared to fire that purgeth away the dross, 1 Peter. i. 7; to the fan that driveth away the chaff, Mat. iii. 12: to a pruning-hook that cuts off the luxuriant branches, and maketh the others that remain more fruitful, John xv. 2; to physic, that purgeth away the sick matter, Isa. xxvii. 95; to ploughing and harrowing the ground, that fitteth it to receive the good seed, Jer. iv. 3. Wilt thou be troubled when God cometh to make use of this fire to purge out thy dross, this fan to winnow away thy chaff, this pruning-hook to lop off the luxuriances of thy soul, this physic to purge out thy corruption and filth, this plough to break up thy fallow ground, and destroy the weeds that grow in thy heart? Should we not rather rejoice that he will not let us alone in our corruptions, but refine us as metal is by the fire; and fan and winnow us, that we may be pure grain; and prune us, that we may be fruitful in holiness; and use a medicine to cure those distempers, which otherwise would destroy us; and suffer the ploughers to make long furrows upon our backs, that we may enjoy the richer crop? thus it is for spiritual good.

(3.) For our eternal good. Heaven will make a complete amends: 2 Cor. iv. 17, 'For our light affliction, which is but for a moment,

worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' The affliction worketh it as a means which God useth, it shall either hasten or secure our glorious estate; this mainly is intended in Rom. viii. 28-30, 'For we know that all things shall work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.' Well then, as a bee sucketh honey from a bitter herb, so there is a great deal of good which faith can extract out of afflictions; no water, but it can turn into wine; no stones out of which faith cannot make bread.

[7.] That we shall have comfort, and support and direction, and many intervening blessings, before the deliverance cometh.

(1.) Comfort; we shall have it: 2 Cor. i. 5, 'For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.' God will refresh and relieve our troubles with many comfortable experiences of his grace; comforts proportionable to our afflictions. Should we have great sufferings and small comforts, we should not be well enough provided for; such a degree of heat will not warm cold water unless it be made more intense; a little boat that would serve well enough in fresh water, will not serve at sea, where we are to conflict with boisterous waves and mighty billows; therefore as our sufferings abound, so our consolations by Christ abound also. God suits his dispensations to the need and want of the creature. The disciples, when they had lost the bodily presence of Christ, they received the Spirit. God will not give comforts upon conflicts till the affections be purged from the dross and feculency of outward delights; till then we cannot relish spiritual delights. Troubles usually enlarge the capacity of the soul, for they humble us, and an humble soul is a vessel fit to receive grace. They put us upon the exercise of grace; then men pray most, and have most communion with God; and the more grace is exercised, the more comfort is increased; for the comforts of the Spirit follow the graces of the Spirit, as heat doth the fire. After the sharpest winter there is the sweetest spring, and the more fruitful summer and autumn.

(2.) For support. If deliverance cometh not yet, if God giveth support, we have no reason to complain; as he that is well clad is not much annoyed with the cold. David prayed, and counted support an answer: Ps. cxxxviii. 3, 'In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.' It is a real answer to have strength to bear out in our troubles, though deliverance be not yet come. Sustentation is a degree and beginning of deliverance, though God doth not remove the trouble: Isa. xl. 31, 'But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.' God enables them to bear up and hold out when they seem to be quite spent.

(3.) So for direction. This is another of those intervening mercies, Ps. cxliii. 10. David was in great danger, and beggeth for deliverance;



or if not that, yet for instruction—‘Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God.’ The danger of sin is a greater inconvenience than the danger of troubles. Now he beggeth wisdom of God to carry it well under his trouble; for in our troubles we are very apt to miscarry, unless God guide us continually. Necessity is an ill counsellor, and will soon tempt us to some indirect course; and therefore it is a great mercy to have our guide: Isa. lviii. 11, ‘And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought.’ In our gloomy and dark condition God will lead us by the hand and help us over our stumbling-blocks.

### III. What is the work of faith under afflictions?

1. To enlighten the mind, that we may judge aright of afflictions. Sense maketh lies of God, and causeth us to judge amiss of his dispensations. Why? because it judgeth of them by the outside and present feeling: Heb. xii. 11, ‘No affliction for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous.’ Alas! if we should judge of all God’s care and love by our sense of his present dealing, we shall conclude that he hath no respect to his people. Therefore faith, that is the evidence of things not seen, is needful, that we may interpret God’s providence, and rightly understand his dealing with us. Faith remedyeth this double evil of sense, because it interpreteth things not according to their outside and visible appearance, but according to the promise. Again, it looketh not upon providence by pieces, but in their whole draught, to the end of things.

[1.] Faith is necessary, that we may not dwell in the bark and outside of God’s dispensations. Sense judgeth *κατ’ ὄψιν*, by outward appearances, and so informs you of nothing but expressions of God’s anger; but faith can see love in his anger, and unfold the riddles and mysteries of providence, and showeth you how God can extract honey and sweetness out of gall and wormwood, and that his heart is full of love when his hands are smart and heavy upon us; as when he had a mind to bless Jacob he breaketh his thigh, and maketh him halt and go lame; and the bucket goeth down into the well the deeper, that it may come up the fuller. So that whatsoever appeareth, faith concludeth that God is a good God. Faith, ploughing with God’s heifer, cometh to know his design: Job xi. 6, ‘And that he would show thee the secrets of wisdom, that they are double to that which is.’ By the secrets of wisdom is meant the hidden ways of his providence. Divine providence hath two faces, the one of rigour, the other of clemency sweetly tempered therewith; like a plaited picture, that one way representeth the face of a virgin, another way the face of a serpent. We look upon it but of one side, and think that he dealeth harshly with us, and that all is wrath and severity; his love is hidden from us when we we feel nothing but pain, and smart, and blows, but faith showeth it to us.

[2.] Faith is necessary, that we may not judge by the present, not looking to what is to come. He that looketh upon the first rude draught of any notable work seeth no beauty in it: Ps. xxxi. 22, ‘For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes;’ and Ps. cxvi. 11, ‘I said in my haste, All men are liars.’ David was fain to eat his words spoken in haste. The fumes of passion and carnal affection

blind the mind, that we look only to what is present. David was quieted when he saw their end, Ps. lxxiii. 17. This settled him and satisfied him, to consider what this will be in the issue. The end puts the difference.

2. To teach us to carry ourselves heroically, above our present condition, not as overcome and dejected by it unto an uncomely sorrow : 2 Cor. iv. 16, 'For this cause we faint not ; for though our outward man perish, our inward man is renewed day by day.' He was happy in the increase of comfort and grace by the decrease of worldly felicity, by his outward pressures being the more incited, and made the more towardly to the performance of his duty : 2 Cor. vi. 8-10, 'By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report, as deceivers, and yet true ; as unknown, and yet well known ; as dying, and behold we live ; as chastened, and not killed ; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing ; as poor, yet making many rich ; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.' Thus doth a christian live above his outward estate by faith ; if contumeliously used by some, yet reverently respected by others ; though vilified by some, yet commended by others ; 'deceivers, yet true,' that is, though he was represented as an impostor, yet those that had eyes to see might easily see and find him to be a faithful dispenser of the truths of God. Good christians are persuaded of it, and the wicked are convinced of it, however they seem to dissemble it ; we are looked upon by some as if they knew us not, yet by others we are owned and valued ; in danger, but yet sustained ; exercised with a little affliction, yet we have a being and an opportunity of service ; looked upon as miserable, and in a sinking condition, yet always cheerful, rejoicing in the testimony of a good conscience ; as poor, and having little of worldly substance, yet enriching others with grace and the gifts of the Spirit ; as having nothing, yet we are so provided for by God's providence as to want nothing that is necessary and useful for us ; not having the wealth of the world in our hands, yet having enough for necessary use with contentment. Thus should a christian live above, yea, contrary to his worldly condition. Once more, hear Paul again expressing his condition : 2 Cor. iv. 8, 9, '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 ;' wrestling with all difficulties, yet sustained by an invisible assistance ; brought to extremity as to any secular and human means, yet carried through. This should be the temper of a gracious heart, never more exalted than in his low degree, never more humble than when most exalted ; still there is work for faith, but no ground for discouragement.

3. To see it made up in God what is wanting in the creature. A christian's life is made up of riddles and mysteries ; he wanteth all things, and yet he hath all things, and can see fulness of supplies in the midst of want, and an all-sufficiency in God, when there is no means of outward help. As a wicked man in the midst of his sufficiency is in straits : Job xx. 22, 'In the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits ;' so a godly man in the midst of his wants can satisfy himself in God. It is the happiness of heaven to have all things in God, without the intervention of means, for there 'God is all in all,' 1 Cor. xv. 28. The life of faith is but heaven anticipated and begun : Hab. iii.

18, 'Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.' Yet, that is, 'though the fig-tree do not blossom, and the labour of the olive fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herds in the stall,' ver.

17. When all outward supplies are cut off, to rejoice in such a low condition, that is faith indeed. As David, when all was lost at Ziklag: 1 Sam. xxx. 6, 'David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.' That is living by faith indeed, when God's all-sufficiency is enough to us.

4. To wait on the Lord for a final and sanctified issue out of all our afflictions: Ps. xxxvii. 7, 'Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him.' This waiting is an act of dependence on God as the fountain of our life and happiness, though he seem to turn away from us: Micah vii. 7, 'I will look unto the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation.' And an act of patience, or tarrying the Lord's leisure: he that waiteth, must be content to stay: Isa. xxviii. 16, 'He that believeth shall not make haste.' Faith doth patiently attend upon God: Ps. xl. 1, 'I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined his ear unto me, and heard my cry.' It is not enough to wait for a while, but to wait till the blessing cometh. And it is an act of hope, or an expectation of a comfortable issue: Isa. viii. 17, 'I will wait upon the Lord that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him;' notwithstanding the present tokens of his wrath and displeasure. He that waiteth is in expectation to receive. Now if we could bring our hearts thus to wait upon God patiently, a blessed end would surely follow; for none ever waited but they found the deliverance come in due time: Isa. xxv. 9, 'Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us; this is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.' But we are hasty and precipitant, and must have present satisfaction, or else the promises are not for our turn; our dependence is loose, our patience is quickly tired, and our hope soon lost. When the people saw that Moses stayed too long in the mount, then presently they must have an idol. Samuel directed Saul to go to Gilgal, and there to tarry for him seven days, 1 Sam. x. 8. Saul tarried till the seventh day was come, but could not tarry till the seventh day was over and past, therefore he himself offered sacrifice, 1 Sam. xiii. 12, which cost him the loss of his kingdom. So many bear out a while, but cannot tarry till our Lord cometh to take his work into his own hands, and so miscarry in the very haven, just when God is about to right the wrongs done to his people.

5. Obstinately to cleave to God when he seemeth to thrust us from him by many disappointments: Job xiii. 15, 'Though he slay me, yet I will trust in him.' This is a holy obstinacy that is very acceptable to God: such as blind Bartimeus showed: Mark x. 48, 'Many charged him that he should hold his peace, but he cried the more, Thou son of David, have mercy on me!' or as the woman of Canaan, that standeth fending and proving with Christ till he giveth her satisfaction, and telleth her, 'O woman! great is thy faith; be it unto thee, as thou wilt,' Mat. xv. 28. When we turn discouragements into motives of believing, and draw so much the nearer to Christ as he seemeth to drive us away from him, it will be well with such in the issue. For however God seemeth to wrestle with such for a while, yet it is with a purpose to give faith

the victory, and to yield up himself to do for us what our souls desire of him. This holy obstinacy of faith we should get. Lukewarm dealing, however it may please us in a calm day, yet when we are to conflict with great difficulties, and delays of deliverance, nothing but such a kind of faith will make us hold out. You pray, and God keepeth silence, and will not seem to take notice for a time; as the woman of Canaan called to Christ, and he 'answered her not a word,' Mat. xv. 23. It is not said he heard her not a word, but he answered her not a word: these two differ, Christ often heareth when he doth not answer; his not answering is indeed an answer, and speaketh this, Pray on, continue your crying still, the door is kept bolted that you may knock again. Afterwards he gives her a rebuke: ver. 26, 'It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to the dogs.' Observe, first 'he answers her not a word;' and then he gave an answer to the disciples, not to the woman, and the answer is sad, 'She is not within my commission—I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,' ver. 24. Yet she came and saith, 'Lord, help me,' ver. 25. Then he saith, 'It is not meet to take the children's bread, and give it to the dogs.' But she fastens upon him, and turns discouragements into arguments—'Truth, Lord, but the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table,' ver. 27. Then Christ saith unto her, 'O, woman! great is thy faith,' ver. 28. Thus when Christ seemeth to look away from you, and to rebuke you, you should cleave to him the more by a holy obstinacy of faith.

6. To look for the recompense of reward: 2 Cor. iv. 18, 'While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.' Faith sees the eternal glorious things that are to be enjoyed after this life. Certainly an object, though never so glorious, cannot be seen without eyes, if there be looking, there must be an eye wherewith to look and see. Faith is the eye of the soul, without which there can be no prospect of the other world. Therefore faith is said to be 'the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen,' Heb. xi. 1. If you would look at things invisible by reason of their nature, as God, or by reason of their distance, as the blessedness of the world to come, you must get faith. Nature is short-sighted. In things near at hand, reason is acute enough; in things that are afar off, we are stark blind; we see little of anything beyond this world to quicken us, to make that preparation that such eternal things deserve. Therefore the wisest part of this world is taken up with toys and trifles; the sweetness of honours, and wealth, and pleasure is easily known. Few can see the worth of these unseen things, only those who can pierce above the clouds of this lower world, to the seat of the blessed. The light of faith will make you see heaven, and glory, and happiness, in the midst of deep pressures and afflictions.

7. To make us humble ourselves under God's mighty hand, owning sin as the cause of all our miseries. Two things compose the heart to quietness and submission to the will of God, to see the cause of afflictions, and the end of afflictions. The cause of afflictions is sin: Micah vii. 9, 'I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him;' Lev. xxvi. 41, 'If then their uncircumcised hearts be

humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity.' When God is angry, it is our duty to stoop humbly under his afflicting hand. The end of afflictions is for our good: Heb. xii. 9, 10, 'We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure, but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.' We must be contented with God's methods, and submit to his discipline, let him take what way and course he pleaseth to do us good.

*Thirdly*, I now come to the third rank, the effects of faith, and there to speak of the influence of faith upon obedience, and the duties of holiness. Distinct beings have a distinct principle, by which their life is conducted and ordered; a beast liveth by sense, a man by reason, and a christian by faith. By sense the beasts discern what is hurtful or useful, agreeing or disagreeing with their natures; mere human affairs are guided by reason; but all matters of christianity, and of a spiritual nature, are directed and improved by faith. Therefore, as we have spoken hitherto of the influence of faith with respect to its objects, and opposites; now of its effects, because the whole business of christianity is conducted and quickened by it. Therefore I shall now treat of the influence of faith upon obedience, and show you—(1.) What obedience is required of a christian; (2.) The necessity of faith as to this obedience; (3.) What is the work of faith in order hereunto; (4.) How we shall bring our hearts thus to live in yielding obedience to God.

I. What obedience is required of us; it is needful to state that, that we may see it is no easy thing to walk with God. I think I need not go one step further back to prove that obedience is necessary, notwithstanding the grace of the gospel. In the kingdom of grace we are not our own masters, or at liberty to do what we will. Christ came, not only as a saviour, but as a lawgiver, and accordingly hath given us laws to try our obedience: Heb. v. 9, the apostle telleth us, 'He is become the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him.' Christ came not into the world to lessen God's sovereignty or man's duty, but to put us into a greater capacity to serve God; and though love be the great gospel duty, Rom. xiii. 10, yet by love is not meant a fellow-like familiarity, but a cheerful subjection to the will of God: 1 John v. 3, 'This is love, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous.' Therefore I think I need not go so far back, but shall take the rise of my discourse from the next step. And supposing that obedience is required, I shall show you what obedience is required and expected from us; and that I shall do by a short view of some few places of scripture. The first place I shall mention is, 1 Peter i. 15, 'But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.' No small thing is required of christians, but a conformity in some measure to the God whom they worship; the impression or stamp must be according to the engraving of the seal. If we own God as the supreme being, worthy of all that respect and worship that we give him, we must study to be like him; no other pattern is set before the eyes of the children of the Lord; the holiest upon earth is not a sufficient copy for us to imitate. Now as God is holy, not only in regard of the purity of his essence, but also in regard

of the rectitude of his administrations: Ps. cxlv. 15, 'The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works;' so a christian must not satisfy himself with an imaginary holiness within, but must really manifest the frame of his heart in his conversation and visible actings, that he may express God to the life, and be a perfect resemblance of his purity to all that see him, and are conscious to his walking. Yea, they must be holy *ἐν πάσῃ ἀναστροφῇ*, 'in all manner of conversation—that is, in every creek and turning of his life; there is no part of his conversation which ought not to savour of holiness; not only his religious but even his common and civil actions ought to be done in the Lord, and for his glory. And in all conditions he ought to prove himself a hater of what God hateth, and a lover of what God loveth. This is one place that expresses a christian's duty, and the Lord help us to fulfil it. And as here our duty is expressed by holiness, and all manner of holiness, so the next place will acquaint us with the branches of it. And that is in Luke i. 74, 75, 'That being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our lives.' Our duty there is made the end of our deliverance; Christ came to deliver us from the curse of the law, but not from the duty of the law; not that we might not serve God, but that we might serve him the more cheerfully, without fear, with peace of conscience, and joy of heart. But how will God be served? and wherein must we express our duty to him? There are two words—'In holiness and righteousness.' Holiness noteth our consecrated estate, and expresseth the duties of the first table; and righteousness the duties of the second table; and both together, universal obedience prescribed in both the tables of the moral law. Mark it, our duty lieth not in external shows, but in inward and substantial graces, expressed in a full conformity to the will of God. And this 'before him,' that is, before the all-seeing God, to whom no hypocrite can be acceptable. And 'all the days of our lives;' not for a fit or start, we must be constant all our life; it is not enough to begin well, but we must hold out in such a course. Take another place: Col. i. 10, 'That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.' Still the work of a christian groweth upon our hands; we are not only to be subject to God, but with such a subjection as will become such a Lord to exact or receive. And what is there not due to him? 'Worthy of the Lord,' so as the world may see there is no terror comparable to his frowns, no comfort comparable to his smiles, or the sense of his favour. There is a repugnancy and unbeseemingness in a slight careless conversation to so great a Lord as we profess to serve and obey. And this 'unto all pleasing;' it is not enough to regard the matter of our actions, but also the scope and end of them. A thing done may be good for the matter, yet the end may be faulty; as a piece of money may be good metal, yet if it have not the king's stamp, it is not current; there must be in every action at least an habitual, and in actions more solemn and weighty an actual purpose to please God by our obedient walking. 'Walk worthy of the Lord in all pleasing,' and that too with fruitfulness, that ye grow better every day, 'being fruitful in every good work;' praying better, hearing better, loving God more, and abounding in his

work ; and this not only in practising what we know, but searching that we may know more of his will concerning us—‘Increasing in the knowledge of God.’ If all this beget not in you a sufficient sense of the duty that belongeth to a christian, take one place more : Heb. xii. 28, ‘Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.’ All the privileges of the gospel kingdom are given to us to oblige us ‘to serve God ;’ and if we would serve God, we must ‘have grace,’ that is, we must take fast hold of grace, otherwise we have neither heart, nor hand to serve him. But how will God be served ? ‘Acceptably,’ in a cheerful manner, as being persuaded of his acceptance and good-will to us in Christ. And then in the other part of this scripture our duty is expressed by two words—‘Reverence and godly fear.’ ‘Reverence,’ in God’s service, looketh at his excellency and glorious majesty, that there may be a due respect shown to him, and at our unworthiness, and the infinite distance between him and us—a sense of our vileness to come near him, and to be concerned in anything that concerneth his glory, who is so great a God. And then with ‘godly fear,’ that we may circumspectly handle and meddle with his service, with a care not to offend, but please him in all things ; as with the greatest humility, so with the greatest caution. By this time I suppose you see what it is to serve God, and what obedience is required of us ; that he will not be put off with everything. No, he requireth that men should be like him, walk worthy of him, in holiness and righteousness all their days, and that with reverence and godly fear.

II. I shall show the necessity of faith as to this obedience. Faith is necessary—(1.) As to God’s acceptance ; (2.) And our encouragement ; (3.) From the nature of the thing itself.

1. It is necessary as to God’s acceptance ; for nothing can please God that is not done in faith : Heb. xi. 6, ‘Without faith it is impossible to please God.’ It is so with respect to the person working, and it is so with respect to the work itself.

[1.] With respect to the person working, because he is not within the covenant of grace till he believeth, ‘but the wrath of God abideth on him,’ John iii. 36, ἐχθρῶν δῶρα ἄδωρα. Enemies’ gifts are giftless ; the services of wicked men are but glittering sins. In the covenant of grace God doth not accept of the person for the work’s sake, but of the work for the person’s sake ; that is, because of his interest in Christ, in whom alone he is well pleased. And therefore whatever we do must be done in a believing state ; for our obedience is not acceptable in itself, because of much defect and imperfection in it, but in and through Jesus Christ.

[2.] With respect to the work itself. For unless it be quickened by a true and lively faith, it is not acceptable to God ; for it is but the carcass of a good work, without the life and soul of it. Superficially the selfsame things may be done by a believer and a carnal man ; but that is but the body of a duty, that which should animate it is an obediencial confidence, for all the motions, affections, and inclinations of the soul, are swayed and inclined by faith ; as all motion is inspired from the head, albeit we go upon our feet, and move with our hands.

So a firm assent to God's good-will and pleasure revealed to us hath a sovereign command on every grace, to cause it to put forth an operation proper to it. All good acts regularly performed issue from faith, and therefore they are called 'the work of faith,' 2 Thes. ii. 11. Well then, to our acceptance, the person must be accepted, before the work can please God; and that service is rightly qualified which proceedeth from faith in Christ, is conformable to the word, and tendeth to God's glory.

2. As to our encouragement, that we may serve the Lord readily and cheerfully, when we hear of so much duty, as was intimated before. Alas! what shall we do that are 'beset with sin?' Heb. xii. 1. What shall we do that find sin always 'present with us?' as Paul groaningly complains of it: Rom. vii. 21, 'I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me.' Christians are often discouraged with the thoughts of their own weakness and vileness, and the importunate returns of their lusts, and are ready to say, we shall never do anything, or to any good purpose. Therefore, till they be persuaded of God's help and grace, they do but coldly set upon the practice of holy duties, stagger much, and are off and on, often fainting at the difficulty of the work, dismayed at their manifold slips, their service groweth tedious and troublesome, and their want of faith occasioneth doubts and fears, and deadness and uncheerfulness, so that they drive on heavily in the Lord's work. But now faith, on the other side, keepeth us close to the commandment, and causeth us to rest upon the Lord for ability to do what he requireth, and comforts us with the acceptance of our sincere and unfeigned services, though weak and imperfect, and so causeth us to go about it with cheerfulness, life, and vigour. Was it not an encouragement to Moses when God said unto him, Exod. iv. 12, 'Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say?' And was it not enough to encourage the disciples when Christ said, 'I will be with you always, to the end of the world?' Mat. xxviii. 20. And doth it not exceedingly quicken us to remember that God will help our infirmities, and accept of our sincere endeavours, and reward our sorry services with eternal life? What will put life and heart into us, except these promises do?

3. Faith is necessary from the nature of the thing itself, because of the inseparable connection between faith and obedience, as between the cause and the effect. Take faith either for assent, or for dependence, or a confident relying upon God's mercy in Christ, still there is this connection between faith and obedience.

[1.] Take faith for an assent. Faith produceth it where it is in any life and vigour; therefore it is called 'the obedience of faith,' Rom. i. 5, and Rom. xvi. 26, as being begotten by it. Faith is not without obedience; there will be a reverent subjection to God if we believe he is, and doth govern the world. Nay, there is not only such a connection between faith and obedience as there is between the cause and effect, but in some respect such a connection as between branches growing out of the same root, or acts of the same grace. The same grace that produceth assent produceth obedience; by faith we assent to every part of God's known will as good and fit to be observed by us. Now if this assent be real, you will assent to his commands as well as to his



promises, and see a necessity of obeying the one as well as resting upon the other: Ps. cxix. 66, 'Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I have believed thy commandments.' There is a faith that is conversant about the commands as well as the promises: these are part of his word, and therefore must be believed. Faith is an assent to the whole doctrine of God, not only that part which concerneth our privileges, but that other part which concerneth our duty; the one part is as true as the other, and if we assent to it heartily, or 'receive the word gladly,' Acts ii. 41, we are bound to acknowledge the precepts as well as to expect the graces and benefits of the new covenant.

[2.] Take faith for dependence, or a confident relying upon God's mercy in Christ, and still faith and holiness are near akin, and do one imply the other. Partly, because when we choose and accept of Christ, we choose and accept of him as a lord and king, as well as a saviour: Acts v. 31, 'Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a prince and a saviour,' for Christ is the perfect antitype to Melchisedec king of Salem, which is by interpretation, 'king of righteousness, and after that, king of peace.' As a saviour to beget peace, so a king to command the heart; so that if we take Christ with all his titles, we must necessarily mingle resolutions of duty with expectations of mercy; and as we thrive in the one, we grow in the other. Our confidence in God's mercy can be no greater than our fidelity to God's commands. When love to the world or the flesh tempts us to omit any part of our duty, or work any disorder in our souls, Satan will easily weaken our confidence thereby, and sin will breed distrust, when the soul is serious. Confidence and comfort follow grace, as heat doth fire; and fears and doubts follow sin, as pain doth the pricking of a needle, or some sharp thing where-with a man goeth himself. And partly, because faith in this sense is an act of obedience to God's will, and therefore draweth all other parts of obedience along with it; for we believe in Christ, because God hath commanded it: 1 John iii. 23, 'And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ;' and John vi. 29, 'This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.' Many times a poor soul hath no other motive and encouragement, but ventureth in the face of difficulties on the encouragement of a command; as Peter: Luke v. 5, 'We have toiled all night, and taken nothing; nevertheless, at thy command, I will let down the net.' So say, Lord! I am an unworthy, poor, frail creature; yet at thy command I will believe. Well then, I reason thus, that which is itself the obedience of a command cannot be the cause of disobedience. We must not pick and choose; the main work doth not exclude the rest, but enforce it. Certainly if we believe on God's command, we will make conscience of other things that are commanded, as well as faith; for he is truly obedient to no precept that doth not obey all: James ii. 10, 'Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.' The same reason that maketh us believe, upon believing will make us obey God in other things, for all are enforced by the same authority. And partly, because this dependence of faith is the endeavour of a contrite or broken heart to come out of his misery, and to seek happiness of God by Christ. Now a broken heart cannot wax wanton against God; if we seek our relief by Christ, we cannot

allow ourselves in rebellion against Christ: there is a contradiction in the thing; he cannot be an enemy to Christ, and hate him in whom he would trust. Among men dependence begets observance: Ps. cxxiii. 2, 'Behold, as the eyes of servants look upon the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden on the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God until that he hath mercy upon us;' or rather: Phil. ii. 12, 13, 'Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do.' Men will not offend him from whom they look for their all. So that dependence and obedience mutually infer one another.

III. I come to the third thing, to show what faith doth in order to obedience.

1. It urgeth the soul with God's authority, and chargeth the heart, as it will answer it to him another day, not to neglect or despise the duty we owe to him. It is faith alone that doth acknowledge and improve God's sovereignty, and worketh the sense of it into the heart to any purpose. And that for these reasons—

[1.] Because the governor is invisible, and we do not see him that is invisible but by faith: Heb. xi. 27, 'For he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.' Temporal potentates are before our eyes, their terrors and rewards are matter of sense. That there is an infinite, and eternal, and all-wise Spirit, who made all things, and therefore hath a right to command and give laws to all things, reason will in part tell us. But faith doth much more assure the soul of it, and impresseth the dread and awe of God as if it did see him with bodily eyes.

[2.] Because it must appear that this is the will of this supreme being. As the ruler is invisible, so none without faith can believe that those commands are God's commands, holy, just, and good, without which persuasion there can be no obedience: 1 Thes. ii. 13, 'When ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it, not as the word of man, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which worketh effectually also in you that believe.' There is need of faith to see that they be God's laws; for it is not matter of sense, that the scripture is the expression of his commanding and legislative will, whereby he sheweth to man what is holy, just, and good, and bindingly determineth his duty: Micah vi. 8, 'He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justice, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?'

[3.] And partly, because many of these commands are contrary to natural reason, and are not so evident by those common rules by which we judge of things. Contrary to natural reason: Heb. xi. 17, 'And he that had received the promises offered up his only-begotten son;' and ver. 30, the compassing Jericho seven days, to natural reason, was a very unlikely means to make the walls fall down. So Abraham, contrary to natural affection, offered his son; and 'when he was called to go into a place, which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went forth, not knowing whither he went,' Heb. xi. 8. There is *cultus naturalis* and *cultus institutus*—natural worship and instituted worship; as Naaman's washing seven times in Jordan, 2 Kings v. 10. Some commands of God carry their own reason and evidence with them, others stand only upon the authority of his in-

stitution, which no natural light could ever reveal to us, but only faith, giving credit to the word of God.

[4.] And partly, because we are not only to see God in the command and see it urged bindingly, but to receive it with that reverence that becometh so great a Lord. It is his command who 'is able to save and to destroy,' James iv. 12. He hath *potestatem vitæ et necis*—do or die; so that *intuitus voluntatis*, 1 Thes. iv. 3; and v. 18; 1 Peter ii. 15. The sight of God's will is reason enough, and instead of all reasons to a believer. Thus to charge the heart, that we may not shift and distinguish ourselves out of our duty, there is need of faith, that we may shake off sloth and negligence, much more all deceit and fraudulency; a general dogmatical faith will not serve the turn.

2. It uniteth us to Christ as a fountain of grace, without whom we can do nothing: John xv. 5, 'Without me ye can do nothing.' We can do nothing without Christ, nothing apart from Christ: 2 Cor. iii. 5, 'Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves but our sufficiency is of God.' Christ is the fountain from whence all our supplies come: John i. 16, 'And of his fulness have we all received, and grace for grace,' and all by virtue of our union with him: 1 Cor. i. 30, 'Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption;' and the band of this union is faith: Eph. iii. 17, 'That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.' As the Spirit on Christ's part, so faith on ours; and the more we act faith, the more clear and sensible it is: John vi. 56, 57, 'He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me;' as meat chewed and digested begets spirit and life, and is turned into the eater's substance. Some do but taste Christ a little, and spit him out again; but those that concoct and digest him, that embrace Christ, and apply him by faith, and by a constant dependence, Christ doth abide in them by his constant influence and quickening virtue. By this spiritual union and mutual indwelling we are made partakers, not only of his righteousness and merits, in order to our justification, but also of his Spirit, in order to our sanctification. As the branches partake of the sap of the root, and as members of the body are partakers of the life of the soul by which the body is quickened; so whosoever is united to Christ, the Spirit of Christ dwelleth in him: Rom. viii. 9, 'Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his;' and if the Spirit of God dwell in us, he will not suffer us to be unholy and unfruitful.

3. Faith comforts and encourageth us by the promises of assistance, acceptance, and reward.

[1.] By the promises of assistance. Alas! in ourselves we are weak and of no strength, and so our hearts are faint, and our hands feeble. Duty can never be done without God's sanctifying grace—'Let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear,' Heb. xii. 28. It must be so, or we are quite discouraged. There must be both habitual grace, which giveth a general readiness and preparation of heart for the actions of the new life: Eph. ii. 10, 'We

are his workmanship, created in Jesus Christ unto good works ;—a bowl is first made round before it can run round ; we cannot act without a principle, without divine qualities infused ;—and also actual grace, by which God doth excite that grace which is infused into us : Heb. xiii. 21, ‘The Lord make you perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight.’ God doth continually co-operate and work in us and with us. As providence is a continual creation, so is assisting grace a continuation of God’s renewing work ; he is at the beginning, middle, and end of every good action : Phil. ii. 13, ‘He worketh in us both to will and to do.’ Now this is a great encouragement to ply the oar, when we have wind and tide with us ; the soul groweth into a confidence, and is much encouraged to lit up the feeble hands and strengthen the weak knees : Isa. xlv. 24, ‘Surely shall one say, In the Lord I have righteousness and strength.’ Comfort and spiritual ability increase as God strengthens us in the promise : Phil. iv. 13, ‘I can do all things through Christ that strengthens me.’ Assurance of help encourageth us to work.

[2.] By promises of acceptance. We drive on heavily when we know not whether God will accept of our work, yea or no ; as he that serveth a hard master that is always finding fault, hath no mind to his work. To take off this discouragement, God doth often promise to accept of what we do through the assistance of his Spirit : Rom. xii. 1, ‘Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God ;’ 1 Peter ii. 5, ‘Ye are an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable unto God by Jesus Christ.’ Our sacrifices are not sin-offerings, but thank-offerings ; as the dedication of ourselves to God’s service : Rom. xii. 1, ‘Present your bodies a living sacrifice ;’ *i.e.*, penitent and humble supplications : Ps. li. 17, ‘The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit,’ and offering praise to God : Heb. xiii. 15, ‘By him therefore let us offer unto God the sacrifice of praise continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name ;’ so charity to the saints : Phil. iv. 18, ‘I have received the things which were sent from you, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God ;’ and all these in testimony of our thankfulness to Christ in offering up himself as a sin-offering. All spiritual sacrifices must be done in a spiritual manner ; these are acceptable to the Lord, not for any worth that is in them or advantage that can be in them, but because they are presented to God by Jesus Christ, who taketh away the iniquity of our holy things : Exod. xxviii. 38, ‘And he shall bear the iniquities of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts, that they may be accepted before the Lord ;’ and he perfumeth our services with the incense of his merits : Rev. viii. 3, ‘There was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints.’ Our iniquities are many, yet God’s mercy is great, who will accept us and our services that are unfeignedly performed to his glory. He owneth his gracious work in us when what we do is good, and done by a man in Christ, by strength drawn from Christ, and for God’s glory, though in itself it be weak : Mal. iii. 4, ‘Then shall the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years,’ *viz.*, when they are purified to be an holy priesthood unto God ; so Isa. lx. 7, ‘They shall come up with accept-

ance upon mine altar.' Many such promises as these there are in the word of God everywhere, which is a great encouragement to poor souls to do their utmost.

[3.] By promises of reward. Hope doth excite and whet endeavours. We have no reason to be sluggish in God's service, for in the end it will turn to a good account : 1 Cor. xv. 58, 'Be ye steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.' He hath interposed his faithfulness, and laid his justice at pawn with us : Heb. vi. 10, 'God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour of love.' If God be a just God, we need not doubt ; the rewards of religion are to come, but where they are apprehended as certain and evident, they do exceedingly encourage and strengthen the heart. It should be a shame to us that when we have such wages we are no more hard at work. When it is for the everlasting enjoyment of the ever-blessed God, shall we tire and wax faint ?

4. Faith reasoneth and argueth in a most powerful and prevailing way, with such arguments that a believer cannot say nay to them. It reasoneth partly from what is past, and so all its arguments are dipped in love, or a sense of God's kindness to us in Christ, and then they must needs be forcible : Titus ii. 11, 12, 'For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world ;' and Gal. v. 6, 'Faith worketh by love ;' and Rom. xii. 1, 'I beseech you, by the mercies of God,' &c. Faith sets love to plead for God, and love beareth all before it : 2 Cor. v. 14, 'The love of Christ constraineth us ;' so in the text, 'Who loved me, and gave himself for me.' There is nothing like the pleadings of faith ; he left heaven for our sakes, and took a body, and endured a cursed death, and is gone to heaven to plead our cause with God ; he hath pardoned so many sins, and what wilt thou then not do for him ? Faith will take no repulse. And then faith reasoneth forward, partly from hope, and partly from fear. From the eternal recompenses ; no hopes equal to the rewards it proposeth, no fears comparable to the terrors it representeth ; no pleasure like the joys of heaven, no terrors like the torments of hell ; and so looking into the world to come, it breaketh the violence of every contrary inclination : 2 Cor. iv. 17, 'For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,' and so quickens the soul to follow hard after God, and overcometh the world, the great hindrance of keeping the commandments : 1 John v. 4, 'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.'

IV. What shall we do, that faith may have such an influence upon us ?

1. Consider how just it is for God to command, and how reasonable it is we should obey the supreme being ; his will is the reason of all things, and who should give laws to the world but the universal sovereign, who made all things out of nothing ? Whatsoever you are, or have, you received it from the Lord ; and therefore whatever a reasonable creature can do, you owe it to him. You are in continual dependence upon him, 'for in him you live and move, and have your

being,' Acts xvii. 28; and he hath bought you and redeemed you, and called you to life by Christ, 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20, 'You are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.' You owe your time and strength, your life and love, all that you are and can do, you owe it all to God.

2. He enjoineth nothing but what is good for us: Deut. vi. 24. 'And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God for our good;' and Deut. v. 29, 'O that there were such an heart in them that they would fear me, and keep my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever.' God hath tempered his sovereignty to the reasonable creature, and doth not rule us with a rod of iron, but with a sceptre of love.

3. That God loveth all that are good, and hateth all that are evil, without any respect of persons: Acts x. 35, 'But in every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him;' and Ps. v. 5, 'Thou hatest all the workers of iniquity;' the greater of either kind the more, the lesser the less.

4. This must be laid up in the heart with a lively faith, and this belief must prevail with us so far as to submit ourselves to God's will, to like what he liketh and to hate what he hateth; to love that best which his word telleth us he loveth best, to hate that most which his word telleth us he hateth most, though otherwise pleasant to our natural inclination. But alas! we mistake opinion for faith, or a cold and dead assent for true believing. A hypocrite is not transformed by his faith; he talketh much of it, but he showeth little of the spirit of it; especially the fruit of obedience, which is most natural and proper to it, and without which all other pretences are to little purpose; as the three children in the furnace, the fire had no power over them, nor was one hair of their head singed, nor their coats changed; no more power hath the word upon their hearts. A true believer is changed thereby: 2 Cor. iii. 18, 'But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord;' Phil. iii. 10, 'That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death.'

5. That it is much better to obey the law of God than our own affections, the lusts of the flesh, or the law of sin—'Not my will, but thine be done,' so our Lord said, Luke xxii. 42. By retaining any branch of our own wills unrenounced, or not resigned up into God's hands, we give Satan a hold of us, and he will never let go the hold till we cut off the member that offendeth; it is as an halter about an horse's neck, and we are as a bird that is caught by one claw, and as an ambassador pursuing but part of his instructions. Indispositions are so far from excusing, that they call for the more duty; though we cannot command the wind, yet we are to fit the sails.

## THE LIFE OF FAITH IN PRAYER.

*But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering ; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed.—*  
JAS. i. 6.

I SHALL from this text further treat of the life of faith. Having spoken of the influence and use of faith upon obedience, or the duties of holiness in general, I shall now speak of the use of faith in prayer.

In the context there is an exhortation to prayer, and in the text an instruction how we should pray.

1. There is an exhortation to prayer in the fifth verse—‘If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God.’ He presseth us to make an advantage of our wants, and to look upon them as so many occasions of recourse to God at the throne of grace ; and he encourageth them, partly by the consideration of God’s nature—‘Who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not.’ We need not make scruples of consulting with God upon every occasion ; he is not backward to bestow grace, nor is he wont to reproach those to whom he giveth anything ; though prayer putteth God to it never so often and never so much, yet he upbraideth none. And then he encourageth them partly by a promise—‘Let him ask, and it shall be given him.’ It is said of Augustus that he never sent away any from him sad ; it is true of the Lord, he doth not send away his worshippers sad—‘Ask, and it shall be given you ;’ prayer will not be a fruitless labour.

2. In the text there is an instruction how we should pray, which is laid down and enforced.

[1.] It is laid down to prevent mistakes—‘Let him ask in faith.’

[2.] It is enforced by a reason *ab incommodo*, from the inconveniency of not asking in faith—‘For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed.’ Wavering and doubting keep men in a perpetual tempest and agitation of mind, roving to and fro from one dependence to another, as the waves of the sea are carried hither and thither.

*Doct.* That none pray aright, but those that pray in faith.

Faith is all in all in prayer—‘The prayer of faith shall save the sick,’ James v. 15. It is not prayer simply, but the faith in prayer that prevaileth with God for a gracious answer ; so Mat. xxi. 21, 22, ‘If ye have faith, and doubt not, . . . all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.’ The grant and answer is suspended upon that condition, for God will not exercise his power till we rest upon it. In short, faith and prayer are inseparable companions, like Hippocrates’ twins, they live and die together ; they are begotten together, and grow up together, and die together.

1. They are begotten together, for faith beginneth its life in crying unto God. The first grace that is acted is faith, and the first duty when grace is infused is prayer : Zech. xii. 10, ‘I will pour upon them the spirit of grace and supplication ; and Paul after his conversion, the first news we hear of him is, ‘Behold, he prayeth,’ Acts ix. 11. As

the new-born babe falls a-crying ; so, as soon as we are born again, the first work that is set upon is prayer.

2. They grow up together, mutually strengthening and increasing, and setting one another a-work : Ps. lxii. 8, 'Trust in the Lord at all times, pour out your hearts before him.' Trust vents itself in prayer, and prayer increaseth trust, for in prayer the principles of confidence are solemnly drawn into the view of conscience.

3. Because they end together. When we come to die, faith is resolved into sight, and prayer into an uninterrupted praise.

Now for the clearing of this point—

First, I shall show you what is that faith that is requisite in prayer. Divers thoughts and opinions there are about it : I will not perplex you with them, but conceive it thus : it is a confidence that our prayers shall be heard ; that is the faith that is required in prayer : 1 John v. 14, 'And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us.'

This confidence that we shall be heard containeth many things in it.

1. A believing that there is a God, or else why should we pray unto him ? Heb. xi. 6, 'He that cometh to God must believe that God is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him ;' otherwise all our devotion will be but customary and for fashion's sake, or a compliance with the vulgar error ; as one called it, *eamus ad communem errorem*, when he spake of the worship of God. Unless we have this persuasion that God is, all is nothing.

2. That he is such an infinite being that he can supply all the wants of the creatures, and accomplish all their desires : Eph. iii. 20, 'Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.' This is a main prop of confidence in prayer, that God is able not only 'to exceed our prayers, but our conceptions and hopes : so 2 Chron. xx. 6, And he said, O Lord God of our fathers ! art not thou God in heaven ? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen ? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee ?' Faith sets prayer a-work, and prayer sets the almighty power of that God a-work, and hath a universal empire and dominion over all the world, and all the events and affairs of the world ; and therefore our Lord Jesus Christ layeth down this as a ground for prayer—'Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory ;' he can set all things a-work for the glory of his name, and for the good of his people.

3. That he is omniscient as well as omnipotent, he knoweth what we do and speak, when and where any poor creature is praying to him : Acts ix. 11, 'Arise, and go into the street that is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold he prayeth.' God observeth you in your most private and secret retirements ; in what corner of the house soever we are, he knoweth what we are a-doing, whether we are toying or praying, for it is said in what street Saul was, and in what house, and what he was doing : so Mal. iii. 16, 'Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to the other, and the Lord hearkened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought



upon his name.' God taketh notice of every word we speak to him, or of him, or for him. We cannot hear many speaking at once, because we are finite creatures, but God heareth all the world over, and knoweth how to interpret the secret groans and motions of the heart: Rom. viii. 27, 'He that searcheth the heart knoweth the mind of the Spirit.' We do not speak to an absent God, but to one that looks into the secret corners of our heart, to one that is always present and near at hand.

4. That God is ready to hear and answer our prayers: Ps. lxxv. 2, 'O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.' He hath taken the name upon him of a God hearing prayer; it is his nature and property, it is his work and constant practice; what hath God been doing for thousands of years, but receiving the addresses of his people? yea, it is his delight and glory, he will be known by it; therefore he is called the 'Father of mercies,' 2 Cor. i. 3, as being the fountain of all grace, and 'rich in mercy to all that call upon him,' Rom. x. 12. He is more ready to give than we are to ask; yea, he giveth unasked, and more than we ask; and his quarrel with us is, because we do not ask enough.

5. That God will stand to his word, which is the rule of commerce between him and his creatures. This assurance he hath given to the church: Ps. cxxxviii. 2, 'Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name,' that is, above all that is famed and spoken of God; you have him punctual in making good his promises. The heathens had two notions of their gods, that they always kept touch with their worshippers, and were ready to do them good. They are both true of the great and living God whom we serve in the spirit; we may put the humble challenge upon him, and mind him of his word: Ps. cxix. 49, 'Remember thy word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope;' and by this we exceedingly encourage ourselves to deal with him, when we have his promise to show for it: 2 Sam. vii. 27, 'For thou, O Lord of Hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed unto thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house, therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee.' The attributes of God apprehended at large have not such a force upon the soul as when he is obliged and bound by his promise, and therefore this is a great holdfast upon God.

6. That God will both accept of our persons and prayers in Christ, the son of his love, in whom he is well pleased: Eph. i. 6, 'Who hath accepted us in the Beloved, to the praise of his glorious grace;' this is the proper ground of prayer. Christ was sparingly revealed in the old testament, yet when they prayed, they looked towards the temple, where were the figures, and symbolical representations of Christ; yea, some of them spake out: Dan. ix. 17, 'Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary, that is desolate, for the Lord's sake.' Jesus Christ was a mediator to the church in the old testament, but sparingly known; but now to us he is plentifully made known: Eph. iii. 12, 'In whom we have boldness, and access with confidence, by the faith of him.' Our encouragement of pleading, and our hopes of acceptance, must be grounded upon his merit and intercession, and the Father's love to him, and to poor sinners in and through him.

7. Out of all this there resulteth an actual reliance upon God, according to these terms, for the acceptance of our persons, and the answer of all our requests and supplications: 1 John v. 15, 'And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.' Keep to the rule of prayer, ask the things that are agreeable to God's will and conducive to his glory, and fit for us to receive in our station, and then though they be ever so difficult, ever so many in number, ever so presently needed, we are confident we shall have the petitions we ask. Indeed it doth not open a door for us to expect the fulfilling of all our desires, and promises of our own making; if we interpret it so, it is horrible presumption, as you know it is to forge a bond; this maketh for God's dishonour, and is an ungrounded confidence; but ask regularly, according to God's will, you may be sure God will grant what you ask.

But how can we thus rely upon God, and have confidence that we shall be answered in all our particular requests, since mercies asked are so various, some absolutely promised, and some only conditionally, and temporal things are not always granted in kind.

*Ans.* 1. Prayer may be heard when it is not answered with success; Daniel was heard as soon as he prayed: Dan. ix. 23, 'At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth;' but yet, Dan. x. 12, 13, there was some stop, and some time before it could be brought about. The Lord heareth presently, but giveth in comfort afterwards; prayer put up in Christ's name gets a hearing presently, and in time gets an answer. God will exercise our faith for a while, to believe this, though we see it not; and he will exercise our patience for a while, to wait for his leisure, and in the meantime <sup>enlighteneth</sup> us to believe that prayer is heard, when it is not answered <sup>worketh</sup> in kind. Therefore we must distinguish between God's hearing <sup>is able</sup> answering the prayers of his saints; God will take his own <sup>way</sup> and time for giving in answers of prayer to his people. Mordecai's name stood in Ahasuerus's books some time before his honour was conferred upon him. You may not hear of God for a good while, but you shall hear of him at length. Abraham prayed for a child, but many years intervened before he had him in his arms. Our Lord Jesus Christ was heard as to the success of his death, in the victory over his enemies, but not as to the taking away of the cup: Heb. v. 7, 'Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared.'

2. We may be sure that prayers are granted, so far as they are asked regularly: 1 John v. 14, 'And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us.' What is it to ask according to his will? It concerns the person, the matter, the manner, and the end of prayer; *si boni petant bona, bene, ad bonum.*

[1.] The person or the petitioner, he must be one that serveth God: 1 John iii. 22, 'And whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.' He that serveth God and pleaseth God is sure to be accepted; so James v. 16, 'The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man

availeth much.' What have others to do to come in Christ's name? Naturalists speak of a jewel of great virtue, which, being put into a dead man's mouth, loseth all its virtue; so prayer, though it be of wonderful use and virtue, yet put into the mouth of a dead man, one that is dead in trespasses and sins, and is not made alive by Christ, it is of no virtue and efficacy with God.

[2.] For the matter, it must be according to the will of God; it must be good and lawful, such things as God seeth fit for us; it must be conformable to his revealed will, and with submission to his secret will; not contrary to his word, nor against his decrees.

(1.) It must be according to his revealed will. The throne of grace is not set up that we may come and vent our sudden distempered passions before the Lord, or to set God a task to provide meat for our lusts. When the disciples would have called for fire from heaven, Luke ix. 54, 55, Christ saith unto them, 'Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.' We are soon transported into uncomely passion, and we would have enemies confounded. Many times a child of God goes on the devil's errand; we are his messengers when revenge sets us a-work.

(2.) With submission to his secret will; Mat. xxvi. 39, 'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.' Christ, as mediator, was subject to his Father's will. So we pray aright when we pray that if God see it good for us, to give the thing we desire; if it be hurtful to us, God will not hear; in that case denying is a greater mercy than granting. As the heathens observed it too great a facility in their gods to grant men their wishes to their ruin. Herod was too lavish when he gave his minion leave to ask what she would to the half of the kingdom.

[3.] The will of God falleth upon the manner too; it must be with fervency, that our hearts may be upon the work: Mat. vii. 7, 'Ask, and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.' We must return upon God with renewed importunity.

[4.] The will of God falleth upon the end too: James iv. 3, 'Ye ask, and receive not; because you ask amiss, to consume it upon your lusts.' God will not provide meat for our lusts; this were to debauch the throne of grace.

3. I answer, that faith is to be acted in prayer for temporal mercies; for both spiritual and temporal mercies and blessings are promised, and whatever is the matter of a promise is the object of faith. God will be as punctual in the lesser matters which concern the present life, as in the weightier matters that concern thy eternal happiness; so that he will either give them *in specie*, in kind, or in value. It is fit that God should judge of it, whether a temporal enjoyment will be good for us, or when he will give something in lieu of it; we are to acquiesce in his good providence for our provision here, as well as our salvation hereafter. He is willing to take our care from us, Phil. iv. 6, 7; he intends not our loss, but our ease; he will provide for us, and in the issue will give us a full account of his love and faithfulness.

4. To act faith in prayer for temporal mercies is not to believe that we shall have them *in specie*, in kind, but faith is to rely upon God's power, submitting to his will: Mat. viii. 2, 'If thou wilt, thou canst

make me clean.' Unbelief thinks little of an invisible hand, and saith, 'Can God prepare a table in the wilderness?' Doubting of God's power is the great thing that unbelief stumbleth at; we must not conclude against his will, but refer all things to his will, well knowing that he is a good God, and a wise God, not troubling ourselves about events, but determining that he will cast all things for the best. This is the faith that we are to have in conditional promises.

*Secondly*, Let me show you the necessity of praying in faith.

1. Without faith prayer is not acceptable to God: Heb. xi. 6, 'Without faith it is impossible to please God.' God doth not look to the eloquence of a prayer; carnal men, that have no grace, may have great gifts of speech and flowing of language; nor doth God look merely to the ardour of affection, for lust may make men earnest, and beget in us rapid motions; but he looks to the prayer of faith.

2. No prayer hath life in it but what is made in faith: Rom. x. 14, 'How shall they call on him, in whom they have not believed?' It is but a mocking of God, to pray to him, unless we expect good of it; we do but come and repeat words for fashion's sake if we do not pray in faith. Why should we address ourselves to him, if we make a question of his power and good-will to help us?

3. Faith is necessary, that we may not be dismayed with the difficulties and seeming impossibilities of obtaining what we need and ask according to God's will. Many times mountains must be removed: Mat. xxi. 21, 'If ye have faith, and doubt not; . . . If ye say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and cast into the sea, it shall be done.' It is true, not only in the age of miracles, but in all ages, here are still mountains of oppositions, difficulties which seem as impossible to remove as a mountain. Now this would shut up our mouths, and make us languish in despair, if there were not faith to remove these mountains: Zech. iv. 7. 'Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain.' Faith apprehends nothing too hard for God. How contemptible are those difficulties to a lively active faith? Who art thou, O mountain?

4. Faith is necessary, that we may resolve to stick fast to God, without carnal shifts, whatever cometh of it, and not to use any means of deliverance, but what are every way consistent with our duty to God. I take this to be the case of the text; he speaks this when christians had divers cases to be resolved, saith he, 'Let us pray in faith, nothing wavering;' and in ver. 8, 'A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways:' he is divided between God and the world, and in doubt whether the ways of God be still to be adhered to and owned, and whether we should continue waiting upon God quietly, however things succeed with us, or else shift for ourselves. This man is in a wavering condition; and therefore to keep us in a close adherency to God, and in a quiet dependence upon him for the issue of all our troubles, there is need of faith; for he that cannot trust God cannot long to be true to him. Therefore 'let him ask in faith,' that is, adhering to God's all-sufficiency; he that is persuaded of God's power and good-will, and doth refer himself to him, to bear him out in his duty, this man will be faithful to God.

5. Faith is necessary, that we may wait God's leisure: Hab. ii. 3,

'The vision is for an appointed time ;' we must not be too hasty : Isa. xxviii. 16, 'He that believeth will not make haste.' Precipitancy is the cause of much evil ; Saul could not tarry till Samuel came, but would go and offer sacrifice himself, and that lost him his kingdom. So when we are hasty, and cannot tarry the Lord's coming, we miscarry.

*Use 1.* Here is reproof—

1. To them that will not pray, when God alloweth us, yea, commands us, to pray in faith, and with a confidence that we shall speed the better. If there were but a loose possibility, we should pray : Acts viii. 22, 'Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee ;' it is a very great difficulty, yet pray ; so Exod. xxxii. 30, 'And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin, and now I will go up unto the Lord, peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin ;' so 2 Kings xix. 4, 'It may be the Lord thy God will hear all the words of Rabshakeh ;' so Joel ii. 14, 'Who knoweth, but the Lord will return, and repent, and leave a blessing behind him ?' Faith can stand upon one weak leg ; if there be but a 'may be,' we should go to the throne of grace.

2. It reproveth those that do not look for any success in prayer, that pray only out of course, and throw away their prayers ; as children shoot away their arrows, and never look after them any more ; that do not gather up the fruit of their prayers : Ps. v. 3, 'In the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up ;' and Hab. ii. 1, 'I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower and will watch to see what he will say unto me.' He was spying and observing what came in by his dealing with God in prayer ; he was looking to see the blessing coming. Besides, when we do not look after the success of our prayers, we lose many gracious experiences that would confirm our faith : Ps. xviii. 30, 'The word of the Lord is a tried word.' I have found that it is not time lost to go and plead the promises with God. And it will awaken our love : Ps. cxvi. 1, 'I will love the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplication ;' and it will quicken us to holy living, and a life of praise.

3. It reproveth those that have many doubtings and dark thoughts about what they pray for, about the mercy and power of God ; this is an evil incident to God's own children. There is a twofold unbelief, a reigning unbelief, and a doubting unbelief. The reigning unbelief is in those that were never acquainted with God : Mal. iii. 14, 'Ye have said, It is in vain to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinances ?' But then there is a doubting unbelief, which is a weakness left upon the saints, which though it make their prayers very uncomfortable, yet it doth not make void their prayers—'O thou of little faith ! wherefore didst thou doubt ?' Mat. xiv. 31. Peter ventured out of the ship at Christ's call, but his feet were ready to sink ever and anon. David was surprised with this unbelief, but the Lord heard him : Ps. xxxi. 22, 'I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes : nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplication when I cried unto thee.' If faith be weak, we must not cease to pray, but pray the more, that faith may be confirmed, and that we may be assured of God's favour, and may grow up into a confidence in this duty.

*Use 2.* Of exhortation, to persuade us to pray in faith. Now to this end, consider what encouragements there are.

1. Consider what assurance Jesus Christ hath given us : John xvi. 23, ' Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.' There is a note of asseveration, ' Verily, verily.' Whatever our doubts and temptations be about it, the word of God is to be tried ; do you think that Christ spake truth when he said, ' Verily, verily.' So John xv. 7, ' If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you.' If Christ hath subdued your desires to a submission to God's providence, and to the government of his laws, ask what you will, and it shall be given you ; so John xiv. 13, 14, ' Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it.' Christ delighteth in despatching the affairs of his people. As the vision was double, and Pharaoh's dream was doubled for the greater assurance and certainty ; so here Christ inculcateth his speech for the greater confirmation of it, that we may be confident he meant as he spake.

2. In all your prayers to God consider how significant the name of Christ is in heaven. If you come in the sense of your own unworthiness, and desire alone to be accepted in him, you shall not be slighted or neglected. If you send a child or a servant to a friend for a thing in your name, the request is yours ; and he that denyeth a child or a servant, denyeth you. Jesus Christ hath sent you in his name, Go ask in my name ; so that in effect the request becomes Christ's request. God can no more deny your request in Christ's name than he can deny Christ himself.

3. Consider, how much God loveth you : John xvi. 27, ' For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me ;' his heart is upon the things you ask for his glory. Now this is a mighty encouragement ; as when Joab perceived the king's heart was towards Absalom, 2 Sam. xiv. 1, compared with the following verses, he made intercession by the woman of Tekoa. So when your desires are regulated according to his will, and subordinated to his glory, his heart is upon these requests.

4. Consider, the moans of the beasts and other dumb creatures are regarded by him, and will not the Lord hear the prayers and supplications of his people ? Ps. cxlv. 15, 16, ' The eyes of all things wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thy hand and satisfiest the desires of every living thing.' When the creatures gape for their refreshment, God satisfieth them. Now if the Lord hath respect to them, will he not hear his own children ? Luke xii. 24, ' Consider the ravens : for they neither sow nor reap ; which neither have store-house nor barn ; and God feedeth them : how much more are you better than the fowls ?' Such is the Lord's overflowing love, that all the creatures have their wants supplied by his bounty.

5. Consider what kind of prayers have found acceptance with God. Solomon's dream was pleasing to the Lord, 1 Kings iii. 5, compared with vers. 9-13 ; the workings of his heart in his sleep were pleasing to God. Many times through grief, and the prevalency of our distempers, we are hardly able to put prayer into language ; but then

faith can send sighs to heaven. Words are but the outside of prayer ; it is the actings of grace that lieth nearer the heart than the prayer. A dumb beggar can get an alms at Christ's gate by making signs. If we be not tongue-tied with sin, and carnal liberty hath not brought an indisposition upon us ; nay, a look finds acceptance with God : Ps. v. 3, 'My voice shalt thou hear in the morning ; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.' And the breathing out our souls to God : Lam. iii. 5, 6, 'Thou hast heard my voice ; hide not thine ear from my breathing.' Yea, broken words with spiritual affections will be accepted with God ; nay, chattering, as Hezekiah chattered like a crane, Isa. xxxviii. 14. Our desires have a loud sound in God's ears : Ps. x. 17, 'Lord, thou hast heard the desires of the humble.' Desires make no sound with men, but with God they have an audible voice. All this being put together, is a great comfort to the soul that God will accept of a sigh, a groan, a look, a desire, a dream ; these are more acceptable to him than the pen of a ready writer, more than when we flow in words without spirit, life, and affection.

6. Consider the condescension of God, in parables relating to this matter, Luke xi. 8 ; he speaketh there of a man that would not rise to give loaves to another because he was his friend ; yet because of his importunity, he would not be gone else, he arose and gave him. So Luke xviii. 3-5, there was a clamorous widow and an unjust judge ; he would not avenge her of her adversary for her sake, yet he did it, for his own sake, and for his own quiet, 'lest by her continual coming she weary me.' In these parables there is a condescension to our suspicious thoughts, as if God had said, I know you think me tenacious and hard-hearted, that I am not willing to give grace ; I know these are your secret thoughts, yet if I were so, see what importunity will do. Grant it that your supposition were true, yet it becometh you to pray, and to be earnest and instant, and see what I will do for you.

*Use 3.* If none pray aright but those that pray in faith, then let us examine ourselves—Do we pray in faith ? How shall we know that ?

*Ans.* By three things.

1. By the serenity and composure of your spirits in prayer. Hannah, when she had poured out her heart before the Lord, 1 Sam. i. 18, it is said, 'she went away, and her countenance was no more sad ;' so when thou hast made thy moan to God, thou findest a great deal of ease and comfort come of it. As when the wind is shut up in the bowels of the earth it causeth terrible convulsions and earthquakes till it get a vent ; so there are many tempestuous agitations and workings of heart in us ; but then a believer can go to God, and there ease his heart by pleading his case before the Lord.

2. When thou continuest praying, though God seemeth to deny thee ; when upon a denial thou dost return and fasten the more upon him ; as the woman of Canaan cleaves the closer to Christ the more he seemed to thrust her from him. Christ says to her : Mat. xv. 26, 'It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs ;' but she answers, ver. 27, 'Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table.' It is a sign you expect something from God when you will not be put off without it.

3. When you are satisfied with the promise before you enjoy the

thing promised: Ps. lvi. 4, 'In God I will praise his word.' When you can praise God for his word, though as yet you have not the performance; you see the blessing in the root, and this bears up your hearts.

## THE LIFE OF FAITH IN HEARING THE WORD.

*But the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.*—HEB. iv. 2.

I AM now to show you the use of faith in hearing of the word.

It hath been sometimes said that there are many good laws, but there wanteth one good law to put them all in execution; so it may be said you often hear good sermons, but there wanteth one good sermon to persuade you to put the rest in practice. This is the design of this text.

The apostle is proving in the context that it concerneth us to take heed, by the example of the Israelites, that we do not miscarry through unbelief. The ground of the argument is, that we have an offer of rest as well as they, a merciful tender of eternal life, which he calleth 'a promise of entering into God's rest,' ver. 1. Though many occasions of getting and doing be spent and gone, yet whilst it is to-day this offer is continued to us; and therefore we should stir up ourselves to lay hold of it in time. For we are in danger as well as the Israelites. Those that have like privileges may expect like judgments if they presume upon them or do not improve them. Yea, we are rather more in danger; the gospel was preached to them but darkly and implicitly, to us more clearly and fully. Canaan was but a type and figure of the heavenly inheritance or eternal rest to be obtained by Jesus Christ; yet their unbelief was heinous, and cost them dear. The sum of the apostle's reasoning is, they had gospel as well as we, and we shall have judgments as well as they; he giveth a reason of their judgment for our warning,—though they had gospel in the wilderness, 'yet the word preached did not profit them,' &c.

In the words take notice—(1.) Of an event; (2.) The reason of it.

1. The event,—*The word preached did not profit them*; in which assertion we have—

[1.] The subject,—*The word preached*, λόγος ἠκοῆς, the word of hearing, they did, or might hear it,

[2.] The predicate,—*Did not profit them*; that is, they got neither title to nor possession of eternal rest by it. That deserveth the name of profit, because it is the greatest good that God did ever give or man is capable of; and all is nothing without this, loss rather than profit to the soul, whatever we get by it. If a man get knowledge by the word, or honour and credit by the word, by professing or preaching it, yet if he doth not get a title to heaven, or a right to enter into God's rest, he doth not profit by it—'The word did not profit them.'



2. The reason of the event. Some read the text, 'Because they were not united by faith to it;' so is the marginal note, and Chrysostom and many others go that way, and they explain it thus: the greatest part of Israel were not of the mind whereof Caleb, and Joshua, and others were, who believed God's promise of bringing them into Canaan, and thereupon received no benefit by the promise. But I rather choose the text-reading,—*Not being mingled with faith*, *μὴ συγκεκραμένους*, the word is taken from a potion, which, according to the ingredients put into it, is medicinal or mortal. The word is the potion; if it hath all its ingredients, if mixed with faith, it produceth its effect, and becometh the power of God to salvation; if not, it doth us no good, but hurt rather; or as any liquor mingleth with the thing on which it is poured; or, as to make the seed fruitful it must be incorporated with the earth, and receive of the virtue and fatness of it; so the word must not only be heard, but digested by faith, or it will not be profitable, or stand them in any stead that hear it.

*Doct.* That though the word of God be so great a blessing, and so excellent a means of salvation, yet it doth no good, where it is not mixed with faith in the hearing: Rom. i. 16, 'I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth.'

Consider here—(1.) The things mixed; (2.) The necessity of this mixture in order to profit.

*First*, The things mixed; they are the word of God, and faith.

1. The word of God. A divine revelation is the proper object of faith; there is a human credulity when we believe anything spoken by man for the authority of the speaker; but no authority of man can be such a firm and sure ground of faith as the testimony of God, who neither can deceive nor be deceived. Therefore, 'if we receive the testimony of man, the testimony of God is greater,' 1 John v. 9. Now the whole word is to be received and apprehended by faith; but chiefly the doctrine of the gospel, which containeth the offer of Christ and all his benefits. The whole word is to be received, for faith hath a respect to all truths; there is the same reason for one as for all, because they are all revealed by God: Ps. cxix. 160, 'Thy word is true from the beginning, and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.' From beginning to ending there is nothing but truth; whatever is contained in the word is either history or doctrine, or precepts, or promises, or threatenings; faith mingleth with all these.

[1.] The historical part of the word. These must be believed, because the doctrinal part dependeth thereupon: as the creation of the world, the fall of man, the promise of the Messiah to Adam, the covenant made with Abraham. There is a harmony in the scripture, as in a concert all the notes agree, and suit one with another. The whole scripturesuiteth with these historical passages, because they conduce much to our profit; for they are pawns and evidences of the possibility, yea, certainty of other things that are to come: Ps. cxxi. 2, 'My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.' The scripture is not only a register of what is past, but a prognostication of what is to come. Yea, it serves for our caution—'Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition,' 1 Cor. x. 11.

Now faith looketh upon these things in the word as if a-doing before our eyes.

[2.] Doctrines ; as the mystery of the trinity, the union of the two natures in the person of Christ, the benefit of imputed righteousness, that we are healed by another's stripes, the doctrine of the resurrection, &c. All these mystical verities we receive them upon God's revelation. They are properly the objects of faith, because without God's revealing them they cannot be understood and found out by the light of natural reason, and in these things, though we cannot so presently and fully see the reason of what we believe, yet we see reason enough why we should believe them, because they are revealed in the word of God, which no otherwise appeareth to us to be his word. In these things reason must not be heard against scripture, or be set up as the highest judge in matters of religion. As reason corrects sense, so faith reason. To appearance a star is but a little spark or spangle ; but reason will tell us it is much bigger, because of its distance from us. The work of grace is to captivate the pride of our thoughts and prejudices against God's revelation : 2 Cor. x. 5, 'Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.' Reason must be captivated to faith, though not to fancy. If it be revealed it must be believed, how absurd and unlikely soever it seem to us ; this is 'receiving the kingdom of God as a little child,' Mat. xviii. 3. A child believeth as he is taught ; I mean by God, not men. Thou art neither fit for heaven, nor the understanding of heavenly things, till thou hast denied thine own wisdom. That which is above reason cannot be comprehended by reason ; all lights must keep their place, sense is the light of beasts, reason of men, and faith of the church ; to consult with nature in supernatural things, it is all one as if you did seek the judgment of reason among the beasts, and determine of human affairs by brutish instinct. There are many things necessary to religion which the angels themselves could not know if they had not been revealed : Eph. iii. 10, 'That unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.' The way of salvation by Christ is such a mystery as could not have entered into the heart of any creature, no, not an angel. In these things, believe God upon his word ; pills are to be swallowed, not chewed ; if the sick man cheweth them, he spits them up when he tasteth the bitterness of them, and so loseth a wholesome remedy. Or to use Chrysostom's comparison—'A smith that taketh up his red-hot iron with his hands, and not with his tongs, what can he expect but to burn his fingers ?' So we destroy our souls when we judge of mysteries of faith by the laws of common reason.

[3.] Precepts. That is another part of the word to be propounded not only to our obedience, but to our faith ; and first to our faith, and then to our obedience : Ps. cxix. 66, 'Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I have believed thy commandments.' It is not enough to grant them rational or wise directions, or good rules for the regulating of human nature, but we must see them as God's laws, as injunctions from the glorious and powerful sovereign of the world, which we cannot neglect with-

out the greatest hazard; that is to believe the commandments. Many will catch at promises, but do not regard precepts; they smile upon the promise, but frown when the command puts them in mind of their duty. Faith owneth our obligation to God, and maketh us see the necessity of obedience, as well as it representeth the comfort of the promises, and to perform our duty, how contrary soever it be to our interest and carnal affections. But otherwise, without faith, when the commandments are crossing to our corrupt humours, they are questioned, slighted, and shifts studied by defiled consciences to divert the thoughts of duty. Therefore we need expressly to see that this is the will of God.

[4.] Promises; these are only received by faith: Heb. xi. 1, 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for;' so the promissory part of the word is there in brief described. These are a principal object of faith: 2 Peter i. 4, 'To us are given exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be made partakers of the divine nature.' The Lord worketh saving grace at first by these promises, enabling the guilty, graceless, and cursed sinner to believe, and apply the pardon, grace, and blessedness freely offered in them; and as soon as he gets grace to believe and apply these promises, God beginneth to apply and make out upon his heart the things promised, stamping his own image upon him, that the sinner beginneth to look like God his Father for holiness, wisdom, and purity. These promises have a fitness to purify the heart as well as pacify the conscience, and must be used to both ends. If we respect promises, we must respect all promises; the honour of God is as deeply engaged to perform one promise as another. God's failing in any one promise would be the breaking of the whole covenant; as on our part the breach of one point maketh us guilty of the breach of the whole law: James ii. 10, 'Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.' Promises for pardon, and promises for sanctification, you must regard both, and put both in suit; promises for this life, and of a better. Many live by their wits in the world, and yet pretend to live by faith for heaven. You must trust God for all things, your names and estates as well as for your souls; only you must not be a stranger to the main promises, for herein lieth the life and heart of religion.

[5.] There are threatenings in the word of God, and these are part of the object of faith; for God is faithful and true in his threats as well as his promises, and therefore equally to be believed in both. The threatenings should work with us as if already accomplished. Josiah rent his clothes when he heard the words of the law: 2 Chron. xxxiv. 19, 'And it came to pass, when the king heard the words of the law, that he rent his clothes.' We are not like affected when the judgment is threatened, as when it is come upon us—'But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word,' Isa. lxvi. 2. So Noah prepared for a flood many years before it came: Heb. xi. 7, 'By faith Noah, moved with fear, prepared an ark, to the saving of his house.' Tell many of the wrath of God, and they look upon it as a vain scarecrow; tell them of judgment to come, which is enough to make a heathen tremble, Acts xxiv. 25, but they are no more moved at it than with a dream or a vain fable. All is for want of faith; but they that will not believe, shall feel.

Thus you see the whole word is the object of faith: faith in the histories, for our warning and caution; faith in the doctrines, to increase our reverence and admiration; faith in the threatenings, for our humiliation; faith in the precepts, for our subjection; and faith in the promises, for our consolation. They all have their use: the histories to make us wary and cautious; the doctrines to enlighten us with a true sense of God's nature and will; the precepts to direct us, and to try and regulate our obedience; the promises to cheer and comfort us; the threatenings to terrify us, to run anew to Christ, to bless God for our escape, and to add spurs to our duty. Thus faith maketh use of the word of God, and all things contained therein.

But especially the truths of the gospel, and that good thing which is offered in those truths is that mainly which saving faith doth close with and rely upon, and is fully satisfied withal. This is that which is most mysterious in itself, and remote from vulgar knowledge: Mat. xvi. 17, 'Flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father which is in heaven;' most profitable to lost sinners: Tit. ii. 14, 'Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity,' &c.; doth most set forth the praise of God: 2 Cor. i. 20, 'All the promises of God in him are Yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us;' that to which all the rest tendeth: Rev xix. 10, 'The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy,' the life and heart of religion, the most blessed news that could come from heaven. Faith findeth death in the threatenings, a burden of work in the precepts; but in Christ and the gospel it findeth the way to heaven laid open, a way how a sinner may be saved and divine justice not wronged. This is that which 'the angels desire to look into,' 1 Peter i. 12. So excellent and ravishing is the saving of lost sinners by Christ incarnate, they study it and pry into it.

Once more, the word is considered as dispensed in the ordinance of teaching and hearing—'The word preached did not profit them.' God doth not only work by the word, but by the word preached: 1 Cor. i. 21, 'It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.' To hope to gain the world by the preaching of a few contemptible persons was looked upon as a ridiculous confidence; but it pleased God to make use of that way, which pierced farther and conquered more than the Roman armies ever could. *Britannorum inaccessa Romanis loca, Christo tamen patuere.* Eph. i. 13, 'In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.' The hearing of the word is the ordinary means whereby faith is wrought and exercised; so 1 Peter i. 25, 'The word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word, which by the gospel is preached unto you.' That word is the seed of the spiritual life, that word endureth for ever in the effects of it, that word must be mingled with faith in the hearing; not only the scripture in the general, but the particular messages that are brought to you, and delivered from and according to that word by the Lord's servants, whom he hath sent. Many men will not declaim against the written word, but they have a slender esteem of those portions of truth which God carveth out to them by the messengers whom he sendeth to them. God, that instituted prophets and apostles to write scripture, did also institute pastors and teachers to explain and apply scripture: Eph. iv. 11, 'He gave

some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.' And when they go to work, *clave non errante*, their messages are the word of God.

But you will say, Must we believe all the dictates of fallible men?

*Ans.* Yes, in what accordeth with scripture, and is rightly deduced and inferred thence. Consequences are the word of God, and bind as well as the express scripture, Mat. xxii. 32. Jesus Christ proves the resurrection by this consequence, that 'God was the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob;' only we are to search: Acts xvii. 11, 12, 'They received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scripture daily whether those things were so;' therefore many of them believed. The scriptures we receive upon their divine evidence, and other doctrines upon their consonancy to the scripture: Isa. viii. 20, 'To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.' We must not be light of belief, but weigh things in the balance of the sanctuary; nor yet obstinate and contemptuous of what is delivered in the way of an ordinance.

2. Faith. Nothing less will serve the turn. That whereby the soul receiveth the word is faith; that whereby it receiveth it effectually is sincere faith. There ever have been and still are three sorts of men in the world.

[1.] Some that break out into open opposition of the gospel; that are so far from being christians, that they are scarce men: 2 Thes. iii. 2, 'That we may be delivered from unreasonable, and wicked men, for all men have not faith.' Infidels are unreasonable and absurd, and never oppose the laws of Christ but they also violate the principles of nature.

[2.] There are some that are neither hot nor cold, that do not oppose the gospel nor yet accept it; that assent which they seem to have, is not so much an actual assent as a non-refusal, or non-opposition, or rejection of the counsel of the word. Some indeed stand in full contradiction, and actually reject the counsels of God: Luke vii. 30, 'But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves;' and Ps. ii. 3, 'Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.' But these though they make some profession of the gospel, yet they are careless, idle, and secure. These the apostle speaketh of, Heb. ii. 3, 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation,' compared with Mat. xxii. 5, 'And they made light of it.' They do not deny, but excuse themselves. *Non vacat* is the sinner's plea; but *non placet* is the real disposition of his heart.

[3.] There is a third sort, that do not only make profession of the name of Christ, but receive the truth in the love of it and in the power of it, and transfer it into practice: 2 Thes. ii. 10, 'They received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.' There is a receiving truth in the light of it by conviction, but there follows no conversion. And then they receive the truth not only in love, but in power. The gospel is the ministration of the Spirit and power: 1 Thes. i. 5, 'Our gospel came not to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance;' 1 Cor. ii. 4, 'My speech and my preaching was not with the enticing words of man's wisdom, but in

demonstration of the Spirit, and of power.' And they transfer it into practice: John viii. 31, 'If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;' and Mat. vii. 21, 'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven.' Christ's real worshippers are known, not by compliments and external respects, but the inward constitution of their hearts, and the course and uniformity of their practice and conversations; they are those that do so carefully and constantly attend unto God's word that they lay it up in their hearts: Ps. cxix. 11, 'Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee;' and make it the rule of their whole lives: Gal. vi. 16, 'As many as walk according to this rule;' so as to obey his commands: Rom. vi. 17, 'Ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine that was delivered you;' rely upon his promises: Ps. cxix. 49, 'Remember thy word unto thy servant, on which thou hast caused me to hope;' fear his threats: Isa. lxvi. 2, 'To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.' A carnal man doth not tremble under his strokes, but they tremble under his word, and engage themselves to continue with God in well-doing, and in the pursuit of everlasting happiness: Rom. ii. 7, 'To them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honour and immortality, eternal life.'

To make this evident unto you, I shall show you—

(1.) How many things come short of faith, or that true and unfeigned assent that must be mingled with the word, to make it a sovereign remedy for our souls.

(2.) What is that true faith that doth so.

1st. Many things come short of faith, or that true and unfeigned assent which maketh the word effectual. There are several degrees of assent.

[1st.] There is conjecture, or a lighter inclination and propension of the mind to the gospel or word of God, as possibly or probably true; a suspicious knowledge or guess at things, when we go no higher than an 'it may be so.' The generality of careless professors go no further. It may be true, for aught they know, that there is a rest remaining for the children of God: and these do walk according to the trade of Israel, and conform to the current opinions and practices that are a-foot.

[2d.] There is beyond this opinion, when the mind is strongly inclined to think it true, but not without fear of the contrary; they are so rationally convinced of the truth of the gospel that they are not able rationally to contradict it; yea, they can dispute for it, but it is but opinion; they can plead for it, and defend it, as a dead, rotten post may support a living tree; yet it doth not sink so deep unto them as to enter into the heart: Prov. ii. 10, 'When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant to thy soul.' They live in suspense and uncertainty in matters of religion, and do not know ἀληθώς, 'Surely, that Christ came out from God:' John xvii. 8, and ἀσφαλώς, Acts ii. 36, 'Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.'

[3d.] There is a higher degree, and that is dogmatical faith or a

naked assent unto, or a persuasion of the truth of God's word; but it is such an enlightening as is without taste and without power; it worketh no thorough change in the heart or practice: as many men that make no doubt of the truth of the gospel, yet do not feel the power of it. This is spoken of, James ii. 19, 20, 'Thou believest that there is one God, thou dost well; the devils also believe and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?' They have so much light as may disturb their peace, but not so much as doth comfort the conscience and overpower their carnal affections. Well then, this is not it that must be mingled with the word; not the word and conjecture; not the word and opinion; not the word and dogmatical faith that rests in a dead naked assent, but it must be a believing with all the heart, a cordial assent: Acts viii. 37, 'If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest be baptized.'

[4th.] There is presumption, or a snatching at the promises, without considering the terms. There is no man that hath a conscience, and some loose persuasion of the truths of the gospel, but he apprehends it to be a good word, suitable to the necessities and desires of a guilty and indigent creature; but it hath no prevailing efficacy to purge the heart and subdue him to God: Micah iii. 11, 'Yet they will lean upon the Lord and say, Is not the Lord among us? none evil shall come upon us.' The leaning of a carnal presuming, and the leaning of a broken heart, differ, as the leaning of a drunkard that is not able to go alone, and the leaning of a wounded man that is ready to faint. Now a man that in compassion would lend his arm to one wounded, and whose life is dropping out by degrees, would not lend his arm to a reeling drunkard that is defiled with his own vomit; so the claims of mercy that a bold sinner maketh to the grace of God in Christ are rejected, when the dependence of a broken-hearted creature is justified. We have a comfortable promise: Ps. l. 15, 'Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee;' but a guard is set about it, that no disobedient wretch should gather its sweet fruit: vers. 16, 17, 'But unto the wicked, God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant into thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee?' The like you have in Ps. lxxviii. 19, 20, 'Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with his benefits, even the God of our salvation, Selah. He that is our God is the God of salvation, and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death.' We can never speak enough of the mercy of God to poor broken-hearted sinners; it is here twice repeated; but bold and daring sinners, that continue in their rebellion and enmity against God, have no share in it, nor can they lay claim to it; ver. 21, 'But God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such a one as goeth on still in his trespasses.' Christians that live loosely, as pagans, they shall not find grace to be a sanctuary to them. It was Origen's answer to Celsus, who said that christianity was a sanctuary for wicked profligate persons,—No! saith he, it is not a sanctuary for them, but an hospital to cure them.

2d. What is the true faith that must be mingled with the word?

[1st.] It is a lively faith, or assent to the doctrine of God. The scripture speaketh of a dead faith; James ii. 20; and a lively faith,

and of a lively hope : 1 Peter i. 3, ' Who hath begotten us again unto a lively hope ; ' such as quickens them to the use of all due means to attain what they believe and hope for : Acts xxiv. 14-16, ' But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets : and have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow ; that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men.' A drowsy inattentive assent prevaileth nothing, but such as hath life and affection in it. To many faith is no more than non-denial, or a negative assent ; they do not contradict the truth, but it doth not affect the heart, and excite them to pursue and look after the things represented to them. Faith is acted and exercised about what we hear, as about matters wherein we are deeply concerned. It is not enough to have faith, but it must be exercised and put forth—such a faith as engrafteth the word into us : James i. 21, ' Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.' It is not only pleased with the notions as matter of opinion, but receiveth and layeth up the word as the seed of life, yea, changeth the disposition of the soul into the nature of the word : Rom. vi. 17, ' But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin ; but ye have obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine which was delivered to you,' *εἰς ὃν παρεδόθητε τύπον διδασχῆς*, into which form of doctrine ye were delivered ; its lively character is enstamped upon us. 2 Peter i. 4, ' Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature.' What effect hath the word upon the soul, to transform us into the image of God ?

[2*d.*] It is an applicative faith. We do not only believe God's word and all things contained therein, to be a truth, but we believe it as a truth that concerneth us in particular, and thereupon apply it to ourselves. Meat will feed, if it be eaten ; water will quench thirst, if we drink it, and receive it into our bodies ; yet if we neither eat the one, nor drink the other, we may perish for hunger and thirst. So the applying and urging the heart with the word preached doth profit us : Job v. 27, ' Hear it, and know thou it for thy good ; ' and Rom. viii. 31, ' What shall we then say to these things ? ' and Heb. ii. 3, ' How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation ? '

[3*d.*] It is an obediential confidence, such as doth not take one part of the word and set it against the other ; the precept against the promise, or the promise against the precept, that hope to take liberty now and then, to break a commandment without forfeiting a claim to the promises, or, like mountebanks, that drink poison in confidence of an antidote : Rom. vi. 1, 2, ' What shall we say then ? shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound ? God forbid ! how shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein ? ' They are not encouraged to dally, but to sin by hopes of grace : Jude 4, ' Turning the grace of God into lasciviousness ; ' these debase the principles of the gospel. It teacheth other things, where it is rightly apprehended : Titus ii. 11, 12, ' For the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts we



should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world ;' others are not sensible of the necessity of yielding obedience to God.

*Secondly*, The necessity of this mixture in order to profit. This I shall make good, for otherwise the ends of the gospel cannot be obtained. I prove it thus—

1. It is agreeable to the wisdom of God, that as there should be a means to offer, so there should be a means to receive his grace. The word doth only offer grace, but it is faith doth receive it ; therefore, as without the word there can be no faith, so without faith the word can have no power. To a good crop, or a fruitful harvest, there is required, not only good seed, but *subactum solum*, a prepared soil and ground, Mat. xiii. The seed was the same, but the ground was different : some fell on the highway, some on the stony ground, some on the thorny ground, some on the good ground, which only thrived and prospered : ver. 23, 'He that receiveth the seed into the good ground, is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it, which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundred, some sixty, some thirty-fold.' Well then, there must be receiving as well as offering, and a kindly receiving. A plaster doth not heal at a distance till it be applied to the sore. It is our souls were wounded, and our souls must have the cure ; the light that illuminateth must shine into the place that is enlightened ; the life that quickeneth must be in the substance which is quickened by it. If the bare discovery and offer of grace, without the applying of grace, or receiving of grace, were enough, the gospel would save all alike, the despisers of it as well as those that submit to it. Therefore there must be receiving ; Christ must not only be offered, but received : John i. 12, 'To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.' And the covenant is not only tendered to us, but accepted by us : Acts ii. 41, 'Then they that gladly received his word were baptized.' Blood shed will not avail us, unless it be blood sprinkled : Heb. xii. 24, 'And to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.' Christ's making the atonement is not effectual to salvation, unless it be received, owned, and applied : Rom. v. 11, 'We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement.' General grace must some way be made particular, or else it cannot profit us. Christ doth not save us at a distance, but as received into our hearts, or else why are not all justified, all adopted, all saved ? There is the same merciful God, the same sufficient Saviour, the same gracious covenant : the reason is, some apply this grace, others do not : Eph. i. 13, 'After ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.' It is not enough to know the gospel to be a doctrine of salvation in the general. but we must look to this, that it be a doctrine of salvation to ourselves in particular. What doth it profit us, if it be a doctrine of salvation to others, and not to ourselves ? therefore we must receive and apply the promises to our own souls, that they may stir up joy, and thankfulness, and praise, and may quicken and enliven our obedience, and in time our interest in them may be determined to our joy and comfort.

2. That the proper grace to receive is faith. Here I shall show—

[1.] The necessity of it.

[2.] The efficacy of it, that without it the ends of the gospel cannot

be obtained ; that by it they are powerfully and effectually obtained.

*First*, The necessity of it,—because without it the ends of the gospel cannot be obtained ; and this with respect to God, Christ, the gospel, or christian religion, and the believer himself.

1. With respect to God. Holiness and love to God is required *sub ratione finis*, and faith *sub ratione mediæ*, as a means to make us holy and to love God. That this is the great end of the gospel institution is plain from scripture : 1 Tim. i. 5, ‘ Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned.’ The end and scope of the gospel is love to God, and faith in Christ our Redeemer is the great means which conduceth to it. So Christ giveth us an account of the words which he heard from his Father ; and the sum of it is, that our great duty is that we love God, and our great happiness to be beloved by him, John xiv. 21–23. The gospel revelation was set up for this end and purpose, to represent to us the goodness and amiableness of God, that he might be more lovely to us and be loved by us. The great design of reconciling and saving lost man by Christ, and his wonderful condescension in his incarnation, life, sufferings, and death, is all to reveal this love of God in Christ, and to work up our hearts to love God again. To this end also tend his merciful covenant and promises, all the benefits given to his church, and the privileges of the saints, the Spirit, pardon, peace, glory ; all these tend to warm our hearts with love to God ; and faith is appointed to look upon all these, to consider them, and improve them : Gal. v. 6, ‘ Faith worketh by love.’ The principal use of faith is to kindle the love of God in our souls, that knowing and believing the love which God hath to us in Christ, we may love him again, and thankfully obey him. Now if this be not enough to you, take an argument or two, thus—

If the great end of Christ’s coming is to bring us to God : 1 Peter iii. 18, ‘ For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God ;’ John xiv. 6, ‘ Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth and the life ; no man cometh to the Father but by me ;’ and Heb. vii. 25, ‘ Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him,’—I say, if this be the end of Christ’s coming, to bring us to God—that is, to turn us in heart and life to him from whom we had fallen, surely love to God is the great end of the christian religion ; and therefore faith, which is to receive and improve it, is the means to this end.

Again, if heaven and eternal blessedness be but perfect love, then the end of the gospel is love ; for the gospel is appointed to make us everlastingly happy. Therefore was it written, therefore did the Son of God come to bring us to this perfect estate. But now heaven is but the love of God, and perfection in holiness ; and to be blessed in heaven is to be happy in the perfect love of God, to see him as he is, and to be like him. A perfect love to God is maintained by perfect vision, and on our part a perfect receiving his love to us. Then surely that is the end, and faith is the means, to take notice of, and be persuaded of the love of God that shineth to us so gloriously in Christ.

Well now. how can the end of the gospel be obtained, which is to love God, and be beloved of him, if either we have no faith, and do not believe this wonderful demonstration of God’s love in Christ ; or but a dead faith, and do but slightly reflect upon it, with cold and narrow

thoughts? surely, though the gospel be such a notable institution to teach us the art of loving God, and so sovereign a remedy against our corrupt self-love, yet it will not profit unless it be mixed with faith in the hearing

2. With respect to Christ, who in the gospel is represented as clothed with the office of a mediator between God and us, which he executeth in that three-fold function of a prophet, priest, and king. Now the great duty of the gospel is to own him in all these, and to submit to him, that they may have their perfect effect upon us. To hear him as a prophet: Mat. xvii, 5, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.' To receive him as lord and king: Col. ii. 6, 'As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.' Consider him as a priest: Heb. iii. 1, 'Consider the apostle and high-priest of our profession, Jesus Christ.' Now, how can any of this be done without faith, or a sound belief that he is the Son of God, that cometh in all these qualities to us? Can we learn of him whom we take to be a deceiver? or obey him whom we believe not to be our true and rightful Lord? and if we believe not his merits and sacrifice as a priest, can we be comforted with his glorious promises and covenant, and come to God with the more boldness and hope of mercy upon that account, especially in a dying hour? Surely Christ must lie by, and the fruits of his offices be neglected, unless we believe that he is authorised and fitted for all these things; that he is the teacher sent from God to show us the way of life; that his sacrifice offered through the eternal Spirit is of full merit and value to expiate our sins; and that he is lord of life and glory, and able to protect us till he hath brought us to heaven: 2 Tim. i. 12, 'I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.' We must be persuaded of his authority, sufficiency, readiness, willingness to do us good, before we can trust ourselves and our eternal interests in his hands. Who will take physic of a physician that he trusteth not? or go to sea with a pilot whose skill he questioneth? Surely before we can heartily consent, or resolvedly put ourselves into his hands, to be reconciled to God, and saved from sin and punishment, and finally brought to perfect happiness and glory, we must be persuaded what he is, and that he is able to do all this for us: Mat. ix. 28, 'Believe ye then that I am able to do this?' Christ puts the question to the blind men; they answer, 'Yea, Lord.' So when you consider of Christ's glorious offices, and the blessed effects of them, think you that he is able to do these things. Pose your hearts, will he indeed show me the way to heaven? hath he paid such a ransom for my captive soul? will he protect me so powerfully in the way of salvation? let faith work such a thorough persuasion of his ability and fidelity, as may extort a full resignation from you of yourselves into his hands, that by his own methods he may lead you to everlasting glory.

3. With respect to the word itself, or those sacred oracles wherein the gospel or the christian religion is contained, you will see the truths there recorded cannot well be apprehended and digested without faith, because there are things written which do concern matters past, present and to come; and all these have difficulties which can be only removed by faith.

[1.] Matters past; as the creation of the world; the providence of God towards his church and people throughout all successions of foregoing ages, till the scriptures were written and completed; the keeping of the promise of the Messiah still a-foot till his coming in the flesh; the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. These were things of necessity to be confined to some determinate time and place, it was not necessary that Christ should be always dying and always rising, in every age and place, and in the view of every man. These things can therefore only be apprehended by faith, for we saw them not; they are believed upon some competent and sufficient testimony.

[2.] Things present are those which concern our present duty; suppose accepting of Christ and self-denying obedience, both require faith, yea, a strong faith.

(1.) The accepting of Christ for our Lord and Saviour. Now this is hard, yea, impossible to be done, without a sound persuasion of the truth of that doctrine which concerneth our redemption by Christ; for this is a rare and wonderful mystery. 1 Tim. iii. 16, 'Great is the mystery of godliness.' Those natural apostles, which are gone forth into all lands to preach up an infinite and eternal power, I mean the sun, moon, and stars, these natural preachers are dumb and silent, say not a word concerning Christ, or God manifested in the flesh. Angels could not find out this mystery by all their excellency of wisdom and knowledge; but they admire it, as they study it, and see it in God's dispensations to the church: Eph. iii. 10, 'To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God;' and 1 Peter i. 12, 'Which things the angels desire to look into.' Yea, the blessed virgin, when a messenger was sent from heaven to tell her of this mystery, though an extraordinary messenger, and she so nearly concerned, said Luke i. 34, 'How shall this be?' The conception of a virgin, the death of the Son of God, who was life itself, are not matters so easily apprehended and improved, unless the Lord give us faith. How can we build upon this foundation with any confidence?

(2.) Self-denying obedience. Men are addicted to their own wills and lusts, and will not easily suffer themselves to be persuaded to change heart and life, especially when this change is like to cost them dear in the world, and they must forfeit those things which they see and love for a God and glory which they never saw. Naturally the spirits of men are yokeless and libertine: Ps. ii. 3, 'Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.' And when temptations come, we consult with the flesh, and so will not easily believe the necessity of this self-denying obedience, but cavil and wriggle, and distinguish ourselves out of our duty. Unless a firm assent lay a strong obligation upon us, we shall cast off yoke after yoke, till we leave Christ but an empty name.

[3.] Things future in the unseen world. We have to do with an invisible God, who hath propounded hopes in an invisible world. Now what shall we do without faith, which is 'the evidence of things not seen,' Heb. xi. 1. We are apt to take up with things present, and are little affected with things unseen, and above our senses. Nothing but a strong faith will engage us to look after these things, and to venture all depending upon these things.

4. With respect to the party who is to receive these truths, faith is necessary ; who may be considered as to his mind, heart, and life, all which are to be bettered and profited by the word.

[1.] As to his mind, which must be enlightened and awakened. Corrupt and carnal reason is such a stranger to God and heavenly things that unless the Lord give us a new light, which may direct and quicken us, we shall not much mind either God or heaven. Therefore for our cure the understanding must be enlightened and awakened, and it is both by faith.

(1.) Enlightened rightly to the discerning of these things: 1 Cor. ii. 14, 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.' Supernatural matters must be discerned by a supernatural light, spiritual matters by a spiritual light ; other things are determined by sense and reason, but our light in these things is by faith, by which we see those excellent and high things which are above the reach of the natural man. It serveth for the government of the soul, as the eye for the body; by it we see God: Heb. xi. 27, 'By faith he saw him that is invisible.' Hereby we see Christ: John, vi. 40, 'That every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life ;' and we see heaven: 1 Cor. iv. 18, 'While we look not to the things which are seen, but to the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.' Till God openeth the eye of our minds, we neither see God: Heb. xi. 6, 'Without faith it is impossible to please God ; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is;' nor do we see Christ: 1 Peter ii. 7, 'Unto you therefore which believe he is precious ;' nor do we see heaven: 2 Peter i. 9, 'Receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls.' Therefore must we mind this, to get a spiritual sight; seriously deal with God about it: Eph. i. 18, 'The eyes of your understandings being enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.'

(2.) The understanding or mind must be excited and awakened to regard and consider these things which we see and are convinced of. For otherwise, in seeing we see not, and in hearing we hear not. As when you tell a man of a business whose mind is taken up about other things, he mindeth it not, regardeth it not, or carrieth himself as if he minded it not. They do not think of God, and Christ, and heavenly things ; they mourn for sin as if they mourned not, rejoice in God as if they rejoiced not, seek after heaven as if they sought not after it. Now to cure this inadvertency, or to bring us to a more attentive consideration of these things, requireth a lively faith. The same light and Spirit that doth open the eyes of the mind to discern heavenly things doth also awaken us to the minding of them: Acts xvi. 14, 'Whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended to the things that were spoken of Paul.' Many precious truths lie by, and are lost for want of consideration. Non-attendency is the bane of the professing world: Mat. xxii. 5, 'They made light of it ;' when men will not suffer their minds to dwell upon these things, that they may consider what is true misery, and what is true happiness.

[2.] That which is next to be considered in the entertainment of truth, or of the gospel is the heart, which is to be subdued to God: Rom. vi. 17, 'But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin; but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to you.' Now how shall this be done without faith? to gain the heart to a holy and heavenly life, which is naturally so averse from it. The credulity and belief required of christians is as the matters which are presented to our belief. Christianity, which is mostly conversant about things practical, must be received not only with the mind, but the heart: Rom. x. 9, 10, 'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation;' so Acts viii. 37, 'If thou believest with all thy heart thou mayest be baptized.' You must receive the truth in the love of it: 2 Thes. ii. 10, 'They received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.' That which was made for the heart must be admitted into the heart; till it is there it is not in its proper place, it is rejected where it seemeth to be received. For if you be convinced of the truths of the gospel, and do not admit them to come into your hearts, you are false to them and yourselves, and cannot expect they should profit you. This is the difference between the unsanctified and the regenerate: the one receiveth the truth in the light of it, by a mere speculation, but shuts up his heart against it; the other receiveth it in the love of it, openeth his heart to it, and admitteth it to its proper place and work; the one imprisoneth it in unrighteousness, the other entertaineth it with love and regard. Now this is the true receiving, and that which is proper to faith, to receive all holy truths with a practical intent, to work them upon your hearts according to their nature, weight, and use. Now if it be so, we may see how little we profit by the gospel till we mingle it with faith in the hearing; that is, so apprehend and believe the truth as to get the heart affected with it.

[3.] The life is bettered and overruled by the word received. For a believer is to be considered as to his head, heart, and life. When the mind is enlightened and the heart sanctified, the truth is to break out into the conversation; the life must be holy and obedient: 1 Peter i. 14, 15, 'As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance. But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.' Now how shall this be done without faith? By a lively faith it may be done. How dare you neglect Christ if you believe that he is the Son of God, who must be your judge? or indulge the flesh, be mindless of heavenly things, if you believe the necessity of self-denial, and the reality of the world to come? There is a great deal of difference between the name, title, and profession of a believer, and the real efficacy of true faith. A true believer is to get the truth of the gospel into his mind, heart, and life: that truth which enlighteneth his mind, doth also purify his heart: Acts xv. 9, 'Purifying their hearts by faith;' so that by it not only mistakes are discovered, but lusts subdued. And it doth not only purify the heart, but overcome the world: 1 John v. 4, 'This is the victory whereby we overcome the world, even our faith.' And it pro-

duceth a good conversation, not discouraged with tribulations, nor diverted from the pursuit of eternal happiness by the baits and allurements of the flesh. Yea, it putteth us upon a bold and an open profession of the name of Christ, and respect to his ways, however discountenanced in the world: 2 Cor. iv. 13, 'We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak.' Now this being the case of the person who is to receive and entertain the gospel, to receive it into his mind, and heart, and life, certainly there is a necessity of faith, for it is the office of faith to do all these things.

Secondly, The efficacy of faith. To this end I shall show—

1. That all efficacy is ascribed to faith.

2. Whence it hath its power and force.

[1.] That all efficacy is ascribed to faith; for till the gospel be owned as a divine and infallible truth, it hath no effect upon us: 1 Thes. ii. 13, 'Ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.' The truths of the gospel concerning God, Christ, sin, grace, hell, and heaven, are of such weight and moment as that they might move a rock; yet they shake not, they stir not the heart of a carnal professor, because they receive the word in word only; but where it is received in faith, it is not received in word only, but in power. And there it worketh effectually: 1 Thes. i. 5, 'Our gospel came not to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.' To believe the truth of God's word is the ready way to make it effectual; it is slighted, because it is not credited. A man may give high and cogent reasons against his lusts, and yet follow them, if the truth be not rooted in his heart. All graces are set a-work by faith, as reverence to the word; some 'tremble at the word' when it convinceth of sin, Isa. lxvi. 2, because they know it is the word by which they shall be judged at the last day: so for repentance; some humble themselves at God's warnings and threatenings, it is the fruit of their faith; Jonah iii. 5, 'The people of Nineveh believed God and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth.' Some prize Christ as he is offered in the new covenant, but this is from faith: 1 Peter ii. 7, 'To you that believe he is precious.' When faith representeth him in all his loveliness, then the soul prizeth him. Some are ready to the duties enjoined: Ps. cxix. 66, 'I have believed thy commandments.' Faith doth all, and enliveneth all truths, and maketh them operative.

[2.] Whence hath faith this power?

(1.) Because it qualifyeth us for the gift of the Holy Spirit: Gal. iii. 14, 'That we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith;' and John vii. 39, 'This he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe in him should receive.' The Spirit begets faith and actuateth faith, and then faith doth enliven all truths.

(2.) From the matter propounded to faith and apprehended by it, which is God's word, and hath a stamp of his wisdom, goodness, and power left upon it. There we see his divine authority, charging and commanding us under pain of his displeasure to mind and regard such things. It is the Lord hath spoken it: 1 Thes. ii. 13, 'Ye received

it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh also in them that believe.' And it is enforced upon us in the most strong and potent way of argumentation, as from the equity and excellency of what he hath commanded: Hosea viii. 12, 'I have written to them the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing,' from his great love in Christ: 2 Cor. v. 14, 'The love of Christ constraineth us;' from the strict day of accounts, as we will answer it to him another day: Rom. ii. 16, 'In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel;' from the importance and unspeakable concernment of those things to us, our salvation or damnation depending thereupon: Mark xvi. 16, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.' The danger of refusing him is no less than everlasting death, and the happiness of complying with his motions no less than everlasting life and complete blessedness. Now everlasting life and death being in the case, we had need be serious.

(3.) The way of faith's working about these things. The apprehension is clear, the consideration serious, the assent strong, the application close, so that men are pierced to the quick where this faith prevaileth, and are deeply affected with what they hear. The apprehension is clear: Heb. xi. 1, 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.' The consideration serious; they attend, they search: Acts xvii. 11, 'They searched the scriptures daily.' The assent strong: Acts ii. 36, 'Let the house of Israel know assuredly;' and John xvii. 8, 'They have known surely.' And the application close: Rom. viii. 31, 'What shall we say to these things'?

*Obj.* How can faith be necessary to make the word effectual, since itself cometh by hearing, and is ordinarily wrought by the word: Rom. x. 17, 'So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God'?

*Ans.* At first God by his preventing grace taketh hold of the heart, and maketh it to believe; as at the first creation light was made before the sun; and the first man was made out of the dust of the ground, afterwards he propagateth and bringeth forth after his kind; so that the first work might be exempted from the common rule, yet not the subsequent works.

2. Even then there is a faith wrought in and by the hearing, as the gospel doth propound and make known to the understanding the object of saving faith; the Lord doth at the same time work the grace of faith in the hearts of the elect: Acts xvi. 14, 'And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, which worshipped God, heard us, whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things spoken by Paul.' Without this the word would not profit.

3. One faith maketh way for another, the dogmatical faith for the saving faith, and common and general grace for a particular and saving work of God's Spirit; as the priming of the pot maketh it receptive of other colours.

*Use* 1. Is information, to show the reason why there is so little profiting under so much means; there is no faith, the cause is from ourselves or in ourselves. Alas! we may complain: Isa. liii. 1, 'Who



hath believed our report?' Most men have not that general faith so as to incline their hearts and ears to take notice of what God saith.

*Use 2.* Is reproof of divers sorts.

1. Some do not hear; they neglect the seasons of grace, and refuse to come there where the sound of the gospel may be heard; whereas we are commanded 'to be swift to hear,' James i. 19. Others sleep while the word is preaching; as Eutychus fell asleep—'While Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third story, and was taken up dead,' Acts xx. 9. It was a sin, and God punished him, though he was a youth, and the sermon was after supper, and of great length, even till midnight; it was an infirmity, but infirmities are punished by God. Others talk, or suffer their minds to be diverted by every trifle: Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 'And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness;' as a child's eye is off his book if a butterfly do but come by. The devil findeth them other work; how often do we mingle sulphur with our incense! Those that hear in jest will find hell hot in good earnest. Well then, Rev. ii. 7, 'He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.'

2. Some do not understand what is outwardly heard by the ears of the body: Mat. xiii. 19, 'When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart;' and Jer. v. 21, 'Hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding! which have eyes and see not, which have ears and hear not.'

3. Some do not believe what they understand; that is the great requisite, Acts. xv. 7, 'That the gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel and believe.'

4. Some do not obey what they seem to believe: Rom. x. 16, 'But they have not all obeyed the gospel; for Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?' and Mat. vii. 26, 27, 'And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man that built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.'

5. Some do not persevere in what they undertake to obey: Deut. v. 27-29, 'Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall say, and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee, and we will hear it, and do it. And the Lord heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and the Lord said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken unto thee; they have well said all that they have spoken. Oh that there were such an heart in them that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them and with their children for ever.'

*Use 3.* Is to press and excite you—

*First.* In the general, to entertain the gospel with a sound and lively faith.

1. Without it there is no sin to be conquered. The first sin was unbelief: Gen. iii. 1, 'Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?' and still unbelief is the cause of transgressing, for the flesh is importunate to be pleased, and the temptations of the world will hurry us to evil: Heb. iii. 12, 'Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.' The flesh is fed with the baits of sense, but the spirit is encouraged and strengthened by the supports of faith.

2. Without it no grace can be thoroughly exercised: Heb. xi. 6, 'Without faith it is impossible to please God.' All graces are set a-work by faith; repentance: Jonah iii. 5, 'The people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth.' To believe the truth of God's word when it is spoken is the ready way to make it effectual. Their repentance was no more than legal, but it was as good as their faith was. All is quiet in the soul, no news of repentance, nor noise of any complaining against sin, till faith sets the conscience a-work; so there is no prizing of Christ without faith. He and all his graces lie by as a neglected thing till we believe: 1 Peter ii. 7, 'To them that believe he is precious.' When faith represents him in his loveliness to the soul, then the affections are stirred.

3. No worship can be seriously performed without it. For prayer: Ps. lxxv. 2, 'O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.' When we believe him to be a God hearing prayer, then we come cheerfully into his presence. So for hearing the word, it is this bindeth the ear to hear: Acts x. 33, 'We are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God;' and it bindeth the heart to reverence: Isa. lxvi. 2, 'To him will I look, who is of a humble and contrite heart, and trembleth at my word.'

4. Without it no acts of justice and mercy can be well done: Acts xxiv. 14-16, 'But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets; and have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust. And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men.'

But how shall we do to get this faith?

[1.] Beg it of God, it is his gift: Eph. ii. 8, 'By grace ye are saved, through faith; and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God.' He must open the eyes of our minds: Eph. i. 17, 18, 'That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; the eyes of your understandings being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.'

[2.] Study the grounds of faith. Many truths revealed in scripture are agreeable to the light of nature, and known by it: as that there is one God, the first cause of all things, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; that it is reasonable that he should be worshipped and served, and that according to his will; that we have faulted with him, and have rebelled against his will declared in his law, and so are ob-

noxious to his wrath and displeasure; that reasonable creatures have immortal souls, and die not as the brute beasts; that true happiness is not found in those things wherein men ordinarily seek it, namely, in things grateful to the animal life; all these things, and such like, nature teacheth. The business of the christian religion must needs lie in three things.

(1.) In declaring to us more fully the nature, will, and worship of God.

(2.) In finding out a remedy for the fall, or expiating the faults and sins of men, which is done by the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ.

(3.) In propounding a fit happiness for an immortal soul. Now think with yourselves with what congruity and evidence these things are done in the gospel; here are prophecies to usher in this doctrine, miracles to confirm it, valuable testimony to recommend it to us; and how agreeable all these are to the nature of God and our necessities.

[3.] Attend upon the means whereby faith is wrought, as the ministry of the word: 1 Cor. iii. 5, 'Who is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed?' There is some consideration or other given out to beget or strengthen our faith, for God is not wanting to his ordinances, and we go on by degrees in believing, the sincere soul still finding more evidence in the word continually, and more experience in his own heart: John v. 10, 'He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.'

[4.] Get a prepared heart. To this end—

(1.) See that there be no carnal bias: John v. 44, 'How can ye believe that seek honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?' Indulgence to any sensual affection, to the honours, riches, and pleasures of the world, maketh men unfit either to believe or consider the truths of the gospel.

(2.) Let there be no wilful, heinous sin: 1 Tim. iii. 9, 'Holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience.' Men are loth to believe to their torment, as malefactors cannot endure to think of the assizes. An honest and good heart doth best receive the good seed. Sin doth weaken our faith, and wilful sins breed horror in our minds, and make us wish the gospel were not true, that there were no God, no day of judgment, no hell for the wicked and ungodly; if so, then it is your interest to be an unbeliever.

[5.] Are you willing or unwilling to believe? If willing, wait upon God, he will not fail the waiting soul: John i. 17, 'Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ;' if unwilling, Christ will not give his grace to them that despise it, or make folks believe whether they will or no, or when they had rather not believe; or if God out of his secret grace will surprise you, you cannot expect it.

*Secondly*, In every particular message that is brought to you in the way of an ordinance, regard God's providence in it; Christ hath a greater share in it than the teacher. Remember now that in every important truth your faith is tried: John xi. 26, 'Believest thou this?' and in every duty pressed your obedience is tried. Now let faith be lively and applicative, and the closer the application the better. The promise of pardon and life is universal, and includeth you as well as

others, if you will believe in Christ, for all true believers shall be saved ; but this is to excite your faith and obedience, not to assure your interest, which dependeth upon your sincerity in faith, love and obedience. There is the application of faith and the application of assurance. The application of faith is a particular application of Christ and the promise to ourselves, so as to excite us to look after the benefits and ends for which Christ is appointed : Acts xiii. 26, 'To you is the word of this salvation sent.' It is our duty to make general grace particular. The application of assurance is, when I actually determine that my own sins are pardoned, that I am adopted into God's family, and appointed to eternal life, which cannot be without some sense of my sincerity, because the promises of God require a qualification and performance of duty in the party to whom the promise is made : 1 John iii. 14, 'We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.' And as you are to stir up your faith, so you are to set about the duties which the word calleth for. On the first opportunity fall a-practising, for this is a message sent from God to try your obedience ; by doing this continually you will insensibly habituate yourselves to the practice of godliness, and so grow up into comfort and peace.

See the Use of Faith in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, handled in the Sermon on Heb. xi. 23.

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A TREATISE OF SELF-DENIAL;  
WITH  
SEVERAL SERMONS  
ON THE  
SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER,  
AND OTHER OCCASIONS.

## THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE ANN, LADY WHARTON.

MADAM,—The known esteem your ladyship had for the reverend author, and the kind respects you still bear to his surviving relations, gives your ladyship a claim to any of his works. But besides that, the right you have to a part of this volume makes this public offer of it to your ladyship justly necessary, the ‘Treatise of Self-denial’ being many years since, in the time of your ladyship’s widowhood, designed and prepared by the author for the press, he intending the dedication of it to yourself, which he therefore often called ‘My Lady Wharton’s book.’ That copy being lost, the ensuing treatise has been collected from his own notes, and therefore is truly his own, though it wants much of that exactness it would have had had it been polished by his last hand, and so would have been more worthy your ladyship’s acceptance.

What was then so suitable to the circumstances of your ladyship’s case, the providence of God hath made as seasonable now it is published, God having of late called you in a more eminent manner to the exercise of this great duty of self-denial by the sad breach he hath made in your noble family. Seldom do God’s eminent servants pass off the stage of this world without some remarkable trials, in which he will prove the truth and strength of all their graces, and so not only magnify the power of his own grace, in carrying them through such temptations, but also evidence the strength of their graces in bearing them, for a pattern to those that should hereafter believe in him.

One branch of self-denial here treated of is the denial of our own wills, not only in a subjection to God’s laws, but in a submission to his providences; and how congruous and fit a thing is it that the author of our beings should govern us and dispose of us according to his own pleasure! Men do what they will with their own; and God’s right to them, and to everything that they have, is far more absolute than their right can possibly be over themselves, or anything that is theirs; especially when his right to them is what they have owned and consented to when they entered into his covenant, and chose him for their God, and gave up themselves and all they had to him to be at his disposal. Can it be thought that God deals hardly with any when he takes from them, not only what he has given to them, but what they themselves have given back to him again in their covenant-engagement? He is a God, and therefore can do no wrong to his creature; and he is their God, and therefore will do them no harm. As he is a God, he is under

no law, but his own nature and will; and as he is their God, he is engaged by covenant to make all occurrences work for their good in the issue. And what if God withdraw the endeared objects of their affections, that the beams of their love, being contracted, may more strongly centre upon his most amiable and blessed self; that the world being embittered to them, they may more earnestly long for their heavenly country; and that finding the sweetest flowers here to be fading and withering, they may loosen their hold of all things here below, and take the faster hold upon God and eternal life. Sure such providences ought to be entertained not only with submission, but thanksgiving.

The great and powerful instrument by which God works these blessed effects in the hearts of his people is faith, which is a grace of his own operation; that faith which unites the soul to Christ and fetches in those supplies from the covenant of grace which are for their support and comfort in all their afflictions: that faith which realiseth the unseen glory, presentiateth our future hopes, looketh beyond time to eternity, and so deadeneth the heart to all the delights and smooth pleasures of sense, and reconcileth it to all the rougher paths of God's providences. How excellent, useful, and pleasant a life is this life of faith, which the author handles in the other treatise!

Your ladyship being so well instructed in the school of Christ, having for so many years sat under the ministry of the worthy author of these following treatises and sermons, I doubt not but your serious thoughts have often suggested these and many other such-like considerations for your encouragement and support under God's afflicting hand; and may you every day find more and more relief from them! Yet I hope your ladyship will pardon the liberty I have taken of being your remembrancer herein, the place in which I have the honour to serve your ladyship in your family for so many years obliges me thereto; and I am the more encouraged to hope for your favourable acceptance hereof, having been a witness of so many instances of your ladyship's condescending goodness.

May the great God of heaven and earth enrich with the choicest blessings my noble lord and your ladyship, that you may be examples of a holy, self-denying obedience and active faith; and so by how much the more conspicuous you are in that eminent station God hath set your honours in, by so much the more useful and exemplary you may be to all that are about you. That God would lengthen out both your years to further usefulness, and after a long and fruitful life here on earth, and a large experience of the goodness of God to yourselves, and those that have descended from each of you, you may be gathered into God's garner as a full-ripe shock of corn coming in its season. So prays, as in duty bound, right honourable your ladyship's most obedient servant and chaplain,

WILLIAM TAYLOR.

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# A TREATISE OF SELF-DENIAL.

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## BOOK I.

*If any man will come after me, let him deny himself.*—MAT. xvi. 24.

THE occasion of these words standeth thus: Christ had foretold his passion, and Peter taketh offence. The cross though it be the badge of christianity, is always displeasing to flesh and blood, and we dislike heaven, not for itself, but for the way we travel to the land of promise, through a howling wilderness. Carnal fancy imagineth a path strewed with lilies and roses: we are too tender-footed to think of briers and thorns. Peter giveth vent to his distaste by carnal counsel—‘Master, favour thyself.’ Peter’s speech to his master is much like the voice of the flesh or Satan in our own hearts; when duty cannot be done without difficulty and disadvantages, our carnal hearts say, Favour thyself, let this be far from thee. Christ rebuked Peter, or rather the devil in Peter—‘Get thee behind me, Satan.’ God’s own children may often play Satan’s game. Peter speaketh out of an innocent affection and respect to his Master, and the devil hath a hand in it. And therefore it is a high point of spiritual wisdom to be skilled in his enterprises—‘We are not ignorant of his devices,’ saith the apostle, 2 Cor. ii. 11. The devil turns and winds on every hand; the same Satan that stirred up the high-priests to crucify Christ, sets his own disciple upon him, to dissuade him from being crucified. He was afraid of the work of redemption, and therefore seeketh either to hinder the sufferings of Christ, or to make them so ignominious that the scandal might take off from the efficacy. When Christ was upon the cross he playeth the same game, but by other instruments: Mat. xxvii. 40, ‘If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.’ Though he had our Saviour at that pass, yet he was afraid what the work would come to. It is very notable that when Christ rebuketh Peter, he doth with the same severity check the devil, tempting him to idolatry, and Peter dissuading him from sufferings; it is spoken to both, ‘Get thee behind me, Satan,’ compare Mat. iv. 10, with ver. 23 of this chapter. So strong an inclination had our Lord to die for us, that he looked upon carnal pity to his person with the same indignation and scorn which he doth upon a temptation to idolatry. However, the condescension and tenderness of Christ to his erring disciple is to be observed: he doth not only rebuke him, but instruct him, and the rest of his disciples. Thus can Christ make an advantage of our failings; Peter’s carnal counsel was



the occasion of this excellent lesson, which Christ by this means hath for ever consigned to the use and profit of the church—‘If any man will come after me, let him deny himself.’ I shall a little open the words.

Christ saith, ‘If any man,’ to show that the duty is of an unlimited concernment; it involveth all, whosoever will enter themselves in Christ’s school, or list themselves in his flock or company; it doth not only concern a few which are called out to be champions for his cause, and to expose their bodies to the cruel flames, but ‘if any will come after me.’ Will, *θέλει*; the word is emphatical, it noteth the full purpose and consent of the will. Whosoever is firmly resolved. ‘Come after me;’ as a scholar after his teacher, as a sheep after his shepherd, as a soldier after his centurion. Coming after, it is a phrase proper to scholars. The phrase sheweth the necessity of the duty, unless you will be disclaimed as none of my followers. Here Christ would give us the main character of his own disciples. Christianity is a school and sect of men that deny themselves and their own conveniences for Christ’s sake.

‘Let him deny himself;’ these are the words which I shall insist upon. And in them there are two things to be observed: the act—‘Let him deny;’ the object—‘Himself.’

1. For the act, *ἀπαρνησάσθω*; the word being a compound is the more emphatical; it signifieth *prorsus negare*—Let him utterly deny himself. Denial properly belongeth to speeches, but by a metaphor it may be also applied to things. To speeches it is proper, as to propositions or requests. In propositions we are said to deny when we contradict that which is affirmed; in requests we deny when we refuse to grant what is desired of us. Now by an easy traduction it may also be applied to things, which we are said to deny when we neglect, slight, or oppose them; as denying the power of godliness, neglecting or opposing it; though with propriety enough the word may retain its original sense, because all things are managed in the heart of man by rational debates, counsels, and suggestions, and we are said to deny when we refuse to give assent to fleshly dictates and counsels. The flesh, or corrupt self, hath its propositions, its motions in the soul; it speaks to us by our own thoughts, and puts us upon this or that work. Envy, lust, and corrupt motion have a voice, and an imperious voice, too, that grace is much put to it to give a strong negative. Envy bids Cain, Go kill thy brother; ambition bids Absalom rebel against his father; covetousness bids Judas betray his Lord and Master; so worldly affection bids us pursue present things with all our might. Now because we are wedded to our opinions, and these are the suggestions of our own hearts, therefore they are called self; and we are said to deny when we enter our dissent, and deny the motion. Flesh, what have I to do with thee? I am not ‘a debtor to the flesh,’ Rom. viii. 12. I will hazard all for Christ, and make it my work to get into covenant with God. This for the act—‘Let him deny.’

2. The object is the next word to be opened—*ἑαυτὸν*, ‘Himself,’ a capacious word, that doth not only involve our persons, but whatever is ours, so far as it standeth in opposition to God, or cometh in competition with him. A man and all his lusts, a man and all his relations; a man and all his interests; life, and all the appendages of life, is one

aggregate thing which in scripture is called self. In short, whatsoever is of himself, in himself, belonging to himself, as a corrupt or carnal man, all that is to be denied. And indeed, every man hath many a self within himself; his lusts are himself; his life is himself; his name is himself; his wealth, liberty, ease, favour, lands, father, mother, and all relations, they are comprised within the term of self. As when our Lord explaineth it, Luke xiv. 26, 'If any man will come after me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren, and sisters, nay, and his own life, he cannot be my disciple;' *μισεῖν* is the same with *ἀπαρνεῖσθαι*, hating, it is the same with denying or neglecting his duty to them for God's sake, when a higher duty is to take place. I confess, among the things which are called self there is a difference.

[1.] Some are absolutely evil, and must be denied without limitation; as lusts and carnal affections, Tit. ii. 12, which are very properly called self, because we are as tender of them as of our own souls; and therefore they are expressed by the terms of the 'right hand,' and the 'right eye,' Mat. v. 29, 30. A sinner will as soon part with his eyes as with his lusts, or the pleasure of his senses. And so they are called 'members:' Col. iii. 5, 'Mortify your members, which are on the earth.' Sin is riveted in the soul, and it is as irksome to a natural heart, to part with any lust, as with a member or joint of the body; we are willing to hold them by as fast and close a tenure as we hold ourselves; we startle at a reproof, as if a joint were pricked or touched.

[2.] Other things are only evil respectively as they prove idols or snares to us; and so life, and all the ornaments, comforts, and conveniences of life; as liberty, honours, wealth, friends, health, they are all called self. The reason is, because by love, which is the affection of union, they are incorporated with us, and become parts of us: Hosea iv. 18, 'Ephraim is joined to idols;' they are cemented with them. Now that which is to be denied in these things is not so much the thing itself, but our corruption that mingleth with them, and causeth them to become a snare to the soul.

The point that I shall insist on out of the whole is—

*Doct.* That it is the duty of all that would be Christ's disciples to deny themselves.

I shall handle the doctrine of self-denial—

1. In general.

2. In its several kinds and subjective parts.

*First*, In general. In managing this argument, I shall use this method, viz.—

1. Give the extent of self-denial.

2. The reasons of this duty, with the most effectual motives and arguments of persuasion.

3. The signs by which we may know whether we omit or practise it.

4. The helps which the scripture prescribes for our furtherance in so great a work.

*First*, And as a foundation for all the rest, I shall consider the extent of this duty, both in regard of the object, or the things which are to be denied, and in regard of the subject, or the persons who are to practise it.

1. For the object—A man's own self, it is a bundle of idols. Since God was laid aside, self succeeded in the crown; we set up everything that we call our own. Everything before which we may put that possessive 'ours' may be abused and set up as a snare, all the excellences and comforts of human life, both inward and outward.

For the understanding of this, and that you may know how far self is to be denied, I must premise some general considerations, and then instance in some particulars; for it seemeth harsh and contrary to reason that a man should deny himself, since nature teacheth a man to love himself and cherish himself: Eph. v. 29, 'No man ever hated his own flesh;' and grace doth not disallow it. Therefore—

[1.] In general, you must know when respects to self are culpable. There is a lawful self-love—'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' James ii. 8; in which there is, not only a direction to love our neighbour, but a concession and allowance implied to love ourselves; and in so doing, we do well. By an innocent and natural respect nature fortifies itself, and seeks its own preservation. A man may respect himself in a regular way. That self which we must hate or deny is that self which stands in opposition to God or competition with him, and so jostleth with him for the throne; lay aside God, and self steppeth in as the next heir; it is the great idol of the world, ever since the fall, when men took the boldness to depose and lay aside God, as it were, self succeeded in the throne. Fallen man, like Reuben, went up to his father's bed. Self intercepted all those respects and embraces which were due to God himself, and so man became both his own idol and idolater. It is with God and self as it was with Dagon and the ark; they can never stand together in competition; set up the ark, and Dagon must fall upon his face; set up Dagon, and the ark is deposed and put down. Well then, if we would know when self is sinfully respected, we must consider what are the rights and the undoubted flowers of the crown of heaven; I mean, what are those special privileges and respects that are so appropriated to the godhead, as that they cannot without treason to the King of all the earth, be alienated from him or communicated to any creature. Now these are four:—

(1.) To be the first cause, upon whom all things depend in their being and operation.

(2.) To be the chiefest good, and therefore to be valued above all beings, interests, and concerns in the world.

(3.) To be the highest lord and most absolute sovereign, who swayeth all things by his laws and providence.

(4.) To be the last end, in which all things do at length terminate and centre.

1st. As God is the first cause, so he would keep up the respects of the world to his majesty by dependence and trust. Now it is the ambition of man to affect an independency, to be a god to himself, sufficient for his own happiness. Our first parents greedily caught at that bait:—'Ye shall be as gods,' Gen. iii. 5. The devil meant it not in a blessed conformity, but a cursed self-sufficiency; and we are all apt to be taken in the same snare, which certainly is a very grievous sin. Nothing can be more hateful to God. This therefore is a great

part of self-denial, to work us off from other dependences, and to trust in God alone.

2d. As God is the chiefest good, so he must have the highest esteem. Valuing other things above God is the ground of all miscarriage in the business of religion. When anything is honoured above God, or made equal with God, or indulged against the will of God, Dagon is set up, and the ark is made to fall.

3d. As God is the highest lord and most absolute sovereign, it is his peculiar prerogative to give laws to the creature; therefore self is not to interpose and give laws to us, but only God; his will must stand. The great contest indeed between God and the creature is, whose will shall stand, God's will or ours; who shall prescribe to us, self or God. Fleshly nature sets up laws against laws, and our fleshly wills set up providence against providence. Self-will is bewrayed by murmuring against God's providence, by rebellion against his laws, and when we are obstinate in our homage and obedience to self: Jer. xviii. 12, we will walk in the way of our own heart; and Jer. xlv. 17, whatsoever cometh out of our mouths, that we will do. So James i. 14, the apostle makes it to be the root of all sin when a man is drawn away by his own lusts and his own will, that is set up against the laws of God. So in providence, a stubborn creature will not submit when God's will is declared. It was a great submission, and an act of self-denial in Christ—'Not as I will, but as thou wilt;' but self saith, Not as thou wilt, but as I will; for we by murmuring set up an anti-providence against God.

4th. As God is the last end of our beings and actions, the supreme cause is to be the utmost end: Prov. xvi. 4, 'God made all things for himself.' But now, in all that we do we look to ourselves; vain man sets up self at the end of every action, and jostles out God. In all the actions of life they are but a kind of homage to the idol of self. If they eat and drink, it is to nourish self, a meat-offering and drink-offering to appetite. If they pray or praise, it is but to worship self, to advance the repute of self; the crown is taken off from God's head, he is not made the utmost end. If they give alms, they are a sacrifice offered to the idol of self-estimation; 'They give alms to be seen of men,' saith Christ, and in this self is set up, and God is deposed and laid aside.

[2.] Let me give you some particular instances. To instance in excellences, moral or natural, or in civil interest. In moral excellences: righteousness, that is apt to be a snare in point of self-dependence. Paul found it to be *ζημιαν*, a loss, Phil. iii. 7, a hindrance from casting ourselves entirely upon grace. It is the highest point of self-denial for a man to deny his own righteousness, to see the dung and dross that is in himself and all his moral excellences. So also, concerning our own wisdom, that is a self that comes to be denied. It is said to Babylon: Isa. xlvii., 'Thy understanding hath undone thee.' So of all men, when we presume upon our own sense and apprehension, we soon go wrong. This is the main thing to be considered here; for Peter, out of carnal wisdom, dissuades Christ, and then Christ saith, 'Whoever will come after me, let him deny himself,' deny the dictates of his own reason and will. He that makes his own bosom his oracle, asketh counsel of a fool; we shall be cavilling and disputing till

we have disputed ourselves out of all religion : Job. vi. 24, 'Cause me to understand wherein I have erred.' Till we come to see by divine light, carnal wisdom is always making lies and ill reports of religion ; we think it folly and preciseness to be strict, and that zeal is fury, and it is cowardice and disgrace to put up wrong. We shall still be calling good evil, and evil good, because we are wise in our own eyes ; there is a woe pronounced upon such : Isa. v. 21, 22, 'Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight !' &c. It is an excellent point of self-denial to 'become a fool, that we may be wise,' 1 Cor. iii. 18. As when we look in a perspective-glass we wink with one eye, that we may see the more clearly with the other ; so here we must put out the eye of carnal wisdom, and become fools, that we may be wise for Christ. So for all civil interests : life, that is the most precious possession of the creature, and yet not too good to be denied : ver. 25, Christ instanceth—'Whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it.' That is the gospel way of thriving, to lose all for God. Now this is to be denied, not only in purpose and vow, but when it comes to trial ; as it is said of the saints : Rev. xii. 11, 'They loved not their lives to the death.' When it comes to a point, either they must leave their God or lose their lives on the account of religion. The loving-kindness of God is better than life. So for estate : Mat. xix. 27, 'We have left all and followed thee,' say the disciples ; we must leave our coat, as Joseph did, that we may keep our conscience whole. The best usury in the world ; ten in the hundred would in the world be counted an oppression ; but now here is a hundred for one, Mark x. 32. So also for fame and esteem in the world ; though to an ingenious spirit this is exceeding precious, yet John the Baptist, speaking of Christ, saith, 'He must increase, but I must decrease.' We must be content to be ciphers, that Christ may rise up into the greater sum ; as one in a crowd that holds another upon his shoulders, he is lost in the throng, but the other is exposed to the view of all. So for our friends : Luke xiv. 26, 'Whosoever hates not his father, and his mother,' &c. There are many cases wherein we are to deny our friends ; as suppose, when we shall incur their displeasure, out of faithfulness to Christ. Carnal parents will frown upon us, and, it may be, withdraw maintenance, and other conveniences of life ; but it is better an earthly father should frown than that God should frown, it will be made up in spiritual relations. So in case of doing justice and right we must not own father, mother, brothers, or sisters, for this is but more handsome and natural bribery. Levi was commended for this by the Lord : Deut. xxxiii. 9, 'He saith to his father and mother, I have not seen him, neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children, but observed my word, saith the Lord.' It is good to be blind and deaf to all relations in this case. Asa spared not his own mother, but deposed her, being idolatrous. See Deut. xiii. 6-9, 'If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thy own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers, . . . thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him ; neither shall thy eye pity him ; neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him ; but thou shalt surely kill

him ; thy hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people,' &c. We are apt to look upon these rules as calculated for Utopia, and have but a grammatical knowledge of them. So also for carnal things : if it be a right hand or a right eye, it must be plucked out and cut off, Mat. v. If it be as gainful and as profitable a sin as the right hand is profitable to us, yet it must not be spared. 'We must deny all ungodliness,' Titus ii. 12, though ever so pleasing. Thus for the object, it extendeth to all things.

2. For the subject : see the extent of it, it reacheth all sorts of men ; Christ saith, 'If any will come after me, he must deny himself.' It is notable, that circumstance in Mark, when Christ gives the lesson of self-denial : Mark viii. 34, 'When he had called the people unto him, with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself.' There is no calling, no sex, no age, no duty, no condition of life that is excluded, but one way or other, they are put upon self-denial. No calling : magistrates, and those who are called to public trust, they are most obliged, in regard of God and men, to deny themselves. It is notable, the self-denial of Joseph, though he were a great officer in Egypt, yet his family ran the same lot with other tribes. And Joshua, in the division of the land, he took his own lot and share last, Joshua xix. 49. Men in public places are most liable to mind private interest, to the neglect of the public ; but they ought not to feather their nests with public spoils.

So for men of private stations. It is not the duty of public persons only, all conditions are liable to self-seeking ; many times your private callings may be against the public interest, either of religion or civil welfare, as they that made shrines for Diana, when the gospel came, and reformation likely to be wrought, Acts xix. 24, they cried, 'Our gain will be gone.' Therefore in this case you should be content to sink and to suffer loss, as the lighter elements descend to conserve the universe. Or, it may be, you have thriven by iniquity of traffic ; now you are to deny yourselves by making restitution : Luke xix. 8. 'I will restore fourfold, and give to the poor.' Restitution is a hard duty, but a necessary one ; and you must vomit up your sweet morsels wherewith you have surefeited, or else conscience will not be healthy. And so for other callings and relations : minister and people. Ministers, of all men, had most need to practise this duty. We are to deny our own ends. How many carnal ends may a man promote by his service in the ministry ? Fame, applause, the satisfying of our necessity ; we are not to preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord. We are to deny ourselves in our learning and parts ; we are debtors to the learned and unlearned, we are to become all things to all ; and Christ hath lambs as well as sheep. We must be content to go back ten degrees, that we may condescend to all, not to soar aloft in speculation ; possibly this may be more for our fame and repute of learning, but less for profit. So for people : in hearing you must deny the curiosity of the ear, that others may profit by plainer lessons, and that every one may have his portion in due season. It is a great part of self-denial to suffer the words of exhortation. Guilt is apt to recoil when tender parts are touched. Now you are to deny yourselves, to love the reproach

as well as the comfort, and count it precious oil. Consider the submission that was in Hezekiah when the prophet came with the bitter threatening of a curse that should cleave to his posterity—‘Good is the word of the Lord!’ a sweet submission of a sanctified judgment, Isa. xxxix. 8. All that was good in it was, that it should not come in his days. So also for all sexes: it is a duty for men; not only for men, who are called out to public actions, but for women also, they are to deny themselves in their delicacies of life, that they may exercise themselves in the grave duties of religion, that they may not wax wanton. It is necessary also in all duties; to instance in those two great ones which do divide and take up the whole christian life, prayer and praise, both of them should be practised with self-denial. When we come for grace, we should deny our own merit—O Lord, not for our own righteousness. And when grace is received, when we come to praise God, self must vanish, that God may have all the praise, Mat. 16. When the good servant gives an account of his faithfulness, he saith, ‘Not my industry, but thy pound hath gained ten pounds;’ he gives it all to grace. So 1 Cor. xv. 10, the apostle checks himself, as if he had spoken unbecomingly—‘I laboured more than you all, yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me;’ so Gal. ii. 20, ‘I live,’ then presently draws in his words again, ‘not I, but Christ liveth in me.’ As the elders throw their crowns at the Lamb’s feet, so all our excellences must be laid at the feet of Christ; as the stars disappear when the sun ariseth, so we must shrink into nothing in our own thoughts. When Joab had conquered Rabba, he sent for David to take the garland of honour; so when we have done anything by grace, we must send for Christ to take the honour. Prayer is the humble appeal to mercy, disclaiming of merit; and praise is the setting of the crown upon Christ’s head; not I, but the grace of God that is wrought in me.

To apply this, all men are to practise this duty, in all things, at all times, and with all their hearts.

[1.] All men are to practise it. Oh! do not put it off to others; no man can exempt himself. Usually, when these duties are pressed, we think they are calculated for men in great places, and rich men; but it is a duty that lies upon all, all are apt to seek themselves. When Christ spake something concerning Peter, it is said, ‘Peter looked about on the disciple Jesus loved.’ So we are apt to look about to others. Look for it, before you die you will be eminently called to this service. Never christian went out of this world, but, one time or other, God tried him in some eminent point of self-denial. As it is said, God tempted Abraham, tried him in that difficult point of offering his son, Gen. xxii. 1; so Christ tried the young man—‘Go, sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor,’ Mat. xxii.

[2.] For the object—in all things. Let not your self-denial be partial and halting; as Saul slew some of the cattle, but spared the fat, and Agag. Many can deny themselves in many things, but they are loth to give up all to God without bounds and reservations. As Joshua deposed all the kings of Canaan, so every lust is to be cast out of the throne. He that denies himself only in some things, really he denies himself in none. Jehu put Baal’s priests to death, but con-

tinued the calves in Dan and Bethel, out of interest and reasons of state. Herod denied himself in many things, but could not part with his Herodias.

[3.] You must deny yourself always ; it must not be temporary and vanishing. In a good mood we can give up and renounce all, and be humble, and ascribe all to grace. We may hang the head for a day like a bulrush, Isa. lviii. There should be a constant sense of our unworthiness kept up, and a purpose of renouncing all and giving up all. It is not enough to deny a man's self in a thing wherein there is no pleasure, and when his soul abhors dainty food, but it must be in things which are desirable, and this must be constantly practised too. Ahab humbled himself for a few days.

[4.] It must be with all our heart. Which signifies that it must not be done by a mere constraint of providence, as a mariner in a storm casts away his goods by force, but as a bride leaves her father's house : Ps. xlv. 10, 'Forget thy father's house ;' it must be out of a principle of grace, and out of love to Christ. Now you must not do it politiciy, but with your whole heart. There is no such great self-seeking as is carried on usually under the colour of self-denial. As the apostle speaks of some, 2 Cor. xi. 12, that would preach the gospel freely, to shame and cast contempt upon Paul. The devil disguiseth himself into all forms and shapes. As Jacob put on Esau's clothes that he might appear rough and hairy, and so get the blessing ; so many seem to deny themselves of the comforts of life, but it is but for their own praise. The Pharisees were liberal in alms ; they could deny themselves in giving, which others could not do ; but it was to be seen of men. Therefore this self-denial must not be self-seeking, carried on under a pretence, for that is abominable to God. Thus for the extent of the duty.

Secondly, I come to handle some reasons, with the most effectual enforcements. It is the duty of all that would be Christ's disciples to deny themselves, I shall prove it by several grounds.

1. We cannot else be conformed to our great Master. Jesus Christ came from heaven on purpose to teach us the lesson of self-denial ; his birth, his life, his death, was a pattern of self-denial. His birth, it was a great step from God's bosom into the virgin's lap ; a great condescension : 2 Cor. viii. 9, 'When he was rich, he became poor, that we might be rich.' None can deny themselves so much as Christ did, because none was so rich as he. We may talk of flocks and herds, and the poor ornaments and supplies of a frail life ; but he had the possession of a perfect happiness and glory in the divine nature, he was rich indeed. He needed not to have the respect of the creature to make him more happy ; he was the lord of glory, and heir of all things. Yet when he was thus rich he made himself poor. He did not only subject himself to the law, and abject condition of the creature, but came in a poor, mean way, not in pomp, not in a princely equipage. As soon as he took our nature, he would have a feeling of our wants and miseries, therefore was born in a mean, obscure way. Born of a poor mother, in a poor place, wrapt up in cheap and unworthy swaddling-clothes, the fellow of God, the heir of all things, the lord of angels, he is thrust out among beasts in a stable. Christ would not come in pomp, but with slender provision and furniture, to put a disgrace upon



worldly greatness and bravery. He would overturn the idol of the world, not only by power, but by the choice of his life. And as his birth, so was his life; he was exercised with sorrows and labours. Christ was not a man of pleasure, but a man of sorrow. Rom. xv. 3, the apostle saith, 'Christ pleased not himself,' neither in the choice of his own life, nor in any delights that he could propose to himself of his own profit and advantage, he was happy enough without them, So in his death. If any had reason or cause to love his natural life, Jesus Christ had. His soul dwelt with God in such a fellowship as we are not capable of; and yet he gave up himself to redeem us from the present world, Gal. i. 4. It is but ridiculous to profess Jesus Christ to be our master, and not to conform to his example. We have no reason to be more tender and delicate of our interest than Christ was. What is our self to Christ's self? We are poor creatures under a law; Christ was God over all, blessed for ever. The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord—'It is enough for the disciple to be as his master, the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household!' Mark x. 25. We should not murmur, we cannot be worse used than Christ was, we have no cause to complain if we be reduced to a coarse robe, when we remember Christ's swaddling clothes; to complain of a hard bed or prison, when Christ was laid in a manger. Certainly an innocent poverty is more comfortable than all the pomp in the world, if we would but choose what Christ chose. Christ was a pattern of suffering from the cradle to the cross. They that caress themselves in all the delights of the world seem to profess another master than Christ. We are of a base condition, but two or three degrees distant from dust and nothing. The sun can go back ten degrees; Christ, the Lord of glory, might go back ten degrees, but we have not so much to lose.

2. This hath been practised, not only by the master, but by all the fellows in the same school. Christ set the first copy, and all the saints have written after it, some better, some worse: Rom. xiv. 7, 'None of us liveth to himself, and none dieth to himself, for whether we live, we live to the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord.' In the context the apostle speaks of the difference of weak and strong believers; some weak, some strong, but they all agree in this, none of us, not one that hath given up his name to Christ, is allowedly a self-seeker; none live to themselves. The example of the saints is to be considered, lest we should think it exceeds the capacity of the creature, and that only Christ could practise it. We find the children of God, those among them that have made the highest progress in Christ's school, they have had lowest thoughts of self. Paul, that was a glorious apostle, yet he saith in one place, 1 Tim. i. 15, that 'he was the greatest of sinners;' and in another place, Eph. iii. 8, that 'he was less than the least of saints.' A man would have thought that Paul, with more congruity of speech, might have said, the greatest of saints and least of sinners, but he saith, the greatest of sinners, and the least of saints; not to lessen grace, but still to lessen self, and put a disgrace upon it. They that are the best scholars in this school most abhor self-conceit

and self-seeking. As the laden boughs hang the head and bend downward, so do the children of God that have been most fruitful in the christian course; as the sun, the higher it is, doth cast the least shadows; so for self-seeking. I wonder how a man can look upon these two great instances of Moses and Paul without blushing. Of Moses: Num. xxxii. 32, 'Blot me out of thy book,' upon condition he would save the people; as if he could take no comfort in his great spiritual privileges, when the glory of God should suffer loss by the loss of his people. So Rom. ix. 3, 'Let me be accursed from Christ, for my brethren that are in the flesh.' Paul, in an excess of zeal, could be willing to bear the common punishment for a common good. We, that are so tender of our honour and respect, so wedded to our ease and private interests, how can we look upon these without shame? Can Paul and Moses wish to be a common sacrifice for God's glory, and for the redemption of others, and we be so tender to our own respects? Moses speaketh to God himself, and Paul calls God to witness—'I lie not:' Rom. ix. 1, 'I speak the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also beareth me witness in the Holy Ghost.' There is a treble oath and asseveration—'I speak the truth,' 'I lie not,' 'the Spirit bears witness with my conscience.' Or rather, there is a double asseveration, with an appeal to two witnesses, both to the Spirit and conscience. Not as if they could wish for hardness of heart; but with an excess of zeal they were carried so high in imitation of Christ, to part with their own happiness for a public good.

3. Jesus Christ may justly require it; all the idols of the world expect it from their votaries. In nature we are sensible that all respects to divine powers are commended by self-denial. We see it in pagans; when Baal was silent, his priests gashed themselves, 1 Kings xviii. 28; they cut themselves, after their manner, with knives and lances, so that the blood gushed out; to gratify their idol, they would not spare their own blood. So those hypocrites, Micah vi. 6-8, see how liberal they are—'Shall I give the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? thousands of rams, ten thousand rivers of oil,' &c. To part with a beast in sacrifice, they thought it was not self-denial enough; they devise something more costly, all their flocks and herds, their children, the fruit of their womb, their whole substance. So superstitious votaries among the papists, they mangle their flesh with scourges and whips, use excessive fasting and abstinence from meat, pinch their own flesh. And we fatten and feed ourselves, and cannot deny ourselves for Christ. See the instance in spiritual idols, how worldly and carnal men can deny themselves to compass their ends: Ps. cxxvii. 2, 'They rise early, go to bed late, eat the bread of sorrow;' they can deny themselves of sleep, and food, and rest, and all in a devotion to worldly interests: Eccles. iv. 8, 'He bereaves his soul of all good.' There is no end of their toil; with an unwearied patience they lay out their strength in vain pursuits. Many a covetous man doth shame many a godly man. Religion is a better thing; shall lust do more with them than the love of Christ with thee? Lust that will make a man labour in the very fire, though it be but for a thing of nought, to deny himself of the necessary support and conveniences of life. Consider the tyranny of worldly affection. Certainly we should have a stronger impulse, for we have a better

reward ; we are acted with a more mighty spirit. It is true, in carnal men it is not self-denial so much as the obstinacy of self-will and stomach. The kingdom of Satan is divided ; self-will is set up against self-delight or ease. Nay, in pleasure, which doth seem of all vanities to be most soft and effeminate, yet men can deny themselves for their pleasure, their credit, estate, their conscience, and all sacrificed to the gullet of that great idol and Moloch-god, their belly.

4. Because self is the greatest enemy both to God and man. (1.) It robs God of his honour. Self, it is a near and dear word to man ; it is both the idol and the idolater. It receives the worship which it performeth ; as the sea sends out waves to the shore, and then sucks them in again. Self is made a god, and then god is made an idol ; Phil. iii. 20, ' Whose god is their belly.' All their toil and labour is to feed and delight themselves, and to exalt themselves. Self hath such sacrifices and devotions as God requires. Self hath solemn worship. A carnal man prays, and what then ? He makes God the object, and self the end ; so that self is the god. So self hath private and closet duties, vain thoughts, and musings, in which we lift up ourselves in our own conceit—' Is not this great Babel that I have built ?' Some time of the day we consecrate to the great idol self, to puff up ourselves with the conceit of our own worth. This is a more secret worship of self. The public worship of self is in self-seeking, and the private in self-conceit, when we feast and entertain our spirits with whispers of vanity, and suppositions of our own excellency and greatness. (2.) As it is God's, so it is man's enemy. Self parts itself against itself, and is its own greatest enemy. Not only they of a man's own house are his enemies, as Christ speaks, but his own heart is his enemy ; self-will, self-wit are the greatest foes you have in the world. Look, as the ape doth crush out the bowels of her young ones while she embraceth them, so man wrongs himself when he overloves himself ; a man need fear and suspect no creature in the world so much as himself, and that when we most respect self. The world and the devil may trouble thee, but cannot hurt thee without thyself. No enemy can hurt us so much as we hurt ourselves ; therefore, if we would take revenge of them that hate us most, we should begin with our own hearts. Men trust their hearts as their best friends, and so they are deceived. It is the greatest judgment that God can lay upon any creature, to give him up to himself : Ps. lxxxix. 12, ' So I gave them up to their own heart's lusts, and they walked in their own counsels.' Oh ! it is a sad doom to be given up to self. On the other side, it is the greatest conquest that can be, to conquer self ; it is an enemy that will hardly be subdued : Prov. xvi. 32, ' Better is he that overcometh himself than he that conquereth a city ;' *i.e.*, he that is able to conquer the masterless bosom enemy, self, that is so apt to betray us.

5. Because those that are Christ's disciples are not their own men : Rom. xiv. 6, ' We are not our own, but the Lord's.' Our will should not be our own law, nor our profit our aim, because we are not our own. There are many relations between us and Christ which take away all the property we have in ourselves. We cannot say that our tongues are our own, to speak what we please, nor our works our own, nor our interests our own ; no, thy tongue when thou speakest, it is not thine,

but Christ's; and so thy estate when thou tradest, remember it is not thine, but Christ's; thy prayer, thy public service, they are not thine, but Christ's. Remember, thy strength is not thine own when thou art wasting it in lust and vanity; it is not thine, but Christ's. So our several relations. I have showed you before the title God hath to us; now let me open the several relations. We are but servants; now servants are not *sui juris*, masters of their own will, but subject to the will of another, by whose command and for whose profit they are to act. The property of servants, saith Aristotle, is not to do their own will and pleasure; they have given up themselves to another. So we are children, and God is our Father, and children are under government, they are to be guided by their father. Then the most honourable relation is that of a spouse, 1 Tim. ii. 12. Now the woman, saith the apostle, must not rule over her own head; we are to be guided and directed by him. The most honourable relations put us upon self-denial.

6. Because it is the most gainful project in the world, therefore we must deny self. Self-denial is the true way of self-advancing. Leave as much as you can for Christ, you will lose nothing—'He that loseth his life shall find it:' Mark x. 29, 30, 'Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mother, and children, and lands, with persecution, and in the world to come, eternal life.' Though we have it not in specie, in kind, we shall have it over and above in value. God will not weary us with expecting too much. Here we have peace of conscience, and hereafter life eternal; others do but gain a shadow to the loss of the substance. They have neither quiet of conscience nor the hopes of glory: Mat. xvi. 26, 'What is a man profited if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?' &c. And the evangelist Luke hath it, chap. ix. 25, 'Lose himself.' To seek the good of our souls, that is indeed to seek ourselves. Every man's mind, his soul, is himself; to lose his soul, that is indeed to lose himself; and when we lose ourselves, we lose all. When a man hath most need, riches fly away; you cannot bribe divine justice, nor keep the soul from hell. Therefore if you would seek yourselves indeed, seek yourselves in God.

7. Because otherwise a man can be nothing in religion, neither do nor suffer; and therefore we must resolve either to deny ourselves or to deny Christ. Before we go out of the world, we shall be put upon the trial. Peter denied his master, because he could not deny himself. All duties in religion put us upon self-denial—private duties upon the denial of lusts, and public upon the denial of interests; therefore we read of 'denying ungodliness and worldly lusts,' Titus ii. 12. In private duties: whenever you go to pray, private duties are contrary to the inclinations and dispositions of the heart, which are for ease and pleasure, and the gratifications of the flesh. If thou hast no self-denial, thou wilt never bring thy heart to God in them. Then in public duties we must look for opposition. Advancers of public good are usually exposed to public hatred, they are sure to be spoken against; when

the devil cannot prevail with instruments to slacken the work of God, then he stirs up the world against it. That must be a complete action wherein malice cannot find fault. It is true, we are not always exposed to persecution, but always to censure. Many that have neither heart nor hands to do good, yet have tongues to censure those that do it, magistrates and ministers. Therefore we must look for trouble, if not from malice, yet from envy. Who can stand before envy? If persecutors be under restraint, yet carnal professors will be apt to blemish what is not done by themselves. Therefore whosoever would be a disciple to God and Christ, this is his first lesson; this is the A B C of religion. We shall never digest the inconveniences of a spiritual life till we resolve upon it. We must make over our interests in our lives, and whatever is dear to us, reckon the charges, Luke xiv. 26. A builder spends cheerfully as long as his charges are within his allowance; but when that is exceeded, and he goes beyond what he hath reckoned upon, then every penny is disbursed with grudging. Most resolve upon little or no trouble in religion, and from thence it comes to pass that when they are crossed, they prove faint-hearted. Therefore put your life in your hand, and resolve to follow Christ wheresoever he goeth.

8. Every one must deny himself, because it is a special part of faith. Faith looks upon God's mercy in Christ, not only as true, but as good; better than life, and better than all the contentments of it, else it is not faith: 1 Tim. i. 15, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation.' It doth not only look upon it as a wise and faithful saying, but as a thing of choice. There is not only assent to what is true, but there is consent and choice. Faith is an inclination of the soul to true worth, and therefore, with a resting upon the mercies of Christ there is a renouncing of interest; Mat. xiii. 46, the merchant that found the rich pearl 'went and sold all to buy it.' This is faith, to come and traffic with God for his mercy in Christ, to part with all, whatever is pleasant and profitable in the world, rather than be deprived of his grace: Luke xiv. 27-29, 'He that hates not his father and mother, yea, and his own life, cannot be my disciple;' and then our Lord brings the similitude of a man that goes about to build, and sits him down and counts the charge. In faith there is a sitting down and accounting the charges, or considering what it is to take Christ. The comforts of christianity we prize much, but they are only necessary to be propounded in case of distress of conscience. But he that desires to be a christian indeed is seriously to cast up his reckoning, what is required at his hands, thoroughly to examine whether he be willing to forego such hopes and contentments as are incompatible with the life he seeketh, or to endure all crosses and calamities wherewith he may be encumbered. The builder that goes hand over head to work, lays the foundation of his disgrace in the loss of his cost. Men labour to fortify their actual persuasion of the mercies of Christ before the carnal life be renounced. It is a mistake to look to faith first, and the settling our particular assurance, as if that were the difficultest thing in religion. The great difficulty lies in self-denial. As Christ put the young man in Mat. xix. 26, upon the trial, Canst thou leave all, and follow me? so we are to put ourselves upon the trial, otherwise our application to God's mercy, and settling our particular persuasion, will be but a rash

confidence. Every one hath some tender parts, and usually at first conviction our tender parts are touched. When God begins to work upon the heart, we should say, Soul, thou hast busied thyself in a wrong way, there is one thing necessary : come out of that way, or thou shalt never be happy. Forsake thy father's house : we are apt to stick at this, we are not able to renounce all for him. As when God called Abraham, he called him from his father's house ; so when we are called to God, we are called from something pleasant and profitable to self.

Thirdly, The notes and signs of self-denial. There are exclusive and inclusive marks. Exclusive marks will show us when self is not denied ; then inclusive marks follow, wherein we may take comfort.

1. Exclusive notes for conviction, how we may know when self is in dominion and sovereignty. It is a sign self is exalted and in dominion—

[1.] When a man did never set himself to thwart his own desires. Carnal indulgence makes lust a wanton. When we cocker our lusts, they grow contumacious and stubborn. They that gratify their senses and wallow in all fleshly delights, never knew what it was to be exercised in Christ's school ; a man that cannot deny his ease and pleasure is not fit for Christ : Eccles. ii. 11, ' Whatever my eyes desired, I kept not from them ; I withheld not my heart from any joy.' When men can remit nothing of their vanity and luxury they make christianity to be but a notion and an empty pretence ; they are men and women of pleasure, when Jesus Christ was a man of sorrows. The children of God are always wont to cross themselves in things which they most affect ; as David poured out the water of Bethlehem when he longed for it. It is good sometimes to make such an experiment upon ourselves ; we may find out many images of jealousy, if we would try whether we could deny ourselves in what we most affect.

[2.] By an impatience in our natures when we are crossed by others. Self seems to be a very delicate and tender thing ; we cannot endure to be crossed in our opinions and interests, or in the accomplishment of our lusts. Haman is sick, and cast upon his bed, because he wanted Mordecai's knee. Always our affliction argues the greatness of our affection. It should be the *ἐλάχιστον*, ' the smallest thing,' as the apostle saith, ' to be judged of men,' 1 Cor. iv. 3. When men have set a high price and value upon themselves, they are vexed when others will not come up to their price. John died for crossing Herod in his Herodias ; Jonah made his gourd to be a piece of himself, he prized it too much, as appears by his great vexation when God had smitten it. Fretting and murmuring show what is the tender part of our souls, and what we have made as part of ourselves.

[3.] When a man is loath to be a loser by religion. Some are of cheap and vile spirits, they love a gospel without charges, as the apostle speaks, 1 Cor. ix. 18. can be content to serve God so as they may be at no expense for God. Look, as we should count and reckon upon the charges before we profess religion ; so after profession we should ask conscience what it hath cost us to be godly, at what expense we have been at for Jesus Christ, since we have espoused Christ and religion. David would not serve God with that which cost him nought. If a man were told that his way to such a place is encumbered with briers

and thorns, and that he must ride through many dirty lanes, and must look for scratching brambles, and many miry places, now when he seeth nothing but a green and pleasant path, he would think he had mistaken and lost his way ; so when you are told your way to heaven is a strait way, and that religion will put you upon self-denial of your pleasure, profit, and carnal desires, and yet you never wrestled with your lusts, nor quitted anything for Christ, and meet with nothing, but pleasure, profit and delight in the profession of religion, you may well think that you are mistaken in the way, and it is a great sign you are yet to seek in the duty which Christ's scholars must practise.

[4.] When the heart is grieved for the good of others, it is a sign self is then in dominion. Many can rejoice and please themselves when God hath been glorified by some act of their own, but they are grieved when the work is done by others ; selfish and carnal men would fain make a monopoly of religion. Oh ! consider, such a temper is a sign that self is too dear and near to us. We should be as glad if God be glorified by others as when ourselves are the instruments of his glory. Luther said, *Si nos non sumus digni, fiat per alios*—My design is, that the work of God may be done ; and if I be not worthy, let the work of God be done by others. So Paul ; Phil. i. 15, 16, Many preach the gospel, supposing to add affliction to my bonds ; yet if the gospel is preached, I therein rejoice, and will rejoice. It is a Pharisee's spirit to malign and envy the good of others : John xii. 19, ' Behold, all the world goes after him, and we prevail nothing ; ' they were vexed Christ had so much of the respects of the people. Men would monopolise all respect to their faction, and keep up a devotion to their interest ; this made the elder brother envy at the prodigal's return, Luke xv. When we envy the gifts and graces of others, and their esteem in the world, it is a sign self remains in sovereignty and dominion. Many, because they would shine alone, are apt to blast and censure the repute of others, and malign the grace wrought in them, whereas we should rather rejoice therein.

[5.] When men care not how it goeth with the public so they may promote their private interest. I mention this because, as self is to be denied for God's sake, so it is to be denied for the good of others. There is self in opposition to God, and self in opposition to the good of others : 1 Cor. x. 14, ' Let no man seek his own, but every one the good of others ; ' as we are bound to promote the glory of God, so the good of one another too, especially the public good. Therefore the children of God have no heart or regard to their private conveniences with the loss of the public. Moses, when God promiseth to prefer him, Exod. xxxii. 10, 11, ' Let me alone, do not beseech me for this people, and I will make of thee a great nation.' God offers him a composition, if he would cease his prayers, and tells him the holy seed should be continued in his line, instead of the line of Abraham, and all the rest of the tribes should be abolished ; yet it is said, Moses besought the Lord, and desired mercy for the people, O Lord, let not thine anger kindle against thy heritage ; it is no matter what becometh of me, so the people be safe. So Neh. v. 18, ' I took not the bread of the governor, because the bondage was heavy on the people ; ' he would not take the necessary support and maintenance whereby the greatness of his place might be borne

out, because there was affliction upon the children of God. But now carnal men care not how they embroil a nation, nor how it goes with the public affairs, so they may promote their own interest, and set up self in place and honour. The children of God are wont to yield up all their own interest for a public good: Jonah i. 10, 'Cast me into the sea;' so the tempest may be still, no matter what becomes of me. So Nazianzen, when there was a great trouble and contest about his place—'Doth my honour trouble you? Let me go aside in obscure silence, and live neglected, and die, and my bones be thrown into the dark, where they may not be found nor known.'

2. As there are exclusive marks, so there are inclusive also. I shall name but three.

[1.] When a man in all his purposes, in every actual choice, is swayed by reasons of conscience rather than by reasons of interest; when he is contented to be anything, so as he may be serviceable to God's glory, and Jesus Christ may be all in all. Thus Paul, when he was in a strait whether to be dissolved or stay in the flesh, it is no matter which it be, so Christ be magnified, whether it be by life or death, Phil. i. 23. If my body be spent with labour, or fall as a burnt-offering in martyrdom, it is no matter, so Christ still be magnified; when we are contented that self should vanish, so as Christ may appear, and shine in all his glory. As when the sun displays its beams the stars vanish; when we are put upon any choice of life, whether we shall do this or that, still we are to measure it, not by self-interest, but with respect to God's glory. Seneca saith, A magnanimous man cares not, doth not look, where he may live most safely, but most honestly. A child of God looks, in the disposal of his affairs, where he may have most work, and do most service, and not merely to provide for ease and safety. As a traveller, when two ways are proposed to him, one pleasant, the other very craggy and dangerous, he doth not look which way is most pleasant, but which way conduceth to his journey's end; so a child of God doth not look to what is most grateful to the flesh, but how he may do most work and service, and glorify God upon earth.

[2.] By an humble submission to God's will. It is a great conquest over ourselves when we can conquer our own will. Now the children of God speak as if they had no will of their own at all. Before providence is past, they absolutely give up themselves to God's disposal, either for deliverance or trouble. In 2 Sam. xv. 25, 26, 'The king said unto Zadock, Carry back the ark of God into the city; if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and show me both it and his habitation; 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.' David speaks as if he had no will of his own, and gives up himself to the disposal of God. So also after the event, when God hath declared his will, they silence all the murmuring of their spirits: 1 Sam. iii. 18, 'It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.' There is enough to calm all the discontent of their mind, there is God in the providence. A child of God can lose nothing by force. Men may take away his estate by violence, but he resigns it to God. God may take away his friends, but he resigns them, they are taken away by the consent and resignation of a sanctified will. So for their lives, they resign



themselves up to God. Therefore it is notable, when the scripture speaks of wicked men, it is said, 'What hope hath the hypocrite, when God shall take away his soul?' and Luke xii. 19, 'This night shall thy soul be required of thee.' The children of God consent to give up their souls, estates, and friends, upon the call of providence. There is a subscription to God's will—'It is the Lord.' Nay, there is not only patience, but they can even bless God, because his will is accomplished: Job i. 21, 'The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.' They can see as much cause of blessing God, not only when he doth enrich them, but when he doth impoverish them, and lays his hand upon them; this is to cause our wills to be swallowed up in the will of God, and this is to be like the great pattern Christ himself—'Not my will, but thine be done;' we should not be like our great master if we did not this. Christ indeed prays against affliction, so may we. We should not have known the greatness of his self-denial if he had not manifested his natural desires, but he refers himself to God. And so must we also.

[3.] When a man is vile in his own eyes, and reflecteth with most indignation upon his own sins. There are none that pass a severer doom than the children of God do upon themselves when they have sinned against God; they need no other judge than their own consciences to pass a sentence upon them. Men naturally are apt to favour themselves, they are slight in self-humiliation, and deep in censure of others. With indignation they reflect upon the sins of others, but with indulgence upon their own. As Judah, when it was told him, 'Tamar thy daughter hath played the harlot; and also, behold, she is with child by whoredom.' Judah said, bring her forth, and let her be burnt, Gen. xxxviii. 24. But when she showed him the tokens, and that he had defiled her, then he was calm enough. It is otherwise with God's children, no sins so odious to them as their own: 1 Tim. i. 15, 'Jesus Christ came to save sinners, of whom I am chief.' Oh, there is no such sinner in the world as I am, saith Paul. So Prov. xxx. 2, 'Surely I am more brutish than any man, and I have not the understanding of a man.' How could a godly man say so? It is the fruit of spiritual indignation. A godly man spends the most of his revenge and spiritual indignation upon himself. Oh, there cannot be a more brutish person than I have been, that have sinned against so many mercies, so many obligations, and so much light! These are not compliments, but they speak them with bitter feeling. Saith Chrysostom, They do not only speak it in humility, but in truth. They can but know the sins of others by guess and imagination, but they feel their own sins, they know them by sense. As in sorrow we are apt to say, There is none like mine. Why? Because we feel the gripes of our own pains. So the children of God, they feel how grievously they have sinned against God. Saith David, Ps. lxxiii. 23, 'I was as a beast before thee.' They know they have more mercies than others, and more obligations than others, therefore their offences seem to them to be more grievous. Well, if the heart be brought to this pass, that the heat of indignation is spent upon thy own sins, and these things be spoken not by rote and imitation, but out of deep sense and feeling, it is a comfortable sign that self is dethroned in thee.

Fourthly, To give you the means of self-denial, whereby this work may be made more easy.

1. If you would deny yourselves, lessen your esteem and your affection to worldly things. I join them together because affection follows esteem. If you would deny yourself for Christ, you must prize the worst of Christ before the best of the world. See Ps lxxxiv. 10, 'I had rather,' saith David, 'be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.' When an earthen pitcher is broken, a man is not troubled at it, because he hath not set his esteem and heart upon it, being but a trifle. What made Moses so eminent for self-denial that he could refuse all the honours of Pharaoh's court, and choose rather 'to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season'? It is said, 'He esteemed the reproach of Christ to be greater riches, than the treasures of Egypt,' Heb. xi. 25. Moses' esteem was set right. Again, lessen the affection; the greatness of our affection causeth the greatness of our affliction. Therefore we are so troubled to part with things, because our hearts are too much set upon thm. We greatness the things of the world in our esteem and affection; then it is a trouble to part with them for Christ's sake. Alas! all these outward things, they serve but to prop up a tabernacle that is always falling. But how shall we lessen our esteem and affection; is that in our power? I answer, You may do much, deny lusts in their first motion, ere they grow upon your esteem and affection, and prevail by delight in the soul. When anything begins to sit too close and too near the heart, it is good for a christian then to be wary, and ask this question, How shall I deny this for God? 1 Cor. vi. 12, 'I would not be brought under the power of anything.' Though the objects you converse withal be lawful, yet when they encroach upon thy spirit, then deny them. And then take heed what thou dost account thyself. It is a great part of christian prudence to know what is ourselves. Do not count sin thyself. See how the apostle parts it, Rom. vii. 17, 'It is no more I, but sin that dwelleth in me.' Thou shouldst be able to say concerning all carnal desires, It is not I, but sin. There is an old and corrupt self. So thou shouldst not count the world thyself, that is none of thee: Luke xii. 15, 'Take heed, and beware of covetousness.' What is the reason? 'For man's life consisteth not in the abundance of what he possesseth.' It is not thyself, thou art neither further from the grave nor the nearer to true contentment; I may be happy without this.

2. Seek self in God, this is an innocent diversion. When we cannot weaken the affection, let us change the object. What is it that is so near to thee? Is it honour? seek honour in God. Do but change vain glory for eternal glory. That is a lawful seeking of self when we seek it in God: John v. 44, 'How can ye believe that receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God?' You may change your desires from vain glory into everlasting glory: John xii. 43, 'For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.' If a man did desire praise, where can we have better than to be praised with God's own mouth, in the face of all the world, at the great day of accounts, when Christ shall proclaim you to be an heir of the crown of heaven? So for pleasure; if thy soul be drawn

out to it, oh ! remember, there are no pleasures like to those chaste delights thou mightest enjoy by communion with God, the pleasures which are at his right hand for evermore. Affections are not abrogated, but preferred ; and we transplant our desires, that they may flourish in a better soil. If thou desirest riches, turn out thy heart toward the good treasure God hath opened in the covenant, to be rich in grace, rich towards God.

3. If thou wouldst deny thyself, resolve upon the worst, to please God, though it be with the displeasure of yourselves and all the world.' Usually we do not sit down and count the charges, we do not make our resolution large enough. When we take up the profession of religion, we look for but little trouble, therefore are soon discouraged. Usually we give God but small allowance ; we do not carry our lives and our estates in our hands, as we should do, when we take religion upon us. A man never comes to Christ rightly, unless he gives up himself and friends, and bids Christ take all. Till it comes to such a resolution as Nazianzen had concerning his human learning—I never affected riches, nor greatness in the world, only I have affected a little eloquence, and I will tell you how far I have affected it, that I have something of value to esteem as nothing for Christ. So men should give Christ liberal allowance ; then when it comes to trial, thou wilt not be grudging ; it is that thou didst count upon, to part with for Christ's sake.

4. Take heed of confining thy welfare to outward means, as if thou couldst not be happy without such an estate, without so many hundreds in the world ; beware of binding up thy life and contentment with the creature, for when we come to part with it, we can as soon part with our lives. The children of God resolve, ' Though the fig-tree do not blossom, and the labour of the olive fail, yet to rejoice in the Lord,' Hab. ii 17, 18. This should be a christian's resolution, not to trust to the creatures, but in God, though all these things are gone. This is a holy independency, when our hearts are taken off from the creature. The men of the world have only a candle which is soon blown out, an estate that may easily be blasted : but the children of God have the sun, which can stead them without a candle. The Lord saith, Hosea ii. 11, 12, ' I will cause their mirth to cease,' speaking of the carnal Jews. Why ? ' I will destroy her vines and her fig-trees.' All the wicked man's happiness is bound up with the vine and fig-tree, with his estate. Consider, your happiness doth not lie within yourselves, nor in any other creature, but in God alone. God in himself is much better than God in the creature ; now carnal men, they prize God in the creature, but not God in himself. And therefore the first thing we must depend upon is that God is an all-sufficient God in himself ; not God in friends, not God in wealth, but God in himself. We cannot see how it can be well without friends, and wealth, and liberty, therefore our hearts are glued to them. Oh, take heed of this. All these things are but several pipes to deliver and convey to us the influence of the supreme cause ; therefore still prize God in himself before God in the creature.

5. Direction : often act faith, and look within the veil. Send thy thoughts as spies and messengers into the land of promise. A man

will better quit that he hath upon earth when he hath strong expectations of heaven, Rom. viii. 18. When a man seeth that God hath laid up a more excellent glory for him, he will reckon these things are not to be named the same day : 2 Cor. iv. 16, 'For which cause we faint not : but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.' The apostle gives an account of his valour and resolution ; how he was able to withstand the discouragements of the world—'We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are unseen.' Heaven will satisfy all losses and then the world is quitted with ease. Look, as the woman left her pitcher when she was acquainted with Christ ; so when a man is acquainted with better things, his heart is taken off from these outward things. When Christ said to Zaccheus, salvation is come to thy house, then he presently added, 'Half of my goods I give to the poor.' When the heart is much in heaven, the earth will seem a small thing. When we look upon the stars, they seem but as so many sparks and spangles ; but if we were above the earth, the world would seem but like a little black spot.

6. In all debates between conscience and interest, be sure to observe God's special providence to thyself. When conscience and interest are a struggling, consider, whence hadst thou that which thou art so unwilling to part withal, but from the Lord ? Distrust is the ground of self-seeking. We do not consider the providence of God to us, and that all changes are in his hands, and therefore we cannot deny ourselves. Who is that which gave thee such an estate that thou art loth to lose ? or such a comfort thou art unwilling to part withal ? When Amaziah the king of Judah was admonished by the prophet not to let the army of Israel go with him, 'What shall I do,' saith he, 'for the hundred talents ?' 2 Chron. xxv. 9, the sum for which he had hired them ; and the man of God answered, 'The Lord is able to give thee much more than this.' So when thou art troubled, How shall I do to live ? what shall I do for an estate ? The Lord is able to give thee more than this. It is God's blessing that maketh rich, and he can supply thee with a great deal more if he see fit. Men think it is their own providence that doth all, and so they are loth to part with what they have. Consider, thou couldst not have this if God had not given it thee. So when men are loth to lose their friends, when, by the profession of religion, they may be in danger thereof, remember who brought them to be thy friends. Prov. xvi 7, 'When a man's ways please the Lord, he makes his very enemies to be his friends.' Piety will do more than carnal compliance. Thou mayst by this hazard God and thy friends too.

7. Consider the right God hath in all that is thine ; he hath a natural right, and a right by contract. A natural right to all thou hast : he made it, and he gave it thee. No creature can be *sui juris*, at his own power and disposal. Riches are not thy own, but God's bounty to thee. Foolish men account all that they have their own, they think they may do with it as they list : Ps. xii. 4, 'Our tongues are our own, who is Lord over us ?' Consider, thy tongue is not thy own, for it was

not made by thee ; and when it is blasted, thou canst not repair it. A prodigal that is not able to deny his pleasure, speak to him about it, and he will answer, I hope that which I spend is my own. Thy estate is not thy own, to spend it as thou pleasest. So covetous men think they are absolute lords of what they have : 1 Sam. xxv. 11, 'Shall I take my bread, and my drink, and give it to strangers ?' Goods must be laid out according to the owner's will, else it is robbery. Now all that thou hast is God's, therefore thou art to part with every interest and concernment of thine, as it may be for his glory. God hath a right also by contract : thou hast given up thyself, and all that is thine, to God, Rom. xii. 1 ; and do but consider the danger of alienating things that are once consecrated. Consider, what was the end of Ananias and Sapphira.

Before I come to the particular kinds of self-denial, take some observations concerning this duty.

If you would deny yourselves,

[1.] Every one must observe his temper, and the particular constitution of his own soul. There are several ways of sinning ; let every one look to his own way, Isa. liii. 6. God knows, we are all out of the way, but usually there is some particular way of sin into which our hearts do wander and digress. Now when God tries any man, he tries him in his Isaac ; therefore self-denial must be considered according to the kind of self-love. Which way doth self-love most of all bend and incline your souls. The observation is necessary, because there may be some kind of shadow of self-denial in carnal men. Lusts are obstinate, and because their contrariety will not give way one to the other, therefore, for the convenience of the grand lust, a man may deny himself in something. A covetous man bereaves his soul of good, and may be rigid and sullen to his nature, yet he may not deny himself. He may deny himself of pleasure, but not of worldly profit. Others, that are of a dreggy and voluptuous constitution of spirit, they may be slight as to worldly profit, when their hearts are caught by another snare : Ps. xviii. 23, 'I kept myself from mine iniquity.' Usually there is some special sin, which, by the frequency of temptation that often occurs, and our desires that way, we may call *our* sin. Now herein is our uprightness tried, when we can deny our sin.

[2.] Many may deny themselves in purpose, that yet fail when they come to act. Certainly, in purpose we must deny ourselves. Whenever we come to Christ, we must bring our lives and our comforts in our hands ; we must come with a resolution to part with all. Though every christian be not a martyr in effect and act, yet he must be in vow and purpose, and resolve to renounce all upon the just and convenient reasons of religion. Now the trial is when we are put upon these particular cases. We cannot so well judge of an affection by its single exercise, as when it is brought to a direct conflict and trial. The things of religion, in the absence of a temptation, may seem best to the soul ; but the spirit is never discovered till we come to an actual choice, and particulars are compared with particulars ; then desires, which before lay hid and dormant, rouse themselves, and oppugn grace in the civil wars of the soul. When there is a conflict between conscience and interest, then are we tried. Now you need not wish for these cases, for before-

you go out of the world you will find they will come fast enough. Many cases will happen when duty is without encouragement, and all self-respects fail; nay, when for conscience' sake you are put upon visible disadvantage, Rev. xii. 11. It is said of the children of God, that 'they loved not their lives to the death.' When it came to this pinch, that either they must deny life or deny Christ, then they loved not their lives. Many may in a prodigality of resolution, seem to lay all at Christ's feet, as Peter in his confidence talked high—'I will not deny thee,' but yet afterward they may fail, when they come to resist unto blood: Heb. xii. 4, 'Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.' When you must make choice of the world or Christ, then are the best discoveries made.

[3.] They are nothing in religion that cannot deny pleasure and the delicacy of life. For this is the constant and private self-denial of a christian, which is always necessary. All sin is rooted in a love of pleasure more than of God; for therefore do we sin, because of the contentment we do imagine to be in sin, that draws on the heart to the practice of it. Now he that cannot abjure his contentment is nothing: Prov. xxv. 28, 'He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.' The meaning is, he that cannot subdue his inclination to pleasure, doth lie open to every temptation. As an unwall'd town in time of war receives every army that comes; so is his soul, it lies obvious to temptation. And besides, pleasures will necessarily bring a brawn upon the heart, they are so contrary to the severity of religion. Seneca said, Certainly, it is necessary that he should have low thoughts of duty that hath high thoughts of pleasure, and to gratify his senses. If God had required nothing of us but the perfection of reason, if we were only to show ourselves men, there must be a bridle upon appetite and sensual desires. There is an old quarrel between appetite and reason. Nature itself would suggest such arguments to us as would put us upon the mortification of the senses.

[4.] We must deny ourselves in point of desire as well as in point of enjoyment: Titus ii. 12, 'Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts.' The great part of this duty consists in mortifying and subduing worldly lusts, that we may be content with our portion, though but a little of the world, if God seeth us fit for no more. It is a high point of self-denial, not only to part with what we have, but to be content with what we have; when the soul comes to this, to say, I have enough, because I have as much as God allotteth me, and because God seeth it fit I should have no more. To be content with a little of the world, and not to desire more, it is the poor man's duty as well as the rich. As a rich man is to quit his possessions when God calls him, so a poor man is to quit, mortify, and subdue his desires. Covetousness, when once it prevails upon the heart, it desires, it grasps, it aims at the whole world; therefore Christ saith, Mat. xvi. 26, 'If a man should gain the whole world,' implying, that is in the aims of men. When a man's corruptions break out that way, he will never be satisfied. Solomon saith, Eccles. v. 10, 'He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver.' The heart of man is largely drawn out, so that like the grave, we shall never be able to say, It is enough. To enjoy complacency in

our portion, it is a great part of self-denial. To desire more, it is but to desire more snares. If I had more, I should have more trouble, more snares, more duty; greater gates do but open to more care; I should have more to account for, more time, and more opportunity; and alas! I cannot answer for what I have already. If a plant be starved in the valleys, it will never thrive on the mountains; so if in a low condition we are not able to conquer the temptation of it, what shall we do if we had more, if we cannot be responsible to God for what we have?

[5.] Vainglory is as sordid a piece of self, and as much to be denied, as affectation of riches and worldly greatness. Covetousness, that carries a man to another object, but vainglory to another end; the one makes us idolaters, and the other hypocrites; an idolater sets up another God, and a hypocrite denies the true God. For mark, God, by reason of the excellency of his being, is to be the highest object of our respect; and because he is the supreme cause, he is to be the ultimate end of all our actions; and when we set up another end, we deny God his prerogative.

[6.] We are to deny ourselves, not only in case of temptation to direct sin, when either we must thus deny ourselves or actually sin, but also for the general advantage of duty and obedience, and the conveniency of a holy life; for instance, I am to deny my pleasure, not only when reason may be grossly discomposed, not only by refusing such works of the flesh as stink in the nostrils of nature, but lest I be unfitted for duty, lest insensibly I contract a distemper and brawn upon my heart. And so I am to deny riches, not only not to seek them by unlawful means, and when I cannot keep them with a good conscience, but not to lay out the strength of my spirits in the pursuit of the world, that it may not intercept the vigour and strength of my soul, which should be reserved for communion with God. So I am to deny honours, that is, not only ambitious affectation of them, but when they will make me to lose the pleasant opportunity of devout retirement, and a religious privacy with God. And riches are to be denied, not only when they choke conscience, but when they choke the word.

[7.] In the work of self-denial there must special regard be had to the seasons wherein we live, in several cases.

(1.) In doubtful times when God seems to threaten judgment, then our heart must be more loose from worldly comforts than at other times, and we must deny ourselves of those comforts which at other times a man may take. Our Saviour reproacheth the scribes and pharisees for not discerning the seasons. It is a great fault of christians when they do not regard the season and time of God's displeasure; for instance Jer. xlv. 4, 5, 'That which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up, even this whole land. And seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not.' I am pulling down, saith God, and plucking up, and for men to mind worldly greatness, and honours, and the conveniences of the outward life, when the face of the times looks towards a judgment, when we may see a storm in the black clouds, then to think of building, planting, and advancing ourselves, it is most unseasonable and horrid security. This the Spirit of God takes notice of in the men that lived in the days of Noah: it

is said, 'They ate and drank, and married.' All these things, you know, are necessary for the supportation of mankind; but when they minded these things, and had no regard to the season, did not see the storm in the clouds, at such a time when God seems to begin his controversy with a nation, whatever we do, we should do it with caution and fear; for the more we busy ourselves in the world, the more snares do we draw upon ourselves. God looketh, that we should be observant of the season, and not seek after honours, and ease, and plenty. When judgments are coming, our hearts should be most weaned then, when the face of the sky doth begin to lower and thicken towards a storm.

(2.) When we are like to put a stumbling-block in the way of a new convert, 2 Kings v. 26. The prophet speaking to Gehazi, when he ran after Naaman for a gift—'Is this a time,' saith the prophet, 'to receive money, and to think of vineyards and olive-yards, and sheep and oxen, and men-servants and maid-servants?' Simply to receive a gift had not been unlawful, but Elisha was resolved to take none, to show he did not make a trade of miracles for his private gain, but it was God's honour he aimed at; it was enough for him that the God of Israel was acknowledged by Naaman the Syrian to be the true God, he would allure him by the freeness of the gift. The prophet doth not so much rebuke Gehazi for the lie, as for the unseasonableness of the motion, that it might bring disgrace upon the honour and high calling of the prophet, and dishonour the God of Israel. We must depart from our own conveniency in such cases; it is a great stumbling-block to the world when they that pretend to reformation seek honours, profits, great places, and preferments for themselves and their families. All pious designs must have a suitable carriage. In Austin's time it was a scandal against the christians, and the heathens soon took up that reproach, that they overturned the idols, not out of any piety or devotion, but covetousness, that they might have the gold. Reformers of all men should be content with the goodness of the action.

(3.) In prosperous times of the church there is much self-denial to be practised. I confess, self-denial is chiefly for suffering times, for so it is in the text—'Let him deny himself, and take up the cross;' these two are coupled together, that when a cross meets us in our way, which we cannot avoid without some hazard of conscience, then we must deny ourselves. But, however, it is a duty that is always in season. I shall show you wherein this self-denial is to be practised in prosperous times.

1st. We must deny ourselves in charity, and in a constant improvement of our substance to God's glory. Charity, it is the constant vent of christian affection, a holy emptying out of self in liberal and charitable distributions, and it is the only cure and preservative we can have against self-seeking, if done out of sincere aims: Mark x. 31, 'Go sell all that thou hast,' saith Christ to the young man, and 'give to the poor, and come and follow me, taking up thy cross,' but he was sad at that saying. There is somewhat extraordinary in that trial, 'Go, sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor.' This is the self-denial Christ calleth for. Can we trust him upon a bill of exchange to be paid in heaven? How much is to be given is hard to define, somewhat must be done worthy of the gospel, and that you may have more



comfort within yourselves, otherwise you may be as great a self-seeker as those that get goods by rapine, when you possess them with avarice. He is not only a covetous self-seeker that takes away other men's goods, but he that penuriously keeps his own, if he holdeth more than is meet; we are to go back some degrees in pomp and pleasure. Take the example of Jesus Christ, how many degrees he went back: 2 Cor. viii. 9, 'When he was rich, he became poor, that we might be rich.'

2d. In obedience to the word in the strictest inward duties. Many duties go against the bent of a carnal heart, as inward mortification, meditation, self-examination. There is no outward glory in these things, and they are painful and distasteful to flesh and blood. Now in this case you must deny yourselves, for the free practice of these holy duties. Cornelius, when he came to Peter, he and his family, say they, Acts x. 33, 'Here we are all before the Lord, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God;' we are contented to hear whatever God will be pleased to teach. The ministers of the gospel are factors for heaven, they drive God's bargain and covenant with the world. Now the Lord cannot endure any reservation, and withdrawing the shoulder from any known duties; how contrary and distasteful soever they are to flesh and blood, you must practise them. We are all afraid of sins against conscience, and certainly they will be very clamorous. But now the world is mistaken in sins against light and conscience; we think that sins of commission are only sins against conscience; as when a man commits adultery, tells a lie against a check of conscience; but, oh! let me tell you, sins of omission may be sins against conscience too: James iv. 17, mark, the apostle doth not say, 'To him that knows it is evil, it is sin;' but 'He that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is sin;' when you are convinced of any duty, and do not practise it; you are not come up to Christ's rules. Sins of omission are sins against knowledge, as well as sins of commission.

3d. In the uprightness of our aims, to see that we be not guided by aims that flow from self-love. A man had more need to fear his heart in prosperous times than in times of persecution, that he be not led with perverse respects, with the outward countenance of religion, with respect to his own interest, that you be not lovers of yourselves, under 'a form of godliness,' as the apostle speaks, 2 Tim. iii. 1. That you do not merely hold out a pretence of religion, upon those undue motives. There are no greater enemies to Christ than those that profess Christ upon self-interest, Phil. iii. 18, 19. The apostle speaks of some that preached Christ crucified, whose God is their belly, and who minded earthly things, all their aim was to flow in abundance of wealth and pleasure. They really oppose the virtue and power of his cross, as much as those that openly do call him a seducer.

4th. In prosperous times you are to deny yourselves, in mortifying earthly pleasures and carnal desires, how dear soever they be to the soul, though our lusts be as near and dear as the right hand and the right eye. In times of danger God takes away the fuel of our lusts; but in times of peace we are to take away the desires and lusts themselves; and indeed that is hardest. It is easier to quit life than one lust for Christ; these being more rooted in our nature, are more hardly overcome; enduring of hardships is nothing to the overcoming of lusts.

We are to crucify and deaden these desires to the world, how sweet soever they be. Men think there can be no pleasure, but in the accomplishment of their carnal desires. It is pleasant, no doubt, to a woman with child, to have what she longs for, but yet it is more pleasant not to be troubled with those longings; so when these lusts are gone, it will be exceeding pleasant and comfortable to the soul. Your great work then is to take heed that you do not live as those that are debtors to the flesh, Rom. viii. 12. You owe no suit and service to your carnal desires. We are bound to clothe and feed the body, that it may be an instrument to serve God, but no farther; you are not debtors to it, you owe it nothing; and therefore if those desires encroach upon you, you must renounce them. The conveniences of the present life, these things serve only as ballast to a ship in the passage, we are bound for a city whose commodities cannot be purchased for gold or silver. You cannot buy repentance, faith, pardon, or glory, with gold or silver,

*5th.* This public self-denial is required of you in seeking to promote the common salvation and public benefit of the saints, without any partial respect to your own interest and opinion. Usually this is the fault of the children of God, saith Nazianzen, when they begin to grow well, then they are factions and divided, as green timber that lies in the sunshine is apt to warp; so when we enjoy the sunshine of prosperity, we are apt to divide and grow turbulent: Rom. xv. 2, the apostle saith, 'Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good, to edification.' We are not to please ourselves, not to look to the gratification of our own opinions, not to be privately urging our own opinions to the tormenting of interests and the breach of christian charity; it is a most spiritual kind of self-denial to be ever ruled by respects to the general interests of religion more than by private affection to our own party. Look, as the elements leave their proper motion, the water will ascend, and the air descend, to conserve the universe, and that there may be no vacuum and emptiness in the world; so it is good not to be partial to our own private interest, and at least to forbear censures and exasperations, and drawing everything to the height.

*Secondly,* Having handled the doctrine of self-denial in general, I come to the kinds and subjective parts of it; self must be denied so far as it is opposite to God, or put in the place of God; and therefore we may judge of the kinds of self-denial according to the distinct privileges of the Godhead.

1. As God is the first cause, upon whom all things depend in their being and operation, and so we are to deny self, that is, self-dependence.

2. God is the chiefest good, and therefore to be valued above all beings, interests and concerns in the world, and so we are to deny self, that is, self-love.

3. God is, and he alone, the highest lord and most absolute sovereign, who swayeth all things by his laws and providence, and so we are to deny self, that is, self-will, by a willing and full obedience to his laws, and by an absolute subjection to the dominion of his providence; the one is holiness, and the other is patience; the one relateth to his governing, the other to his disposing will.

4. God is the last end, in which all things do at length terminate,

and so we are to deny self, that is, self-seeking. According to these considerations is the doctrine of self-denial.

As God is the first cause, so he would keep up the respects of the world to his majesty by dependence and trust. It is the ambition of man to affect an independency, to be a god to himself, sufficient to his own happiness. Now nothing can be to God more hateful than this. The main thing that preserves and maintains our allegiance and respect to the crown of heaven, is a constant dependence upon God for all things. For we find by experience that the heart is never kept in a right frame but when we look for our all from God. And therefore it is notable that in the covenant of grace, wherein the Lord would repair the ruins of the fall, and bring the creature into a new obligation to himself, God represents himself as all-sufficient, when he came to make a covenant with Abraham: Gen. xvii. 1, 'I am God all-sufficient;' we bring nothing to the covenant but all-necessity, and we come to meet with all-sufficiency in God. Now a great part of self-denial is to work us off from all other dependencies. We are marvellously apt to depend upon our own righteousness, our own wit and wisdom, our own spiritual strength, and the supplies of outward life. Therefore I shall in the succeeding discourse, seek to draw off the heart from these things, that so our trust and dependence may entirely be fixed upon God himself.

That which I shall first persuade you unto is—

First, To deny our own righteousness. For this we have a pregnant example, and that is the example of the apostle Paul: Phil. iii. 9, 'I count all things but dung and dross, that I may be found in him, not having mine own righteousness.' Look into the context, and you will find it express to the purpose. In the 4th ver. he saith, 'If any might have confidence in the flesh, I might much more.' It is no great matter for those to deny themselves that have nothing to trust to; but now, who could display such a banner of his own excellency as Paul could? Besides his other external privileges, take notice of his moral qualification: ver. 6, 'That he was, touching the righteousness of the law, blameless;' that is, whilst a pharisee, he was a man of a strict and severe life, for outward conformity and righteousness of life altogether blameless. Who so strict, so just, and temperate as Paul? Nay, after he was a christian: ver. 8, 'I have suffered the loss of all things for Christ;' credit and interest, honours among the Jews, friends, country, all things, in the behalf of the gospel. Now what is his judgment upon all? See ver. 7, 'Those things which were gain to me I counted loss.' Naturally, he was apt to count those things gain, to look upon them as rare and singular grounds of confidence. If any might expect to be saved, certainly Paul might; you would have wished your soul in his soul's stead, if you had been acquainted with him. But saith Paul, 'I counted them to be loss,' that is, through the treachery of my heart would prove hindrances from closing with Christ, and dangerous allurements to hypocrisy and self-confidence. Nay, he repeats it again in the 8th ver. for the greater emphasis—'Yea, doubtless, and I do account all things but loss,' to show that he made this judgment, not only upon his Jewish observances, but upon his actions as a christian, upon his good works after faith; though he had converted many thousands to God, and done and suffered much for Christ, 'yet I do to this

day count it to be a loss, I count them to be σκύβαλα, dog's meat; not that he repented of anything that he had done and suffered, but as they might hinder the application of the merit of Christ, but as things that his heart was apt to plead before God's tribunal. It is all nothing, it is loss, it is dung, it is dogs' meat. And why?—'That I might gain him, and be found in him,' &c. All was to make way for the greater esteem of Jesus Christ.

Now, upon this eminent example, let me press you to this kind of self-denial, to draw off your hearts from your own righteousness. My method shall be this—

1. I shall show you how hard a matter it is to bring men off from dependence upon our own righteousness.

2. The danger of leaning upon our own righteousness.

3. Some discoveries of those that are taken in this snare of death, that are carried away by a vain trust and presumption of righteousness in themselves.

4. Some remedies and cures.

[1.] I shall show it is a very hard matter to bring men off from a dependence upon their own righteousness.

(1.) Because by nature it is incident to all men. This is an evil that is natural to us. Works are our natural copy and tenure. 'Do this, and live,' it was the covenant made with Adam, and it is written upon the heart of all men. We all seek to be saved by doing. Therefore upon conviction, as soon as we begin to be serious, as soon as the conscience is awakened, the first question is, 'What shall I do to be saved?' John vi. 28, 'What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?' They imagined that life eternal might be gained by the works of the law, without Christ. Now this natural disposition is confirmed and strengthened, partly by ignorance and security. Men do not know what is necessary to true righteousness: Rom. x. 3, 'Being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and going about to establish their own righteousness, they have not submitted to the righteousness of Christ.' They do not know what is necessary to the justifying of a soul in God's sight. None are so apt to rest in their own righteousness as those that have least reason—viz, persons ignorant and formal. St Paul saith, Phil. iii. 4, 'If any might have confidence in the flesh, much more I.' As those that have little learning will be showing of it on all occasions; so persons that do but regard the outside of religion, and practise formal duties, are most apt to rest in them. Why? For formal duties do not discover weakness, and so puff men up. Carnal men search little, and blind conscience is soon pacified; usually, men that are ignorant, and go on in a dead course without feeling defects and needing the supplies of heaven, they are most confident. So partly by natural pride and self-conceit. Man is a proud creature, and loth to be beholden to another. A russet coat patched of our own seems better than a silken garment that is borrowed. Our righteousness! What a poor, filthy, tattered thing it is! Yet our hearts run upon it more than on the righteousness of Christ, that is so excellent and glorious. We are loth to submit and yield to this borrowed righteousness. That is the reason why the apostle useth that expression, Rom. x. 3, 'They have not submitted to the righteousness of God.'

It needs a great deal of submission and condescension to be content to be beholden to divine grace. Men would fain maintain the dignity of works, and are loth to stoop and sue in *forma pauperis*, to come as beggars to God; we would rather come as creditors, to challenge a debt which we suppose he oweth to us. And partly, it is confirmed and strengthened by natural ease and laziness. That which is our own costs no waiting. Paul saith, Phil. iii. 8, 'I have suffered the loss of all things, that I might win Christ.' Ere Paul could be secured against his own fears, he ran through a great many hazards, he suffered much. We have not the comfort of Christ's righteousness, but after much waiting and prayer. But now, when we seek it in ourselves, blind conscience will take hold of anything. And partly too, because God doth follow such kind of men with prosperity in this world; therefore they think the Lord is well pleased with them, till the hour of death comes, then they find all to be but froth, and that no man is a loser by God. Outward religion bringeth outward blessing. Dogs have crumbs that fall from the table; they have the offals of mercy; therefore they that depend upon their own righteousness cannot say God is in their debt, for they have outward prosperity.

(2.) It is most incident to persons after first conviction. When conscience is first opened, men fetch their comfort from their own duties. The law leaves them wounded and low, and they lick themselves whole again by some offers and resolutions of obedience. Usually, observe it, carnal men are only sensible of, or careful about religion upon some gripes of conscience; they use duties as men do strong-waters in a pang. Nature is more prone to a sin-offering than to a thank-offering. Duties should be a thank-offering, and they make them a sin-offering. As in an outward case, when men have offended their superiors, for a while they become more pliant and obsequious, that they may redeem their fault by their after diligence, so it is here, when conscience comes and arrests men in the name of God, then men will run to duties till conscience be asleep again. Therefore it is good in all gripes of conscience, and whenever we come to settle our peace, to observe from whence you fetch your comfort, and how it grows upon you: Ps. xcii. 19, &c., 'In the midst of my sad thoughts, thy comforts delight my soul.' It is very sweet when a christian can see he hath fetched his comfort from Christ, and not merely from some outward observances and formal duties. Inquire how thou didst come to be satisfied with thy estate. Usually when conviction is not very deep, men blind and choke conscience with their own endeavours, and their resolution of growing better. When they are wounded with sin, then they are apt to run to self for a plaster.

(3.) After conversion the children of God are very subject to it, to lessen their esteem of Christ by overvaluing their own righteousness. As long as we live in the world we are apt to set up a righteousness of our own. When the apostle would give us a catalogue of sins, pride of life is last mentioned, because, when other sins are subdued, pride remains, it grows upon the ruin of other sins. Now of all the pieces of pride, this is the most dangerous, to pride ourselves in our own righteousness. The apostle Paul doth not only say, I count my righteousness, when a pharisee, loss; but now that I am a christian, I yet

‘account all things loss.’ It is storied of Mr Fox, that he was wont to say he was more afraid of his graces than of his sins, as being in danger to be puffed up, lest they should tempt him to a self-confidence. Our Saviour prescribes it as a general rule, whenever we have done anything for God, he would still have us cherish thoughts of our own nothingness: Luke xiii. 10, ‘When you have done all, say you are unprofitable servants;’ herein I have merited nothing. And that possibly may be the reason, why the children of God, in the fairest view of their graces, do so solemnly disclaim their own righteousness; as 1 Cor. iv. 4, the apostle Paul saith, ‘I know nothing by myself, yet am I not thereby justified.’ Paul knew no unfaithfulness and no negligence in himself in the work of the ministry, yet am ‘I not justified for this before God.’ When you have done your utmost, still run to grace, and make grace your claim: Neh. xiii. 22, ‘I caused the Levites to sanctify themselves; remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me, according to the greatness of thy mercy.’ It was an excellent work, ‘yet spare me,’ saith he, ‘according to the greatness of thy mercy.’

[2.] I shall show how dangerous it is to lean upon our own righteousness.

(1.) We shall not prize Jesus Christ; Christ is outed of the heart by the confidence that men have in their works. Because Paul disesteemed works and counted ‘all things dung,’ the more excellent did Jesus Christ seem to him—‘All is dung for the excellency of the knowledge of my Lord.’ So, on the contrary, when men esteem works, they are sure to disesteem Christ. Now it is the highest profaneness in the world not to esteem Christ. It is not only profaneness to be drunk, commit adultery, or steal, but not to prize the Lord Jesus Christ. And when the apostle speaks of not prizing Christ, 1 Cor. xvi. 22, saith he, ‘Let him be accursed till the Lord come;’ and Heb. xii. 15, ‘Let there be no profane person, as was Esau, who despised the birthright.’ The birthright, it was a pledge of the grace we have by Christ, and therein lay Esau’s profaneness, he did despise his spiritual privileges; therefore nothing is more dangerous than the conceit of our own righteousness.

(2.) It will certainly be a great loss to you, it will deprive you of many precious experiences. God is very tender of the trust of the creature; when men stand upon their own bottom, they turn the back upon their own mercies, they will soon grow dead and careless, and religion will not be carried on in such a sweet and sensible way, because grace is obstructed, for that you depend upon yourselves. But now by disclaiming works you will lose nothing, but you will gain Christ, and in him find comfort and grace. When once we are interested in the righteousness of Christ, then we shall have the proof and virtue of the Spirit of Christ for the mortifying of sin and quickening the soul to holiness: see Phil. iii. 10, ‘That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection.’

(3.) Dependence upon our own righteousness, it will draw the heart to demure hypocrisy, by making men contented with an imperfect resemblance and dead picture of righteousness. There are none that trust more in works than those that are most defective in them. If

we come to perform duties indeed, we cannot but be sensible of the weakness of them, and so we shall fly to mercy. None are so truly godly as those that cast their whole dependence upon grace; none perform duties with more care, and overlook them with more self-denial; none have greater care of duty, and lower thoughts of it when it is performed. Who more strict and laborious than Paul? yet all is nothing but dung and dog's meat. In the scheme of judgment, and at the last day, Mat. xxv. 37, when Christ saith to the sheep, 'Stand on my right hand, you have fed me,' &c., they say, 'Lord, when saw we thee an hungry, and fed thee?' &c. They wondered that God should take notice of such worthless services. The goats were apt to plead for themselves, but the sheep admire at God's thoughts of their charity. Carnal men, when they are pressed to strict duties, they choke conscience with maxims of grace; but when they look for blessing, then they build upon works. Now the godly are quite contrary, they work as if there were no grace; and yet they expect all from grace, as if there were no works.

(4.) It will make the promise to be of no effect to you. All our comfort lies in the acceptance of the gospel, we are undone by the old law. Now when you depend upon works, you cut off yourselves from those hopes, and are obnoxious to the rigour of the law. God puts it to your choice at what court you will stand; will you plead at the tribunal of justice, or of grace? Rom. xi. 6, 'If it be of works, it is no more of grace; and if of grace, it is no more of works.' Either it must be wholly of grace or wholly of works. So Gal. iii. 18; if you build upon the law, you will evacuate and make void the promise to you. The covenant will not be mixed, no more than gold or clay, no tempering of these things. Gal. v. 2-4, those that would establish works, the apostle tells them they are 'fallen from grace,' are 'debtors to the whole law,' and that 'Christ profits them nothing.' God doth not love a patched righteousness. New cloth upon an old garment will make the rent worse. Your souls must be entirely carried out to the righteousness of Christ.

(5.) We shall best know the danger of self-dependence when wrath doth actually make pursuit after sinners, either in pangs of conscience, or in the hour of death, or at the day of judgment. Phil. iii. 9, 'O that I might be found in him;' the expression 'found' implies that there is a time when God will search Jerusalem with candles. When wrath makes inquisition for sinners, oh, it is an excellent thing to be sheltered under the buckler of grace! Merit-mongers are best confuted by experience. Certainly, they that cry up works seldom look into their own conscience. However men may babble in the schools, yet when they come to plead with God, then they will see there is no claim will serve their turn but the righteousness of Christ. They may dispute with men such as themselves, but when they come to dispute with their own consciences in the agonies of death, then they will cry out it is best to lean upon the merit of Christ. Let a man plead with God, Give me not a crumb of mercy, unless I be found worthy; do not save and justify me, unless I deserve it. Yet, when conscience arrests men, and cites them before the tribunal of God, then they tremblingly fly to the horns of God's mercy, and to his free acceptance in Jesus

Christ. Therefore this will be comfortable to you in the hour of death. You cannot have a better winding-sheet than to be wrapt up in Christ's righteousness; it is only that will bear you out. Therefore say, *Horreo quicquid de meo est, ut sim meus.*

[3.] To give some discoveries of the depending upon our own righteousness. Because men are doctrinally right, and disclaim the opinion of merit and works, they do not discern this secret vein of guilt that runs throughout the soul. There are practical papists, as well as practical atheists. Thou shalt not be judged by thy naked opinion, but by the disposition of thine heart. A man may own grace in pretence, yet trust in himself all the while. Luke xviii. 9, compared with the 11th. verse. In the 9th verse it is said, 'Jesus spake this parable against those that trusted in themselves that they were righteous;' there he brings the instance of the Pharisee; yet in verse 11, he saith, 'God, I thank thee;' he talks of grace, of blessing God and owning God, but he was proud and puffed up by the conceit of his own righteousness, his secret confidence was built upon his own works. So Deut. ix. 4, 'Say not in thine heart, this is for my righteousness.' Though we do not say it with the tongue, and plead for merit, yet there may be a saying in the heart; there is a language which God understands, in the secret dispositions of the soul. All thoughts are not *explicite*, and impressed upon the conscience; some are *implicite*, thoughts by interpretation. How shall we find this difference out?

(1.) When there is a secret blessing of ourselves in our performance of good duties, without humiliation for defects. The children of God, the more they do, the more they abhor themselves and hunger after Christ. It is a notable passage of Nehemiah, chap. xiii. 22, 'And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and that they should sanctify the sabbath-day. Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy.' It was an excellent work he had done here, to put them upon sanctifying the sabbath, yet 'spare me.' When the children of God do anything worthy and excellent, they the more hunger after grace as having sensible experience of their own defects, whenever they come into God's presence. They have more cause to be humbled than lifted up, though carried on with much activity and life in a holy service. There is much weakness, much want of zeal, and want of affection or attention; therefore they have still cause to reflect even upon their holy things. But now, when there is no actual humiliation, when men perform duties, and grow more proud and conceited, their duties prove loss to them, not gain. This is one advantage we have by holy ordinances, to grow more vile in our own eyes. Nothing makes the children of God to abhor themselves so much as their duties, because there they converse with a holy God, and that puts them upon the remembrance of their defects, and there they discern the weakness of their graces. As we feel the lameness of the arm in labour and exercise, so in those spiritual exercises they discern the feebleness of their graces. Nay, there their corruptions are irritated, and make resistance, and therefore they come to see that their natures are full of sin and their services are full of weakness. And so they cry out with David, Ps. cxliii. 2, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord!' He doth not



say with thy enemies, with unbelievers, but with 'thy servant.' Self-conceit then is a sure argument of self-dependence. When men think much of what they have done for God, and do not break out into actual humiliation, certainly it is a sign their hearts do run upon the merit of their actions. Secretly they say in their hearts, This is my righteousness, which is against the standing rule of Christ: Luke xvii. 10, 'When you have done all you can, say you are unprofitable servants.'

(2.) When men grow vain and wanton after solemn duties, as if their former strictness should bear them out: Ezek. xiii. 33, 'He that trusts to his righteousness, and commits iniquity,' &c. Usually men that trust to their righteousness indulge themselves in vanity and sin with the more licence and boldness, as if one part of obedience would recompense and make amends for the defect of another. This is grossly done by carnal men; as the Jews hoped to repair their want of mercy, by the multitude of their sacrifices, as if that would make amends for their defect in the weighty things of the law, by tithing mint and cummin. It is true the children of God may be surprised, as good Josiah was, his breach with God was after he had prepared the temple, 2 Chron. xxxv. 20, when he went out to fight against Necho, king of Egypt. Now suitably, and like to this, is when the indulgence goes before the duty; it is all one, only it is more carnal, as when men give up themselves to a greater liberty in sinning, out of pretence that their repentance shall make amends for all. As those in the primitive times that delayed their baptism, When I am baptized, I will leave off my vicious course of life; or, as men give up themselves to youthful follies upon a dream of a religious old age, and upon a pretence of a devout retirement and that hereafter they will sequester themselves from the world.

(3.) When men would have some worth in themselves before they come to God for mercy. He comes to God most worthy that comes most sensible of his unworthiness, Luke xviii. 9. Read the parable that Christ spake against those that were 'righteous in themselves:' the one would come to God with something of his own, the other would come as a beggar—'God be merciful to me a sinner;' the one appeals to justice, the other to mercy. It is contrary to the gospel, however disguised it seems; it seems to be humility, yet indeed it is but pride. When men will not look after the comforts of the gospel because they are not worthy, this is contrary to the tenor of the gospel; for wherefore is Christ a Saviour, but for sinners, 1 Tim. i. 15. It is but a humble pride when men would have some worth in themselves before they would come to God.

(4.) When men murmur if God doth not hear their prayers, and come in at their times and seasons: Isa. lviii. 3, 'Wherefore have we fasted, and thou regardest not?' When men will come and challenge God as if he were in debt to them, it is a sign their hearts secretly run upon their own righteousness. Murmuring is a fruit of merit. If God be not a debtor, why should we complain where nothing is due? Therefore the complainers speak perversely against the providence of God. It is a sign they think they have deserved better. Those that prescribe to God ascribe too much to themselves. Proud hypo-

erites think God is beholden to them, that he is bound to hear them, therefore they murmur if they have not what they expect. They entertain crosses with anger, and blessings with disdain. Mal. i. 2, when God loved them, they count slight of his mercy and say, 'Wherein hast thou loved us?' The children of God wonder why the Lord should show them any mercy at all; they wonder anything should be theirs but vengeance and punishment, since nothing is theirs but sin. 'What am I!' saith David, 2 Sam. vii. 18. Whence is it that God should be so merciful and gracious to me? Nothing can be little to them, because they know their sins are so great and their deserts so small. And if God lay affliction upon them, they are humble and quiet, knowing it is but the fruit of their doings.

(5.) When men go on in a track of duty and outward observances, and never look after the interest of their persons, this is a sign they would be accepted for their works' sake. It is God's method to accept of the person before the work. And all that are God's are driven to take hold of the covenant, driven out of themselves to run to the 'hope that God hath set before them,' as it is said of the heirs of promise, Heb. vi. 18. There was never a man that belonged to God but one time or other he was driven to run to the covenant of grace; therefore when men never breathe out those desires to be found in Christ, it is a sign their hearts do secretly build upon their own righteousness.

(6.) If the person of Christ be not exceeding precious to your souls, and always kept in the eye of your faith and in the arms of your love, you have not a due sense of your own state and actions: Cant. i. 13, 'A bundle of myrrh is my beloved.' The children of God always keep up an esteem for Christ in their hearts, and strive to keep in the fire of love to their dearest Lord. Paul groans fearfully under the relics of sin, Rom. vii. 22; but saith he, 'Blessed be God for Jesus Christ:' Your hearts will be breaking out in thanksgiving if you have a due sense of the nothingness of your own works.

[4.] For the helps and remedies to take you off from depending upon your own righteousness.

(1.) Meditate much upon the nature of God; it is such that his children are ashamed to appear in his presence. Job saith, chap. xlii. 5, 6, 'I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.' Oh! consider, you have to do with a holy God, that can endure no imperfection because of the holiness of his nature, and that will not release his law because of the severity of his justice: Ps. cxl. 3, 'In thy sight shall no flesh living be justified.' Alas! we can scarce keep up a fair show before men; a discerning man may soon look through the veil of our profession, How shall we do to appear before the holy God? We need to have a better robe than our own if we would be comely in God's sight, for our 'righteousness is but as filthy rags.'

(2.) Exterminate no sin, for that will lessen your esteem of Jesus Christ. Have true and proper thoughts of the least sin. See how God hath been displeased with the lesser sins of his people: one passionate fit of anger kept Moses out of Canaan; Adam was thrown out of Paradise for eating an apple; and the angels of heaven for a thought,

aspiring to God's greatness and majesty. Therefore extenuate no sin, and this will make Christ exceeding precious.

(3.) Consider the greatness of God's love, and the infiniteness of the reward that he hath provided for us. If we did oftener think of this we should be ashamed of our weak requital, and should run to the merit of Christ.

(4.) Remember that we have all from God. Whenever we have done anything with which the heart is apt to be tickled, remember how many considerations there are to humble you. In every holy service, if there be anything that is good in it, it is from God—'Of thine own, O Lord, have we given thee.' Shall we be proud because we have received more from God than others? A servant that trades with his master's money doth but his duty, and deserves nothing. All we do in holy things, it is upon the expense and cost of divine grace.

(5.) Consider how much evil and weakness is in every service. Certainly that cannot merit glory that needs pardon itself. Though whatever we do in holy things be by divine grace, yet all that passes through our hands receives some soil and filth from our hearts like pure water that runs through a dirty channel.

(6.) Whatever we can do for God, it is due to him, so that the payment of new debts will not quit old scores.

Secondly, I come to work you off from dependence upon your own wisdom, a matter necessarily to be regarded in this argument. Christ had foretold his sufferings, and Peter, out of carnal wisdom, dissuadeth him from the cross, and suffering himself to be so used; and upon this occasion Christ saith, 'If any man will come after me, he must deny himself,' that is, he must not, with Peter, follow his own carnal reason and understanding, as if such kind of counsel and advice were best. Thereupon, in the 25th verse, as a help to self-denial, our Lord lays down a conclusion that is quite contradictory to the judgment of carnal sense—'He that will save his life must lose it;' implying that we must have other thoughts, we are not to be guided by the judgment of our own sense and reason, but by maxims and principles of faith. Therefore we have that dissuasive, Prov. iii. 5, 'Trust in the Lord with all thy heart, and lean not to thine own understanding;' where Solomon shows that dependence upon our own understanding and wisdom is wholly inconsistent with a trust in God.

In the managing of this argument—

1. I shall state the matter, how far we are to deny our own wisdom.
2. Show how hard and difficult a matter it is to bring men off from leaning upon their own understanding.
3. The signs whereby leaning to our own wisdom is discovered.
4. Dissuasives or reasons to take us off from such a dependence.
5. The directions that are proper in this case.

[1.] How far we are to deny our own wisdom. It concerns us both in doctrinals and practicals.

1. In doctrinals. To wave such discourse as is controversial, I shall lay down two propositions.

1st. Reason must not be heard against scripture.

2d. Scripture cannot be understood or applied without the Spirit.

[1st] Reason must not be heard against scripture, or be set up as the

highest judge in matters of religion ; otherwise we shall soon shift off many of the chiefest principles and articles of faith, as the incarnation of Christ, the resurrection of the body, the mystery of the trinity, &c. Who, by his own wisdom, can see God veiled under the curtain of flesh, the root of the vine growing upon one of his own grapes ? Who can see that life must be fetched out of death ? or that one man must be healed by another's stripes ? that the morsels of worms are parcels of the resurrection ? Therefore the first work of grace is to captivate the pride of our thoughts and our prejudices against religion : 2 Cor. x. 5. ' Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every high thought to the obedience of Christ ; ' captivating every high thought, the inward reasonings of the mind, to the obedience of Jesus Christ. There is *ὕπακοη πίστεως*, an obedience of faith. Reason must be captivated to faith, though not to fancy ; and if it be revealed, we must believe it, how absurd soever and unlikely it seems to nature. At first conversion our prejudices must strike sail to religion. When our Saviour speaks of the first conversion, he saith, Mat. xviii. 3, that ' whosoever receives the kingdom of God, he must receive it as a little child.' A little child believes as he is taught ; so must we, as we are taught,—I mean by God, and not by men. You are never fit for heaven nor the understanding of heavenly things, till you have denied your own wisdom ; that which is above reason cannot be comprehended by reason. All lights must keep their place. There are three lights—sense, reason, and faith. Sense, that is the light of beasts ; reason, that is the light of men ; faith, that is the light of the church : all these must keep their place. To consult with nature in supernatural things is all one as if you should seek the judgment of reason among the beasts, and determine of human affairs by brutish instinct. If carnal men should but have liberty to let nature work, and set down a divinity of their own, what a goodly religion should we have in the world ! A very comely chimera ! For practicals, I am sure it would be large enough ; natural conscience hates fetters and restraints. And in doctrinals it would be absurd enough ; man can never take a right draught and image of God. We cannot empty the ocean with a cockle-shell ; so neither can we exhaust the divine perfections by the shallow discourse of our reason. The heathens that were most profound in the researches and inquiry of reason, they sate abroad and thought of hatching of an excellent religion ; but what was the issue ? Rom. i. 22. ' Professing themselves wise, they became fools.' All that they produced was fables, and high strains of folly mixed with popular rites and customs. There are many things that are necessary to religion, which the very angels themselves could not know if it had not been revealed to them : Eph. iii. 10, ' That to the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known, by the church, the manifold wisdom of God.' The way of salvation by Christ is such a mystery as that it could not have entered into the heart of any creature, no, not of an angel. If an angel had been to set down which way man should be saved : nay, if all the cherubim and seraphim, thrones, dominions, and powers, if they all had met together in a synod and council, it would have posed all the world and the united consultation of angels, to have found

out such a way. Therefore in those things that are revealed we must believe God upon his word; we must believe above and without reason.

[2d.] The scripture cannot be understood nor applied without the Spirit. A blind man cannot see the sun, though it shine ever so clearly; and so, till the inward light meet with the outward, we cannot apprehend God's mind—We shall be 'ever learning, and never come to the knowledge of the truth.' As the eunuch said to Philip, Acts viii. 32, Philip saith to him, 'Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me.' Whenever you go to the word of God, you must not be your own interpreter; it must be interpreted by the same Spirit by which it was indited. It is very notable, when Christ himself was the preacher (and certainly none can interpret as Christ could), he expounded the scriptures. But it is said, Luke xxiv. 45, 'Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scripture.' Christ, as an external minister, first opened the scriptures, and then, as the author of grace, he opened their understandings, without which they would have been veiled up in clouds and darkness. Mere flesh and blood are apt to stumble in God's plainest ways, and when we rest in the strength of our own reason we shall soon make a contrary and indiscreet use of truth: Hosea xiv. 9, 'Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? The ways of the Lord are right, the just shall walk in them; but the transgressor shall err therein.' The ways of the Lord become an occasion of ruin to the wicked; they shall undo themselves by their own apprehensions. Carnal reason turneth all to a carnal purpose; as the sea turneth the dews of heaven and the tribute of the rivers into salt water. But they are plain to them that are enlightened by a heavenly light. As the sun draws out a stench from carrion, and a sweet savour from flowers; or as the pillar of the cloud was 'light to the Israelites, and 'darkness to the Egyptians;' so are the ways of God 'the savour of life unto life' to them that believe; but unto the other the 'savour of death unto death,' 2 Cor. ii. 16. So Solomon saith, Prov. xvi. 29, 'As a thorn goeth up into the hand of a drunkard, so is a parable in the mouth of a fool.' The Jews were wont to sew their garments with thorns; now when he would sew, he wounds and gareth himself, because his spirits are disturbed. Natural men may have literal knowledge, but they turn it to quite another purpose; it were easy to instance in many principles: 1 Cor. vii. 29, 'The time is short,' saith the apostle, what is the use he makes? To be more strict—'Let them that have wives be as though they had none,' &c. There is his inference. Now compare it with 1 Cor. xv. 37; the epicure draws another inference—'The time is short.' What then? Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die.' The apostle presseth strictness, and he presseth jollity. The commonest truth in practical divinity is a mystery, and it must be divinely understood.

(2.) As it holds in doctrinals, so also in practicals; there we are to cease from our own understanding.

1st. We must not take counsel of human and fleshly wisdom. Folly is bound up in the heart of a man, and it is the more dangerous because it goes under the disguise of wisdom; so that we think none are wise

but those that are fleshly wise. Now the apostle saith, Rom. viii. 7, 'The wisdom of the flesh is enmity to God.' An enemy may be reconciled, but enmity cannot. A vicious man may become virtuous, but vice cannot become virtue. Do but observe what a contradiction there is between the wisdom of the flesh and the wisdom of the Spirit. This saith, The way 'to be exalted, is to abase ourselves;' the way to become first is to be last; the way to be strong is to be weak; the way to live is to die; the way to be wise is to be a fool: 1 Cor. iii. 18, 'He that would be wise must be a fool, that he may be wise;' that is, renounce his own wisdom that he may be taught of God. It is a high point of wisdom to be one of the world's fools, to take such a course as that the world counts us fools. To save life, we must lose it; so consequently of estate, and other appendages of life. That which the flesh would call saving, the Spirit calls losing; that which the flesh would call wisdom, the Spirit calls folly. So on the contrary, the flesh is quit with the Spirit. That which the Spirit calls strictness, the flesh calls folly and preciseness; that it is cowardice and disgrace to love enemies and to put up with wrongs; and to pardon injuries a servility of spirit; and that charity is prodigality. As astronomers call the glorious stars by the names of lions and bears, the dragon's tail, &c; so carnal reason miscalls the graces of God's Spirit. To renounce present delights and advantages there is not a course more foolish in the eye of natural reason: 1 Cor. ii. 14, 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.' These things are folly to him; and our heart will be apt to say, when any begin to be strict, We shall have you turn fool now. Fervent zeal seemeth peevishness and frowardness, and strictness mere scrupulosity and niceness. To be severe and strict in religion, to do or suffer, or to quit visible conveniences for invisible rewards, to renounce interests, to mortify carnal affections, all this is folly in the judgment of sense: Isa. v. 20, 21, 'Woe to them that call evil good, and good evil; that put light for darkness, and darkness for light; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.' It is a strange perverseness to confound the names and nature of things. We would count him a madman that would call night day, and day night; yet so distorted and depraved is our reason. A man that is blind cannot distinguish between night and day; he may suppose it is night when it is day, yet he cannot take darkness itself for light. Now, what is the reason of all? It is rendered in the 21st verse, 'Woe to them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight.' When men lean upon their own wisdom, they can expect to make no better judgment. Reason is not only blind, but mad; and therefore see who you make your counsellors. We shall never be good subjects to God as long as we give fleshly wisdom the hearing. Abraham, when he offered Isaac, did not acquaint Sarah, lest she should dissuade him; so in all cases of religion consult not with flesh and blood. Every sin hath a thousand shifts and fig-leaves. There is no sinner but he is like Solomon's sluggard, that is 'wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason,' Prov. xxvi. 16. I confess in a doubtful case a man is to deliberate; but in the wisdom of the flesh interest hath the casting voice, rather than conscience and religion. Therefore take heed of making your bosom your oracle,

and neglecting constant application to God for wisdom and direction in all cases, especially as to religion.

2d. We must not rest in our own private and sanctified light; how good soever it be, it must not puff us up and take off our dependence from God, though we have knowledge, wisdom, parts, and learning. It is a high contempt of God, when you make your bosom your oracle; you take his work out of his hands. Christ is the great counsellor, Isa. ix. 6. And we are to go to him for advice. It is God's prerogative, which he will not part with: Prov. iii. 6, 'Acknowledge him in all thy ways, and then he shall guide thy path.' This keeps in the fire of religion, and maintains a commerce betwixt us and heaven. All nations that have been touched with the sense of a deity have granted a necessity of consulting with a divine power. The very pagans had their sibyls and oracles that they consulted with. And certainly the people of God dare not resolve upon any design till they have first asked counsel of God. Next to depending upon our own righteousness, this is the greatest evil. God is very jealous of the creature's trust; for trust is the acknowledgment of his sovereignty, and sets the crown upon his head: Judges ix. 15, 'The bramble said unto the trees, If in truth you anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow;' where trust is made an acknowledgment of sovereignty. Therefore if we would acknowledge God, we must make him our oracle and counsellor, and that in three cases.

[1st.] In the general choice of thy life, both for opinion and practice. David had made God his portion: Ps. xvi. 6, 7, 'The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage. I will bless the Lord who hath given me counsel; my reins also instruct me in the night season;' as if he had said, Lord, if I had been left to the counsel of my own heart, I should have been as wicked a wretch as others are; I have as vile a heart, that doth as much delight in flesh and the pleasures of sin as any do. Oh, whither should I have gone? What would have been my course and way if the Lord had not given me counsel? How should I have been hardened in ways of sin and carnal pleasures! There are many who have more wisdom than I have, yet they have taken a wrong course, and are prejudiced against the ways of the Lord. Oh, blessed be God that I have received counsel in my reins: Ps. xxv. 10, 'What man is he that feareth the Lord; him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.' They that think to be religious upon their own choice and wit prove stark fools, and are justly hardened by their own prejudices. It was the corrupt doctrine of the heathens, *Quod vivamus, decorum munus est; quod bene vivamus, nostrum*. Seneca saith,—That we live, we owe to the gods; that we live well, we owe it to ourselves. So Tully, *Judicium hoc est omnium mortalium*, &c.—This is the judgment of all men, that prosperity is to be sought of God, but wisdom is to be taken from ourselves. This is to rob God, to enrich man; and that is the highest sacrilege, to rob God of his glory. God must not only give thee heaven, but he must give thee counsel. Thou mayst resolve and purpose, and yet still thou shalt be set back till God give thee direction. As a picture must be seen in its proper light, so the ways of God are never lovely till they are discerned by his own beam and light.

[2d.] In the management of the whole spiritual life, still we need

counsel and direction. Our own wisdom is an empty lamp; we shall soon stumble if we have not new counsel and direction from God. Mark the apostle's speech in 2 Thes. ii. 5, 'The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and the patient waiting for Christ.' We know not how to exercise love, nor how to fix our patience, nor how to dispense the exercise of every grace in an orderly manner, without counsel from God. When a ship is rigged, yet it needs a pilot; so when the soul is furnished with grace, still we need direction how to exercise grace, otherwise religion will degenerate into a fondness and superstition, and patience will be turned into blockishness; zeal into an indiscreet heat, and constancy into humorous stiffness. There are many nice and critical cases in religion which we shall not understand without the continual direction of the Spirit. Let me instance in those rules: Eccles. vii. 16-18, 'Be not righteous overmuch, neither make thyself overwise. Why shouldst thou destroy thyself? Be not overmuch wicked, neither be thou foolish. Why shouldst thou die before thy time? It is good that thou shouldst take hold of this; yea, also from this withdraw not thy hand; for he that feareth God shall come forth from them all.' How shall we know how to take the middle way, that we may neither hazard conscience nor endanger ourselves by a sullen and rigid obstinacy? God will direct us how to temper zeal with prudence—'He that feareth God shall come out of them all.' Through false appearances and the weakness of grace we are apt to miscarry—'Fear God,' that is, acknowledge him, and he will decide the case.

[3d.] In all your particular actions and affairs self-wit is very confident and presumptuous, and we speak as if all were in our own hands: I will carry on this business, and thus and thus order my affairs. But alas! where we seem most wise we are most infatuated. Pharaoh was never such a fool in his life as when he said, 'Let us go wisely to work,' Exod. i. 10. God loves to confute men in their vain confidences; and when they lean to their own understanding, they seldom prove successful; for then we entrench upon God's prerogative, and God will have the creature know that all their actions are in his power, and the success depends upon his blessing. This is the bridle God hath on the world, the disposal of their affairs: Prov. xx. 24, 'Man's goings are of the Lord; how can a man then understand his own way?' We cannot see the event of things in the course of our lives, what is expedient, and what not, therefore we must ask counsel of God. Man would fain work out his own happiness, and like a spider, climb up by a thread of his own weaving; but it is gone with a breath—'The hope of the hypocrite is like a spider's web.' Men that will be their own carvers, they seldom carve out a good portion to themselves. God will have us daily to acknowledge the dominion of his providence, and live in a continual dependence, that so there may be a constant respect between us and him—'Lord, teach me,' saith David, 'on thee do I wait all the day long;' Ps. xxv. 4, 'Show me thy way, O Lord; teach me thy paths.' David would not give over his dependence, no, not for a moment. Thus I have shown how far we should not lean upon our own understanding.

[2.] I shall show you how hard a matter it is to draw men off from



dependence upon their own wisdom. It is natural to us all, but especially it is incident to young christians, who are hugely given to dogmatise, because their notions, being hasty and fervorous, are accompanied with more confidence, though with less reason. They are peevish and obstinate in their sense, and none so humorously conceited of what they hold as they. It is incident also to men of great parts. Simple men that are not able to raise doubts and objections are more credulous—‘The simple believeth every word;’ but these, that have such an high claim and title to the exercise of reason, are wont to scoff at matters of faith, to lose the reverence and respects of religion, at least are not so soon won to close with the simplicity of the gospel. But I say it is naturally incident to us all, and truly, hardly cured, for several reasons. Partly, because the evil is so close and spiritual. Christians do not easily fall to open idolatry, to worship a stock and a stone, but they easily idolise their own understanding, and so their respects to God are intercepted, or but coldly rendered. We are not so sensible of the defects and weakness in the understanding as we are of distempers in the will. Distempers of the will are always *cum luctâ*, accompanied with some combat and strife, by which they are exposed to the view and notice of conscience; but the distempers of the understanding are more silent, and when we are convinced of them, they seem more pardonable, because they do not work such disturbance as other sins do; it is a secret and sly evil. And partly, because a natural wit befriends carnal desires. There is a league and a conspiracy between the soul and the spirit, between the understanding and the carnal desires: Heb. iv. 12, ‘The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit;’ it can dissolve the cursed league and conspiracy between a carnal understanding and a carnal heart. It is an easy matter to deceive him that will be deceived. We love our understanding, for there bad counsel hath more credit than the best and most sacred suggestions of the Holy Ghost. Our wit is forestalled by affection, so that we are willingly directed by the dictates of our own hearts, and it is troublesome to us so much as to suspect them. And partly through pride. Natural wit is very confident. It is no easy thing for a man to pluck the eyes out of his own head, and to give his hand to another to lead him which way he pleaseth. Man is loath to have the leading part of his soul to be debased. By our understandings we are distinguished from the beasts, and therefore we cannot endure to cease from resting in our own understanding and parts. That man is extremely proud of his understanding, appears by two sensible experiences or observations.

(1.) We rather would be accounted wicked than weak; sooner own a wickedness in morals than a weakness in intellectuals. In wickedness there seems to be somewhat of bravery and choice; we all affect the repute of wisdom: Job xi. 12, ‘Vain man would be accounted wise, though he be born as the wild ass’s colt.’ Though man be foolish and gross of conceit, yet he would fain be accounted wise: Gen. iii. 5, ‘Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.’ Ever since the fall we catch at knowledge. The pharisees were mighty angry with our Saviour when he charged them with blindness: John ix. 40, ‘Are we

blind also?' Will you say we are ignorant that are the great rabbis, and doctors of the people?

(2.) Another observation is, that errors are more touchy than vices. Men do with greater patience bear with declamations against sin than convictions of error, which may arise partly from this, because erroneous persons usually take up their errors out of interest, and men cannot endure the voice of a hated truth. But chiefly, and the most universal reason, is our natural pride; men are conceited of the sufficiency of their understanding, and so become impatient when they are convinced of their mistake.

[3.] The signs whereby leaning to our own understanding is discovered.

(1.) When men are puffed up with a conceit of their knowledge, it is a sign they lean upon it. Why? For esteem and admiration is an inseparable evidence of trust. Therefore the scriptures that do dissuade us from leaning upon our own understanding, dissuade us also from being wise in our own eyes, or conceit: Rom. xii. 6, 'Be not wise in thy own conceit;' and Prov. iii. 7, 'Be not wise in thy own eyes; fear the Lord, and depart from evil.' These two always go together, self-conceit and self-dependence: 1 Cor. viii. 2, 'Knowledge puffeth up;' and, 'If any man thinks he knows anything, he knows nothing as he ought to know.' Our ignorance is never cured till we come to heaven, and it is a good progress in grace to be sensible of it. When men think they are above ordinances, they know as much as men can teach them; for substance, they know nothing. It is a sign they have never waded into the depth of the scripture. Menedemus was wont to say of them that went to Athens to study the first year, he thought they were wise men; the second year, philosophers; the third year, orators that could talk of wisdom; the next year that they were plebeians, that they understood nothing but their own ignorance. Usually thus it is in growth in scriptural knowledge. Young christians are very opinionated, but when they look into the breadth of the commandment, then they see their own ignorance—that 'they know nothing.' This is the reason why the children of God have such a low opinion of their understandings. A man would wonder at their expressions: Prov. xxx. 2, 3, 'Surely I am more brutish than any man, I have not the understanding of a man; I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy.' The more he saw, the more he was acquainted with his ignorance; so that he durst not attribute any wisdom to himself. None are so sensible of their ignorance as those that abound in knowledge. Look, as when the sun appears, the light of the candle seemeth nothing; so when God comes and enlightens their mind, oh, what a brutish creature was I! But now, self-admiring argues great confidence.

(2.) When men dare undertake anything without asking counsel from God: Prov. iii. 6, 'In all thy ways acknowledge him.' We are not to lessen our dependence, no, not for a moment. Whenever you go forth in the strength of human counsel and reason, you do, as it were, say, In this business I can do well enough without God. It is a great contempt to put upon God when in the things of the family, church, or commonwealth we do not seek him earnestly. Not only in

doubtful and difficult cases, which are wholly above our strength and wit to decide, but in all your ways God must be sought and acknowledged. The prophet Jeremiah speaks as one that was sensible of his dependence : Jer. x. 23, ' Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself ; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.' There should be such an actual sense and feeling upon the soul. So David said, Ps. xxv. 4, ' Show me thy ways, O Lord ; on thee do I wait all the day.' A christian dares not to go into the study, shop, nor into the assembly or council, without God. Mr Greenham, when one came to ask his advice in a business, he answered, Friend, you and I have not prayed yet.

(3.) If thou wert never moved to bless God for making Christ to be wisdom. You know what the apostle saith, 1 Cor. i. 30, ' He is made to us of God wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.' I observe, many bless God because Christ was made redemption and sanctification, for natural conscience is sensible of the sad consequences of sin ; but usually we lean upon our own understanding, we do not bless him for being made wisdom to us : John xiv. 6, ' I am the way, the truth, and the life.' Many may bless him for life, for the hopes of glory ; but hast thou blessed him, because he hath been a prophet to teach thee ? This is always the first work of grace, to convince us of our brutishness and folly—as Paul, when he was converted, was made blind—that we may prize Christ the more, that we may say to Christ, as Moses to Hobab, his father-in-law, Num. x. 31, ' Leave us not, I pray thee, that thou mayst be to us instead of eyes ;' that thou mayst run to Christ for eye-salve : Rev. iii. 17, 18, ' Because thou sayest I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear, and anoint thy eyes with eye-salve,' &c. When men are never convinced of their natural blindness, they do not prize Christ in all his offices ; it is no small matter that he is a prophet to guide thee ; the truth, as well as the way and the life.

(4.) When men cite God before the tribunal of their own reason, this is a sign that the word and counsel of God was never exalted in their judgments. In matters of faith, worship, and obedience, we are to fetch our light from the scripture. And we would set up an higher tribunal, and fetch all from our reason, and give laws to heaven. Usually men will dispute against the righteousness of God's decrees, the simplicity of his ordinances, the mysteries of faith : Rom. ix. 20, ' Who art thou, O man, that disputest against God ?' When men are apt to pick quarrels with religion, to cavil and snarl at God's ways, to dispute away duties rather than practise them, it is an ill sign. All the ways of God seem unjust and incredible to the carnal reason of men ; they cannot believe how Christ should be God and man in one person ; how it should be just that by one man's transgression all should be made sinners, and why God should elect some, and leave others in their corruption. Ah, foolish man ! who art thou, that disputest against God ? They cannot believe the same body shall rise again ; suppose

it be thrown into the sea, and eaten up by fishes, and those fishes devoured by men, and those men torn with wild beasts, they cannot see how it is possible God should restore to every body his own substance : Mat. xxii. 17, 'Ye err, not knowing the scriptures, and the power of God : ' the power of God sheweth that it may be so ; the scripture that it is so. There is the rule and ground of truth. So men will dispute against the simplicity of the ordinances : 2 Kings v. 11, 12, 'Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel ? ' They cannot see but reading at home may be as effectual as the public ministry. So they cannot see why men should pray, since God's decrees are past, and his decrees are unalterable ; if he will, he may give mercy and salvation without their prayers ; and if he will not, he cannot be won to it by their importunity. Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God ?

(5.) When men despise the advice and help of other christians. The Lord will have us to profit by one another. He withdraws himself many times to this end and purpose, that we may be endeared one to another, as well as engaged to himself. Certainly the head cannot say, I have no need of the foot. As God would establish a dependence between himself and us, so he would establish a dependence between christians among themselves ; therefore grace doth not only come from God, but we receive it in part through the means of the body : Col. ii. 19, 'And not holding the head, from which all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.' The admonitions of the weakest christian, they may be of great use to enkindle zeal, if not to better our knowledge ; as a wisp of straw may enkindle a great block. Now when a man thinks his own wit sufficient, and that he need not be taught of any, it is an evil sign : Prov. xxvi. 12, 'Seest thou a man wise in his own eyes, there is more hope of a fool than of him.' A fool will rather be counselled than one given to self-conceit. You cannot put wine, or any other liquor, into a blown bladder till the wind be voided, and the bladder rid of it, so here such puffed bladders are in a sad condition, can receive nothing, they can make no progress in grace.

[4.] In the next place I must join dissuasives and directions together. If you would cease from your own understanding—

(1.) Be sensible of the utter impotency of nature : 1 Cor. ii. 14, 'The natural man understands not the things that are of God.' He is not only actually ignorant, but unable to conceive ; not only through negligence, but weakness ; not only will not, but cannot ; there is a prejudice and positive enmity in the heart. The mind of man is not white paper, but it is prepossessed with carnal principles, atheism, unbelief, profaneness, libertinism. As the stomach that is ill-affected with choler casts up all the food it receiveth as soon as it is swallowed, so we reject all holy doctrine. Though we may like generalities, yet when we are pressed to practice, carnal reason will discover itself. We are apt to think ourselves angels, but we are but beasts : Eccles. iii. 18, 'I said in my heart, concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts.' Nay, after regeneration we have great cause still to suspect ourselves. There are two voices, flesh and spirit. And our wisdom that we have,

is often enthralled, and made a prisoner to sinful passions and affections. Therefore when we go about any business, especially when we come to the word, we should never do it without lifting up our souls to God for the spirit of wisdom and revelation : Eph. i. 17, 18, 'That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him ; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that we may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.'

(2.) Consider the mischief of self-conceit, or dependence upon our own wisdom. Most men in the world are ruined by it ; of Babylon is said, 'Thy understanding hath undone thee.' Who would choose him for a pilot that drowns every vessel that he governeth ? it is as inconsistent with salvation, as trusting in wealth. It is true, the object is more excellent, but therefore the temptation is the more dangerous. Now, 'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God,' Mat. xix. 24. Consider, what a great folly it is ; *Bis desipit, qui sibi sapit*—He that is wise in his own eyes is twice a fool ; a fool by having but a little knowledge, and by his great conceit of it. And then it is the ground of all the creature's miscarriages. Apostasy from religion, whence comes it ? From idolising self-wit, John vi. 65. Christ had spoken something which they understood not, of eating his flesh—'From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him,' because they could not fathom it by the line and plummet of their reason. It is the usual rise of heresy ; then a man is ripe to breed monstrous opinions in the church. When men will have the mysteries of faith demonstrated by the law of reason, like a sick man who will not swallow his pills, but chew them ; when he tastes the bitterness, he presently bringeth them up, and so loseth a wholesome remedy. Then it is the ground of all corruption in life, the lust of covetousness, it is rooted upon self-conceit, Prov. xxiii. 4. When Solomon dissuadeth from covetousness, 'Labour not to be rich,' then presently, 'Cease from thy own wisdom.' See how these two precepts are coupled, as if the Spirit of God should say, if you hearken to carnal wisdom, that will tell you of honour, great pleasure, and of flourishing in your family ; that you shall want nothing ; but be not wise in your own eyes, that will be a means to keep you from labouring to be rich, from prostituting your precious time, care, and strength, only to advance secular interests.

Thirdly, I come now to speak of dependence upon our spiritual strength, and grace received : Gal. ii. 20, 'I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me,' where there is an abnegation of all his own strength with respect to the spiritual life. The work of the inferior agent is denied, that the supreme may have all the glory : not I, but Jesus Christ.

1. I shall show you the consequence and weight of this part of self-denial.

2. How far forth our spiritual strength is to be denied.

3. What are the signs whereby dependence upon our own strength may be discovered and found out.

[1.] For the consequence and weight of this : I shall show you in

several considerations, that certainly this is a necessary part of self-denial.

(1.) Because dependence maintains the commerce between God and man; it is the ground of the creature's respect to God. A proud creature is loath to be beholden, to come out of itself, and to fetch all from another. We had rather keep the stock ourselves. When the prodigal had his portion in his own hands, away he goes from his father. We would be strangers to the throne of grace were it not that there were a continual dependence upon God for the supply of grace. Those two great duties of prayer and praise are built upon dependence. So that in effect the whole spiritual life is but a profession of our dependence upon God.

1st. To instance in prayer. If we did not depend upon God for daily receiving, the Lord would seldom hear from us. Most of the prayers in the apostle's writings are for a supply of grace: 2 Thes. i. 11, 'Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power;' and Eph. iii. 14-17, 'I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with all might, by his Spirit in the inner man,' &c. This was the reason, why Paul prayed for others, and why the saints pray for themselves, that they may have new strength from God in the inward man. So Heb. xiii. 20, 'Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight.' This is the great cause of Christ's intercession, to maintain the life which we have received. God would oblige us to continual visits and intercourse with himself by keeping grace in his own hands.

2d. For the duty of praise. Self loves to divide the glory with free grace; and truly, if we be not sensible of our dependence upon God, we shall never think of setting the crown upon grace's head. The saints that are kept humble, are also kept thankful; they see they can do nothing themselves, and therefore they come and give God the glory: Luke xix. 16, 'Thy pound' saith the faithful servant, 'hath gained ten pounds;' as if he had said, It was not my industry, but thy pound. This makes the children of God to come with ingenious acknowledgments—'Not I,' said Paul, 'but Christ that liveth in me.' Alas! I do little in the spiritual life, it is Christ that doth all. I live, there is some concurrence; but mine is nothing to what Christ doth. So 1 Cor. xv. 10, 'I laboured more than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.' They take off the crown from the head of self, and lay it at the feet of Christ. As Joab sent for David when he had conquered Rabbah, to take the honour of the victory; so when they have done anything through grace, they send for God to take the honour. They know whence their supplies come, and that makes them thankful.

(2.) It is a very great sin to rest in ourselves; it crosseth the very end of the covenant, and robs Christ of his free grace. In all God's dispensations to the creature, his aim is to magnify his own grace; and the great end of our being christians is to be to the 'praise of his

glorious grace,' Eph. i. 12. When we come to heaven, it is a great question which we shall most admire, grace or glory. Certainly when our affections are wrought up to the pitch of the glorified estate, we shall value glory for grace's sake; for this is God's great end, that grace may have the glory. Therefore it is a necessary part of a christian's work, to keep his heart still sensible of his dependence upon grace; therefore self-sufficiency after grace received is a great sin. The more we rest in self, the more we rob grace. Carnal men, they are hardly sensible of foul and gross sins; but a christian is sensible of spiritual evils, and of these chiefly. When we humble ourselves for want of life and quickening, there may be something of hypocrisy in that; because quickening serves the pride of parts, and we would all discover gifts with applause. Now it is a sign of grace to be humbled for depending upon our own strength and endeavours, because we would not rob Christ of his chiefest honour and glory.

(3.) It is a sin not only foul in its nature, but severely punished by God. The saints have never so foully miscarried as by their self-confidence. Who would have thought that Lot who was pure and chaste in Sodom, should have committed incest in the mountain, when there was none but he and his own daughters? Though he avoided the filthiness of Sodom, where there was a multitude to draw him to evil, yet he fell foully when there was none but his own family. In the dreadful falls of God's children we may see that nature is but a sorry undertaker. No man knows how far his heart will carry him till it comes to the trial. Who would have thought that Peter's high resolution would end in curses and blasphemy, and denying of Christ? The man of God, that spake against the altar of Bethel, could deny the king's request, but could not deny the old prophet to turn back and eat; 1 Kings xiii. 8. compared with the 19th ver.; when grace had left him, then he falls. The prophet saith of Ephraim, that 'he was a cake not turned,' baked but of one side; for a great while we may stand fast; but when once we grow secure, we may sadly miscarry. Hezekiah knew how to be sick, but not how to be well. The Spirit of God will not flatter us in our vain confidences; when we proudly trust in ourselves, the Lord, to punish pride, will deny his assisting grace, and so we soon feel the disappointment of a trust misplaced. When God framed us and renewed us by grace, he doth still reserve a dominion over particular acts of grace. Grace is but a creature; if we rest in it, we may make grace an idol; it is not an independent thing, but dependeth in, *esse, conservari et operari*. There is a constant concurrence necessary to strengthen the habit as well as to produce the act, without which habits are dead and useless.

[2.] How far spiritual strength is to be denied. The question is needful, lest while we seek to establish devotion we lay a ground for laziness; therefore I shall show it in four propositions—

(1.) That there is somewhat in a christian which we may call spiritual strength;

(2.) That this strength is to be maintained and supported; and

(3.) To be drawn out in constant exercise; yet

(4.) Not to be rested in, for several reasons.

1st. There is somewhat in a christian which we may call spiritual strength. The familists say, That grace is Christ himself working in

us, and that there are no habits of grace; that it is not we that repent and believe, but Christ. But certainly this is false and foolish; there is something poured out upon a christian: Zech. xii. 10, 'I will pour out upon them a spirit of grace and supplication;' and there is something that remains in them, called the 'seed of God,' 1 John iii. 9, which cannot be Christ or the Spirit, because it is called the new creature and the inward man, that is created after God. And a good treasure, that a christian hath of his own, a good stock God hath bestowed upon him: Mat. xii. 53, 'A good man out of his good treasure,' &c. There is a stock of grace conveyed into the soul which may be increased; therefore we are said, 2 Peter iii. 18, 'To grow in grace.' All which things are not compatible to the Spirit; nay plainly, the fruits of the Spirit, which are the created habits of grace, are distinguished from the Spirit himself: Gal. v. 22, 'Now the fruits of the Spirit are these, love, faith, gentleness,' &c; so 2 Tim. i. 5, 'The unfeigned faith that is in thee.' In regeneration there is introduced into the soul a stock of knowledge, a whole frame of grace, faith, and patience, and love, and hope, and these abide upon the heart. They are not transient operations of the Holy Ghost, nor the Holy Ghost himself, but such habits as abide still in the heart. Besides, if in acts of grace there were nothing but an operation of the Holy Ghost, and a man were a mere patient, then all our defects, and the faintness of our operation, were to be charged on the Spirit; as a ship is an innocent piece of timber, therefore the splitting thereof is not charged upon the ship, but the pilot.

2d. This strength is with diligence to be maintained and supported; we are to be very careful that we do not waste our stock, and prove bankrupts with grace received. When we embezzle our habitual treasure, God is exceeding angry, and then he withdraws his actual influence. By gross sins we maim and distemper the new nature, and it is a long time ere it can be set right again. It cost David much labour and travail of soul to get a right spirit within him: Ps. li, 'Lord create in me a clean heart;' it was a creating work. It must be constantly maintained, for we may easily embezzle and weaken it in a great measure.

3d. It must be stirred up and improved to holy actions—'A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good things.' God hath given us a treasure to trade withal. Grace teacheth no man to be lazy. The doctrine of dependence on Christ doth not take us off from endeavours, but from resting in them. But you will say, What can we do with habitual grace, if there be not some predetermining influence? I answer—

[1st.] Some small power there is to an act, otherwise what difference were there between a regenerate and an unregenerate man, if a renewed man were totally disabled? The days of our unregeneracy are thus described, Rom. v., 'Then were we without strength;' but certainly, when we are taken to grace, there is some kind of power; God's image is repaired in such persons; they have renewed faculties, Eph. iv. 23. God hath given us gifts and abilities to work which are not altogether in vain; motion and operation followeth: Col. ii. 6, 'As you have received Christ, so walk in him.' Something you may do by virtue of the new nature. Thou mayst call upon thy soul, and awaken it; it is thy work to quicken habitual grace, and to do what thou canst to



bring it forth: 2 Tim. i. 6, 'Stir up the gift of God, which is in thee.' It is an allusion to the priest that kept in the fire of the altar; so we are to stir up ourselves as much as we can. Isa. lxiv. 7, The Lord complains, 'There is none that stirs up himself.' As we are men, we have understanding and memory, and can revive truth upon the conscience in an outward and literal way; but as we are renewed men, so we have a sanctified understanding and memory, and that is more, and a greater advantage; so we may call upon the soul and stir it up, and grieve for deadness.

[2d.] I answer, all the moral actions of the regenerate are commanded by God: though the principle of motion be but natural, yet we are under a command to be doing; want of predetermining grace will be no excuse. God may do what he will as to matter of assistance, but I must do what I am commanded in matter of duty. God is at liberty to act, but we are not; we are bound, but the Spirit is free. Therefore, putting forth the exercise of grace, being a moral thing, and that which falls under a command, we are obliged to it.

[3d.] It is God's way to meet with his creatures in the midst of their endeavours: Rom. viii. 26, 'The Spirit helpeth our infirmities.' Helpeth together—the word importeth such help as when another steppeth it, to sustain the burden that lieth too heavy upon us. When we wrestle and strive in a way of duty, God will come in with his assistance.—We know not the counsel of God; he may join with us, but we refuse his help and put it away if we act not. Up and be doing, and the Lord will be with thee. Within there must be a habit of grace; without, there is an assisting grace. We must be doing, and leave alone God with his own gracious work.

[4th.] This strength, though it must be improved and stirred up to action, yet it must not be rested in. When God frames the new creature, he doth not leave us as a clock to go of ourselves. God hath reserved the dominion over particular acts of grace to himself, that so he may keep the creature in a constant dependence. Not only the seed, but the tree; and not only the tree, but the fruit, dependeth upon grace. We are not only the planting of the Lord, grow in his courts, but our fruit is found in him: Hosea xiv. 8, 'In me is thy fruit found.' Grace is not only seen in renewing the faculty and strengthening the habit, but also in quickening it to bring forth fruit. Because this is the matter in hand, I shall lay down several reasons and considerations to enforce it.

[1st.] Because though we are renewed, yet it is but in part. The maim of nature is not fully recovered till we come to heaven; we still halt of the old fall; our nature is not altered of a sudden, but still tasteth of the old leaven; there is a constant weakness while we are in the world. Many would flatter nature, and say of it as Christ said of the damsel, she is 'not dead, but sleepeth,' as if original corruption were not a deadly maim, but only a swoon and languishment. After grace is put into the heart, we still find that our graces are weak and feeble. The children of God complain, Gal. v. 17, 'The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.' We cannot act with such freedom and courage as we would in the holy life. So Paul, personating a regenerate man, saith, Rom. vii. 18, 'To will is

present, but how to perform that which is good, I find not.' The new nature may purpose and will, but we cannot perform a good work without a new concurrence.

[2d.] Because the habit of grace is but a creature, it is not an independent thing, like the Spirit of God himself. If we rest in it, we may make grace an idol. There is need of the concurrence of grace, to strengthen the habit and produce the act, without which the habits will be but dead and useless. This is that the apostle intimates when he saith in the 2 Thes. i. 11, 'We pray always that God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power.' Grace is a creature, therefore depending, as all other creatures, upon God, and cannot stir or move without God. The apostle saith, Acts xvii. 18, 'That in him we live, and move, and have our being;' we are moved and acted by him. If God should but suspend his influence, the creature cannot move, nor stir a joint or arm. If God should but 'let loose his hand,' as it is expressed, Job vi. 9, all creatures would fall into nothing. There is a providential assistance that is necessary to all created agents; as the fire could not burn the three children, though the property was not destroyed, but because God's influence was suspended; all things would fall into nothing if he should let loose his hand. I produce these things for demonstration; for in the exercise of every grace God doth not only work by a general concurrence, as a universal cause, but by special aid and assistance. Every act is from God, as the author of nature, and graciousness of the act is also from God, as the author of grace. There is a great deal of difference between the natural elevation of the faculty and the gracious exercise of it. As the apostle saith, 2 Cor. iii. 5, 'Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God.' As the apostle saith, 2 Cor. iii. 5, 'Of ourselves we are not able to think a good thought.' We are so far from a good work that we cannot so much as think without an influence of providence. Nor can we think graciously without the influence of grace. Therefore to the resistance of any sin, or to the performance of any holy duty, there must be some concurrence from God. We cannot rest in any creature or created thing, but still look up to him as the independent cause that sends forth his influence. Nay, this holds in the very angels; grace is always necessary every moment to the angels, to prevent possible sins, and to stir up actual rejoicing in God; they had need of a continual influence from their creator, so have we.

[3d.] Because of the several indispositions of the saints. We are always weak, but sometimes we lie more wind-bound and suspended than at other times, and are not able to move and stir. The children of God find a great many corruptions, a loathness and shyness of God's presence, especially after long guilt, and there needs a 'day of power to make them willing,' Ps. cx. 3. So also they find deadness; when they have given content to the flesh, their hearts are apt to grow flat and dead, and they lose the savouriness of their spirits; therefore David begs for quickening: Ps. cxix. 37, 'Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken thou me in thy way.' And sometimes they are in straits, they are bound up and suspended. The mind is like the eye, which is a very tender part, soon offended and out of temper. Men, you know, are very seldom indisposed for bodily labour; but now

the affairs of the christian life, being wholly spiritual, there will be much unfitness and distemper as to them; the soul will soon be indisposed.

[4th.] A fourth reason is the sovereignty of God, who keepeth grace in his own hand, and gives it out at pleasure, that he may make the creature beholden to him. God delights to have men and angels to be his debtors, and therefore he exerciseth all his dispensations to them with a liberty and freedom—‘He giveth the will and the deed, according to his good pleasure,’ Phil. ii. 3. He gives the power and the faculty, and the act; he suspends and enlargeth the acts of the understandings and affections of men according to his own pleasure. We cannot be masters of any one good act without grace. He will be master of his mercies, that he may keep the power in his own hands, that we might wait upon him by a humble and actual trust.

[5th.] The necessity of a continued influence from Christ. Grace is in his keeping: 2 Tim. ii. 1. ‘Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.’ That grace which makes us to work strongly in duty, and with good effect, it is in Christ not in ourselves: John xv. 5, ‘Without me you can do nothing;’ separated from Christ, we can act nothing. Members divided from their head, they cannot live; so out of our mystical head we cannot live and act. There is not one individual act of grace but Christ is interested in it, as the soul is in the motion of every member. There must not only be a constant union, but a continual animation and influence: Phil. iv. 13, ‘I can do all things, through Christ that strengtheneth me,’ not only hath strengthened, but strengtheneth by a constant influence. You saw Adam was an ill keeper of his best jewels; and because Christ is a good steward, he knows the value of spiritual privileges; therefore all is put in his keeping; it is put into safe hands, that we may be sure to find it when we have need. But you will say, If we can do nothing without Christ, what difference is there then between the state of nature and the state of grace? I answer, By grace we have new faculties, which have some small power, though we can be confident of little success. Before conversion we were wholly passive, there was no co-operation; but now we have renewed faculties, there is a sub-operation; we act as instruments, in the virtue of the principal agent; we have a will to close with the things of God, and an understanding to judge aright of them as moved by God; how we may carry out the work of God, and act as instruments in his hand, by virtue of the principal and supreme cause.

[6th.] Another consideration to press you to a continual dependence upon God in the exercise of your spiritual strength, is the sad experience of God’s children whenever they have been left to themselves. I need not instance in the angels, which did ‘excel in strength;’ yet when left, they fell. I need not speak of Adam in innocency, how he fell when God left him, when he left him, I say, to the freedom of his own will. But let us speak of holy men of God that are under the same dispensation we are, the most holy and sanctified men of God: 2 Chron. xxxii. 31, it is said of Hezekiah that ‘the Lord left him, that so he might know what was in his heart.’ God will show us what we are in ourselves; if he should but suspend grace and spiritual influences but for a moment, what poor chaff are we before the blast of every tempta-

tion! As when a glass is shaken then the dregs appear, so it is with us. I now come to give you the signs.

[3.] The signs of depending on our spiritual strength.

(1.) If you would know whether you do so, observe the frame of the heart both before and after duty. (1.) Before duty, and every address to God; whenever we come to worship, we should have actual thoughts of our own weakness. When we come to pray, Lord, we know not how to pray, how to act faith, and how to draw forth grace; we should still be 'poor in spirit,' that is a grace of constant use. But now, when men are full of parts and gifts, and think 'to go forth and shake themselves as at other times,' as it is said of Samson when his strength was gone; when we think to find the same savouriness and smartness of expression, God will make us see how much we are mistaken. Therefore when we have not actual thoughts of our own weakness when we come to perform any holy exercise, it is a sign we are too full of our own gifts and abilities. (2.) After the duty, art thou moved to bless God for the supplies of his grace, especially if gifts have been discovered with applause? Art thou able to say with David, 'Lord, of thine own have I given thee?' canst thou cast the crown at the feet of Christ? canst thou take all thy excellency, and lay it down at Christ's feet? If it be not thus with us, it is a sign we depend too much on our own strength.

(2.) Another note is a confident presumption of the success of future actions and undertakings, without taking God along with us in our resolution. Thus Peter, he was a sad instance of leaning upon himself: Mat. xxvi. 74, 'Though all men should deny thee, yet I will not deny thee.' The confidence of the children of God is built upon the expectation of grace; and if God will undertake for them, then they can be confident of the success of their endeavours: Ps. cxix. 32, 'I will run the way of thy commandments when thou shalt enlarge my heart.' Look to the ground, whether it be built upon thy own resolution, or the expectation of his grace.

(3.) When man dare venture upon occasions of sinning and temptations, certainly this is a great confidence, and it cannot proceed from divine grace, for God when he keeps us, he will keep us in his ways, not when we tempt his providence. Therefore when men can delight in carnal company, and put themselves upon such a snare, it is a sign they depend not upon God. For what is the fruit of depending upon God? avoiding all occasions of evil. Therefore when men dally with temptation, it is a sign they place confidence in their own strength.

(4.) Despising of ordinances. These are the pipes by which God conveys his influences to us, and by which the habits of grace are strengthened, by the power that goes out in them. There must be dependence upon God in the use of means if we would maintain grace: Luke xviii. 8, 'Take heed what you hear, for to him that hath shall be given.' Attend upon ordinances. Why? for otherwise you will lose the flush of gifts which puff you up. Many despise hearing when they have got a little knowledge.

(5.) It is a sign of dependence upon ourselves when we contemptuously insult over others that are weaker than ourselves; for if we did acknowledge all to be from grace, how could we be proud? Who

would dare to be proud of that which is but borrowed? Who could be proud because he is most in debt? If we have more gifts than they, we are more obliged to God, and this keeps the hearts of God's people humbled: 1 Cor. iv. 7, 'For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou, that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?' Thy merit is no more than theirs, and in thyself thou art as incapable of spiritual blessings as they are, and in holy duties thou canst do no more than they can; for what dost thou add to duty? Nothing but what will lessen the value of it; they can add corruptions and weakness of their own, so canst thou. The pharisee, you know, that condemned the publican, he speaks of grace in pretence—'God be thanked, I am not as other men,' &c.; but because 'he despised others,' Christ spake that parable. When men are proud and confident of their own abilities, and despise others, there is a depending upon themselves; they have much cause of thankfulness, but none of pride.

Fourthly, I come to speak of the fourth head—viz., Dependence upon the supplies of the outward life. And—

1. To show that there is such a sin.

2. How evil and heinous it is, that it is capable of the highest aggravations.

3. What are the notes and evidences by which this secret vein of guilt may be traced and found out in the soul.

4. The proper cure and remedy.

[1.] That there is such a sin appears by the testimony of scripture, and by experience.

(1.) By the testimony of scripture, which is the best judge of the heart: Mark x. 23, 24, 'And Jesus looked round about him, and said to his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!' Now because this seemed harsh unto the disciples, who were leavened with the conceit of a pompous Messiah, therefore, ver. 24, it is said, 'The disciples were astonished at his words. And Jesus answered and said, How hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!' Christ allays the wonder, it is not simply impossible for a rich person, a man that possesseth wealth, to be saved, poor Lazarus sleeps in the bosom of rich Abraham; there may be godly rich as well as godly poor; but it is impossible for them that 'trust in riches.' Our Lord shows how irreconcilable it is with the hope of salvation, as impossible as for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. That place sheweth that there is such a sin, a sin that we may easily commit when we have anything in the world. And because men think light of spiritual sins, that do not end in a gross and foul act, he sheweth how irreconcilable it is with all hopes of salvation when it reigneth. So Job, when he doth protest his own innocency: Job xxxi. 24, 'If I have made my gold my hope, or said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence. If I have rejoiced because my wealth is great, and because my hand hath gotten much.' Job, to vindicate himself from hypocrisy, reckoneth up the usual sins of hypocrites, and among the rest this is one, 'To make gold our hope, and fine gold our confidence. He had before named extortion and oppression, and now carnal confidence. It is not enough that our

wealth be not gotten by fraud, cozenage, and extortion ; but we must not trust in it, nor make it our confidence, Luke xii. 15-21. The rich man is not charged, that he had gotten his goods wickedly, but that he had trusted in them—‘Soul, eat, drink, and be merry, thou hast goods laid up for many years.’ Men think them to be the staff of their lives, and the stay of their posterity ; therefore it is said, ‘The rich man’s wealth is his tower,’ as elsewhere it is said, ‘The name of the Lord is a strong tower ; the righteous run to it and are safe.’ A godly man thinks himself never safe till he be gotten within the verge of the covenant, till he be within the munition of the rocks that God hath provided for the safety of his soul. But the rich man, till he be walled and entrenched within his wealth, he never thinks he is safe and secured against all the changes and chances of this present life ; and so God is laid aside, ‘not the name of the Lord,’ but his wealth is his ‘strong tower.’ Therefore is covetousness called idolatry, and a covetous person an idolater, Eph. v. 5. It is not so much because of his love to money, as because of his trust in money. The glutton loveth his gullet, and the gratifications of his appetite ; he makes his ‘belly his god,’ but he doth not trust in his belly-cheer, thinks not to be protected by it, as the covetous person doth by his estate, and so becometh an idolater, making the ‘creature his god.’ The covetous man is an idolater, because he robs God of the chiefest respect the creature can show to him, which is confidence and trust ; he thinks he is the better and safer, because of the abundance of his goods.

(2.) By experience, I shall prove first it is incident to all men, and that they are ensnared who are least sensible of it.

1st. It is incident to all men. Every man is naturally an idolater, and he makes the creature his god ; few or none are free from this idolatry ; we all stick to the creature too much. The rich, the poor, all sorts of men, may be comprised under this censure. The poor cannot be exempted, for those that have not wealth idolise it too much in fancy and conceit, they imagine what a happy thing it is to be in such a case—oh, had they wealth, this were enough to make them happy ! and because they have not, therefore they trust in those that have it, which is idolatry upon idolatry ; therefore it is said, Ps. lxii. 9, ‘Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie ;’ therefore a lie, because they disappoint those that trust in them, to the wrong of God. To appearance, men of low degree can do little or nothing, but men of high degree are a lie. It supposeth a promise, and a breach of promise. Men of high degree tempt us to trust in them, and then they will surely prove a lie. The miscarriages of the poor are by a servile dependence on such as have not power to hurt or help them, if God will not ; they are apt to say, I shall lose such a friend, hazard his frowns and displeasure, all their hopes are built upon his favour, so they come to displease God. But chiefly this sin is incident to the rich : Ps. lxii. 10, ‘If riches increase, set not your heart upon them.’ Usually, as our estate grows, so doth our confidence, the distemper is bred up in us by degrees. Great men, their minds are secretly and unawares enchanted with their estates, and delight in the fruition of them, and from thenceforward we begin to date our happiness, and so grow secure, and neglectful of God and holy things. Many that are in

want despise wealth, and live in actual dependence upon the providence of God ; but as soon as they begin to have somewhat of the creature, their hearts begin to value their estates, as if they could live alone, and without God, and then they are altogether intent about increasing their store, or keeping and retaining that which they have gotten. As Antigonus's soldier, who had a grievous disease upon him, yet fought valorously, but when cured, became as timorous as others, because then he began to prize his body ; so when we are poor our hearts may be taken from the creature, but when riches increase, we begin to think that our 'mountain stands strong ;' and that now we are secure against all the strokes and changes of providence.

2d. It is a secret sin that is found in those that are least sensible of it. We are blinded with foolish and gross conceits, and are apt to think that a man doth not make money his idol if he doth not pray and offer sacrifice to it, and adore his gold with outward ceremonies, as the heathens did their idols of gold and silver ; whereas the sin is to be determined, *non exhibitione ceremoniarum, sed oblatione concupiscentiarum*, saith Gregory—not by formal rites of worship, but by the working of the heart towards it. Many carnal christians are idolaters in affection ; though not by external rites of worship, yet in the inward workings of their heart. We smile at the vanity of the heathens that worshipped stocks and stones, and onions and garlic, and yet we do worse, though more spiritually ; we worship the creature, and set it up instead of God. Though we do not actually say to gold, 'Thou art my confidence,' or use such gross language to riches as, You shall deliver me, or, I will put my trust in you ; yet our hearts do secretly say so when we make it our main care to get or gain wealth. Therefore it is not enough that you break not out into such actual thoughts. Remember, there are implicit as well as explicit thoughts ; this is the interpretation of our actions when we do not make God our portion, but trust in the abundance of our wealth ; our hearts say so, 'Thou art our confidence, and we do not perceive it. Many declaim against the vanity of outward things, and yet their hearts secretly trust in them. There is a difference between speaking as an orator and acting as a christian. Many may make it their common theme and common place ; they grant the creature is vain, and wealth but an unstable possession, because they are in judgment convinced of the vanity of them. Men will say, We know well enough money is but refined earth, and we esteem as basely of it as others do ; but their hearts work towards it, and they are loath to part with it. Their 'inward thought is that their houses shall endure for ever,' Ps. xlix. 12. This is not the fruit of habituated meditation, or mature deliberation, still money hath thy heart and trust, and thou thinkest thou canst not be happy without it. He that gives God good words is not said to trust in him ; so he that gives the world bad words, that can speak contemptuously of the creature, yet he may trust in the creature all the while.

[2.] I will endeavour to show you the evil of the sin, and how great it is.

(1.) Job saith, chap. xxxi. 24, it is a denying of God, to make gold his confidence. You take away God's honour, and wholly lay him aside. Do not flatter yourselves, a man cannot trust in God and riches too :

Jonah ii. 8, 'And they that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.' You renounce God by trusting in wealth. The same altar will never serve God and Dagon; the Philistines could not bring it to pass, do what they could; nor will the same heart serve for God and the world. Now consider what dishonour this is to leave God for the creature; it is as if a woman should leave her husband, and dote upon her slave, or as if a fool should throw away his treasure, and fill his chest with coals; or take away his precious garments, and fill his wardrobe with dung.

(2.) And then it is idolatry, the setting up of another God. We first commit adultery, by diverting our love and esteem from the true God, and then we commit idolatry, by fixing our hope and expectation in the creature. Trust is only due to God. Now by trusting in worldly self you dethrone God, and put money in his place; therefore it is said, Col. iii. 5, 'covetousness which is idolatry;' and there is a parallel expression: Eph. v. 5, 'Nor covetous man, who is an idolater.' Mammon is the idol, and the worldling the priest. The inward worship is esteem and trust, and the outward care and endeavour is to wallow in wealth. All their care is about their present accommodations, whereas a man's main care should be for heaven and grace, and for other things he should refer himself to God's allowance.

(3.) This must needs be a very great sin, for it is the ground of all miscarriage in practice. When men think they cannot be happy without money, they dare not obey God, for fear of offending mammon; they shall lose their wealth, which is their happiness: 1 John v. 3-5, 'For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus Christ is the son of God? It is notable, when the Spirit of God speaks of 'keeping the commandments,' he presently speaks of 'victory over the world.' What is the connexion and contexture between these two sentences? The world, that is the great hindrance of keeping the commandment; it hinders the soul from looking after heavenly things. It is impossible a man should fix his heart on things above, unless he be weaned from trust in the world. All our esteem of riches comes from the trust in them. If men were truly persuaded that all things were vain, they would make out after other satisfactions; but men think there is no want in their condition, therefore they neglect heaven.

(4.) It is the ground of all disquiet and discontent of mind. If a man would live a happy life, let him but seek a fit object for his trust, and he would be safe; we lose the equal poise of our spirits, because we bind up our life and happiness with the life and presence of the creature. David saith, Ps. xxx. 6, 7, 'I said in my prosperity, I shall never be moved, my mountain standeth strong. Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.' When once we begin to think of a strong mountain, and set up our hopes and heart here, it doth but make way for a great deal of trouble. A man shall never want trouble that misplaceth his trust; he will always be up and down as the creature is. Whereas a christian whose heart is fixed in God is like the nave and centre of a wheel, it is still in its own



place and posture, though the wheel move up and down ; such christians keep their spirits in an equal balance in all providences. A child of God whose heart is fixed on God, though there be a great change made in his condition, he is where he was still ; but a wicked man, his hope and comfort ebbs and flows with his estate ; when his estate is gone, his confidence is gone. It is a sad thing to have our hopes fixed upon that which is subject to so many casualties, the waves, the wind, the fire, the wrath of man, the undermining of thieves, the unfaithfulness of a debtor. Certainly we shall never have peace till our confidence be rightly placed. Ps. cxii. 7, it is said of a godly man, 'He shall not be afraid of evil tidings.' Why ? Because 'his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.' Though there come messenger upon messenger, as to Job, one bringing him news of a bad debt, another of a loss at sea, another of an accident by fire, a tempest, an earthquake, or it may be of the violence of thieves, or robbers, he is not 'afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed,' trusting in God. As Job, he was equally poised and equally balanced in spirit, his joy doth not ebb and flow with the news that is brought to him. But now see the contrary in wicked men : Jer. xlix. 23, they have heard evil tidings, therefore their heart fainteth. The enemy was broken into the country, all their estate that lay upon the borders was lost, for of that the prophet speaks ; this causeth faintness and trembling at the heart. It is a sad thing to put your joy and your contentment under the creature's power. Now till your trust be rightly placed, so it will be.

[3.] The third thing is, to give you the signs by which this confidence may be discovered. I will give you but three plain evidences : by your care to get wealth ; by your thoughtfulness in the possession of it ; and by your grief for the losing of it.

(1.) By your carking care in getting an estate ; when men cumber themselves with much business, and have confidence in the means, with neglect of God, it is a sign we think we cannot live without an estate. A man that is always getting crutches sheweth that he cannot go alone. There is a lawful labour. Wealth may be sought for the necessities of life, and for the exercise of good works ; but when men make it their main aim to get an estate, it is a sign they place their happiness in it ; they make it their chiefest good, and utmost end. Now because it is hard to distinguish honest labour from worldly care, you must examine it by the disproportion of your endeavours in spiritual and heavenly things. Our Saviour concludeth his parable against trusting in riches : Luke xii. 21, 'So is he that heapeth up treasures to himself, and is not rich towards God.' Men make most provision for the world, and a little slender care serves for heaven. They have no care to provide suitably for their souls ; all their endeavours are to leave their posterity an estate, but they are not so careful to see grace in their hearts. That which they desire is to see them well matched, well provided for, but are not troubled about their carnal or unregenerate estate. They can be contented with slight assurance in the matter of heaven, but all things seem too little to settle their estate upon earth. A little degree of sanctification serves the turn, but in the world they would still have more and more, join house to house, and field to field, not faith to faith, and virtue to virtue. They have a lean soul, and a fat estate ; they suffer the

lean kine to devour the fat—when they suffer worldly cares to eat up all their vigour and strength, which they should reserve for communion with God. Bernard saith, *Felix domus ubi Martha queritur de Maria*—Oh that is a blessed family where Martha can complain of Mary! Luke x. 40. She complains Mary was too much in spiritual things. But alas! it is usually quite contrary: Mary may complain of Martha—all our care and endeavours are spent in the world, and we content ourselves with some drowsy devotion towards God. When there is such a disproportion, this is a sign men had rather enjoy wealth than God. Heavenly things should have the first place, and our principal strength: Mat. vi. 37, 'Seek first the kingdom of God;' but you are all for the fatness of an outward portion, neglect heavenly things, and are for that which would perpetuate your names on earth.

(2.) When in possessing wealth you look upon it as the surety and pledge of your happiness and felicity, you then place the chief stay and trust of your souls in the things of this life. When a man hath gotten an estate, then he grows proud, and drunk with temporal happiness, as if he were above fate, and all the changes to which the creatures are obnoxious; this is a sign men dote upon their wealth, and make a god of it. Vain admiration always ends in vain expectation. We think we are above the control of providence, we have enough for us and ours: Luke xii. 19, 'Soul, take thy ease, thou hast goods laid up for many years.' When God gives us an estate, we think we have enough to make ourselves and children happy. Oh, it is good to keep the heart sensible of the changes of providence every moment; and when we glitter most in the splendour of an outward estate, let us remember man at his best estate is but vanity. Many times we cannot roast that which we have got in hunting; God may blast all in an instant. But especially if this security put you upon injurious practices, when a man dares venture upon a sin in a confidence that his greatness and wealth shall bear him out. When men wax insolent to God, and proud and injurious to men, and all upon confidence of their present greatness, as if they were sufficiently secured and fenced against all changes whatsoever—when they grow fat and wanton against God and men, as Deut. xxxii. 15, this is that the Spirit of God speaks against, Ps. lxvii. 10, 'Trust not in oppression, be not vain in robbery;' when men care not what wrong they do to their inferiors because they are sure and safe, as if God could not bring them down, surely and certainly, and suddenly and wonderfully, by strange and unexpected means.

(3.) When we are loath to let them go upon just and convenient reasons. As suppose, if they be taken away by providence, men's hearts are so depressed as if all their happiness were gone. Job was otherwise; he had messenger upon messenger of evil tidings, yet blessed God. It was Gregory's observation, *Sine dolore amisit, quia sine amore possidet*; Job lost his estate without grief, because he possessed it without love and trust. His heart was not fixed upon his estate, therefore he parts with it most easily. Carnal men are troubled when their riches take wing, because they are their god. Their hearts are depressed beneath the heart of man, because their happiness is gone; as Micah said, 'Ye ask me what aileth me, when ye have taken away my gods.' Or else they are loath to let them go voluntarily, upon any good occasion. A carnal man, he holds his life by them, he cannot be

happy without them ; therefore he dares not dispose of them for holy uses, or for his own relief.

[4.] To give you the remedies and cures of this distemper.

(1.) God only can do it thoroughly, and to purpose. We read, Mark x. 23, that 'Jesus looked round about, and said unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God !' and ver. 24, 'The disciples were astonished at his words.' But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, 'Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.' Then it is said, ver. 25, 'And they were astonished out of measure, and said, Who then can be saved? And Jesus said, With God all things are possible.' It is impossible to enter and trust ; it is as impossible almost to have it and not to trust in it. This blessing then is to be sought of God with greater care and diligence ; you should put up more frequent prayers for this grace than you do for wealth and life. To have a competent measure, and not to trust in it, it is a greater blessing than the greatest abundance in the world. Therefore let this be one of your constant prayers, 'Lord, let not my heart be set upon these things.'

(2.) Man must use endeavours, for we confute our prayers by idleness ; for when a man doth not use the means, he shows his designs are not hearty. Now the means to attain this are these following—

1st. Frequent practices of charity : we should be as careful to employ wealth to charitable uses, as worldlings are to gather wealth : Luke xii. 33, 'Sell that you have, and give alms. Provide for yourselves bags that wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, and moth corrupteth not.' There is no remedy nor cure, but only in laying them out, and then they will be ours for ever. This is a real profession, you look upon all these things as vanity, and only useful as you have a further opportunity of service of doing good. There is no means to prevent the danger of trust and confidence, but a constant exercise of good works ; these are the true riches. The way of destroying idols was by crumbling them to pieces. It is better to be a steward than a treasurer ; to have them in our hands, that we may give them to others, than to have them in our hearts, that we may adore them ourselves ; therefore while thou possessest them, it is not thou that art rich, but thy chest ; but when thou distributest them, and art rich in good works, these are the riches that can never be lost.

2d. Make but suppositions, and see how thou canst bear the loss of all things when but represented in conceit and imagination—If God should blast my estate, if such a friend should prove unfaithful, such a debtor defraud me. The church, Hab. iii. 17, 18, doth make a supposition—'Though the fig-tree should not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine, and the labour of the olive should fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls, yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.' Suppose that God should send a dear year, and there should be scarcity in all things, what then ? Can I comfort myself in these things ? The fool in the Gospel durst not sup-

pose what might fall out that night ; it would discompose all his mirth to have thought of a sudden stroke that night, Luke xii. 19, 20. He dreams of many years. This would keep your souls in an equal poise, either to keep or forego an estate. Men do not acquaint their souls with suppositions of loss and danger, and so grow secure.

3*d*. Meditate upon the vanity of the creature. Talk hardeneth and deludeth men, but meditation leaveth deep effects. There is a moral efficacy in constant and serious thoughts ; the world puts fair titles on them ; and calls them goods, treasure, and substance ; but God calls it shadows, lies, running after shadows. How different are the notions of the word from those of the world ; the word looks upon it as a vain shadow : Ps. xxxix. 6, 'Surely every man walketh in a vain show, surely they are disquieted in vain ;' the word shows they are not only vanity, but lies : Ps. lxii. 9, 'Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie.' The creatures lie by our own thought, they abuse us by our trust, and they will surely prove a lie. A man should not rest in any creature, unless he hath a mind to be deceived ; now no man would be deceived. Nay, the scripture speaks of them as if they were nothing : Prov. xxiii. 5, 'Wilt thou cast thine eyes upon that which is not ?' In comparison of better things, they are rather said not to be than to be. And consider, riches take to themselves wings ; the thief, the sea, the displeasure of the magistrate, the violence of the soldier, and our own unadvised words many times are wings to riches, that make them fly away from us ; but the more 'enduring substance' is in heaven, Heb. x. 34.

4*th*. Improve experiences to this end and purpose ; it is a lesson God hath taught us now in these times. Men were never more greedy of the world, and God never more showed us the vanity thereof ; the greatest men have proved a lie to their dependents ; how many have experience of these things ! They, and their fathers and grandfathers, have laid out all their wit, labour, and toil to get a great estate, and are deprived of it all in a moment, and now it is bestowed upon others. Thou hast known many great ones who are now no more thought of ; either they are dead and gone, and others enjoy their places ; or if alive, their flower is gone, they live like a neglected stalk. How often hath God stained all worldly glory, and the world will do so still ; it will forget thee, as it hath forgotten many others. How many in these times have had heirs that they never thought of, those that have been strangers to their blood and family ! Job xxvii. 17, 'Though he heap up silver as the dust, and prepare raiment as the clay ; he may prepare it, but the just shall put it on, and the innocent shall divide the silver.' They may provide and heap up a great estate, and think now they and their families are ennobled for ever ; but riches take wing, and God bestows them upon others that we never dreamed of.

5*th*. Lay up several gracious maxims and principles in the soul.

1. None ever trusted in the world, but they had cause to complain. Mammon's drudges have hard work, and worse hire and wages ; as Jacob after he served seven years, and when he expected beautiful Rachel, he receives Leah. Riches will surely disappoint the trust you put in them ; they promise contentment, but that promise is but a lie ; they do but distract the head and heart with cares. They promise peace, plenty, and security, which they can never bring to you. They

are called 'deceitful riches.' A man should not trust in any creature, unless he had a mind to be deceived. At death especially we shall see how the world hath beguiled us: Job xxvii. 8, 'What is the hope of the hypocrite, when God shall take away his soul?' a sorry gain and purchase. When our service is ended, we see what kind of wages mammon giveth us in the day of wrath: Zeph. i. 18, 'Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath.' Justice will not be bribed with money, we cannot buy a pardon. Consider, if a man had taken a long voyage to the Indies, and had brought many commodities with him, and not one fit for the traffic of that place; just so it is here, we are bound for a city where gold and silver will make no traffic, thou canst not buy one hour for repentance. Consider how justly the saints and blessed angels may laugh at thee when thy foolish trust is disappointed—Lo, this is the man that trusted in his riches, and would not make the Lord his portion. (2.) The more wealth, the more danger. In a net, when great fishes are taken, the lesser escape; so it is in public calamities, they that are the poorest, many times have the best portion. A tree that hath largeness and thickness, being loaden with boughs, provoketh others to lop it, or else it falleth by its own weight. Nebuchadnezzar, when he had forced Jerusalem, he carries away the princes and noble captains, but the poor were left in the land. Therefore never believe the world, it promiseth life, continuance, advancement of families, but no man can assure himself to hold his wealth one night; remember, you have to do with a cheater. (3.) Thy estate, it is not thy life. Thy life and happiness is not bound up with thy estate; Luke xii. 15, it lies not in abundance, but in the providence of God. (4.) Remember, God is the author of all the wealth we enjoy. This will draw off the heart from the creature, that it may with more entire trust fix and fasten upon God himself. In want and distresses we see the creature is vain, but few will own this in abundance: Prov. x. 22, 'It is the blessing of the Lord that maketh rich.' By what means soever thou hast thy estate; if it comes to thee by inheritance, yet it is God that gave it to thee; it is of God's grace, that a man was born of such rich friends, not of beggars. If thy estate comes by gift, remember, the hearts of men are in God's hands, and it is he that can make them able and willing. If thy estate comes by industry and skill, and diligence in thy calling, bless God that gives thee thy skill and success; many have not the skill, and many have not the success that have as great skill as thyself.

I now come to speak to that branch of denying, self-will. As God is the supreme lord and law-giver, so we are to deny our self-will. Now our submission to God is double, to his laws, and to his providence; we submit to his laws by holiness or obedience; we submit to his providence by patience.

*First*, We submit to his laws by obedience. Our will is to give place to the will of God: Col. iv. 12, 'That you may be perfect and complete in all the will of God.' This was the prayer of Epaphras, and this should be the aim of every christian, to bring his will to a perfect conformity to the will of God.

1. I shall show the difficulty of this part of self-denial.

2. Give some motives to enforce it.

3. Give some rules, which may serve both for direction and trial.

*First*, For the difficulty of this part of self-denial; that will appear if we do but consider—

1. That man's will is the proudest enemy that Christ hath on this side hell, it resisteth Christ in all his offices. In his kingly office and reign: Luke xix. 14, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.' God hath set up Christ as king, and the world votes it in the negative—'We will not have this man.' The great contest between us and God is, whose will shall stand, God's or ours. The soul cannot endure to hear of another king and another sovereign, because it affects a supremacy, and it cannot endure that any should lord it over us: Ps. xii. 4, 'Our tongues are our own; who is lord over us?' Man would have the command of his own actions. A proud creature cannot endure to hear of fetters and restraints. The rebellion of the world against Christ was 'to cast away his bands and cords,' Ps. ii.; so Jer. ii. 31, 'We are lords, we will not come at thee.' They would be absolute, and without God. This is so rooted in our nature that Satan, when he sets heretics at work, he puts them upon holding out this bait of worldly liberty and freedom from the reign and sovereignty of God: 2 Peter ii. 18, 'They promise liberty, but are themselves servants of corruption.' The great rage and tumult of the world is to break the bands and cords, and to loosen us from our obedience to God. The proud will of man cannot endure to hear of an higher lord; this hindereth his reign in the heart, and slighteth the offers of his grace: John v. 40, 'You will not come to me, that you might have life.' Christ comes with riches of grace, and desires entertainment, and we neglect him, and are taken with the basest creatures. If a king should come to a subject's house and desire entertainment, and he should neglect him, and talk with base fellows, this were a mighty affront put upon him. Yet this is our disposition towards Christ; he comes to dispense comforts and graces, and we will not entertain him, but are taken up with the creature. All that Christ hath done is, to us, lost for want of our consent. All things are ready prepared, decreed in heaven, only the guests are not ready, they will not come, will not consent, and ratify the decrees of heaven. In short, this is the cause of all sin, and of all the disorder of the creature: James i. 14, 'Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lusts, and enticed.' Man taketh himself to be lord over his own actions, and enacts contrary laws to God, in the court of his own heart, and is so wedded to his own affections, that he accounts his lusts himself, and can as well endure to have his sin reproved as a member of his body to be cut off.

2. The difficulty of it will appear again if we consider, the will is far more corrupted than any other faculty of the soul. The understanding is much blinded, but the will is more depraved and averse from God. The mind of a carnal man hath a little light, which is apt to suggest some good motion. As Job's messenger said, 'I alone am escaped to tell thee;' so may conscience say, 'I alone am escaped out of the ruins of the fall to suggest some good motion to thee.' But now the will doth more abhor and refuse good than the understanding is ignorant of it; there is some light in the understanding, but there is

nothing but sin in the will. Many a man is often convinced, his understanding is gained before he is converted; they see better things, see what is good, before they choose them. The last fort Christ gains in the heart is the will of man.

3. Consider, the will is not subdued by all the methods and external arts of grace which God useth to gain the soul. The Lord makes a challenge in Isa. v. 3, 4, 'Judge between me and my people, what could be done more for my vineyard than I have done?' What could God do more than to provide a Christ, a gospel, a gracious covenant? and yet all this doth not gain with man. There we have the highest motives to allure us, the strongest arguments to persuade us, the greatest terrors to affright us, yet the soul will not yield. Oh, what sweet motives have we to come in to God: the offer of Christ; the promise of heaven and glory! God outbids all the world. What will you have more? You have my Son to die for you, my grace to help you, heaven to reward you. God hath contrived a sweet plot of grace, but the will of man slights all. The devil, he cannot bid so fair for your heart, yet men give up their souls to him. He cannot promise you everlasting glory. Can Satan give you such recompenses as God? The world cannot assure you of everlasting happiness. You may die, or these things may fly away from you. The devil was never buffeted for you; he endured no agonies, shed no blood for you; he seeks to undo you all he can, therefore 'Come to me,' says Christ. But the sum of all is in Mat. xxiii. 37, 'I would, but you would not.' When God comes with external offers, with fit accommodation of means, with all necessary circumstances and methods of grace, yet the sinner turns back. Christ renews messengers, yet the proud will of man saith, 'I will not;' Ps. lviii. 5. 'They will not hearken to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely.' All the charms of grace will not prevail, they stop their ears; Christ's blood may stand as cheap as common blood for all this, if God did not come in with an act of power. Nay, further, if he should threaten and inflict judgment, yet all will not work to soften the heart and subdue the will of man, without an almighty efficacy and influence. The greatest terrors are of no force. Judgment may break the back, but not the heart. Pharaoh was crossed again and again, God multiplies plague upon plague, yet his will stood out—'I will not let the people go.' When God knocks upon us by the hammer of judgment, yet it will not break the flint and the rock and adamant that is in our will. The bad thief had one foot in hell, yet he blasphemes still. Not only the standers-by, but one of the thieves derideth Christ on the cross.

4. When the will is in part renewed and cured, yet still it is apt to recoil and return back again to its old bondage. How often do the children of God complain of weariness, deadness, and straits, continual reluctance of the flesh: Gal. v. 17, 'The flesh lusteth against the spirit, so that you cannot do what you would.' A child of God cannot do what he would; when his will begins to be set towards heaven, it is very much broken and distracted: Rom. vii. 18, 'To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find not.' When we are gone out of Sodom, we are apt to look back again. And this will be our condition till we come to heaven: the flesh will rise up in arms

against every holy motion, and our fetters hang upon us, till we come into Christ's arms. We are not only at first conversion like a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke ; but afterward still we find there is an unruly will, not fixed with obedience to the will of God.

Secondly, To give you motives and arguments to enforce this kind of self-denial.

1. The soul is never renewed till the will be tamed and subdued to God. The soul can never be said to be regenerated till the will be renewed. The new creature begins in the mind, but is never perfected till it come to the heart, till we 'put off the old man with his lusts,' Eph. iv. 22, 23. Till our natural inclinations be altered—till grace be placed in the centre of the heart, corruptions will recoil. When the bird's wings are broken, then it can fly no longer ; so when once the will is broken, then the sinner is subdued, and taken captive by grace. The mind is only the counsellor, the will is the monarch ; till this be done, you cannot look upon yourselves as new creatures.

2. Because no creature can be *sui juris* at his own dispose, and to live according to its own pleasure. If any might plead exemption, then certainly Christ, as man, might, because of the glorious fellowship that was between the human and divine nature. But see, when Christ took human nature, he was bound to submit his human will to the Godhead ; when he took our nature, he took our obligation upon himself, and therefore he saith, Heb. x. 9, 'Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.' When Christ came into the world, this was his work, to do his Father's will. He brought himself into the condition of a creature, and then, having taken our nature, he was to take our obligation upon himself, which Christ performed. Christ and his Father had but one will between them both : John v. 30, 'I seek not my own will, but the will of my Father that sent me ;' there was a perfect resignation. Christ did so obey as if he had no private human will of his own, but only the will of his Father. Christ did not look to his own ends, to the safety and conveniency of his human nature, but to what was his Father's will. And wilt thou stand upon terms with God ? And dost thou think thou art too great to submit and stoop to God ? Nay, consider the holy angels, that have many privileges above man, yet they have no exemption from duty and homage ; they have many privileges, freedom from troubles, sicknesses, diseases, and from all the infirmities and clogs of the flesh, but they are not freed from obedience—'They obey his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word,' Ps. ciii. 23.—The Psalmist speaks of the angels there, they still owe homage to their creator. Those courtiers of heaven are servants of God, and followers with us in the same obedience. Now Christ in his prayer, Mat. vi., hath referred us to the example of his angels—'Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.' You upon earth are not held to a harder law than they are in heaven ; they obey his will, and so must you. Certainly, no men are too good nor too great to obey God. If the example of the angels be too high, then look to all the creatures, they obey God, and sometimes contrary to their natural tendency and motion, as the sun stood still ; and it is said in the Gospel, Mat. viii. that 'the winds and seas obeyed him.' Man only is eccentric and exorbitant in his motions ; they glorify God in their way. The sun shall rise up in



judgment against many a carnal wretch. God hath set to them a decree, beyond which they shall not pass; and they obey the laws of their creation, but we are disobedient, and break through all restraints.

3. Consider the right God hath to us, as we are his creatures, and as we are new creatures; as we are bare creatures, we hold our being and all that we have continually from God. Now you know, the more a man holds of a lord, the more homage he is bound to perform. Thou holdest thy life and all thy comforts by his allowance; the more thou hast, the more is due, though usually it be quite contrary: the more we have from God, the more we slight him. *Qui majores terras possident, minores census solvunt*—Many times, they that hold the greatest lands pay the least rent; so the more we hold from God, the less careful we are to give in returns of obedience to him: Jer. v. 5, 'I went to the great men, but they have altogether broken the yoke.' Those that have more means of instruction, that have higher breeding, have greater obligations upon them; but these usually are the worst. A horse that is kept low is easily ruled by his rider; but when he grows lusty and fat, he lifts up the heel against him, and will not suffer the bit; so when men grow great and prosperous, when God hath fenced them with prosperity, then they wax wanton and disobedient. And as we are new creatures: 1 Peter iv. 2, 'That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh, to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.' The great aim of grace is to cure the disorders of the will, and to bring us into a stricter bond of service to the Lord; therefore usually at conversion this is made explicit by our own solemn vow. A good heart is contracted to Christ, as an evil heart is to the world: Cant. ii. 16, 'My beloved is mine.' All that is thine is God's; you have no will of your own, you have given up yourselves to another; take heed of retracting the vows of your solemn covenant and fealty that you have sworn to God.

4. There is a great deal of reason our wills should be given up to the will of God, because we are not able to manage them ourselves. By the laws and customs of all nations fools and madmen are to be ruled by their kindred, not to be left to their own wills, but to the will of another; now naturally we are mad fools, as Titus iii. 3, 'Foolish and disobedient,' and have not the guidance of our own will; therefore it is not fit that it should be left in our power, but given up to God. If we be our own pilots, we shall soon shipwreck ourselves. When God requires the resignation of our will, it is but the taking a sword out of a madman's hands. A man's own will, it is the cause of all the mischief that comes to him, and, at last, of his ruin. *Tolle voluntatem, tolle infernum*, saith Bernard—There would be no hell were it not for the perverseness of a man's will. It is Chrysostom's position, *Nemo læditur, nisi à seipso*—Man could never be hurt were it not for himself and his own will; others may trouble us, but cannot hurt us; the devil may tempt us, but not hurt us till we consent; the world may frown upon us, but it cannot harm us; so the apostle intimates, 1 Peter iii. 13, 'Who can harm you if you be followers of that which is good?' It is presently added in the next verse, 'But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye, and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled.' Men may trouble and molest you, but cannot

harm you without your own consent. Now since none can harm us but our own will, and since we are unfit guides, it is fit we should have a guardian, and who is wiser than God? The merchant, though he hath stored the ship with goods, yet because he hath no skill in the art of navigation, therefore suffers the pilot to steer it; so though the will be ours, let us give it to God, to manage it according to his good pleasure.

5. It is a very great condescension and blessing that God will take the charge of our will. The strictest rules of religion are to be reckoned among our privileges. It is the greatest judgment that God can lay upon any creature to give him up to his own will, and to the sway of his own heart; the Lord threatens it when other means are ineffectual: Ps. lxxxii. 12, he saith, 'So I gave them up to their own counsel, and to their own heart's lust;' that is a dreadful punishment. So Rom. i. 24, it is said, 'The Lord gave them up to uncleanness;' and ver. 26, 'Their own vile affections.' It is worse to be given up to a man's own heart than to be given up to Satan; for a man that is so given up may be recovered again: 1 Cor. v. 5, 'Deliver such a one to Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord;' this may be for his exercise and trial; but when once a man is given up to himself, to the sway of his own heart, there cannot be a greater judgment. When the sentence of obduration is passed upon us, it is as much as to say, Give him up to hell and utter judgment, as an irrecoverable sinner.

6. It will be great pleasure to us in the issue when once we can get the victory over our own will. There is none have more joy and greater happiness than the angels and spirits of just men made perfect, and yet none have less of their own wills. The angels and blessed spirits perfectly accomplish the will of God, therefore are completely happy. Why should we account that a sad work which is a part of our happiness in heaven? The saints and angels complain not of any burden; yet they have no *velle* and *nolle* of their own, they will and nill as God doth. We think it is a happy thing to have our carnal desires accomplished, and wonder how any can be contented without them; they fancy such great felicity in their way; therefore the world wondereth at the children of God: 1 Peter i. 4, 'They think it strange that you do not run with them into the same excess of riot.' It is pleasant to a woman with child to have what she longs for, but it is much more pleasant to be without the trouble of such longings; so the world thinks it pleasant to have their carnal desires satisfied, but it is a great deal more pleasant to have those desires mortified. Drink is very pleasant to a man in a fever; but who would put himself into a fever to taste the pleasure of drink? Certainly, if a man would be completely happy, he must renounce his own carnal desires. If you would but trust Christ upon his word, you would find it is not so burdensome and grievous as you imagine; you would find 'his yoke to be an easy yoke,' Mat. xi. 28, not only as you have help from God, but the very delight and contentment we enjoy would make it easy. Certainly it will be far better to give up our wills to God, than to the devil. How hard is his yoke, and how small are his wages? A little pleasure here, and eternal pains hereafter.

Thirdly, In the next place, I shall give you some rules which will serve both for direction and trial; it is very needful, for men are apt to flatter themselves with a pretence of obedience; they cry, Lord, Lord! but do not do his commandments. Many will give good words, and because they do not break out into such an actual contest with God, as those rebellious and obstinate wretches, Jer. xviii. 12, 'And they said, There is no hope, but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart;' or as those, Jer. xlv. 16, 17, 'As for the word thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee, but will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth,' &c.,—if they do not break out into such an obstinate and gross contest with God, they think they are safe; but you know, Mat. xxi. 28, Christ spake a parable for the discovering of such a hypocritical profession of the two sons; the one said, 'I go sir, and went not;' the other, 'I will not; but afterward he repented and went.' Our Saviour puts the question, 'Whether of the twain did the will of his father?' He that said, I will, but did not, was the worst, because the understanding is somewhat better than the will; therefore men will give God good words. This rebellion is disguised with a promise and pretence of obedience; therefore I shall give some rules which you must observe in denying your own will, and by which you may try your estate.

1. If you will obey God there must be some solemn time when you make this resignation to him. Naturally we are averse, and therefore whosoever is brought in to God, he comes humbly, and like a pardoned rebel, and lays down the weapons of defiance. God, as creator, hath a right to your wills, to your obedience; but he will have his right confirmed by your grant and consent: Rom. xii. 1, 'I beseech you, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.' There can be no more acceptable sacrifice to God than the entire resignation of our wills to him. So Acts ix. 6, Paul comes and lays down the buckler, and gives God the key of his own heart—'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' Grace had so melted him that he that had done nothing before but breathe out threatening, now comes humbly, crying out, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' This is that our Saviour intends in that expression, Mat. xi. 28, 'Take my yoke upon you.' Jesus Christ will force it upon none, he requires the consent of your own will. In matrimonial contract consent is not to be forced; so Christ doth not force his spouse against her own consent, but she is to make an actual resignation of her own self to God. You must desire God to come and take possession of your hearts.

2. When you give up yourselves to God, it must be without bounds and reservations: Col. iv. 12, 'I pray that you may be perfect and complete in the whole will of God;' you must not pick and choose, but take all the will of God as your rule to walk by. So Acts xiii. 22, 'My servant David, he shall fulfil all my will.' Whatever God will signify to be his pleasure, that will David fulfil. We should so perfectly obey as if we had no will of our own, not reserving a propriety in the least motion or faculty of ours. The least sin, when it is allowed, is a pledge of the devil's interest and right to us. If a man

hath bid a thousand pounds for an excellent jewel, will he stand for a penny more? And as we thus entirely resign ourselves at first, so afterwards we must make good our vows; we must remember every action of ours, it is given up to God; every motion, every glance, it is under a rule; and in every lesser action we should say, will God have this to be done or no, and in this manner? and if not, let us not do it for a thousand worlds. Especially in praying—Do I pray as the Lord would have me? Is it with such reverence, with such submission, such affection? I gave up myself to do his whole will, to do the duty, and in that manner which God requires. So in eating and drinking, in all actions you should do all in obedience, in that manner, and to that end that God requires. Every glance of the eye is under a rule: Mat. v. 28, 'Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.' We must use our sight in obedience to God, and so also our hearing.

3. There are some special things which God hath willed, and our master hath given us a special charge about; those things must be done, how distasteful soever to flesh and blood, or prejudicial to our interests. There are three things that have his stamp and seal upon them—'This is God's will.' So it is said of holiness and sanctification: 1 Thes. iv. 3, 'This is the will of God, even your sanctification;' so of duties of relation, obedience to magistrates, parents and masters: 1 Peter ii. 15, 'Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man, . . . for so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.' So of the duty of thanksgiving—'In everything give thanks to God, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you;' concerning these things we have the express pleasure of God. Now it is great rebellion and disobedience not to obey God's solemn charges. Holiness, it is irksome to nature, and we are apt to forget thankfulness, and we are sensibly tried in duties of relations. God hath expressed his will concerning all these.

4. In all these things we must not only do what God wills, but we must do it, because he wills it; this is pure obedience. The bare signification of God's will and pleasure, it should be reason and motive strong enough. You read, Lev. xix, where God enacteth sundry laws; this is the reason for obedience—'I am the Lord.' The Lord wills, that is enough to engage the obedience of the creature. So in these places before mentioned, wherein holiness and thanksgiving, and duties of relation are enjoined, this is the reason alleged—'for this is the will of God.' The angels have no other motive: Ps. ciii. 22, 'They do his will, hearkening to the voice of his word.' This is that which is motive enough to the angels, God hath signified his will; and we should captivate all our thoughts, and not allow of disputes—'Have not I commanded thee?' saith God to Joshua. So we should plead with ourselves: when we are slack and sluggish to any duty, say, Hath not the Lord commanded thee? What needeth any farther argument?

5. We must not only do what we know, but we must search that we may know more. This is a great sign of an obedient heart, when we are willing to inquire what duty further God requires: Rom. xii. 2, 'That ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.' A man that hath given up himself to God must make

it his constant practice ; we shall be accountable for ignorance as well as neglect. Many times there may be somewhat of will in ignorance. When men have no mind to practise, certainly they have no heart to know and search : Eph. v. 17, 'Be not unwise, but understanding what is the will of God.' Men are loath to sift out truth to the bottom, lest it should prove to their disadvantage ; when they do not understand, or have a confused notion that what God commands is contrary to their lusts, they will not know it distinctly ; these do not err in their minds so much as in their hearts. Some err in their mind, out of simple ignorance ; others in their heart, they have no mind to know ; in such their negligence there is deceit. Therefore search and find out what is the acceptable will of God, that you may have a clearer light and ground for practice. The angels are always hearkening for a new command, Ps. ciii. 22, so should we be hearkening still. As the beasts, in the Revelation, that stood before the throne : Rev. iv. 6, 'They had eyes on either side,' that they might see what God would have them to do ; so we should be always searching that we may be perfectly instructed in the will of God.

6. Our obedience is chiefly to be tried by keeping ourselves from our sin, *i. e.*, that sin, which our corrupt will had wedded and espoused. So David : Ps. xviii. 23, 'I was upright before thee, and I kept myself from mine iniquity.' Herein is our subjection to the will of God chiefly tried, in keeping ourselves from our own sin, which is most vehement and passionate ; thy worldliness, thy sensuality, thy pride, according as the corruption runs out, for we are apt to deceive ourselves in generals. God hath left some particular lust for trial ; we are to 'deny all ungodliness,' but chiefly this bosom sin. If men were acquainted with their own hearts they would find there is some sin for which conscience smiteth most ; a sin, to which temptations are most frequent, of most usual residence and recourse, that is proper to their constitution and course of life. Certainly he is not acquainted with his own heart that doth not know this sin ; and he is not acquainted with the work of grace that doth not resist and mortify it. Therefore, though it be never so dear and pleasant, yet herein God will try thy obedience, Mat. v. 29, 30. Our Saviour expresseth it 'by cutting off the right hand, and plucking out the right eye.' Though it be as dear and precious to us as a member of the body, as useful as a right hand, or as pleasant as a right eye, yet it must be plucked out ; as men to preserve life will cut off a gangrened joint, though it be a right hand ; so must our bosom lust be mortified.

7. Because there cannot be an exact conformity to the will of God, our obedience will be discovered by the general bent and course of our lives. A godly man hath set his face towards heaven ; it is true, sometimes he may be turned out of the way, but the course of his life, the bent and care of his soul, is to bring up his heart to a conformity to the will of God. A ship that sails to the east or to the west, may be driven back by a storm, but it makes way again towards the haven ; so a man may be overborne by the violence of a temptation, but makes way again, seeks to recover the harbour to which he aims. A godly man is troubled for the breach of God's will above all things ; sin is most contrary to the divine will ; therefore our obedience will be

best known by our care to avoid all sin, and by our grief for committing it.

*Secondly*, I come now to speak to the second branch, submitting to the providence of God.

As God is the supreme lord and law-giver, so we are to deny our self-will by a subjection to his laws, which is holiness, and by a submission to his providence, which is patience. In renouncing the dominion of the will, it is not enough to do what God commandeth, but to suffer what he inflicteth. His will is declared in his providence as well as in his law. Now, murmuring is an anti-providence, a renouncing of God's sovereignty, as well as open sins and rebellion against his laws; therefore when God's will is declared, though against our dearest comforts and nearest relations, this should be enough. In stating this submission I shall show—

1. How far we are to submit to the will of God in providence.
2. What are the grounds of this submission.
3. The helps to it.

First, How far we are to submit to the will of God in providence. That will be discovered in several propositions.

1. The lowest degree is, we must be quiet and silent. When a vessel is much shaken, it is apt to splash over; and so usually we give vent to strong passions, and to the grievances of the mind, by murmuring and complaint. There is a quick intercourse between the tongue and the heart; and therefore when the heart is burdened and overcharged, it seeks ease and vent by the tongue. The first degree then of the patience of the children of God is to keep silence: Ps. xxxix. 10, saith David, 'I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, because thou didst it;' it is God, and therefore the least repining thought must not be allowed; when he saw God in the providence, he durst not speak one word that might savour of discontent. So Lev. x. 3, when Aaron had two children taken away by a judgment, and a strange stroke of God's providence, it is said Aaron held his peace. Now this quietness and silence must be, not only in suppressing words of pet and passion, but in calming the affections. When an oven is stopt up, it is more hot within. When David kept his tongue as with a bridle, yet musing made the fire burn and his heart boil against God, Ps. xxxix. 3. And therefore there must be a quiet contentation of the mind and submission of the heart, how grievous soever the affliction be. A stormy mind is as bad, though not as scandalous, as a virulent tongue. You must be contented in your very souls, you should not dare to quarrel with God, nor enter a plea against providence. Thoughts are as words with God; therefore take heed of private disputings. We must obey God with silence and quietness. Believing will give us ease, when disputing cannot.

2. We must not only quietly submit to God, but willingly, and approve and accept the providence. Patience perforce is no grace. God is not glorified, till there be a subscription of the judgment and a consent of the will. A subscription of the judgment, that the providence is good, because God wills it: as Hezekiah said, Isa. xxxix. 8, 'Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken.' Look into the context, and you will find it was a heavy sentence that intimated

the transportation of his issue and posterity into Babylon, yet his sanctified judgment calls it good—good, because God would have it so. That is best which God wills. We murmur, we set up an anti-providence, and censure the acts and dispensations of God, as if we could correct them, and do better and fitter for the government of the world. A heathen could say, If this be pleasing to God, let it be, that is best which pleaseth him. And so there must be a consent of the will : Lev. xxvi. 41, ‘If then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity.’ Mark that place : it is not said, if they shall *bear* the punishment, but ‘*accept* the punishment of their iniquity ;’ kiss the rod, and welcome the providence. There must be a perfect correspondence between our wills and the dispensations of God. Look, as the patient doth willingly take bitter pills that make for his health ; so should we swallow with willingness and contentment the hardest accidents. We should not take the providences of God as a drench, but as a potion ; not as a thing that is enforced upon us, but that to which our sanctified judgment consents. Heathens, if their lives were as good as their works, may shame many christians ; they would always be of the same mind with God. Seneca saith, I yield to providence, not out of necessity, but choice. It is best, saith he, because God wills it ; if he bless, it is good ; if he afflict, it is good ; his will is the highest wisdom and reason ; therefore faith welcometh all providences, as well as submitteth to them. Rabbi Gamzeth said, This dispensation is good, and this too, because it comes from God. God hath a supreme right to dispose of us according to his own pleasure : Job ix. 22, ‘Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him ? and who can say, What dost thou ?’ Will you resist him in the disposal of what is his own ? Which is more equal, that your will should stoop to God’s, or God’s will be brought down to yours ? How little good will it do us to murmur ! it is better to submit.

3. We are not only to submit to God, but to love him when he seems to deal most hardly with us. You know in the gospel we are bidden to love our enemies, though they be really so, though they be our fellow-creatures, and we do not depend upon them as we do upon God ; therefore much more are we to love God when he only appeareth as an enemy. The Lord Jesus in the height of his sufferings loved his Father, yea, he loved the cross for his Father’s sake : John xviii. 11, ‘The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink of it ?’ Christ loved the elect when he suffered most for them, and loved his Father when he suffered most from him—It is a bitter cup, but it is of my Father’s sending. Our love should glow most to God in our affliction, so the church professeth, Isa. xxvi. 8, ‘In the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee ; the desire of our souls is to thy name ;’ then did their desires burn and glow towards God. Many pretend to love God when he blesseth them, when they abound in ease and all kind of comfort, but storm as soon as they are touched in the skin. Look, as the heliotrope turns after the sun, not only in a shining but in a cloudy day ; so in most gloomy days the bent of our hearts and desires should be after God. So also among the creatures ; the dog loves his master that beats him, and many times when he is half dead he will run after his master. Look, as God sends Israel to

the ox, because they did not love him for his kindness—‘The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib; but Israel doth not know; my people doth not consider,’ Isa. i. 3; so we may send you to the dogs for not loving of God when he beats you; we should the rather love him then, because God loves us when he doth correct us—‘He loves whom he chastens.’ A man may give entertainment to strangers, but he gives chastisement only to those of his own family. We are of God’s household, a part of the charge of God, and therefore are under the discipline of his house. And that is some argument of God’s love, that he doth not let us alone. You are put to your trial before men and angels, whether you can love him, when he exerciseth you with sharp afflictions.

4. We must not only love God for the dispensation, but entertain it with cheerfulness and thanksgiving. This should be enough to the creature, that God’s will may be fulfilled, though with their loss and smart: Job i. 22, ‘The Lord hath given, the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.’ A child of God is of a different temper from other men; he can fear God for his mercies, and praise him for his justice. We are bound to bless him for taking as well as giving. All God’s corrections to his children are administrations belonging to the covenant of grace, evidences of God’s faithfulness, and means of good to the saints, and therefore deserve to be reckoned in the roll of mercies. Oh, what a good God do we serve, when we can even bless him for afflictions! A christian can sing in winter as well as in the spring. In outward things we can thank a physician for a bitter potion. We can pay a surgeon for cutting off an arm or a leg in a gangrene, and therefore much more have we cause to bless God for his faithfulness to us, for taking as well as giving; but if there were no advantage, it is enough that God’s will is accomplished, this is matter of praise. See the instance of David, 2 Sam. xii. 20, when he understood that the child was dead, ‘He arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of God, and worshipped. Then he came into his own house; and they set bread before him, and he did eat.’ Before, he would not rise from the earth nor eat bread, but sat mourning; but when God’s pleasure was declared, he goes with praise into God’s house, and with cheerfulness to his own, because he would not seem to oppose or cross God’s will, but would bear it with cheerfulness and patience. It is more than enough to thee that it pleaseth God, whose pleasure thou art bound to fulfil, how dear soever it should cost thee.

5. This submission must be manifested, whatever the cross be. As in obedience there must be no reservation, they were not to leave a hoof in Egypt; so in the cross we must make no exceptions, but give God a blank paper, and let him write what he will. I know there is a gradation in our miseries, some are greater and some are less, though every one thinks his own to be most burdensome, because he is under sense and feeling—‘No sorrow like my sorrow.’ There is a great deal of difference between afflictions. Those miseries that light upon the outward estate, they do not sit so close as those that light upon the body; and those that light upon the body are nothing so terrible as those that light upon the soul—‘The spirit of a man can bear his in-



firmities, but a wounded spirit, who can bear ?' Common generousness will bear up under an outward cross ; yet all must be borne with patience and submission. The apostle enumerates sundry sorts of afflictions : 2 Cor. xii. 10, ' Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecution, in distresses, for Christ's sake ;' if it be racking pains of the body, or if it be reproaches that enter into the very soul ; if it be want, calamity, infamy, loss of goods, loss of children or husband, of all dear relations, we must not be our own carvers, but we must take up our cross, as Christ saith. God himself will choose the rod ; we are not bound to seek, or choose, or make the cross, but to bear, and take it up, when it is laid upon us. We are not to fill the cup ourselves, but drink that which God tempers in the cup with his own hand. It is not a cup of our own brewing ; it is a deceit to say I could bear such and such an affliction with cheerfulness, and patiently, if it were not the loss of dearest and nearest relations. But God knows how to strike in the right vein. The world would soon become an emptiness and solitude if every ignorant creature might be his own physician, and prescribe his own potion. Those that would have a cross of their own carving do not submit to God, but to their own wills. Pride of will shows itself in providence as well as worship, when men cannot bear the cross that God hath laid upon them. Impatience is as great a sin as superstition. Look, as it is superstition to carve to ourselves such worship as pleaseth us, so it is a breach of God's law, an entrenchment upon the sovereignty and wisdom of providence, when we would carve out our own cross. How grievous soever the affliction be, we must submit. Suppose it be a submission to death itself, it is not by chance, but by God's disposing hand ; God doth but call us back to our old dust, and by the same sovereignty bring us to the grave by which he brought us out of the womb : Ps. xc. 3, ' Thou turnest men to destruction, and sayest, Return, ye children of men.'

6. This submission must be manifested by preparing ourselves to suffer yet more than we feel for the present in vow and purpose. A christian resigns up himself to the will of God, he hath no will of his own, Lord, turn me into what condition thou pleasest, as David, 2 Sam. xv. 26, ' Here I am, do to me as seems good in thine own eyes.' A believer sets his name to a blank, that God may write what he pleaseth ; this is to reserve no will of our own. Patience is a very high grace ; it doth not only consent to known articles, but refers itself for the future to God. It is a question which is most worthy, obedience or patience ; obedience hath a stated rule, all the articles of the covenant are absolutely set down, what God hath required ; but patience refereth itself for the future to God, let God write what he will ; I am thy creature, it submits to whatever future trial God will appoint. So Acts xxi. 13, the apostle Paul speaks of greater sufferings — ' I am ready, not only to be bound, but to die for the Lord Jesus.' If it were a heavier burden, even death itself, I am ready to bear it, I have given up my will to God. So Heb. xii. 4, ' You have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin ;' intimating they should prepare themselves for greater sufferings. The persecution already borne was as nothing ; this makes the lesser suffering to be more tolerable. Resolution for

the worst that can come, it is a great degree of submission, and will be a very great help, when you are resolved to bear whatever God will inflict; alas! otherwise we shall soon faint and murmur.

7. It is a very high degree of submission to submit to God's dispensation in spiritual wants and troubles. We should not be troubled at whatever we may want without sin, and therefore you should bear spiritual evil with a sweet submission to and acquiescency in the will of God. I shall instance but in three things to be borne, the want of sensible consolation, spiritual desertion, and many times God's not hearing of our prayers.

[1.] Want of suavities in religion, or of sensible consolation. These are a mere preferment in grace, and we must tarry till the Master of the feast hath bid us sit higher. All the sin is if the comforts of the Holy Ghost be despised, not if they be not enjoyed, when we have low and cheap thoughts of them; it is not the want, but the contempt. Such things as are mere dispensations, and proposed as rewards are different from duties. To want grace, though it be God's gift, that is a sin, because the creature is under a moral obligation; but not to want sensible comfort, because that is merely given, but not required; and therefore when we want these things, we are to be patient. Remember, Christ himself parted with these for a while: when he was in the midst of his agonies, he said, 'Not my will, but thine be done;' it hath relation to the sensible consolations of the Godhead, which Christ felt by virtue of the glorious fellowship—'Not my will, but thine be done;' this may be God's will to keep us from pride. Therefore when christians would have those redundancies and overflowings of Christ's love at the beck of their own desires, it is a sign they have not learned to submit to God; it argues impatience, or conceit of merit. Remember, in these sensible consolations there may be more of self-love, and of indulgence to our own appetite, than of obedience. We praise God best when we are contented with what he gives, and contented with what he doth, though it be with our loss. But when men cannot love God nor serve God, unless they be feasted with love and fed with these sensible consolations, it is like peevish children, that will not be quiet till pleased with some bait and sweetness; it is not the Father's will that quiets them, but the apple, or some such external satisfaction. It is an act of obedience to submit to God's mere will.

[2.] In matter of desertion it is good to be sensible of God's withdrawments. But we should be rather troubled about the fault than the punishment, that which causeth God to withdraw the comfort of his presence, for herein God will have his sovereignty and pleasure acknowledged: Phil. ii. 13, it is said, 'He giveth both to will and to do, according to his own pleasure.' I confess this is a bitter cup; but remember, Jesus Christ himself hath been our taster. He complains of desertion: Mat. xxvii. 46, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' and we do not deserve to be handled more softly than the Son of God. He complaineth of desertion, to manifest his sense of the evil; but still he saith, 'Not my will, but thine be done.' God may make use of this to humble us for our self-conceits, and for our pride and thoughts of merit, or having an obligation upon God. It is good sometimes to be left to ourselves, and stand upon our own legs, that so

we may know ourselves; as God left Hezekiah, that he might show him the pride of his heart. That we might be kept low and empty, and that grace may be exalted, these dispensations are very necessary.

[3.] When God doth not always sensibly hear our prayers. Though this is a very sad case, to go away from God without a token for good, without any sensible effect of his love, yet God will show us that prayer deserves nothing; therefore when we have wrestled mightily at the throne of grace, yet we may miss. Why? that we may know, though Christ be full and God willing, yet we must have 'grace for grace,' John i. 16; that is, grace for grace's sake, freely. God will make us see we are but unprofitable servants, and he will not give blessings to us but in and through Christ, when we rely upon him. Or else we may ask too coldly, or without esteem of those spiritual blessings, or else thou hast been too earnest for temporal blessings, and God will not give thee poisoned weapons to offend thyself. God knows what is best, and his will must be submitted to.

Secondly, For the grounds upon which we are to renounce our own will.

1. The absolute sovereignty of God, and his supreme right and dominion over the creatures, to dispose of them according to his own pleasure. He can destroy and annihilate, and no man can call him to account: Job ix. 12, 'Behold he taketh away and who can hinder him? and who can say, What dost thou?' Before what tribunal will you cite God? And where shall he give an account of his dispensations? When he takes away, who can say, Lord, what dost thou do? Every man may do with his own what he pleaseth, why not God? thou art as 'clay in the hand of the potter:' Rom. ix. 20, 'Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?' Why should we deny God the common privilege of all proprietors? If God use us according to his own pleasure, he doth but use that which is his own. A man may cut out his own cloth as he pleaseth. Why should we confine the right of God to narrow limits? If he make us sick, pained, infamous, if he humble us with want, if he should take away our relations, where will you cite God to give an account of this matter? It is injurious to resist a man in the disposal of his own goods; why should we resist God, that hath such a supreme and absolute right over the creature? 1 Sam. iii. 18, saith Eli, 'It is the Lord,'—it is he that is the supreme and absolute lord,—'Let him do whatsoever he pleaseth.' It is good to be satisfied with the will of God, and sit down and say no more; it is the Lord, and he may do with his own as he pleaseth.

2. God can take away nothing from us but what he gave us at the first; we do but return him his own, and we should do it with thanks. When he taketh anything from us, he doth but demand his own goods. Job, chap. i. 22, saith, 'the Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away, blessed be his name.' He that hath taken, gave first. And Seneca hath just such another passage, *abstulit, sed et dedit*—God hath taken; ay! but he gave first, it was his own. So Job ii. 12, 'Shall we receive good at the hands of God, and not evil?' If God hath left blessings and comforts with us, shall we be grudging when he comes and demands them again, when he did but lend them to us for awhile? Remember,

God takes but a part that gave all, and it is his mercy that he hath left thee anything,

3. The excellency of God's will. God is infinitely good, wise, and powerful; he knows what is better for us than we do for ourselves. Unless we will blaspheme God, and count him evil, or ignorant, or impotent and weak, why should we murmur? Alas! we are poor, short-sighted, narrow-witted creatures; it is best to leave our condition to the wisdom of providence. Say, when thou goest to murmur and repine against God, when God takes away thy comforts, estates, relations, Who am I, that I should prefer my will and my judgment before God's? We pray daily 'Thy will be done,' and shall we confute our own prayers? consider, which is more equal, that thy will should be conformed to God's or God's stoop down to thine? It is the child's happiness that the father's will is his rule, not his own. God's will is more safe. We usually make our reason the highest court, and enact laws, and then would have God bound by them. Should the sheep choose their pasture, or the shepherd? God shapeth your condition, and cutteth out your allowance.

4. Ground: the honour the Lord doth us, that he should take us in hand, though it be to correct us; Job speaks of it with admiration, Job vii. 17, 18, 'Lord, what is man, that thou shouldest magnify him, and that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment?' It is meant of corrective dispensations, that God should spend his thoughts upon such an unworthy creature, that God should try him in a way of affliction; how grievous soever the chastisement be, yet that God should look after him is wonderful. If a king should undertake to form the manners of a mean subject, it is a great abasement; so that God should look down upon us from the height of his imperial glory: Job xiv. 2, 3, 'Man cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not; and dost thou open thy eyes upon such a one, and bringest me into judgment with thee?' 'What is man?' saith he. Man is but a vapour, and 'dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one?' Wilt thou look upon such a shadow of clay? upon such an unclean sinful creature? We are unworthy of the very anger of God, as a beggar is unworthy the anger of a prince, or a worm of the indignation of an angel.

5. Whatever God doth to his children, it is with aims of good; he is goodness itself, more apt to do us good than the fire to burn or the sun to shine. Consider, God's nature is most alien from other courses, he doth not 'willingly afflict or grieve the children of men.' It is for our sakes that he puts on this rigour; the scripture speaks of it as a forced dispensation. If a friend should undertake a business that is contrary to his nature and disposition to pleasure us, we are the more obliged to him: so it is God's great condescension that he should take the rod in his hand, and that he should use it to our profit, we are bound to acknowledge it. If God doth punish, it is not that he delighteth in punishment; but he doth punish us here that he may not punish us for ever. Who would not rejoice, that, if when he owed a debt of a thousand pound, the creditor should require but twenty shillings? It is God's mercy that we shall suffer in this world, that we may not suffer in the world to come: 1 Cor. xi. 32, 'When we are judged, we

are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.' There is often a great deal of mercy in affliction. After the sin of Adam, there could not be a more gracious nor more wise invention than affliction to wean our affections from the delight of the senses, and to meeken the spirit. And if God should not deal thus with us, we had cause to complain, as if he were too gentle; as we have cause to complain of that physician that lets his patient die, because he will not put him to the trouble of physic; or as Eli's children had cause to complain of their father, because he was so indulgent; and Amnon of David. It is a great judgment to be let alone. When God was angry with Ephraim, what is his sentence? Hosea iv. 17, 'Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone.' It is an honour that God is mindful of us, that he will give us suitable corrections. If a man see a serpent creeping upon another while he is asleep, though he give him a great blow, yet it is a courtesy to him to kill that serpent that would destroy him; so God doth but kill that serpent that would kill us. We are chastised, but it is only to destroy and kill sin. But suppose we could see no good in the affliction, yet we are bound to believe there is good in it, and not to have hard thoughts of God. Alexander, when his physician was accused that he would poison him in such a potion, takes the letter in one hand, and shows it his physician, and drinks off the potion in confidence of his trust and fidelity. Distrust will make lies of God, as if he meant to hurt and wrong us; but we should say as Christ did, 'The cup that my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?' We should trust God's potion. We are dearer to God than we can be to ourselves; he is more solicitous for our good, than we are for our own. God loves the lowest saint infinitely more than the highest angels love God.

6. Impatience doth not lessen the evil, but double and increase it: takes not away the bitterness of the affliction, but makes it bitterer, and is the wormwood and gall of it. All the evils in the world consist in the disorder of the will, in the disagreement that is between the object and the appetite. Man's will is the cause of all his misery; we are troubled because it falls out otherwise than we would have it. He that wills what God wills may have somewhat to exercise him, but hath nothing to trouble him. All the evils that we meet with in the world come merely from our own will.

Thirdly, for the helps by which we might bring our hearts to rise l  
to the will of God. stē

1. See God in all things. This is the first principle of submission: Ps. xxxix. 10, 'I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, because thou didst it;' that made David quiet and altogether silent. So Hezekiah speaks of his patient submission to his disease and the sentence of death: Isa. xxxviii. 15, 'What shall I say? he hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done it.' That passage, though it be in the song of thanksgiving, relates not to the deliverance, but to the affliction. As soon as we see God in the providence, it is the duty of a christian to cease and say no more; as he answered the king, I have learned not to dispute with him that can command legions. Why should we contend with the Lord of hosts, unless we can make good our quarrel? Every wheel works according to the motion of the first mover. Creatures

are but subordinate instruments of providence. We break our teeth in biting at the nearest link of the chain. Oh! look to the supreme mover, it is God that hath fastened all the links. David was so far from opposing God that he bears the very contumacy of the instrument: 2 Sam. xvi. 11, 'Let him alone, and let him curse: for the Lord hath bidden him.' This was spoken when Shimei cursed him, and one of the captains would have taken off his head; that was a time rather for humiliation than revenge. As a magistrate, he might have punished him; but 'Let him alone' saith he, I see God in it. Consider, it is God that chooseth men to be instruments of his justice, that by them he may admonish us of our duty. To resist a lower officer of state is to condemn that authority with which he is armed. Consider, instruments are set a-work by God; they could not wag their tongue without God. It is good to see God at the end of causes. Do not think God sits idle in the heavens; providence hath no vacancy. Christ saith, 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.' God is always working, in and by the operation of the creature. We look no higher than the creature, and so are apt to murmur.

2. Wait for changes. Evils foreseen are the better digested and borne; it is like the fitting of the burden before we put it upon our backs. Hereby the cross is made more portable—'The evil I feared,' saith Job, 'is come upon me.' It is good to look for changes; it is good to look for the affliction before it finds us out, and to keep our mind and heart loose from all comforts. We have great reason to think of changes: we cannot elude the course which God hath set; the cause of suffering is born and bred up with us. We were born in sin, and sin grows as we grow, and therefore the cross, which is the consequent of sin, shall not be taken away till we are taken out of the place of sinning. God might have translated us to heaven presently, without trouble, but there is a method in all his works. He might have caused the earth to bring forth bread as well as an ear of corn; but he would have it first to grow, then to be threshed, then ground, then baked, and so fitted for man's use; so there are many preparative changes to fit us for heaven, as the stones were squared before they were set in the temple. He were a madman that should expect his bread to grow out of the ground before the corn were cleansed by the flail, or bruised by the mill-stone, or baked in an oven; or should expect the stones of a building to come together by chance; so it is a great madness to think to go to heaven without changes and afflictions. We must expect to 'enter into the kingdom of God by much tribulation.'

3. Moderate and lessen your carnal desires. Our afflictions are very much heightened by our affections. We set up a court of providence in our own hearts, enact laws there, and speak of what we would do and do not reserve the exceptions of God's providence. Oh! it is very hard to repeal the decrees and sentence of our own will when once it is set and determined; when we have decreed that thus we will do, this we will have, then we are vexed if God will not let it stand; this causeth storms and murmurs against the will of God: Jer. xlv. 5, 'And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not.' When men's desires are for great things, especially in uncertain times, they do but

dress up a trouble and sorrow for themselves. Self-love and self-seeking always make way for self-trouble ; and therefore keep your desires low. It is far easier to add than to subtract ; and it is far better to rise with providence, when the master of the feast ‘bids us sit higher,’ than to be compelled to descend and lie in the dust. Therefore till God’s will be declared it is good to keep the heart in an equal poise for all providences, and not let our will outstart God’s : as David said, 2 Sam. xv. 26, ‘If the Lord hath any pleasure in me, he will bring me back again ; if not, here I am, let him do with me what pleaseth him.’ He did not dare to pass his vote first, but gives providence the precedence ; so should we.

4. Consider, what little cause you have to indulge your own murmuring ; guilt is enough to silence any creature. Thou art a creature, and a guilty creature, and God is the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth ; let this stop thy mouth. There is always cause from God, and we may still say, as in Ezra ix. 13, ‘Thou hast punished us less than our iniquities have deserved.’ We are now in Babylon, and we might have been in hell. Consider, God is too just to do us wrong. Certainly there is a cause ; if he will exchange hell for Babylon ; there is much of mercy, but nothing of injustice. But suppose there were no cause visible, God may resolve the reason of his actions into his own will. God is under no law, and thou hast no tie and engagement on him ; why should he give an account of his matters ? If affliction is not deserved from men, it is to be borne more cheerfully. Whose cross would we bear, the cross of Christ or the thieves ? When we suffer as malefactors, we bear the thieves’ cross. There is no cause why we should allow our murmuring. Consider the evil of murmuring, search it to the head, and you will find it always comes from pride. The devil is the proudest creature, and the most discontented with his condition. Murmuring is always a fruit of supposed merit, we think we have deserved better. Alas ! we are worthy of nothing, and if we have ever so little, we have cause enough to be content. Though you cannot fare as others—though you have not such good trading—though you have not houses so well furnished, yet what have you deserved ?

5. Do but interpret your murmuring, what is it ? It is but a taxing of God, and it is an high presumption for creatures to tax their creator, as if they were wiser than he ; it is, in effect, to say, this is not well done ; there is an error in providence, which we would fain correct. If it be good, and best, why should we repine ?

6. Consider, what little good will murmuring do us ? We should never argue against providence, because we cannot counterwork it. It is best to do that voluntarily which we must otherwise do by force. Submit to God ; God will have the better in all contests with the creature : Job ix. 22, ‘Who can hinder him ?’ Your comforts, and children, and estates, are in his hands ; if he will take them away, who can hinder him ? Therefore why should we murmur against him.

The next branch of self-denial is denying self-love. God is the chiefest good and highest object of the creature’s respect, and therefore we are to deny self, that is, self-love. A necessary doctrine. It is said, ‘In the latter times, that men should be lovers of themselves,’ 2 Tim. iii. 1

Men have been always lovers of themselves, in every age of the church ; but in the lees and dregs of time this evil shall most reign and prevail. The latter times are inflamed with wars, and so all love to our neighbour is devoured ; and with heresies, and so God is neglected, and then there remains nothing but self to be respected and adored. In the abbreviation of divinity, or in a moral consideration, there are made to be but three general persons or beings, God, thy neighbour, and thyself. Now when men have lost their reverence to God, and their charity to their neighbour, self is only left to devour all the respect of the creature.

In treating of self-love we must—

1. See how far it is criminal.

2. Then speak of the branches and kinds of criminal self-love.

*First*, How far self-love is criminal. To love ourselves is a dictate of nature, and not disallowed by grace. We read not that man is expressly commanded to love himself, because every man is naturally inclined to it—‘No man hath ever hated his own flesh, but loveth it, and cherisheth it,’ Eph. v. 29. By natural instinct all creatures move and act to their own good and preservation. But though there be not an express command, yet there is an allowance, it is implied in that precept ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.’ The thing enforced is love to our neighbour, but the thing implied is love to ourselves. There is an innocent affection planted in nature moving every man to procure his own welfare. In procuring this welfare we have a liberal allowance ; nature aimeth only at things necessary, but in grace God hath been indulgent, enlarging the bounds of allowance, and besides necessities, hath afforded us the conveniences and moderate pleasures and delights of the present life. Therefore the motions of self-love are regular and tolerable as long as they do not entrench upon the privilege of God, but are subject to his will and the laws of sanctified reason.

But when are they vicious and sinful ? I answer, when they go beyond the limits prescribed, when self-love encroacheth upon the love of God, or the love of our neighbour, when a man loves no other but himself, and makes religion and all to stoop to his private commodities or pleasure. Aristotle in his ‘Ethics,’ defining self-love, saith, ‘he is a lover of himself that doth all he doth for his own sake, and with respect to himself, to his own pleasure and profit.’ But let us rather take the description from the apostle, in two places : Phil. ii. 21, ‘Those that seek their own things and not the things of Jesus Christ ;’ and 1 Cor. x. 24, ‘That seek their own, and not another’s welfare.’ Who mind the conveniency of their own life, and their own private profit, without any respect to the glory of God and the salvation of others. This is self-love that is prejudicial both to God and our neighbour, when a man makes himself the centre of all his actions, without any respect to God or the good of others. But because particulars are most sensible, therefore let me tell you—

*Secondly*, This self-love is twofold—to our persons and to our interests. I told you before that self is a capacious word, and doth not only involve us, but that which is ours. (1.) To our persons : we manifest that by doting upon ourselves, and by the admiration of ourselves, and so it is



contrary to true humility and lowliness of mind. And then (2.) To our interests and enjoyments: we manifest self-love, by an inordinate zeal and care of our interests, preferring them before the conscience of our duty to God and our neighbour, being loath to part with anything that is ours for God's sake. This I principally intend to treat of, as being contrary to God's privilege of being the chiefest good; for this is a preferring something before him, when we can neglect his glory, or our obedience to his commands out of a zeal to our own interests.

First, The first kind of self-love is shown by doting upon or admiring our own persons. Self-conceit must be renounced, as well as self-interest. When a man thinks of himself beyond what is meet, and admires his own gifts and excellences, this is to be in love with his own shadow, to become our own parasites and flatterers.

Here I shall show you—

1. To what kind of persons this evil is incident.
2. How it discovers itself.
3. How odious it is.
4. Some remedies.

[1.] To whom it is incident? To all men by nature. By long conversation and acquaintance, a man becomes enamoured of himself, and hath high thoughts and opinions of his own excellency; as Goliath admired his own stature, and Nebuchadnezzar his own Babel, 'That he had built for the honour of his majesty.' There is a natural disposition this way, and there are none of the sons of Adam to be excluded. But usually and mostly it is incident—

(1.) To those that are most ignorant of the state of their own hearts: Rev. iii. 17, 18, 'Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich.' The church of Laodicea doted upon itself; she thought herself rich, and wanted nothing, when they wanted all things, though blind and unclean, yet miserably conceited. In a transparent glass the least motes are seen; but in a thick bottle we cannot discern the grossest dregs and sediment. Certainly those that have most light, they have lowest thoughts of themselves. He that knows himself best loves himself least of all. Love is always blind, especially self-love; it is but a fond fancy of that which is not: Rom. vii. 9, 'For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.' When Paul had but little knowledge, he had great conceit of himself. A short exposition of the law would beget a large opinion of our own righteousness. Usually what is wanting in the light of reason is made up in the pride of reason.

(2.) It is incident to men that by their own industry have raised themselves to any excellency, either in estate, or learning, or other endowments; there are none so apt to be puffed up and conceited of themselves as they are, for they look upon themselves as makers of their own fortune; they are not only drunk with their felicity and attainments, but admire their own prudence and diligence, by which they have compassed worldly greatness and excellency. It is a question who are

most apt to dote on their own excellency, those that have been perpetually happy, or those lifted up out of misery and a low estate. In a perpetual hereditary happiness there is little of our own acquist and purchase to be seen; but those that have raised themselves out of a low condition are apt to be puffed up upon a double ground, their happiness and their diligence; they are happy, and they have made themselves so, as they think, and so dote upon their own prudence and diligence, as well as their felicity and acquists.

(3.) It is incident to men of great gifts, especially after some public performance and exercise of them. It is hard to discover gifts with applause, and not to be proud. Our minds are secretly enchanted with self-love, and the music of our own praise. Therefore the apostle forbiddeth novices, those that were newly begotten to Christ, young men, to be put into the ministry, but very mortified persons: 1 Tim. iii. 6, 'Lest being lifted up with pride, they fall into the condemnation of the devil.' Men of great gifts and unmortified spirits are very apt to fall into pride, and so into condemnation; in a strong wind it is hard to sail steady. It is a question not easily decided, which duties are most difficult, public or private. In private duties there seems to be some difficulty, because there we have no other witness but God, and so we are tempted to slighness, for every one cannot see God; and in public duties there we are tempted to pride and self-conceit in the exercise of our parts.

(4.) It is incident to good christians; they are in danger to be enamoured of their own goodness. Pride once got into heaven itself among the angels, it crept into paradise, and the best heart can hardly keep it out. When men have withstood the 'lusts of the flesh,' and 'the lusts of the eye,' yet they may be overcome with 'pride of life.' Look, as a castle, when it cannot be taken by assault, many times it is blown up; so when the devil cannot surprise and take us by other stratagems, by open assault, he seeks to puff and blow up the heart. Paul was like to 'be puffed up with the abundance of his revelations,' 2 Cor. xii. 7, though he were a sanctified vessel, and though his enjoyments were not of an earthly nature. It is a sin very incident to the children of God to be lifted up with a vain conceit of their own worth, others are not liable to it so much as they are. It is no wonder for a beggar to call himself poor, or a drunkard to have such low thoughts of himself, they are not in such danger as you are. And it is a sin got out with a great deal of difficulty; God is forced to punish it with other sins. For common sins, God useth the discipline of affliction; but for this he punisheth sin with sin, and gives us up to some scandalous fall, that so we might know what is in our own hearts.

[2.] How it bewrays itself; I shall mention but two marks.

(1.) By admiring thoughts and reflections upon our own excellency. A man is apt to entertain his spirit with privy whispers of vanity, and to court himself, as it were, with suppositions of applause and honour in the world: Luke i. 51, 'He scattereth the proud in the imagination of their heart.' Proud men are full of imaginations and musings upon their own worth, greatness, and excellency. This is the courtship that self-love makes to itself, when men muse upon the excellency of their gifts, and how far they excel others. As the strutting king, Dan. iv.

30, as he walked on the palace of Babylon, he is musing upon the vastness of his dominion and empire: 'Is not this great Babel that I have built for the honour of my majesty and the glory of my magnificence?' When men make an idol of self, they are wont to come and solemnly worship it, to dote and gaze upon their own excellences and achievements; but a sincere christian's heart is taken up with admiration of Christ and the riches of the covenant, as Abraham walked through the land of promise, Gen. xiii. and said, 'All this is mine.' So carnal men are wont to take a survey of their gifts and excellences, how far they excel others in parts, prudence, and estate, and so play the parasites with their own hearts.

(2.) It discovers itself by partiality to their own failings. Man is a very favourable judge to himself; men favour their own sins, but with bitter censure comment upon the actions of others: Prov. xvi. 2, 'All the ways of a man seem right in his own eyes, but God weighs the spirits;' mark, it is in his own eyes. Man is apt to be partial in his own cause, blinded with self-love; when he comes to weigh his own actions, self-love takes hold of the scale, and so there is no right done. There is a great deal of difference between our balance and the balance of the sanctuary. Men are loath to see an evil in themselves; they can see moles in the eyes of others, severely censure their failings, but cannot see beams in their own, Mat. vii. 3. A sincere heart is most severe against his own sins, and flings the first stone at himself; but self-love is blind and partial. The apostle saith, that 'love covers a multitude of sins.' It should do so in our neighbour, but it doth cover that which is in ourselves. The cases of Judah and David were very famous. Judah, when he was to sit judge upon Tamar, would have burned her because she had committed adultery, Gen. xxxviii. 34; but when he saw the bracelets, ring, and staff, when he understood his own guilt, he becomes more favourable and mild. So David, 2 Sam. xii. 5, when the prophet Nathan came to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba, and represents the case to him, it is said, 'David's anger was greatly kindled against the man. And he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this shall die, die without mercy.' But when David was found to be the person, and the prophet tells him, 'Thou art the man,' then he was not so severe, his mind was more calm. In a disease we think our pain the sharpest; so when truly cured of self-love, we think no sins like our own. The apostle Paul counted himself 'the chiefest of sinners,' and certainly a person so sanctified would not lie.

[3.] Let me come to the odiousness of this sin. This is prejudicial to God, to your neighbours, to yourselves.

(1.) To God it is flat sacrilege; we detract from God, and rob him of the praise of his gifts, that we may set the crown upon our own head: Hab. i. 16, 'They sacrifice to their net, and burn incense to their own drag.' Instead of acknowledging God, in their greatness they cry up their prudence, valour, and understanding. When we intercept God's praise, this is to deify ourselves, and put ourselves in the place of God. Trust and praise are God's own privileges; it is the rent which God, as the great landlord of the world, expects from us. He hath leased out mercies and comforts to the world upon this condition, that we

should give him the acknowledgment of praise. To intercept the praise due to him is to rob him of his rent and revenue. All creatures are bound to exalt and magnify God.

(2.) It is prejudicial to others. Self-love makes men envious and slanderous. When men would shine alone, and would have all the world else to serve for their foils, to set them off, therefore they blast their gifts with censure, aggravate their failings, and load them with prejudice, that upon the ruins of their good name, they might erect a fabric of praise to themselves. Self-lovers are always bitter censurers; they are so indulgent to their own faults, that they must spend their zeal abroad. And therefore, observe it, the apostles, when they would dissuade from the pride of censuring, they always bid us to consider ourselves: Gal. vi. 1, 'If any brother be fallen, restore such a one with the spirit of meekness, considering yourselves.' Do not set up a high conceit of yourselves, and so blemish others, and make an advantage of their failings. So James iii. 1, 'Be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.' If men would look inward, they might judge freely, with more profit and less sin.

(3.) It is prejudicial to ourselves. Inordinate self-love was the ruin of angels, and it will prove the confusion of men; he is the best friend to himself who loveth himself least. Carnal self-love is indeed but self-murder; properly, it is the hatred of thy soul which is truly thyself. As the ape which hugs her young ones with too much earnestness, crusheth them, and thrusts out their bowels; so this self-hugging will be your ruin. It hinders us from the love of God; and those that love not God shall never be happy; and it is the cause of all sin, 2 Tim. iii. 2, 'Men shall be lovers of themselves.' It is set in the first place, as the mother of all the rest—'They shall be lovers of themselves, then covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers;' lovers of themselves, therefore 'covetous' seeking to increase their own store, though the means be never so unjust and irregular. They 'shall be lovers of themselves,' therefore proud, as it is common for such men to gaze upon their own excellency, and the idol they set up in their own hearts. They 'shall be lovers of themselves,' therefore 'boasters.' Men use to draw others to the worship of their own idols, insulting over others, because they deify themselves, loving pleasure more than God, gratifying their private appetites, though with the displeasure of God. 'Fierce, incontinent.' It were easy to derive their pedigree. But to instance in a sensible inconvenience, self-love is a ground of self-trouble and discontent. When men set an high price upon themselves, and others will not come up to it, then they are troubled and vexed. He that is low in his own eyes is secured against the contempt of others; they cannot think worse of him than he doth of himself. It is true, a self-loving man may set himself low in his own expression, speak as if he were a vile creature; but that is but an artifice of pride, to beat self down that it may rebound the higher. If others should think of him as he speaks of himself, he would be much troubled.

[4.] To give you some remedies against this self-love. If you would not dote upon yourselves, consider—

(1.) The vileness of your original; it is good to remember 'the hole

of the pit, out of which we were digged.' Agathocles, a potter's son, afterward king of Sicily, would be served in earthen dishes, that he might be put in mind of his first condition. We should all consider the baseness of our original. Why should we be proud of our own worth? We have been infamous from our birth, tainted in our blood, prisoners to Satan, defiled in nature, guilty of high treason against God. What a pitiful creature is man by nature! Certainly the angels, if they could be touched with such kind of passions and afflictions, they cannot choose but laugh at us, to see us dote upon ourselves; it is as if a leper should be conceited of the comeliness of his own face, and think every scar a pearl or ruby. We still halt of the fall and maim of nature all our lives; and the longer we live in the world, we are the more sensible of it. A man that hath been sick, and begins to walk, he feels the aches in his bones; so after we are recovered, we feel the disorder of nature—'We cannot do the things that we would,' Gal. v. 17; and Rom. vii. 18, 'For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not.'

(2.) Consider the purity of God. Much acquaintance with God in our thoughts would make us loathe ourselves. How did Job cure his self-love? Job xlii. 6, 'Mine eyes see thee, and therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.' The only way to loathe and abhor ourselves is to think often of God's holiness. To this God must we be like in holiness; and when this holy God cometh with his impartial balance to weigh the spirits of men, and I come to give an account to him, what a loathsome creature shall I appear! Whenever your thoughts begin to be tickled, and your hearts enchanted with self-admiration; when you begin to muse how much you excel others in parts and prudence, turn your thoughts upon the excellency of God, and then thou wilt cry out, O vile, unclean, and unworthy creature! As the prophet Isaiah, when he saw God in vision: Isa. vi. 5, 'Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.' When you think of the immaculate purity of the holy God, all your proud thoughts will vanish. Daniel saith, Dan. viii. 10, 'I saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me; for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength.' Men are self-conceited, because God and their thoughts are mere strangers. The stars shine most, the further off they are from the sun; the less light there is, the more they will shine, as at night; one seemeth to exceed another—'One star differeth from another in glory,' 1 Cor. xv. 41. But when the day comes, all the differences of the stars vanish, none shineth; the heaven seems to be as if there were no star at all. So when God ariseth in all his glory, those that are apt to think themselves to be better than others, they see that all is nothing but darkness and mere imperfection in comparison of him.

(3.) Consider the greatness of thy obligation. A man hath no cause to love himself the more because he hath more gifts than others, but to love God the more; great gifts do not argue a good man, but a good God. The apostle saith, 1 Cor. iv. 7, 'Who hath made thee to differ?' If thou excellest others, consider, who must have the praise and glory

of this. Must thou dote upon thyself, or love God that made thee to differ? The more thou hast received from him, the more thou art in debt to him. A man should be humble, not only for his sins, but for his gifts and excellences. The greater our gifts, the greater must our account be. Gifts and excellences lay a greater obligation upon us. It is not the greatness of gifts, but well using of them is the glory of the receiver; and that is from God too. If thou shouldst be gracious and better than others, yet who made thee better? It is an evidence thou hast gifts with a curse if they puff thee up.

(4.) After every duty there is enough to keep thee humble. When thou hast done the duty, either conscience works and smites for some failing, or it doth not work. If conscience should not work, there is enough to keep thee humble: 1 Cor. iv. 4, 'I know nothing by myself, yet I am not thereby justified.' If conscience should not smite thee for one straggling thought in prayer, one carnal glance and reflection, yet still you must say, 'I am not hereby justified.' God knows the secret working of my heart, to which I am not privy. I am apt to be partial in my own cause; this will not quit me before the tribunal of God. So, Luke xvi. 15, 'Ye are they which justify yourselves before men, but God knoweth your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.' He doth not only say that which is 'esteemed' among men, but that which is 'highly esteemed;' and then he doth not say, God may not have such high thoughts of it, but it is 'abomination in the sight of God. That which men call a rose may be found a nettle when it comes to God's judgment; that you call spice may be dung when God comes to make a judgment; and thy sacrifices may be carrion. But if conscience should work, and smite thee for failings, then there is enough to humble thee, and keep down these high thoughts that self-love is apt to put forth: 1 John iii. 20, 'If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.' My heart now smites me, that I have had some vain thoughts and carnal reflections while I have been doing something for God; but will not God much more? God seeth with a more clear light. What is the light of my conscience to the pure eyes of his glory? God hath an ocean-hatred against sin, I have but a drop; I may hate sin because it is against my interest, but God hates it, because it is against his nature; his holiness sets him against it. God knows the privy turnings of heart. The duty seems to be a strange duty wherein you will not find some matter of humiliation.

(5.) Get this advantage of thy failing, that thou mayest be the more out of love with thyself. Oh, what odious creatures should we appear, if we did but keep a catalogue and roll of every day's miscarriage—if all the errors of our life were but drawn up together! Now whenever you put yourselves in the balance, graces in the one scale, sins in the other, your evils will much overweigh—'Few and evil are the days of my pilgrimage,' saith Jacob. We have but a few days in the world, a short life, yet it is long enough for thousands of sins and evils. Our sins are more than our graces, because in every act of grace there is some fleshly adherence. We think well of ourselves. Why? because we only take notice of our worth and excellency, and not of our defects, as if the reflexive light were nothing else but to see the good that is in

us. Consider, conscience was made to censure the evil as well as to approve the good : Rom. ii. 15, ' Their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing, one another.' It should be translated thus, accusing and excusing by turns ; accusing must take its turn. You are bound not only to know your knowledge, but your ignorance ; not only to reflect upon your graces, but your sin. It is an easy matter to know our graces, but it requires a great deal of grace to get a humble sense of our continual fail 174.

Secondly, I come now to the second kind of self-love, and that is self-love to our interests and enjoyments.

There is a lawful respect to the safety and convenience of our lives. As we are bound to love ourselves, so we are bound to love our interests and our relations. The service of Christ requires no violation of the laws of God and nature, but still the great interest must be preserved. We are bound to love ourselves, but we must love God more than ourselves. He is a true disciple that doth not seek himself, but the honour of his master. Now the place of scripture for this, is Luke xiv. 26, ' If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, wife and children, or brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life, he cannot be my disciple.' To all these relations the scripture enforceth a dear and tender love ; and yet in such cases where such love is incompatible with the love of Christ, we should rather hate than love. Hatred there is the same with denial in this scripture ; hate, that is, to deny his own life ; all must be renounced for Christ's sake, because there is a higher obligation. We are more obliged to our Creator than to our parents, and we owe more service to our Redeemer than to our greatest friends and benefactors in the world. Let him not ' love father and mother above me,' for so it is Mat. x. 37. And pray, mark again, all these relations are mentioned because one time or other they may prove a snare. The frowns of a father or mother, it is an ordinary temptation. When a child takes to religion, he exposeth himself to the displeasure and brow-beating of a carnal father and mother. And so the insinuation of a wife, of one that lies in the bosom, it is a great snare ; so provision for our children and family ; so brothers and sisters ; loss of familiarity between them, when we are to lose our commerce, it is a great temptation. Then love to our own lives. Life, it is the great possession of the creature, by which we hold other things ; these are known temptations. Well then, it is a faulty self-love when we love anything that is ours, and prefer it before the conscience of our duty to God ; when we are loath to part with our lives, with our relations, anything that is ours, for Christ's sake, or the just reasons of religion.

Concerning this self-love, I shall observe—

1. That we mistake our own identity, and think self to lie more in the conveniences of the body than of the soul. A man hath a body and a soul too, and he is to seek the welfare of both. Now we love the body, and seek the conveniences of the body ; that is the reason why so often in scripture self is expressed by the body : Eph. v. 25, ' So ought husbands to love their wives, even as their own body,' because naturally our love runs out that way. Man loves this life rather than the next, and his body rather than his soul, and pleasure more

than the body ; they waste and harass the body in hunting after riches, pleasure, and honour, and profit, and such-like appurtenances of the outward life ; now these are mere mistakes. The self we are to preserve and maintain is soul and body, in a convenient state and constitution, to perform duty to God, and to attain to true happiness. Now when we love the body, we do not love that which is properly ourselves. The body hath more affinity with the beasts, as our souls have with the angels ; our souls are ourselves—‘What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul ?’ In another evangelist it is, ‘If he shall lose himself.’ Our souls were chiefly regarded by Christ : in the work of redemption he poured out ‘his soul to death’ for our souls ; therefore in denying thy self this must be distinguished. Whatever thou dost with the body, or the conveniences of the body, do nothing to prejudice the soul and eternal happiness. I ground this observation upon this very context. Christ had spoken something of his bodily sufferings ; and saith Peter unto his master ; ‘Favour thyself,’ Mat. xvi. 23 ; and then Christ giveth this lesson in the text. ‘Deny thyself,’ and take up thy cross—‘If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me ; for whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it ;’ and then explains it, ver. 26, ‘For what is a man profited, if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ?’ We lose by saving the body. He that makes his body himself, and the appurtenances and conveniences of the temporal life himself, he will deny Christ, but will never deny himself. You must reckon upon and discern this first, what is yourself.

2. We misplace self as well as mistake it. He that loves himself more than God lays God aside, and sets self on the throne in his heart. now this is a great crime in the eye of nature. There is a natural reverence to what we conceive to be of divine power. Every one will say, I love God best ; God forbid, I should love anything above God. We cry out against the Jews for preferring Barabbas before Christ. yet we do the like every day, when we prefer a carnal satisfaction before communion with God. We think the Gadarenes were vile men, that could be content to part with Christ, and preferred their swine before him ; yet we, that profess to believe the dignity of his person, do many times little less. We look upon it as a great scorn in the Philistines that they should set up Dagon above the ark ; yet this is done by carnal persons, and they are not sensible of it, because it is done (as idolatry is, under this light we enjoy) spiritually. Look, as a man may give the devil bad words, yet hold the crown upon his head, that doth not exempt us from his power and dominion—many that defy the devil in their words, yet defy him not with their heart—so empty professions do not satisfy. This self-love is not to be measured by naked professions, but real experiences. If your heart be carried out more to the creature than to God, and the strength of our spirit run out to pleasure, and we spend whole hours and days that way, and can find no time for God, we love the creature more than God, though we do not say so much in gross language.

But here a question will arise, What are those usual experiences, by



which this disposition is to be measured? I shall answer it in several propositions.

1. The comparison of affection with affection is the best way to discover the temper and strength of our love; that is, when we compare our affection to Christ with our affection to other matters; for we cannot judge of any affection by its single exercises, what it doth alone as to one object, as well as by observing the difference and disproportion of our respect to several objects. If you observe the vein of marks and signs in scripture, they always put us upon this compounded trial, the disproportion of our respect to God and to the world; as to instance both in the pleasure and profit of the world. In the pleasure of the world, 2 Tim. iv. 3, there is a description of very carnal men—'Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.' Simply and apart, a man cannot be so well tried, either by his love to God or by his love to pleasure; not by his love to God, because there is in all men a pretence of devotion and service to God; nor by his love to pleasure, because there is a lawful allowance of taking pleasure in the creatures, provided they do not take and overcome our hearts. But now, when you compare affection with affection, when the strength of a man's heart is carried out to the use of worldly comforts and pleasures, and God is neglected, and we cannot find any delight in the exercises of religion and the way of communion, God hath established between himself and us; this is an ill note, and shows that we are 'lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.' So for the profit of the world, Luke xii. 21, Christ spake a parable, to find out who is the covetous man, and concludes it thus—'And so is he that lays up treasures to himself, and is not rich towards God.' Simply, man cannot be tried by laying up of treasures, by hoarding up worldly provision, and by getting increase in the world. Why? because we are allowed to be active and cheerful in the way of our calling, and God may bless our industry. And besides, on the other hand, a man may think he hath made some provision for heaven, because he waits upon God in some duties of religion, and because of some cold and faint operations, some devout and cold actings and workings of his soul. But now compare care with care—'He that lays up treasures to himself, and is not rich towards God;' that is, when a man is all for getting wealth for himself, and is not so earnest to get grace and get a covenant interest for himself, to be enriched with spiritual and heavenly exercises; when men follow after spiritual things in a formal and careless manner, and after earthly things with the greatest earnestness and strength that may be; when respects to the world are accompanied with the neglect of heaven; when men can be content with a lean soul, so they may have a fat estate; when all their care is to join land to land, and not lay up evidences for heaven; this is a sign the heart is naught, and grossly covetous.

2. Though comparison be the best way to discover love, yet this love is not to be measured by the lively stirring acts of love so much as by the solid esteem and constitution of the spirit. Why? because the act may be more lively where the love is less firm and rooted in the heart. The passions of suitors are greater than the love of the husband, yet not so deeply rooted. The commotion may be greater in less love, but esteem and solid complacency is always a fruit of the

greater love. Men laugh many times most when they are not always best pleased. A man may laugh at a toy, yet he cannot be said to rejoice more in that toy than in other things, because the act of his joy is more lively than it would be in a solid, serious matter. We laugh more at a trifle, but are better pleased at a great courtesy. The commotion of the body, and spirits, and humours, depends much upon the strength of fancy; and fancy depends much upon the sense and the presence of the object, so that sensible things do much affect and urge us in the present state to which we are subjected; we are masses of flesh and blood, and it is our infirmity introduced by sin, that the senses and vital and animal spirits are affected with sensible things rather than spiritual. For instance, a man may have more affectionate expressions upon the loss of a child or an estate, than at God's dishonour. A man may weep more for a temporal loss than for sin. Why? because in spiritual things grief doth not always keep the road, and vent itself by the eyes. So a man may seem to have more lively joy in sensible blessings than in spiritual, and yet he cannot be concluded to be carnal. Why? because of the solid estimation of his heart; he could rather part with all these things than offend God; had rather want this and that comfort than want the favour of God. David longed and fainted for the waters of Bethlehem, as strongly as the spouse that was sick of love, longed for Christ. But he would not have refused the consolations of the Spirit, as he refused, pouring out the waters of Bethlehem. The affections may be violently carried out to a present good, which though it be not without some weakness and sin, yet it doth not argue a state of sin. Therefore the judgment you are to make upon your heart, whether you love your relations and contentments more than God, is not to be determined by the rapid motion, but by the constant stream and bent of the heart. Your affections may be more vehemently stirred up to outward objects, because two streams meeting in one channel run more vehemently and strongly than one stream. It is a duty required of us by nature and grace moderately to prize these things, children and friends, outward delights and comforts; nature craves a part, and grace judgeth it to be convenient; there may be more sensible stirring in the one though the solid complacency and esteem of the soul be set right.

3. As our affection to outward things is not to be judged by the vigorous motion and titillation of the spirits, so neither altogether by the time and care that we lay out upon them. A man may spend more time in the world than in prayer with God, yet he cannot be said to love the world more than God. Why? Because bodily necessities are more pressing than spiritual. In the proportions of time, we see that God allowed six days for man to labour, and appropriated only the seventh to himself, which is an intimation at least that the supply of bodily necessities will require more time than spiritual. I do not speak this, as if in the week a man were free whether he would serve God or no. For as we may do works of necessity on the sabbath day, to preserve ourselves, so we must in the week redeem seasons for duty. But I speak this to show that the great proportions of time spent in the world do not argue disproportion of affection to God and the world. The body must be maintained. Nature and

grace hath laid a law upon us so to do, and it cannot be maintained without active diligence in our calling; and therefore, though I should give God but two hours in the day for immediate service, and spend the other in my calling, and necessary refreshment, yet I cannot be said to love God less and the world more, provided it be with these two cautions—

[1.] That I go about the duties of my calling in obedience, and upon a principle, and for ends of religion. If a christian were wise, he might give God all his time, not only that which he spends in the closet, but that which he spendeth in the shop; when you go about your worldly business with a heavenly mind, and do it as God's work, to the end of his glory. Those that live by handy labour, they must labour, not merely to sustain themselves, but to glorify God, and do good to their neighbours: Eph. iv. 28, 'Let him that stole, steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may give to him that needs.' Mark, if a man were in such necessity, if he hath but from hand to mouth, if a man live by handy labour, yet he is to have a gracious end, to bring glory to God, to be useful to his neighbour, to give to him that needs. So that in effect God hath the most work, though grace be exercised rather about temporal than spiritual employments; for the difference is not so much in the proportion of time as in the materials of grace. In our callings grace is to work there; grace works to keep the heart right in worldly employments; and in duties of worship, grace works to keep the heart right in spiritual employments. That in worldly business we may have a heavenly mind, and that in spiritual business we may not have carnal minds; that now and then you may send a glance to heaven; and in duties, that you may not straggle into the world.

[2.] My next proviso is that you will sometimes make the world give way to grace, and rather encroach upon your temporal than spiritual necessities. Too, too often we find the 'lean kine devour the fat.' Now it is good sometimes to take revenge, and let grace encroach upon the world, for special and solemn duties. Look, as it is a sin to feed without fear, so it is a sin to trade without fear, lest we should be too much in the world. Remember, 'we are debtors, not to the flesh,' Rom. viii. 12. Did we promise we would be all for the flesh? No, but rather we are 'debtors to the Spirit,' we have entered into covenant to gain all opportunities for heaven. It is better to make business give way to duty, than duty to business. Bernard hath a pretty expression, *Felix illa domus ubi Martha queritur de Maria*—That is a happy family where Martha is complaining of Mary; when the world complains of duty, rather than duty complains of the world, for the greatest part of our time and care should be spent in the work of God.

4. The great trial of our esteem and love to God is when duty and interest are utterly severed. When we are put upon an exigency or strait either to deny ourselves or Christ; as in the similitude of the dog following his master, when two walk together in company, we do not know whose he is; but when they part, the matter is tried. God and mammon may sometimes walk together, but when they part company, you are put to your choice, whether you will leave God or the company of mammon. I leave all upon this decision, because such

straits and cases are called *δοκιμίας*, trials—'Knowing the trial of your faith worketh patience;' and 'count it all joy when ye fall into divers trials,' James i. Our affections are brought into the lists, and God and angels sit as spectators to behold the combat. Here are deliberate debates; and when in a deliberate debate the world gets the victory of conscience, it is an ill sign; here you show whether your esteem and a solid complacency be in God or no. The things of religion, in the absence of a temptation, seem best, but when you are brought to an actual choice, either of duty or sin—when duty is left without sensible encouragement, or loaded with sensible discouragement, what will you do then? which will you prefer? Rev. xii. 11, 'They loved not their lives unto the death;' when it came to the pinch. A temptation, represented in fancy and speculation, is nothing so terrible as it is in its own appearance. We may be of great confidence in fancy, as Peter was; but when we are called out to death itself, then not to love our friends or lives, to hazard the frowns of a father, the familiarity of kindred, provisions for your children, it is a sign your love to God is real. It is true, in such a case as this is, a child of God may be overborne by the violence of such a temptation, but speedily he retracts his error. Here is the great trial, when we are called out (as first or last we are) to break a law or hazard an interest, to please men or to please God: then are we put to it, to see if we will deny ourselves or Christ. The high priest under the law had the names of the tribes upon his breast, but the name of God on his front or forehead—Exod. xxviii. 29, compared with 37—to show that he was to love the people, but to honour God; an emblem of every christian, if his relations be on his breast, yet the honour of God must be on his forehead. That interest must be chief and predominant; when we can venture upon the displeasure of God to gratify our interest, this is to love ourselves more than God.

But you will say, Many of us are still left in the dark, every one is not called to martyrdom and public contests. How shall we judge of our own hearts, and know whether we have this kind of faulty self-love? whether we mistake and misplace ourselves, or not? I answer, We need not wish for these cases, they will come fast enough, before we come to heaven. But if they come not, there are a great many other cases by which you may try your souls—cases that do not belong to martyrdom. I shall (1.) Show what are the acts of self-love; (2.) What sheweth the reign and state of it; (3.) Give some remedies.

1. The acts of this kind of self-love are many. All sins are a conversion from God to the creature; and so far as we sin, we prefer the creature before God. But there are some special acts of sin that are to be taxed and censured upon this occasion. When a man can break a law to salve an interest, and makes duty to give way to relations, this is to venture on God's displeasure to gratify a friend. No affection to the creature should draw us to offend God. So it is said to Eli: 1 Sam. ii. 29, 'Thou honourest thy sons above me.' Eli did not think so, in his heart; but this was the interpretation of his act. By virtue of his office he should have put them by the priesthood; but he chose rather to please his sons than God, and was more careful of the credit of his sons than of the credit of God's worship, which was extremely scand-

alised. When parents prefer their children to spiritual employments, or continue them there for their maintenance, though otherwise unfit and unworthy, this is to honour their sons above God. God is to have the highest honour and respect.

[2.] When we can part with spiritual prerogatives for a more free enjoyment of carnal pleasures. When we make pleasures to be the business of our lives, and are carried out with great affection thereunto, but are cold and careless in the service of God, this is to love them more than God, 2 Tim. iii. 4. It is a sin not to be stroked with a gentle censure. There is much of profaneness shown, when duty and pleasure come in competition; and we cannot find any contentment in communion with God, but can part with that to gratify the senses. The temptation is so low, that the sin riseth the higher. When the consolations of God are exchanged for the pleasures of sin, it is a sorry exchange: like Esau's selling his birthright for a mess of pottage, Heb. xii. 16. When the temptation is small, and yet prevalent, it is a sign the natural inclinations are very great: they are carried downwards, as heavy bodies, by their own weight; they are not forced, but inclined. A little sinful delight and satisfaction draweth them out of the way, and maketh them hazard the love of God, the consolations of the Spirit, and whatsoever is dear and precious to Christ. Now this is aggravated, when upon serious debates and strugglings of conscience men do not what is best, but what is sweetest, it is a very shrewd symptom of this evil, for resolution or debate argueth something of choice and full consent; not only a doing of evil, but a preferring of it.

[3.] When men have an actual conviction upon them, and out of carnal reasons think of delays; Mat. xxii. 5, 'They made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise;' and so, Luke xiv. 18, they are loath to part from these things. Christ calleth, not only from sin, but from the world; they do not send a denial, but an excuse; some neglect, others oppose. They do not kill the preachers, yet they prefer these paltry matters before the king's grace tendered to them. When their hearts are affixed on worldly affairs, they will not leave them for heavenly offers. An overgreat care for the business of the world worketh a neglect of God: Heb. ii. 3, 'How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?' Though we do not condemn or oppose, yet if we neglect, we think the world better, and will not be called off to higher things.

[4.] When men have a greater savour in worldly gain than in the ordinances of God, when they think all time is lost that is spent in duty: Amos viii. 5, those wretches that said, 'When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn: and the Sabbath be over, that we may set forth wheat?' It was a hindrance and a loss to them to lose a day; it was irksome to fast from gain. It is a profane spirit that grudgeth God his time, and to think that all is lost that is spent in duty and service to him; this is to love the world more than God. This savour is bewrayed by self-denial, when we can deny ourselves more for pleasure than for God; it is an ill sign when we count nothing too much for our lusts, and everything too much for God. When we spend whole days in the world, Ps. cxxvii. 2, or in pleasure, counting it a pleasure to riot in the day-time, 2 Pet. ii. 13; in effect and

necessary interpretation, this is to 'love pleasure more than God.' When we cut God short of his necessary allowance, and do not keep the soul healthy, and are loath to redeem time for ordinances, and can spend it freely and without remorse in pleasures, and this is our joy and rejoicing; when men can rack their brains and waste their strength in worldly business, yet will not take pains in a godly life, it shows that the world, not God, is uppermost in the heart.

[5.] When for the favour and countenance of men, and our ambition to attain them, we do many things that are contrary to the conscience of our duty to God. It is an ill sign when men cannot satisfy themselves in the approbation of Christ; he should be instead of all. It were a great folly in a race to make the people judges, and neglect the *ἀγωνοθέτης*; it is no matter what standers-by say, so the judge of the race do approve. Yet thus too many do; they are convinced of the excellency of the ways of God, yet dare not profess them, lest they should 'lose the praise of men,' John xii. 42, 43. Their consciences were sufficiently convinced, but their heart was not subdued and weaned from self-respect. In all controverted cases, thus it falls out; men are hardened, not so much for want of light, as want of love to God; they will not veil to truth. Such a spirit, in the reign of it, is wholly inconsistent with grace, for so Christ chargeth it: John v. 44, 'How can ye believe, when ye seek honour one of another?' Men are loath to lose credit with their own party; so Paul, Gal. i. 10, 'For do I persuade men, or God? or, do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not have been the servant of Jesus Christ.' Paul, when a pharisee, was carried with a wild zeal, and animated with a false fire.

[6.] When we find more complacency in outward enjoyments, and are more satisfied with them than in God's love and favour; when men cannot find any sweetness in communion with God, but are wonderfully drawn out in fleshly delights. This is contrary to the dispositions of God's people: Ps. lxxxiv. 10, 'One day in thy courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.' Oh, that is a day of a thousand that is spent in free access to God in his ordinances! Wherever there is a new heart, it must have new desires and new delights. But carnal men, like swine, find more pleasure in swill than in better food. It is irksome to converse with God in duties, they find no more pleasure than in the white of an egg. As those, Mal. i. 13, that brought the sick lamb, and the lame, yet they did count it a great burthen, and they say, 'What a weariness is it!' They puffed and blowed, and said, How weary am I with bringing this sacrifice! This is an ill note, and doth in effect proclaim that the life of pleasures is more excellent and satisfying than that which is spent in the exercises of religion.

[7.] It argueth a spice of this carnal self-love when men envy them that have outward increase, as if they had the better portion. This is an evil with which the children of God may be surprised when Satan is at their elbows. They may have admiring thoughts of the world, and think it a brave thing to milk out the breasts of worldly consolations: Ps. cxliv. 15, 'Happy is the people that is in such a case.' But this is but like a nod in case of drowsiness, they awake with more vigour and life; yea, rather, 'Happy is that people whose God is the

Lord.' The ground of this trial is because God in the ordinances is much more sweet than God in the creature, even as much as grace excelleth nature. Now, the best that wicked and carnal men have is but God in the creature. You prize a carnal self when you look lean upon their mercies; you have a true self, that is more advanced and ennobled; but you prize a carnal self, as if this would make you more happy than those privileges you have, and the comforts you enjoy with a good conscience. For the aggravating of this evil, consider, the devil himself is not taken with material things, with carnal pleasure, and with the delight of the senses. Why? because he is a spiritual essence. Christians, they are made partakers of a divine nature; therefore when carnal men increase in wealth, or grow fat, and flourish in outward pleasure, they should not envy them. The people of God have always disclaimed this evil, as the Psalmist doth, in Ps. vi. 7, 'Thou hast put more gladness into my heart than when corn, and oil, and wine increased.' If they grow fat upon common mercies, should I wax lean upon spiritual mercies? So Ps. xvii. 15, 'As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness, I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.' Those that bear down all before them with violence, they may be filled with treasures, they may provide for their babes, but I envy them not their portion; I have a better self, that is provided for—'When I awake, I shall be satisfied with thy image and likeness.'

[8.] When men are more troubled for worldly losses than they are for sins against God, this is also to love the creature more than God. All affection follows love, and so doth grief; and therefore it is notable, John xi. 35, it is said, 'Jesus wept,' and then it followeth, 'They said, Behold, how he loved him.' The greatness of our grief will bewray the greatness of our love; therefore when we grieve more for worldly losses than for sins, this is an act of self-love. I confess, in crosses there may be a greater commotion, but there should not be a more solid grief. A christian's sorrow is consecrated, it is water for the uses of the sanctuary; we should not lavish out our tears, but reserve them. Men may spend their affections on carnal matters, and then, when they should mourn for sin, they have no tenderness left. Most of our grief should be for the affront we put upon God's grace. It is an argument men love the creature more than God, when they can grieve more for a temporal loss than for departure of God.

2. Then for the state of it. Most of the marks already given are convincing, yet you must know a man is not tried by what he doth in a temptation in all these things; but a man is to be measured by the constant course of his life. When a man maketh pleasures and earthly advantages to be the scope of his life rather than God's service, and letteth go all care of heaven, and constantly consults with flesh and blood, and is ruled and guided by the love of the creature and respect to his own interest, rather than the love of God, this argues the state. Many a man, in fact, and by the interpretation of his action, may be said to love the creature more than God. But the state is to be measured by the esteem and solid constitution of the soul; when men's bent is to the carnal life, and they are prejudiced against the strict part of religion, and have neither hope, nor desire, nor estimation for Christ, as the pearl of greatest price. And therefore, when-

ever they are put to the trial, they fall off from Christ to the 'present world,' as 2 Tim. iv. 10. They seek to provide for their safety and profit rather than peace of conscience, and never, or but in a slight manner, look after their true self, and I may add, are not grieved for the failings in act. This sheweth it is an habituated disposition; self is in the throne, and not God.

3. I come now to offer some remedies. Herein I shall speak something by way of consideration, and something by way of means. I shall be brief, because prevented in the general part. To inform the judgment is not so necessary, every one will confess that it is not fit the creature should be preferred before God; but to impress an awe upon the heart, and to awaken faith and meditation.

[1.] Consider, how much thou differest from the temper of God's children, when thou preferrest self before God, and esteemest the outward appendages of life rather than that which is properly thyself. The children of God count the worst part of godliness better than the best of worldly pleasures. Take Christ at the worst; when obedience puts us upon inward trouble or outward suffering, yet they think it is fit he should have the preferment; they count the groans of prayer better than the acclamations of the theatre. The very tears of God's children are blessed, and they look upon the most burdensome and difficult duties as sweet. They cannot only say, 'Thy loves are better than wine,' as Cant. i. 3; the manifestations of his grace are more choice than the best refreshments of the creature; but, 'One day in thy courts is better than a thousand,' Ps. lxxxiv. Galeacius Carracciolus said, Cursed be the man that thinks all the world worth one hour's communion with God. Now when thou preferrest thy pleasure and contentment, what a vast difference is there between thee and them! It is recorded of Moses, Heb. xi. 26, that 'he esteemed the reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.' He looks upon that as the most glorious passage of his life. And Thuanus saith of Lewis Marsae, a French nobleman, when he was condemned to suffer for religion, and because of the nobility of his blood was not bound with ropes, as others were, *Cur non et me torque donas, &c.*—Give me my chain also, and make me a knight too of this excellent order. The reproaches of Christ are better than all the pleasures of the world.

[2.] Consider, how wilt thou be able to look Jesus Christ in the face on the day of recompenses, when you have such cheap and low thoughts of him for trifles, when you are content to part with God and Christ, and all the comfort and hope of the Spirit, for a trifle, for worldly concerns, base and dreggy pleasures. The day of judgment is one of the enforcements of self-denial. When Christ had laid down this doctrine of self-denial, ver. 27, saith he, 'For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according to his works.' The devil will insult over you, because you would forsake Christ upon so small a temptation, and would sell all the excellent things of religion for a toy, a matter of nothing. And how will you look the blessed companions of Christ in the face, angels, and those self-denying saints that could give up every concernment, and counted not their lives dear? You become the scorn of saints and angels: Ps. lii. 7, 'Lo, this is the man



that made not God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness.' This is the man that would not make God his portion, that preferred his body before his soul, and his wealth and pleasure before Christ; this is he that would not part with a little comfort in the world for Christ's sake.

[3.] Consider, if we would love ourselves, we should love our best self. The dignity of the soul requires the chiefest care to keep and save it. The body was made to be the soul's instrument to work by, therefore it is inferior to it; we should look principally to the safety of the soul. Besides, the bodily life may be lost, but the soul endures to eternity; the bodily life may be repaired, while the soul is sick. Therefore it is best to secure the soul in the hands of Christ, and then thou canst not miscarry. Alas! the body is but the case, but the vessel, as Anaxarchus said, *Tunde vasculum*, &c. When he was put into a great mortar, and pounded with brazen pestles, he cried out to his tormentor. Beat on, beat on the bag of Anaxarchus, thou canst not hurt himself. Now who would preserve the case, and lose the treasure?

[4.] You may seek self with more allowance and leave from God and conscience, yea, and with more success, when the better part of self is once secured and made safe. Self-love is not abrogated and disannulled by grace, but overruled and put in its proper place. By the law of nature we are first to look after the necessities, and then the conveniences of life. We are bound to look after the necessities and conveniences of the body, but first we must look to the soul: Luke x. 42, 'One thing is necessary;' it is a necessary thing to secure the soul. It should be the main care of a christian to state what is necessary for the salvation of his soul; this will stead you in life and death. This one thing is simply necessary; one thing is necessary for itself, all other things necessary in order to it. Thou art to maintain thy body, that it may be an instrument for thy soul while thou actest and workest toward true happiness. 'Seek first the kingdom of God,' Mat. vi. 33; that is, first seek to get into a state of grace. The kingdom of God is put for all the whole state of evangelical grace. The first thing the Israelites did in the morning was to seek manna; this kept them alive. So the first thing, and thy chiefest care and work should be to secure thy soul, and then all other things will be added, so far as they are convenient.

[5.] The very motives and reasons that draw us to self-love do draw us to better things, for he that loveth anything would love the best of the kind; and therefore, if we love anything that is good, let us love that which is eternally good. What do we love? is it friends, life, glory, pleasure, substance? When we love friends, let us love the best of friends, an eternal friend, such as God is. We should please them most with whom we are to live longest. If we love long life, let us love eternity; if glory and praise, remember that there is no praise like that which is given us before God and angels, out of Christ's own mouth; vain glory, it is nothing to everlasting glory. If we love pleasure, let us love the best of the kind; those 'pleasures which are at God's right hand;' the nearer the fountain, the sweeter the water. If we love wealth, let us love 'enduring substance.' Heb. x. 34, the

joy of heaven is called 'enduring substance.' All earthly things are but perishing movables.

[6.] Consider, what reason we have to love God above all things; not only in point of desert, we are more obliged to God than to all things in the world, and not only in point of law and duty, which we shall be responsible for, but in point of natural reason. All the creatures are but the image and shadow of that goodness which is in God. The good of the creature is but *splendor summi boni*—a ray or beam of the chiefest good. God hath parcelled out his goodness, these are but broken pieces. Why should we dote upon the image, and neglect the substance? Why should we love other things, and not God much more? and, with the dog, catch after the shadow, and let go the substance? It is true, in the creature there are some draughts and strictures of God's goodness which serve to put us in mind of God; not to intercept our affections, but to proclaim to us that God is more worthy of our respect and esteem. God hath parcelled out his goodness in all the creatures, to admonish us, and not to satisfy us. Consider, all these things stand in need of God to preserve them, they need other things. But now, God alone is enough, and he himself, without the creature, can satisfy thee; he that hath God hath all things; he that possesseth him, 'possesseth all things,' 1 Cor. iii. 18, and they are more thine when thou hast them not, than when thou dost enjoy them without God, for then they are a less snare to thee. So then say with indignation to all other loves, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee,' &c. Ps. lxxiii. 25.

[7.] It is a very great honour when thou art called out to any actual trial, to show how much thou lovest God above the creature. There is no cause of grief in such a case, if our eyes were opened and our affections mortified. Certainly it is better to give up our concerns to God freely than to have them taken away from us by force; to offer them up to God, than to have them snatched from us. It is a great honour that God will have our will exercised, and our loyalty manifested; he might take away our pleasant things by the dominion of his providence, and so they may be taken away in punishment. It is an honour when we can sacrifice them by way of thanksgiving; death will take us from them, and God may take them from us. It is an honour that we may resign them before we die, and that by an act of choice and consent we may render them to God for the sake of a good conscience. 'To you, it is given to suffer,' saith the apostle; your gain will be more than your loss. The means that may enable you to obtain this self-denial, follow.

(1.) See that you take heed of complicating and folding up thyself with the creature. We are apt to make ourselves too large; take heed, what thou countest thyself. There is an old and corrupt self, which we should not own. Consider thy comfort, thy safety, thy value and acceptation with God, doth not depend upon these things, Luke xii. 15; thy safety doth not lie in them; these things are but pipes to convey the blessing of God to thee. Thou dost not live upon abundance, but upon providence; otherwise thy bread would be as a turf of earth to thee, not thy comfort. A man may have happiness enough in a single God, without the creature, Hab. iii. 18. In heaven, it is our privilege that there God is 'all in all,' without the intervention of

means and creatures. It is a dark way to enjoy God in the creature ; the highest way is to enjoy him alone, separate from these outward things. Neither thy value and esteem with God, nor thy eternal life, doth lie in it. God loves thee, though naked, stripped of all temporal gifts and favours ; he doth not love thine, but thee. Jesus Christ died not for thy goods and estate, but for thy person. And when God looks for thee in heaven, he doth not look that thou shouldst come with a train of outward comforts ; for when we go to the grave we go naked, and leave these things behind us.

(2.) Act faith, partly upon the blessed recompenses. What is the reason men dote upon the creature ? Because they are not acquainted with a higher glory. Carnal men are purblind, they cannot 'see afar off,' 2 Peter i. 9 ; they look upon the things of heaven as golden dreams, as pleasing delusions ; therefore cannot be divorced, nor separate their affections from present comforts. It is notable, when Christ said to Zaccheus, 'Salvation is come to thy house,' presently he saith, 'Half of my goods I give to the poor.' As good almost bid men pluck themselves asunder, as press them to such a thing ; it is as to rend the body from itself ; yet the sight of heaven will do this.

(3.) Then faith must be employed to judge aright of present sufferings and encumbrances : faith must count losses to be savings. As we are not to believe reason, so not sense, against the articles of faith. Why do we believe the glorious mystery of the trinity, three in one ? Because Christ hath revealed it to us. The same Jesus hath revealed, 'Blessed are they that suffer persecution ; and he that loseth shall save.' Why should we count that grievous which Christ hath called blessedness ? Why should we count that loss which indeed is the greatest gain ? We are as much bound to believe persecutions will make us blessed, and losing will be saving, as we are bound to believe that God is three in one, and that there is a union of the two natures in the person of Christ. Faith is as much seen in practicals as it is in speculative principles ; there it is oftener tried ; the other is but in special temptations.

(4.) Let us love ourselves, and all things else, in God, and for God's sake. When God is made ours, we love ourselves in loving God. We should love nothing but for God's sake ; do all to his glory, and with aims and ends of religion. Certainly God doth all things for himself. We should not love any other, no, not ourselves, but for God's sake, and the accomplishing of his holy will. If we love the godly, we should love them because they bear his image. Our enemies we should love, because of God's command, and our relations and comforts as they are God's gifts to us. God must have all the heart ; and in those affections that are carried out to other things, the supreme reason must be taken from God. That is the law still in force : Deut. vi. 5, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might. The Lord our God is but one.' And it is often repeated in the new testament. We are to reserve no part for idols, for creatures ; all is too little for so great a God, though it be more than we can perform. When a great prince in his progress comes to an inn, he takes up all the rooms in the house, not holding it to stand with his state to have a stranger to be sharer with him. All our respect must either be

carried out to God, or to other things for God's sake. Certainly this will be a means to keep ourselves from such a degree of affection to them, as may alienate and divide our souls from God; yea, in whatever we love, it will make us tend to the service and glory of God. Look, as when one foot of the compass is fixed in the centre, it gives strength and direction to the other part that moves about the circumference; so when the heart is fixed in God, resolved to love God alone, we shall receive strength and direction from him, our love will be rightly set. The saints and angels above love God with all their hearts and all their souls, therefore they cannot sin. Love is all the rule and guide they have, they can do nothing inordinately; so should we, in our measures, labour to come up to this, and it would be an exceeding great regulation of our love. Self-interest may come in as accessory, but the principal and original cause of all is God alone. We should love ourselves united with God by Jesus Christ; love God's servants as those that are dignified and beautified with his image; our relations, as they may be tokens to us of God's love.

THE fourth branch is against self-seeking, by which I mean a denial of our own ends, for God must be the utmost end of all the creatures actings.

Here I shall show—

1. What this self-seeking is.
2. The evidences how it bewrays itself.
3. How necessary it is to handle it.
4. How difficult it is to deny this part of self.
5. Some remedies by way of consideration and practice.

*First*, What it is. Self-seeking is a sin, by which men refer all they do or can do, to their own glory and advancement. There is a double self-seeking, contrary to the double end of the creature's being and operation; one, by which we aim at our own profit; and another, by which we aim at our own glory. For the two great ends of the creature's being are, that we may enjoy God; and then that we may glorify God.

1. Our great aim should be to enjoy God; that is the happiness to which we are poised and inclined by the bent of nature. An immortal soul was made for an eternal good; nothing beneath God will satisfy it; and the heaven that we expect is nothing else but the filling up the soul with God. There is a great controversy in the world between God and self while we are here; but now in heaven the quarrel is taken up, and we and God are united in the nearest and closest way of union and communion, that we may enjoy him forever. Now when we rest in any low enjoyment, and are satisfied with it without God, that is self-seeking; in effect it is self-destroying, self-losing. But the scripture speaks according to our aim and intention; we intend to seek ourselves, though in effect, we do but lose ourselves. Of this the scripture speaks—'All seek their own, and not that which is Jesus Christ's.' In effect, neither their own, nor Christ's, but the carnal and corrupt heart of a man counts nothing our own things, but the concernments of the flesh. Of this kind of self-seeking they are guilty that do God's work, but not with God's end; not to enjoy him, but to enjoy the world; they make

a mere merchandise of obedience : if they have worldly gain, they are satisfied ; for other things they will give God a bill of discharge : Mat. vi. 12, 'They have their reward.' They will acquit and release God of all the grant and promise that he hath made of heaven to them in the covenant of grace, if God will give them a patent to enjoy as much of the world as they can, which argues a sordid and base spirit : Rom. xvi. 18, 'They are such as serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.' The apostle speaks of false teachers, that did not make God their end, but were wholly bent upon their secular profit ; that reprove not for, but soothe men up in, their sin. In their preaching there is no salt, and in their private visits there is a great deal of worldly compliance, and all because they have set up another God, such a base thing as the belly, instead of Christ.

2. The next aim of the creature should be to glorify God in all the motions and operations of the soul. This must be the settled frame and constitution of souls, to enjoy God, that is our happiness ; to glorify God, that is our work ; and therefore, when the aim of the heart is at our own glory and praise, this is self-seeking. Now, that you may discern it the better, and see when the soul is guilty of it, I shall show you how far we are to intend the glory of God in every action of ours ; I shall do it in these propositions—

[1.] This must be the end that we must propose to ourselves in all our civil actions ; though the action be civil, yet the end must be religious, that I may glorify God, and do good to others, 1 Cor. x. 31, though it be but in such a natural action, as eating and drinking ; this must be the fixed aim, 'to do all to the glory of God,' otherwise you set up another God, Moloch instead of God. When merely you eat to gratify your own flesh, it may be a meat-offering and drink-offering to appetite. So also for your traffic ; if it be merely for wealth, it is but consecrating yourselves to mammon, and setting the world in the place of God. This is the great mercy of God, that, considering our necessity, he hath so wisely ordered it that he might lose no part of our time. Our very natural actions may be religious. Works of nature may become acts of grace, and our traffic may be a kind of worship when our ends are to glorify him ; otherwise we set up self in his place. Your very eating is idolatry when it is merely to please and gratify self. Your table it is a table of devils—'Whose God is the belly,' Phil. iii. 18. And then, as for your traffic : when you trade in the world merely to grow rich, and have not an aim at the glory and service of God, you set up another god ; mammon is your God, Mat. vi. 24, 'No man can serve two masters ; ye cannot serve God and mammon.' But here ariseth a question worthy to be discussed, Whether in every action we are bound actually to intend God's glory ? I answer, We should labour as much as we can to make our thoughts actual ; this is the very vitality and vigour of the spiritual life, when all our natural actions are raised up to a supernatural intention. As a christian is not to have evil aims, so he is not to be like a blind archer, to shoot at random and without a mark. Why should we forget God at any time, that doth always remember us ? There is not a moment that passeth but God looks after thee, or else thou couldst not live ;

may, he doth remember us, as if he had forgotten all others, and had none else to care for in the world. There is not a good thought of thine forgotten. The spiritual life seemeth to be as asleep when we do not think of God. In gratitude we seem to be obliged. And consider again, certainly an actual elevation of the soul is of no great labour and trouble, because thoughts are quick and sudden; and it will not hinder us, or be a burden to us, to look up with the eye of our soul, but it would be of great profit, it would make the actions of the mind more acceptable to God; and the soul will the better be kept upright; this will be as a golden crown upon the head of every action, and will be an excellent means to prevent carnal injections. However, because of our infirmities in the lesser actions of life, the habitual intention sufficeth; as an arrow may fly to the mark, though the archer hath ceased to think of it; or rather, as a man travelling homeward may not always think of home, yet he is journeying thither; so a christian may not always actually think of heaven, yet his heart is set that way. We should at least renew this every morning. And in the noble actions of life that require more labour and difficulty, there our thoughts should be explicit, and the reason is, because Satan is ready to blast every serious duty with the injection of carnal thoughts. The devil is not only with you in the shop, but in the closet, and at duty; and many times, though we 'begin in the spirit,' yet we are apt 'to end in the flesh.' Self recoils upon us: Gen. xv. Abraham when he had quartered the sacrifices—'The fowls came down, but he drove them away.' So when we think of offering duty to God, carnal thoughts are apt to rush into the mind; so that without this actual intention we may easily begin for God, and yet end for self-interest notwithstanding.

[2.] In actions sacred, and in the higher operations of the soul, be they either internal or external, the utmost end must be the glory of God. (1.) In internal actions, in desires of grace and salvation, our end must not be self. Our motions are then regular, when they are conformed to God, when we have the same end and aim as God hath. Now whatsoever God doth, both within and without, in creation and grace, it is for himself: Prov. xvi. 4, 'The Lord hath made all things for himself.' Well then, we should seek grace and glory with the same aim that God gives it: Eph. i. 6, 'He hath accepted us in the Beloved, to the praise of the glory of his grace;' that is God's aim, that grace may be glorified in thy salvation, and in thy acceptance of Jesus Christ. I desire my salvation, but I should not rest there; but this should be my utmost aim, that God may be glorified in my salvation. Some make a question whether or no we may look to the reward; but those that make it seem to mistake heaven, and they have a carnal notion of the reward of the gospel, and dream of the heaven of the alcacon, and not the heaven of the gospel. What is the heaven of the gospel, but to enjoy God for ever, in the way of a blessed and holy communion? Now can any man be so irrational to conceive I should not aim at the inheritance of the saints in light, as well as at the vision and fruition of God? This must needs be a high act of grace, to seek my own happiness in the highest way of communion with God. They mistake the nature of the covenant, or the way with which God would deal with men, for God hath invested his precept with a promise, and men would

seem wiser than God. We may use the Spirit's motives without sin, as the saints have done. It was a foolish modesty in Ahaz, when God 'bade him ask,' and 'he would not ask a sign,' Isa. vii. 10-12; so it is a foolish modesty, when men will not act their faith upon the reward and the blessed recompenses. Christ used this way: Heb. xii. 2, It is said, 'for the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, and despised the shame,' &c. And truly all creatures, as they are now made, must needs take this course, look to the glory, that they may discharge the duty and endure the cross. No created agent can rest merely in the beauty and goodness of his own action. It is a folly to say that virtue is a reward to itself, if you speak of eternal reward; it is God's covenant way. We are not only to regard duty, but the encouragement of duty. But then the reward must not be the chief cause, but the encouragement; the ultimate reason must be the glory of God. When we make the reward the ultimate end of all we desire, this is to respect self above God; the glory of God must be the main-spring of all our desires and hopes. To look after happiness is an innocent aim of nature, but to glorify God is the aim of grace. Now only to aim at happiness is the mere motion of nature, and of our own will; but it is our duty to have a further aim at the glory of God. By the law of our creation we were bound to aim at the glory of God, though our happiness were not subordinate to it, for 'God made all things for himself.' (2.) In external actions, and in duties of worship, we must have a good aim. It is dangerous in sacred things to look a-squint, and by the temple to serve the concerns of the shop; this is to put dung in God's own cup; this is to make God serve with our iniquities; and to use worship as a pretence and cover to interest. When we pervert things from their proper use, we do them an injury. If a cup were made for a king to drink in, and we should use it as a vessel to keep dung and excrements, it were a high affront; yet nature doth not design such things to such an use, but art, and the will of man. Duty is made for the special honour of God, by his appointment, therefore it should have no end beneath itself.

[3.] In all conditions of life, a christian should be indifferent to every estate, so God may be glorified; to be like a die in the hand of God, let providence cast him high or low, as it pleaseth God: Phil. i. 21, 'So be it, that Christ may be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or death;' I am indifferent, my aim only is to magnify Christ. This is the temper of a christian; things may fall out, not as we think, but always as we would, if our general aim be to God's glory, for in providence we are required only to be passive. There is nothing left to our choice; we are to resign up our wills to his good pleasure; our duty is submission; events must be left to God himself, and in these things he will provide for his own glory. Well then, whether your condition be prosperous or adverse, pleasing or displeasing, if it be for God's glory, it should be all one to you. A traveller, when he asks the way, it is all one to him if you direct him to the right hand or left, so he may accomplish his journey; so it is to a christian; whether his way to heaven lies by sickness or health, by quiet or trouble, by living at home or by exile and banishment, abased or abounding, by estate or poverty, a christian is content, so God may be glorified. Thus should we, in all

conditions of life, submit ourselves to the disposal of God, that he might be glorified upon us. Some dispute whether we are not to be at such a pass for the eternal state of our souls, whether he will damn us or save us, so he may be glorified. I answer, No; this seems to be extremely harsh, and God doth not put us upon that trial, the laying down our souls to the disposal of God; that is only required of Christ, that he should lay down his soul as to the consolations of the Godhead, for a while. It would put a creature into an indifferency in point of duty, or into despair in point of hope; whereas God in his covenant seeks to draw on the creatures to be earnest for the everlasting welfare of their souls, rather than to leave it at his disposal. By this you may see what is self-seeking; we do not make it our aim to enjoy God and glorify him in this manner.

*Secondly*, To give you the signs by which a self-seeker may be discovered. The best judge is his own conscience. Yet to revive guilt by a note or two.

1. A man is guilty of this self-seeking when he puts himself upon the profession of godliness, out of the promise of some worldly advantage. Gen. xxxiv. 22-24, observe the argument of the Shechemites, they would yield to circumcision upon this supposition—‘Shall not all their cattle, and all that they have be ours?’ A brutish argument; and yet this is very usual, especially in times of public changes. It is usual for men to follow a dying church for a legacy, as vultures for a carcase; the change may be good, but their end is stark naught. It was a complaint made, *Non pietate everterunt idola, sed avaritiâ*. There may be a great idol in their own hearts. Men may follow Christ ‘for the loaves,’ John vi. 26; they did not value his person, but they would live at ease, and be fed with miracle. *Vix diligitur Jesus propter Jesum*—Seldom is Jesus valued for his own sake. Men seek temporal conveniences in the practice and profession of the gospel, ease, peace, wealth, credit, and so they appropriate Jesus Christ to secular uses. It was an inestimable mercy that God should send his Son, yet they look no further than the loaves.

2. When a man cannot endure to be crossed for his religion. Carnal professors are ‘enemies to Christ’s cross,’ Phil. iii. 18; their lamp will not burn, unless it be fed with the oil of praise and profit. A godly man is contented to be neglected and abased for Christ, and yet still is satisfied with his work: 2 Sam. ii. 22, ‘I will be yet more vile.’ Blessed be God, I can suffer this for his sake. A horse that hath a nail in his foot may travel well upon soft ground; but in a hard and gravelly way there he halteth. So men as long as religion is accompanied with conveniency, then they may like it, but are ‘enemies to the cross of Christ;’ then hirelings will soon prove changelings: Job ii. 9, ‘Dost thou yet retain thine integrity?’ When men are delicate and tender, and cannot endure the cross, it is a sign they had other aims of credit and profit in their profession.

3. By envying others in the same profession; we should rejoice in their gifts and graces, and be glad that God may be honoured by others as well as ourselves; but proud men would shine alone, they envy the gifts and graces of others; this is a sure note of self-seeking. It is not grace they look after, but carnal advantage. This is the practice



of the elder brother, which Christ taxeth in the 15th of Luke; he that is truly gracious, desires that others may partake of the same grace, for he knows that God is thereby the more glorified. But when we are covetous of reputation, and design our own honour, then the fewer, the greater is our advantage. These men know that their stream will suffer some loss, when it is diffused into so many channels. It is notable, that of the apostle, Gal. v. 26, 'Let us not be desirous of vainglory, envying one another, provoking one another.' Self-seeking puts men upon passions and envy; they are touchy, because they are jealous of their own interest; and they are envious, because they think the commonness of gifts and graces detracteth from their esteem.

*Thirdly*, To show you how necessary it is that you should practise, and that we should preach, this part of self-denial. How necessary it is appeareth enough already; but yet further, it may be added that you should regard it. (1.) Partly, that you may not rob God of his essential honour. There is nothing that alienates a man from God so much as self-seeking. Devotion and service are preserved when we make God our paymaster; but when men look to the world and the approbation of men, they do not care for God—'If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him,' 1 John ii. 16. Christ is troublesome to such, not welcome, because of the interest he hath in conscience. Brethren, it is no small matter I am speaking about; self-seeking abuseth God exceedingly. It is one of his prerogatives to be the utmost end of the creature's being and operation, and you usurp that which is proper to God; when self hath a pre-eminence above him, God is kept out of the throne. Pharaoh only reserved this, to be greater in the throne than Joseph; you may do much that is good, clothe the naked, feed the hungry, give your body to be burnt, but, all this while, self is greater than God in the throne. (2.) This is very necessary, that you may not rob him of his tribute from the creatures. God hath given us many things, only reserved this—'My glory will I not give to another.' He hath given us the profit, that we may give him the glory. God hath given us a lease of the comforts of the world, only this he hath reserved as his rent and acknowledgment—that he will be glorified in all our actions and honoured in all our blessings. God hath made us, and hath a right and title to us. He that planted the tree, hath a right in the fruit. God that made us, certainly expects some fruit from us. God gave us talents to this purpose, or rather lends us; we are but servants, to employ the talents to our master's use. A christian hath given himself up to God a 'living sacrifice,' Rom. xii. 1. You are not your own, God hath a right and title to you, therefore do not rob him of his glory; a sacrifice under the law was no more his that offered it, but the Lord's.

And as it is necessary you should practise it, so it is necessary we should press it again and again upon you. Self-seeking is a close evil, as well as a dangerous and heinous one. Two things I observe—(1.) That the greatest self-seeking usually is carried on under the colour of self-denial. As the Gibeonites put on old shoes and old garments to make a league with Joshua; so many pretend mortification and self-denial to endear themselves to others, for worldly profit and advantage, as those the apostle speaks of, in 2 Cor. xi., that to gain credit, entrance,

and applause, would take no maintenance. All the carnal designs of men have been carried on under a pretence and veil of religion. Herod, under a pretence of worship, would have Christ to be destroyed, Mat. ii. 8; and Jezabel proclaims a fast to destroy Naboth, 1 Kings xxi. 9; so Simeon and Levi pressed the Shechemites to be circumcised out of revenge. A crocodile weepeth, and then maketh a prey. Carnal ends are often shrouded under religious pretences. (2.) That we are more apt to accuse others out of envy than to reflect upon ourselves. Many think self-seeking is a sin only incident to them that are called to public employment, either in the church or common-wealth. We may warn others, but we cannot judge of them; for self-seeking lies in the aim of the spirit, and is liable to the censure and judgment of God alone. When the action was fair, Job i. 9, it was Satan's accusation, 'Doth Job serve God for nought?' You should not out of envy accuse others, but reflect on thy own heart. We may not have such opportunity as they to enrich ourselves, and that may put us upon envy; but art not thou a self-seeker so far as thou canst reach within thy grasp? Oh, the envy that is in our hearts, and the pride that is in our prayers and conferences which we do not take notice of! Wouldst thou be thought well of in thy place, as Simon Magus, would be *μέγας*, 'some great one;' thou mayest be guilty of simony, as they may be guilty of hypocrisy, bribery, and purloining from the public.

*Fourthly*, It is a difficult and hard piece of self-denial. It is natural to us—'All men seek their own things,' Phil. ii. 21. All our mark, naturally, is at some aim of our own, at our own profit and credit. It is very hardly laid aside, for base and unworthy desires are very importunate, and do recoil upon us after mortification, and after resolutions to the contrary. We often find that we begin well; we aim at the glory of God, it is our habituated aim, but thoughts of pride grow upon us, in the very middle of the action, or else after it is ended. It is an impudent sin, that will assault us again and again.

*Fifthly*, Let me give you some remedies against this sin, by way of consideration and practice.

1. By way of consideration.

[1.] Self is a base and unworthy mark to be aimed at. He that shoots at a shrub, will never aim so high as he that shoots at a star. That service must needs be base that doth not intend Christ, and centre in him. All actions savour of their end. How low-spirited are they that seek themselves! How soon they are apt to warp! It doth but expose you to temptation. They that have an ill end will not scruple at an ill way. He that hath a right mark in his eye will hardly miscarry so much as he that takes a wrong mark.

[2.] Consider the greatness of the sin in making other things our end besides God; you use the name of God that you may enjoy the world; you make him a minister of sin. You make religion a bait, and Christ a means to accomplish your carnal purposes. It is a question who sins more, he that makes use of wrong means, or he that proposeth a wrong end. He that makes use of wrong means makes the devil serve God; but he that hath a wrong end makes God serve the devil. You make the end serve the means; nay, though it be but in a glance and in a thought, it is a degree of whoredom. God would

have Israel to have the 'law written upon the fringes of their garments,' Num. xv. 39, that they might look upon it, and remember the commandments of the Lord, and 'do them;' and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which you used to go 'a-whoring.' You know the glance of the eye outwardly, and a thought in the heart, it is whoredom—'He that looks on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.' Evil suggestions that draw us away from God, are whoredom; you break the vows of loyal love and affection to Christ. As a man may be an adulterer in thought, so he may be a spiritual adulterer too: James iv. 4, 'Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?' The devil for one sin of thought, for aspiring after the dignity of God, was turned out of heaven. Now in your own thoughts you make your own praise your end.

[3.] It is an ill sign. To know the end doth distinguish a man from a beast, and to choose the end doth distinguish man from man. Survey all the world, wherever the name of christian is heard, you will find, here is the great difference between man and man, in what they make their utmost end and chiefest good; therefore when you make self your end, it is an ill character and sign.

[4.] No man doth less enjoy himself than he that doth most seek himself. Self-seeking is always attended with self-losing, for we cannot expect wages from God and mammon too. And worldly rewards are very uncertain; God is wont to disappoint carnal aims, and the event is not suitable to the intention.

[5.] You shall have the greater judgment: Mat. xxiii. 14, 'Woe unto you scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers, therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.' The pharisees, that they might be counted great devotionaries, would make long prayers, that they might have the disposing of orphans, and be trusted with widows' portions. All sin is out of measure sinful, yours especially; your very pretence, when you would seem to be good, and are stark nought, it aggravates the sin before God. If we would be accounted good when we have an evil aim within ourselves, when we take up religion for an ill purpose, and for a cloak only, the sin is the greater, and so will the judgment be also.

[6.] Consider the dishonour that comes to Christ by self-seeking. There are no greater enemies to the gospel than self-seeking christians: Phil. iii. 18, 19, 'For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly.' None greater enemies than they that make a god of their belly. What is the reason few or none are now converted, that ordinances are not so powerful as they were wont to be, but because many shroud themselves under the name of christians, and yet mind nothing but their own profit and gain? Testify against them we must, though with grief, that we may keep up the honour and repute of religion, that is mightily stained by them. It is an honour to God when we serve him out of pure love, not for pay and gain. But when men merely make a market of religion, Satan and his instruments make an advantage of this; they will say they profess religion, only to get great places. God may have

servants enough upon such terms : Job i. 9, 'Doth Job serve God for nought?' It is true, Job is diligent and zealous, but doth Job lose by his profession? So carnal men will say, Is it for nought? They hunt after great places and preferments in the world. It was an old complaint of the gentiles, Lo, say the heathens, those that talk of their being freed from the tyranny of the devil, that they are dead to the world and alive to Christ, yet we see them to be as base and self-seeking as any. In vain do they talk of baptism and the Holy Ghost (by which they think they are ruled in all their actions), and of the gospel, when their whole life is nothing else but a contradiction to the rules of the gospel. It is a mighty prejudice to religion, and a dishonour to God, when men shroud themselves under the name of christian and zealous persons, and secretly aim at their private commodity and profit.

2. But to remedy this evil by way of practice, be more frequent in prayer and praise. Frequent in prayer, to be purged from all self-seeking and sinister respects, carnal affection will be importunate. Then for praises, cast the honour upon God himself. As when they would have given the apostles divine honour, they cried out, 'We are men of like passions with yourselves. Why gaze ye upon us?' so when we meet with applause in the world, and are apt to be puffed up, we should cast it back, and remember that God is to have this praise. As Joab sent for David that he might have honour in taking the royal city, so should you give God all the glory and praise.

Having handled self-denial in reference to God, I shall now speak of it with respect to our neighbour.

As there is a carnal self in opposition to God, so there is also a carnal self in opposition to the good of others, to the duty we owe to our neighbour. In a moral consideration there are three general beings, God, thy neighbour, and thyself. Now self is ravenous, and devoureth the respects due to both. It seeks to intercept and usurp the rights of the Godhead, and to divert and engross the respects that are due to our neighbour. Well then, I shall now speak of self-denial with reference to our neighbour, and the rather because it is established by God's law, and that in the next place to our respects of God : John iv. 21, 'And this commandment we have from him, that he which loveth God, should love his brother also.' The scripture speaketh very little of love to ourselves, because of the strong bent of nature that way ; there is somewhat of allowance, but nothing of precept. Self-love is not commanded in scripture, but regulated. The commandment takes notice of our love to God, and then of our love to our neighbour. This grant we have, that we should love ourselves ; but this by commandment, to love our neighbour.

1. Because love to our neighbour is a means to preserve our respects to God ; partly because he trieth us by this sensible way. God needeth nothing from us. He is elevated far above our bounty and kindness ; and therefore it is easy to pretend love to God, if God had not devolved his own right upon our brethren, and made them the proxies to receive those respects, that we cannot so well bestow upon God himself. God needs not our love, but his servants do. Therefore it is made the test of our love to God that we love our brother : 1 John iv. 20, 'If a man say I love God, and hateth his brother he is a liar ;'

so 1 John iii. 17, 'If a man loveth not his brother, how dwelleth the love of God in him?' We cannot love God aright, without loving our brother, and cannot love our brother aright if we love not God; we must love our brother for God's sake. Therefore our pretensions are but mere lies when we pretend to be open to God, and our bowels are shut against our brethren, whom he hath made his proxies. And justly, because by sensible objects God would wean us from a devotion to ourselves, that so we may be made more fit for respects to objects spiritual and invisible. We are naturally moved to respect things or beings that are visible to our senses, and communicate with us in nature and blood, for so far they are nearer to self, and therefore God required the more respects to man, that we might be prepared for respects to his essence, which is more remote. Thus God argueth: 1 John iv. 20, 'If he love not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?' By the senses, we see man partake with us in the same communion, and similitude, and nature; and if objects sensible do not work upon us, how shall we be moved to do anything for God, that is invisible, and more remote? If things that have a greater similitude with us, if visible things, of the truth of whose being we have certain proofs, do not work upon us, how will our respects be elevated to God, who differeth more from us, of whose being we are apt to doubt, because he is invisible? If we have no natural love, how can we be supposed to have that which is supernatural? So that we see God would make advantage of this natural love, and by our respects to man fit us to love himself. It is necessary then to state this kind of self-denial. Now that you may see how far we are to deny ourselves in reference to the good of others, let me lay down some propositions, and then close all with application.

[1.] A man is bound with many engagements to love his neighbour.

[2.] To love his neighbour as himself.

[3.] In some cases, more than himself.

(1.) A man is by many engagements bound to love his neighbour; no man is born for himself. Nature teacheth it, and grace doth establish this dictate of nature. There is no one thing pressed in scripture so earnestly as the love of our neighbour: Gal. v. 14, 'For all the law is fulfilled in this one word, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' How can the apostle say, 'All the law?' There are respects due to God that are established by the law, as well as to man. The meaning is, all the civil part of the law, the whole second table; or else, all the law, as we obey God in loving man, for God's sake, so we turn the duties of the second table into duties of the first, and make commerce to be a kind of worship. Besides, this is Christ's solemn command: 1 John xv. 17, 'These things I command, that you love one another. This is the sum of Christ's charge to his disciples. By way of special charge, it is ranked with faith: 1 John iii. 28, 'And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.' Here is the great commandment, faith in God, and love of the brethren, the great charge of Christ, which he left at his death. It is a legacy as well as a precept. Speeches of dying men are wont to be received with most veneration and reverence, but especially the charge of dying friends. It is notable, the brethren of

Joseph, when they were afraid he would remember the injuries they had shown to his person, they sent messengers unto Joseph : Gen. i. 16, saying, 'Thy father did command before he died, saying, So shall ye say unto Joseph, forgive the trespass,' &c. Oh, let us fulfil the will of dead. When Jesus Christ took his leave of his disciples, this was that he gave in charge, that we should have special respect to the good of one another. Therefore, when thou art wont to quarrel with, or to neglect others, say, What love do I bear to Christ, since I do forget the solemn charge the dying Jesus left to his disciples, John xiii. 34. Christ calls this his new commandment—'A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another.' How could he say so, since it was as old as the moral law, or the law of nature? New, because it is excellent, as a new song among the Hebrews is an excellent song; or rather, new, because solemnly and specially renewed by him, and commended to their care. New things and laws are much esteemed and prized; so let this my new commandment, let it be highly in esteem and regard. Nay, let me add farther, one reason why Christ came from heaven was to propound to us a pattern of charity; as to repair and preserve the notions of the Godhead, that the glory of God might suffer no loss by the greatness of his sufferings, so to show us a pattern of charity. To elevate duty between man and man; and therefore is his example so often urged in this case: John xiii. 34, 'That ye love one another, as I have loved you;' and Eph. v. 2, 'We ought to walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savour.' Christ would come from heaven to show us the highest pattern of self-denial. He would discover to us the love of his Father: John xv. 19, 'As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you.' The Father loved him with an infinite love, yet parted with him for the salvation of mankind; he parted with his dear Son out of his own bosom to be unworthily treated in the world for our sakes. And Jesus Christ parted with himself and all, to raise our love to God and men; therefore we ought to 'walk in love,' as Christ hath loved us.

(2.) The ordinary measure of our respect to our neighbour is that love that we bear to ourselves: James ii. 8, 'If ye fulfil the royal law, according to the scriptures, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well.' This is the royal law, the solemn standard of equity, and the measure of all respects between man and man, like the king's highway, and road of duty. Self and neighbour being equal in the balance, therefore they are to have the same respect. Now this rule, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' implies two things—(1.) And principally, that I am to do them no more hurt than I would do to myself: Mat. vii. 12, 'Whatsoever you would others should to you, do you the same to them, for this is the law and the prophets,' that is, this is the sum of the whole word concerning moral duties. As I would not have them to injure me, so must not I injure them; wish them no more hurt than to my own soul. I must hide their defects and infirmities, as I would hide and conceal my own. And in all contracts and acts of converse I am to put my soul in their soul's stead; in short, to wish or do them no more evil, than by a regular act of self-love I would wish

or do to myself. Then (2.) It implies that I am as really to promote their good as my own : 1 Cor. x. 24, ' Let no man seek his own things, but every man another's wealth ; ' not seek his own, so as to exclude another. It is not to be understood simply, apart and by itself, but *in sensu conjuncto*, for I am to seek my own things ; but let him not seek his own things, so as to neglect his care of another's welfare. We are to perform all offices of humanity suitably, and convenient to their necessities ; we are to wish them all spiritual graces and eternal blessings, as we would to ourselves. Acts xxvi. 29, ' Would to God all that hear me this day were altogether such as I am.' And we are not only to wish but to procure their good by all means possible, only this caution is to be observed, that our endeavours may be more for our own good than the good of others ; and yet I cannot be said to love myself more than others, because the expression notes only the reality of that affection that I should bear to them. I am to love them as myself. But in expressing the effects of this love, by industry, care, and bounty, there is a method, an order prescribed by God ; and so I am first to love my own body ; next, my near relations, the wife of my bosom and children ; then neighbours, then strangers, then enemies : Eph. v. 28, ' So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies.' It is made the rule of conjugal society, therefore there must be a subordination : first wife, then children, then kindred, then neighbours ; therefore the apostle saith, 1 Tim. v. 8, ' But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.' The Hebrews preferred the men of their own nation before the Grecians in their daily ministration. The effects of bounty and love are to be dispensed according to the urgency of necessities. They that dwell about us, and are more frequent with us, their necessities provoke us more to acts and expressions of love towards them.

(3.) In some cases a man is bound to love his neighbour more than himself. In the law it is, ' Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself ; ' but in the gospel we have an higher pattern : John xiii. 34, ' As I have loved you, so ought you also to love one another.' Now the Lord Jesus hath loved us with an high love, he hath laid down his life for us. And it is no strain to apply this in some cases to love to our neighbours : 1 John iii. 16, ' Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us ; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.' He shed his precious blood, which was more valuable than all the world, therefore we should not stick at anything, not life, which is our most precious possession. Life and all must go for our neighbour's sake. But you will say, In what cases ? First my single life, to save the whole community and society. It is a constant rule that all private things must give way to public ; for God's glory is more promoted and concerned in a public good than in any private ; therefore a public good is better and more considerable in itself, than any particular happiness of ours. In the whole business of self-denial, the great question is, which shall take place, God's glory, or the creature's profit. Thus Jonah, to save the company, saith, ' Cast me into the sea.' It was not only an act of patience and submission to the sentence of God when he was discovered and found out by lot ; but it was an act

of charity, to save those that sailed with him. Men should be contented to be sacrificed for a real public good. The creatures, they will leave their private bent to preserve the universe.

Case 2. We ought to help on one another's spiritual good with the loss of our temporals, and to venture person and estate for the propagation of the gospel. Paul's glorious excess of charity is in some degree to be imitated, Rom. ix. 3, who could wish himself 'to be cursed from Christ for his brethren and kinsmen in the flesh;' and Moses, Exod. xxxii., 'To blot his name out of the book of life,' if God would spare his people. In some degree they are to be imitated; with our loss we are to promote the spiritual good of others. We have an high instance in our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 Cor. viii. 9, 'For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye, through his poverty, might be rich.' When he was rich, rich in the glory of the Godhead, yet he would come in the form of a servant. But alas! who becomes poor for Christ now? Who is willing to go back any degree of his own pomp and pleasure, that he may advance the public good, and promote the glory of Christ? Public spiritual good is far more valuable than any temporal good.

3. It is a necessary act of our love to God, we may expose ourselves to uncertain dangers, to hinder another's certain danger. If a man were assaulted by thieves and ruffians, to prevent murder, I am bound to endanger my own life. If I may possibly contribute help, by the laws of God I am to help the wronged party, though it be to my own hazard. Thus Esther, 'If I perish, I perish,' when she went into the king. There was a double ground of that resolution; one was, she preferred the public good before her own private life; the other ground was because the cause was only hazardous, though likely. Now this case is the more binding, if it be the life of a public person, of a minister or magistrate. A subject is bound to preserve the life of a magistrate more than his own. The hand will put up itself to save the head; so ministers, as Rom. xvi. 4, 'For my sake they laid down their own necks.' He speaks of Aquila and Priscilla, they exposed themselves to danger of death to save Paul in some tumult; and therefore, saith he, I do not only give them thanks, but all the churches of Christ. Nay, if it be but the life of a private friend that is in danger, I am bound to expose myself to some hazard for his sake: John xv. 13, 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.' Christ speaks of it as an act of love and friendship. For though simply my life and his be of a like value, and mine may be more dear to myself than his, yet my duty to him and his life, must overway, especially if the case be but hazardous, as to rescue him from an assassin.

I shall conclude all with a word of use, which is to condemn two sorts of persons, self-lovers and self-seekers.

*First, Self-lovers.* There are several sorts of them.

1. When men seek their own contentment above the public benefit. They care not how it goes with the public, so their private interest flourish. The sin is more aggravated, if it be in times of public hazard, if men be neglectful. Among the Romans, men would leave their shops and trade, and venture all for the common good. But when in dangerous



cases men are diverted from public service by a zeal to private interest, this is a foolish course ; like to those that would look to their own cabins, when the vessel itself is in danger. Judges v. 16, those that were wanting to public duty, were blasted with infamy and shame. ‘Gad, Dan, and Ashur, that had their country near the sea ; and felt not the yoke ;’ and Reuben, that lived on the other side Jordan, stayed at home unworthily, to tend their cattle and flocks, and were more affected with the bleating of the sheep, than with the groans and complaints of their brethren, under the oppression of Jabin. Those that ‘did not come out for the help of God, they are cursed,’ ver. 23. So they are counted of a base and degenerate spirit, who are mentioned : 1 Chron. iv. 22, 23, ‘They dwelt among plants and hedges ; there they dwelt with the king for his work ;’ these were ancient things. Some that came of a noble extraction, yet because they remained in Babylon, and would not venture with the people of God, and go up and build the temple, they are marked out as men unworthy of their extraction.

2. When men in the course of their lives do only mind their own things, and are wholly taken up in fulfilling their own wills and desires. This is the temper of most men, they are of a narrow private heart, and do not seek the welfare of others. It is both against nature and grace. Against nature : no man is born for himself, his country hath a share in him ; his friends, and the persons with whom he lives, have a share ; for by nature man was made to be helpful to others. Man by nature is a sociable creature, made for commerce. If man could live of himself, he might live to himself. Now human society is built upon communion and commerce. The eye cannot say to the foot, I have no need of thee ; and we cannot say of the meanest person, We have no need of thee. It is the wisdom of providence to cast the frame of the world into mountains and valleys, to make some poor and some rich. The poor are as necessary for manual labour, for corporal and hard services, as are the rich ; therefore it is against nature when men wholly live to themselves. So it is also against grace, which casts us into one mystical body. And the apostle, Rom. xii. 5, hath a notable expression, ‘So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.’ There is a great self we are to regard, and that is the societies to which we do belong and we are members of ; and the welfare of this great body must we seek and promote. As in a clock, one wheel moveth another, each part gives and receives help, and one from the other ; so should every one be serviceable, and put his heart, hand, and head to the common good, and be sensible of the common evil. As in the natural body there is no disaster happens to any one member, but all the rest are affected therewith. The tongue cries out when we tread upon the toe, You have hurt me ; or if the foot be pricked with a thorn, the rest of the members will testify their compassion. The tongue complaineth, the eyes shed tears, the head studieth to recover it, and find out the grievance, and the hands will assist. There are three ways wherein we are to be specially serviceable one to another : by prayers, by counsel, and by outward actions of relief. (1.) We are to mind in our prayers the good of one another, and labour for it with God, as we would seek his face for our own souls. This is a cheap act of charity, it costs us nothing but a little breath

and expense of spirit, and it is an advantage to us, as well as benefit to them, that we have an occasion to go to God. David, you know, fasted for his enemies, Ps. xxv, and Abraham prayed for Sodom; but alas! few are nowadays touched with the miseries of others. If we be free from trouble, we care not what others suffer. Now the apostle saith, Heb. xiii. 3, 'Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversities, as being yourselves also in the body.' We that are at liberty, must not forget them that are in bonds, but esteem them as our own, till God set them free. Canst thou be a member, and not be affected? The children of God, when they have been in a flourishing condition themselves, have always laid to heart the miseries of others of God's children that have been in a suffering condition. Nehemiah was a favourite at court, the king's cup-bearer, yet he is sensible of the affliction of his country, chap. i. And Daniel, a great prince in Babylon, yet how affectionately doth he plead with God for Sion: we are to implead their case with God, though we are never so well. (2.) Another way is by counsel. Thou art not to suffer sin upon thy brother, no more than upon thy own soul, for every man is made his brother's guardian and keeper: Heb. iii. 13, 'Exhort one another daily while it is called to-day, lest you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.' Take heed not only lest you yourselves, but lest any of your body and society be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. It is true, we have charge and trust enough of ourselves, but yet God hath laid this duty upon us too, therefore we should be much in spiritual counsel, though we spend ourselves, and be spent; it is a great part of self-denial, that is required of us. John iv., Jesus Christ was weary, yet he treats with the woman of Samaria about conversion. (3.) This love is to be manifested by sensible acts of charity and relief. You had need be much in this, for Christ takes notice of it as done to himself. If Christ lay languishing upon his bed, we all pretend we would go and visit him. 'What you do to these little ones, you do to me,' saith Christ. He tries the young man by that, Mark x. 31, 'Go, sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor.' It is the doctrine of self-denial to the young man, as if self-denial and giving to the poor were terms equivalent. I press it the rather because men love a cheap religion, pretend to pray for others, but yet stick at those costly acts of charity; can give good words and counsel, but will not relieve and clothe; but we cannot satisfy God with mere words, as you cannot pay debts with the noise of money; there must be some real bounty, by which you should approve your heart to God. It is the main thing Christ taketh notice of in the day of judgment.

3. When in acts of charity to others men only regard their own relations and friends. This is but a natural love, because relations and friends, they are but self-multiplied, and dilated, and 'If you only love them that love you, what reward have you?' Mat. v. 46. Who will give you thanks for this; for the mere motion of nature. But it is according to the pattern, when you can 'love enemies,' and love those that wrong you. Christ loved us when we were his enemies, and children of wrath; and when we had offended God, he loved us, and gave his soul as a propitiation for our sins. Therefore you are not

only to love your own relations and allies, but enemies may come in as your neighbour, Luke x. 29. It is a high prerogative to be a forgiver. Therefore let us not lose this crown of honour. Let us try which will be most weary, they in offending, or we in pardoning.

*Secondly*, It reproves self-seekers. And here—

1. They are guilty that seek their private benefit, though it be with the public loss : that make a prey and merchandise of the calamity of the times ; that trouble the water, that they may fish in it ; that feather their own nests with public spoils ; set an house on fire to roast their eggs : set on foot innovations to promote themselves. Men had need look to themselves in such cases. We read, Nehem. v. 14, though by the allowance of the king of Persia, Nehemiah had a standing course of diet allowed for him and his friends, yet, saith he, ‘ I took not the bread of the governor.’ We should not carve out such large portions to ourselves, in times of distress and calamity. We see Joseph had a great trust in Egypt, yet he had made no provision for himself. Therefore it is the glory of a man in a public place rather to depart from his own right, than to make a merchandise of the times, and a prey of his brethren.

2. When men make merchandises of their private courtesies, and aim only at their own praise ; when men eye self in all they do, and have an aim only to advance themselves in the esteem of others, in all the public good they do, these are self-seekers indeed. The heathen poet could say, that is no alms, which we use as a way of trade and exchange, that it will bring no profit to you at all. Still we must look to the pattern, Jesus Christ ; when he loved us, ‘ He pleased not himself,’ Rom. xv. 3. Therefore there should be nothing of self and private reflection upon our own interest or our own charity.

3. Persons envious, those that would have a monopoly of gifts to set of themselves, and envy the gifts and graces of others. Whereas God would have us rejoice in each other’s grace and labours. What is theirs by labour, is ours by love, by virtue of the mystical body ; whatever members do, the glory and good rebounds to all. We being in the body, we should not envy them, as the foot doth not envy the eye, because it is seated in a higher place. Envious persons are not members of the body, but wens, that grow monstrous by sucking, they seek to draw all to themselves, therefore cannot rejoice in the good of others.

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S E V E R A L   S E R M O N S

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P U B L I C   O C C A S I O N S ,

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T H E   L O R D ' S   S U P P E R .

## A FAST SERMON.

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*But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob ; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel.*—ISA. xliii. 22.

IN the front of the text there is an exceptive particle which referreth to the context—*But*. Now, if you consider the context before or after it, it containeth promises of mercy, of God's forming them into a state and people ; of forgiving their iniquities for his name's sake, &c. 'But' God promiseth mercy, though they had deserved judgment. The Lord was resolved for once, to make use of his prerogative, and to save them out of the mere and free motion of his own grace. Thus doth God sometimes work out of order and course, and show mercy when the state of a people is most sinful. He promiseth to restore Israel when they had neglected him, and were ready to cast him off. Such instances we have in like cases, 1 Cor. xi. 25. In the very night in which Christ was betrayed, he instituted the Lord's Supper ; he was consigning to the Church the food of life, when the world was designing and plotting against him a cruel death. So God was giving the law in the mount, while the people were worshipping the calf in the valley. Whilst Paul was persecuting the church, Christ appeareth from heaven to convert him, and make him an apostle, Acts ix. Free grace doth often step out of the way and beaten road to meet sinners in their wanderings. So here, God promiseth them great mercies ; yet he chargeth them with their sin and shameful neglect of him : 'But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob ; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel.'

For the verse, there are two distinct charges—

1. A neglect of prayer.
2. Growing weary of God.

I shall now insist upon the former, though not excluding the latter also. The point is this—

*Doct.* People are at a dangerous pass when they begin to neglect prayer.

Eliphaz layeth it as an heavy charge upon Job, chap. xv. 4, 'Surely thou restrainest prayer before God.' When conscience is clamorous, wants pressing, and yet men cannot find the heart to go to God, it is a sad case. Restraint noteth the keeping in of a thing that would fain break out. So the heathen are described to be the families that all not upon his name, Jer. x. 25 ; that is, that do not acknowledge and worship him. So Ps. xiv. 4, 'The workers of iniquity,' of what

religion soever they profess themselves to be, 'they call not upon the Lord.' The evil of this will appear if we consider—

1. The ends why this duty was appointed.

2. The causes why this is neglected.

*First*, Why the duty was appointed. God's command is reason enough for the practice of any duty. There needeth no other argument to a gracious heart than this is the will of the Lord concerning you; but all God's institutions are full of reason, and in a condescension to us; he requireth nothing by way of mere task. The duties of religion are not a task, but a means to do us good; so is this among the rest.

1. It is a notable part of God's worship, or a serious calling to mind his presence and attributes. It is a sin, not only to deny God, but to forget him, Ps. ix. 17. Now we are apt to forget God, who is an invisible being, though we have all things from him, and he be necessary to us continually. Therefore in prayer we present ourselves before him that we may solemnly remember God, and inure ourselves to a reverence of his majesty. Therefore they that neglect prayer said to forget God: Jer. ii. 31, 32, 'We are lords, we will come more unto thee. Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me days without number.' They carry themselves as if they had no need of God's support; they do not regard him, nor preserve any reverence of him in their minds. To withdraw from prayer is to withdraw from God; and to be unwilling to pray is to be unwilling to draw nigh to God, or to have any serious thoughts of his being and attributes.

2. It is a profession of our dependence. We do not enjoy our mercies by chance, or by good fortune (as we speak), but by the indulgence and gift of God. Now, that we may not be ignorant of the nature of our tenure, God will have us pray, that we may acknowledge his right and grant in all that we possess and enjoy. Thus, Mat. vi., God biddeth us ask 'our daily bread;' the bread you eat is not your own, but God's. You entrench upon his prerogative when you use it without his leave; as when we take anything that is our neighbour's, without asking his leave, we are thieves and robbers. To use the creatures without prayer is robbery; and without praise, is sacrilege: therefore it is said, 1 Tim. iv. 5, 'That every creature is sanctified by the word and prayer.' In the word we know our liberty; in prayer we ask God's leave and blessing; therein we acknowledge the donor of all we have and hope for: Ps. lxii. 8, 'Trust in the Lord at all times, pour out your heart before him.' If we depend upon God, we must pray to him, and seek for a relief in all our troubles. Those that depend upon his relief will earnestly beg it of him, and apply themselves to him by prayer.

3. It is a duty wherein the mysteries of our most holy faith are reduced to practice. There are two great mysteries in the christian religion—the doctrine of the trinity, and the mediation of the Son of God. We have the comfort of both in prayer; and we never practically and experimentally discern the benefit of it so much as there. (1.) The mystery of the trinity. It seemeth a profound speculation, till we find the use of it in our addresses to God: Eph. ii. 18,

'Through him we have access by one Spirit unto the Father.' The mystery is unriddled when a poor soul cometh to God through Christ by the Spirit. When a needy and guilty soul would have any gift and benefit from God, he is discouraged till he reflect upon the merit and mediation of Jesus Christ, and put his cause into his hands; and yet he knoweth not whether Christ will tender his suit, or regard it yea or no, until he be encouraged by the Spirit. The whole process of soul affairs, or the workings of a needy guilty soul towards God, may be put into this short issue: God, as a lawgiver and judge, which is our first apprehension of him, by the spirit of bondage driveth us to Christ as mediator; Christ, as mediator, by the spirit of adoption bringeth us back again to God as a father, or one that is able and willing to show mercy. When we first think of God, his terror and majesty oppress our hearts with fears; but we must have grace, or we are undone for ever; but there is no grace, no salvation, in any other but Jesus Christ, who hath procured us welcome and audience. He giveth us leave to come to God, having opened the door by his merit and intercession; and the spirit and heart to come. (2.) The mediation of Jesus Christ. He died to bring us to God, 1 Peter iii. 18; and our great duty is coming to God by him, Heb. vii. 25. But where do we so sensibly find this as in the duty of prayer, wherein we have experience how Christ bringeth us to God? He doth, in effect, there take us by the hand, and lead us to God, and hideth our sins, and procureth our acceptance, and presenteth us amiable to his Father, having justified and sanctified us, and cleansed us from those pollutions which rendered us loathsome and abominable in his sight. Do you know, christians, what you neglect, when you neglect prayer, one of the most concerning acts of your religion? If you omit it wholly, you do not deserve the name of christians; if you perform it rarely and unfrequently, you are not serious christians; or if you put off God with a few frozen and heartless words, you are not lively christians.

4. One special end of prayer is to nourish communion and familiarity between God and us; for it is the converse of a loving soul with God, between whom there is a mutual complacency. God delighteth in us, and we delight in God; it is the nearest familiarity that man in flesh can have with God, and therefore called 'an acquainting ourselves with God:' Job xxii. 21, 'Acquaint thyself with God, and good shall come unto thee.' Acquaintance among men groweth by frequent commerce and intercourse, when they often meet and speak one to another; so by this holy commerce with God we grow acquainted with him. So a visit of God: Isa. xxvi. 16, 'In trouble have they visited thee.' In prayer we give God a visit. Well then, when you neglect prayer, you neglect to give God a visit, or to preserve an acquaintance between him and you; and it is as if a man were weary of the presence of his dearest friend. Should we stand off from this work, or go to it as a bear to the stake, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks, or an ox to the yoke? Now this familiarity is the more to be prized, because it is said, that 'thereby good shall come unto us;' and that upon a double account. (1.) Partly, as it giveth boldness in our present distresses. When God and you are grown strange, you cannot come with that

freedom and sweetness; as to a familiar friend we are wont to pour out our complaints into his bosom upon all occasions. Men are soon weary of their friends out of satiety or penury, their stock is soon spent, they waste by giving: Prov. xxv. 17, 'Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbour's house, lest he be weary of thee, and so hate thee.' But it is not so with our heavenly friend, the oftener we come to him, the welcomer. He bids us pray continually, 1 Thes. v. 17. Now though mere love should put us upon this commerce with God, yet—(2.) There is another advantage which accrueeth to us. A man that hath been frequently entertained by God, and accepted with him, and had his prayers heard and granted, hath a great encouragement in the hour of death to go to him for help. It is a dreadful thing for a man to go out of the world who hath had no comfortable knowledge of God, no skill to pray to him, no encouragement to expect acceptance from him; to appear before a God whom they never heartily loved, nor ever were acquainted with as to any intimate communion. I leave it to consider what the condition of a man is who, in the greatest distress, must have recourse to an unknown friend, to whose favour he can pretend no merit and title; or of whose kindness he hath never had experience; yea, into whose presence he is forced against his will. Alas, how soon will the time come upon us, when those that despise prayer will betake themselves to it when it is too late; that will cry, Lord, Lord, when anguish and terror seize upon them; when prayer that should be the fruit of faith, love, and hope, shall be only the product of despair and horror! When we shall challenge acquaintance with Christ; but he shall say, 'I know ye not, ye are workers of iniquity.'

5. Prayer is required to preserve in us a sense of our duty, and to keep the heart in better frame. They had need be careful who come often into God's presence: 1 Peter i. 17, 'If ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth every one according to his works, pass the time of your sojourning in godly fear;' and Lev. x. 3, 'I will be sanctified in all that draw nigh unto me.' So 2 Tim. ii. 22, 'Whosoever nameth the name of Christ, let him depart from iniquity.' We that so often draw nigh to God should be afraid to offend him; as men are afraid to offend those upon whom they depend, and into whose presence they must often come; or, as those who minister in the presence of princes must be seemly clad, and always appear in neat and comely apparel. Communion between God and us is interrupted by wilful sin: 1 Peter iii. 7, 'That your prayers be not hindered.' A christian is still to take heed that his access to God be not spoiled; either broken off, or carried on carelessly and formally. God will stand at a distance from us, or the heart will stand at a distance from God; God is provoked to withdraw by our disorderly walking; or else the heart will grow shy of God; as Adam hid himself when he had sinned. If we give way to pride, and passion, and lust, and worldly-mindedness, how shall we pray at night, and look God in the face with any confidence? 1 John iii. 21. How wilt thou keep his favour, when thou hast grieved his Spirit? who would distemper himself with drink that is to plead his cause in a case of life and death? By constant prayer God layeth an obligation upon us to be strict and holy.

6. To engage our affections to heavenly things. We wrestle with



God to catch an heat ourselves. God needeth not importunity; our heavenly Father knoweth what we have need of; he is not moved with the charms of rhetoric, why then doth God require striving and arguing in prayer? Partly to increase our faith. Every argument which we use in prayer is a new ground of hope drawn forth in the view of conscience. Partly to engage our desires and affections. The more earnestly we beg anything of God, the more zealously we are engaged to seek after it; for God will warn us of our duty by our own requests. We present our desires before God, and plead them with him. Now these desires are either pretended or real. If pretended, then our prayer is no prayer, but a mockery, and formal and customary devotion; and God will not be mocked, it will cost us dear to personate and act a part in his presence, and to complain of burdens that we feel not, or express desires which we have not. If real, then they are actuated and animated by the apprehensions of his observing presence; so that in speaking to God, we speak to ourselves; our prayers are so many exhortations to the fear and love of God, and the forsaking of sin, and to seek the glory of God, and the peace and welfare of the church, or whatever the request be. Nay, not only an exhortation, but a kind of engagement, an implicit vow; we bind ourselves to our duty by our requests. When we desire that his name may be hallowed, or his will be done, we are bound to do what in us lieth to glorify his name, to promote his kingdom, to subject ourselves to his will, honestly to seek our daily bread in our vocation and calling, and to take the appointed course to obtain the pardon of our sins, and strength against temptations. It is not only a sermon preached to ourselves in God's hearing, but a solemn vow and engagement to use all the appointed means whereby we may obtain these blessings; and if we falter we are the more criminal, because we neglect, or turn away from that which we profess to be our desire and happiness.

7. To be a means of comfort and spiritual refreshing. The soul is disburdened of trouble by this kind of vent and utterance. To pour out our complaints into a friend's bosom, who will only pity us, though we do not expect succour and redress from him, will give us some ease; much more to open our hearts to one who is able and willing to help us: Job xvi. 20, 'My friends scorn me, but mine eye poureth out tears to God.' To bring our complaint and request before the throne of grace, must needs yield comfort and solace to the soul. Certainly none ever made conscience of prayer but he carried away some comfort with him. There is a pacifying virtue in this duty, as the opening of a vein cooleth the blood. Many of David's psalms begin with anguish and bitter complaints, and end with assurance and rejoicing; as if in the midst of prayer his affairs were altered, and one had brought him news, and all things went according to his own heart and mind. The very conferring with God bringeth some refreshment, your burden is cast off, and devolved upon the Lord: 1 Peter v. 7, 'Cast your care upon God,' saith the apostle, 'for he careth for you.' How do we cast our care upon God? Another place will inform you: Phil. iv. 6, 7, 'Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.' &c. It is no more dishonour for God to bear our cares than it was for Christ

to bear our sins ; and what is the effect ? ‘ The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ,’ &c. Look, as when the air is imprisoned in the earth, there are shakings, and convulsions, and earthquakes, till it get a vent, but then all is quiet ; so the soul is tossed and turmoiled with many tormenting thoughts, till we acquaint God with the matter, then all is quiet. When Hannah had commended her suit to God she went away, and her countenance was no more sad, 1 Sam. i. 8. How often do the children of God come away with triumph from the throne of grace, and leave their sorrows and their fears behind them ! Well, then, thou that neglectest prayer, neglectest the comfortablest and sweetest part of God’s worship, a duty that is not burdensome, but pleasant, and conduceth to the comfort, and quiet, and ease of the soul, as well as to God’s honour ; a duty wherein you have liberty to beg the greatest mercies, to deprecate his most grievous judgment, to treat with him about the most important business in the world, which is the saving of your own souls. Surely it is no tedious task for a needy soul to beg of God, who is so ready to relieve him, and show him grace and favour.

*Secondly,* The causes why men neglect it.

1. Out of atheism, that is at the root. When men neglect prayer, either they believe there is no God, or no providence ; for did we believe that there was a God who made all things, and doth sustain all things, and that we do depend upon his goodness for all that we are and have, we would be more frequent in prayer ; for necessity compelleth us to worship him whom we take to be God ; and to implore his help who giveth all manner of blessings, and ordereth all things which fall out in the world. The pagan mariners in a storm called every man upon his God : Jonah i. 6. *Jure venit cultus ad sibi quisque deos.* The gentiles that acknowledge a God, have also acknowledged a necessity of prayer and supplication to him. Plato and Proclus have written books *περὶ προσευχῆς*, concerning prayer, and have given directions how to pray, though they were heathens. Certainly whatever profession men make, they are not better than atheists, who do not make conscience of prayer, public in assemblies, private in families, personal and secret in closets. When the eyes of all things look to him for a supply of their wants, should not we own him and acknowledge him ? Eliphaz chargeth Job deeply : Job xv. 4, ‘ Thou castest off fear, thou restrainest prayer before God.’ As if the restraint of prayer did argue a casting away of all reverence and fear of God. Many content themselves with public worship, are never with God in private. Have they any sense of providence, any fear and respect of God ? David maketh the not calling upon God to be the special character of an atheist : Ps. xiv. 1, ‘ The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.’ How doth he prove it ? ver. 4, ‘ They call not upon the Lord,’ they do not seek after him. This sign is sure, and will not fail. Thou hast need to suspect thyself when thou neglectest to pray in thy family, in thy closet ; thou dost not think God is there.

2. Security. The creature’s address to God beginneth in a sense of his own wants ; for surely they that are deeply affected with their own wants, and persuaded of God’s readiness to supply them, will pray ;

but men slight God when they do not need him : Jer. ii. 31, 'We are lords, and will not come at thee.' In sickness or extreme danger, hypocrites will pray : Job xxvii. 10, 'Will he delight himself in the Almighty ? will he always call upon God ?' The sincere cannot be long away from God ; for they delight in his company ; and they look not to things seen, but to God's invisible conduct, upon which all their happiness dependeth ; and are sensible of their own weakness and frailty, and therefore their commerce with God is constant. They need daily pardon, daily grace, as well as daily bread. But hypocrites never care for prayer, till extreme necessity put them upon it. At other times they are secure and careless. Their duties are forced from them, like water out of a still, not like water out of a fountain : Isa. xxvi. 16, 'In trouble they will visit thee, they will pour out a prayer when distress is upon them.' In their straits, then they howl ; when God visits them, then they visit God. A drop of prayer is much at other times ; then they pour it out by buckets : as where water is precious, they spare it not to quench a fire : Hosea v. 16, 'In their afflictions they will seek me early ;' at other times they turn back upon the mercy-seat. Carnal men use their duties, as we do strong waters, not for a constant drink or diet, but to help in a pang, after long neglects, or upon some great trouble. But a gracious heart is sensible of its constant necessity ; and they that are carried on with a constant delight in God, do not run to him, as men do to a tree in a storm, which otherwise they would pass by and take no notice of. Surely those that have felt the weight, and smart, and sting of sin, will cry for mercy and healing. They know that the soul is a tender thing, like the eye, soon offended and out of order ; they know it is more exposed to danger than the body, though generally it be less cared for. Though man's body be never so strong, and of such an athletic constitution, yet no man will follow his labour so as to omit to take his necessary food, or necessary rest, that he may keep it in good plight. So whatever good estate the soul is in, we must not omit to pray, to keep the soul in good plight.

3. Out of coldness in religion, and weariness of God, as in the latter clause ; and then his service groweth burdensome. Man is an unstable creature, and loveth shift and change ; for a while zealous, but when his first heats are spent, falleth off ; and religion is laid by : closet duties are thrown out of doors, family duties go next after, and then public duties are little regarded, or used only for custom and fashion's sake. They lose their first love, and then leave off their first works, Rev. iii. 3, 4. It is base ingratitude, since God gives us so little cause for it : Jer. ii. 5, 'What iniquity did you find in me ?' What hurt did the worship of God do you and your families ? So Micah vi. 3. But men are of another spirit, and so God is neglected. Certain it is, carnal pleasures will make men weary of prayer, or prayer will make men weary of carnal pleasures. They take the worse choice.

4. Want of peace breeds loathness and backwardness, as David hung off, Ps. xxxii. 3, till he had recovered his peace. Men have no comfort in God when they come to him as an angry judge rather than a gracious father, 1 John iii. 27. Every duty is a new arraignment, a very

penance, and a reviving of their fears. Certainly you should have more comfortable thoughts of God. Get a conscience better established; improve the death and intercession of Christ more, that you may come with boldness, Heb. iv. 16, and x. 19.

5. Want of spiritual strength. He that hath lame joints cannot delight in exercise, which is a pleasure to them that are strong and healthy. Prayer groweth a burden to men of weak and wandering thoughts, lean and barren understandings, and dead affections. You should get the distemper removed, but not neglect the duty. God hath provided help for prayer, and fitness cometh by use. You should rouse up yourselves: Isa. lxiv. 7, 'There is none that calleth upon thy name that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee.' If you will not stir up yourselves, this dulness, deadness, and barrenness will increase upon you.

*Use.* Oh! then, let us begin to bethink ourselves. It is a dangerous case when men begin to slacken in prayer, and this daily commerce with God, when there is less frequency and less complacency in this work. Time was when thou couldst not be content until thou hadst given God a visit, and must consult with him upon all occasions; but now thou beginnest to lose thy tenderness, thou art a stranger to thyself, and therefore grown a stranger to thy God, as it thou hadst no business with him. Thou wert wont to keep a continual correspondence with the God of heaven, and to maintain a sweet intercourse between him and thy soul. How came these fervours to be spent? 'Ye ran well, who hindered you?' Have you found any discouragement in God that your delight in him is lessened, and your care of duty lost? Many do it out of carnal affection—their affections leak out to the world; others out of rotten, corrupt, and base principles. As for instance—

1. Some think they need not pray, they cannot alter God. So Maximus Tyrinus, the Platonist, reasoned, God hath set the course of his counsels, importunity will not prevail with him to alter them. I answer—Though we can make no change and alteration in God, yet it bettereth our hearts and increaseth our trust. Rev. xxii., 'I come. Even so, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.' Ehas knew God would give rain, then setteth himself a praying. We pray not that God's will may be altered, but accomplished in his own way. God will have it brought about by this means that he may do a people good upon his own terms, in the way of entreaty and supplication: Jer. xxix. 11, 12, 'I know the thoughts which I think towards you, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and go and pray to me, and I will hearken.' So Ezek. xxxvi. 37, 'I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them.' So when Daniel understood by books—Dan. ix. 3, 'I set my face unto the Lord God by prayer and supplication,'—Daniel goeth to work in good earnest.

2. Others think they are above prayer; look upon it as an inferior duty for men of their standing and growth. I answer—Surely on this side eternity we must be always praying. God's children are called his 'supplicants,' Zeph. v. 10; 'the generation of them that seek him,' Ps. xxiv. 2. Here are necessities of the church, yea, and personal necessities of our own, to put us upon it. Jesus Christ himself was

frequent in the practice of it, and chose places of solitude and retirement, spent whole nights in prayer, see Mat. xiv. 23, 24. When the disciples go to sea, Christ goeth unto the mountain to pray. If he that had the fulness of grace prayed to the Father with such fervour, should we think ourselves above prayer that are poor indigent creatures, and have nothing but what we receive by begging?

3. Some will not pray but when the Spirit moveth them, not in a constant stated course. I answer—This is as if we should never come to God but when he doth expressly send for us. But the suspension of the Spirit's influence is often a punishment of our neglect in this kind. He withholdeth grace because we do not seek it in his own way. We are to stir up the grace received, 1 Tim. i. 6; indisposition doth not excuse us. Though I find nothing but deadness in my heart, yet I am to pray, because my weakness and impotency doth not dissolve my obligation to duty. And God hath promised to be with us when we are up and doing. The influence of grace is not the rule of duty, but the help. God's command is the reason and rule of duty. 'Howbeit at his command,' &c., Luke v. 5. Whether disposed or indisposed, we are bound to obey. God may do what he pleaseth, we must do what he hath commanded. Our impotency is sinful; a drunken servant is a servant still. The outward act of a duty is under a command, though we do it not so spiritually. 'Take with you words,' Hosea xiv. 2.

4. Others think there is no need of such frequent praying. They use it as physic, not as a diet. *Ans.* The hours of duty are not determined; but the expressions wherein they are enjoined are large and comprehensive: 1 Thes. v. 17, 'Pray without ceasing.' There must be a constant correspondence between us and God. When there are such gaps between duty and duty we lose ground in the spiritual life; we must be frequent in it if fervent: a key seldom turned rusteth in the lock; a man gaineth fitness by degrees. A gracious heart seeth reason enough to be much and often with God.

5. Some say it is in vain to serve the Lord and attend upon his worship; as Mal. iii. 14; and then everything is begrudged: Mal. i. 13, 'What a weariness is it!' But these are not acquainted with God who rewardeth perfunctory services, much more those which are real, as Ahab's counterfeit humiliation. These are drowned in sense, and therefore observe not what cometh from above, and reckon not of prayer, because they question the being of God and his providence, Ps. xv. 2. Surely his people can give you many experiences of God's hearing and answering their prayers.

Here is the second charge—'But thou hast been weary of me, O Israel.' To be weary of God, is to be weary of his worship and service.

*Doct.* That it is as sad a character as can be given, either of persons, or of a people, to say that they are weary of God.

To represent this to you I shall show—

1. The nature of the sin.
2. That it is incident sometimes to a people considered in their community; sometimes to persons considered in their single capacity.
3. The causes of it.
4. The effects.

### 5. What a sad charge this is.

*First*, The nature of the sin—To be weary of God. Weariness in the body noteth a deficiency of strength, no more mind to work; in the soul a falling from God, and we have no mind to his service, which is either partial or total.

1. Partial. When the heart is more alienated from God than before, and all our respects to him grow burdensome and grievous, and the heart begins to repine at everything we do for him: Mal. i. 13, 'Ye said also, What a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts; and ye brought also that which was torn, and lame, and sick: thus ye brought an offering. Should I accept this at your hands, saith the Lord of hosts?' There is a tediousness and irksomeness in God's service, be it never so slight. They that brought a sickly lamb for an offering, yet puffed as if they were tired with some great burden and labour: Amos viii. 5, 'When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn, and the sabbath that we may set forth wheat?' As if all were lost that were laid out upon God. And so he is neglected and begrudged as an unwelcome guest.

2. Total. When not only the power of religion is abated, but the very profession of it is cast off; and so, being weary of God, is a plain revolt or departure from him, and the obedience we owe to him: Heb. iii. 12, 'Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.' The evil is departing from God by a formal and direct apostasy, or denying and forsaking that which they formerly professed; and the cause of it is the evil heart of unbelief, expecting no good by that way. It is an evil heart, because the heart which inclineth to this apostasy hath a malignant quality in it, not infirmity only, but malignity and unbelief in the cause of it, or a doubt of the happiness offered by Christ.

*Secondly*, That it is incident sometimes to persons considered in their single capacity; sometimes to a people considered in their community.

1. To persons considered apart and in their single capacity. A more common sin it is than we are aware of, for all by nature are inclined to it.

[1.] Partly out of natural adverseness to God: Rom. viii. 7, 'The wisdom of the flesh is enmity to God;' and Col. i. 21, 'Enemies by your minds in evil works.' This enmity manifesteth itself by a backwardness to that which is good, by a proneness to that which is evil. And it is enmity against God because of his law. It is not subject, nor can it be. In the law there is a precept and a sanction. The precept sheweth what is due from us to God: and the sanction what is due from God to us, the *debitum pœnæ*—what punishment is due to us; for reward we can expect none, having faulted in our duty. Now both breed a strangeness and enmity between us and God. We hate him as a lawgiver, and we fear him as an avenger, Isa. lix. 2. We are as shy of God as God hath reason to loathe us. Ever since Adam first sinned, and then ran to the bushes, this disposition remaineth in us. Our forefather was first a fugitive, and then an exile. This is the disposition of all his posterity. We will not come to God,

or not keep with him. The natural aversion from our duty is hardly cured, we having temptations of sense to feed it. Jam. i. 14. And our legal bondage, because of the sanction and curse, breedeth in us a shyness of God, Genesis iii. 10. And after we have seemed to consent to the invitations of his grace, yet it is hard to settle in a thorough love in his majesty, and delight in him.

[2.] Partly because of the fickleness and changeableness of man, who is unstable as water : a restless creature that loveth to shift and change. In his comforts, the very delights of nature by continuance grow burdensome to us, and pleasures need to be relieved and re refreshed by other pleasures. In his opinions and notions about religion, light chaff is taken up by every wind, Eph. iv. 14. In his affections : John v. 35, 'Ye rejoiced in his light for a season.' And curiosity, an adulterous affection to truth, loveth it while new. The frame of our hearts is soon changed ; sometimes we are zealous, anon cold and flat ; now humble, then proud ; now devout, anon vain ; now meek, and soon after passionate. In the choice and course of our lives no creature so unlike itself as man is. When our first heats are spent we flag and grow weary : Gal. v. 7, 'Ye did run well ; who did hinder you, that you should not obey the truth ?' Sometimes they show great forwardness in embracing the truth ; and though they have no satisfying reason for their defection from it ; yet mere levity diverts their affection and zeal, and they grow cold and careless in it, yea, quite alter the course of their religion and profession, and their former zeal and sufferings tend to no other effect but the disgrace of the gospel. Jehu's pace for a while often endeth in Demas' choice. 'Demas hath forsaken us, having loved this present world' So versatile and fickle is man's heart.

But more distinctly ; particular persons may be ranged under two heads.

(1.) Common and ordinary professors ; and there is little doubt of them, but that they who are only acquainted with the toil of religion, and never knew the comfort of it, that they will put themselves into all shapes and forms as their affections and interest lead them. Therefore no question the love and zeal of hypocrites may miscarry and vanish, and though they seem to be carried on with great fervour and affection in the ways of God for a while, yet afterward fall quite away ; partly because their love to God was built upon foreign motives, the favour of the times, the awe of education, the advantage of good company. Jesus is not loved for Jesus' sake. If he be the object of their respect, yet not the reason ; and then it is no wonder to see hirelings prove changelings ; and those that loved a Christ triumphing, to forsake and hate a Christ crucified. All artificial motions cease, when the poise is down by which they are moved. And meteors vanish and disappear when the matter that feedeth them is spent ; when in the meantime the stars, those constant fires of heaven, shine with a durable light and brightness. Partly because that love and zeal which they had for God was not so rooted as to subdue contrary affections. A taste they had of the goodness of God in offering pardon and life by Christ, and but a taste, Heb. vi. 4-6. Such as is easily choked by the cares of this world and voluptuous living.

Therefore we are warned : Heb. iii. 6, 14, 'To hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.' Well, then, growing weary of God is the ordinary sin of the carnal professor who never was thorough in the practice of godliness.

(2.) God's own people may abate much of their vigour in religion. Their love to God decayeth, and their sense of things eternal is lessened, and they grow cold in prayer, dead and uncomfortable in their duty, and so live as if they were weary of God, and weary of well-doing. And therefore are such often quickened in the scripture : Gal. vi. 9, 'Let us not be weary in well-doing.' And 2 Thes. iii. 13, 'But ye, brethren, be not weary in well-doing.' They lose all, if they persist not. And we have an instance, Rev. ii. 4. They that were commended for their labour in the Lord's work, zeal against hypocrites, patience in adversity, yet have this charged upon them, that they left their first love. Though they make not a total defection, yet they may suffer much loss in the degree of grace ; and the acts and fruits of it may be much intermitted, which is a great evil ; because the highest degree of love doth not considerably answer the love of Christ, nor the duty of the regenerate, who are called by him from such a depth of misery, and to such an height of happiness, and who are to love him with all their soul, heart, and might. And because to come short, not only of the rule, but our former practice, is the more culpable ; for it seemeth to be a kind of condemning of our former practice, as if we had been too hot and earnest before, and done more than we needed. And lastly, because as love and zeal decayeth, so doth our work, Rev. ii. 4, 5 ; either it is wholly remitted, or else performed in a perfunctory, slight manner ; such as argueth a neglect and contempt of God, rather than a due esteem and sense of his majesty. They dare not utterly give over the service of God, or quite abandon it ; yet lay not to heart their slight and perfunctory dealings with him. Thus you see it is a common sin which all should take heed of.

2. It is incident to a people considered in their community ; yea, nothing is more usual than for nations to grow weary of God ; for the whole followeth the reason and manner of the parts.

[1.] For the church of God in general. We in our times, who live in the dregs of christianity, may soon perceive a manifest difference between the early days of the gospel, and those corruptions which now obtain ; when the faith of the gospel is turned into dead opinions, and questions, and vain janglings ; and the worship of the gospel into a theatrical pomp, and the pageantry of empty ceremonies, which eclipse the majesty and splendour of it ; and the discipline of Christ into a temporal domination ; and all is carried in the christian world by sides and interests ; so that christianity looketh like another thing, a design calculated for the present world, rather than a serious preparation for the world to come. In the first days we read, Acts iv. 33, 'That with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.' Christianity shineth more by its native lustre than meretricious ornaments ; and Acts xix. 20, 'That the word grew mightily.' But in the latter times, atheists and scoffers abound, and are more rife than serious worshippers : 2 Peter iii. 3, 'There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts.' The church of God is troubled, not only



with furious persecutors, subtle deceivers, but also profane scoffers. At the first promulgation of the gospel, truths were new, and the exercises of the christian religion lively, and there was great concord and seriousness among the professors of the gospel. Before men's senses were benumbed with the customary use of religious duties, the notions of God and salvation by Christ were fresh and active upon their hearts; but when the profession of christianity grew into a form and national interest, and men became christians rather by the chance of their birth than their own choice and rational conviction, and the world was turned into the church, and the ancient severity and strictness was much lost, and the memory of those miracles and wonderful effects by which our religion was confirmed almost worn out; and so the truth of it questioned and impugned by men of subtle wits and a prostituted conscience,—we seem to grow weary of the name of Christ; and in the fag-end of time mockers and atheistical spirits swarm everywhere; and the holy, meek, sober, humble, heavenly spirit seemeth to be banished out of the christian world, but that a few broken-hearted christians keep it up. And partialities, and sidings, and sects are countenanced, while unquestionable duties are little regarded, except by those few who have the courage to live in a counter-motion to the practices of a loose age, by their holiness and charity, and serious regard to the hopes of another world.

[2.] In every nation. What ups and downs are there in religion? Now the interest of God is in great request, and anon neglected, scorned, and trampled upon. You have Israel's story, Ps. lxxviii. and still the burden is, ver. 37, 'Their hearts were not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant.' Sometimes all afloat for God, but presently quite becalmed. Usually religion is changed in a nation upon two grounds, change of persons, and change of interests. (1.) Change of persons. When good old zealous men are gone, the stage is shifted, and there cometh on a new scene of acts and actors; one generation passeth, and another cometh. As we are told of Egypt, there arose a generation that knew not Joseph, a new family reigned in Egypt, though we have no account of it in scripture; so here a new generation rise, that will scarce own their father's God, at least grow weary of him; and being never pope-bitten, nor acquainted with the former bondage from which their ancestors were freed by the mighty power of God, grow cold in religion, ready to give up all which was retrieved out of former corruptions with so much ado. It is hot work for a while, but afterward it runneth into formality, and religion groweth dead and flat. A new sort of persons arise that forget the old God: Josh. xxiv. 31, 'And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, which had known all the works of the Lord, and what he had done for Israel.' For a while there is a zealous generation; but they decay and die away, and religion decays with them. And the survivors lose their zeal for God and the interests of his kingdom. Salvian compareth religion to a river, which loseth in depth what it getteth in breadth; to a body, which, as it groweth larger and bigger, groweth less active; to a mother, that is the weaker for every birth. *Multiplicatis fidei populis, fides diminuta est.* (2.) By the change of interests. When it

is for their interest to own God, men think they can never bind themselves fast enough to him ; but when the posture of interest is changed, God is laid aside, they grow weary of God ; they deal treacherously with the Lord, and walk willingly after the commandment, Hosea v. 7, 11. And then though they be broken in judgment, all their matters go backward, and not forward, they will not be reclaimed. Jehu drove on furiously, while interest and reason of state carried him to pull down Baal, but still kept up the calves at Dan and Bethel. There he showed himself weary of God. Therefore you see what changes there are in the world.

Now it is a very great evil, sorely resented by God, when his people cast him off : Ps. lxxxi. 11, 'Israel would none of me.' God had chosen them above all nations, but they would not stick close to God. They had seen his miracles, enjoyed his worship ; but by degrees their respect to God was cooled, and they must have the gods of the nations round about them. So God threateneth to resist them that were turned back from the Lord, Zeph. i. 6. In the days of Joshua (in whose time that prophet prophesied), they had professed a great reformation, but soon revolted ; therefore God would be quick and severe upon them. So Jer. ii. 12, 'Be astonished, O ye heavens,' &c. The Lord speaketh as if the sun should be struck blind with astonishment, and the spheres should hurl out their stars, and the lights of heaven look pale upon such a wickedness, that a people should grow weary of their God, and change their God for that which is no God !

*Thirdly*, The causes why a people grow weary of God. Besides those general causes, as to persons and nations, mentioned before, these may be added—

1. Want of love to God. For love is the life and heart of all other duties. As that decayeth, other things decay with it. If the first love be gone, the first works will be gone also ; at least are not carried on with that life, seriousness and complacency, as they should be, Rev. ii. 4, 5. Love is the great principle of our duties ; and therefore it concerneth christians to keep it up in strength. Nothing is hard and grievous to him that loveth God ; he is never weary of serving and glorifying God, 1 John v. 3. Therefore the sense of our obligation to Christ, who hath done such great things for us, should never be worn out.

2. We are too much led by sense ; and if we have not present satisfaction, we soon grow weary of religion, as if all this while we had gone upon a wrong scent : Mal. iii. 14, 'Ye say, It is in vain to serve the Lord ; and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinances ?' Isa. lviii. 3, 'Wherefore have we fasted, and he seeth not ?' &c. People are carried on with great fervour and vigour for a while ; but if they meet not with sensible benefit, tire and grow weary of religion, and attendance upon the duties thereof. But this should not move us ; for God doth not govern the world by sense, but by faith, 2 Cor. v. 7 ; and our eternal reward is sure, 1 Cor. xv. 58. If we faint and give over, we miss of it. And besides, you do not serve God, but tempt and take an essay of him. If you forego religion, because you find not at first what you hope for, you do not make the adventure of faith, but only try conclusions and experiments, and look for such sensible proofs, which God will not always vouchsafe to you.

3. It argueth too much love of the world, which by long importunity prevaileth with us to forsake God, and grow dead and cold in religion, 2 Tim. iv. 10. When we are well at ease, the world draweth us off from the love of God and heavenly things: 1 John ii. 15, 'If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' And where there is not love there is no delight; and where there is no delight there will soon be a weariness or backwardness to his service.

4. It comes from indulgence to the ease of the flesh. As bodily weariness is most incident to the lazy, so is spiritual weariness to those who do not rouse up themselves: Rom. xii. 11, 'Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.' If we will not take pains to keep grace alive, we soon tire and flag in the ways of godliness. We must stir up ourselves: Isa. lxiv. 7, 'There is none that calleth upon thy name, none that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee.' So we by prayer and diligent meditation must keep up the fervour of our spirits; and take heed of a remiss will, which is easily discouraged. There is in the saints an habit of doing good, which is kept up by influence on God's part and diligence on ours. Now he that works by an habit, worketh with delight, is never weary of doing good. There is infused in regeneration an inclination to spiritual and heavenly things, Heb. viii. 10, and Ps. xl. 8. Now this inclination is strengthened into a preparation or readiness, 2 Tim. ii. 21. The inclination is the remote power, the readiness is the next and immediate power; the inclination is from the seed of grace, the readiness from growth and strength of grace. Now next to this readiness, an earnest impulsion, a zeal for the service, when our hearts within us make us willing. And this is continually strengthened in us by God's influence perfecting the habits of grace, Heb. xiii. 21; and by ourselves, Rev. iii. 2; by our watchfulness and diligence.

5. Impatience of troubles, and the manifold discouragements we meet with in the way to heaven: Heb. xii. 3, 'Consider him who endured such a contradiction of sinners, that ye may not wax weary and faint in your minds.' The tediousness of afflictions doth make the mind weary. Elijah speaketh like a man quite tired and spent, 'Take away my life, I am not better than my fathers.' The best christians may be tired and out of breath in bad times: Mat. xxiv. 12, 'Because iniquity doth abound, the love of many waxeth cold.' It is not taken in a general sense, that when there is a deluge of wickedness, sin, by being common, groweth less odious; but in a limited sense, taking iniquity for persecutions, it is at least a damage to zeal.

*Fourthly*, The effects. I shall not mention the gross effect, total apostasy from God, or wholly giving over religion, which doth sufficiently discover itself; but the effects of that partial deficiency or weariness I mentioned. Three things I will name—

1. Boldness in sinning. When men begin to lose their tenderness and strictness, have not such a deep awe upon their hearts, but let loose the reins, and allow themselves to sin freely in thought, sometimes foully in word and act, the heart is not watched, the tongue is not bridled, nor the life regulated with that circumspection and care which becometh saints—the heart is suffered to remain full of envy, pride, and worldliness, and other evil affections; the tongue overfloweth with

idle, if not rotten and unsavoury speeches. In their lives men become vain and careless, more bold and venturous upon temptations and snares. Certainly then men grow weary of the restraints of religion; while they have any love to God, they have a lively hatred of sin, Ps. xcvii. 10. They deny the motions of sin with more resolution; bewail the commission of it with more tenderness, Luke vii. 47; yea, bemoan themselves because of the relics of corruption, Rom. vii. 24. But when men lose their conscientious tenderness, wallow in sin without remorse, cast off their former strictness, not their fond scrupulosity, and enlarge themselves to all manner of vanity, they are grown weary of that exactness which religion calleth for.

2. More coldness in duties of worship. Either it is omitted, or performed perfunctorily, and in a careless, stupid manner. (1.) It is less frequent, as if they could live without God, Jer. ii. 31, 32, Job xxvii. 10; and need not such frequent converse with him, scarce keep an holy acquaintance. Usually this evil groweth upon us by degrees; as the glory of the Lord in Ezekiel did remove not all at once, but by certain steps, from the holy place, the altar of burnt-offering, the outward court, the city, then rested on one of the hills which encompassed the city, as loath to be gone. So men grow cold towards God by degrees. God is first cast out of the heart, then out of the closet, then out of the family, then more indifferent to public duties; then sin begins to manifest itself, till the sinner appear in his own colours. Therefore observe how this weariness and satiety grows upon you, when you seldom think or speak of God, Ps. x. 3, seldom converse with him, grow more strange to him, begin less to love and prize the ordinances and means of grace. God is neglected; you have no mind to meet with him, as formerly you had. Ps. lxxiii. 2, David prayeth, 'That I may see thee, as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.' (2.) When there is less complacency and seriousness in worship. It is more tedious and irksome, and we do not keep up a delightful communion with him, neither in the word nor prayer, nor is meditation of God so sweet as it was wont to be, but more grievous and troublesome. The word was the solace of your souls, 'sweeter than honey or the honeycomb,' Ps. cxix. 103; but now you are gospel-glutted and Christ-glutted; manna loseth its relish with you; prayer is looked upon as a task and a penance, rather than a privilege. The throne of grace, which was the porch of heaven, is now neglected; and though you were glad to meet together and call upon the name of God, now it is an heavy bondage to be tied to accustomed opportunities of meeting with God. You could say, as David, Ps. civ. 34, 'My meditation of him shall be sweet; I will rejoice in the Lord.' Now thoughts of God rush into the mind like unwelcome guests; you like not to retain them in your minds.

3. Less care and study to please God. Surely they who value and esteem his favour above all things make it their business and work to please him, Col. i. 10, Isa. lvi. 4, 1 Thes. iv. 1, 2 Cor. v. 9. Now when it is a more indifferent thing to you whether God be pleased or displeased, this is not so greatly minded; our intention is less sincere, and we more mind the pleasing of ourselves and the pleasing of men. We are grown weary of him. They that keep up that high esteem of him can be content to do anything and suffer anything rather than dis-

please God and lose his favour. His love is their life, his displeasure as formidable as death itself to them, Gen. xxxix. 9. So also they are willing to suffer anything, Phil. iii. 8-10.

*Fifthly*, What a sad estate of soul it is appeareth—(1.) By the heinousness of the sin; (2.) Terribleness of the judgment.

1. The heinousness of the sin.

[1.] It is an horrible contempt of God, after trial, to fall off from God, and return to our carnal pleasures and satisfactions again. Those that never chose him sin less than those that grow weary of him after choice; for the apostle saith, 2 Peter ii. 21, 'Better they had never known the way of righteousness.' For they do in effect pronounce, after some trial and experience, that the world is better than God, or proclaim to the world that there is not in God what they expected in him.

[2.] It is a very senseless and unreasonable sin. God never gave you cause or occasion to grow weary of him. He challengeth Israel: Micah vi. 3, 'O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me;' Jer. ii. 5, what is it maketh you weary of God? His commands? They are not grievous, but all holy, just, and good. His trials are not severe, nor above measure, nor beyond strength. His rewards are not doubtful or questionable, but sure, if we had but the patience to wait for them. 'Many good works have I done among you; for which of those do you stone me?' Much good he hath done us; what is it makes us weary?

[3.] There is much ingratitude in it. He hath given much cause to the contrary. There is none begin with God but they have an invitation to go on—in God himself a new inviting sweetness to keep up our affections fresh and lively, 1 Peter ii. 3, Ps. xxxviii. 8. In his ways much serenity and peace, Gal. vi. 16; yea, strength if we be sincere with him, Prov. x. 29; besides a promise of supply. It is not only matter of usual experience, but secured by promise: Isa. xl. 30, 31, 'The youths shall faint and be weary, but they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength.' Look, as in heaven God is always to the blessed spirits new and fresh every morning; so in the church, when we taste anything it doth not cloy—there is more to be had in God, still greater things than these. In carnal and earthly things, the more we try them the imperfections which formerly lay hid are discovered upon fruition; therefore, all these things are less in enjoyment than they were in expectation. But it is not so in these spiritual things; every taste should provoke appetite.

2. The terribleness of the judgment.

[1.] On nations. When men have opened the doors to the king of glory, and then throw him out again, or bid him depart out of their coasts for temporal reasons, as the Gadarenes did Christ, God taketh it heinously: 2 Chron. xii. 8, 'They shall know my service, and the service of the kingdoms of the countries;' that is, they should see what a difference there was between serving God and serving enemies.

[2.] On churches. Rev. ii. 5, 'Behold I will come against thee quickly.' When their zeal of christianity was abated, he threateneth a removal of their candlestick. If a people grow weary of Christ, they that would not acknowledge his worth shall know the want of him to

their bitter cost. God would unchurch them, by removing his ordinances from them, and give them over to those errors and delusions they affected and lingered after.

[3.] For particular persons, it layeth them open to God's severe correction, Hosea v. 15. The great use of afflictions is to quicken us; if God's discipline smart, we may thank ourselves for it. God maketh them the sharper, that we may not dote upon the world, and neglect him, and grow cold in his service, and to awaken a lively sense of religion in us.

[4.] For total defection. There is dreadful vengeance appointed for them that prefer the creature before God, bodies before souls, and earth before heaven: Heb. x. 9, 10, 'They draw back to perdition.'

*Use.* Take heed of growing weary of God.

1. Man is a very changeable creature, and the course of temptations may be altered, 1 Kings ii. 28, and 1 Kings xiii. 4-19.

2. There is a cursed satiety. Our affections are deadened to things to which we are accustomed. Manna is loathed by the Israelites: Nothing but this manna. The full stomach loatheth the honeycomb. When first acquainted with religion, we are more affected with it, but afterwards glutted. Certainly we more admire grace, and are more affected with it, when first called out of darkness into light, 1 Peter ii. 9. In a deep thirst our taste is more lively; but yet the sense of this wonderful mercy should never be forgotten by us, nor should we ever lose our gospel relish.

3. When we grow weary of God, we take little notice of it. The generality of professors, if they do not wholly cast off religion, are satisfied though their love to God be exceedingly cold; and as long as they do a few outward things for God, which they had rather leave undone than do them, do not take notice of the decay of their principle, which is faith working by love. But God noteth this; for he weigheth the spirits, and all is but tithing, mint, and cummin, if we pass over judgment and the love of God, Luke xi. 42.

4. The issue of this distemper of mind is so dreadful, that we cannot sufficiently watch against the first declinings, for these are the cause of all the rest. When you begin to grow careless, strike in effectually and rouse up thyself, 2 Tim. i. 6, *ἀναζωοποιεῖν*, as the priests were to keep in their holy fire of the altar. Otherwise when the evil heart beginneth to draw us from God, we shall be hardened in it, Heb. iii. 12, 13. It was a delight to me to think of God, to speak of him, or to him; how is it that my heart is gone off from these things? God is as lovely as ever, and sin as odious.

5. Worldly lusts must be mortified; for if our love be pre-engaged, God will be defrauded. As when the pipe breaketh out, the water cannot go forwards. It is an inordinate affection to other things that deadeneth our hearts to God.

## A FAST SERMON.

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*Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts.  
But ye said, Wherein shall we return?—MAL. iii. 7.*

THOUGH the time of this prophecy be not exactly specified, yet the matter sheweth that Malachi prophesied after the return from captivity. When the people were established again in their possessions, they soon forgot God and the mercy of their deliverance, and polluted themselves with divers sins and abominations. Therefore the prophet is sent to expostulate with them, which he doth in a warm and close way of arguing. The sins charged upon them are pollution of God's worship, and profaneness in the people; but in the priests, who should teach them better, ignorance and partiality in God's law. Besides, in the people again, carelessness in worship, a parsimonious detention of God's rights, marriages with infidels, polygamy, abuses of divorce, blasphemous and hard thoughts of God, contemptuous speeches of his providence. Observe how soon a people may forget the mercy of their deliverance. A man would have thought that persons newly come out of a long and tedious captivity should have been more awful and thankful. But man is man still; and no moral means will cure them, without God's special and powerful grace. They were tainted by long converse with the heathen, and smelt of Babylon when they came back to Zion, having brought home the sins of the country with them where they had been scattered. To such a people is Malachi sent; and his dealing with them is suitable; sometimes boldly expostulating, other whiles sharply threatening, again seriously exhorting the people.

The verse, of which the text is a branch, carrieth the face of a sweet exhortation to repentance: a duty very seasonable; for, saith he, 'from the days of your fathers ye have gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?'

In which words there is—

1. An accusation—*Ye have gone away.*
2. An exhortation—*Return unto me.*
3. The rejoinder or reply of the people.

1. In the accusation there is the nature of their sin; they had gone off from God's ordinances, and had not kept them. Sin is a going away from God's ordinances, or a breach of his law, 1 John iii. 4; and the law may be broken, either by omitting the good required, or doing the evils forbidden. This people are supposed to be charged with both in

the text. Ye are gone away from mine ordinances, by doing things contrary to the law ; there is transgression, or sins of commission. And ye observed not what the law required, ye have not kept them ; there sins of omission are implied. The next thing in the accusation is their long continuance in their sins, 'from the days of your fathers.' The longer we lie in sin, the more heinous and provoking it is, and the worse it is remedied, and it bringeth us nearer to the curse and actual judgment ; for God will not bear always. A chimney long foul and not swept, is fired at length.

2. The exhortation. There you may take notice of the duty, the motive and authority with which it is backed. (1.) The duty, 'Return to me.' They that are gone away from God's ordinances are gone away from God himself ; by breaking his laws they renounce their fealty to their rightful Lord, and turn the back upon him, and not the face. Therefore repentance towards God, Acts xx. 21, is necessary to set the creature right again, and put him in his proper place and posture, called therefore a turning or returning to God often in scripture, because the bent of the heart is altered, and set to love, please, serve, and glorify God. This is the duty we must mind, if we mean to be safe. And it must be done, not by a few, but all, or many, at least ; but especially every one must look to himself. Many are willing others should turn from their sins, but stay behind themselves. No ; let us come jointly and generally, every one of us bring our bucket to quench the common burning : Hosea vi. 1, 'Come let us return unto the Lord, for he hath torn, and he will heal us ; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.' This turning is not an hanging our heads for a day like a bulrush ; but a putting away the evil of our doings, and a fixing and engaging our hearts to love God, and live to him ; this is the duty. (2.) The motive is, 'And I will turn unto you.' If we turn to God in a way of duty, he will turn to us in a way of mercy. We turn to him by his preventing grace, and God turneth to us by his rewarding grace, giving us blessing, comfort, peace. Our returning to God is our great duty ; his returning to us is our great happiness. (3.) The authority with which both are backed, in those words, 'saith the Lord of hosts ;' that is, which hath all things at his command, to arm them for us or against us, according as we make him a friend or an enemy. (1st.) This bindeth the duty. Remember with whom your business lieth, with the Lord of hosts. It is ill to be found in a course of disobedience to him. He that commandeth all things, shall he not command your hearts ? (2d.) It assureth the promise ; for what difficulties soever lie in the way of our happiness, the Lord of hosts can remove them.

3. I come now to the people's answer and reply, or entertainment of this exhortation : 'But ye said, Wherein shall we return ?' (1.) It is not a serious question, but a cavil, not a desire of information, but a bold expostulation ; for it is mentioned here with a 'but ;' 'but ye said ;' and it suiteth with the stout and stubborn genius of this people, who would not yield to anything that might infer their guilt. See it all along : Mal. i. 2, 'I have loved you, saith the Lord ; but ye said, Wherein hast thou loved us ?' They remember the old desolations, and were not satisfied with the present mercies. So ver. 6, 'Hear, O



priests, that despise my name ; and ye say, Wherein do we despise thy name ?' They would not own any such thing. So ver. 7, 'Ye have offered polluted bread on mine altar ; and yet say, Wherein have we polluted thee ?' They thought everything good enough for God, and yet would not own that they had any lessening thoughts of his majesty. So chap. ii. 14, God rejected their offerings, and they say, 'Wherefore ?' they saw no cause. So chap. iii. 8, 'Ye hath robbed me, saith the Lord ;' as they detained the maintenance due for the support of his worship ; 'and yet ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee ?' So ver. 13, 'Your words have been stout against me ; yet ye say, Wherein have we been stout against thee ?' Thus did they outface all challenges. Therefore it is not a serious inquiry, like that, Acts ii. 37, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do ?' and Acts xvi. 30. These speak as owning their sin, and desiring to be directed into a better course. But in the text they did not ask as desiring to be satisfied in the duty, but as quarrelling at the application of it to themselves ; wherein had they sinned, that they should need to return ? It is an exception to the charge, that they had not departed from God. (2.) This question or reply was not in words. The scriptures are wont to attribute such sayings and speeches to wicked men as agree to their manners ; if their mouths do not say so, their practice and carriage saith so ; as Ps. xiv. 1, 'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.' There are explicit thoughts expressly conceived in our minds, and implicit thoughts which lurk in our hearts, and are known from the interpretation of our actions, when these are run up to their proper principle. Men live as if they were influenced by such a thought ; what could he do worse if he should actually say, 'There is no God ?' So he shows us what and wherein we offend ; not that they speak it in plain terms, but they clearly showed such was their meaning : What have we done amiss ? or wherein do we depart, that thou biddest us return ? that is, the exhortation was lost upon them, as if they needed no repentance nor reformation.

*Doct.* That a people who are apparently gone off from the ways of God, are not easily brought to a sight and sense of the necessity of returning to him.

The point is true—(1.) Of mankind in general ; (2.) Of nations ; (3.) Of particular persons.

*First,* The point is true of mankind in general, who, being fallen from God, continue in their apostasy as long as they can with any tolerable shift and pretence of satisfaction. There is in all some false imaginary happiness, and some counterfeit righteousness, wherein they please themselves. The false happiness is as their God, and the superficial righteousness is as their Christ and mediator ; and so they are secure and senseless, till God open their eyes by a powerful conviction. They neither seek after another happiness, nor trouble themselves about the way whereby they may obtain it.

1. That men set up a false happiness in their carnal estate needeth not much proof ; for ever since man fell from God, he adhered to the creature : Jer. ii. 13, we left the fountain, and we betook ourselves to the cistern. And if we can make a shift to patch up a sorry happiness here in the world apart from God, we neither care for him, nor

will come at him : Jer. ii. 31, 'Wherefore say my people, We are lords; we will come no more unto thee?' They love to live of themselves. Our pleasure, profit, and honour, that is our God; and while we enjoy these without control, we look no further; and if we can sail with a full current in worldly felicity, we count ourselves well a-paid. Certainly we do not seek our happiness in an invisible God, nor can we wait to enjoy it in an invisible world. The flesh must be pleased; and the more it is pleased, we think ourselves the more happy.

(2.) That there is something in us which is instead of Christ to us, to keep the conscience quiet when our affections take up with present things. Our happiness is to satisfy our desires, our righteousness is to allay our fears. Now here we run to an external course of religion, as if it would make us perfect, as appertaining to the conscience. We seek to something external, which is diversified according to men's education. If pagans, to the *ἔργον νόμου*, Rom. ii. 15. If we do some external works, and avoid some gross sins, wherein shall we return? If Jews, to ritual observances of Moses, and there is our righteousness : Rom. x. 3, 'For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.' Out of ignorance and pride in their legal observances, they rejected the obedience of the gospel. If they be christians, they rest in baptism and the name of christians, or the outward profession of the gospel, without coming under the power of it. The apostles obviated this, 1 Peter iii. 21, and 2 Tim. iii. 5. Among christians, who are divided in opinions, interests, and affections, some rest in this form, some in that; some that they are of a church which claimeth infallibility and damneth all others that are not of their own way; and if they be herded there, they think they are safe. They are catholics, others are heretics; and out of the church there is no salvation, but there they promise it themselves without scruple; though God knoweth, and we may easily see that of all christians they are in the most hazardous condition; and it is a very large charity that can allow them any probability of salvation. Others have their external forms, wherein they place all their religion, though accompanied with little life and power of godliness. And others take up a stricter form, and delude their souls with the fallacy and self-conceit of disproving other men's errors, when their hearts are not a jot the better constituted towards God, or disposed to the heavenly life; if they stand on the vantage ground, they are not the taller men. And so as long as men make any shift to live quietly in the carnal state, in vain do you press them to return to God. Thus it is with mankind in general.

*Secondly*, As to nations, which is the case here; for a national return to God preventeth national judgments. Now how hard is it to convince them of a necessity of returning to God, though they are apparently gone off from his ways!

1. Because the commonness and continuance of sin taketh away the odiousness of it. By custom and tract of time, corruptions get esteem and veneration, that they are accounted a great part of religion; and God is outlawed as it were, and Christ's prescriptions and institutions are looked upon as innovations, against which the zeal of the country

is engaged. And though, in pressing men to return to God, we do not, as Moses, open a new fountain in the wilderness, but, with Isaac, dig the wells which his father had opened before, because the Philistines had stopped them and filled them up with earth, Gen. xxv. 18; yet the world cannot bear it; but say unto us, as they did to him, Go from us. It was Nazianzen's plea, in reviving the doctrine of the trinity, after the church had been long oppressed by the Arians: Though we endeavour to take away the earth with which the old fountains have been obstructed and filled up, it will not do. That which hath been received by tradition from their fathers, though vain, they will not part with, 1 Peter i. 18; and John iv. 20, 'Our fathers worshipped in this mountain.' Inveterate superstitions are not easily removed. In the text, 'From the days of your fathers ye are gone away from my ordinances;' and no wonder that they said, 'Wherein shall we return?'

2. Because of some show of worship and religion left among a people. If they be not wholly gone from God, they will not own that they are in part gone from his ordinances; and so reformation becometh desperate, lest they should seem to lose the whole, while they yield that they have erred in part. Antichrist had not gotten such a great advantage over christian people if he did not sit in the temple of God, 2 Thes. ii. 4. And the Jews did not so often cry out, The temple of the Lord! the temple of the Lord! as they cry out, The church! the church! and all corruptions and usurpations must be borne out by the name of the church and the authority of the church, and we must not so much as peep and mutter against the church. And thus Christ's ordinances are turned against himself, and the beast pusheth with the horns of the lamb, Rev. xiii. 11. Church constitution is used to oppress Christ's interest, and the most serious people that he hath in the world. Press them to return from whence they are fallen, and still they have this buckler to ward off all invitations of reformation: The church hath decreed otherwise, and the church cannot err; and with this *mormo* or bugbear they fright and drive off all motions of returning to God.

3. Because they are in part reformed already, and purged from some of their defilements, and will you have them returning still? These people had been in Babylon, but now they had built the temple, and the sacrifices and worship were restored, and therefore think they might well say, 'Wherein shall we return?' Had they not done enough already? Must reformations be reformed, and no end of them? Alas! Christ gets up by degrees, for the world disputeth it with him inch by inch. And if his messengers would be contented with half Christ, they might live in pomp and ease as others do—*Si dimidio Christi*, &c. The ark and mercy-seat removes, till it was seated in its proper place, from Shiloh to Kirjath-jearim, then to the house of Obed-edom, then to the city of David, till at length placed in the temple. We accept with thankfulness as much as God alloweth us and the world will bear, and are ready to support the common christianity with our utmost endeavours, provided we be not bound to consent to encroachments, and to approve imperfections and defects, as if these spots of the church were the beauty of it. We observe—All cannot be done at one time, and we must wait God's leisure. The best kings

of Judah could not bring the people to return as far as God would have them, and they themselves would have them: 2 Chron. xx. 33, 'Howbeit the high places were not taken away; for as yet the people had not prepared their hearts to the God of their fathers;' 2 Chron. xxxiii. 17, 'Nevertheless the people did sacrifice in the high places, yet to the Lord their God only.' We bless God for the abolishing of idolatry, for the zeal of the first reformers, the consent and allowance of our princes, that Christ is so far onward in his way; and we abhor those that go upon that principle, the worse the better, as being wholly bent to separation, division, and destruction; but yet we patiently and humbly wait for a more thorough returning to the Lord.

4. Another reason why a people are not easily brought to a sight and sense of the necessity of a national repentance is because they many times return feignedly, as in Josiah's time: Jer. iii. 10, 'This people hath not returned to me with their whole hearts, but feignedly, saith the Lord.' There seemed to be a thorough reformation then, for that godly prince searched into all nasty corners that he might cleanse them; but many discontinued their practice that yet hankered after them in their hearts, and secretly kept up their abominations. And Zephaniah was sent in his days: Zeph. i. 4, 'I will utterly consume all things, saith the Lord.' Why! will the Lord never be pleased? Yes; God is a good God, but the people dealt deceitfully with him; they seemed to turn to the Lord when they did not. There may be a face of strictness when there is little of the power of godliness, and men contradict not only the principles of their religion, but their own professions.

*Thirdly*, Come we now to particular persons. When they are apparently gone off from God, it is hard to bring them to acknowledge their sin, and to see a necessity of returning to him. I will enforce this by two considerations—

1. That a people professing repentance in the general, yet, when it cometh to particulars, wince and start, and will not be convinced of apparent sins, and then reply, 'Wherein shall we return?'

2. That is but a notion of repentance, not a real exercise of it, when we profess to return to God, and know not wherein we should return.

1. For the first, I will prove it by two things—(1.) The several shifts men use to divert a particular acknowledgment of sin; (2.) The causes of it.

[1.] The several shifts men use.

(1.) Men rest in generals, and say, We are all sinners, and raise a great outcry against sin. But alas! that is but a notion, and too much in the air to work upon the heart and conscience. Confession should be particular; you must fetch out your sins by head and shoulders till you find out the Achan, the most particular and most affective. Blunt iron, that toucheth many points, maketh but a bruise; a needle, that toucheth but one point, entereth to the quick. As Nebuchadnezzar dreamed a dream, but could not tell what it was, Dan. ii. 5; or as Ahimaaz brought David tidings of a tumult, but could specify no particularity, 2 Sam. xii. 27; so many confess to

God sins, but do not name the sins by which they have provoked him. Sin in the general is the common pack-horse upon which men lay all their burdens; it is long of sin; but what sin I pray you? If it be sin, amend then, avoid sin. There they start aside. Zanchy observeth the apostle saith not, 1 John i. 9. *Si confiteamur nos peccatores esse; sed si confiteamur peccata nostra*—He doth not say, If we confess that we are sinners, but, If we confess our sins. We should particularise those that most wound the conscience. Malefactors in men's courts are not indicted in general terms, but fact and circumstances are related. But to God we confess by wholesale and in the lump, say we are sinners in the general, but will scarce be known of any particular sin we have committed. God saith, Hosea v. 15, 'I will return to my place till they acknowledge their offence.' And again, 1 Kings viii. 38, 'When he shall acknowledge his own plague, and the sore of his own heart.' In deep distress, inward or outward, there is some concealed sin which we must find out, without which much show of prayer and humble confession of a sinful people will be little worth.

(2.) They confess particular faults, but not the sin God aims at. There are some creditable sins and loved errors, like diseases, that are incident to the best complexions and constitutions. It may be human frailty, when it is gross enormity; distractions in duties, when tippling should be mentioned rather; some defects of love to Christ, when it is gross inclinations to the world and sensual delights, &c. As Moses pleaded he had a stammering tongue, he was not eloquent, &c.; but God gently toucheth his privy sore: Exod. iv. 19, 'And the Lord said unto Moses in Midian, Go, return into Egypt: for all the men are dead which sought thy life.' Moses pleaded not that, but God knew what was the great impediment and let in the case. So it is with us, we plead this and that, confess sins that we are guilty of indeed, but overlook the main sin.

(3.) Transferring or putting it upon others; they care not upon whose back the burden is cast to ease their own shoulders. Adam puts off the sin upon his wife, and obliquely upon God himself: Gen. iii. 12, 'The woman which thou gavest me,' &c. Aaron puts it off upon the solicitations of the people: Exod. xxxii. 22, 'Thou knowest this people, that they are set on mischief,' &c. Pilate washed his hands, but yet he could not wash off his guilt, though he said, 'Look you to it,' Mat. xxvii. 24. So among others, sometimes the people shift off their burden on their rulers and governors, whereas the princes smart often for the people's sins, Prov. xxviii. 2; on the other hand, the prince on the people, Zech. xi. 3; as head and stomach mutually vitiate and disorder one another. Again, people on their ministers, ministers on the people; but both are punished: Luke vi. 39, 'The blind lead the blind, and both fall into the ditch;' Ezek. iii. 20, 'The wicked shall surely die; but if thou givest not warning, his blood will I require at thy hands.' Oh! what cause have all of us to acknowledge our offences and humble ourselves before the Lord, and to return to a more serious discharging of our duty! So among us; one party chargeth the calamities of the nation upon another, as if they said, 'Wherein shall we return?' The stricter party charges it on the

profane, the profane on the stricter party; but we all see cause to charge it on ourselves: 2 Chron. xxviii. 10, 'But are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord our God?' He would have them seriously to consider their own ways, and dive into their own hearts; though God had made them the scourge to punish the children of Judah, had not they their sins also? One party may have the advantage of another in point of power and interest; but they all stand upon the same level before God. All have miscarried, and neither the one nor the other can say, 'Wherein shall we return?'

(4.) They outface all challenges; and when they have done apparent injury to God, others, and their own souls, they will not see it, but reject all convictions: Jer. xvi. 10, 'It shall come to pass, when thou shalt show this people all these words, and they shall say, Wherefore hath the Lord pronounced all this great evil against us? or what is our iniquity? or what is our sin that we have committed against the Lord our God?' &c. Wicked men are pertinacious or presumptuous, either to deny or excuse their sins, though never so notorious and conspicuous; choosing rather to charge God with iniquity, as if he had punished them without cause or above measure, than to acknowledge their perfidious carriage towards him. So Jer. ii. 23, 'How canst thou say, I am not polluted, I have not gone after Baalim? See thy way in the valley, know what thou hast done,' &c.

(5.) By censuring faithful reprovers: Jer. vi. 10, 'The word of the Lord is to them a reproach.' It is a sad crisis and temper of a people to count matter of reproof matter of reproach; and let a man deal never so faithfully, they say he doth but rail. Though truths be delivered never so wisely, strongly, and with clear deduction from scripture, and with never so much caution and circumspection, yet guilt is touchy, and cannot brook it. And this is the fault of the religious party, the fooleries adopted into their religion.

[2.] The causes of it.

(1.) The blindness of self-love, whereby we are conceited of ourselves, and of our own gifts, and of our own good estate, and will not have the fallacy and cheat that we put upon ourselves discovered, Prov. xvi. 2. Especially in such practices as are in vogue and esteem, Luke xvi. 15. There are certain sins that are authorised by the ignorant false zeal of some good men, and cried up as a piece of religion. Now the discovery of this is irksome; conceits of our own goodness will not permit a debate about them: John ix. 40, 'Are we blind also?' It is a sign of a naughty heart when men cannot endure to hear of their sins and errors.

(2.) Loathness to acknowledge our shame. Certainly a man is loath to take shame to himself, and, though conscious of an offence, will not seriously confess it even to God. Adam hid himself, Gen. iii.; David kept silence, Ps. xxxii.; and is forced to urge his backward heart by a practical decree, ver 5. And Job maketh it the common nature of man: Job xxxi. 33, 'If I have covered my transgressions, as Adam, by hiding my sins in my bosom.' Some take the name *Adam* properly for the first man, whose fall and covering his transgression were remarkable; others take it appellatively, as Junius, *more humano*, after the manner of all mankind, who use to palliate and cloak their sins.

(3.) Indulgence to our lusts. Serious acknowledgment is a means to mortify them, and forsake them; for men cannot easily continue in sins for which they solemnly judge themselves before the Lord. Now all the godly, none excepted, have some tender parts in their soul, which they are loath should be touched, some evils which are as their Delilahs wherein they delight most; as David had his iniquity, from which he kept himself, Ps. xviii. 23. And every man, besides their general inclination to all sins, hath a peculiar and particular inclination to some bosom sins, which their constitution and education does prompt them unto, or course of life does minister occasion of. And these are the evils in which men should prove their sincerity, as in not sparing them, so in not covering or hiding of them, but confessing them with all bitterness of spirit before the Lord. Surely you should return from every known sin. For he that reserveth and alloweth any one darling sin, is no forsaker of sin, but doth only make choice of that sin which he would live in. As what profit is it to guard one part of the city walls, when the other are left open to every assault? But yet here is an indulgence which maketh us touchy and tender of having this sin meddled with; as it is seen in Herod, Mark vi. 19, 20. And not in him only; but some good men are impatient of reproof when their Delilah is touched; therefore it is hard to convince them, to bring them to see wherein they should return.

2. Now I come to my second consideration, that it is but a notion of repentance, not a real exercise of it, when we profess to return to God, and know not wherein we should return. What do you call returning to God? Long harangues against sin in prayer? This may be done by hypocrites, who raise up a puppet of sin in their own fancies, and cudgel it with barren invectives, but yet regard iniquity as a darling in their hearts. Surely real repentance is when anything that was amiss before is mended. It is either the reformation of some particular disorder by which God was provoked, or a general fixing of the heart to God, that we may love him more and serve him better, that it may sensibly appear that we have gotten good by every serious act of humiliation before God. But to bring it to some head, no repentance is serious and real but what is honourable to God and profitable to us. Now the more particular it is, the more these ends are accomplished.

[1.] Solemn repentance honoureth God; and therefore it is often said to be a giving God glory, Mal. ii. 2; Rev. xvi. 9, 'They repented not to give him glory;' Josh. xvii. 19, 'My son, I pray thee, give glory to the God of Israel.' True confession and humiliation for sin under judgments doth especially give God a double glory—the glory of his truth, and the glory of his justice: the one relates to his laws, the other to his providence. (1.) The glory of his truth: Hosea vii. 12, 'I will chastise them, as their congregation hath heard.' God herein sheweth that his word shall take effect, that his threatenings are not a vain scarecrow, that men shall feel the danger which they would not believe. When he suits the judgment to the sin, according to the rule of the word, we are convinced of this, and so give God the glory of his truth. (2.) His righteousness. God loveth to be clear when he judgeth, Ps. li. 4, or to have the reason of his dispensation seen, that

he may have the glory, and we may have the shame: Jer. ii. 17, 'Hast thou not procured this unto thyself?' and is not this thy 'way in the valley?' as we say to children, Is not this your eating green fruit? This silenceth us, and honoureth God.

[2.] It is profitable to us to know what sin God aimeth at; that God never afflicts but for a cause, is necessary to be known, for the honour of God; and for what cause, that is necessary to be known, for our profit, that by the bitterness of the effects it may be made more odious to us; for our knowledge is more by the effect than the cause, Jer. ii. 19. By the evils we suffer God sheweth us the evil which we commit, and that we may know what to redress: 1 Cor. xi. 30, 'For this cause many are weak and sickly among you.' Particular repentance respects particular sins.

• Use 1. It informs us how difficult the work of conversion is, when the first work, and that which is but a common work, and may be lost, namely conviction, is so hard. Such is our blindness and partiality in our cause, our stupidity and hardness of heart in interpreting the word and providence, that when we are called upon to return to God, we know not wherein to return. Oh! what ado is there to bring a man to a kindly conviction of sin! The knowledge of the disease is but the first step to the cure; but when, under deadly spiritual distempers, we are heart-whole, and will not see our folly and filthiness, that we may turn to the Lord, and carry it so carelessly as if we needed no repentance—*Ex pede Herculem*—by this piece of the work judge of the rest—

Use 2. To exhort us to two things—

1. Take heed of the shifts whereby men beguile themselves, and if they do anything towards turning to God, it is but personated, a part acted for a day; but God is not more glorified, nor are they ever the better.

[1.] Take heed of outfacing open crimes. We are so shameless, as to clear ourselves when our wickedness is evident: Jer. v. 19, 'And it shall come to pass, when ye say, Wherefore doth the Lord our God all these things unto us? Like as ye have forsaken me, and served strange gods in your land, so shall ye serve strangers in a land that is not yours.' So Jer. xiii. 22, 'If thou say in thine heart, Wherefore are all these things come upon me? For the greatness of thine iniquity are thy skirts discovered, and thy heels made bare.' In our afflictions many thoughts boil up in our minds, and among the rest, about the cause of our troubles, Why doth God deal so severely with us? And we are at a loss in apparent causes; so wretched and sottish is our self-conceit, as if we were to be taught and told that which all the world can see. The foul blotches of our wickedness do appear, and yet we are loath to take notice of it, and bear it out as if we had done nought amiss; like the whore in the Proverbs, Prov. xxx. 20, 'She wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness.' An allusion to one that has eaten fat meat; when the mouth is wiped all is clean. This is outfacing.

[2.] Take heed of transferring. Man is mightily given to it; sometimes charging it on the wickedness of former generations, that we may remove it far enough from ourselves. This is in the nature of



man. Ask the Jews the reason of all their present calamities; and they will tell you their fathers worshipping the calf in the wilderness; but this will not fit us, for we have overpassed the deeds of the wicked of former generations, Acts v. 28. They have far outgone them in sin. Many declaim against the evil of the times, like the crafty lapwing that goeth screeking abroad to draw the fowler from her own nest. Have you no sins of your own to bemoan? Are not the times the worse for you? Is there nothing wherein you may exercise your personal repentance in reference to God? The sins of the land, you should be affected with them as if they were your own, because of your concern for God's glory, and because you be members of that society that hath so greatly sinned against God. So did Moses: Exod. xxxiv. 9, 'Pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance:' so Daniel, chap. ix. 5, 6, 'We have sinned and committed iniquity,' &c.; and ver. 13, the holy man joineth himself with the common body of which he was a member. Some transfer it upon the opposite faction, maliciously misinterpreting and misapplying providence to the disgrace and disparagement of those from whom they differ; as Shimei imputed all David's calamities to his severity to the house of Saul: 2 Sam. xvi. 8, 'And the Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned.' Thus men take the boldness to sit as a coroner's inquest on the souls of others, by their bold glosses and comments on the providence of God, and make it speak their own language. When they themselves live in apparent defiance of God, they will censure his people for doubtful matters, or lesser failings. God doth not use to contend with a nation for lesser faults or ordinary infirmities; nor do his judgments come for doubtful things, but the apparent breaches of unquestionable duties: Hosea iv. 2, 'By swearing, lying, killing, stealing, committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood.' Now for men guilty of such like crimes to lay all on the people of God, it is as if a man overgrown with leprosy should upbraid another with a pimple in his face, or that hath in his drunkenness plunged himself into the sea, should revile another for slipping into a ditch. But then, on the other side, the people of God ought not to put off this wholly from themselves, as if they were to bewail the sins of others when they appear in these duties. For—

(1.) They have their sins; a spirit of division and unsubmission to all that may be called lawful power, freely speaking evil of dignities; a censorious spirit, and a spirit of detraction, which men professing godliness make little conscience of; a spirit of murmuring against God and man; a libertine spirit, that runneth out more to pride than duties; impaling, enclosing religion within a party, and care not what hard things they think, speak, and do against others, thus appropriating Christ, as if the word of God came to them only, making private and doubtful opinions the characteristic of a godly man; hazarding the main of religion for the interest of a party, and fighting apart from the body of Christ's army, anathematising a christian nation, considering how far they differ, not how far they agree; railing against and obstructing the office of the most useful ministry Christ hath upon earth that I know of or ever read of.

Besides their many personal miscarriages, whereby they have offended God.

(2.) The sins of professors, yea, the regenerate amongst them, are most provoking, Amos iii. 2. They sin against a nearer relation, which is more than if a stranger did these things, 1 Peter i. 14; against a principle of life within, 1 John iii. 9. There is more unkindness in their sins, John vi. 67; more knowledge of their duty, James iv. 17. They have felt more of the sting of sin, Josh. xxii. 17, tasted the bitter waters. They are in covenant with God, Lev. xxvi. 25. They make profession of a strict obedience, Neh. v. 9. They harden and justify the wicked, Ezek. xvi. 51.

2. Inquire wherein you should return. Find out the provoking sin. To do so—(1.) There needeth much searching and self-communing, Lam. iii. 40. If you know wherein you have departed from God, you may know wherein to return to him. (2.) There needeth much prayer. Beg of God, Job xxxiv. 32: 'That which I see not, teach thou me;' seek for a further information from God, if anything divideth between you and him. Your hearts are deceitful; he must give you light. (3.) There needeth much observation of your own ways: Prov. iv. 26, 'Ponder the path of thy feet;' then you will soon see how God is dishonoured and provoked by you. But if all this will not do—

[1.] Let me tell you, for apparent wicked men to inquire wherein to return, what special sin God aimeth at, it is but a deceit they put on themselves, to leave the matter of repentance on an uncertain debate. And it is all one, as if a man should break through a thorn-hedge, and curiously desire to know which thorn hath pricked him. For those that are overgrown with sin, it is enough to know that the author of all afflictions is God, the cause is sin, and the end is repentance; that they must be new creatures, or they are undone for ever. To be more particular with them is to defeat the purpose of the dispensation, and to put them upon the leaving of one sin, when God calleth for a change of state, or a passing from death to life; and this is but like mending an hole in an house that is ready to drop down.

[2.] For a serious penitent, God will instruct him: Ps. xciv. 12, 'Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and instructest out of thy law.' Partly by the word; common and avowed truths, well considered and improved, will state much of our guilt, Rom. i. 18. Heb. ii. 2. Partly by checks of conscience. What saith conscience, awakened by misery? Gen. xlii. 21, 'And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us;' so Isa. lix. 12, 'Our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us; for our transgressions are with us, and as for our iniquities, we know them.' Partly by the complexion and face of providence; we may know what is the procuring sin. God is fain to teach us, as Gideon taught the men of Succoth, by briars and thorns. By the evil we suffer he sheweth us the evil which we have committed, and so helpeth our faith by our sense.

[3.] It informs us how we may keep a true fast to God. We have had many superficial mock fasts. If we were once brought to a

sight and sense of returning to God, or a serious exercise of repentance upon those days, they would turn to a better account. What is there wanting?

(1.) A thorough acquaintance with ourselves. Religion in general lieth much in a true and unfeigned knowledge of ourselves. I am sure the life of this duty dependeth upon it. Alas! till a man thoroughly understand himself, his own heart, dispositions, inclinations, ways and actions, how can he humble himself before God? But most of us are great strangers at home; and while our eyes run to the ends of the earth, we do too little examine our own case, that we may be acquainted with the temper and frame of our own hearts, that we may have a just view of our own image and likeness, as it is represented to us in the word of God, James i. 23, 24. We are often discovered to ourselves in our own proper shape; but we forget it, pass it over, and do not consider whether anything be amiss in us, yea or nay. If we see it, it is but transiently; do not consider it so as to reform or amend anything. And then we are apt with those in the text to say, 'Wherein shall we return?' Alas! a few serious thoughts would present us to ourselves with a surprising monstrous appearance, and beget much self-abhorrence in us. How unpleasant soever such a sight be, yet it would be very profitable to us whenever we come to humble ourselves before God. What advantage this would be to us in prayer and praises. Remember thou art a sinner!

(2.) There is wanting contrition and sorrow of heart, or a sensible feeling of the loathsomeness and heinousness of sin. We want a broken and contrite heart when we would reconcile ourselves to God, Ps. li. 17. Otherwise men complain of a burden they feel not. They confess sin, or such actions as are commonly called sins and censured among men as sins; but while they confess them without sense and feeling, it is a sign they do not confess sin as sin, as a violation of the laws of God, and a provocation of his holiness, with that brokenness of heart which the nature and desert of it requireth. It is possible we may use passionate forms of speech, and talk by rote after others; but I observe in the rites of Moses, that if any man touched the water of purification wherewith another man had cleansed himself, he was not purified, but defiled thereby. To speak in the strain of humble penitents, and not to have the heart affected, is to make use of their forms without their spirit. Surely we should confess sin, as we commit sin. Will ye sin with the whole man, and confess it only with the mouth? act it with delight, and not confess it with a sorrow that affects the heart, or without any sense and feeling? This sheweth we are not as real in confessing as we are in sinning.

(3.) There is a defect in the very confession, which seems to be all in all in our humiliations. We have other notions of words and things in dealing with God and dealing with men. Certainly confession is much; it hath promises annexed, 1 John i. 9. But what is confession? Suppose an injury done to a man by his equal or inferior. Let us instance in the latter; some wrong done to you by your tenant or servant; you have a mind to pardon, but he must acknowledge it. If he confess the injury only in general or ambiguous terms, if it be cursory, and without any sense and sorrow for it, or if he did excuse

or extenuate his fault, or upon the next occasion offered to do the like wrong again, would it not rather provoke than pacify you? Thus we put a real and deep signification upon confession in our own matters, but take it in the slightest and emptiest meaning, in things relating to God. Our confessions to him are either general, ignorant, senseless, or without any particular view or lively feeling of the horror of the sins we confess. And so many confess they are sinners, but do not at all confess their sins, their own real actual guiltiness, that which indeed they have committed, or are inclined to do, 1 Kings viii. 38. When it comes to particulars, there is a multitude of extenuations and pretences to hide and cover it; there is not such a confession of the heinousness of our sins as may abase and humble the soul in God's presence, as may induce the hatred of sin, or put an engagement upon the heart to renounce it.

(4.) There is not that earnest desire to forsake sin. We are told, Prov. xxviii. 13, it is the mortifying confession which is acceptable to God; such a confession of sin as may put us upon requests to God, not only that sin may be pardoned, but also that sin may be subdued. To confess sin as loathsome, and act it over again with fresh delight and vigour, is to mock God; though they bewail it, and never cease the more from sinning, it is but an hypocritical pang. To-day they confess it, and to-morrow they act it again with as much delight as before; so all their humiliation is but a false appearance, or a shadow of repentance. Still here is no returning to God.

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## A PREPARATIVE SERMON FOR RECEIVING THE SACRAMENT.

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*For a multitude of the people, even many of Ephraim and Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet did they eat the passover otherwise than it was written. But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, The good Lord pardon every one that prepareth 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, and healed the people.—2 CHRON. XXX. 18-20.*

THE analogy between the sacraments of the Old and New Testament is so common a theme, and so generally known, that I need not spend time to show you how near of kin, and what a great deal of affinity there is between circumcision and baptism, the two initial sacraments, and the passover and the Lord's supper, the other two ordinances that serve for our growth and strengthening when we are once admitted. So that you see my choice is suitable to the occasion. This text though it speaketh of the celebration of the passover, yet will well enough befit the solemnity of the Lord's supper; and therefore I shall handle them at present. The occasion of the words is this: Hezekiah, that good prince, is no sooner stepped into the royal seat of Judah, but he thinketh of reforming religion, and the abuses that throughout his father's time had crept into God's worship. And indeed the best way to settle a kingdom is to settle the religion of it, to begin reigning with reforming. Therefore it is said in 2 Chron. xxix. 3, that in the first year of his reign, the first month, he opened the door of the house of the Lord. 'He opened,' for his father Ahaz had shut it, and polluted it, chap. xxviii. 25. And indeed his reformation went on in a true step and pace, for it began first with the temple and ministry. The commonalty were likely to follow of their own accord when the doors of the house of the Lord were set open, and the Levites sanctified. It is but christian prudence to cleanse the spring if we would have the stream clear; to look to God's house, and those that should dispense his word and ordinances, if we would have the people brought in a way of conformity to him. Well, he meeteth with a rotten clergy, especially the first sort; the priests they proved tough burs and knotty pieces, they

do not come kindly off in the working, they would not easily be planed by the civil magistrate. The Levites and subordinate ministers were more ready, and pliable, and forward to advance the work, as you may see, 2 Chron. xxix. 34. I remember, when it was debated in the Council of Constance, as I take it, whence the reformation of the church should begin, answer was made, *A minoritis*—from the minorites, from the lower clergy. *Imo vero a majoritis*, saith the emperor—from the majorites, the chief, from the greatest of them, those that challenge a superiority over their brethren. And indeed it is but fit it should begin there, if that of Luther be true, *Religio nunquam periclitatur nisi inter reverendissimos*, that religion and reformation suffereth most of all from the right reverend, and is never at a stay but when it cometh to them. It is said here the Levites were more upright in heart to sanctify themselves than the priests. But this is by the by.

I shall not go over the several progresses of this glorious design; only tell you that this chapter is chiefly spent in setting forth the care of this good prince for the due celebration of the passover. And indeed that is kindly reformation that maketh the ordinances of God to speak a pure language, Zeph. iii. 9; and above all, ordinances that take care for the purity of the sacrament. Well, the priests are despatched to this purpose throughout all Israel and Judah, and are entertained with varied success. Some laugh and scoff at them; and indeed it is an usual thing for reformers to meet with a scoff; and all the welcome that a reformation finds is but a jeer, a frump. But it is said in ver. 11, however, ‘divers humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem.’ Amongst those that came, all of them are not so clean as could be wished, for there were many in the congregation that were not sanctified, ver. 17; and therefore they are fain to make a virtue of necessity, to put the Levites upon another employment, which was not so properly theirs; for it belonged to the priests (as you may see, Lev. i. 5), only to kill the beasts appointed for the celebration of the passover; yet the Levites are fain to do it now. The reason of this unusual practice is more fully rendered in the text—‘For a multitude of the people, even many of Ephraim,’ &c.

And thus you see I have brought you home to the words, which are, for the general scope of them, a reason why the Levites did execute the priests’ office. In them briefly you have—(1.) The state and condition of the people; (2.) The prayer of Hezekiah because of that state and condition; (3.) The gracious answer of God to that prayer.

1. The state and condition of the people, set forth in two things—(1.) By their indisposition—‘Many of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Issachar had not cleansed themselves;’ they were guilty of some legal pollution. (2.) By their practice, notwithstanding this indisposition—‘Yet they did eat the passover otherwise than it was written;’ that is, notwithstanding this indisposition, many did rush upon the ordinances.

2. Hezekiah’s prayer—‘But Hezekiah prayed for them saying, The Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek the Lord, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary; that is, he entreats the Lord, that though the people failed in some

legal and ceremonial preparation and the outward acts of purification, yet that the Lord would be pleased to pardon those whose hearts were right and fitted and prepared for them. As if he had said—Lord, these men have not purified themselves with outward purification, yet because their hearts are set towards thee, therefore, Lord, pardon the failing.

3. Here is the success—‘And the Lord hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people.’ He was pleased to dispense with them notwithstanding their indisposition.

There are three queries in all these three parts, and I must despatch them in a word.

1. Concerning the indisposition and practice of the people. A question may be raised, Whether those of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Zebulun, sinned or no in coming to the ordinance?

I answer, briefly and affirmatively, that they did; and that for two reasons drawn from the text.

[1.] They offended; because the text saith—‘They did otherwise than was written.’ God’s service is prescribed, and what he would have us to do is written. The apostle, speaking concerning the Lord’s supper, saith, 1 Cor. xi. 23, ‘For I have received of the Lord that which I also delivered unto you.’ God is the best appointer of his own worship. The essentials of a sacrament are set down in the institution, from which we must not swerve to the right nor to the left. Obedience must be adequate to the commandment. We must not do more nor less than is prescribed. To do more is will-worship and superstition; to do less is irreligion and profaneness. And this latter was the fault of these Israelites; they were not cleansed according to the law, and ‘therefore they did eat the passover otherwise than it was written.’ But—

[2.] It is probable they sinned, because Hezekiah prayed for them for the pardon of their offence. Where there is no sin there needs no pardon. If Hezekiah pray, it is a sign the people are guilty. We cannot imagine this good king would compliment with God, and make that a fault in the excuse which was none in the committing; as our gallants would fain be accounted faulty that they may handsomely crave a pardon. No doubt this good prince thought it a weighty business when he saith, ‘The good Lord pardon,’ &c.

2. Another query falleth in upon this concerning the second part, Hezekiah’s prayer. If the men sinned in coming, why did he merely pray for them? He should rather have kept them back, he being the chief governor; did he not offend in not keeping them off? I answer—No, for—

[1.] He took all the pains that possibly he might for the due celebration of the passover; he used all the means; he deferred it for a while, that the priests might be sanctified, and the people better prepared, ver. 3. He sends posts to give warning of it too, and doth what he can to cleanse and fit them; and therefore he could not be blamed.

[2.] The priests were faulty in not being sanctified themselves.

[3.] Something may be said too, if we consider the posture of the kingdom at that time. Hezekiah had but two tribes, Judah and

Benjamin; and probably they were all cleansed, and served the Lord with one heart, for it is said the multitude of those that were not purified were of Zebulun, and Ephraim, and Manasseh, and Issachar; that is, some scattered people of the ten tribes that were then in captivity, not under his dominion. He had given them license and passport to come to Jerusalem, and receive; therefore, if they came not after the due manner, the fault was their own. Hezekiah's care is showed in praying for them. And, indeed, it is christian patience to suffer, where we have not power to help it. When we do what we can to keep off unworthy receivers, if they come still, and we have no other authority over them, let us pray for them; especially if the defect be not in the heart and life of the service. But—

[4.] These had prepared their hearts towards the Lord. They were careful of the main business; therefore, because of a great inconvenience that would follow, it was but fit they should be dispensed with. It is true, a partaker should be fitted and fully accomplished. Preparation is due preparation when it cometh to the fulness of the precept; and a receiver is then purified when he is cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary. Yet because the failing and unfitness was in a ceremonial pollution, and because they came from far, and for want of time, it was better for Hezekiah to sue for a dispensation than to turn them off; for they were mocked at their coming up; and they would have been more laughed at if their journey had been to no purpose, and they had returned *re infecta*, without receiving the pass-over. And therefore well might Hezekiah pray that the Lord would pass by their other wants and weaknesses, because the people we see set their hearts right.

3. The third query is about an expression—‘And God healed the people.’ Why? Had God smitten them for so small a fault, for want of a ceremonial cleansing? especially since the fault could hardly be avoided, by reason of the straits of time, and a long journey. I answer—

[1.] It is true that God doth usually punish faults of this nature with smitings. You know what is said, 1 Cor. xi. 30, ‘For this cause many are sick among you, and weak, and many sleep.’ For this cause, for irreverent receiving. And indeed that which is little in man's account is not so many times in God's. God is chary of his ordinances, and jealous of his worship; failings are faults there, and therefore he is sensible of the least prevarication. Uzzah is smitten for looking into the ark. And these here may well need an healing for but coming without a due cleansing. For—

[2.] This ceremonial pollution was threatened with death; as Lev. vii. 20, it is said, ‘The soul that eateth of the sacrifice, having his uncleanness upon him, that soul shall be cut off from his people.’ Therefore the people were all under the penalty of this sentence. And though God smote none of them, for aught we know, yet he might well be said to heal them, because he freed them of this guilt, and delivered them from the power and curse of this law. And, indeed, where the heart is right, God is not hard to be entreated to pardon a failing which can plead necessity, especially since God does rather look to the heart than the offering, and the frame of



the soul more than to the outward order. *Nunquam in odoribus sacrificiorum*, &c.—A desire of being cleansed is often accepted for the cleansing itself.

Well, these are the parts, and you have heard them explained.

I shall insist on the first—The people's state and condition. And so—(1.) Of their indisposition; (2.) Of their practice.

*First*, Their indisposition—'A multitude of the people had not cleansed themselves.' I observe thence briefly, and by way of preface to the rest of the doctrines, that in those times in which there is much care had about the right celebration of a sacrament, there are many yet that are unworthy.

Hezekiah sends posts, breaketh down the idolatrous places, doth what he can for the due celebration of the passover; and yet you see here are many 'that had not cleansed themselves.' The point I prove by that, 1 Cor. xi., the whole context, from ver. 17 to the latter end. The apostle had but newly planted a church amongst them, and instructed them in the nature of ordinances; and yet, you see, ere they are warm in their religion, they had many unworthy communicants, unfit to partake of the ordinances. It is with institutions usually as it is with men; their vigour declineth with their age; ordinances lose much of their life and right observance when a people have been inured to them. And yet you see here, as soon as they began to be instructed what a sacrament meant, and who ought to be partakers, yet most of them were unworthy to receive; some were janglers, and some intemperate; divers faults amongst them.

The reasons of the point are these—

1. Because there is a great deal of laziness in people, and an unwillingness against such a soul-searching ordinance as the sacrament. Now the best governors and most pious reformers cannot reach so low as the people's hearts, and therefore, though they take never so much pains to provide for the due administration of the ordinances, yet, till their hearts be wrought upon by the word, there will be those that are not cleansed, some unworthy receivers that are 'not purified according to the purification of the sanctuary.' Some unwilling wretches there are that will submit no further than law requireth. The laws of men are terminated in the obedience of the outward man, but 'the law of God,' as the apostle speaketh, Heb. iv. 13, 'is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing the soul and spirit, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents.' If religion were only visible, and the strength of a duty did consist in the outward presence at it, it were possible to bring all into a prepared way of receiving; but because of heart-preparations, therefore still there may be some that are unworthy. If men were diligent and willing to prepare their souls upon every hint from the authority of the magistrate, we should see a worthier company of receivers. But when men will do no more than they are compelled to, it must needs be that, notwithstanding all the provisions for the better performance, yet some should remain unfit—namely, lazy, unwilling persons, that take no pains to trim up their lamps to meet the bridegroom, to furnish their soul with answerable affections and a becoming spirit, as being to meet with God in every part of this worship.

2. There is a great deal of hypocrisy in many men, and it is possible that they may carry their naughtiness so secretly that they may hide it from the most discerning eye. Now an hypocritical receiver is an unworthy receiver; and therefore, in the times of greatest care about the admission of worthy communicants, these may slide under covert of their mask and fair pretences. A gaudy show may go far, and indiscernible hypocrites do often press upon the ordinances. Judas, you know, eats the passover even in Christ's own company—'He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me,' Mat. xxvi. 23. The pharisees and sadducees submitted to John's baptism; it is said in Mat. iii. 6, ἐβαπτίζοντο ὑπὸ αὐτοῦ, 'they were baptized under Johu;' they submitted to the ordinance, and his ministry; and yet they were a generation of vipers all the while—vipers not only in the general, as they were οἱ κακαὶ τοῦ ὀφίου σπαρμυῆδες, as Ignatius calleth Menander and Basilides, two infamous heretics, the spawn of the old serpent the devil; but vipers they were and serpents in these three respects—

[1.] The viper, they say, when she hath bitten a man, runneth to the water, and if she misseth of it, she dies; so these, after they had devoured widows' houses, they ran to the water of baptism. Hypocrites will come to ordinances to justify their extortion, their biting and griping of the faces of the poor. Sacraments are made stales to their base ends, to pacify their own consciences, or satisfy other men's opinions, concerning their other unjust dealings.

[2.] Vipers, too, as all other serpents, lay aside their poison while they are drinking, but resume and take it up again after their draught. And such hypocrites can lay aside their superfluity of naughtiness while they are at the ordinance, but it is with a promise to take it up again, saying to their sins, as Abraham to his servants, Gen. xxii. 3, 'Abide you here; I must go yonder and worship, and come again to you.'

[3.] Vipers, because this beast is speckled, full of curious spots without, but fuller of poison within. So these have a gaudy painted outside, a form of godliness, but within there is the root of bitterness. Now what course is there to keep off such wretches, such glorious hypocrites and close moralists, that come not within the compass of the law, that look so like saints? To the ordinances venture they will; they must, to still their consciences and to insinuate with other men. And how shall we do to turn such off? for certainly they are unworthy. Therefore, in these times, in which much care is had, many are unworthy still; the viper's teeth not seen till felt. Other reasons might be added; but I come to application.

*Use.* Is it so, that, when much care is taken about the ordinances, many are unworthy to come? It serveth—

1. To show what need we in this land have to humble ourselves, as for other sins, so especially for our sacrament sins, for the profane mixture and the promiscuous riff-raff that was admitted to the Lord's table without any distinction of persons. For if it be so, that many are unworthy in times when greatest care was had, how much more was it so when no care was had at all! When encroaching governors did let loose the reins of church government to all licentiousness, and

none felt the severity of ecclesiastical discipline but conscientious ministers, those that stood in the gap to keep out the drivelling swine and hogs that would have come in there where the hedge was broken down; when every surly drunkard could crow over his pastor, and even dare him to turn him off from the communion; nay, when entangling articles did make it alike punishable to turn off or admit common scandalous sinners to these holy mysteries, what think you, was there not a great deal of profaneness then, and many unworthy receivers? Oh, then, consider it, and labour to remember this sin in your humiliation, for fear lest the land mourn for it, because it was so general. Oh, think upon it, what it is to be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, and to crucify Christ Jesus so often as it hath been done in our assemblies. And would to God that you and I could so think upon it as seriously to be affected with it, and to bless God for the hopes we have that the ordinances shall be more duly administered, and that we would join in effectual prayers to God to bless the designs afoot to that purpose; for, indeed, as the apostle speaketh, 1 Cor. xvi. 9, 'A great and effectual door is opened, but there are many adversaries.' But I come to another use.

2. Is it so, that when much care is taken, yet many are unworthy, &c. It serveth, then, for a double exhortation, both to pastor and people. (1.) To us of the ministry: (2.) To you.

[1.] To us, that we should use all diligent care and circumspection to prevent this unworthiness. Then give me leave to speak a little to myself and my brethren. You see the people are unworthy and unsanctified, do what we can, though there be never so much care and pains taken. It therefore lieth upon us to double our diligence, that though we may fail of our expectations, yet to discharge our duties in striving to fit you for this great mystery. Were I speaking to a congregation where this part of the exhortation would be seasonable, I should strive to press upon myself and others a twofold duty. (1.) To instruct the people in the nature of the ordinances; (2.) To admonish them of the danger of this their unprepared coming. But in this place let it be enough to name these things.

[2.] Here is an exhortation, too, for the people—to stir them up every one to look unto himself whether he be not one of the number. A gracious heart is apt to suspect itself; and when it heareth such a doctrine as this is, that when the greatest care is had there are many that are unworthy, it beginneth to think that itself is principally spoken to. You know when Christ had foretold his passion, and said to his disciples that one of them should betray him, it is said in Mat. xxvi. 22, that 'they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one to say unto him, Lord, is it I?' Why, unworthy receiving is a sin of the same nature. The apostle saith, 1 Cor. xi. 27, 'Whosoever receiveth unworthily is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.' Therefore, when I say that when most care is had some come unworthily, many poor trembling souls are ready to groan out such a question, 'Lord, is it I?' and to fear that it is them indeed; whereas, those that are truly guilty will come in last and for fashion's sake, like Judas there; for it is said, ver. 25, 'Then Judas, which betrayed him, said, Master, is it I?' When all had done, then cometh he. Guilt is most backward to put

the question ; and indeed it is a sign we are unworthy when we do not know ourselves to be so. If we are sensible that we are unfit, and desire to be cleansed, that is the ready way to make us worthy. Ay ! but you will say, who is worthy for these things ?

I answer briefly—A man is worthy two manner of ways—

(1.) *Dignitate æqualitatis*, by an exact worthiness—as the labourer is worthy of his hire. And thus we are not worthy to approach into God's presence, or to meet him in this holy ordinance of his. In this sense humble Jacob acknowledgeth, Gen. xxxii. 10, 'I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies.' And John Baptist, Mat. iii. 11, saith he was not worthy to bear Christ's shoes after him. And thus none is worthy to feed upon his Saviour. And, indeed, when we compare the high privileges that we enjoy by being admitted partakers with our unworthiness this way, it cannot but ravish the soul with thoughts of God's infinite love and the riches of his goodness. But—

(2.) There is *dignitas convenientie*, which consists, though not in a perfect and exact proportion, yet in some fitness and meetness unto that which is required. Thus, in scripture, are we commanded 'to walk worthy of the Lord,' worthy of our profession, worthy of the gospel ; that is, suitable to all these. And thus must we come worthily ; that is, so fitted and prepared as may bear some resemblance and agreement to the solemnity of the work that we go about. And in this sense, this worthiness followeth that worthiness which is called by divines *dignitas dignationis*—a worth of acceptance, or a desiring of God to take our actions in good part for Christ's sake, and to pardon the many failings that accompany them.

So that briefly now, the unprepared unworthy receiver is he that doth not come with answerable meet affections, and so holy and reverent a frame of spirit as God doth require we should bring into his presence. And those are not cleansed with the purification of the sanctuary that do not take pains with their hearts to fit and furnish them with such a meetness and holy temper. If you ask me more particularly what these are, I shall follow the apostle's method in describing and taking notice of such as are pointed at, 1 Cor. xi. They are—

(1st.) All ignorant persons that cannot discern the Lord's body : 1 Cor. xi. 29, 'He eateth and drinketh unworthily, not discerning,' *μὴ διακρίνων*, not differencing, 'the Lord's body,' so the original signifieth. Persons that have not a competent measure of knowledge, and think there is no difference between the elements of the bread and wine that they see before them, and common bread and wine. They are not acquainted with this mystery, for they know as much as they know only by hearsay, and not by experience. They are not able to put a difference, and do not know the nature, use, and end of the sacrament, and cannot tell what the elements signify, but only by rote and custom. They come not with that reverence to it as if it were Christ's body, nor do consider it as a matter of such weight. They say that by the bread is meant the body, and by the wine the blood of Christ. They say, but they do not know it ; they have learned in a notion, but do not spiritually know it to be so, and therefore irreverently come to it as if it were a matter of nothing. They do not

come to it as if it were to eat Christ's flesh indeed; men of a sottish heart, that cannot have an intimate knowledge of the things that are of God, and of such an high mystery. And, indeed, it is impossible to know it as we ought but by faith.

(2*d.*) Those that do not judge and condemn themselves, 1 Cor. xi. 31, 32. It is implied there they did not condemn themselves. A gracious prepared heart is a self-judging heart—*Iniqua lex est quæ se examinari non patitur*; a wicked heart is loath to come to trial. Where the soul is sensible of some guilt, there it will not easily be called to an account. And that is the reason why vain frothy men are so averse to this duty, and to ask themselves what they have done before they come to the sacrament. The strength of sin lies much in this, in that it hindereth all that it can the discovery of itself. Now the deceitfulness of sin can never be better discovered than by self-judging; therefore corruption doth what it can to keep us from this severe duty. Men are not willing to judge themselves; and yet until they do they are unworthy. It would require a great conquest over many spiritual wickednesses to be able to look back into our ways; and it is an hard matter to keep our soul from roving that it may be searched. And therefore natural men cannot exercise a restraint over their hearts till they be searched and winnowed. Hence they mislike this preparation most of all, to look into their ways, and the state of their souls. This self-judging is unpleasant, partly because of natural pride, and partly because of our laziness. It is an humbling, and it is a difficult duty. It maketh the soul to take pains to be out of love with itself; and they would fain be excused here, and desire the good Lord to pardon them if they do not thus prepare their hearts, crying out, as Naaman to the prophet, 2 Kings v. 18, 'The Lord pardon thy servant in this thing.'

(3*d.*) Those that come in uncharitableness and malice are not cleansed, as appeareth by the apostle's finding fault with the Corinthians for this thing: 1 Cor. xi. 17–20, 'They came together, not for the better, but for the worse, because there were divisions among them.' And indeed malice rendereth the ordinance ineffectual. There are two things which we seek in it, union with God, and communion with the members. Uncharitableness in respect of both, is a very unsuitable disposition for a sacrament. As to communion with others, where the hearts are not united, communion is but complementary. And for union with God, God communicates himself there where he findeth answerable dispositions in his servants to receive him. Likeness is the ground of love, and love the ground of union. Then are we united to God when we are like him, as God reasoneth from his truth in Isa. lxviii. 8, 'Surely they are my people, children that will not lie.' So we may reason here, surely they are my people, they love one another; they are gentle and long-suffering, apt to forget wrongs, and pass by injuries, as I do; they are mine, for they resemble me in this. Likeness of desires is the speediest way to beget union of minds. It was an observation of historians, *Eadem velle et nolle demum firma est amicitia*.—Love is kindled by sympathy and suitable disposition. If we would be one with God we must be as God is, full of love, and lay aside all malice and superfluity of naughti-

ness. If we would meet God in the sacrament, we must be sure to have such affections about us, as God will own and acknowledge; if John's reasoning is strong and pithy, how shall we love God whom we have not seen, if we do not love our brother whom we have seen? Besides: 1 John iv. 18, 'God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.' Our soul is fitted for God to possess, when it is seasoned with love and holy affections toward the brotherhood. Therefore it is good to come thither with special love towards God's people, and as much as in us lieth with charity to all men. The two gospel commandments are 'faith and love,' 1 John iii. 23. And therefore we must strive to quicken both for this evangelical ordinance. Especially we should take care before we approach there, that we forego all our turbulency, all malicious discontented thoughts. In the ordinary sacrifices under the law this was required, that if their brother had aught against them, they should go first and be reconciled. How much more, under the grand sacrifice of the gospel, should we bring our hearts to such an holy pitch of self-denial, that we may forgive the greatest injuries that are done unto us. Well now, you see who are unworthy. I shall name one use more, and so conclude this point.

3. If it be so that when much care is taken, yet many still are unworthy; it serves then to show there is no cause why men should abstain from the use of ordinances, for fear of communicating with wicked and profane men. Thus it hath been when the greatest care hath been taken of preventing these: and thus it may be still until the church do leave off to be a mixt company, and there be no unclean thing within the pale of it.

Ay! but you will say, My comfort is hindered by it. I answer briefly—

[1.] It cannot choose but be matter of grief to God's people to see Christ's flesh torn by the teeth of wicked men, and their Saviour crucified afresh by their profane and irreverent receiving, and to see carnal wretches to snatch at these privileges which they know were purchased only for them. I say, this cannot choose but be matter of grief. But if we will not partake but there where there is no cause of grief and sorrow, if we expect such a perfect communion, we must wait for that till we enjoy the society of just men made perfect, and are admitted into the everlasting fellowship of the godly in the heavens. This first; but—

[2.] We shall find that there are many that partake with much joy with unprepared persons, as those of Judah with the Israelites in the text. It is said in ver. 21, 'That they kept together with great gladness.' But—

[3.] There is a double communion. (1.) Direct and immediate with Christ; and this they may fully have if they be not wanting to themselves. (2.) There is a spiritual communion with the members which proceeds from the union with the head: and we should not deprive ourselves of our union with Christ and the inward communion of the saints, for the outward intrusion of some few that have no share nor portion in the things administered. But this, as matter of debate, I leave, and come to another point drawn from the second branch of

the first part, namely, the practice of the people. Notwithstanding their indisposition it doth not keep them off; but they partake notwithstanding: 'Yet they did eat the passover otherwise than was written.' From hence—

*Obs.* That many rush upon the ordinances notwithstanding their unpreparedness. Their not being cleansed, I told you before, was a fault, yet they did eat. The reasons are—

1. The remissness or abuse of the censures of the church that do not restrain such persons from coming, but let them alone to continue in their sins, as 1 Cor. v, 'throughout the whole.' They had not cast out the incestuous person, and disabled him for communion.

2. It proceedeth from ourselves, because—

[1.] There is a great deal of ignorance and unbelief in the hearts of most men. They do not know, and will not believe the danger of unworthy receiving; they think it is nothing, and therefore sottishly put themselves upon the ordinance without any fear at all. They hear us thunder out vengeance against such a sin, but their hearts are hard and their ears made fat; they cannot conceive that we speak to them all the while, and therefore securely go on as if they were in a safe case. Infidelity besotteth the heart and casts a veil upon the soul; so that seeing, they do not see; they know the danger, and yet rush upon it; we show them the pike, and yet they run their own bowels upon it. It is said, Heb. iv. 2, 'That the word preached did not profit them, because they did not mix it with faith in the hearing.' And indeed that is the reason why people do so sottishly. Tell them of their own destruction, they do not believe; when we tell them of the danger, while we declare that all ignorant persons, and all persons that do not judge themselves, and uncharitable wretches, are those that come unworthily to the Lord's table. Yet a man would wonder to see how many that lie under the guilt of these sins, do come there, and sit it out as boldly as the best. Truly these men give us the hearing, but they are full of infidelity, they do not mix the word with faith, and stir up the applicative crediting faculty of their souls, so as to say, Surely this will fall upon me if I receive unworthily. Their infidelity will not suffer them to bring their souls and the word together, and therefore they have a kind of confused knowledge of the danger, but they do not think how they cast themselves upon it. Infidelity besotteth them so that they cannot look to their ways and consider what they are doing.

[2.] Custom prevaileth with most rather than conscience; they will receive because they have used to do it. The people are ready to ask us concerning this holy feast, as the Jews did the prophet, in Zech. vii. 3, concerning their fast: 'Should I not weep in the fifth month, separating myself, as I have done these many years?' So these, Should I not receive now, having received so long? Custom is the main principle that puts them upon an ordinance; and custom usually eateth out the strength of any performance, and dissolves it into a mere formality: 'When ye fasted, ye fasted not to me, saith the Lord.' When people receive they receive not for the Lord, but for custom's sake: 'Ye eat for yourselves, and drink for yourselves, not for the Lord.' No wonder then if many rush upon the ordinances when

custom driveth them. Many would be beaten off from coming unprepared, if use had not hardened them in it. Where people come to duty for fashion's sake, no wonder if they be without life and motion in it. Customary services are cold services. The main reason why people rush so unworthily upon the ordinances, is because they have been at them heretofore, and felt no sensible hurt by the disorderly approach; and therefore why should they not venture again? Those that have but the least experience in the ministry, can say that it is the hardest work of all to fetch the people off from their old customs, especially in matters of religion; and more especially there where they have a command for their warrant, and a precept to justify their practice. Where custom meets with a duty it altereth it; our actions are as they are principled. Receiving is not receiving when it is done for fashion's sake, because we have done so these many years. And indeed profaneness may kill its thousands, but custom its ten thousands in this kind, most unworthy receivers are but customary receivers; and therefore did they come unpreparedly, because they came not for conscience. These are the grounds.

Briefly to apply the point. Is it so that many rush upon the ordinances notwithstanding their unpreparedness? It serveth then—

(1.) To teach us in the ministry how careful we should be to put people in mind of the danger of unworthy receiving; that we may, if possible, snatch them out of the fire, as the apostle speaks; and be like the angels that guarded paradise with their flaming swords, keep men out of that place which will prove their destruction. And would to God I could sufficiently press the point upon your considerations, and possess you of the danger of rushing upon the ordinance in a state of unpreparedness, whilst you are in your unfitness and uncleanness, and live under the power of your reigning sins. O brethren! consider God is somewhat chary over his ordinances; he will not have them unhallowed by profane and rude hands. Uzzah's touch struck him dead in the place. Duties are tender things, and therefore it is not good to be too busy with them. A drachm of poison is enough to make you stone dead; and one poisoned ordinance may kill you. Unpreparedness, indisposedness, poisoneth duty. The sacrifices of the wicked, continuing in their wickedness, are an abomination to the Lord. The want of cleansing of the heart infects the ordinance; and when that is poisoned once, farewell the performer. God will be sanctified in all that come near him, either by obedience from them or vengeance upon them. Nadab and Abihu were struck dead in the place for offering strange fire; and God may strike you dead in the place for bringing strange affections into his presence. I remember what Jonathan said in 1 Sam. iv. 4, 'I did but taste a little honey with the end of my rod, and lo, I must die.' And so it is here; the tasting of a little bread, and the sipping of a cup of wine, may kill thee.

But because men are not easily persuaded of the heinousness of this sin, I shall briefly display it—(1.) In the greatness of the guilt; (2.) In the grievousness of the punishment.

1st, The greatness of the fault. It is no less than blood-guiltiness, even being guilty of the blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ



The apostle saith just so much, 1 Cor. xi. 27, 'Whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.' O! there are many of us whose hearts rise against these Jews, that were the cause of so innocent a person's death as our Saviour's; we could even pluck out their eyes if they were present; whereas all the while we carry the same malice in our hearts, and at every sacrament do crucify the Lord of life afresh. You would take it ill of a man to unchristian you, and call you a Jew; and yet such you are; for you have also imbrued your hands in the blood of your Saviour. See the difference between a worthy communicant and an unprepared receiver; the one hath all his guilt taken away by partaking, the other hath his increased, and hath a crying sin added to the score, which indeed maketh all the rest full weight; they have killed their Saviour. It was a close one of Peter to the Jews: Acts ii. 23, 'This is he whom ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.' And it must be mine to all unworthy receivers, for they are the very men.

2dly, Look upon the grievousness of the punishment.

[1st.] You venture your temporal life in every unprepared receiving. You know what the apostle saith, 1 Cor. xi. 30, 'For this cause many are sick and weak among you, and many sleep;' that is, are dead. It is no good playing with edge tools and dallying with duty. God's judgment may kill you in the place for your irreverent coming into his presence. The sacrament is to some as the water of jealousy; if the party were unclean it made her thigh rot and her belly swell, Num. v. 18; so, if you come hither before you have cleansed yourself according to the purification of the sanctuary, every drop of wine that you drink will make your heart rot, and prove a curse to you. Therefore, as you tender your life, and a blessing upon all that you have, either be clean or forbear.

[2dly.] Irreverent receivers are often punished with spiritual deadness and stupidity. Oh! it is a fearful judgment to be given over to hardness of heart, and to be infatuated by our performances. The ordinances, when they are not for the better, they prove the worse, and become the savour of death unto death. None so insensible and so hard to work upon as unworthy communicants; partly because natural pride is mightily strengthened with a slight performance of duty, whereas it is abated if it were thoroughly done; and besides, the just judgment of God shuts up such men in unbelief. We know this by experience. The best way to make some men sensible, that are past all other cure, is to deprive them of the ordinances. But—

[3dly.] The grand judgment of all provoketh God eternally to cast you off without repentance. The apostle saith so much, 1 Cor. xi. 29, 'He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself.' You would think this were a harsh word if we ourselves should speak it, therefore you see it is very scripture words. The Lord give you grace to hear, to fear it, to consider thoroughly! The God of heaven give you understanding in all things!

## SERMONS ON THE SACRAMENT.

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*Yet they did eat the passover otherwise than was written.—*  
2 CHRON. xxx. 18–20.

IN the words I have observed three parts—(1.) The condition of the people ; (2.) The prayer of Hezekiah ; (3.) The success.

I began with the first part, and therein took notice—

1. Of the people's indisposition—'Many had not cleansed themselves;' and from thence observed—That when much care is had about the due celebration of a sacrament, yet even then there are many that are unworthy.

2. From the people's practice. Notwithstanding their indisposition they did eat the passover—That many rush upon the ordinances notwithstanding their unpreparedness.

3. I shall observe somewhat from the expression, which noteth the fault of their practice—They ate otherwise than it was written.

The point is—That then we offend in our duties when we do otherwise than is written.

Brethren, God's service is written service ; the rule of our obedience is enrolled, it is upon record : if we go beyond it, or come not up to the fulness of it, we do not do as is 'written;' then we offend in our duties. I shall show, first, how many ways we do otherwise than is written, and then prove and apply the point.

We do it two ways—either when we do too little or too much, when we come short of the rule, or go beyond it. There is a pharisaical superstition and an irreligious profaneness. True obedience is adequate to the commandment ; just measure, no more, nor no less. To do more is will-worship, to do less is laziness. God liketh both tempers just alike ; neither pleaseth, for neither doth 'as it is written.'

1. When we do too much. Brethren, the essentials of a sacrament are set down in the institution ; there is the rule. If we seek to patch it up with some zealous additions and pieces of our own, we go beyond the rule ; we do too much, more than God hath required, and therefore more I am sure than he hath promised to accept. *Quis requisivit?* that is all the thanks that we shall have for it—'Who hath required these things at your hands?' Isa. i. 12.

Ay! but you will say, May we do too much in matters of religion? Can God ever have enough of us?

Yes, brethren, there may be too much ; if you go beyond what is written, then there is an *nimium* in religion. But here we must distinguish of the inward part of the duty, which is as the soul to it, and the outward part and presence, which is as the corps and body. The heart of duty is in the heart, it lieth in the right frame of that ; and in respect of this, we can never do enough to put the heart in a right posture to meet God in his ordinances. The virgins can never be too long, never be too much in trimming up their lamps to meet the bridegroom. A worthy communicant can never take pains enough to prepare his untuned heart, that he may come with answerable affections and a becoming spirit, that he may embrace his Saviour in the ordinance. Thus all that we can do is little enough to answer God's expectation : all our righteousness cometh far short of it, and is nothing to him, as it were. Thus never enough. But—

2. In the outward part of duty, in corporal service, and in the pomp and solemnity of his worship, there we may do too much, and that which may be superfluous, more than we need to have done. Nature is mad upon its inventions, and therefore loveth to serve God its own way, to have some crotchets of its own in the outward part of his worship ; therefore God loveth to bridle men up. In this respect they must look at what is written. It is connatural, saith Aquinas, for all men to be led with sensible things ; and therefore in these we usually exceed—*Et datur aliquid superfluum cultui Dei*, as he proveth, 2a. 2d. Quæst. 932 Art.

In the worship of God, which is chiefly spiritual (John iv. 24), there may easily be too much of sense brought in, since we are so apt to be led by sense ; therefore we must have recourse to the rule, to what is written. It is an easy matter to be too pompous in a sacrament, and to sin against the plainness of the ordinance. Duties are like your coats of arms, best when they are plainest, and not overcharged with too many fillings ; or like wine, then most generous and sprightly when it is *plenum sui et immixtum alieni*, pure and uncompounded. God's ordinances look better in their own plain coat, without welt or guard, than in all the trimmings and flourishing gaudiness of our own devices. The sacraments were to feed men's hearts, not to please their eyes or tickle their ears ; and plain bread and wine decently distributed by the minister looketh better, and is more seemly, than copes and altars, and golden candlesticks and basins, and all the apish immolations that have been used of late. Prayer is a great deal more comely without the noise of the organs and the pomp of our great churches than with them. Baptism is more like itself without the cross than with it. And so, in all the service of God, you shall find that is best which is written. And the ordinances are most like to themselves when they are divested of all their outward pomp, and brought home to their native colours, to the plainness of the precept. Brethren, we do not come to the sacrament to feed our eyes, but hearts ; therefore it is best to look to what is written. So ordinances nourish most when they come nearest to their primitive institution. We may, then, do too much here. A sense-pleasing religion is dangerous ; it is too, too much suitable to the bent of natural inclinations ; and that is the reason why

country people are so much taken with these shows; they do not love the native beauty that is in duties half so well as they do the painting of them: they love outward service intolerably, and dote upon it when it goeth beyond what is written. Brethren, it is a miserable thing when you will place religion in that for which you have no ground nor warrant. If you will find yourselves work, and not take that which is cut for you, you know who must pay you your wages. Mark that question of our Saviour to the pharisees, Mat. xv. 3, 'Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your traditions?' Transgress, *παραβαίνειν τὴν ἐντολήν*, that is the phrase; why do ye outpass, outdo the commandment? Ye do not keep to the letter of the statute, but go beyond what is written by your traditions. They did overdo in the outward part. And indeed, hence they had their name of pharisees, as Epiphanius, cited by Spanhemius, testifies; they were called pharisees because of their superabundant will-worship, by which they severed themselves from others. They had their *δευτέρωσεις*, as he speaketh, their alterings and patchings which they set upon the commandments. They were not contented with what was written, but must have their own devices to set off the ordinance, as they think, the better. You see they are forbidden there, and so should you be. God will give you no thanks nor reward for outgoing the rule. If you will perform acceptable service, you must keep to the commandment, not go beyond what is written.

But you will say, Shall we observe nothing in the sacrament but what is in the institution? What will you say, then, to the love-feasts used by the primitive church? for they were founded upon no express command in holy writ; it was a mere custom of the church, to which all the poor people were invited upon the charges of the rich. And what will you say to ceremonies among us? to that of the gesture, suppose standing, sitting, kneeling, or whatever it be? Since the institution and scripture is silent as to these things, either we must use no gesture at all, which is impossible, or go beyond what is written—do something at the ordinance that is not commanded.

I shall answer briefly.

1. In general, that certainly whatever is made a medium, or *modus cultus*, a part or a manner of worship, a part of our duties, a way of serving God, without a warrant from the written word of God, is unlawful, and not to be used. *Omnis cultus sine verbo Dei, idololatria est*, saith Mercer, a papist—All worship without footing in the word of God is but superstition and idolatry. Brethren, it is certainly very hazardous to place any religion in that which we have no precept for from scripture. It is not good to mingle our own chaffy conceits and inventions with the ordinances of God, or in our addresses to God to do anything otherwise than it is written. The Lord would have his ordinances speak a pure language: they must be pure, without mixture. If anything be done at the time of worship, it is good to put a difference between it and the duty, and not alike to make conscience of both. If we think the ordinances not perfect when the patch is gone and the ceremony taken away; if we think the purity of religion is gone, as many ignorant people do—they say they have lost religion when the pomp of it is gone—it is a sign we have served

God otherwise than was written, and placed equal holiness in our customs as God's commands. But—

2. I answer in particular—

[1.] To the matter of love-feasts. It is true the christians of the primitive times had their ἀγάπας, love-feasts, before the sacrament. Warrant in the word of God there is none for these feasts that I could ever see. For the rise and ground of them, some make it to be in imitation of the heathens, who, whensoever they had a general sacrifice (that is, when more than one did sacrifice at a time), and a general sacrifice they had once a year for the whole village, did meet, *μετά τὰς τῶν καρπῶν συγκομιδας* (as Aristotle speaks in the 8th Book of his Ethics, chap. 9), after the gathering in of their first-fruits, offering their sacrifices and feasting one another. Now, because the sacrament came nearest to this sacrifice and was most like it, the christians would not come behind them; they would have their feasts too; for it is manifest the primitive christians did come as near the customs of the gentiles as possibly their religion would give them leave. Or some say they were in imitation of the Jews, who did always finish their sacrifices with feasts and banquets, as is manifest out of scripture; and therefore some conceive these love-feasts were after the sacrament; but the former opinion is more probable. Again, some think they did this in imitation of Christ, who instituted the sacrament after a full supper; therefore, to express their love one to another, they would have their feasts too. Whether this or that were the cause or rise of it, it matters not much; certain we are there is no ground in scripture for them.

But then you will reply—It is lawful, then, to do many times more than is written, to observe that in our practice which is not prescribed in the institution.

I answer, therefore, further concerning these love-feasts—

1. It is uncertain whether they were lawful or no at that time of the ordinance. It is true, indeed, there is no express prohibition in the scripture against them, and the apostle seemeth rather to reprove the abuse than the use of them; but yet, if you mark it, there is nothing said to encourage the Corinthians to continue them, but rather to give them over, it being but a thing of their own devising, since it was so much abused; for you shall see the apostle speaks somewhat slightly of them; he calleth it their 'own supper,' 1 Cor. xi. 21; that is, a supper of their own devising. He would be sure to set it far enough from the ordinance; it should not claim kin of that, and fetch its descent as high as the Lord's supper; it was their supper — 'every one taketh his own supper.' Besides, in ver. 22, that seemeth to condemn the very use of them: 'Have ye not houses to eat and drink in?' Cannot ye feast at other times? Besides, the apostle Jude speaketh very meanly of them too: Jude 12, 'These are spots in your love-feasts.' He doth not say 'in the love-feasts,' as being an approved, received, grounded custom; but ἐν ἀγάπαις ὑμῶν, 'in your love-feasts;' they are not Christ's feasts, but yours; feasts of your own appointment. But besides, if it be not plain out of the word of God, yet certainly much language may be fetched out of the works of God; for you see he blasted this custom

of theirs by his providence. As soon as ever it was begun amongst them it was corrupted, and within a little while after, it so stank in the nostrils of men that it was altogether given off. It was abused to riot, and excess, and contempt of the poor in the apostle's time as soon as ever it was set up, and afterward no doubt it grew worse; and therefore the church left it off, God providing by his providence that we should only know the name of it and no more. Therefore we may guess it was not very pleasing to God, because he suffered it to rot so timely.

Again, it was no way, as I conceive, a fitting custom for communicants to come with a full gorge and a clogged stomach to the elements. You know we are most apt to feel the comfort of the creature when we are hungry, and so then also most likely to be sensible of that spiritual nourishment which is signified by the comfort of the creature. Therefore, all these things considered will make us suspect that custom, that it was but a will-worship, an innovation of theirs, and that the thing itself was not warrantable. You know what Abraham said to God: Gen. xviii., 'Far be it from thee to slay the righteous with the wicked.' So say I, Far be it from me to confound a righteous custom with the wicked abuse of it; yet these things will make it uncertain whether that were a lawful custom or no. But—

2. If the primitive christians did use this custom amongst them, as ignorant people amongst us do their customs, namely, to think the ordinance is no ordinance without them, then they added to God's institution, and did more than was written; they make it a *medium cultus*, and so it is unwarrantable. I have stayed too long upon this question of the love-feasts.

[2.] To the other part of the objection, concerning ceremonies, I answer in a word. So there be no holiness placed in them, these ceremonies may be used in and about duties. (1.) Such as are necessary and profitable, as a gesture in the sacrament; it is impossible but there must be one. (2.) Such as are grave and serious, without pomp and ostentation, not vain and light, but becoming the ordinance; as lifting up the hands in prayer, covering the eyes, or the like. (3.) Such as have no show and suspicion of evil in them, and not apt to be abused by silly and superstitious men. (4.) For the number, they must be as few as possible, for fear lest they entrench upon christian liberty, and be burdensome to tender consciences; and these, too, not violently enforced as parts of duty, nor superstitiously embraced as of a like authority with the ordinance. Briefly, all those that will come within the apostle's rule, *εὐσχημόνως*, and *κατὰ τάξιν*: 1 Cor. xiv. 40, 'Let all these things be done decently and in order.' I should speak more of the nature and use of these, but I am willing to hasten to something that is more practical. Concerning unwarranted ceremonies, there are places in scripture written on purpose, Col. ii. and Gal. v. And of these things more fully, Calvin in his "Institutes," book ii. chap. 7, book iv. chap. 10; Zanchy, and others in divers places. Besides, these ceremonies must be suitable to the end of the ordinance, otherwise it is too much, as Aquinas, cited before. Thus you have this objection answered, and the question stated. And you have seen the first

way wherein men do otherwise than is written—when they do too much ; when they place too much holiness, or bestow too much care and pomp upon the outward part of God's service ; when we dote too much upon a custom, and think the duty no duty without it. As if there were no baptism without the cross, and no communion without kneeling. To go on now—

Secondly, We do otherwise than is written when we do too little, when we come not up to the fulness of the spiritual part of the commandment. Brethren, you will wonder at the expression, yet it is true ; a wicked man had rather bring a thousand bullocks, whole rivers of oil, for sacrifice, than one drachm of faith. The one many times is in our power, the other not. They had rather tear their flesh with whips than rend their hearts with repentance. They cannot endure the inward part of the law ; therefore, in respect of this, they rush upon ordinances otherwise than is written. Pharisee-like, they look only to the titling of mint, and neglect τὰ βαρύτερα τοῦ νόμου, the ordering of their ways and humbling of their heart. If the law did only tie the outward man, they could love it, they would do as it is written ; but they cannot endure to hear that ' the word of God is quick and powerful, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit,' Heb. iv. 12. They do not love to hear of the spirituality of duty, of taming of spiritual wickedness. They could present their persons to an ordinance, but they do not like that cry of wisdom, ' My son, give me thy heart.' They cannot endure to hear such an invitatory to these holy mysteries as that of the apostle is in Heb. x. 22, ' Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.'

Briefly, if you would know when we do too little in duty, then you were best see what is written concerning duty, what is required about it. (1.) Something about the heart before duty ; (2.) Something in duty ; (3.) Something after it. I shall refer it to these heads—

1. We do otherwise than is written if we do not something about the heart before duty, and that is preparation. The heart must be fitted to meet God in the ordinance. Hezekiah beggeth for none, ver. 19, ' but those that had prepared their hearts to seek the Lord God.' And certainly God will bless none but those that come with prepared hearts to seek him, prepared to seek the Lord. You know, when a man goeth to seek a thing, he fitteth himself with necessities to find it, a candle, and spade to dig for it, if need be ; and he cometh with longing desires to find it. And thus must we do to prepare our heart to seek the Lord. We must come with faith and repentance, and other qualifications, and we must come with a desire to find him. Faith is to clear our eyes, to make us see the presence of God in the ordinance ; and desires will keep up faith to a search, to look after him till we have found him whom our soul loveth, as the spouse speaketh. Therefore, if we would prepare ourselves to seek the Lord, we must furnish our heart with answerable affections, with such a frame of spirit as will find him out. We must come with desires after him, saying, as David, Ps. xciii. 1, ' O God, my God, early will I seek thee ; my soul fainth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee.' A true communicant cleanseth his stomach beforehand, that he may come with an appetite,

that he may relish the fatness and marrow that is here prepared, that Christ's flesh may be meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed, John vi. 55. Brethren, thus it is written, and then you eat the passover according as it is written when you thus prepare your hearts, and fit them for the ordinance ; that you come with a longing after it, and desire to seek God in it, when your affections are suitable to the mystery. But of this preparation I must speak hereafter. I am as yet but in the doctrinal part.

2. There is also something to be done about the heart in duty, and that is stirring of it up ; and therefore, if you would come to the rule, to the commandment, you must not scant God in that neither. Many men make conscience of the work and come to the performance, but they do not do it as it is written ; they do not rouse up their spirits, and stir up their hearts while they are receiving, and shake off that drowsy dulness which casts a damp upon their affections. Brethren, it is not the outward presence that maketh a communicant ; for a man may receive, and yet not receive, as it is too often the case. You may not do what God requireth of him. A duty done without life is as a duty not done at all, because it is otherwise than was written and God hath commanded. Mark that expression, 1 Cor. xi. 20, 'When you come into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper.' Dull and dead receivers, they only come into one place ; they do not eat the Lord's supper, even when they eat it, because they do not stir up themselves to see the beauty of the Lord in his worship. We come short of the rule if we come not with holy life and activity, with a working, waiting spirit, that will warm our hearts within us, and make them burn under the ordinances. Mark how the church complaineth : Isa. lxiv. 7, 'There is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee.' They were many that prayed there, but they did not stir up themselves in prayer. Many called upon God, but they did not cry to him. The offence of the duty was because it was not performed as it is written, with zeal, care, and ardency of affection. If a mere repetition of words were prayer, if a dead sitting under the word and ordinances were hearing, and if our actual presence at the sacrament were receiving, everybody would do it as it is written, and none would eat the passover otherwise. No, brethren ; the word requireth more of you. Your hearts must be actuated and spirits quickened. You must not only have graces, but exercise them. You must awaken your hearts and souls. The apostle would have Timothy, *ἀναζωπυρεῖν*, 2 Tim. i. 6, to stir up the gift that was in him ; so must a christian at the sacrament, *ἀναζωπυρεῖν*, stir up the graces of God's spirit in him ; he must blow away the ashes from them, and make them glow and sparkle ; he must rouse them up, as you would a little fire in a brand that is ready to go out. Duties are but dead things without this stirring. We are far below what is written if we do not take pains with our hearts, that they may be quickened at the time of performance. See what a qualification James requireth in prayer, chap. v. 16 ; 'fervent and effectual' it must be ; in the original it is but one word, *δέησις ἐνεργουμένη*, a prayer animated and actuated with zeal, life, and holy fervency, put up with great affection. As in prayer, so in receiving ; a christian's heart should even sweat with bestirring itself



to lay hold upon the Lord. There is an expression, Acts xxvii. 7, 'Instantly serving God day and night.' In the original it is *ἐν ἐκτενείᾳ*, with the forcible putting to of all their might and strength, with their stretched-out strength. Oh! brethren there can never be too much done in respect of the spiritual part of the commandment. Let us not then lag behind, but aspire to the fulness of the precept, that we may do according as is written.

3. And, last of all, if we would not do too little, there is something to be done after duty; and that is recollecting and running over all the carriage of the heart towards God in the duty, and the gracious intercourse that the soul had with God. Brethren, when we strive to keep to the rule, all will be suspected. Christians will think they have never been vigorous enough in their performances, that all is too little to come near the strictness and spirituality of God's law. Therefore they will call their hearts to an account, call themselves before themselves, that they may be humbled for their failings, and thankful for their supplies of grace. They are afraid they have not kept to the rule, therefore they will beg for pardon of their holiest things, and say, as Nehemiah, chap. xiii. 22, 'Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and save me according to the greatness of thy mercy.' Thus you see, brethren, what is required and what is written; what we must do that we may neither go beyond the commandment nor beneath it; that we must not overlash in the outward part, nor come short of the purity and fervency of the inward.

I shall now propose a few reasons, and they are these—

1. Because God loveth to be the appointer of his own services, and can best prescribe the way of his own worship. Now God's way is a revealed way; he hath written his counsel in his word; therefore, if we do otherwise than is written, we offend, because then we appoint our own service, and so are derogatory to God's wisdom, as if he knew not the best way to be worshipped. The very heathens had some glimmerings of this light, that every deity must appoint his own worship; and therefore all their rights and ceremonies were such as they feigned were revealed unto them by some god or another. *Detur enim venia antiquitati*, &c., saith Livy—You must give leave to all men to feign the inspiration of their laws by some god or another. But, brethren, to come to divinity, God loveth to appoint his own service, to meet with a double corruption in us—pride and laziness.

[1.] Pride. We would fain be *ἀντεξούσιοι*, lords of our own actions, and have religion in our own power. And therefore, if men were left alone to themselves, you should see how religion would turn into rites, and all duties into a ceremony; the purity and power of the ordinances would be lost in a pompous sense-pleasing outside. Every man, saith Luther, is born with a pope in his belly. Natural pride would carve out such religion wherein we were most likely to merit.

[2.] But now, again, to meet with our laziness. An heart so disposed likes the outward part of the duty, but careth not for the soul of it; we had rather give the fruit of our bodies for the sin of our souls than be humbled for it: 'Therefore he hath showed thee, O man, what is good, and what he doth require,' Micah vi. 6-8. His service is written service to prevent this corruption. Nay, in the time of the law,

when sacrifices and obedience were chiefly corporal, God set a stint to supererogating and the madness of our nature; he descendeth to the very utensils of his house, that men might not serve him after their own devices. God would have but one altar and tabernacle; it had almost stirred up a controversy in Israel to build another, Josh. xxii. 10. If God should trust to our finding, and his service should be measured in our ephah, not weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, what with pride, what with laziness, he would have but a sorry service of it. Naturally we are rather for the paint than the power of religion.

2. God's word is the only rule and judge of our actions. Therefore, seeing God will appoint his own service, as we derogate from God in the first reason, as if he were not wise enough to appoint, so we derogate from the appointment in his word, as if that were not sufficient. The apostle, when he sets the Corinthians right in the receiving of the sacrament, he goeth to the word: 1 Cor. xi. 23, 'For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you.' You see he referreth you to the institution. Brethren, God's appointment is written; if you do otherwise than is written, you derogate from his appointment. It is not custom, it is not tradition, but the written word of God. People are much swayed with that, as if that were the rule of obedience; but then they may safely do otherwise than is written. God would have us take nothing upon trust, but go to what is written. Custom otherwise will become master of our faith, and easily entail upon us coldness and formality. If there were not a standard to measure services by, we should see the ordinances quickly lose both power and purity. Their power; for they would be used but for fashion's sake. Their purity; for then the ordinances would not speak a pure language, but like those mongrel children that came of Jewish parents and Ammonitish mothers, Neh. xiii. 24, half in the speech of Ashdod, and half in the Jews' language. There would be a miserable gallimaufrey of God's ordinances and man's devices, a linsey-woolsey religion. Thus without heed hath a cross slipt into baptism, and many fooleries into the Lord's supper. No matter for the ancientness of these things; we must look to what is written. Let others pretend antiquity; our antiquity must be the scripture. It was excellently spoken of him that said, We must not heed what others say who were before us, but what Christ did who was before all. And as sweetly, holy Ignatius, *ἐμοὶ ἀρχαία ἐστὶν Ἰησοῦς ὁ Χριστός*—Jesus Christ is my antiquity. Christ must be our antiquity. Ancientness is no warrant for us. An old custom may be an unwritten one; for there is *vetustas erroris*, as well as *antiquitas veritatis*—error may be mouldy, as well as truth be hoary. The cross in baptism I believe is ancient, yet there is no ground for it in the scripture. As our Saviour saith of the matter of divorce: Mat. xix. 8, 'From the beginning it was not so.' And none plead custom for their practice in the ordinance but those that have very little of the power of religion in them.

To apply it now: Is it so that then we offend in our duties when we do otherwise than is written? It serveth then—

*First*, To direct us where to go for information how to perform the

will of God: to the scriptures; see what is required there. In all duties look to the institution, and measure thy practice by it; walk according to that rule, as the apostle's phrase is, Gal. vi. 26. Oh! brethren, natural light will not teach us how to serve God aright. The wisest men in the service of God became vain in their 'iminations, and their foolish heart was darkened,' Rom. i. 21. Nature teacheth us that there is a God; but how he will be worshipped we know not until we search the scriptures and see what is written concerning it. Therefore in every performance look what is required. And here, to press you to it, let me use these arguments—

1. Nothing is accepted of God but what he hath required. The Lord doth not love to humour us in our pride. You know what he said to the men that came with their oblations: Isa. i. 12, 'Who hath required this at your hands?' Why, the Lord himself for matter, though not for manner. And if he did so to them, that did what he required, though not how he required it, certainly he will much more to you, that do not search the records. Try your obedience by the rule; you may offend in matter as well as in manner, for aught you know; and therefore, how likely is it but that you shall be turned away with a *Quis requisivit?*—Who hath required it? There is nothing so displeasing to man as to have his service refused, or to be rejected when he thinketh he pleaseth most. Oh! brethren, if you do not do duty according to God's will, the Lord will reject you, scorn your obedience: Isa. lxvi. 3, 'He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man, and he that sacrificeth a lamb as if he cut off a dog's neck.' True it is the Lord did command these things, to kill an ox, to sacrifice a lamb; but they did not look to the intent, look to the manner; and therefore their sacrifice was but murder and mocking to God, as the killing of a man and the offering of a dog, a ridiculous thing, an abominable thing to offer to the Lord. Brethren, it is so here; he that receiveth the sacrament unworthily is guilty of murder, of the greatest murder, of crucifying the Lord of life: the Jews' curse lights upon them, the blood of the Lord Jesus is upon their head; the apostle saith so, 1 Cor. xi. 27. The matter is good, the receiving is required; but the receiving unworthily, not in God's manner, that is that maketh it abominable. You do not do it after the Lord's will and in his way; and therefore he will cry, Who hath required it? You shall be as welcome to him as you can expect to be to a loving father whose only son you have killed. Oh! brethren, the Lord will not be served after your way; though you hit right upon the matter of obedience, yet you have not done what is written for the manner, and therefore shall not be accepted. As you would know, then, that the Lord should have respect to your offerings, do you look to the commandment; see what the Lord hath required of you. Reason cannot teach you; our foolish heart is darkened. Custom is but a bad guide; as I have done these many years. You know it is the description of a false fast, Zech. vii. 3. The practice is but a bad rule; the most may err. Go to the word of God, look what is written; and then the Lord will accept the service, when thou strivest to come near the commandment. See what is punctually required, and then diligently set thyself a-work. The Lord will accept weak en-

deavours, so they be suitable to the command ; so you do but endeavour to perform what is written, the Lord will accept it more than all the pomp and outside of those that would supererogate in the outward part ; so thou dost not hand-over-head rush upon the ordinance, but weighest thy services in the balance of the sanctuary, lookest to what God requireth ; though thou dost not come near it but in thy purposes and desires, the Lord will accept thee. All that the faithful could say for themselves in the prophet was, ‘ The desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee,’ Isa. xxvi. 8. And all that Nehemiah could urge for the best Jews was that they did desire to fear God’s name, Neh. i. 11. I say, See thou hast prepared to meet the Lord in his own ordinances, and wouldest fain do what is written : remember the death of the Lord Jesus after the due order and right manner, then the Lord will be pleased with thy sacrifice. But if thou comest with unwritten worship, pompous stuff, with a common lazy heart, and not looking to the ends of a sacrament, to the grounds of thy obedience, because thou dost otherwise than is written, the Lord will have no regard to thee and to thy sacrifice. God accepts but what he requireth, and he will not own the requiring of that service which is not agreeable to his word for the manner, though the matter of it be good. Who hath required ? As if the Lord should say—Let him that hath required accept. Thus you see, as we tender the pleasing of God by what we do, we should labour to be directed in the nature of the duty and manner of performance. Look to what is written.

2. The next motive is this, it is the only way to settle the conscience. The scripture is a sure rule ; and when a man walketh by the rule, he need not fear. What is the reason many are troubled ? They are afraid they do not duties after the right manner. Why, brethren, look to the word ; see what is required there. If your service hath the truth of the commandment, though it doth not reach the measures of it ; if you strive after so much as is required, and have this in your desires to do what is written, you will find the Lord will accept you. And indeed, if they would often view the nature of the duty, it would be better with them.

There are but two things trouble the conscience in matter of performance—scrupling what is lawful, and doubting what is acceptable. Now, if we would go to the rule, the conscience would be settled in both particulars.

[1.] For matter of scruple, the word of institution, if it be consulted with, will clear all. I know what is written there, and I am bound to look upon no other thing as a *medium cultus*, as a part of worship. I know what to do, what to forbear ; the Lord hath showed us his will ; and therefore the conscience is every way freed from scrupulous perplexities. The word is a clear, full rule, that satisfieth every man. The commandment is a lamp, and the law is light, Prov. vi. 23 ; and every christian taketh it home to direct him in particular, saying as David, Ps. exix. 105, ‘ Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path.’ Brethren, naturally we have a dark, misty heart, and therefore may well scruple the way ; but when we take a lantern with us, we may see we are in the path, and so walk on the more boldly : ‘ So shall I not be ashamed, for I have respect to the commandment,’ Ps.

cxix. 6. We should not be wavering and so unestablished if we would often look to the rule of obedience; there is enough to remove scruples.

But you will say—The word of institution is not so full, but, though we consult it, there may scruples remain; as to instance in circumstances, and, to specify them, about the gesture in worship, about the time of receiving, &c.; the scripture doth not determine, and therefore we may scruple still.

I answer—Something for clearing of this I have already said in the doctrinal part, and therefore shall add but little now, only for the circumstances specified.

(1.) Touching the gesture, it is of so small concernment that the scripture doth not descend to determine the fittest, whether standing, or sitting, or kneeling. We are left to our liberty, and only stinted by the general rules of charity and conveniency of gestures; so there be no holiness placed in them, and so made parts of worship, any are lawful. The people of God have used many gestures in the service of God never prescribed in the law, and yet cannot be said to do otherwise than was written, because they had not any superstitious conceit of them, to think the service any whit the more acceptable or effectual. Those solemn gestures accompanied in reading the law, Neh. viii. 5, 6, of the people's standing up and bowing their heads, and worshipping with their faces to the ground, were not prescribed in the law; and yet might be well used, though it be nowhere found in the books of Moses why they should be used. Only idolatrous and superstitious gestures, such as do not suit with the nature of the ordinances, are forbidden.

(2.) For the times of receiving, the scripture is not punctual in that, how often we should do it; but the apostle's *ὡσάκις* implieth a *πολλάκις*: 1 Cor. xi. 25, 'As often as ye shall eat this bread, and drink this cup,' implieth that it should be very often. So for prayer, 'pray continually,' 1 Thes. ii. 15. The Spirit of God doth not assign special times for these duties, but generally shows that we should do it as often as we can, very often. The Lord doth not tie his servants to such times and hours; it may be their spirits may be unfit then; but they should show their obedience to God by coming every time they may have it. Therefore you see there is no reason for scruple; if we look to the institution, we shall be rightly informed. Well, therefore, now to press this part of the motive. As thou wouldst have thy conscience freed from its scrupulousness, that thou mayest know what is lawful and what is seasonable, that thy soul may not be as a skein of ruffled silk, perplexed and entangled, search the commandment, look to that. When we are clearly informed about our duty, and have a right knowledge of the will of God, we may the more freely set about the performance; otherwise we shall sin in manner, Rom. xiv. 14. This is the first part.

[2.] Doubting what is acceptable. What is the reason the people of God are so dejected, and do so doubt of the acceptance of God? It is because they are not acquainted with the nature of the ordinances. Many receive no comfort by the sacraments, because they do not know the use and benefit of them. They do not look into the scriptures to

see what God hath promised to accept. The promise and the commandment are so indissolubly knit together, that whilst we keep to the rule, why should we doubt but that the Lord will be well pleased with our sacrifices: Heb. xi. 4, 'Abel offered a better sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous.' *Πλειονα*; it does not signify *gratiorem* only, but *uberiorem*, a more becoming sacrifice: he came nearer the rule, and therefore he had a testimony of his person and performance. Cain did not come to the rule, which was to give the tenth part of the first-fruits, *quod offerebat non recte dividebat*; and therefore he cannot find such comfort. When christians strive to keep to the rule, then they obtain a witness.

But you will say—Doth the searching of the commandment settle the conscience? It filleth it with doubting rather; for when we see the strictness of the institution, and how far we come short of it, we are ready to doubt that we do too little, less than God requireth.

I answer briefly—No; the true soul can comfort itself in the sincerity of its desires; for though God accounts nothing little that springeth from an upright heart, yet they think all is too little because they cannot perfect holiness in the fear of God. And indeed the peace of conscience ariseth hence; because—

(1.) They meet God in his own way. Having searched the institution, they know what God requireth; and therefore will not pay the debt of obedience with their own devices; they offer him a pure worship. Though they cannot be perfect in their services, yet they will make a right choice, serve God after his own manner; not make it up in the pomp what is wanting in the power of religion, as many do; but look principally to the inward part, to the truth of religion. Brethren, he is a better debtor, and more to be trusted, that payeth the creditor in true money, than another that overlasheth in counterfeit coin. One diamond is better than a whole rope of Bristol stones. It is somewhat in God's account when we take the right way to please him, when we love pure ordinance, and had rather serve him for conscience' sake than custom. It is a comfort to a poor soul when he doth but go to the rule; and though otherwise, if he would serve God after man's way, he might do better, yet he would rather bring written service. Certainly, when we submit to God's appointment, the simplicity and plainness of his ordinances, it is a comfort; whereas, on the other side, when men serve the Lord after their own fashion, and satisfy their conscience with the outward part of worship, like those that the Lord speaketh of, Isa. xxix. 13, 'Their fear towards me is taught by the precept of men,' they usually feel no comfort, get no benefit by the ordinances, only lull their consciences asleep by them. All that they get by duty is a false peace, not quickening grace; pride in their excellences, rather than humility for their wants and failings.

(2.) There is comfort in it that they do it upon a good ground. They present true service with a true heart. They do what is written because it is written. They do not come to the sacrament as those Jews kept their fast, Zech. vii. 3, because they had done so for these many years; or as Ezekiel's hearers, chap. xxxiii. 31, 'They come and sit before me as my people.' Not for fashion's sake, because the people of God in the country where they live use to do so; but because God

hath commanded, instituted such an ordinance, and in his holy word invited them. They do it in obedience to God. But of this more by and by.

(3.) They may comfort themselves because they bend all their strength and power to come up to the fulness of the commandment. Though they cannot receive as they ought, yet they will not allow themselves in any laziness. Therefore, before duty they strive to seek God in the ordinance. In duty, they strive to meet God in the ordinance; after the duty, they bless God for admitting them, and humble themselves for their failings. They account nothing too much, and therefore they know God accepteth their little. They use their best endeavour, and therefore there is nothing that may trouble them when they search the rule; for there they know the Lord will accept their endeavours. And if they offer a better sacrifice than Cain, that is, if they come with a better heart, in a better manner, than worldly men (for they will be sacrificers too), and their desires are to the remembrance of God and a due celebration of the communion, that they know the Lord accepteth. But, on the contrary, without a due knowledge of the nature of obedience, the grounds and ends of it, there can be no such comfort. Therefore, as thou dost tender the settling of thy conscience, as thou wouldst not have it entangled with scruples, divided and distracted with a double mind—a wavering double-minded man, *διψυχος*, that is St James's word: James i. 8, 'A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways;' now of the thought that thou doest well, and then again thinking that thou shalt not be accepted, and so banded and whirrited between hopes and fears; seek the word, go to the canon, 'to the law, and to the testimony,' Isa. viii. 20, that thou mayest be directed. Christians are perplexed many times, because they do not ask counsel of the word of God so often as they should. So I have done with the first use.

*Use 2.* Is it so? It serveth then to press us to see whether we do perform duty aright or no. Do we do it as it is written? Here is a mark to try it by, whether we make the word of God both the rule and the ground of our obedience. Everybody will answer, Yea, to the question. And therefore I must a little amplify and take abroad the trial. And therefore, that you may not deceive yourselves, and think that you do no otherwise than is written, I shall lay down a few marks by which you may discover it whether you make the word the ground and rule of your duties. If you do so, then—

1. You will use the ordinances in faith and obedience. This is a principal rule to try yourselves by. And certainly if men would deal impartially with themselves in it, they might know whether they have had a due recourse to the word or no.

But you will say—What is it to use the ordinances in faith and obedience?

For answer, you must know, that every ordinance of God hath a word of institution, which word of institution hath two parts—a command, and a promise; as the Lord's supper, the word, prayer, ever you shall find it hath a word of institution: and every word of institution hath a command and a promise. Now we use the ordinances in faith and obedience when we give obedience to the command and

credence to the word of promise ; when we look to the grounds of an ordinance, and the ends of it ; that God hath instituted it, and to what end ; what benefit we receive thereby, that we may have the commandment for our rule, and the promise for our comfort, and to encourage us with hopes of good success. I shall handle them a little severally, and then give you the drift of the mark.

[1.] We must do it in obedience to the command ; that is, when we set about the duty, because the Lord hath required it of us. So that if it be asked why we do this, and observe that service, as it was said concerning the passover, ‘Why do you observe this?’ Exod. xii. 26, you may give this for a reason—Because God hath commanded us. If you should ask your souls why you do come to the sacrament, your hearts may answer—Because the Lord hath appointed this ordinance for the strengthening of my faith ; because it is a part of the homage that I owe to my creator ; he hath commanded me thus to remember the Lord’s death, 1 Cor. xi. 25.

[2.] We must do it in faith. Look to the promises, that God will make them good unto us, that we shall feel the fruits of the ordinance in our own souls. The acts of faith are three—

(1.) To make us confident that the Lord can make good what he hath promised ; that his body shall be meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed, though we see but the plain outward elements. The heart must be constrained to acknowledge God’s power to work by the sacraments ; and say, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean : Lord, it is thy pleasure to appoint this ordinance, for the sealing of the pardon of my sins, the strengthening of my faith, and for the effectual remembering of the death of Christ to my poor soul ; and if thou wilt, thou canst make good all these things unto me.

(2.) It must kindle a desire in our hearts after the accomplishment of the promises, that the Lord would make good to our souls the mercies conveyed by this ordinance. There must be an holy thirst and longing after the benefit of them

(3.) It must stay the heart, and make it wait the leisure of God until he doth make it good unto us. Though we do not see the Lord working as yet for the sealing of the pardon of our sins, the spiritual nourishing and strengthening of our souls, yet there is a command to keep up our obedience and faith, to keep up our expectation. Just as Peter in the Gospel, when Christ bid him let down the net at such a side of the ship, and thou shalt take some fish, Luke v. 5 : the command and the promise is there : ‘Master,’ saith he, ‘I have toiled all night, and caught nothing ; yet at thy command I will let down the net.’ So, brethren, when you have toiled a great while in expectation of the benefit of the ordinances, and cannot sensibly find any, yet if then at Christ’s command—‘howbeit at thy command’—that shall keep up your obedience (and because of Christ’s promise that he should catch fish, he would believe still, and desire that the Lord would accomplish his promises) ; so, because of the Lord’s promise annexed to the duty, you doubt not but the Lord will work for you good in his due time ; for you are confident he is able, and you have desired that he would. This is to do it in faith and obedience. Thus in any duty, as of hearing of the word ; as Isa. lv. 3, there is a word of institution



for the hearing of the word and the promise annexed thereunto: 'Hear, and your soul shall live.' The word of command, 'Hear;' the promise, 'And your soul shall live.' Now, we must hear in obedience to that command; and sue out that promise, by being confident God is able, faithful, willing to make it good; by desiring that he would enliven our souls, and, in the conscionable use of the ordinances, wait upon his good pleasure when he will accomplish it.

Examine, therefore—Do you thus use the ordinances in faith and obedience, at Christ's command, and looking to him for the supply of grace that he hath promised to convey by that ordinance? and wilt thou wait for them, and art thou confident the Lord will be as good as his word? It is a sign that thou dost duties as it is written, that thou hast looked into the institution, and hath conformed to it. If thou canst in thy heart answer for thy appearance at this holy table, that it is because the Lord commanded thee hither, in expectation of such mercies as the Lord hath made over to this ordinance, and doth long for and desire the accomplishment of them, it is a sign that thou dost it in faith and obedience.

2. The next mark is, if thou dost make the word the rule and ground of thy obedience, thou wilt be careful of the purity of the ordinances, that nothing may be mixed with them but what is in the word, in the institution. There will be no doting upon old customs, no superstitious hankering after ceremonies, unwritten rites, that have no ground in the word of God; but thou wilt be willing that all should be gone and done away. Certainly those that are so ready to quarrel for some old fond custom, it is a sign they little prize the institution of the ordinances; they do not search that. Ignorant men, that are least versed in the word of God, are most ceremonious. Their very religion is ceremony, and their duty is but a custom. Certainly if they did it for conscience' sake, they would have looked to the command that bindeth the conscience; and then the love of these things would not have crept upon them, and have possessed their souls. What is the reason many are so disquieted now, when some things are taken away which they were formerly accustomed to? Oh! brethren, they do not make the word the ground and rule of their obedience. Their very religion is custom, that which they have received by tradition, not what was delivered to them in the institution; and therefore they never look to the mixture and tampering of human devices with God's prescription. They do not care for pure ordinances.

Therefore the rule to examine by is how thou standest affected to the purity of God's worship. Thou wouldest fain have nothing done but what thou hast some warrant for; nay, thou wouldest have had no word used which may be an occasion of corrupting the worship of God. Priest and altar do offend, because when such terms are used he beginneth to fear a sacrifice, a mass, to answer them. They have gotten a pure lip; as the Lord saith, 'He would turn to the nations a pure language, a pure lip.' And in another place, 'I will take away the names of Baalim out of their mouth, and thou shalt call me no more Baali, but Ishi,' Hosea ii. 16, 17. They would not have any monuments of superstition left, not a paganish or a popish word in and about the ordinances. Though Baali signifieth Lord, yet God

will not be called so, because that was their term for their idol. And, saith David, Ps. xvi. 4, 'I will not take the names of their God in my lips.' See that command also of Moses, Deut. xxiii. 13, 'And in all things that I have said unto you, be circumspect, and make no mention of the names of other gods: let it not be heard out of thy mouth.' They are careful that such words shall not be used as have a show of idolatry; they will have the Lord's service expressed the Lord's own way. Unwary speaking hath been cause of much corruption; and therefore they are so careful to have things done according to the word, that they do not love such names and words as custom and superstition hath a long time used about the ordinances. You shall see, Num. xxxii. 38, it is said there that the Israelites obtained 'Nebo and Baal-meon (their names being changed) and Shibmah, and gave other names to the cities which they built.' Brethren, these were idolatrous names; their cities were called after their idols. Baal was an idol, Judges vi. 31; and Nebo was an idol: Isa. xlvi. 1, 'Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth; their idols were upon the beasts.' They change not Shibmah; but Nebo and Baal-meon, such names as were scandalous. So they that are truly careful of coming to the written word, they would have no odd names continued; they would not have the Lord's day nicknamed Sunday. They have a pure lip, and would have no unbecoming word used in the worship of God. Search by this.

*I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet unto my taste.*—CANT. ii. 3.

IN this verse two things are observable—(1.) Christ's commendation; (2.) The church's experience.

1. Christ's commendation, in the beginning of the verse, where he is compared to an apple-tree among the trees of the forest. Some trees yield no fruit at all, as cedars, firs, and elms; some only yield fruit for swine, as oaks bear acorns. The apple-tree beareth variety of comfortable fruit for men. To this we see Christ is compared, and not to an ordinary apple-tree, but to the tree of life, which is in the midst of the orchard and paradise of God, Rev. ii. 7. And mark, in the context, how Christ and the church are bestowing honour upon one another. Christ avoucheth the church to be the best of all assemblies; and the church avoucheth Christ to be the best of all Gods. The bridegroom beginneth and saith, ver. 2, 'My love is as a lily among thorns,' and the bride answereth, 'My beloved is as the apple-tree among the trees of the wood.' *Quis sicut te?* is twice used in scripture of God and of the church, Micah vii. 17, with Deut. xxxiii. 29. The text falleth in with the latter part—the church's eulogy to Christ. Other trees yield little comfort to a poor fainting creature travelling in the wilderness; but Christ is an apple-tree, comfortable for shade, pleasant for fruit.

2. The church's experience—*I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet unto my taste.* The commendation is built on the church's experience. They that have tasted and felt how

sweet Christ is can better speak of him than others: 2 Cor. i. 4, 'That we may comfort others with the comforts wherewith we are comforted of God.' A report of a report is a cold thing. We can best commend Christ to others when we have felt his virtue and tasted his sweetness ourselves. Two things the church experimented in Christ—(1.) Comfortable shadow; (2.) Pleasant fruit.

[1.] A comfortable shadow. In those eastern countries the scorching of the sun was vehement, and the heat of it much annoyed them in travel, therefore so often is there allusion made to a shadow; as Num. xiv. 9, 'Their defence is departed from them;' it is in the margin their shadow; and so the true God: Ps. xci. 1, 'He shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.' And that is the reason why the spouse complaineth, Cant. i. 6, 'I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me;' expressing thereby her afflictions, which to us, in these colder countries, seemeth a strange expression. To them rain is always used for a blessing but sunshine often for affliction, they being parched and scorched with excessive heat. And therefore was it that Jonah was so much vexed when he wanted the comfort and shadow of his gourd. We read, Jonah iv. 7, 8, that he was exceedingly glad of the gourd; but when the sun did arise and wither it, and did beat upon his head, he fainted, and wished that he might die. So God, when he promiseth great happiness to his people, saith, Hosea xiv. 8, 'I will be to them a green fir-tree;' meaning a cool and wholesome shadow against the scorching heat of the sun. All this is said to show how comfortable a cool shade was to them in those parts.

[2.] *His fruit was pleasant to my taste.* Christ hath not only a shadow to hide us, but cordial fruit to cheer and revive us. By fruit are meant those spiritual privileges and benefits which we enjoy by Christ, which are sensibly and satisfactorily pleasing to the soul.

*Doct.* Those that earnestly seek after a shelter in Christ from the wrath of God shall not only find that shelter, but many comfortable benefits and fruits accruing to them.

Here I shall show—(1.) What it is to sit down under the shadow of Christ with great delight; (2.) What these fruits are, and how comfortable to a spiritual taste.

*First,* For the first, that I may not strain the metaphor, but take it as it runneth most easily, I shall give you these propositions—

1. A shadow is not prized by men till some heat scorch them. The church is here represented as faint and parched with heat. Our addresses to Christ always begin with a sense of our own want and misery. Ease is sweet to the burdened soul, and none seek rest in Christ to any purpose but those that feel the load of their own sins, Mat. xi. 28. None fly to their city of refuge but those who are sensible of an avenger of blood at their heels, Heb. vi. 18. None desire so earnestly to be found in Christ but those who apprehend a search, that wrath maketh inquisition for sinners, Phil. iii. 9. None are so willing and anxious about entering into an ark as those that fear a flood, Heb. xi. 7. It is the thirsty hart that panteth for the water-brooks; the hart that hath been chased or eaten serpents, Ps. xlii. 1. It was the stung Israelite that did in good earnest look to the brazen serpent, John iii. 14. The scorched only prize a shadow. We have but cold

and careless respects for Christ till the sense of our misery awaken us. Comfort is a relative word, and implieth distress; so doth also justification, and supposeth accusation, or a sense of condemnation deserved.

2. That which scorseth poor distressed souls is a sense of God's wrath. Observe how fitly God's wrath is set forth by the scorching of the sun—a glorious creature, and very useful, whose influences upon the world are usually very benign and comfortable; yet, to accomplish the purposes of nature, he sometimes ariseth with a burning heat. God's goodness is exceeding great and large; yet this good God hath his wrath, which is set forth to us by the notions of a consuming fire, Heb. xii. 29, and a burning oven, Mal. iv. 1. The wrath of the living God is a dreadful thing, which consumeth and drieth up all without recovery, unless we get a shelter from it. It was typed out by the fire wherein the sacrifices were burnt; and the sense of it is a scorching thing indeed, which drinketh up our blood and spirits, Job vi. 4. Now, because this sense may be increased in us either by sharp afflictions, or heightened by Satan's temptations through the permission of God, sometimes the heat and sweltering which the soul feeleth upon these occasions is expressed by the burning of the sun, Cant. i. 6; compare also Mat. xiii. 6, 'When the sun was up they were scorched, because they had no root, but withered away;' and ver. 21, 'When tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word.' This may awaken a sense of wrath, when God externally appeareth as an enemy. So heightened by Satan's temptations, which are called fiery darts, Eph. vi. 16. His fiery darts are not only boiling lusts, but despairing fears, when the conscience is filled with horror and trouble.

3. Scorched souls can find no shelter nor refreshing shadow among the creatures, but only by coming to the spiritual apple-tree, who is the Lord Jesus Christ. Alas! the creatures carry no suitableness nor proportion with our grief; no more than a good meal or a nosegay of flowers to the trouble of a condemned man, or a rich shoe can give ease to a gouty foot. If our trouble were outward want, riches would satisfy it; but when the wrath of God scorseth the conscience, what will riches, or honours, or pleasures do? Ps. xxxix. 11, 'When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, his beauty consumeth as a moth.' Trouble of conscience will not be got off by carnal means. Greatness and beauty and wealth will be no cure or plaster for this fear. Indeed, in a light conviction, we may divert conscience and stupify it by carnal enjoyments, and quench our thirst at the next ditch; but it is but a palliate cure; our wound is skinned over, and breaketh out again in a greater sore. The evil is but put off, not put away; as those, Amos vi. 3, that did drink wine in bowls, and did put far away the evil day. When they do not make a sure peace with God, but all their thoughts are to put judgment out of their mind, they may harden their hearts, but they cannot quiet their hearts; for the virtue of this opium will be soon spent, and the trouble will return more ragingly. God can soon blast the shadow of this gourd, as he did Jonah's; or else he may give you over to a stupid conscience; and a lethargy is a very dangerous disease.

4. Christ is a complete and comfortable shadow, the only screen between us and wrath. Observe how fitly Christ's interposing between

us and the wrath of God is set forth by the shadow of a tree interposed between us and the heat of the sun. In him alone we find refreshing, ease, and comfort: Mat. iii. 17, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' God is appeased in Christ towards us; he is the shadow which we have against the wrath of God, even Jesus, who hath delivered us from wrath to come, 1 Thes. i. 10. He hath drunk hell dry. To redeem us from the curse of the law he was made a curse for us, Gal. iii. 13. He hath borne the wrath of God in his own person that we might have the blessing, the gift of the Spirit. So he is a shadow against the fiery darts of Satan; nothing will guard us, and help us to quench them, but the shield of faith, Eph. vi. 16. This faith in Christ we hold up as a shield against his violent and piercing temptations, and so quench that heat and pain and horror which otherwise these temptations would kindle in our hearts. We answer his bitter accusations by Christ's righteousness. Then, for the troubles and afflictions of the world he is still our shadow: John xvi. 33, 'In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in me ye shall have rest.' A storm rattling upon the tiles doth not much dismay you when you sit warm under the covert and protection of a strong roof. God promiseth his people, Isa. xxv. 4, to be 'a shelter from the storm, and a shadow from the heat;' and Isa. iv. 5, 'The Lord will create upon the assemblies of Mount Sion a cloud and a smoke by day, and a shining of a flaming fire by night.' It is an allusion to the Israelites in the wilderness; he shadowed them by day with a cloud, and lighted and heated them with a fiery pillar by night. As we travel to our heavenly rest, we need light and we need shelter; we have both from Christ.

5. Faith is necessary, that we may have the comfort of our shadow; for we make use of Christ by faith. There are three acts of faith—(1.) They choose, consent, and own Christ as the only shadow; (2.) They earnestly run to it; (3.) Compose and quiet their hearts under it. For some make this sitting down as an act of spiritual desire; as Junius, *Summe desidero ut sedeam*—I earnestly desire that I may sit down. Some as an act of spiritual delight; as our translation, 'I sat down with great delight.' However, both are implied.

[1.] Here is a choice and owning of Christ as the only shadow against wrath. They that would find Christ a shadow must use him and employ him to that end; as Ps. xci. 1, 'He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.' The qualification and the promise is the same. What is abiding in the shadow of the Almighty but dwelling in the secret place of the Most High? God is to his people what they take him to be. Dwell in God, and you shall dwell in God. If you will take God to be what he offereth himself to be, and hath promised to be, you will find him actually and indeed to be so when need shall require, and you make use of him to that end. So delight is rewarded with delight, Isa. lviii. 13, 14; and courage and strength of heart with strength of heart, Ps. xxvii. 14, and Ps. xxxi. 24; for God loveth to make good the undertaking of faith, and will every way answer his people's expectations. If God hath set forth Christ to be a propitiation, a screen between you and wrath, use him as such; run to your spiritual apple-tree. Surely Christ can only shelter us from the wrath of God; and

faith, which maketh use of Christ to this end, can only give us an interest in this benefit: Ps. ii. 12, 'If his anger be but kindled a little, blessed are they that trust in him.' Deliverance from wrath is the fruit of embracing Christ, or closing in covenant with him; those that betake and apply themselves to him as their only refuge and safety. A carnal man is to seek; in the midst of all his worldly comforts he hath not a true shadow or a true place of retreat from the heat of God's wrath. When God frowneth they know not whither to go. If God let loose conscience or Satan against them, all worldly comforts are soon dried up. Wealth, honour, riches will not stead them in the day of wrath, Prov. xi. 4; much more when he summoneth them into his presence: Rev. vi. 16, 'They shall call to the mountains, and say, Fall on us, and hide us from the wrath of him that sitteth on the throne.' Oh! what would they give then for a shelter!

[2.] This work must not be done sleepily, but in the greatest earnest. The original phrase expresseth a vehemency of desire of this shadow to overshadow them. Such a desire should we have after Christ and his righteousness. Oh! that I might be found in him! And all is nothing to this, that I may gain Christ, Phil. iii. 8.

[3.] This sitting down with great delight noteth the composing and quieting the soul in Christ. Here they have ease and rest when once gotten to sit down under his shadow. So that it is not a bare choice, but such as is accompanied with desire and delight.

6. They meet not only with coolness, but fruit; as an apple under an apple-tree to one that sits under its shadow in a great heat. Christ yieldeth not only a comfortable shadow to believers, but also pleasant fruit. We are not only sheltered from wrath, but we may take and eat the apples of paradise. The mercies of the covenant are not only privative, but positive, Ps. lxxxiv. 11, and Gen. xv. 1. There is shadow on a fir-tree, but fruit on an apple-tree. The returning prodigal desired only to be accepted into the family, to be made an hired servant, to be kept from perishing; but the father maketh a feast, Luke xv. It was as much as our thoughts could reach to, to be delivered from hell and wrath to come; but God will give abundance of grace, and the gift of righteousness by Christ Jesus, Rom. v. 15. We shall not only enjoy his shadow, but taste his fruit.

*Secondly*, My next inquiry is, what these fruits are? They are the benefits and the privileges which we have by Christ. Mark, here is—(1.) Fruit; (2.) *His* fruit; (3.) Sweet to our taste.

1. Here is fruit. Christ received of the Father the fulness of power and of the Spirit for the benefit of the redeemed, that he might shower down the streams of grace on all that repair to him for relief and succour. Now what these fruits are—

[1.] In the general, we may tell you, all that is worth the having we have from Jesus Christ; all the blessings of this present life and of the world to come: 1 Cor. iii. 21–23, 'All things are yours, because you are Christ, and Christ is God's.' We lost our right to all by sin, and Christ came to restore all to us, ordinances, providences, heaven, happiness, and death, as the couple between the worlds. All things that concern life natural: Rom. viii. 32, 'If God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also

freely give us all things?' All things that concern maintenance, protection, food, raiment, safety during our service; all things that concern life spiritual, 2 Peter i. 3; to keep alive grace in the heart, to express it in the conversation. For the other world we have eternal life, 1 Tim. iv. 1. All things here hath a subserviency to that life, Rom. viii. 28.

[2.] More particularly, there are many choice and excellent fruits which believers receive from him.

(1.) The pardon of all our sins: Eph. i. 7, 'In whom we have redemption by his blood, the forgiveness of sins;' sin, which is such a mischief to us, such a wrong to God. The wrong done to infinite justice was so great that the Son of God must come and shed his blood before there could be a sufficient ransom given to keep up the honour of God's government. We cannot be sufficiently apprehensive of so great a benefit. So Acts xxvi. 18, 'We are turned from the power of Satan to God, that we may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified.' Is not this a sweet fruit, to have a free and full forgiveness of all our sins and daily failings? Isa. lv. 7. What is it that troubled us before we were acquainted with Christ but sin? What is it that made God terrible to us but sin? that clogged our consciences, disabled us from serving him cheerfully, but sin? that rendered us shy of God's presence, but sin? that damped our hearts in all our afflictions, but sin? that stood in the way of all our mercies and hopes, but sin? Surely, if we can get rid of sin, this is a benefit that is not lightly to be passed over.

(2.) Peace with God: Rom. v. 1, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.' God, that was formerly an enemy, is now a friend; the war between us and heaven ceaseth. Tyre sought peace with Herod, because they could not subsist without him, Acts xii. 20. Certainly 'in him we live, move, and have our being.' He could destroy us every moment. He hath sent messengers to tell the world of this peace, Acts x. 36, preaching peace by Jesus Christ. God's messengers come to you with an olive branch in their mouths, proclaiming and offering this peace to all that are willing to enter into it, and cast away the weapons of their defiance.

(3.) Adoption into God's family, John i. 12, and 1 John iii. 1. David could say, 'Seemeth it a light thing to you to be a king's son-in-law?' So may I say, to have the blessed God, whom we had so often offended, to become our reconciled father in Christ; and it will not be an empty title, but justified and filled up with answerable privileges as to us: Mal. i. 6, 'If then I be a father, where is my honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear?' God, that disliketh empty titles on our part, will not put us off with an empty title.

(4.) The heirs of glory: 'For if children, then heirs, co-heirs with Jesus Christ,' Rom. viii. 17. Children shall have a child's portion: 'He hath begotten us to a lively hope, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,' 1 Peter i. 3, 4; and Titus iii. 8, 'Being justified by faith, we are made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.' All God's children have an ample inheritance kept for them; it is secured to them by the

promise of the faithful God, and possessed by Christ in their name, and in due time is bestowed on themselves, Rom. vi. 8.

(5.) The Holy Ghost is given, not only to sanctify us at first, but to dwell in our hearts as a constant inhabitant, as in his own temple, 1 Cor. vi. 19, to maintain God's interest in our souls, to conquer the devil, subdue the flesh, and overcome the world; to resist the devil, 1 John iv. 4; to subdue the flesh, Rom. viii. 13; to overcome the world; for, 1 Peter i. 5, 'We are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.' The Spirit succoureth us in all our extremities—that is, by the power of his Spirit dwelling in us. By this Spirit we are cleansed more and more from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, sanctified throughout, and fitted more and more for the enjoyment of that eternal happiness we are appointed unto.

(6.) Peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost; for this is a great privilege of Christ's kingdom, Rom. xii. 17. The Spirit, indeed, is not so necessarily a comforter as a sanctifier; and yet this is part of his work, to shed abroad the love of God in our hearts, Rom. v. 5. To assure us that we are his children, Rom. viii. 16; and to be the earnest and fore-pledge of our everlasting happiness: 2 Cor. v. 5, 'Who hath given us the earnest of his Spirit.'

(7.) Access to God, with assurance of welcome and audience, Ps. l. 15, and Heb. iv. 15, 16, and 1 John v. 14. This confidence we have, that 'Whatsoever we shall ask in his name, he will do it for us.' Oh! what a mercy is it that we have a father to go to! that our persons and services should be acceptable and pleasing to him for Christ's sake! We find the comfort of it living and dying. These are some of those fruits which grow upon this spiritual apple-tree.

2. *His fruits*; for a threefold reason—

[1.] Because purchased by him. All these privileges were procured for us by his blood, death, and sufferings. Pardon of sins: Col. i. 14, 'In whom we have redemption by his blood, the forgiveness of sins.' God would not cancel our debts till he had received this satisfaction. Peace with God: Col. i. 20, 'Having made peace through the blood of his cross.' It stood the Mediator dear that we might enjoy God's peace and favour with life. Adoption into God's family; it is the fruit of his sufferings or being made under the law: Gal. iv. 4, 5, 'Heirs of glory.' We are purchased unto everlasting redemption, Eph. i. 14. The sanctification of the Spirit, Eph. v. 25, 26. Peace of conscience: 'This man our peace,' Micah v. 5. Audience: Heb. x. 19, 'We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.' So that he purchased all these favours for us.

[2.] These fruits flow from him; for as he purchased them, so he hath the keeping and dispensing of the purchased benefits; for he hath purchased this grace, not into another's hand, but into his own. He doth by the Spirit sanctify and bring back the souls of men unto God. Therefore it is said, John i. 16, 'Of his fulness have we received, and grace for grace.' And whatever the Spirit doth, he doth for his honour and glory, and as his Spirit: John xvi. 14, 'He shall take of mine, and glorify me.'

[3.] It is enjoyed by virtue of an interest in him, as we are members of his mystical body: 1 Cor. i. 30, 'But of him are ye in Christ,



who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness.' First we are in him, and then he is made to us of God all that we stand in need of. When we are engrafted into Christ we partake of his benefits: 1 John v. 12, 'He that hath the Son hath life,' &c.; John xv. 1, 2, 5, 'I am the vine, ye are the branches.' So that by virtue of our union with him, and interest in him, we receive these fruits.

3. These are sweet unto a believer's taste. Observe there—

[1.] That believers have a taste of the goodness of Christ. They do experimentally find a great deal of comfort and sweetness in him: 1 Peter ii. 3, 'If so be that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.' Others know Christ by hearsay, they by experience. They know 'the grace of Christ in truth,' Col. i. 6. We use to say, *Optima demonstratio est a sensibus*—Things talked of do not affect us so much as things tasted and felt. He that hath tasted honey knoweth the sweetness of it more than he that only reads of it. Therefore we ought to get this taste—that is, an inward experience of the truth and goodness of heavenly things; for christian religion is a thing not only to be understood, or disputed, or talked of, but also tasted. Moral instruction may give a sight, but faith a taste.

[2.] That Christ's fruits are very sweet to their taste, because of the suitableness of the fruit to the prepared appetite. They have an hungry conscience, and so can sooner taste that sweetness. As a man is, so is his appetite. The beasts find sweetness in grass, swine in their swill, more than an epicure in all his dainties. Among men, every constitution of heart affecteth a suitable diet. In the general, the carnal relish only carnal things. More particularly, some worldly men, like the serpent, feed on the dust of the ground. Some vain-glorious men, like the cameleon, live upon the air and breath of popular applause; the sensual, on the husks of brutish pleasure. But a christian's delights are on Christ, the promises of the gospel, and the fruits of the Spirit, 1 Cor. ii. 12. A christian hath another spirit than the spirit of this world. A sanctified soul can taste the sweetness of spiritual things, word, sacraments, graces, hopes. Yea, the way of obedience is sweet to them: Prov. iii. 17, 'Her ways are pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.' It is wonderfully comfortable, and filleth their hearts in a satisfying manner, when they can have any experience of God's love in Christ, in the word, or meditation, or prayer, or sacraments: 'My soul is filled as with marrow and fatness,' saith David, Ps. lxxiii. 6. Besides the attractive goodness of the object, there is inclination in their own souls to it.

Use 1. Here is an invitation to draw us to Christ.

1. As he is a shadow. This notion is like to prevail with none but those who are scorched with God's wrath, or laden with the burden of sin; with them that are either of a troubled or of a tender conscience. They long to sit down under his shadow indeed, and to get a taste of his pleasant fruits; yet I must speak to all, to begin here. The fruits are neither eaten nor the sweetness of them felt till we come under his shadow, and delightfully sit under his righteousness; but I pray you all to consider what need we have of this—(1.) Consider our own deservings: 'Are we not all children of wrath even as

others?' Eph. ii. 3. If we are grown insensible, the greater is our misery; and doth it not concern you 'to fly from wrath to come'? Mat. iii. 7. Because as yet we feel not the scorching and broiling heats, should we not make sure of a shelter? If a spark light upon the conscience, if God's anger be kindled but a little, what a condition are you in! (2.) A drooping soul that mourneth under the fears of God's displeasure, how doth he value this? The afflicted and poor of the flock, they will trust in the name of the Lord, Zeph. iii. 12; and should we not value that which is prized by them that are more serious than ourselves? (3.) When you must appear before the bar of God when you are to die, a shelter and a screen between you and wrath will be very welcome, Rev. vi. 16. What would you give then for a sealed pardon, for an interest in Christ's righteousness, for a propitiation or means of atonement between you and an offended God? (4.) The damned in hell, that are lost for ever, who are scorched in eternal flames, and have made trial of that sad condition, what would they give? Luke xvi. 24, 'Have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am horribly tormented in this flame.'

2. With respect to pleasant fruit: Ps. xxxiv. 8, 'Oh! come, taste and see how good the Lord is to those that put their trust in him.' We entertain black thoughts of the ways of God, as if religion were a sour thing, and there were no pleasure and delight for those that submit to it. Augustine and Cyprian were both kept off by a fear that they should never see merry day more; as, indeed, it is hard for pleasant natures wholly to renounce accustomed delights. To confute this prejudice, if you will not believe the spies who have visited the land of promise, and passed it through, and have brought a good report thence, told you how pleasant and sweet the fruits thereof are, come and make trial yourselves. Oh! taste and see. You will find enough in Christ to spoil the gust and relish of all other pleasures. *Quam suave mihi subito factum est carere suavitatibus nugarum.* As the sun puts out the fire, so doth this greater delight make carnal vanities tasteless to you. Surely all Christ's fruits will be sweet to you. Is it not sweet to hear that voice, 'Be of good cheer, thy sins are pardoned'? Mat. viii. 2; so 'I will be to you a father, and you shall be my children.' The comforts of the Spirit, are they not the sweetest things that ever were felt? Peace, Phil. iv. 7; joy, 1 Peter i. 8; yet these are but part of his wages. If Christ be sweet in the ordinances, what will he be in heaven?

*Use 2.* Do we ever sit down under his shadow, so as to find his fruit sweet unto our taste? You may try your state, and discern it by your relish of spiritual things. When men find no savour and sweetness in Christ, and can enjoy full contentment and satisfaction without him, it is a dangerous sign of a carnal heart, Rom. viii. 5, and Luke xiii. 16. I am sure it is an humbling consideration. The grossy carnal heart can taste the sweetness of the creature, but not of Christ. To an unmortified heart there is no more taste of Christ than in the white of an egg. The promises are but as dry chips and withered flowers. Christ crucified is no feast to them; they are pleased better with a vain story, or any carnal recreation or sensible

enjoyment, or the mirth of vain company. They long not for, nor ever taste, the apples of paradise, or the fruit which groweth upon the tree of life.

But are christians to be measured by their feelings, tastes, or comforts?

I answer—The taste of the sweetness of Christ's fruits may be considered either with respect to God's dispensation or our duty and disposition of soul.

1. If you consider it as an act of divine dispensation, or an impression of the comforting Spirit, this dependeth upon God's pleasure, who sheddeth abroad his love in Christ in our hearts by the Spirit in what measure he pleaseth. These spiritual suavities or high tides of comfort God letteth out upon special seasons, after deep meditation, earnest and strong desires, sad conflicts with sin and the world, or great struggling by pangs of trouble. As we give children a piece of sugar after a bitter potion, so to him that overcometh, God giveth to eat of the tree of life in the midst of paradise, Rev. ii. 7, and ver. 17 'hidden manna,' &c. This is Christ's feast for conquerors or triumphers. For this we must wait upon God in his sanctuary, leaving him to his own pleasure, and be content till the master of the feast bid us come and sit higher.

2. There is a state of spiritual things which is a necessary duty, when these things please us better than any worldly things whatsoever. To be holy is more contentment than to be rich. To love God more, trust him more, and obey him better, please more than if God should give them all the honours of the world. This taste is known more by esteem, admiration, thankfulness, and solid contentment, than by passionate joys; yet they should be excited on special occasions. They are never so well pleased as when they enjoy most of God, have a sense of his presence. Never so satisfied as when they are most fruitful, as when most powerfully drawn out after God. This taste must be cherished, and still kept up in us. Affectionate stirrings and workings of soul after heavenly things are very sweet, and such as all christians should strive for; yet esteem, choice, and thorough willingness and well-pleasedness with Christ are the main things. You must not be dead-hearted; therefore you must take heed of those things which would deaden your taste. What are they?

[1.] Want of faith. Such worthy things could not be entertained with such coldness if we did believe them true: 1 Peter ii. 7, 'To them that believe, Christ is precious;' and if he be precious, we will give him a suitable welcome into the heart; we will entertain him as we do precious things. A carnal wretch may talk of Christ as others do, but to him Christ and his gospel is a common thing, because he hath no sound belief of these things, only a little human credulity. Affection still followeth persuasion, Heb. xi. 13. We look for no great matters, therefore go no higher than a customary devotion or a cold respect.

[2.] We are governed by fancy, sense, and carnal appetite; and the carnal gust will mar the taste of heavenly things. The joys of sense are natural to us, and the joys of faith are strangers to our hearts; and then it is no wonder that the one does easily vanquish and

overcome the other. Brutish worldlings rest satisfied with worldly contentments and carnal delights, and the taste of the pleasures, profits, and honours of the world spoil the taste of spiritual comforts. Garlic and manna will never suit the same appetite. The heightening of the world lesseneth our esteem of Christ, 1 John ii. 15. Conscience is stupefied with vain delights. When we come to say, Soul, take thine ease; thou hast goods laid up for many years; then better things are coldly entertained. Spiritual things lose their sweetness when your pleasure is intercepted by the things you enjoy in the world.

[3.] Some sin is regarded in the heart, rolled as a sweet morsel under the tongue. And if sin be grown sweet, spiritual delight languisheth; for something else pleaseth us better; as a sucker draweth away the strength of the tree, or as a leak in a pipe lets out the water, or a wound in the body weakeneth the strength. Yea, till sin grow bitter to us, nothing in Christ will relish with us; for Christ came to take sin away; and till sin be sin indeed, grace will never be grace indeed.

[4.] If you do not prepare your appetite by self-examining, 1 Cor. xi. 28, and confession of sin. Humiliation for our unworthiness, reconciling ourselves to God upon new covenant terms, hearty resolutions for God, a deep sense of our wants, these things breed an appetite and desire of grace; and hungry consciences know how to prize the food. Be sure to do thus, and then you will find a well-pleasedness in Christ; and say, 'His love is better than wine,' Cant. i. 2. His loving-kindness is better than life. If the affections be not ravished, there will be at least a solid esteem; at least you will find that 'one day in God's courts is better than a thousand elsewhere,' Ps. lxxxiv. 10. There is a solid complacency in Christ, and a serious joy, that is more durable than sudden transports of soul.

*Use 3.* Direction to us in our special addresses to God. The practice of the spouse is then in season. Come and sit down under his shadow, and eat of his fruits. I remember Solomon saith, Prov. xxvii. 18, 'Whoso keepeth the fig-tree shall eat of the fruit thereof.' So he that waiteth on his master shall be honoured. When you come to duties, you come to sit under the spiritual apple-tree, to wait upon your master for your dole and portion. We taste the fruits of Christ most in solemn ordinances: Ps. xxxvi. 8, 'They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house;' so Ps. lxxv. 4. And they are not sparingly dispensed. The spiritual apple-tree is fully laden, and you may eat and feed abundantly with his blessed allowance, Cant. v. 1. Only remember, if you would find God's favour and presence in the mercies, you must use diligence; for we come to partake as well as receive. When we hear or pray loosely, with slackness and remissness of zeal, we lose the comfort of these duties. So in the Lord's supper you must exercise faith, and repentance, and love, and thankfulness to your Redeemer. All the benefits we enjoy are Christ's fruits, his by purchase and right and from him communicated to us. Serious thoughts, and an active lively faith is required, that you may take and give up yourselves to Christ in an humble obedience.

## A SERMON ON LUKE XVII. 32.

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*Remember Lot's wife.*—LUKE xvii. 32.

HERE is a warning of Christ's relating to an history recorded by Moses, in which two things are remarkable—(1.) The sin committed by her ; (2.) The punishment inflicted on her ; what she did, and what she suffered. She remembered too much the place where she had lived, and was loath to get out of it ; and when she was got out, her heart hankered after it still. And we must remember the manner how she died, for our caution and warning.

It is brought in here among the predictions of the calamities that were to come upon Jerusalem. And in the parallel place it is thus expressed : Mat. xxiv. 16–18, 'Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains ; let him that is on the house-top not come down to take anything out of his house ; neither let him that is in the field return back to take his clothes.' Now read the foregoing verse here : ver. 31, 'In that day he which shall be on the house-top, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away ; and he that is in the field let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot's wife.'

The comparing these two places together will give us the sense, that where life is in safety, we must not think of loss of goods, lest we lose both ; and where eternal life is in danger, we must not run that hazard for any temporal things : for it presently followeth, ver. 33, 'Whosoever shall seek to save his life, shall lose it ; and whosoever shall lose his life, shall preserve it.' For both temporal and eternal life, 'Remember Lot's wife.' And it is either a proverbial expression to hasten their flight, or a profitable admonition.

*Doct.* That it is very profitable for those whom God hath called from a state of wrath and perdition to eternal safety and rest by Christ to remember Lot's wife.

This woman was called out of burning Sodom to a secure place of retreat ; but she disobeyed God, and perished in the passage.

To make this evident, I shall—(1.) Briefly give you the history concerning her sin and judgment ; (2.) Show why it is profitable for us to meditate on it.

*First,* The history concerning her sin and judgment. You have it,  
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Gen. xix. 26, 'And his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.'

1. Of her sin; she looked back. What fault was there in that? you will say. I answer—

[1.] There was disobedience in it, because it was against the express command of God, given by an angel: Gen. xix. 17, 'Look not behind thee.' Now this commandment of not looking back was not given to Lot alone, but to his wife and children, as the event sheweth; for he, nor either, or any of them, was not to look back. Now, to go against an express command of God in the smallest matters is a great crime. As when Saul spared Agag and the fattest of the cattle, against God's command, Samuel telleth him, 1 Sam. xv. 23, that rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. It is rebellion and stubbornness when men wilfully transgress God's known commandments, and commit a sin the rather because it is evident to them God hath forbidden it. Now this God taketh as heinously as if it were witchcraft, when men leave God and seek to devils; or idolatry, when they forsake God's true worship, and serve idols; they despise and resist God's known will, and so rob him of his glory, and the service due from the creature to him.

[2.] There was unbelief in it; not believing the words of the angel, God's messenger, who had assured her in the name of God that he would destroy Sodom: Gen. xix. 13, 'Hasten hence, lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.' Now she would look back, to see whether the prediction and warning were true. And therefore the author of the Book of the Wisdom of Solomon, chap. x. 7, calleth her ἀπιστοῦσης ψυχῆς μνημεῖον, a monument of an unbelieving soul. It is a grievous sin to call God's truth in question. But usually disobedience is complicated with unbelief, and men despise the commands of God because they do not believe his threatenings: Heb. iii. 12, 'Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.' An unbelieving heart will easily be perverted and enticed into a rebellion against God, and those that cannot trust God will not be true to him.

[3.] There was worldliness in it, or an hankering of mind after what she had left in Sodom; and so this looking back was a look of covetousness, a kind of repentance that she had come out of Sodom; for people are wont to look back who are moved with a desire and remembrance of their former dwelling. So Lot's wife looked back because she had left her heart behind her. There were her kindred, and friends, and country, and that pleasant place which was as the garden of God, Gen. xiii. 10. From thence this woman came, and thither she would fain go again; as if she had said, And must I leave thee, Sodom, and part for ever from thee! This certainly had an influence on her, for she was loath to depart; for when the angel warned them all in common, Lot lingered: 'And the men laid hold upon his hand; and when his wife lingered, they laid hold on the hand of his wife, and on the hand of her two daughters; the Lord being merciful to him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city,' Gen. xix. 16. Nay, when they had brought them forth, they were fain to quicken them: 'Escape for thy life, lest thou be consumed,' ver. 17;

and the wife lingered behind her husband ; for it is said, ' His wife looked back from behind him,' as inclining still to stay. Now when God would try their obedience, they were to despise their substance and fair dwelling they had left behind, and to show no signs of repentance that they were to come out ; but she looked back. And so shall we, if we be not fully loosened from the world, and our hearts cleave to any earthly thing. Affectation of worldly things draweth us from ready obedience unto God. Till we be thoroughly resolved, we are in danger. Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, despised the riches, and pleasures, and treasures of Egypt, Heb. xi. 24-26 ; and so must all that would be safe ; not only leave these things at God's call, but ' count them dung and dross,' Phil. iii. 8 ; reject them with detestation and abhorrency, so far as they are a temptation, if they would not come into the snare again.

[4.] There was ingratitude for her deliverance from that dreadful and terrible burning which God was bringing upon the place of her abode. When God meant to destroy Sodom, yet Lot found such favour for himself and his family that, in the utter waste and desolation of four whole cities, he was only exempted, and the fifth city, which was Zoar, preserved for his sake. It is said, ' The Lord was merciful to him,' Gen. xix. 16. He could not pretend to it out of any merit ; and might have smarted ; for his choice showed weakness in not resting on God's word : ver. 19, ' I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die.' Only this God required at his hands, that he and his family should make haste and begone. Now, to disobey God in so small a matter was in her great ingratitude. The sins of none are so grievous to God as of those that have received much mercy from him : Ezra ix. 13, 14, ' After such a deliverance as this, should we again break thy commandments?' To commit sin after mercy maketh it more provoking ; when the angels of God shall come in an errand from heaven. Nay, the Son of God was amongst them ; for one of the angels is called Jehovah, ver. 24 ; the Lord Christ was one of them. Oh ! think what it is to despise the mercy of Christ, who came from heaven to deliver us ; and shall it be slighted ?

2. Of her judgment. She was turned into a pillar of salt. The judgment was sudden, strange, shameful ; suitable to the punishment which lighted on the Sodomites.

[1.] It was sudden. Sometimes God is quick and severe upon sinners, surprising them in the very act of their sin ; as Lot's wife was presently turned into a pillar of salt. So Zimri and Cosbi unladed their lives and their lusts together, Num. xxv. 8 ; and Herod was smitten in the very act of his pride : Acts xii. 23, ' Immediately the angel of the Lord smote him ;' Dan. iv. 33, ' The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar ;' Dan. v. 30, ' In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain.' Thus many times judgment overtaketh the wicked in the very instant of their sin ; and God will give the sinner no time. Therefore we should not tempt and presume upon his patience. If you make bold to sin still, because you have done so long, and yet go unpunished for it, God may break in upon you in an hour that you think not of. The fly that playeth long with the flame yet is burnt at last. Lot's wife had warning to go out of

Sodom over night, but she made no reckoning of that. She was commanded in the morning, not only to go, but to make haste; yet she cared not for that. When her husband and she prolonged the time, yet they were not punished for that; and when they took liking of another place than the angel appointed (the angel saith the mountain, they Zoar), she is not punished for that. But when she would tempt God, and provoke him further, and look back, then God turned her into a pillar of salt. Surely it is the greatest mercy to have grace to repent; but it is also a mercy to have space to repent: Rev. ii. 21, 'I gave her space to repent of her fornication,' &c. But God's patience must not be wearied.

[2.] It was strange. For here a woman is turned into a pillar of salt. Strange sins bring on strange punishment. When Aaron's sons offered strange fire to God, strange fire came from heaven and consumed them, Lev. x. 2. And Job telleth us in general, chap. xxxi. 3, 'Is not destruction to the wicked, and a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity?' that is, some stroke of justice which is singular and remarkable, whether on persons or nations. The stupid world is not awakened by ordinary judgments, but looks upon them as some chance or common occurrence; and therefore God is forced to go out of the common road, and diversify his judgments, that by some eminent circumstance in them he may alarm the drowsy world to take notice of his hand. As here; when this woman had gone directly against God's command, and would not trust herself with his providence, but out of corrupt affection hankered after the things she had left, God did severely punish her; and her statue and pillar stood for a memorial to all others, to warn them, and season them, not to run into like transgression.

[3.] It was shameful; for she is made a public and lasting monument of shame to herself, but of instruction to us. Where there is sin at the bottom, there will be shame at the top. If ever God open the conscience, we ourselves shall be ashamed: Rom. vi. 21, 'What fruit had ye in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?' What fruit then? But besides it bringeth a blot; besides that φόβος διπλοῦν ψόγου, God setteth us forth as spectacles of public shame. Some God hangeth up in chains of darkness, as warnings to the rest of worldly sinners. Sin brings dishonour to God; and therefore no wonder if it do bring dishonour to us. If we be not tender of God's name, he will not spare ours. Besides the wound in the conscience, there is a blot and a stain that will not easily be washed off. God threateneth his people that they shall be a proverb and a taunt to all that pass by, Jer. xxiii. 8, and Lam. ii. 15.

[4.] It was a judgment suitable to that which was inflicted on the rest of the Sodomites. All Sodom was turned into a salt sea; the cities were destroyed by sulphur and brimstone; but the country about was filled with salt, that it might be fruitful no more: for it is said, Deut. xxix. 23, that 'if Israel kept not covenant, the land shall be burned with brimstone and salt; neither shall it be sown, nor bring forth, nor shall any grass grow in it; like as in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah;' and Zeph. ii. 9, 'As I live, saith the Lord, Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah;



even the breeding of nettles, and pits of salt;' so that the cities being consumed, the land did lie in heaps and pits of salt. Now proportionably, Lot's wife, by her lingering and liking to this place, was turned into salt also, and those that like the sins of a place shall partake of their plagues. When we are called out of mystical Babylon (Rev. xviii. 4, 'Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues'), surely it concerneth us to be thorough with God; for those that seem to escape may be overtaken with the judgment of the place, and led forth with the workers of iniquity.

*Secondly*, I must show how profitable it is for us to meditate on this instance, even for all those who are called from wrath to a state of rest and glory.

1. That it concerneth such not only to consider the mercies of God, but also now and then the examples of his justice, that 'we may serve him with fear, and rejoice with trembling,' Ps. ii. 11. We are in a mixed estate, and therefore mixed affections do best. As we are to cherish the spirit or better part with promises and hopes of glory, by which the inner man is renewed day by day, so we are to weaken the pravity of the flesh by the remembrance of God's judgments, not only threatened, but also actually inflicted; for instances do much enliven things. When the apostle had reckoned up the judgments of God on the Israelites in the wilderness or passage to Canaan, he maketh this use of it, 1 Cor. x. 11, 12, 'Now all these things happened to them for examples, ὡς τύποι, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come: wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.' Now, what was done to them may be done to us; for these judgments are patterns of providence; and if we would blow off the dust from the ancient providences of God, we may easily read our own doom or desert at least. The desert of sin is still the same, and the exactness of divine justice is still the same; what hath been is a pledge and instance of what may be. And scripture history is not only a register and chronicle of what is past, but a kind of calendar and prognostication of what is to come. Mark, again, this must be considered by him that seemeth to stand, or to have good advantages by grace. Here was a woman taken as a brand out of the burning, and in a fair way of escape, yet afterward perished, and is set up as a public monument of salt, to season the rest of the world. All these things are warnings to us; and the most spiritual ought to take heed by them. So our Lord Christ, when he mentioneth the disastrous end of those Galileans whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices, and those on whom the tower of Siloam fell, would have all make this use of it. Luke xiii. 5, 'Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish.' He would have us make use of judgments for our caution and warning, to quicken and increase our repentance. *Electorum corda semper ad se sollicitè redeunt*—Tender hearts apply all to themselves; they find it an help: it doth not weaken their confidence and joy in the Lord, but it doth increase their caution and watchfulness.

2. That not only modern and present, but ancient and old judgments are of great use to us, especially when like sins abound in the age we live in, or we are in danger of them as to our own practice.

God biddeth the Israelites go to Shiloh, and see what he did to it for the wickedness thereof, Jer. vii. 12. And the apostle saith, the Israelites in the wilderness were our figures and examples, 1 Cor. x. 6, that 'we should not lust as they lusted, nor murmur as they murmured, nor tempt Christ as they tempted.' And another apostle tells us, that Sodom and Gomorrah are set forth for an example to those that should afterward live ungodly, Jude 7. If others have smarted for disobeying God, why not we, since God is impartially and immutably just, always consonant and agreeable unto himself? His power is the same, so is his justice and holiness. If we will not be warned by threatening nor example, we sin doubly; as he that will run into a bog wherein others have plunged themselves before is guilty of double folly—of adventuring rashly, and not taking warning. This is one great benefit that we have by the historical part of the word, that it does not only preserve the memory of the saints, that we may imitate their graces and enjoy their blessings, but also recordeth the sins and punishments of the wicked, that we may avoid their judgments. As here, Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt to season after ages.

3. This particular judgment is monumental, and so intended for a pattern and spectacle to after ages; and it is also here recommended by the Lord himself: 'Remember Lot's wife.' He exciteth us to look upon this pillar; and therefore certainly it will yield many instructions for the heavenly life.

[1.] This seemeth to be a small sin. What! for a look, for a glance of her eye, to be so suddenly blasted into a pillar of salt! This seemeth to be no great fault; but it teaches us that little faults in appearance many times meet with a great judgment. There may be much crookedness in a small line; and the matter is not so much to be regarded as the majesty and authority of God that commandeth; as in garments the dye is more than the stuff. A man may be more wicked in committing sin in a small matter than in a great; partly because it is against a plain commandment; partly because the sin might have been easily left undone, because the temptation was not great, and we stand with God for a trifle. But that I may at once vindicate God's dispensation, and enforce the caution, I shall prove—

(1.) That sin is not to be measured by the external action, but by the circumstances. Eating an apple, to a common eye, is no great matter; but God hath laid a restraint upon it, and that was the ruin of all mankind. Moses's words, Num. xx. 10–12, 'Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch water out of this rock for you?' But 'he spake unadvisedly with his lips,' Ps. cvi. 33. God found unbelief in them, and therefore he shut him out of the land of Caanan. God knew this woman's heart, and could interpret the meaning of her look. We cannot put a difference between the look of Abraham and the look of Lot; yet the one was commanded, and the other forbidden. Abraham is allowed to look to Sodom: Gen. xix. 28, 'And Abraham got up early in the morning, and looked toward Sodom; and behold the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.' Yet Lot and his family are forbidden to look that way. We cannot distinguish between the laughter of Abraham and the laughter of Sarah: Gen. xvii. 17, 'And Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, saying, Shall

a child be born to him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?' Compare Gen. xviii. 12, 'And Sarah laughed within herself, saying, Aiter I am waxed old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?' And she is reproved: 'And the Lord said, Wherefore did Sarah laugh?' The one was joy and reverence; the other was unbelief and contempt. We cannot distinguish between the Virgin Mary's question, Luke i. 34, 'How shall this be?' and Zachariah's, Luke i. 18, 'And how shall I know this? for I am an old man:' and he was struck dumb for that speech, ver. 20. But though we cannot distinguish, God, that knoweth the secret motions of the heart, can distinguish.

(2.) This woman's sin is greater than at first appeareth. For here was—(1.) A preferring her own will before the will of God. God said, Look not back; but she would look back. (2.) There was a contempt of the justice and wrath of God, as if it were a vain scarecrow: 1 Cor. x. 22, 'Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?' (3.) Here is also a contempt of the rewards of obedience, as in all sin: Heb. xii. 15, 16, 'Looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness, springing up, trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birth-right.' (4.) There was an abuse of the grace offered for her escape and deliverance. Warning is given by an angel, and offer to save herself and all that belonged to her; as none sin against God, 'but they despise the riches of his goodness and forbearance,' Rom. ii. 4. Oh! therefore look not on sin at a distance, but make a narrow inspection into it. All these four things are in every deliberate sin, seem it never so small.

(3.) Because we think we may preserve the smaller sins for breed, and that God is more severe in remembering these than we are faulty in committing them. Therefore think of and seriously consider that small sins are the mother of great sins, and the grandmother of great punishments. As little sticks set the great ones on fire, and a wisp of straw often enkindleth a great block of wood, so we are drawn on by the lesser evils to greater, and by the just judgment of God suffered to fall into them, because we made no conscience of lesser. The lesser commandments are a rail about the greater, and no man grows downright wicked at first, but rises to it by degrees. So for punishments. Nahab and Abihu for strange fire; Ananias and Sapphira keeping back part, Uzzah for touching the ark; the Bethshemites for looking into the ark. We may make little reckoning of sin, but God doth not make little reckoning of sin; or else why hath he given us these instances? So that this advantage in the spiritual life we have by this instance, that no sin should be accounted small that is committed against the great God.

[2.] This was a sin committed by stealth: as she followed her husband, she would steal a glance, and look towards Sodom; for it is said, Gen. xix. 26, 'His wife looked back from behind him.' God can find us out in our secret sins; and therefore we should make conscience, as not to sin openly, so not by stealth. Achan was found out in his sacrilege, how secretly soever he carried it, Josh. vii. 18; Ananias

and Sapphira in keeping back part of what was dedicated to God, Acts v. ; Gehazi in affecting a bribe : 2 Kings v. 26, 'Went not my spirit with thee?' meaning the light of his prophetic spirit. Lot's wife would lag behind, and look to Sodom, fearing a rebuke from her husband, but she met with a rebuke from the Lord. The apostle saith, Eph. v. 12, 'It is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.' A serious christian is ashamed to speak of what they are not ashamed to practise. But though you can hide it from men, you cannot hide it from the all-seeing eye of God. Uncleanliness usually affecteth a veil of secrecy ; therefore it is said, 'Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge,' Heb. xiii. 4. God will judge them, because usually this sin is carried so closely and craftily, that none but God can find them out. Well, then, let no man embolden himself to have his hand in any sin, in hope to hide it ; for nothing can escape God's discovery, to whom all things are naked and open. God knew what the king of Syria spake in his secret chamber : 2 Kings vi. 12, 'Elisha the prophet telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bed-chamber.' God knew the secret thoughts of Herod's heart, which it is probable he never uttered to his nearest friends, concerning the murdering of Christ : Mat. ii. 13, 'Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.' In short, to be an open and bold sinner in some respects is worse than to be a close and private sinner, because of the dishonour done to God, and the scandal to others, and the impudence of the sinner himself ; but in other respects secret sins have their aggravations.

(1.) Because if open sins be of greater infamy, yet secret sins are more against knowledge and conviction. The man is conscious to himself that he doth evil, and therefore seeketh a veil and covering, would not have the world know it. It is a sin with a consciousness that we do sin : James iv., 'To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.' If you live in secret wickedness, envy, pride, and sensuality, and would fain keep it close, this is to rebel against the light.

(2.) This secret sinning puts far more respect upon men than God ; and this is palliated atheism. They are unjust in secret, unclean in secret, envious in secret, declaim against God's children in secret, sensual in secret. Ah, wicked wretch ! art thou afraid men should know it, and art thou not afraid God should know it ? What ! afraid of the eye of man, and not afraid of the great God ? Thou wouldst not have a child see thee to do that which God sees thee do : Jer. ii. 26, 'The thief is ashamed when he is found,' saith the prophet. Can man damn thee, and fill thy conscience with terrors ? Can man bid thee depart into everlasting burnings ? Why art thou afraid of man, and not of God ?

(3.) The more secret any wickedness is, it argueth the heart is more industrious about it, how to bring it to pass with least shame and damage to ourselves ; as David plotted Uriah's death : 2 Sam. xi. 14, &c., 'David wrote a letter to Joab, saying, Set Uriah in the fore-front of the hottest battle, and retire from him, that he may be smitten, and die.' So Josh. vii. 11, 'They have stolen, and dissembled also, and put it among their stuff.' So Acts v. 9, 'How is it that ye have agreed

together to tempt the Spirit of God?' In secret sins there is much premeditation and craft and dissimulation used. Oh! therefore avoid these sins.

[3.] The next lesson which we learn hence is, that no loss of earthly things should make us repent of our obedience to God, but that we should still go on with what we have well begun, without looking back: Luke ix. 62, 'No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.' A man that hath undertaken the service of Christ must go through with it. In ploughing there is no looking back. The people of Israel, when they found the inconveniences of the wilderness, were making themselves a captain to go back to Egypt. The apostle saith, Phil. iii. 13, 'Forgetting the things which are behind, I reach forth to the things which are before.' We should not mind or look at anything behind us that would turn us back and stop us in our way to heaven. The world and the flesh are the things behind us, we turned our backs upon them in conversion. If either of these would call back our thoughts or corrupt our affections, we must renounce them, detest them. The things before us are God and heaven; and is not God and heaven better than the world and the flesh? Surely God should be pleased before the flesh, and heaven sought after rather than the world. A crown of endless glory is better than all the vain delights and pomp of this world; and therefore we should not grow weary of walking with God, and look to the things behind us so as to forfeit and hazard the things which are before us. Thus you see many useful instructions may be drawn, to make us persevere in the heavenly life, and carry it on with more success.

*Use.* From the whole—

1. Remember that in getting out of Sodom we must make haste. The least delay or stop in the course of our flight may be pernicious to us. Persons convinced of their danger are always in haste: Mat. iii. 7, 'Who hath forewarned you to flee from the wrath to come?' And the heirs of promise are described, Heb. vi. 18, to be such as 'have fled for refuge, to take hold of the hope which is before them.' No other pace is comely here but flight. Alas! we are apt to linger when God calleth us; and though there be fire and brimstone in the case, yet we are loath to depart, till God by a sacred rescue pluck us out of that woful estate wherein we are by nature. David lingered not: Ps. cxix. 60, 'I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.'

2. That till our resolutions be firmly set for God and heaven, and there be a thorough bent and bias upon our hearts, and the league between us and our secret lusts broken, after we have seemed to make some escape, we shall be looking back again: 'For where our treasure is, there our heart will be,' Mat. vi. 21. As in the instance of Lot's wife; her heart hankered after what she had left behind. And therefore, till the heart be effectually turned from the creature to God, weaned from the love of its secret lusts to the love of Christ, the back bias of corruption will recover its strength, and we are ready to revert to our misery, whatever profession we have made, and hopeful beginning we have had.

3. That to look back, after we have seemed to escape, doth involve

us in the greatest sin and misery. The apostle tells us, 2 Peter ii. 20, 21, 'If after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse than the beginning; for it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness,' &c. Their sin and judgment had been less if they had not professed to have yielded to God so far. Partly because a revolt in them is treachery and breach of vows; for we turned our back upon the world and all the allurements thereof when we consented to the covenant, and resolved to follow Christ in all conditions, till he should bring us into a place of rest and safety. And partly because it is a profession of our mistake by experience; as if upon trial we found the world better, and God worse, than ever we thought them to be: Micah vi. 3, 'O my people, what have I done unto thee, and wherein have I wearied thee?' Partly because they have had some relish and taste of better things, Heb. vi. 4. Now light and taste about the ways of God do much aggravate sin; partly because the devil is most furious against such: Mat. xii. 45, 'The last state of that man is worse than the first.' Well, then, if men be not really and effectually changed in their hearts, and do only make profession, they may be ensnared, and made slaves to their lusts again.

4. That if we would not go back, we must not look back. The devil will not say at first, Go back to Sodom, though that is it which he intendeth; but rather, Look back, hoping the person which yields to look back will go back in the end. Sin is bashful and shameth to beg too much at first; it asketh but a little, and that little will draw on more; and so corruption insensibly steals upon us, and our hearts are drawn off from God. Therefore watch against the first declinings; these are the cause of all the rest. Evil is best stopped at first; the first breakings off from God, and remitting our zeal and watchfulness. He that keeps not a house in constant repair will be in danger of having it fall down upon him. So, if we grow remiss and careless, and keep not a constant watch, temptations will increase upon us.

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## A SERMON ON JOHN III. 33.

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*He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.*—JOHN iii. 33.

FOR the occasion of these words, we must look a little back into the context. There you will find that both John and Jesus were admitting proselytes into the kingdom of God by baptism; Jesus in the land of Judea, and John at Ænon, near Salim. Now the kingdom of God seldom enjoyeth any long and successful progress without opposition. If outward enemies fail, domestic jars and quarrels shall be raised rather than this kingdom shall go forward without contradiction. John's disciples were at least half friends to Christ, yet were troubled at the great resort to his baptism, out of foolish emulation and jealousy for their master's credit; which was occasioned thus: A dispute there was between John's disciples and some Jews, whether John's baptism or their legal washings did most avail for the purging away of sin. Among other things objected by the Jews to lessen John's baptism, they mentioned that practised by Christ as a more excellent and esteemed way. This nettled John's disciples; therefore, as men grieved to see so many attend to Christ's doctrine and frequent his baptism, and fearing lest their master should be outshined, and the respects of the people be turned upon another, they complain to John: 'Rabbi,' say they, 'he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him.' It is good to see how John receiveth this complaint. Nothing will try a man's grace more than questions of emulation. John, like a modest and self-denying spirit, doth seek to allay this envy in his disciples by his humility and faithfulness, giving a large testimony to Christ, both of the excellency of his person, and the certainty and truth of his doctrine.

1. Of the excellency of Christ's person above himself, or any other messenger of God. He telleth them that every one must hold the place given him from above, and contain himself within his degree and measure. Now his place was to be the servant, and Christ the lord. He was not the Christ, but his harbinger. Christ was the principal person and bridegroom. He had honour enough in being the friend of the bridegroom, and to rejoice in that the bride or the church began to hear Christ. Christ had the spring in himself; what others had was by communication; and therefore he must yield to the growing

glory of Christ, who by his original came from above, and in respect of dominion and sovereignty was above all.

2. The certainty and truth of this doctrine: 'What he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth.' His doctrine was infallible, and as being conscious to the secrets of God, his testimony was certain, though it found little credence and reception in the world: 'No man receiveth his testimony;' that is, no man in comparison, none with that assurance they ought to do. John's disciples say, 'All men follow him;' but John saith here, 'No man receiveth his testimony.' They think there were too many followed Christ, and John thinketh there were too few. They say invidiously, 'All men;' John humbly, 'No man.' None to speak of, none as they ought, for many followed him out of novelty. Thereupon he persuadeth them to receive Christ's testimony. His argument is, that thereby they should bring honour to God, and honour him with that honour which he most esteemeth, by a solemn acknowledgment of his truth: 'He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.'

The words contain—

1. The true notion of Christ's doctrine—it is a testimony.
2. The respect due to it—it must be received.
3. The effect and fruit of this receiving—it bringeth honour and glory to God.

There take notice—

[1.] Of the particular attribute that is honoured—that God is true.

[2.] The solemnity or manner of honouring—hath put to his seal.  
Or, in short—

(1.) The description of a believer—he is one that receiveth Christ's testimony.

(2.) The work of a believer is to put to his seal that God is true.

*Doct.* He that heartily embraceth the doctrine of the gospel doth solemnly ratify and bear witness to the truth of God.

First, I shall speak of the true notion of Christ's doctrine—it is a testimony. Here I shall handle the nature, value, and use.

First, The nature of it. A testimony is a sort of proof, necessary in matters that cannot otherwise be decided, and found out by rational discourse, as in two cases—

1. In things that depend upon the arbitrary will of another; and—
2. In matters of fact. In both these respects the gospel is brought to us as a testimony. In the first respect by Christ, who came out of the bosom of God, and knew his secrets. In the second, as it is a report of matter of fact by eye and ear witnesses; so by the apostles.

[1.] A testimony is necessary in matters that depend upon the arbitrary will of another. If I be concerned to know how he stands affected towards me I must know it by his testimony solemnly deposed and given for my satisfaction. So the gospel, or the doctrine of God's good-will in Christ for the salvation of sinners, is a thing that cannot be found out by the light of nature. But Christ, who was in the bosom of the Father, knew his heart, and hath given testimony how it standeth affected to the salvation of men. None can know God's mind but God himself, and he to whom he will reveal it. So Christ saith,



Mat. xi. 27, 'No man knoweth the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him,' as no man knoweth the things of a man but the spirit in a man. To save sinners is not *proprietas divince nature*—a necessary act of the divine nature; but *opus liberi consilii*—an act of his new grace, love, and condescension: John iii. 16, 'God so loved the world.' This wonderful work proceedeth from the free motion of God's will, and therefore it was impossible to be found out by discourse of natural reason; for how could any man divine what God purposed in his heart before he wrought it unless he himself revealed it? That *Deus est placabilis*—that God was to be appeased, man might find out by the continuance of the course of nature and the blessings of providence, notwithstanding many sins and the need of an expiation and a propitiatory sacrifice: but for the way of appeasing God, how a man shall be pardoned, reconciled to God, and obtain eternal life, of this nature knew nothing. The angels, which are the highest sort of rational creatures, wonder at it when it is revealed, Eph. iii. 10, and 1 Peter i. 11. Therefore the knowledge of the gospel merely dependeth upon the testimony of God brought us by Christ, who was sent to reveal his Father's will.

[2.] A testimony is necessary in matters of fact. Matter of law is argued and debated by reason, but matter of fact is only proved by credible witnesses; and in this sense the gospel to us is a testimony that Christ came into the world, taught the way of salvation in that manner wherein it is now set down in the scriptures, wrought miracles, died for our sins at Jerusalem, and rose again to confirm all, and to make faith to the world that he was the true Messiah. These things were to be once done in one place of the world, but yet the knowledge of it concerned all the rest of the world. All the world could not see Christ in the flesh, nor see him work miracles, nor see him rise again and ascend into heaven; and it was not necessary that he should always live here, and act over his sufferings in every age and every place, and so give the whole world a testimony of sense; yea, the contrary was necessary, that he should but die once, and rise again, and go to heaven; and those that lived in other ages and other places should have only valuable testimony of it; and this was the office put upon the apostles, who were chosen witnesses of the death and resurrection of Christ: Acts i. 21, 22, one of those that conversed with Jesus was ordained to be a witness of the resurrection; and Acts ii. 32, 'This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses;' so Acts x. 39, 'We are witnesses of all things which he did, both in the land of the Jews and at Jerusalem;' and in many other places. In this sense the word of salvation is a testimony brought us by credible witnesses, the apostles confirming it by miracles everywhere; but of their testimony we speak not now, but his testimony.

Secondly, The value of his testimony. Christ is to be believed in all that he delivered to the world concerning the mind and will of God. This will appear if we consider—(1.) The witness; and (2.) The testimony itself.

1. The person witnessing. It was he who was spoken of and promised in paradise, Gen. iii. 15; shadowed and figured in the sacrifices of the law. It was he who was prophesied of in the Old Testament:

John v. 39, 'Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me.' The whole scope of the Old Testament is to bear witness of Jesus Christ, of his person, natures, offices, his birth, life, death, sufferings, and the glory that should follow. A man may trace the story of Christ among the prophets, and show from point to point that he was the person sent from God to declare his will to the world. It was he who was owned by God by a voice from heaven at his baptism, Mat. iii. 17; at his transfiguration, Mat. xvii. 5; a little before his death: John xii. 28, 'Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again;' and 2 Peter i. 16, 'For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' It is his testimony whom the Father has sealed, John vi. 27; to whom he hath given the Spirit without measure, John iii. 34; who wrought miracles in the sight of all the people, appealed to his works, and professed to stand to that judgment. His followers, who could not be deceived, nor certainly would not deceive, have assured us so. His disciples could not be deceived, for they did not learn these things from others, nor gather them up from their own reason, but were eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses. It is not a report of a report, that is uncertain; neither did they hear and see them slightly or perfunctorily, but conversed with him from day to day; had no sign of distraction and fantastic impressions. Neither are the things such as they could be deceived in them; or, if that could be imagined, by whom should they be deceived? Not by God, who cannot be deceived himself, for he knoweth all things; nor will he deceive others, being so holy in himself, and so good and loving to mankind. Nor by angels, good or bad. Not by good angels, for how can they be good if they deceive? Nor by evil angels, whose tyranny they set themselves to oppose, overthrowing their idols, temples, and altars, and seeking to draw men from their worship to the worship of the true God, who made heaven and earth, to true virtue, piety, charity, and holy and inoffensive living with men. Nor would they deceive. To what end should they do this? Their religion forbiddeth them to lie for God, to do evil that good may come of it. What was it that they might have wealth, pleasure, or glory and honour, and the favour of men? These things they renounced for the doctrine's sake which they preached, and did teach others to renounce, and did endure all manner of displeasure, torments, and death. They had no reason to witness these things but for the profit of the world.

2. The testimony itself. It is such a testimony as man needeth, as hath a fair correspondence with other principles of reason, and such as hath a convincing evidence in itself.

[1.] It is such a testimony as man needeth. There is a double necessity upon mankind to look out for such a religion or doctrine as may allay our fears and satisfy our desires. Till these things be done man is unsatisfied; a religion doth not do the offices of a religion. As to God, the great business of a religion is to provide due honour for God; as to man, due rest for his soul. This latter we have now

under consideration chiefly: Jer. vi. 16, 'Stand in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls;' and Mat. xi. 28, 29, 'Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest; take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.' Now the soul is never at rest, nor sits easy within the bosoms of the considering part of mankind, till there be provided a suitable happiness, and a sufficient means for the expiation of the guilt of sin. Happiness is our great desire, and sin is our great trouble. The great question of the fallen creature is, Micah vi. 7, 'What shall I give for the sin of my soul?' They are haunted about the scruples of appeasing provoked justice. And then the other question and inquiry is, 'Who will show us any good?' Ps. iv. 6. Where shall a man be happy, that he needeth not seek any further? Now a testimony that shall answer these two grand scruples and controversies, which have much perplexed the mind of men, should be acceptable to us.

[2.] It hath a fair correspondency with principles of reason and truths evidenced by the light of nature, some of which respect our fears of punishment, some our desires of happiness, some both; but I keep to these two.

(1.) That there are a God of infinite power, and wisdom, and goodness, who made all things, and so men, and should be served by them.

(2.) That all have extremely faulted in this subjection which is due to the creator of the world. Experience manifesteth this.

(3.) That having faulted in this subjection, they are liable to God's punishment: Rom. iii. 19, 'All the world are become guilty before God;' ὑπόδικος τῷ Θεῷ.

(4.) That there are no hopes of being freed from this punishment, unless the holy and just God receive some satisfaction. Now the mystery of redemption by Christ doth fairly accord with these principles, and is built upon them. The heathens invented several ways of expiation to bring God and man together, and to reconcile justice and mercy, but none so considerable as this ransom found out by God.

And then, for desires of happiness, the principles of reason are these—

(1.) That reasonable creatures have immortal souls, and die not as the beasts die.

(2.) That true happiness is not to be found in such things wherein men ordinarily seek it, as riches, honours, and pleasures.

(3.) That since vice and virtue receive not suitable rewards here, therefore there must be some reward and punishment after this life.

(4.) That Christ's testimony sheweth us the right way of obtaining the one and eschewing the other, for he hath brought the true life and immortality to light, 2 Tim. i. 10.

[3.] That this testimony hath a convincing evidence in itself: 2 Cor. iv. 2-4 'By the manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God; but if our

gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.' If men's minds were not blinded with delusions, and their hearts biassed with carnal affections, they could never reject it. It is true, the way of salvation by the death of Christ and his resurrection from the dead are not known but by illumination from the Spirit or supernatural revelation; yet they are not contrary to such truths as are naturally known concerning the power, wisdom, and goodness of God, and are evidenced to us by their harmony and agreement with other truths revealed both in nature and scripture, and in the doctrine of Christ concerning them. There is a singular power to terrify and humble the mind of man, and then to give it true peace and comfort, such as cannot be found elsewhere; and to draw them to a genuine holiness, derived from the highest fountain and principle, the Spirit of Christ; the highest rule, the will and command of God; and the highest end, which is the pleasing, glorifying, and enjoying of God.

Thirdly, The use of it as a testimony.

1. To bless God that he hath stated a rule of commerce between us and him. If Jesus Christ had not come out from the bosom of God, we had been left at great uncertainties; but now God hath told us his mind, what we must do, and what we may expect in the testimony which Christ hath brought from heaven. The way of blessing and enjoying God is not left to our uncertain guesses, but made known in an authentic way by Christ.

2. To show us with what sureness we may build upon the hopes of the gospel; it is God's testimony. The apostle saith, 'If we receive the witness of men, the testimony of God is greater,' 1 John v. 9. It is but reason that we should allow God that value and esteem that we give to the testimony of men who are fallible and deceitful. Among men, in the mouth of two or three witnesses every truth is established, Deut. xix. 5. Now, we have witness upon witness concerning the gospel. There are three that bear witness in heaven, and there are three that bear witness on earth: 1 John v. 7, 8, 'There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost;' the Father by voice and oracle; the Son by voice to 'Saul, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' in words so convincingly that he knew it was God; the Holy Ghost descending on Christ in the form of a dove, and on the apostles in cloven tongues of fire. There are three also that bear witness on earth, 'the Spirit, the water, and the blood,' in the heart of a believer, a bosom, near testimony, illuminating and enabling a man to discern the doctrine to be of God; leaving constant and sensible effects, pacifying and quieting the conscience, and sanctifying the heart by this doctrine, the blood of Christ cleansing and purifying us as by clean water. God's testimony is the ultimate resolution of faith. Now if after all this we should not believe the testimony of God concerning his Son and his message delivered to us, how great will our condemnation be!

3. Our danger is great if we receive not and obey not this doctrine

concerning accepting sinners to life in Christ; that will appear by comparing two places. In Mat. xxiv. 14, it is said, 'The word of the kingdom shall be preached *εἰς μαρτύριον*, for a testimony to them;' and Mark xiii. 9, 'A testimony against them.' First to them, next against them; to them, if they receive it; against them, if they reject, neglect, or believe it not. What is now an offer of grace will then be an accusation for despising grace. God will not be without a witness at the day of judgment, and men will be left without excuse. We had sufficient to convince us of the way of pleasing God.

*Secondly*, The respect that is due to this testimony. It is not only to be heard or understood, but received: 'Whosoever receiveth this testimony;' that is, to hear it so as we may understand it; to understand it so as we may assent to it with our minds; to assent to it with our minds so as we may embrace it with our affections; to embrace it with our affections so as we may build our hope and confidence thereupon, and lie under the sovereignty of it in our lives and actions. This is to receive the testimony of Christ: one degree maketh way for another.

1. Hear it or regard it we must. Here is a testimony brought out from the bosom of God concerning the weightiest matters, our eternal peace and salvation; and that by his Son taking our nature. Now, for us to disregard it is the greatest indignity and affront that we can put upon God: Mat. xxii. 5, 'But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise.' There was a feast provided, all things were made ready—a marriage-feast of the king's son—a message sent, but 'they made light of it.' Now many will not take it into their care and thoughts, nor so much as consider what God had intended from all eternity for their comfort and peace. The first sort of bad ground was the highway, the careless, neglected, unbounded common: Mat. xiii. 19, 'When any man heareth the word and understandeth it not;' *μὴ συνέντος—non attendit*; doth not lay it to heart, doth not consider the necessity and use of this doctrine. So Acts xvi. 14, God's first work upon Lydia was to make her attend to the things spoken by Paul; that is, to enter into a deep consideration with herself. The careless highway hearer is very common, that lightly taketh up the current opinions where he liveth, and doth the work of an age in a breath. Men say, We are all sinners, and God is merciful, and Christ is the saviour of the world; but they never weigh these things. The outward notion falleth upon their hearts as seed doth upon the beaten path, but it never entereth so as to take root there.

2. Understand it we must, or we do not receive this testimony. We must search after the thorough knowledge of those things which Christ hath taught us concerning the purpose of his Father, or the manner of our salvation: John xiv. 21, 'He that hath my commandments and keepeth them.' A man must have them before he can keep them; have them in our judgments before we can keep them in our memory, hearts, and consciences; know our duty before we can make conscience of it. Nothing gets to the will and affections without the understanding, as nothing passeth to the bowels without the mouth and the stomach: Prov. xix. 2, 'Without understanding

the heart is not good.' You cannot go on with the work of God till you do understandingly close with Christ Jesus. Christ called the multitude and said, 'Hear and understand,' Mat. xv. 10. Next to the ear, the mind must be possessed with these truths.

3. We must firmly assent to it, acquiesce in the testimony of Christ; and the mind must be so far prevailed with as to assent to the truth of what it understands. The apostle saith, 1 Tim. i. 15, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation.' First determine of that; the word is true. If we did believe it, we would make more use of it. There is a defect in point of assent. Doubts would sooner vanish if we did not secretly give God the lie. Man is apt to suspect evangelical truths as lying cross to his lusts and interests; even dogmatical infidelity is more rife in this lower world than we do imagine, where God is unseen, and our great hopes and enjoyments are to come, and our owning of God costs us so dear, and the flesh is so importunate to be pleased. All our coldness in duty and boldness in sinning cometh from hence; atheism and unbelief lieth at the bottom. Men are not persuaded of divine truths, and therefore they have so little influence upon them; therefore look to assent; John vi. 69, 'We know and are assured thou art the Christ;' so John xvii. 8, 'They have known assuredly that I came out from God.' We should come to this certainty and persuasion, and firm adherence to the general truths.

4. To embrace it with all affection: Acts ii. 41, 'They received the word gladly;' ἀσμένως. It is good news to a poor hungry conscience to hear of a pardoning God, and a merciful and faithful Redeemer, and the offers of eternal life, and a sure way pointed out how to come at it; it is the rejoicing of their souls. Therefore we must embrace it with hearty and unfeigned affection. The gospel is not only true, but good; therefore to be received with the dearest affection. Christ is not only to be received understandingly, but heartily, 1 Tim. i. 15. Many relish not the gospel because their affections are pre-engaged. Swine prefer swill before better food.

5. To build our hope and confidence thereupon while we continue with patience in well-doing. I join both together, because resolutions of duty (in a sound heart) are always mingled with expectations of mercy. Such a good being offered under conditions, we are to perform the conditions; they that believe shall have the good things promised: Ps. cxix. 166, 'Lord, I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments.' None doth rightly rest and rely upon Christ but he that resigneth up himself to his service. Comforts are in order to work, and are never needed nor felt but while we are working. It is the laborious man that hungereth and hath an appetite. The last ground, which is the good ground, is that honest heart which, having heard the good word, keepeth it, and bringeth forth fruit with patience, Luke xviii. 15. This is to receive the testimony of Christ, when heart and conscience give way to it, and we suffer it to sway us to obedience, when the word dwelleth plenteously in us, ruling in our hearts. The degrees make way for one another; attentive audience for knowledge; knowledge for faith or assent; assent to the truth and goodness of what Christ offereth in the name of God, for

embracing and prosecution, and that for the subjection of the whole man and constant reliance upon God in the exercise of holiness. We must receive the precepts with a resolution to practise them; the promises with a resolution to depend on them as our only happiness.

*Thirdly*, He that thus receiveth doth ratify the truth of God, and solemnly bear witness to it. Here I shall—(1.) Speak of the manner of ratifying and confirming; and (2.) Of the matter confirmed.

1. The manner of ratifying and confirming. It is not said, believed, or confessed, or protested, but *ἐσφράγισεν*, 'hath put to his seal.' Those things that we doubt off we are not wont to confirm with our seal, but those things which we are assured of, and would have others to look upon as firm and authentic. Jezebel wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal, 1 Kings xxi. 8, to give them the greater credit. Nehemiah, when he had renewed his covenant with God, he and the princes and Levites and priests sealed it, Neh. ix. 38. So Esther viii. 8, 'Write ye also for the Jews in the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring; for the writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse.' So Jer. xxxii. 10, 'I subscribed the evidence and sealed it.' But then here ariseth a doubt: How can we confirm the truth of God, and make it more authentic? for God is worthy of credit though no man believes him; he needeth only to say, *Teste meipso*: if he must stand to man's courtesy, *Tum Deus si homini non placuerit, Deus non erit!* as Tertullian saith in a like case. Again, what credit can the testimony of God have from man's seal, who deceiveth and is deceived? I answer—It is not out of need, but out of condescension. God's truth is the same in itself, and needeth not our confirmation; but he will put this honour upon us, that we should as far as we can honour his truth by our subscription. It is our honour that our testimony is taken in so great a matter. God is true, though every man be a liar, Rom. iii. 4; but our sealing is of great use and profit both to ourselves and others.

[1.] To ourselves; to bind us more firmly to believe that doctrine, and live according to it, which we have owned and ratified by our own consent. You do, as it were, give it under hand and seal that you are one that will stand to this faith, and expect comfort and privilege by this covenant: Isa. xlv. 5, 'One shall say, I am the Lord's, and another shall subscribe with his hand to the Lord.' When you assent unto and embrace this doctrine, you subscribe to the God of Jacob, and give up your names to be entered into his muster-roll, and registered into the church-book of the first-born: Ps. lxxxvii. 6, 'The Lord shall count when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there.' God hath his lease-book, wherein all that belong to him are registered. Now you do, as it were, under hand and seal list and enrol yourselves in his service, and, as a member of Christ's mystical body, engage yourselves to perform duty, and to wait for the comfort of the promises.

[2.] For the profit of others. Your faith professed doth as it were seal the truth of God to them: Isa. xliii. 10, 'Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord.' God's people, that have from time to time such plentiful proofs of divine power and providence, are able to give sufficient testimony for him; and others are confirmed in the faith and belief of

that to which we attest when we are diligent in holiness, patient and joyful under the cross, full of hope and comfort in great straits. We put to our seal to the promises, and commend our faith to others. God was angry with Moses and Aaron, Num. xx. 12, 'Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel; therefore ye shall not bring the people into the land which I have promised them.' We are not only to believe God ourselves, but to sanctify him in the eyes of others. We set hands to a thing that we would promote and get to pass in the world. We must believe so that others may be moved by the generousness of our faith to embrace the truth. When the Thessalonians had received the word in much assurance, and much affliction, and much joy in the Holy Ghost, the apostle telleth them, 1 Thes. i. 5-7, they were ensamples to all that believed in Achaia and Macedonia. Thus we propagate our faith, and commend the truth of God to others. But alas! many are not only infidels themselves, but propagate their infidelity: Titus i. 16, 'In their works they deny him,' live down the faith they pretend unto. Our lives should be a confirmation of the gospel, but are indeed a confutation of it; we should confirm the weak, and we offend the strong. Well, then, the meaning is, he is firmly persuaded in his own heart, and doth openly profess and live accordingly, and gains others to do likewise.

(2.) The matter confirmed, that God is true; not that God is merciful, or that God is just, holy, and wise, but that God is true.

[1.] God's truth is a great prop of faith. That which upheld Sarah, when she had a promise of conceiving a child, after she was past age, was the faithfulness of God, Heb. xi. 11. So you put to your seal that God is true, he is truth itself. God can do anything, but cannot lie. The heathen acknowledged it to be the property of the gods to speak the truth and do good.

[2.] The honour of his veracity is more pleasing to God than any other thing: Ps. cxxxviii. 2, 'Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.' He hath ever stood upon that, in being punctual in keeping covenant and fulfilling his promises. This is most conspicuous above all that is famed or spoken or believed of God; nothing so dear to God as his truth. Men cannot endure to have the lie put upon them; they take themselves to be honoured when their word is believed. And will God disappoint them that deny themselves, and build upon his promises? It cannot be.

[3.] This setting to his seal that God is true, it supposeth some precedent obligation which he hath taken upon himself, and God's word is engaged and laid at pledge. Now—

(1.) God is engaged by promise to Christ in the covenant of redemption, that he will justify, sanctify, glorify all those that believe in Christ, Isa. liii. 10, 11. Now the poor soul that receiveth his testimony giveth it under hand and seal that God is as good as his word, that he hath performed the conditions of the eternal covenant; as when men are bound to pay great sums, they require an acquittance that they have discharged their obligation. God is obliged to Jesus Christ to bestow eternal life upon all those that come to him in his name. Now every poor soul that is encouraged to wait for this benefit giveth it under his hand that God is true.



(2.) God was engaged to the old church to send Christ to raise up a great prophet from among his brethren, like unto Moses, whom they should hear, Deut. xviii. 13. He was to be a lawgiver as Moses was, but of a far more perfect law; such an one whom the Lord had known face to face, as he did Moses, but of a far more divine nature; one approved to the world by miracles, signs, and wonders, as Moses was, but miracles evidencing a divine power. Now they that receive Christ's testimony do acknowledge that God hath discharged his faith which was plighted to the old church in the promises and prefigurations of the law. You say, Yea, Lord, it is as thou hast promised. Therefore, Rom. xv. 8, Christ is said to be 'the minister of circumcision, for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers;' so Luke i. 70-73, 'As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began; that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant, the oath which he sware to our father Abraham.'

(3.) God is true in the doctrine of reconciliation and promise of eternal life to Christ's faithful disciples discovered to us in the gospel, or in what he speaks by Christ; there is a divine character in his doctrine. The testimony of Christ is the testimony of God. He spake as an original author; for so it followeth, ver. 34, 'He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God;' John vii. 16, 'My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.' He devised it not himself as man, nor acquired it by any human art and industry. As God equal with the Father, he knew all these mysteries; as man, by communication from his Godhead. God is true in what he revealeth by his Son: so John xiv. 24, 'The word which you hear is not mine, but the Father which sent me.' You justify God's truth against the objections of your own hearts and the prejudices of the world; you own it as a doctrine that hath a divine truth only in it, and so build on it.

*Use.* To persuade us to receive Christ's testimony, and to receive it so as that we put to our seal that God is true. It is easy to reason; partly—

1. From the honour that is done to God. God justifieth, sanctifieth, glorifieth us, and we justify, sanctify, and glorify God. We justify God: Luke vii. 29, 'And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John.' When we receive God's message by Christ, we acquit him of all that the blind world or our carnal hearts lay against him. We sanctify God: Isa. viii. 13, 'Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.' To sanctify is to set apart, and to expect and fear more from God than can be expected and feared from all the powers in the world. We glorify God: Rom. iv. 20, it is said of Abraham, 'He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.'

2. Consider what an honour there is put upon us, that such poor worms as we are should be called to the sealing of God's truth, to confirm the promises by our consent, and to give it under our hands that we believe the promises, that so others may be moved by our example

to accept of this way of salvation, and so your faith procures credit to God. Oh! do not deprive yourselves of this dignity.

3. On the other side, consider what a great dishonour it is to God not to give credit to his word. You blaspheme God when you do not receive his testimony: 1 John v. 10, 'He that believeth not God hath made him a liar.' To make God a liar is to make him no God at all. To have the promise of life unfolded, if we do not heartily embrace it, and firmly build upon it, and be diligent upon these hopes, we carry it so as if his testimony were not true. Hereby you wrong yourselves by your own prejudices, and become a stumbling-block to your brethren, confirming them in an evil way.

4. You are of the church, and pretend to receive Christ's testimony; you are God's witnesses, it is a mockery, a treachery, if you should not put to your seals, live in the constant sense and belief of eternal blessedness by Christ

5. Consider how careful God's faithful servants have been to perform their duty in this kind. Moses: Deut. xxxii. 4, 'He is the rock; his work is perfect; a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he.' So Joshua, chap. xxiii. 14, 'Not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord spake concerning you.' So Jacob: Gen. xlviii. 15, 16, 'He blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my father Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads,' &c. It is the great and most acceptable piece of worship; if you put to your seal to God, God will seal to you: Eph. i. 13, 'In whom also, after ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.'

*Object.* But you will say, What needeth all this ado? Do not we believe the scriptures to be the word of God, and Jesus Christ to be the Messiah? Are we not baptized into his name? I answer—

1. Many may visibly possess Christ, and yet not believe in him. Christ hath disciples in name, and disciples indeed: John viii. 37, 'If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.' Many profess to know God, but in their works deny him, Titus i. 16. So God refuteth the claim of those that said, 'My God, we know thee; but ye have not followed the thing that good is,' Hosea viii. 2. We profess God knoweth the heart, and yet we never take care to purge the heart from corrupt lusts. We profess God hath a particular providence and care of his people, and yet we shift for ourselves. We profess God is true, yet believe him no further than we can see him.

2. A speculative assent doth not denominate us true believers, but answerable walking. Certainly to believe so as to put to our seal implieth it, where, when a man receiveth the word of God as his truth, and doth accordingly manifest it in his life, he puts to his seal, and by his profession and practice doth declare that God is true. They that live merrily and sleep quietly in a course of sin, or a negligent uncertainty of their salvation, do not believe, unless a dead opinion be taken for faith; a dead opinion begotten in us by education, and the tradition of the country where we live. We deceive ourselves with names, and shows, and dead opinions, and customary religion, but have no life nor seriousness: they have a literal knowledge and appre-

hension of the things taught, but it worketh no change in them. You are to believe so as to put to your seal; not in word, but in deed; to declare plainly in the whole course of your lives that you believe the great promises brought to you from God by Christ. Many in their manner of living make God a liar. The careless preacher is as bad, or worse, than he that is haunted with actual doubts about christianity. The trembling doubter mindeth his business, but these never regard it, and do in effect say, Christ and his salvation is not worth the looking after; as it is said of them, Ps. cvi. 24, 'They despised the good land, they believed not his word.' Those that resolve to give over the pursuit of Canaan are said to doubt of his promise. They that neglect salvation do not believe the truth of it: Heb. ii. 3, 4, 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him, God also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles.' If a man tell you that in your field there is a rich treasure which you may have for digging, if you believe the man, will not you go about to dig it up? but if you doubt the truth of it, then you let it alone. The things propounded by Christ are so worthy, that, if you believe them, you will put in for a share, and use all good means to obtain the comfort and benefit promised.

3. In speculative assent there is not that firmness in many that live in the church as is generally conceived. In the bosom of the church there are practical atheists: Zeph. i. 12, 'And it shall come to pass at that time that I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees, that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil.' In Jerusalem, in the degeneracy of the christian religion, such men were more rife than the serious worshippers of Christ: 2 Peter iii. 3, 'There shall come in the last time scoffers, walking after their own lusts.' The last days are full of those profane scoffers. At the first promulgation of the gospel, while truths were new, and the exercises of christian religion lively, and there was great concord and seriousness amongst the professors of the gospel, then profane scoffers were rare and unfrequent; before men's senses were benumbed with the customary use of religious duties, the notions of God were fresh, lively, and active upon their hearts; but afterwards, when the profession of christianity grew into a form and national interest, and men were rather christians by the chance of their birth than their own choice and natural conviction, the church was pestered with this cattle. It was an article objected against Pope John the twenty-third in the Council of Basil, that he believed that there was no life eternal, that the soul died with the body; and Paul the third is reported by another good author to say, when he was dying, that now he should know three things of which he had doubted all his life—*An anima fiat immortalis; an sit infernus; an sit Deus*. Were these monsters alone, think you? Certainly there are others who, however they smother their opinions, do indeed think there is no heaven and no hell; especially now are they rife among us that live in the dregs of christianity, when men are grown weary of the name of Christ, and the ancient severity and strictness is much lost, and the

memory of those miracles and wonderful effects by which our religion was confirmed is almost worn out, or else questioned by subtle wits and men of a prostituted conscience. Now there are many mockers, and men of atheistical spirits swarm everywhere, who only talk of these things in jest; nay, and as it seemeth by their slight and frothy handling of the matter, preach of them in jest. Certainly one great fault in christians, is they do not mind strengthening assent to or belief of gospel revelations; whereas the weakness of this weakeneth all our graces, and is the cause of that unevenness and uncertainty that we bewray in the course of our lives. Hence cometh our coldness in duty, our boldness in sinning. Our coldness in duty: Would we serve God in such a lifeless, heartless manner, and pray so carelessly, if we did believe that what Christ hath told us of the everlasting enjoyment of the blessed God were true? If we did believe the truth of the gospel and of the world to come, how careful and earnest should we be to make our calling and election sure. We would think all diligence little enough. So our boldness in sinning: We would not venture, if we did believe everlasting torments and the strict account that we must make to God. Temptations then would be refused with scorn and indignation: 'In vain is the net laid in the sight of any bird,' Prov. i. 17. Therefore it is a fault in christians when they mind the applying act, but do not labour to make their assent more firm. Things may be daily applied when once we are assured of them; otherwise we raise an house without a foundation.

4. In this sealing God's truth there are many things implied which most christians want. It implieth spiritual evidence, experience, and confidence in temptations to the contrary, and enforceth practice.

[1.] It implieth spiritual evidence. None can receive Christ's testimony without a work of the Spirit; spiritual things must be spiritually discerned: 1 Cor. ii. 14, 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.' To sight there must 'be not only *objectum perspicuum*, but *organum bene affectum*. Besides the perspicuity of the object, there must be a clear eye. A blind man cannot see at noonday, nor he that hath the strongest sight at midnight, Eph. i. 17, 18. Now most christians have not the Spirit of Christ. God revealeth these things and giveth us eyes to see them.

[2.] Some experience of the power of this truth in comforting and changing the heart. A report of a report is never judged valuable; you cannot say to others, God is true, till you have felt somewhat of it in your own hearts: 1 John i. 1, 2, 'That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us); that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his son Jesus Christ.' Experience is above all dispute: Phil. i. 9, 'This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all judgment;' to have some impression of the truth upon our hearts.

[3.] It discovereth itself by confidence in temptations to the contrary, either from inward troubles or outward. Inward troubles or agonies of conscience: The faith of a weak christian bringeth more honour to God than the love of a strong christian. Upon the encouragement of Christ's testimony he casts himself upon God's mercy, when he feeleth him as an enemy: Job xiii. 15, 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.' So in outward troubles; when in the midst of deep afflictions, you can comfort yourselves in the promises, and rejoice with joy unspeakable and glorious. This is to honour God, to put to your seal that God is true; as the martyrs are said to seal it with their blood. Faith is but a notion before.

[4.] It enforceth holiness. When your lives are swayed by these principles, and you are full of that lively diligence which becometh christians, then you declare plainly that you think God is true. All these are exemplified in the church of the Thessalonians: 1 Thes. i. 5-7, 'For our gospel came not to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake; and ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost. So that you were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.' So that you see there is need of pressing you to believe, that you may put to your seal that God is true.

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## SERMONS ON MICAH VI. 8.

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### SERMON I.

*He hath showed thee, O man, what is good ; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God ?—MICAH vi. 8.*

IN the context you have—First, A question to which the text is an answer. The question is in vers. 6, 7. The sinners would know what would please God, vers. 6, 7. Their question teacheth us—

1. That ceremonial observances will not compensate a neglect of substantial duties.

2. That hypocrites will give anything rather than give up themselves to the Lord ; rivers of oil, thousands of rams, their own children, so they may not part with their own wills. *Quid querit a te nisi te ?*

3. That it is not the costliness of the sacrifice, but the godliness of the sacrifice which God looketh at.

Secondly, The answer is in the text, ‘He hath showed thee, O man, what is good ; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God ?’ The pertinency of this answer must be vindicated.

1. The question was not a scruple or case of conscience about the true satisfaction or way of appeasing God’s justice, but a contentious cavil of them that stood much upon their outward sacrifices, and were willing either to continue that way or to add more, if this would please God and they might thereby avoid his wrath. Now, these did in vain pretend ignorance when the rule of their duty was plain and easy.

2. The answer is suited so as best to convince hypocrites ; not to show the true means of atonement, but to defeat their false claim. Whatever atonement God would accept, yet without the performance of necessary duties it would be fruitless and ineffectual to them : ‘He hath showed thee, O man, what is good.’

*Doct.* That in revealing our duty to us, God exacteth nothing of man but what is good.

The observation yieldeth two points—

1. That God hath plainly revealed his mind concerning the duty of the creature.

2. That whatever God hath so revealed is good.

*First*, That God hath plainly revealed his mind concerning the duty of the creature : 'He hath showed thee, O man.' How hath he showed us? Partly by the light of nature, partly by the light of his word.

1. By the light of nature. The things here mentioned concern either the lower or upper hemisphere of our duty. To walk humbly with God importeth that we should carry ourselves with reverence and obedience to the divine majesty ; and to do justice and love mercy, that we should carry ourselves justly and charitably towards men. Both are revealed by the light of nature. Our duty to God : Rom. i. 19, 'That which may be known of God is manifest in them ; for God hath showed it them.' How showed it them? By graving it on their hearts. Our duty to man : Rom. ii. 15, 'Which show the work of the law written upon their hearts, their consciences also bearing them witness, and their thoughts accusing or excusing,' by turns.

2. By the light of his word, wherein our duty is more clear, full, and certain.

[1.] More clear : Ps. cxix. 105, 'Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.' The use of a lamp is by night, and the light of the sun shineth by day. Whether it be day or night with us, we clearly understand our duty by the word of God. The night signifieth adversity, and the day prosperity in all conditions. Hence we may learn how to behave ourselves. Once more, the word *path* noteth our general choice and course of life ; the word *feet* our particular actions. Now, whether the matter wherein we would be informed concerneth our choice of the way that leadeth to true happiness, or else our dexterous prosecution, that we may not swerve from the right way in any action of ours, by doing anything impertinent or inconsistent with our choice, still the word will direct a humble and well-disposed mind ; so that here our duty is clearly stated, and if a man's heart stand in awe of the word, he cannot easily miscarry.

[2.] It is more full ; for the book of nature is blurred by man's apostasy from God and degeneration from his primitive excellency ; and our chief good and last end being altered by sin, we strangely mistake things ; and, weighing them in the balance of the flesh, which we seek to please, we put light for darkness and evil for good, Isa. v. 20, and so miserably grope in the dark, and cannot so clearly discern our way to true happiness. And besides, man's condition is such that he needeth a supernatural remedy—a redeemer ; which, depending upon the mere grace of God, cannot be found out by mere natural light, which can only judge of things necessary, and not of such things as depend upon the arbitrary will and love of God, John iii. 16. Besides, in the things evident by natural light, nature is dark. The great lines of our duty are fair and legible, *ἔργον νόμου*. The outward work is written in our hearts—abstinence from gross sins, performance of outward duties ; some notices are escaped out of the ruins of the fall, and to convince us of sin, and mind us of our duty ; but that full, entire spiritual obedience which is due to God is not known to nature. Therefore, besides the candle of the Lord within us, which is reason, God hath set up a lamp in the sanctuary, which is scripture, to direct us in the way to true happiness, and this is clear and full, and compriseth all

that is necessary. Therefore David saith, Ps. cxix. 96, 'Thy commandment is exceeding broad;' as containing all things necessary for our duty and happiness.

[3.] It is more certain, as having a greater stamp and impress of God upon it. Everything that hath passed through God's hand discovers its author. The light of nature showeth itself to be of God; but much more the light of scripture, wherein he hath discovered more of his wisdom, goodness, and power; it being such a revelation of the mind of God as is fit for God to give and us to receive; suited to the nature of God, to preserve a due honour, esteem, and reverence of his blessed majesty; and exactly calculated to our necessities, for recovery out of sin, and obtaining our true and proper happiness; and cometh to us attested with such evidence from heaven as we cannot rationally withstand: 2 Peter i. 19, 'We have a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto we shall do well to take heed, as unto a light which shineth in a dark place.' It is surer than the light of nature, as not liable to such debate and uncertainty, which must be cleared before man's duty can be stated to him. More sure than miracles, oracles, visions, as being put into writing; and a faithful record, as the constant measure, standard, and rule of faith and manners for the use of the church in all ages.

Now it is good to see how David compareth these two revelations of the mind of God, where he first admireth the brightness of the sun, and then the purity of the law. The joining of both these meditations showeth—

(1.) That the world can be as ill without the word of God as without the light of the sun. What would this inferior world be without the light of the sun, but a great cave and obscure dungeon, where men would creep up and down like worms out of their holes? Now the light of the word is as necessary for the blessedness of our souls as the sun's light is comfortable to our bodies.

(2.) The comparing of both these showeth that there are two books wherein we shall do well to study, both made by God himself, and both manifesting and discovering God to the world—the book of nature, and the book of scripture. You cannot look upon the book of the creatures, but in every page and line of it you will find this truth presented to your eyes, that there is an infinite, eternal power, that made all things, and is to be owned, revered, worshipped, and obeyed by us. This is enough to leave the world without excuse. But in the book of the word you may see more of God and the way to enjoy him. This doth more powerfully convince man of his misery, and show him his remedy. The use which the psalmist maketh of these books is notable. Of the first, to admire the glory of God by the beauty of the heavens; of the second, to humble and awe man by the purity and strictness of the law; as all religion lieth in the knowledge of God and ourselves. Well, then, this is the double way of revelation—

The revelation of God's mind in the word consists of two parts—the moral part, and the evangelical.

(1st.) The moral part doth mostly contain our first holiness, and the primitive duty which we owed to God as a creator before the fall



or our defection from him, that we should serve and obey him as our rightful Lord, and love him as our chief good and happiness. The moral part is that which is mentioned in the text, and still belongeth to us; for every creature ought to be in subjection, and is under a debt of duty to his creator. And Christ Jesus, when he came to redeem us, did not dissolve this bond; for he 'redeemed us unto God,' Rev. v. 9. He never intended to rob God of a creature when he made any man a christian. This were to make us rebels against God, and not subjects to him. This was far from Christ's intent; for he came to fit us for that holiness and righteousness which was due to God by virtue of our creation; to fit us for it by his renewing and reconciling grace. He encourageth us by his reconciling grace: Luke i. 74, 75, 'That we should serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness, all the days of our lives.' He inclineth us to it by his renewing grace: Eph. iv. 24, 'The new man is created after God, in righteousness and true holiness.' Therefore the law of grace is subordinate to the law of nature, and was introduced that we might return to the obedience due to God. And in this respect it may be said, 'He hath showed thee, O man, what is good;' for Rom. vii. 12, 'The law is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good;' that is, the law in general, and this command in particular, that which had wrought such gracious effects in his heart. The law is holy, fit for God to give and us to receive; and just, hugely conducive to the good of human society; good, very profitable to those that observe them.

(2d.) The evangelical part of the word, which revealeth pardon of sins and salvation by Christ to all those that will accept it with a believing and thankful mind, and are willing to return to their obedience to God, 1 Tim. i. 15, John iii. 16, Heb. v. 11, and in many other places. Now here is the greatest, fullest, and truest prospect of his goodness to mankind, Titus iii. 4, in that, when God was displeased for the breach of the first covenant, and man hereby had fallen irreparably from his primitive holiness, and brought himself under guilt and a curse, he took occasion by this misery to open a door of hope to us by Christ, and hath set up a new court of righteousness and life, where sinners may appear; and grace taketh the throne, and the judge is Christ, and the rule is the gospel; and upon repentance, faith, and sincere obedience, we may be accepted with him; and the Lord standeth with open arms to receive all those that run for refuge to this court, and take sanctuary at this grace, devoting themselves to his fear and service. Here we may say indeed, 'He hath showed thee, O man, what is good.' The gospel part is called 'the good word:' Heb. vi. 5, 'Having tasted the good word;' and the great privileges offered to us are called 'glad tidings of good things,' Rom. x. 15, quoted out of Isa. lii. 7; the best things that ever were brought to man's ear. Therefore chiefly I shall consider these words with respect to the gospel revelation.

*Secondly,* Whatever God hath so revealed is good.

1. To clear this to you, I shall premise some distinctions of goodness.

[1.] There is a moral and beneficial goodness. That which is good

morally is that which is our duty, just and equal ; as Deut. xxx. 15, 'I have set before you life and good, death and evil.' Holiness is called good, and sin evil. That is good which is right in the sight of the Lord. The good of profit and utility is also spoken of, Deut. vi. 24, 'The Lord commanded us to fear the Lord our God, for our good always ;' so Deut. x. 13, 'Statutes which I command thee this day for thy good.'

[2.] Moral good is either *bonum per se*, good in itself, because of its suitability to the nature of God ; or merely upon God's institution. This distinction is intimated, Rom. xiv. 17, 18, 'For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost ; for he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God and approved of men ;' that is, these things are pleasing to God, as suitable to his nature, and as agreeable to the reasonable nature in us ; whereas things that merely depend upon positive institution are indifferent without God's command, and, in comparison and competition with these unquestionable duties, may be said not to be good : Ezek. xx. 25, 'I gave them statutes that were not good ;' it is not simply denied, but comparatively.

[3.] Beneficial goodness is twofold—either concerning the body and the soul, or this life and a better. Godliness conduceth to both : 1 Tim. iv. 8, 'Godliness is profitable for all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.' Yet the good of the soul must be first regarded, and other things are superadded, Mat. vi. 33. And God dispenseth the good things of this life with respect to a better ; when we want them, the want turneth to good : Rom. viii. 28, 'We know that all things work together for good to them that love God.'

2. Now let me show you that, in the revelation of our duty, God exacteth nothing of us but what is good. I prove it thus—(1.) By the design of the christian religion ; (2.) The structure and frame of it.

[1.] The design of the christian religion is to make man good, and to cure him of all evil. I prove it, because it requireth man not only to do good, but to be good. It is the perfection of our nature ; it forbiddeth sin, that it may allow us no liberty to sin, to be bad and miserable. So far as a man doth not comply with these precepts, so far he is an enemy to himself. Surely our perfection is a great part of our duty. Our religion calleth us to the highest degree of goodness, to be full of goodness ; not to take up with any lower degree of holiness. It doth not account him to be good that would not be better. And whatever degrees of grace we have, we are obliged to ask more and we are to endeavour after more ; and this with conformity to the highest pattern : Gen. xvii. 1, 'Walk before me, and be thou perfect ;' and Mat. v. 48, 'Be ye therefore perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect ;' 1 Peter i. 15, 16, 'He saith, Be holy, as I am holy. Wherefore, as he that hath called you is holy, so be holy in all manner of conversation and godliness ;' 2 Peter iii. 11, 'What manner of persons should we be, in all holy conversation and godliness ?' From all these places we conclude, that we should still be aspiring after a further degree of holiness, goodness, and perfection in

conformity to God; that man by his duty may be prepared for his blessedness; and that, whilst he groweth more like God, he might be more fitted for the vision and fruition of God. We are called to perfection, and though we cannot fully attain to it in this life, we must come nearer and nearer: 'He that hath this hope, purifieth himself, even as he is pure,' 1 John iii. 2, 3. No less pattern than God is set before us. Thus does the true religion design to make man good.

[2.] The structure and frame of it. How doth it promote this design? Four ways—(1.) By the blessedness and reward which it offereth; (2.) By the duties it requireth towards God and men; (3.) By the means which it useth to enforce these things; (4.) The course it taketh to fortify us against temptations to the contrary.

(1.) The blessedness and reward which it offereth. We are often inquiring, 'Who will show us any good?' Ps. iv. 6. Now, in the scripture, God has showed man what is his chief good and proper happiness. There is the greatest good that can be attained or imagined, for beyond God there is nothing. And the happiness which the word offereth is God reconciled, God finally and fully enjoyed. Our happiness, by the way, consisteth in reconciliation with God; at the end, in the vision and fruition of God. This is happiness indeed.

(1st.) Our reconciliation with God through Christ, if we will enter into his peace. This is that which we only are capable of here, and the good we are now admitted into: Rom. v. 1, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord.' As soon as ever we turn to him by faith and repentance, he giveth us the pardon of all our sins, and accepteth us in the Beloved, to the praise of his grace; and thereby the sentence of death is reversed; we are delivered from wrath to come, 1 Thes. i. 10, 'and not only so, but being justified by faith,' we are 'made heirs according to the hope of eternal life,' Titus iii. 7. We have a right, though not the possession. And there is a long train of blessings which we enjoy for the present by virtue of this right; only we have them not but as we verify and make good the reality of our first faith and repentance by a constant holy walking and obedience; as audience of our prayers: 1 John iii. 22, 'Whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do the things which please him.' The presence of the Spirit, assuring us of the love of God, John xiv. 21, 23. Peace in our own souls. What pleasure like the testimony of a good conscience! as no torment like that of an evil one: heaven is begun in the one, and hell in the other: 2 Cor. i. 12, 'This is our rejoicing.' Having this, you may look God in the face in duties, 1 John iii. 21; in death, Isa. xxxviii. 3. This peace of a good conscience supposeth a walking according to God's counsel and direction in a course of holiness: for it is an approbation of the discharge in our duty. There is some trouble while good acts are a-doing, as there is a slight pleasure while sin is committed; but as soon as the mists and clouds of passion are over, conscience will accuse or excuse. Besides, we are under the constant care and providence of God: Ps. xxxiv. 15, 'The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry: the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.' All necessities are vouchsafed, Mat. vi. 32, 33. Afflictions are moderated, 1 Cor. x. 13;

sanctified, Rom. viii. 28. Enemies are awed or bridled, 1 Peter iii. 13, Prov. xvi. 7. All these blessings are consequent upon the state of reconciliation, when our repentance is not a fancy, nor faith a naked opinion or cold assent, but such a lively sense of God's love and grace as maketh us faithfully return to a love of God, and a care of and delight in his ways.

(2*d.*) The vision and fruition of God in heavenly glory. That is the great good offered to us when our nature is perfected, and by its most perfect acts is employed about the most perfect object, and God is all in all, giving out the fullest communications of his grace to us, and that for ever, the soul being perfect, without spot or blemish, and this vile body like Christ's glorious body. And we shall ever remain in the sight and love of God; and what is sweeter than his presence? Ps. xvi. 11, 'In thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand pleasures for evermore.' And this without fear of change, 1 Thes. ii. 17. If anything be good, this is good, to live for ever in the sight of God, and to love him and be beloved of him.

(2.) The duties it requireth of us both to God and man.

(1*st.*) As to God, the great duty of love, that we should love God in Christ, with all our souls, and with all our hearts, and with all our strength: Dent. x. 12, 'What doth the Lord require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, and to love him with all thy soul, and to walk in his ways, and serve him with all thy heart?' It obligeth us to seek after this happiness, the vision and fruition of God, with such affections as do become it; to begin our happiness in our duty, to train up ourselves in a way of loving God, and receiving the communications of his love to us, that the consummation of the spiritual life may be like the whole progress of it; and so in our very work we have a foretaste of our reward and end. Oh! then, what a good religion is this, where our principal work is love and delight in him whom we serve and worship! And is that any hard task? What is the object of love but good? And the acts of love are sweet and pleasant. And should we stick at this, to love a good God in the highest manner? Is not the object good? Is he not good to us? What floweth from him but goodness? And what do we expect from him but such good as our hearts cannot sufficiently conceive of? And since our whole religion is nothing else but an art of loving God and enjoying God, surely that which he hath showed us is good.

(2*d.*) As to men. To do good is the employment of our lives: Eph. ii. 10, 'Created in Christ to good works,' &c.; and this with a zeal, Titus ii. 14. Now that doctrine is good which only employeth men to do good. But to whom must we do good? To all: Gal. vi. 10, 'Do good to all, especially to the household of faith;' yea, enemies not excepted: Mat. v. 44, 'Do good to them that hate you;' Rom. xii. 21, 'Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.' And this doing good God expecteth from us in every capacity and relation. Magistrates, Rom. xiii. 4, are 'the ministers of God to them for good,' deputy gods. So ministers: Acts xi. 24, 'Barnabas was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost.' A man of a selfish temper and spirit hath not that zeal for God, that compassion for souls. So private christians to one another: 'I am persuaded that ye are full

of goodness,' Rom. xv. 14. Very kind these were ; it makes us most compassionate to the bodies and souls of one another. So people in an inferior quality—servants, when they are good: Eph. vi. 8, 'Whatsoever good thing any man doth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, bond or free.' If they make conscience of doing good in their callings, and go about their duties as service to God and out of compassion to men, God will take notice of it in the poor bond-servant. A principle of love and good-will in the heart doth make any service more acceptable and valuable than any outward pomp in what we do. A sincere honest heart is beyond all external advantages.

(3.) The means it useth to enforce these ; that is, what are the encouragements and helps ?

(1st.) The love of God in Christ is the great engine of the gospel, and the motive and encouragement which should persuade us to our duty, 2 Cor. v. 14, and Rom. xii. 1, Titus ii. 11, 12. God would be obeyed by his people, not as slaves, but as children ; and would have the great spring and rise of man's obedience to be love and gratitude ; and therefore doth he oblige us at so high a rate, and carry on the covenant of grace in such an astonishing way of mercy, that none of his commandments might be grievous to us, because sweetened by his love, 1 John v. 3. God will be served, not as an imperious sovereign, but as the God of love; not with a grudging mind, but with delight and readiness ; not as dragged and forced, but as excited and influenced by that deep sense that we have of God's goodness.

(2d.) We are inclined and enabled by the sanctifying Spirit. In the christian religion, not only the precepts are good ; but there goeth along with them the power of God to make us good : Ps. cxliii. 10, 'Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God ; thy Spirit is good.' The Spirit's direction hath strength joined with it. And he is a good Spirit, as he doth incline us to good. The Spirit is the only fountain of all goodness and holiness : Neh. ix. 10, 'Thou gavest also thy good Spirit to instruct them.' Why is he so often called the good Spirit, but that all his operations tend to make men good and holy ? Eph. v. 9, The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth.' The phrase noteth both our thankfulness to God and beneficence to men.

(4.) How doth it fortify us against all temptations to the contrary, but by the proposal of good to us. So it keepeth us from the evil of sin. The great art which religion teacheth us is but the preferring of the greater good before a lesser. Do that, and you are safe ; for all the world miscarrieth by preferring a worse thing before a better. Three things religion mainly persuadeth us unto to keep us safe—(1.) To prefer God before the world ; (2.) The soul before the body ; (3.) Eternity, or a long life before a short one.

(1st.) God before the world. Its great business is to get us to love God above all, that comparatively we may little esteem reputation, wealth, pre-eminence, grandeur, pleasure, in comparison of the favour of God and the fruition of God. Usually these are the things which all that perish prefer before God and immortality. Now, if you could have an higher esteem of God, and say truly, with David, Ps. lxxiii. 25, 'Whom

have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee;’ you have plucked up all temptations by the roots. See John v. 44, and John xii. 42, 1 John ii. 15, 2 Tim. iii. 4. So that here is the great miscarriage of men, they have not digested this point of religion. They love the world more than God, the praise of men more than the praise of God, pleasures more than God. Is God that man’s chiefest good who preferreth his lust, his wealth, or honour, or any base thing in the world before him? A little fleshly delight or fear of man shall make him break with his God.

(2d.) The soul before the body. In all reason the better part should have most respect and care. The good of the body is fluid, and vanishes; the soul is immortal. Now, shall we pamper the body and neglect the soul? What a fool is he that hath cared for all things more than what should be most cared for, his precious and immortal soul! Luke xii. 20, ‘Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?’ Luke x. 42, ‘Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken from her.’ Surely we have better souls than a dog or a swine—souls which are capable of better things than the pleasures of this life; the knowledge of God, and the love of God. If you would seek good, seek the good of your souls in the first place.

(3d.) That a long life should be preferred before a short one, eternity before time. All that are convinced of a life to come should therefore lay out more care upon things eternal than temporal. What wise man would be careful to furnish his inn, where he tarrieth for a night, and be content that his house be naked and destitute, where his constant abode is? Do thus, and temptations will little sway with you, 2 Cor. iv. 18. What is a little affliction here, or happiness here? Rom. ii. 7, ‘To them that, by patience in well-doing, seek for glory and immortality, eternal life.’ Every one would do well, have good; then seek everlasting good; this your religion directeth you unto.

Use 1. Information or instruction how false the prejudices of the world are, as if the ways of God were rigid, severe, and unprofitable. No; ‘He hath showed thee, O man, what is good.’ He requireth nothing that is hard, unjust; nothing that is noxious and harmful, or for our real loss and damage; nothing which a man well in his wits would refuse, if left to his own option and choice. What notion have you of good? that which is amiable, pleasant, profitable, honourable?

1. That which is amiable or draweth affection: *καλὸν ἐστὶ οὐ πάντα*, &c. What is more amiable than holiness? It is the beauty of the soul. It is nothing else but putting the soul in a decent posture of subordination to God, or a regular decency in our thoughts, affections, words, and actions. The beauty of the body, which consists in good colour or good proportion, is a mean thing to this. As it consists in good colour, it is but skin deep, and soon blasted and withered by age and sickness, or as lovely proportion that may be in an horse or any other creature. But this of the soul, *si oculis cerneretur*, if it could be seen by the eyes of the body, how would it ravish us, and stir up a wonderful love in the hearts of men to itself! By this we are made amiable to God, in whose sight it is a great price, 1 Peter iv. 3, to Christ, to the holy angels, to good men. It is a pleasant sight to see it in a

thorough good man, who seeketh to do good to all, to hurt none, lusteth not to honour and greatness, but giveth place to all, giveth due respect to all, and, how great soever, condescendeth to the meanest; wrongeth none, is angry with none, raileth at none, revengeth himself upon none, but is courteous to all, beneficial to all: to God; is careful to keep up a due remembrance of God by daily invocation and worship; always rejoiceth in Christ, and liveth in obedience to the sanctifying motions of his Holy Spirit; so that his life is not tainted with the blot of any heinous sin; is still encouraging himself by the promises of another world, and levelling and directing all his actions thither. Thus is the good man described in scripture; and can there be a more delightful spectacle, unless it be to a man blinded with prejudice and the love of vice, than to see such a man?

2. Pleasant. Surely the truest delight is found in the exercise of godliness: Prov. iii. 17, 'All her ways are ways of pleasantness, and her paths are peace.' None have such a sweet life as they that live holily and suitably to God's commands, moral and evangelical. Sensualists are sots and fools, that run to carnal delights; they never come away from their sports with such a merry heart as the christian cometh away from the throne of grace. The conscience is the most sensible faculty, and the pleasures are more intimate and deep than those that only tickle the sense, as all carnal delights can do no more. The saddest duties have their pleasure annexed; no man ever repented his repentance, 2 Cor. vii. 18. But those duties that concern communion with God, as prayer, though it seem a dull unpleasing task to the carnal, it is a sweet reviving to the gracious: 1 Sam. i. 18, Hannah, having poured out her prayer to God, 'was no more sad.' So conformity to God; as in justice: Prov. xxi. 15, 'It is a joy to the just to do judgment.' So mercy is a blessed god-like thing, Acts xx. 38. These are chaste delights, never soured with any sting or remorse.

3. Profitable. Men stand upon advantage. What profit? is the usual question: Deut. v. 29, 'Oh! that there were such an heart in them that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever.' No advantage or disadvantage cometh to God; he is above the reach of our injuries or benefits. What hath God lost by the fall of the angels? They have lost, but he hath not lost. Even in this life we have more than all the wages of sin cometh to: 1 Tim. iv. 8, 'For bodily exercise profiteth little, but godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come;' and Mat. vi. 33, 'Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.' No man is a loser by God. Here we have peace of conscience, Ps. cxix. 165, but chiefly in the other world. When a man gaineth most by the devil's service, he is the greatest loser; when he loseth most by God's service, he is the greatest gainer, 1 Cor. xv. 58, Rom. vi. 22.

4. Honourable. If we consider it aright, service is an honour and duty a privilege; God is so great a master, and his work is such noble work. He requireth nothing but what is the perfection of our being, that it puts an excellency upon a man to yield to this service: Prov. xii. 26, 'The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour.' Carnal men, though loath to submit to God's precepts themselves, yet see an

excellency in those that practise them. God himself is glorious in holiness, *Exod. xv. 11.* So that to be holy is to put on the royal robe of the king of all the earth. Surely the more a man partaketh of the image of God, and the nature of God, and the holiness of God, the more excellent, far above those who have no higher trade than to please the flesh.

*Use 2.* What reason we have to acquiesce in and bless God for the good religion what he hath taught us : we had lost the knowledge of God, and the world to come, and the way that leadeth to it. Now, that we have such a sure revelation, that teaches us to know God ; it is our glory, *Jer. ix. 29* ; to know Christ it is our life, *John xvii. 3* ; to know the world to come, *2 Tim. i. 10*, the way thither by Christ's doctrine : *Ps. xvi. 11*, 'Thou wilt show me the path of life.' By Christ's example, *1 Peter ii. 21*, which was necessary, we being bound to imitation, and very engaging. We live by the same laws God himself lived by when he was in the flesh. In short, the moral part of the word is good, but the evangelical part glorious, *1 Tim. i. 1, 9, 11.* Oh ! let us prize this discovery of the will of God.

*Use 3.* It informeth us what a good people we should be, for the impress should be according to the seal. What do bad people do with a good religion ? In our religion all is good. There is a good God whom we should imitate : *Ps. cxix. 68*, 'Thou art good, and doest good ; teach me thy statutes ;' and *Acts xiv. 17*, 'Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good,' &c. And from whom it came ; a good Christ : *Acts x. 36*, 'God anointed Jesus of Nazareth, who went about doing good ;' that is, to the bodies and souls of men—giving sight to the blind, limbs to the lame, and health to the sick, life to the dead, naturally, spiritually. There is a good Spirit, so called because he maketh us good. Barnabas was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, *Acts xi. 24.* There is a good word. Now what remaineth but that we be also a good people ?

1. Good to man. Goodness should be the constitution of our souls, and doing good the business of our lives. It is mighty taking, more than rigid innocency : *Rom. v. 7*, 'For a good man one would even dare to die.'

2. Good to God. Many place religion in an easy temper, which is often difficult to God ; wax to other things, but as a stone to God ; easy to temptations, hard to be instructed to godliness. But, *Luke vi. 45*, he is a good man that out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things ; ready to honour and glorify God on all occasions, ever liveth in constant obedience to him.

## SERMON II.

*And to walk humbly with thy God.*—MICAH vi. 8.

THIS relateth to the duties of God's worship, which, indeed, 'are the chief and principal. All our justice and mercy must come from love



and obedience to God, or else they are destitute of their true and proper principle. We are under a law, subjects to the heavenly sovereign, to whom we must give an account; and in all that we do, either to God or man, obedience must sway the conscience and incline the heart. Faith presents encouragements, and then what we do is no more morality, but religion. In this clause two things are observable—

1. The matter. To walk with God is to live an holy life, Gen. v. 22.

2. The *modus* or manner—humbly; or, as the word may be translated, ‘Humble thyself to walk with God;’ *i.e.*, with that submission and reverence which will become such a God. Humility is a voluntary debasement of soul before God, arising from a sense of his greatness and our vileness.

*Doct.* Walking humbly with God is our great duty, which distinguisheth the sincere from the hypocrites.

I shall show you—

1. What it is.

2. What reasons may enforce it.

*First*, What it is, or what it containeth.

1. A ready submitting or subjection of ourselves to all God’s commands. Sin biddeth a defiance to God and disowneth his authority; therefore, Ps. cxix. 21, the proud are described to be those ‘that err from God’s commandments.’ Wicked men shake off the yoke of God, and will not be subject to their maker: Exod. v. 2, ‘Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?’ This is the language of men’s actions, if it be not of their tongues. Every wilful sin hath a great deal of pride in it, for it is a lifting up our will against the will of our creator, and so a depreciation or contempt of God’s majesty and sovereign authority, and disowning his interest in us: 2 Sam. xii. 9, ‘Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do that which is evil in his sight?’ So Ps. xii. 4, ‘With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us?’ So it is charged, Neh. ix. 16, ‘Our fathers dealt proudly, and hardened their necks, and hearkened not to God’s commandments.’ Sin is a pride against God himself. When the prophet inviteth them to repentance, he saith, Jer. xiii. 15, ‘Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud;’ that is, break off your obstinacy and contempt of God. We humble ourselves then to walk with God when we lie at God’s feet, desiring to know his pleasure, claiming no power over ourselves, or anything that we have, but entirely submit ourselves to be commanded and governed by him. There are two branches of this ready obedience—(1.) A fear to offend; (2.) A care to please.

[1.] A fear to offend so great and glorious a majesty, Heb. xi. 28, 29. The more holy any is, the more humble in this sense; that is, more tender of doing anything that is displeasing to God: as it is said of Michael, the archangel, *οὐκ ἐτόλμησε*, Jude 9, ‘He durst not bring against him a railing accusation,’ &c. So Prov. xiii. 13, ‘Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed; but whoso feareth the commandment shall be rewarded.’ There is nothing of less account with the carnal-minded than a commandment; but there is an holy awe upon the gracious; they dare not proceed if a commandment stop their way.

The authority of God is more than if an angel should stand in the way to hinder them with a drawn sword. They dare not go over the belly of a commandment to enjoy the things they most affect. This is the first branch, a reverence of God's authority.

[2.] The other is a care to please, or an holy solicitude to approve themselves and their lives to God: Col. i. 10, 'Walk worthy of God, unto all pleasing.' He is a God too great to be slighted or negligently served, or put off with a little superficial religiousness done by the by. No; the whole drift and bent of their lives and their chief endeavour is to be well-pleasing unto God: 2 Cor. v. 9, 'Therefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.' And they are still improving themselves herein, and striving to come out of their first weakness; they cannot satisfy themselves with what they have done: 1 Thes. iv. 1, 'As you have received how to walk, and how to please God, so you would abound therein more and more.' They daily grow better, and mend upon the hand. Surely this is not service becoming the great God. They are troubled that they know him so little, love him no more, serve him no better; and therefore still are exciting themselves to more growth and progress in godliness. This is the first and great thing which is included in humbling ourselves to walk with God.

2. It consisteth in a patient contentedness with every condition God bringeth us into; for as we are to subject ourselves to be governed by God's commanding will, so we are to submit ourselves to be ordered by his disposing will. Those that would walk with God must follow him wheresoever he leadeth them. They are called to his foot, Isa. xli. 2, to go to and fro at his command as he should appoint them, or submit to be disposed of according to his will. And herein consists true humility, meekly to submit to God's corrections, or to humble ourselves under his mighty hand, 1 Peter v. 8. Murmurings are the fruit of pride. The devil, the proudest creature in the world, is the most discontented with his condition. They whose souls are lifted up are opposed to the just who live by faith: Hab. ii. 11, 'Behold his soul, which is lifted up, is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith.' Afflictions are in themselves humbling occasions; but where they light upon hypocrites, it discovereth their pride and swelling against God's sovereignty that he should have the disposing of us at his pleasure; whereas the humble and upright soul submits to God, and waiteth for him in the hardest and straitest condition. Therefore, if we would humble ourselves to walk with God, we must be contented with his conduct, that he may lead us to heaven in a way best pleasing to himself, not thinking ourselves worthy of any better condition than he seeth fit to bring us into; nor murmuring against it if it be hard and pressing; yea, accepting the punishment of our iniquity, Lev. xxvi. 41; glad it is no worse with us; for then, and never till then, are our hearts humbled: Ezra ix. 13, 'Thou hast punished us less than we have deserved.' If we are in Babylon, remember we might have been in hell.

3. It implieth specially reverence in worship, and that we be deeply sensible of our unworthiness to approach his holy presence. Surely we have not a due sense of the excellency of God, unless we

debase ourselves before him. It is said, Lev. x. 3, 'That God will be sanctified in all that draw nigh unto him.' God is sanctified when we carry ourselves humbly, holily, and uprightly in his sight; when we set him apart from common things, going about his worship with another kind of heart than we do go about our ordinary business. So Ps. xc. 6, 'Oh! come let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our maker.' Here we come in the lowliest manner, to express the sincere humility of our souls, as sensible of our great distance from God, and his superiority over us. God's love doth not abase his majesty: Ps. lxxxix. 7, 'God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and had in reverence of them that are round about him.' Our thoughts should be taken up with the greatness of his power, excellency, and majesty, that he may not only be loved, but feared by us, and our praise and humble adoration may be made up of both.

4. A constant dependence on him, and a looking for all from him that we stand in need of in the course of our obedience, that we may live in him, and live to him, and continually receive a supply of strength from him: Gal. ii. 20, 'I live, yet not I,' &c.; and Phil. ii. 12, 13. Spiritual life would be at a stand unless God did strengthen and enable. The humble soul is sensible of his utter insufficiency, 2 Cor. iii. 5, therefore liveth in and upon Christ, hath no life but from him, no access to God but by him; he is daily receiving from Christ, John xv. 5. They live in him as members in their head, as branches in their root; need him not only for a turn, but for their very subsistence. The stock is not in our hands, but in his.

5. A modest sense of their own vileness and nothingness. Humility, properly and strictly taken, is a mean esteem of ourselves. In their course of walking with God, they best see enough to humble them; it is because they are best acquainted with themselves, they think none so bad as themselves. Thus Paul, 1 Tim. i. 15, counts himself *πρῶτος ἁμαρτωλῶν*, 'the chiefest of sinners,' and 'less than the least of all saints,' *ἐλαχιστότερος*, Eph. iii. 8. So Agur: Prov. xxx. 2, 'I am more brutish than any man.' They have such dull thoughts of God, such an aversion from holy things, their meditations are so strange and backward as to the life to come, that they think there can hardly be such unthankful creatures in the world. A good christian hateth himself for the imperfectness of his obedience to God, more than hypocrites do for reigning sin. No question but 'the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour.' But you will say, How then can he speak this in truth? I answer—They have more light and love, therefore none value themselves at a lower rate than they do; and they know more evil of themselves than possibly they can know by another; they have an intimate sight of their own sins, but a remote view of the sins of others. Guilt checketh a mistrust of others, but uprightness condemneth ourselves. A man grievously sick feeleth his own pain, and can but guess at the pain of another. The sincere heart is conscious to such defects in his love to God, such slightness in his service, such cold thoughts of happiness to come, such unreadiness in his duty, such non-proficiency under his advantages and the means he enjoyeth, and experienceth such

reluctances and oppositions of the carnal nature against anything that is good, that he thinketh none can be as bad as himself. As their spiritual life increaseth, so doth their sense of what is an annoyance to it; but the heartless hypocrite is vaunting and boasting: 'God, I thank thee I am not as other men,' Luke xviii. 11. Now, concerning this humility, I observe four things—

[1.] It is spoken of them that are supposed to do justice and love mercy, they walk humbly with God. Some are altogether destitute of goodness, have no real worth wherein to pride themselves. Humility doth not imply a want of grace, but an humble sense of the imperfections which are mingled with the grace that we have; and doth not only become the downright sinner, but the choicest servants of God: Luke xvii. 10, 'When you shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants.' Many speak against resting in their own duties when they have done nothing for God therein. Humility is when we have done all. To use this plea, when done nothing, is to harden ourselves in the neglect of duty. They that have done nothing are cast out as unprofitable servants, Mat. xxv. But when done our utmost, then to humble ourselves is most proper and commendable, and tendeth most to the glory of God and our own self-abasement.

[2.] I observe, that walking humbly is here pressed; not hanging the head for a day like a bullrush as many will in a day of humiliation, but are proud at other times. *Walking* implieth more than one act, a continued course and tract of humility, or a life of lowliness, meekness, and patience. This grace is never out of use; our exercise of it continueth till we are perfected in heaven; still there is an abasing of themselves before God, Isa. vi. 2, 3. But here, in this life, God's children are still admiring the mercy of God in Jesus Christ, still kept sensible of daily weaknesses and failings, see a constant need of having their wants supplied, and receiving new comfort and grace out of Christ's fulness. And once more, it is a frame of heart, not a pang. Legal terrors are a judiciary impression, which lasteth but for a while; but this always continueth with us. A stormy conscience we must get rid of as soon as we can, but a tender conscience must be always cherished.

[3.] I observe, this humble walking is consistent with an interest in God; nay, floweth from the sense and assurance of it—'Thy God.' There is no such humility required of us as to put ourselves out of Christ, or to think ourselves excluded utterly from the favour of God. That is not true humility, but sinful ingratitude, to deny his spiritual graces and favours vouchsafed to us. As, in a temporal case, to profess deep poverty when God has given us somewhat to live upon, is a lie and a deceit; so to deny grace received is *humilitatis causa mentiri*. God's children are sensible of their defects, none more; yet they do not deny their grace, Cant. i. 6, and v. 2, Mark iv. 24. Paul acknowledgeth a will when he could not own a thorough performance, Rom. vii. 18. When he in humility calleth himself less than the least of the saints, he acknowledgeth himself a saint in some degree, and owneth the work of grace, though in the lowest form and rank. Christ was angry with Peter's over-modesty, whether in defect

or excess, John xiii. 10. Remaining defects do not make void our interest in Christ, nor change our spiritual estate.

[4.] I observe, that it is no such humility as doth enfeeble our hands for duty; for it is, 'Walk humbly.' They bewail defects, but go on still. Some languish, and spend their religion in fruitless and idle complaints. Oh, no! humble yourselves, but yet walk with God. It is sinful and legal dejection which crippleth our endeavours. God's children press forward to mend what they complain of: Phil. iii. 13, 14, 'I have not attained, I am not perfect; but this one thing I do, I press forward towards the mark.' To lie down under heartless discouragement is not the fruit of true humility.

6. There is also included in it a giving God the glory of all that we have, are, and do; not boasting of ourselves, nor arrogating to ourselves that excellency which is due to God. Whatever we have, we have it from God, and we have it for God, 1 Cor. iv. 7; therefore the crown of excellency must be taken off from our own heads, and thrown at the Lamb's feet, Rev. iv. 10; unwilling to wear a crown in his presence. The saints have been very tender of robbing God of any part of his honour, or ascribing anything to their own merit or power, Gen. xxxii. 10; Luke xix. 16, 'Thy pound;' 1 Cor. xv. 10, 'Not I, but the grace of God which was with me;' Gal. ii. 20, 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me,' &c. They would disappear and be hidden in a throng, that God may have all the glory. They have all from him, therefore they cast the honour of all upon him.

7. Looking for our acceptance and reward from God's mere mercy; allowing no conceit of righteousness or merit in ourselves, but hoping humbly to find grace by a free covenant: Jude 21, 'Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.' That is the only claim the christian makes. 'Christ spake a parable against those that trusted in themselves that they were righteous,' Luke xviii. 9. A good christian, well acquainted with his great imperfections, unworthiness, blusheth at his own defects, dareth not challenge God as a debtor, but ascribes all to his mercy and benignity as a gracious benefactor.

*Secondly*, What reasons may enforce it, or why should we thus humble ourselves to walk with God.

1. It is God, the fountain of all being, from whom we and all that we have doth come, and on whom we do continually depend, and who is the sovereign Lord of the whole earth. To carry ourselves undutifully to him is as much as in us lieth to lessen his majesty, and to bring down the rate of his honour in the world. By slight and neglectful dealing his greatness is disparaged, Mal. i. 14. His greatness calleth for other manner of service than is usually given him in the world. Superficial dealing in his service floweth from mean thoughts of him; and we propagate this slightness to others so far as our actions are public. And besides, by such malignant sin his holiness is blotted: Ezek. xxxvi. 20, 'They profaned my holy name among the heathen.' But of that by and by. There is not a more powerful means in the world to keep men humble than a due apprehension of God: Isa. vi. 5, 'I am unclean, for I have seen the Lord of hosts;' Gen. xviii. 27, 'I have taken upon me to speak unto the

Lord, who am but dust and ashes.' The term *dust* refers to our original. When the soul was formed out of nothing, the body was made of the dust of the ground. *Ashes* refers to the curse or wrath of God that came upon them by the fall. So Job xli. 5, 'I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.' By God's appearing in so great glory and majesty he had a deeper sense of his own vileness than ever before. If God were indeed seen and duly apprehended by the eye of faith, the most holy of all his saints would become loathsome and vile in their own eyes. When we compare ourselves with other creatures, we seem wise, good, powerful, as they are foolish, wicked, and bad. The stars differ from one another in brightness and glory in the night; but when the sun appeareth, all these differences are obscured and vanish out of sight. So where God is thought on and rightly apprehended, our wisdom is but folly, our power but weakness, our righteousness as filthy rags. He is all, we are nothing but what he maketh us to be. All the creatures are to him 'as nothing, less than nothing,' Isa. iv. 17; nothing in opposition to him, nothing in comparison with him, nothing in exclusion of him. Now the mind of man should be often seasoned with these thoughts.

2. 'Thy God;' which noteth our interest in him. He is our God, partly by his own condescension, and partly by our choice. The one noteth our ingratitude, the other our treachery and breach of covenant if we do not humble ourselves to walk with him.

[1.] His condescension. He hath crowned thee with his grace and favour. He must not be the lesser for that, but the greater in our esteem; because that through Christ in the covenant he becometh ours: Deut. xxviii. 58, 'Thou shalt do all the words in this law, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, The Lord thy God.' You above all others are most obliged to God, and singled out to hold forth the name of God with honour to the world, that by the impression upon your hearts and lives the world may know what a great and glorious being he is: 1 Peter ii. 9, 'A peculiar people, that show forth the praises of him,' &c.; τὰς ἀρετὰς, his properties and excellences to the world, that others might have a reverence of God. The world must know from you that God is wise, powerful, good, his counsel the wisest course you can take; his power in an holy awe, not daring to offend him. There are the greatest advantages on the one side, the greatest terrors on the other, discovered by the joy of your faith, readiness of your obedience, and patience under the sharpest afflictions.

[2.] Our choice. We have taken upon ourselves to serve and honour him, believing his excellences and waiting for his reward. Now, for us to be disobedient to God, or murmur against his providence, and to carry it high against him, it is to be rebels to God while we profess to be his people, and, in confidence of our privileges, to break his law, Luke vi. 46, and John vi. 67, 'Will ye also go away?' It goeth near his heart. So that our interest in him doth not make void our duty, but establish it rather. Who will reverence him if his people do not? those whom he hath known of all the families of the earth, who have devoted themselves to him, and chosen him for their God.

[3.] You are with him, always before him in his eye and presence: Luke. i. 75, 'In holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.' To be proud and undutiful before God is to affront him to his face. Others sin behind God's back, you before his very face: 'Will he force the queen before my face?' Esther vii. 8.

[4.] In the word *walk* there is an argument which noteth a continual converse with God and communion with him. Can they be proud that have so often to do with an holy and glorious God? Surely every glimpse of his majesty should take down their self-exalting thoughts. For those who are strange to God, and have little business with him, to contemn and slight him, is not so great a wonder: but you have continually to do with that majesty that is so much to be revered and dreaded; this should move you; the bent of your hearts are towards him, your thoughts are on him, your work lieth with him, even with so holy and so great a God; therefore surely we should walk humbly. If you know the God whom you worship, if you be serious with him, as you are often with him, the very thoughts of God will teach you humility and reverence.

Use 1. If walking humbly with God distinguisheth the sincere from the hypocrites, let us see if we walk humbly with God.

1. If it be so, it is yourselves that you have most cause to complain of in your afflictions, more than the rigour of God or the injustice of men. The rigour of God: Lam. iii. 39, 'Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sin?' Is God severe, or have you been unthankful? Did I honour God with my prosperity, or did I not give him just cause to take away the fuel of my lusts by my ingratitude to him? Nor injustice of men, if slighted, disparaged, disesteemed, and reproached. Contempt from these is no great matter to him that hath a constant sense of the burden of remaining sin. Paul did not complain of afflictions, but of 'the body of death,' Rom. vii. 24; as if no hurt can be done to such a poor worm and such an unworthy sinner as himself. Reproaches might be an help against his sore burden, 2 Cor. xii. 10.

2. If it be so, if you are rightly humble, you will be more willing to be admonished than praised; for your design is humble walking with God, and no man that hath any sense of his duty but will soon see how much more he deserveth reproof than praises. The world seeth not the many secret sins you are conscious unto, and how much more you deserve reproof than commendation. It is the proud man despiseth reproof, but the humble prizeth it. Instances of the one is Amazias to the prophet: 2 Chron. xxv. 16, 'Art thou made of the king's counsel? forbear, why shouldst thou be smitten?' Zedekiah to Michaias: 2 Chron. xviii. 23, 'Which way went the spirit of the Lord from thee to me?' The pharisees to Christ: John ix. 39, 40, 'Are we blind also?' Humble men are of another temper. Job 'despised not the cause of his servants, when they contended with him,' Job xxx. 13, 14. David: Ps. cxli. 5, 'Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness; let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head.' Surely to a gracious heart reproofs are better than praises or flatteries.

3. You will not look upon your graces and privileges without looking

upon your infirmities. A christian's life is an intermixture of thankfulness and humility: 'I believe, help my belief,' Mark ix. 29. And when you do so, you will say you have more cause to blush than to be proud, 1 Cor. iv. 4, 'The world seeth the good, not the evil;' Luke xvi. 15, 'That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.' Self-love overlooketh our failings, Prov. xvi. 2, but our actions will we weighed in a more impartial balance.

4. When you reflect upon your enjoyments, you will consider your account, Luke xii. 43. How shall we do when we shall appear before God's tribunal to answer for his honour, estate, gifts, &c.? This reckoning doth quench all self-exalting thoughts.

5. You will not consider your afflictions, but the undeserved mercies yet remaining, and set the evil against the good, Job ii. 10.

6. You will not look upon your excellency, but remember the author, and the undeserved goodness of God, 2 Sam. vii. 18, 1 Cor. iv. 7. You have nothing but what was given you of grace, and may be taken away by justice.

*Use 2.* To persuade the most close walkers with God to be humble.

1. Pride came into the world with sin. Man was never more arrogant than since he was wretchedly miserable. It is not perfection, but imperfection is the cause of pride; not height, but defect of grace. To be proud and holy is to be sick and well. The sun at height casts least shadows. Laden branches do most bend the head. When holiness is at the highest, there is no pride; as in heaven, and in the person of Christ.

2. The humble have the advantage of others. Where there is an humble sense of wants and the burden of sin, they hear the word with more seriousness than others: Isa. lxvi. 2, 'To him will I look that is poor in spirit, and trembleth at my word.' They have more life in their supplications than others have. The poor sendeth up supplications when others pray formally and heartlessly; they find the want of grace, and pray heartily as an hunger-starved child crieth for bread: Heb. iv. 16, 'Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in a time of need.'

3. They have most respect with God: 1 Peter v. 5, 'Be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility, for God resisteth the proud,' &c.

4. Consider what need there is why close walkers should be humble.

[1.] The sin and misery they were once in. They were born fleshly, carnal, averse from God, Rom. iii. 6, liable to God's wrath, Eph. ii. 3. If escaped by Christ, the sentence was once passed upon you, the rope was about your necks; you were as bad as the worst. This must be remembered, though not to weaken your confidence, yet to humble your hearts. You were at the gates of hell, and might have entered in, but for the grace of your Redeemer.

[2.] There is much corruption of nature yet remaining, Gal. v. 17; and this often breaketh out into actual sin, which breedeth fear of the wrath of God, and should beget such a sense of it as promoteth humility, and should quicken your prayers for pardon.



[3.] Though it break not out into actual sin, yet there are such defects in our best duties as should humble us, such low apprehensions and dull conceptions of God, Christ, and heaven as neither excite reverence nor joy, at least not becoming such a God, such a Christ, such a glory, that a christian cannot satisfy himself in his imperfect endeavours. Ye cannot do the things that ye would: 'How to perform that which is good I find not.'

[4.] The remainder of sin would bring you to damnation if God should deal with you according to your deservings; and it is a wonder that a fire doth not come forth from his jealousy to consume you. If Christ, that died for your sins, did not now hide your nakedness, and by his intercession procure your daily pardon, you would every day be your own destroyers; nay, you would not be an hour longer out of hell, Heb. iii. 17, 18.

[5.] We have a great deal of work to do, and our strength is very small. The best may say, Lord, we have no might; our eyes are unto thee; Rom. vii. 18; 'How to perform that which is good I find not.'

[6.] Now you have a little grace, you cannot keep it of yourselves. Now you are made alive, you cannot keep yourselves alive, if not preserved by him that infused life into you at first, Jude 1, and kept by his power. If he be not the finisher who was the author of it, how speedily, how certainly would you undo all! You are carried in his arms. If left to yourselves in one temptation, it doth easily overcome you. None can preserve us but he that created us.

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## A SERMON PREACHED BEFORE THE PARLIAMENT.

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*And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark : but it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, nor day, nor night, &c.—ZECH. xiv. 6, 7.*

THESE words are a notable prophecy, and, as all prophecies are, somewhat obscure. Your time and occasions will not give leave to search them to the bottom. That we may state the meaning and particular application to the time concerned upon sure evidence, whether they relate to the general state of the times under the gospel dispensation, I say to that whole tract of time from Christ's ascension to his second coming ; or rather, some special season when this shall be most eminently fulfilled ; and what that season is I shall not now dispute. Let it suffice to note that you have here—(1.) A description of troublous times ; (2.) A prescription of comforts against the troubles of them.

1. The description of troublous times, ver. 6—*And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark.*

2. A prescription of comforts ; and there three things are observable—

[1.] The short continuance of them—*It shall be one day* ; that is, one period of providence.

[2.] The providential ordination and disposal of them—*Known unto the Lord.*

[3.] The end and issue of them—*At evening it shall be light.* There are two things intimated—the issue shall be comfortable, and that in a strange season—*At evening.*

To explain these parts—

First, The state of the times. By light and darkness, day and night, is meant prosperity and adversity, Isa. xxi. 11, 12 ; truth and falsehood, joy and sorrow, hopes and fears. Now, when it is said they shall be neither light nor dark, the meaning is, neither good nor bad to any extremity, neither applaud nor complain, neither thorough day nor thorough night, but an intermixture and vicissitude of either.

Secondly, The comforts produced.

1. 'It shall be one day ;' one period or course of providence, much-what after the same tenor. God's people may meet with sharp en-

counters here in the world, and be kept in much uncertainty as to their outward comforts ; but the time is but short ; short in itself, short in comparison of eternity, short in regard of their own desert, short with respect to the enemies' rage, short with respect to our love to God, Gen. xxix. 20, and many other considerations, &c.

2. 'Known to the Lord ;' that is, determined, appointed by him. We know it not many times : Acts i. 7, 'It is not for you to know the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power ;' but it is known to him. Nothing befalleth us without his providence and special designation, his hand and counsel : Acts iv. 28, 'To do whatsoever thy hand and counsel determined before to be done.' God taketh notice of these affairs. He hath set the time, and tempered with his own hand every ounce and drachm of that bitter cup we drink of.

3. The issue and close—'Towards morning it shall be light ;' where the issue is comfortable and the season strange. It shall end well, and that at such a time when nobody would look for it. All providences to God's church end in light, and this at the evening, when sun and day is gone, when seemingly all things tend to a new calamity, and are ready to introduce a sad night and extreme darkness. When miseries first seize upon us we are full of hopes ; and when things begin to clear up and look hopefully, we say, Now it will end, and, Then it will end, when it may be it is but the beginning of the day or morning of our troubles. But at evening, when our hopes are quite spent, and we give all for lost, then unexpected deliverance breaketh in, and we come to a period of all our troubles : Luke xviii. 8, 'I tell you that he will avenge them speedily.'

*First*, From description, observe, that the day of the church's conflict is mixed, and yieldeth wonderful variety of providences. Sometimes truth and righteousness, with its fautors and abettors, getteth the upper hand ; and sometimes the contrary party, that foment error and unrighteousness. Now, it is a doubtful day in a twofold regard—(1.) Because light and darkness are either intermixed or alternate ; either because they shine together at the same time, or they do by turns succeed each other ; either because crosses and comforts, troubles or successes, are equally poised, and a man cannot say which is greater, the light or darkness ; (2.) Or else because our estate in respect of either is not durable and fixed, but liable to great uncertainties ; we do not know which will carry it at the last. Let me illustrate the point in either sense.

1. There is an intermixture of providences at the same time, and the church is in several respects both happy and miserable at once. Here things go well, and there ill ; as, for instance, it may be ill with many private men when it may be well with the public ; as Paul in prison rejoiced when the gospel was freely preached, Phil. i. 15—*Modo me moriente, florebat ecclesia*. Or it may be well with us when it is ill with the church ; as Nehemiah was preferred when the city of God and the sepulchres of their fathers lay waste, Neh. i. It is a rare case when there is a perfect harmony between our private condition and public happiness, Ps. cxxviii. 6. But to come to instances more home and express to the present case. Jacob was at once frightened with hearing of Esau's four hundred men, and cheered with the sight

of an host of angels sent to guard him. The angel that wrestled with him blessed him but maimed him. Paul had his revelations and his thorn in the flesh at the same time. And to be yet more express in public cases, here success, there a loss; here it is Goshen for light; there Egypt for darkness; here hopes, there fears: as Rev. x. 1, 'I saw a mighty angel, that was clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire.' Christ appeared thus to his church and people. A cloud, that signified a storm, and a rainbow, *Nuncius fuderis et serenitatis*, that signifieth a calm, or fair weather; this at the same time. These are strange prelusions of providence. God tempereth his dispensations; good and evil are interwoven with one another in a strange variety. Some evil there is to show we are not past all danger; some good, to show we are not shut out from all hope; as a wise pilot taketh in so much burden as will ballast the ship, and not sink it.

2. Successively there is a vicissitude and interchange of conditions; good and evil succeed each other by turns; as see the state of the Jewish church. Saul's time was bad, David and Solomon's good; Rehoboam and Abijah's bad, Asa and Jehoshaphat good; Joram and Joash bad, Uzziah and Jotham good; Ahaz bad, Hezekiah good; Manasseh and Ammon bad again. Josiah good, and his successors till the captivity all bad; after the captivity good, a little reviving. Thus variously doth God exercise his people in the world. Or take a more particular case; Hezekiah, after his coming to the crown, prospered for divers years; but the tide soon turneth; Sennacherib invadeth his country, seizeth on all; but when he prayeth, God delivereth him by a miracle, smiting Sennacherib's host, 2 Kings xx. 1. Then he sickens, and is ready to die, yet he dieth not, but fifteen years are added to his life. After this, his heart was lifted up, 2 Chron. xxxii. 25; then wrath cometh upon him, a sad message concerning the calamities of his posterity. What a strange succession is here! up and down, day and night, light and dark. So Dan. xi. 32-34. The church is in danger of being ruined; 'Then the understanding among them shall do exploits;' and yet after that, 'they shall fall by the sword,' and by 'the flame,' and by 'spoil many days;' and then holpen by a little help, and so get up again after their hopeless condition. Human affairs, under God, depend much on the people's hearts, and how uncertain are they! Those that cried Hosanna to-day, to-morrow Crucify. Peter makes a glorious confession, and a little after a gross denial. Paul was received as an angel of God, and then looked upon as an enemy, Gal. iv. 14-16. The church complaineth, Ps. cii. 10, 'Thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down.' Now in prosperity; then that being abused brings adversity. Compare 2 Sam. xix. 43, with 2 Sam. xxii. 1. In the first place we find them striving with the men of Judah, saying, 'We have ten parts in David;' and chap. xx. 1, 'We have no part in David; every one to his tents, O Israel.'

*Secondly*, The reason of this, why the day of our conflict is such a mixed doubtful day. Let us consider—(1.) The equity; (2.) The wisdom of God in it.

1. The equity of it. It is such a day as is very suitable to our condition in the world.

[1.] We are in a middle place, between heaven and hell, and therefore partake somewhat of both. Hell is set forth by utter darkness; and of heaven it is said, 'There is no night there,' Rev. xxi. 25. It is all day or all night in the other world; but here, neither day nor night, neither clear nor dark. It is convenient that this middle place of trial should have somewhat of both. In hell, all evil and only evil, Ezek. xvii., without any temperament of mercy; and in heaven, no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor any pain any more, Rev. xxi. 4. These pleased spirits are ever rejoicing. God would give a taste of the other world in the present life; of eternal death and eternal life in the sorrows and comforts of the present life; it shall not be too well nor too ill in the world.

[2.] We have mixed principles—flesh and spirit, Gal. v. 17; and as long as sin remaineth in us we cannot be perfectly happy. The flesh needeth to be weakened by divers afflictions; as grace to be encouraged, and love cherished, with experiences and proofs of God's favour; clouds and sunshine, frowns and favours, summer and winter, day and night. I speak of the best. Alas! generally we are 'evil, only evil, and that continually,' Gen. vi. 5; and therefore our condition might be so.

[3.] As our principles are mixed, so are all our operations. There is a mixture of good and evil in all our services. The water receiveth a tincture from the channel through which it passeth. Our duties are spotted and stained; there is iniquity in holy things; yea, our zealous undertakings and engagements for Christ have a taint of the flesh. There is a great deal of wrath, revenge, fleshly zeal, and kitchen-fire, rather than a coal of the altar, while we are engaged for God: Isa. lxiv. 6, 'Our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; we are as a dried leaf; our iniquities have taken us away.' None of our actions are free from default and defilement.

2. The wisdom and justice of God in it. He hath many wise ends to be accomplished by these mixed providences.

[1.] That a people worn out with long misery may be more pliable to God's purpose. By such mixed providences God will weaken and waste stubborn nature, and cause them to be tossed up and down, that by the protraction of their miseries he may work them to his own bent. A cloud that is soon blown over, and doth only wet us a little in the passing, is not regarded; but when the conflict is long between light and darkness, sunshine and storms, and our miseries continue longer, it doth awaken a people to inquire after God's mind. For a great while a people make a light matter of religion, and God's interest in the nation is looked upon as a trifle, not worth the looking after, and therefore is there such slight reformation; but before God hath done with them they shall see that his interests are to be regarded as well as other rights of man. Surely God hath some notable work to do upon England, or else he would not pursue us with so many effects of his anger and break us with so many changes and distractions. Are all these shakings to no purpose? and to leave us there where God found us at first? as unholy and unreformed as before? Surely, then, it will be utter ruin: Ezek. xxiv. 13, 'Because I would have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any

more.' But God seemeth not to leave England so. He would say, Let them alone: Hosea iv. 17, 'Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone.' As it is with a natural body, when corruption hath seized upon the vital parts, the body must be brought very low, and just kept alive, that a better spring of blood may be procured; the wise physician giveth nothing for a while that may strengthen nature, lest it strengthen the disease; so when corruptions are so inveterate, rooted in men's minds, God doth wear us out with a continual vicissitude and interchange of providences. His dispensations are somewhat like those supplies the Athenians gave to a lingering war, just enough to keep it up, not to end it. Demosthenes compareth them to a medicinal diet, which neither strengthens nor suffers to die, till it groweth to a lingering mischief. As by the motions of his Spirit, so by the courses of his providence: Job xxxiii. 14, 'God speaketh once, and twice, and man perceiveth it not.' God is loath to be gone and make it whole night, and loath to tarry and make it perfect day, but sometimes one party prevaileth, sometimes another. Oh! that we were wise!

[2.] To work us from earthly things to things heavenly. In heaven there is no night, but all day. There is no stability in outward comforts, that we may look higher, and get 'the moon under our feet,' Rev. xii. 1. All sublunary things are liable to changes. We are eagerly bent upon temporal happiness, and would seek our rest here, but that God maketh all unquiet to drive us higher, Mat. vi. 19, 20. Here is slandering and violence. Noah's ark, when it was tossed upon the waves, was the nearer to heaven; so the more we are tossed upon the unstable waters, the more should we look after the place of our eternal rest, where we shall be for ever with the Lord.

[3.] To put a cloud and veil upon his proceedings. There is a foolish curiosity that doth possess us; we are usually earnest to know the event, but slack to use the means; it is natural to us to inquire after what is to come, and to neglect present duties. Now no creature shall know the bottom of his counsels, Isa. xlv. 15. When he meaneth to be a saviour, the world shall not know so much, but things are kept in a doubtful uncertainty, and we cannot say whether they tend to ruin or establishment: Eccles. vii. 14, 'In the days of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider: God hath set the one against the other, to the end that man may find nothing after him;' that man may not be able to look to the end of God's design, who would either slacken his duty or choose his party, not upon reasons of conscience, but carnal motives; and therefore, when man is upon his trial, the face of things looketh doubtfully, Isa. xlviii. 7, and John xiii. 7.

[4.] To prevent the excesses of either condition, God tempereth and qualifyeth the one with the other. Prosperity maketh us grow wanton, adversity stupid; therefore, that we may mourn as if we mourned not, and rejoice as if we rejoiced not, 1 Cor. vii. 31, we are exercised with various changes. Out of indulgence to us he giveth us prosperity, lest we should be overwhelmed with sorrow; and then adversity again for the abuse of prosperity; the one is set against the other, to keep the soul in an equal temper and poise. In adversity we think we shall never be delivered, in prosperity never moved. Now, to keep the soul

steady, God seemeth to hover, and the face of providence looketh with a doubtful uncertainty. Especially are we apt to be corrupted with prosperous things; as Hezekiah, 2 Chron. xxxii. 25. When stormy winds fill the sails, it is hard to go steady. It is certainly an help to inure our thoughts to changes; but when we are well at ease we are apt to forget. Few say, as David, Ps. xxxix. 5 'Surely man at his best estate is altogether vanity.' We should rejoice with trembling. The Egyptians used to present a death's-head at their feast. Leaven (which was forbidden in other sacrifices, Lev. ii. 11), was allowed in thank-offerings, Lev. vii. 13; and Amos iv. 5, 'Offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven.' Leaven made bread sour to taste. When we offer praise for any benefits and deliverances, we should still entertain suitable thoughts of the bitterness to which we are incident during the present state. That we may neither surfeit in prosperity nor despond in adversity, neither wax wanton nor be swallowed up of sorrow, God giveth us such intermixtures of providences.

[5.] To make way for the exercise of our faith; therefore, in the tenor of his providence, God doth so govern and order his providential dispensations towards his people, that they shall not live by sense but by faith. To make this evident, let me tell you five possible ways of providence may be imagined. The first is, that the righteous shall always see good, and the wicked suffer evil. The second, that the righteous shall always be afflicted, and meet with nothing but evil in the world, and the wicked be always prosperous, and enjoy good. The third, that both good and evil men should always be afflicted, and never see good day in the world. The fourth, that both good and bad men should be always prosperous, and never troubled with any evil. The fifth, that neither to all the righteous or all the wicked there should be evil and only evil, or good and only good, but a mixture of both; to the good sometimes good, and to the evil sometimes evil. Now, though all these ways of providence might be just, yet God doth only the first and the last of these; the first in the world to come, the last in the present life; that is to say, that the righteous should enjoy good, and only good, and the wicked evil and only evil. This is the dispensation which God reserveth for the world to come, where the good are always and completely blessed, and the wicked are always and completely miserable. The last, God hath chosen for this world, a mixture of good and evil promiscuously dispensed; that is to say, that some good men shall enjoy more of worldly prosperity, others be kept low and bare; as we read of a poor Lazarus resting in a rich Abraham's bosom, Luke xvi. 23; and that there should be vicissitudes in the same person; some comforts, some crosses. On the other side, the wicked should be sometimes mighty and prosperous, 'not plagued like other men,' Ps. xiii. 5; and sometimes that the iniquity of their heels should cleave to them. There are intermixtures, that neither the righteous nor the wicked may be known by their outward condition. Why? Because the present state is a state of faith, not a state of sense, Acts ii. 6, 7. We are justified by faith, we live by faith, we walk by faith, and not by sight; therefore this state of faith requireth that the manner by which God governeth the world should neither be too sensible and clear nor too obscure and dark, but a middle thing, as the daybreak or twilight is between

the light of the day and the full darkness of the night. If too clear, we should not need faith. If too obscure, we should wholly lose faith. Therefore, the first way of providence is not fit for the present world, that the godly shall always be happy and flourish, and have all things according to their heart's desire, and the wicked always in troubles and calamities. This would make religion too sensible a thing, unfit for the present time, when we walk by faith and not by sense. If the world were so governed, it could not be put to any trial; and temporal things, the good and evil of the present time, would be the great motives to induce men to serve God and avoid sin. Therefore, that men may live by faith, and look for a better reward of righteousness, and a greater punishment of sin, God will not always observe this law and course in his dispensations, to bestow upon the good the blessings of the world, and inflict upon the evil the punishments thereof; but promiscuously give good things to the wicked, that they may not be thought the chiefest good, and sometimes he will bestow them upon the good, that the very possession of these may not be thought evil. Sometimes he will be glorified by his servants in a high and prosperous, and sometimes in a low and afflicted condition; and they shall enjoy vicissitudes and interchanges; sometimes no complainings in their families, sometimes great breaches made upon them. Therefore the first way may be fit for heaven, not fit for earth. It would make all things too liable to sense if God had distinguished men by their outward condition. No; in these things he dealeth promiscuously: 'All things come alike to all,' Eccles. ix. 2. He doth not promiscuously dispense the riches of his grace; these are invisible treasures. His Christ, his Spirit, the hopes of glory, he giveth only to the good; but health, wealth, beauty, strength, success, children, are promiscuously given to good and bad; and God will take them, as well as give them, at his pleasure.

But now, all the other ways of providence, as the second, third, fourth, would too much obscure the providence of God, and hinder faith; as the second, that the righteous should always see evil, and the wicked enjoy the good things of this world. Alas! if we were held always in misery and affliction, and the wicked should always wallow in pomp, and ease, and plenty, it would be a grievous temptation to the weak to deny providence; yea, the faith of the strongest would be grievously shaken; for we cannot expect that the good should be perfect in an instant, and presently dead to all temporal interests. If now, when we see some good ones oppressed whilst the evil rejoice, we be so apt to question, as the Israelites, Exod. xvii. 7, 'Is the Lord amongst us, yea or no?' or as David, Ps. lxxiii. 13, 'Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and in vain have I washed my hands in innocency;' what would be done then? and who could keep his patience and keep his faith if the wicked were always kept in joy and triumph whilst the godly are in tears? Therefore God mixeth his dispensations. Sometimes, to exercise our faith and patience, he denieth many things to his friends which he bestoweth upon his enemies; yet often, on the other side, punisheth the wicked and rewardeth the godly, to show his providence. And so faith is neither made void by too great a light, nor extinguished by too great a darkness.



The third sort of providence, that both should be always miserable, both wicked and godly; for if both were alike afflicted there would be no knowledge of the goodness of God till the world to come, no invitations to repentance nor sense of the mercy of the creation to invite us to remember God. All our pleasant affections would be useless, and our graces, which serve for delighting in God, be cut off and prevented; the harmony and order of the world disturbed, which hath cast the world into hills and valleys, appoints some to be in prosperity, others in affliction and want, that the happy may have occasions of showing mercy and relieving the miserable; as the great veins in the body abound with blood to fill the lesser. But chiefly God would not then show his bounty to all his creatures as he doth: Mat. v. 45, 'He maketh his sun to arise upon the evil and the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and unjust.' So Acts xiv. 17, 'He left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons,' &c. This world is a common inn, where God entertaineth sons and bastards, and seeketh to draw and allure them to repentance by his goodness, Rom. ii. 4. He would have wicked men think whence they have all this wealth, honour and greatness, houses and fields, servants and provisions. Did I bring them into the world with me when I was born, or did a good God provide them for me? No; 'Naked came I into the world.' Did I acquire them by my own wit and industry? No; many that excel me in these things want them. Had I them by inheritance? Who made me to be born of rich parents, not of poor? Many more righteous than I are in a mean estate of life; surely it was God that prevented me with his goodness and mercy, and shall I be unthankful for these benefits? These reasonings would God stir up in the minds of men.

Not the fourth sort of providence, that both should be continually happy; for then there were no room for suffering graces, for the exercise of fortitude and patience, contempt of the world and self-denial. The best would soon forget the world to come. David would not have the Canaanites utterly destroyed to keep Israel in exercise: Ps. lix. 11, 'Slay them not, lest my people forget.' When there was great deliberation in the senate of Rome whether Carthage should be utterly destroyed yea or nay, Scipio was against it, that the Roman youth might be kept in exercise by an emulous city; and the event showed the soundness of his advice, for the ruin of Carthage was the ruin of Rome; for being corrupted by prosperity, they fell into all licentiousness, and for want of a potent adversary to keep them in breath and exercise, fell into destructive divisions and seditions among themselves. It is said, Prov. i. 32, 'The prosperity of fools destroyeth them.' Well, then, you see the reasons of this mixed dispensation.

But is not this contrary to that faith and dependence that we should have upon God for present mercies, when there is such a doubtful face of things that men know not what certainly to expect? for certainty is the ground of faith and close affiance.

I answer—That 'godliness hath the promises of this life, and that which is to come,' 1 Tim. iv. 8; and that verily God doth not cast off his people, and leave them to shift for themselves in temporal things: Ps. xciv. 14, 'For the Lord will not cast off his people, nor forsake

his inheritance.' Men may cast them off, and God may hide himself from them for a while, but yet he taketh care of them. He may for a time correct and chastise them, and permit them for a while to abide under sharp oppressions; yet he will not utterly forsake them, but support and deliver them in his own season. But the faith which is required of us is not a certain expectation of temporal events; there God leaveth it to a may-be. If outward things were sure, we should live by sense rather than faith. God will be waited upon, and therefore keepeth the disposal of all things in his own hand, Jer. ii. 31, keepeth it as doubtful. The true generous faith is not a confidence of particular success, but a committing ourselves to God's power, and referring ourselves to his will; as the leper Mat. viii. 2, 'Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.'

[6.] To win the heart by the various methods of judgments and mercies, and to gain upon us by both means at once: Ps. ci. 1, 'I will sing of judgment and mercy; unto thee, O Lord, will I sing.' It may be neither day nor night, but both together, that our fears and hopes may draw us to God. Mixed graces do best, Acts ix. 33. To increase our fear, God letteth out trouble; to encourage us to hoping in God, that trouble is checked by other providences, Cant. iv. 16, Isa. xxvii. 6. The wind bloweth, God keepeth it from growing furious: Ps. cxxxviii. 7, 'Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me;' as putting life into his affairs.

[7.] God doth it to bring his people to a christian union and accord. God will not hear one sort of his people against another. When religious interest is divided, God keeps the balance equal, and success is sometimes cast on this side, sometimes on that. The light shineth sometimes in one hemisphere, sometimes in another; every party cometh on the stage, have their success, and manifest their corruptions, cannot bear one with another. God breaketh this confidence and that, then draweth to an union. That at length we may lay down our enmities and oppositions, and 'not bite and devour one another, lest at length we be consumed one of another,' Gal. v. 15. Sometimes the strength and upper-hand is given to these; they carry the day, but not the complete victory. What doth this intimate but that we should end the difference by compromise and reconciliation, lest, while we weaken one another by our mutual differences, the whole church be made a prey to Satan and his emissaries, and inevitable ruin and destruction light upon the whole. What have we gained by our contests? Stumbling-blocks are multiplied, atheists are increased. Oh! when shall that spirit prevail—'There is a tribe lacking in Israel' Judges xxi. 8, 9. Though they fought against them, yet they owned them as brethren. Alas! one faction is getting the ball from another, and our church divisions are but like a game at football. Surely, though two seeds will not be reconciled, yet God's family may be reconciled. Now where principles are such as may let in somewhat of Christ, we should try all means; we cannot wholly separate till our master be gone before us. If they fly from peace, we must pursue it, Mat. v. 9.

[8.] To prevent contempt and insolency towards those that are fallen under God's displeasure. This is to 'persecute them whom

God hath smitten, and to speak to the grief of those whom God hath wounded,' Ps. lxxix. 26; Prov. xxiv. 17, 'Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth; lest the Lord see it, and it displease him, and he turn away his wrath from him.' A vindictive spirit is a transgression of God's law. To rejoice and insult over misery is the worst sort of revenge.

[9.] It is a ground of patience: 'Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and not evil?' Job ii. 10. Heavy afflictions want not their comforts to make them tolerable. We want not mixtures to support us. He measureth out good and evil with a great deal of wisdom and tenderness. Should not they which have received good things from the Lord be content to submit to evil things or afflictions, when God seeth meet to exercise them therewith? The tide will ebb and flow. We would have it always flow; but God will not ask our leave and consent, and govern affairs by our opinion, but will send good and evil as it pleaseth him. Therefore, as we receive and entertain good things thankfully and cheerfully, so it is our duty to receive evil things submissively and contentedly. It is a great fault to limit God to one way of dealing with his people, and that we cannot endure changes. We must resolve for good and evil, and prepare for it, Phil. iv. 12. Vicissitudes in our condition are necessary for us. A settled ease in the world would soon corrupt us. In short, God freely conferreth good things upon us; and therefore we should not take it ill if sometimes he maketh us taste the bitter fruits of our own deservings. A christian should be prepared for new assaults of trouble.

[10.] To show that our comforts and crosses are in his hand; and he doth variously dispense weal or woe as our condition doth require: Isa. xlv. 7, 'I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord do all these things.' So Job xxxiv. 29, 'When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? and when he hideth his face, who then can behold him? whether it be done against a nation, or against a man only.' God diversifieth his providence, that if we will not take notice of him in one dispensation, we may in another. So Ps. lxxiv. 16, 17, 'The day is thine, and the night is thine; thou hast prepared the light and the sun; thou hast made summer and winter.' It is spoken of a deep time of trouble. He that hath set winter and summer, day and night, one against another, hath set good and evil in the life of man. You must not so understand it as if good came from God, and evil from ourselves, or by chance. No; God's hand is to be seen and owned in both. He is our party; therefore our first business is to reconcile ourselves to God, to please him, to bear the evil patiently, to accept the good thankfully from his hand. None can resist or remedy what God is pleased to do, 2 Chron. xxv. 8. God hath power to help and power to cast down; and in both he worketh sovereignly and irresistibly. Dangers and deliverances, troubles and consolations, come all from him. He will put us upon various exercises, fearing, believing, trembling, rejoicing, mourning, giving thanks.

*Application.* Now what use should we make of all this?

1. Be sure you do not make an ill use of it.

[1.] When we are not thankful for our mercies because they are not full and perfect. That is a proud and murmuring spirit that entertaineth crosses with anger and blessings with disdain. What but this is spoken of, Mal. i. 2, 'Wherein hast thou loved us?' and Ps. lxxviii. 20; as the people murmured in the wilderness, when they were come out of Egypt; when we disvalue what we have in comparison of what we expect. Pliny speaketh of some, *Quantumlibet saepe obligati, hoc solum meminerunt quod negatum est*—Forget 'what is granted, pitch only upon what is denied; as children in a pet throw away what they have if you do not give them more: 'All this,' saith Haman, 'availeth me nothing,' Esther v. 13. As in the body, if one humour be out of order, or one joint broken, the soundness of the rest is not regarded, so apt are we to murmur if all be not done at once: though God see it needful to keep us in fears and uncertainties, and you have not all that you look for, yet acknowledge what you have. Do not say, It is but so and so, a truce rather than a peace. God is making a step onward in England's mercies. Many strange providences there are to bring us to this. It is a mercy that he remembered us in our low estate, Ps. cxxxvi. 23, when all was struck at; honour, and religious worship, and property were at stake, that he gave us some breathing and rest after our oppressions, Hosea xi. 4; some ease after toil, as ploughmen give their oxen after they come from labour. And now the union of the parliament with their brethren is a step further; we hope we are growing towards the glorious evening. It is an ill use not to acknowledge mercies if all things are not according to your minds. Do not say, It is but thus and thus: Zech. iv. 10, 'Who hath despised the day of small things?' It is God's way to begin with little things that promise not much; thankfulness is the way to make them greater. God is at work; tarry till he bring it forth to perfection.

[2.] It is an abuse if we are discouraged in God's service because of this uncertainty and the returning of clouds after rain, that you cannot tell whether it will be day or night. You ought to take God's part; as in the combat between flesh and spirit, to come into the relief of the better part; so in this doubtful conflict. (1.) When you have any respite and breathing-time, then is a time and season to put your hand to the work: John ix. 4, 'I must work the works of him that sent me while it is to-day; the night cometh when none can work.' Blessed be God, it is not night with us. Truth is not wholly banished, nor buried under a night of ignorance, error, and superstitions; nor the comfort of prosperity wholly gone. Whilst it is day let us do something for God's interest. (2.) If there be uncertainties, never a great work is brought to pass without troubles, and duty should be welcome to you though you are uncertain of the event. Go about it with a resolute submission to God's will, and as prepared for all weathers, Phil. iv. 11, 12. This is a christian spirit. When you pitch upon temporal happiness altogether, and a settled estate in the world, you will be deceived. (3.) Change cometh not till our condition proveth a snare to us; till we grow neglectful of God and his interest, as if we could do well without him, and use our power against him, and so provoke him to leave us.

2. The right use we should make of it. When we have mixed dispensations, and are under a dubious conflict, then—

[1.] By way of caution, take heed of human confidences, and presuming too much of temporal success by means and instruments. One great reason of this long uncertainty wherewith England is exercised is because we run from one means to another, and do not take up the controversy between us and God. It may be said to us, as to Israel, Jer. ii. 36, 37, 'Why dost thou run to and fro, one while in this manner, another while in another, to seek establishment here and there, like a sick man turning in his bed? One while they thought the Assyrian would do it, and then the Egyptian. They shifted hands, but still the mischief continued. The Assyrian distressed them, but helped them not: they were disappointed in the Egyptian. Then the threatening is, 'Thou shalt go forth with thy hands upon thy head; for the Lord hath rejected thy confidences, and thou shalt not prosper in them.' Come back with a heavy heart and dejected habit. As clapping the hands is an expression of joy, so going forth with their hands upon their heads is a sign of great sorrow; as Tamar, when defiled by Amnon, 2 Sam. xiii. 19, 'laid her hand upon her head, and went out crying;' a gesture of lamentation. In the issue it would turn to extreme grief and anguish of heart. It is not improper, now you are met to rejoice in God, to mind you of these things. I do not speak this to take you off from the use of means, but from trusting in means: Oh! this will do it, and that will do it. I tell you, it is the Lord must do it. But when do we trust in means? When we use the creature without God, and hope to work out our ends without giving God his ends, Jer. iv. 14. To get rid of misery by fleshly aid, human force and counsel, without humiliation and repentance, and serious returning to the Lord. When we set the creature against God by wicked combinations, and cover it with a covering, that we may add sin to sin, Isa. xxx. 1. To carry on an evil purpose, to countenance lewdness, that a profane spirit may again come upon the stage and sin triumphantly. If we have this in design, it is to set means against God. Sometimes we set up the creature above God, as if his blessing were nothing to human preparations; and our hearts run more upon outward helps than his favour and blessing, Jer. ii. 13; and Hosea v. 13, 'When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then Ephraim sent to king Jareb, yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound.' Sometimes we yoke the creature with God, when we confine his providence to our probabilities, as if God could work no other way but that which we fancy: Ps. lxxviii. 41, 'They turned back, and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.' We do no more than we see reason for in the course of second causes. I tell you, God is the main party: it is with him this nation hath to do; it is not with unquiet libertines, with open enemies, but with God.

[2.] For direction—

(1.) Walk by a sure rule: Ps. cxix. 105, 'Thy word is a lamp to my feet, a light to my path.' Civil interests are determined by the laws of the country where we live. So far as concerneth conscience, the word of God is a rule and sure direction. When you consult with it, What

would God have me to do in such a case? you shall be sure to know his mind and your own duty, and so can suffer and act the more cheerfully.

(2.) Get a sure guide : Prov. iii. 5, 6, 'Trust in the Lord with all thy heart, and lean not to thy own understanding : in all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.' We have no more understanding than as God is pleased to confirm to us from day to day. Magistrates are bidden to be instructed : Ps. ii. 10, 'Be wise now therefore, O ye kings ; be instructed, ye judges of the earth.' Their good and evil is of a public influence. When men make their bosom their oracle, their own wits their counsellor, especially when swayed by their passions and corrupt affections, they usually miscarry.

(3.) Encourage yourselves by the sure promises that you have to build upon : 'The sure mercies of David,' Isa. lv. 3. The righteous have a sure reward. Prov. xi. 18, 'To him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward.' Heaven is a kingdom that cannot be shaken : Heb. xii. 28, 'Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.' There are great alterations here, but in heaven all is stable ; there is joy without any mixture of sorrow, no misery, no weakness to perplex. In short, a man wrapt up in the peace of God, and the quiet of a good conscience, and hopes of eternal life, is fortified against all encounters, storms, and difficulties whatsoever.

## A SACRAMENT SERMON.

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*While the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.*—CANT. i. 12.

THIS chapter is a sweet dialogue between Christ and the church, wherein they interchangeably express their mutual love to each other. To reflect upon the context would detain me too long from the words. In such scriptures every word is a sacrament and every line a mystery. The Jews compare the three books of Solomon to the three parts of the temple which he built; they liken the Proverbs to the porch, Ecclesiastes to the holy place, and the Book of Canticles to the *sanctum sanctorum*, the holy of holies within the veil, where all things were full of mystery, reverence, and religion. Every expression in this book needeth distinct explication; therefore let it suffice to note, that when Christ had in the 10th and 11th verses professed his love to the church, and what he would do for her, the church, by way of thankful return, expresseth her love to Christ again, and promiseth here a lively exercise of grace in all acts of special communion with him—*While the king sitteth at his table, &c.*

In this profession of the church's respect to Christ you may observe—

1. The season or occasion—*When the king sitteth at his table.*
2. The effect or event—*My spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.*

In the first observe—(1.) The person; (2.) His act or posture.

[1.] For the person, 'While the king,' that is, Christ, who in this whole song is set forth as a king: ver. 4, 'The king brought me into his chambers;' partly to answer the type, Solomon, and partly to show that all acts of communion on Christ's part are not only social and festival, but regal, such as would become a king, and flowed from his kingly office. And therefore, when we would have special communion with Christ, we must look upon him as a king. Partly to beget reverence. When they offered him a sickly lamb, the Lord pleadeth his dignity: 'I am a great king, saith the Lord of hosts,' Mal. i. 14; implying that they did disparage his royal majesty in the baseness of his worship and service. Partly that we may admire his love and

condescension to us, he that is so excellent, the King of kings, of such sovereign majesty, that he will be so familiar with poor believers, and sit at the table with them, and feast them with his loves: Mat. iii. 11, 'But he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear;' and Mat. viii. 8, 'And the centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof.' And partly to enlarge our confidence; we may expect nothing but what is royal, largesses befitting the dignity of a king: Mat. xxii. 2, 'The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son.' Christ will show himself a king in the ordinances of the gospel; in the new covenant he giveth himself to us, and with himself the benefits of pardon and life.

[2.] The gesture and posture wherein he is represented, 'Sitteth at his table.' Some render the word, *in corona sua*, while the king is in his ring and crown; the Septuagint, *ἐν τῇ ἀνακλίσει αὐτοῦ*, in his sitting down, a phrase usually put *pro discumbentium cœtu*, for a company sitting down to meat; their gesture was leaning, their form was in a round or ring; therefore we translate it, 'Sitteth at his table;' and Ainsworth, to express the import of the Hebrew word *בְּסֻבּוֹ*, 'Sitteth at his round table.'

But what is meant, then, by Christ's sitting at his table? Some apply it to his abode in heaven, in the midst of the holy angels and the spirits of just men made perfect; and the eternal pleasures they enjoy there are often set forth by a feast. But rather it implieth the fellowship we have with Christ by the gospel, which is also set forth by a table ready furnished and prepared, where Christ is present feasting with us; as Mat. xxii. 1-3, 'The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king, that made a marriage for his son;' and Prov. ix. 2, 'Wisdom hath killed her beasts, and mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table;' and Isa. xxv. 6, 'And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees; of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.' More particularly, the Lord's supper is called the table of the Lord: 1 Cor. x. 21, 'Ye cannot be partakers of the table of the Lord and the table of devils.' Well then, we see here—

(1.) That Christ hath prepared and furnished a table for the entertainment of his family: Ps. xxiii. 5, 'Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.' Devils malign, but cannot infringe our comforts; they grieve to see the riches of his bounty to us, but we are invited freely to partake of them.

(2.) He hath not only a table, but he sitteth down, cometh and suppeth with us: Rev. iii. 20, 'I will sup with him, and he with me.' The king is in the round or ring among the rest of the guests. At the first institution, Christ did himself partake of his own supper; then he was present in person, but still in spirit, and doth but wait the time when he will 'drink new wine with you in his Father's kingdom.' Mat. xxvi. 29; 'That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom,' Luke xxii. 30. For the present, the effect of an ordinance dependeth upon that sweet company and communion that we have with him in these duties. All gospel ordinances are the sweeter because of Christ's presence with them; this doth enliven the soul, when



Christ is at the table and sitteth amongst us. Thus we see in what posture Christ is represented.

*Secondly*, 'The effect of this on the church's part, 'My spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.' It is usual in scripture to represent sin by roots of bitterness, and the fruits and graces of the Spirit by sweet spices and plants. Now, among all these plants, spikenard was of chiefest account. The herb lavender, which is pseudo-nard, or bastard spikenard, is sweet; but the true spikenard was of great price and esteem. The oil thereof they were wont to pour on the chief guests at great entertainments; as Mark xiv. 3, 'As Jesus sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard, very precious; and she break the box, and poured it on his head.' Now afterwards it is said, 'It might have been sold for more than three hundred pence,' ver. 5. The Roman penny was about sevenpence halfpenny, and so maketh near ten pounds. And it is said. John xii. 3, that 'the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.' Now hereby are figured the graces of the Spirit, wherein Christ delighteth. Only let us inquire whether this be to be applied to the church passively or actively? Some take it passively, as if it were that liquid nard wherewith Christ anointeth the church; for 'we have an unction from the Holy One.' Junius renders it, *perfunder odoribus suavissimus*; but rather it is to be understood actively, that pure and liquid nard wherewith she anointed Christ. This costly and honourable entertainment was bestowed on the chief guest; and the church speaketh of her respect to Christ; she entertaineth him with the sweet favour of her good ointments when Christ sitteth at his table.

*Doct.* That in acts of special communion with Christ, grace cannot lie hid, but will breathe out with great fragrancy; or, at the table of the Lord our graces should be specially and in a most lively manner exercised.

1. There is a reverence common to all worship, for 'God will be sanctified in all that draw nigh unto him,' Lev. x. 3.

2. There is a special delight and affection which should accompany every act of communion with God; for 'it is good for us to draw nigh unto him,' Ps. lxxiii. 28; and God saith, Isa. lvi. 7, 'I will bring them to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer.'

3. Besides, in all acts of communion with God there is an interchange of donatives and duties. Where we expect to receive much grace, there it must be much exercised and acted: Mark iv. 24, 'With what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again.' It is but equity that we should entertain Christ with our best, that we should break our box of spikenard whenever he vouchsafeth to come among us. All communion must needs be mutual, and consists in acts of grace from Christ to us, and acts of love from us to Christ. As you would delight in Christ, and be refreshed with the favour of his good ointments, so you must carry it so that Christ may delight in you; your spikenard must send forth the smell thereof.

4. Again, Christ may more sensibly manifest himself in one duty than another, for he is not tied to means, or to time and season; and it is his presence that maketh an ordinance comfortable, and doth revive the exercise of grace. As upon the approach of the sun in the spring

all is lively and fresh, so the heart is quickened by his drawing nigh unto us. Now sometimes he hideth himself in a more solemn duty, and manifests himself in a more common one, where we least expect him; as the spouse that fell asleep at a feast, Cant. v. 1, 2, was roused and awakened in meditation.

5. One duty must not be set against another. They are all instituted by God, and accompanied with his blessing, and are means of our communion with him, yet they all have their special use and tendency, and one is to be preferred in this respect, another in that, as the ends are for which they are appointed; as in the word we come to Christ as our teacher, in prayer as our advocate, in baptism as our head and lord, into whose mystical body we are planted; in the Lord's supper as the master of the feast, or our royal entertainer.

6. Though the Lord's supper be a special means, yet it is the spirit of grace which doth stir up faith, hope, and love in us. There are three things which must not be forgotten—

[1.] The duty is a means accommodated and fitted to this end, or God would never have instituted it.

[2.] The Spirit is the author both of grace and the exercise of grace; he first infuseth, and then quickeneth and stirreth up grace in us by this means: John vi. 63, 'It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing.'

[3.] You must stir up your own hearts: Isa. lxiv. 7, 'There is none that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee;' 2 Tim. i. 6, 'That thou stir up the gift of God that is in thee.' Well, then, allowing all this, yet it is a truth that at the Lord's table graces should be exercised in a special lively manner; which will appear if we consider—

(1.) The general use which sacraments have besides and beyond other duties.

(2.) What is the special use and intent of this duty.

(3.) What graces are to be exercised.

First, What a sacrament hath beyond other duties. It is the most mysterious instrument of our sanctification and preservation in a state of grace, and therefore requireth a special exercise of grace.

1. In a sacrament there is a more sensible assurance. In other duties we see God's goodness or readiness to do us good, in this his sollicitousness and anxious care for our good: Heb. vi. 17, 18, 'Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of salvation the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation.' He is cautious to make all sure. *Nudum pactum*, a naked promise, is not so great an argument of God's love to us as a covenant signed and sealed.

2. A closer application. A general invitation is not so much as an express injunction. We have the universal proposal in the word, the particular application in the sacraments: Acts ii. 38, 'Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.'

3. A solemn investiture, or taking possession by certain instituted

rites. As we are put in possession by certain formalities of law, as of a house by the delivery of a key, or of a field by the delivery of a turf, This is my house, this is my field; so we take possession of Christ and all his benefits, 'This is my body.'

4. A visible representation of the mysteries of godliness; and so it doth excite us to the more serious consideration of them when they are transmitted to the soul not by the ears only, but by the eyes: Gal. iii. 1, 'Before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified among you.'

5. An express means of union and communion with Christ. We draw nigh to God in prayer, and God draweth nigh to us in the word; but here is not only an approximation, but a communion: 1 Cor. x. 16, 'The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?' There is no union like that of food, which becometh a part of our substance; we eat his flesh, we drink his blood, that which is mystically so.

6. It is God's feast, where we come to eat and drink at his table as those that are in friendship with him. Some duties are our work, others our ordinary meal, but this is our feast: Ps. xxii. 26, 'The meek shall eat and be satisfied; they shall praise the Lord that seek him; your hearts shall live for ever.' Therefore we should specially rejoice in God our Saviour when we are admitted into his banqueting-house.

7. This is the sum of all other duties and privileges, *epitome evangelii*, the abridgment of christian religion, the land of promise in a map: Luke xxii. 20, 'This cup in the new testament in my blood.' The whole new testament comprised in one ordinance, pardon sealed, heaven anticipated, word and prayer mingled together; therefore should grace in a special and lively manner be exercised.

Secondly, What is the special use and intent of this duty? It was instituted for the remembrance of Christ: 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25, 'And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me: and after the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me;' and ver. 26, it is an announcing or showing forth the Lord's death till he come. We show it forth before God and men, as the ground of our thankfulness and confidence; and our great duty is 'to discern the Lord's body,' ver. 29; that is, to look upon it as a body offered in sacrifice for the reconciliation of the world to God, and to behave ourselves accordingly; so that our great work is to commemorate the mystery of redemption by Christ, with all the consequent benefits thereof. Now in this mystery there is considerable—

1. The occasion and necessity of it, why Christ should be given for us, our guilt, and misery, which could only be expiated by the blood of the Son of God; so that one great work of the sacrament is the representation of the evil of sin; for we are to remember the Son of God, 'Who was made sin for us that knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him,' 2 Cor. v. 21, and who was 'made a curse for us,' Gal. iii. 13.

2. The cause of it; the great love of God, or his mercy to poor sinners: John iii. 16, 'God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' And the great love of the Redeemer, who willingly came to perform this act of bounty, to give his life for his people: Gal. ii. 20, 'Who loved us, and gave himself for us.' Therefore that which was set forth and commended to our thoughts is the infinite love of God in Christ.

3. The act of redemption itself; his 'obedience to the death of the cross,' Phil. ii. 7; or his 'making his soul an offering for sin,' Isa. liii. 10. Therefore he is represented as 'crucified before your eyes,' Gal. iii. 1.

4. The consequent benefits which thence result to us. You come not to receive the mercy of an hour, but here is pardon of sin given us without any infringing the honour of God's justice, Rom. iii. 25, 26; the favour of God, 2 Cor. v. 19; the spirit of grace, Titus iii. 5, 6, Gal. iii. 14, and 1 Cor. x. 4, compared with John iv. 14, and vii. 37. So also eternal life, or hopes of glory, Titus iii. 7, and Rom. v. 1, 2, and 1 John iv. 9. And indeed this whole duty is a figure of the eternal banquet. Now the king sits at his table, and his people round about him; hereafter they shall sit about the throne, and the Lamb in the midst of them, and then 'he shall drink *καὶνόν*, new wine with them in his Father's kingdom,' Mat. xxvi. 29. And the discerning his body now is a pledge of seeing his face then. Now these blessings are great, and therefore should raise our wonder; most needful, and therefore should quicken our thankfulness; most firm and sure, for they are dearly purchased, freely offered, surely sealed. The covenant of grace, by which they are conveyed to us, was founded in his blood, offered to us in the promises of the gospel, and sealed in this duty: Mat. xxvi. 28, 'For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins.' Now it being thus dearly purchased, most freely promised, and solemnly applied, externally by eating this bread and drinking this cup, internally by the Holy Ghost sanctifying the action to such a purpose, we should be more revived and encouraged in waiting upon God.

Thirdly, What graces are to be exercised, which is as it were the pouring out of our box of precious spikenard on Christ's head or feet.

1. With respect to the necessity of our redemption, a humble sense of the odiousness of sin, represented to us in the bruises and sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ when he came to be a sacrifice for sin, that we may loath it, condemn it, resolve no more to have to do with it: Rom. viii. 3, 'By sin he condemned sin in the flesh;' that is, by the sufferings of Christ God showed an example of his wrath and displeasure against all our sinful indulgences to the flesh. Therefore Christ crucified must be a sin-killing spectacle. And when we behold Christ crucified, our old man must be crucified with him: Rom. vi. 6, 'Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him;' and Gal. ii. 20, 'I am crucified with Christ.' The bitterness of his agonies and passions must make sin hateful to us.

2. The love of God in Christ, which was the cause, must beget a

fervent love to him again, that we may love him who hath loved us at so dear a rate: 2 Cor. v. 14, 15, 'For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them.' There must be a willingness and resignation to deny ourselves, and all that is dear to us in the world, rather than prove unfaithful to Christ, who suffered such great things for our redemption. This love must kill and mortify our sinful self-love, which is so great a bane and mischief to us, and the cause of all our miscarriages.

3. The act of redemption, or the death of Christ, must breed in us a lively faith in Christ, that we may accept him as our Redeemer and Saviour upon his own terms, and trust ourselves into his hands, and devote ourselves to his service, crying out, as Thomas, 'My Lord and my God,' John xx. 28; welcoming him into our souls with the dearest embraces of thankfulness and hearty affection.

4. With respect to the consequent benefits, there must be—

[1.] Earnest desire, 'called hungering and thirsting after righteousness,' Mat. v. 6; after communion with God in Christ, that you may be partakers both of his renewing and reconciling grace, and that you may get more sensible proof of his love to your souls.

[2.] Joy in the sense of the greatness, suitableness, and firmness of the mercy represented, offered, and applied to you: Cant. i. 4, 'We will be glad and rejoice in thee; we will remember thy loves more than wine;' Acts viii. 39, 'And he went on his way rejoicing.'

[3.] Hope, which is a desirous expectation of the promised glory, looking and longing for it with more earnestness and confidence. This antepast in the house of our pilgrimage is sweet, but what will be our communion with him in heaven? The house of God is the gate of heaven; Christ's death is the price given for your life: Rom. v. 10, 'If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.'

5. That love which is here commemorated must be imitated, and leave a suitable impression upon you. If Christ gave his life for those who are sometimes called his enemies, sometimes his people, such an impartial charity must you have to all men. To brethren and neighbours: 1 John iv. 11, 'If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another;' that is, this love must be answered in our imitating it towards our brethren. And to enemies: Eph. iv. 32, 'And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.' Our wrongs are greater and more in number. But especially must our love be greater to souls, that we may do anything for the saving of souls. This must be regarded, for we have not a due sense of any excellency till we adopt it into our manners, till it be the very constitution of our hearts and our constant practice. Imitation is a greater respect than commendation.

*Use 1. Information.*

1. That in right celebration of the Lord's supper, all the work is not the minister's; it should be a busy day with every christian, as becometh the guests of the God of heaven at so sweet a feast. Christ instituted this duty, and blesseth it; the minister, as his steward, dis-

penseth it, but you must receive it ; and receive it with an applicative faith, with the holy ardours of love, with heavenly desires and resolutions of thankful obedience, loathing sin, renewing covenant with God. You have these graces from Christ, as Esther had sweet odours out of the king's treasury, Esther ii. 12. They are stirred up by the Spirit, but they must be acted by you, and then Christ is pleased and refreshed.

2. To show how unfit they are for the Lord's supper who have no grace at all. Here God requireth the fragrancy of grace ; how can they send forth a sweet-smelling savour who have no spikenard. When they come to break their box, it is empty ; they have not gotten this precious ointment. How can they be lively who are not so much as living ? Who would expect a flame from a dead coal ? Can it glow before it be kindled ? Here we are to quicken and draw forth the grace that we have. This is no duty for them who are dead in their sins. What should a dead man do with a cordial ? and men that have no life, with food. No ; there must be a stock of grace, a good treasure, before we can bring it forth. In vain do men seek after quickening when they have no life.

3. How unsuitable and sad it is that we are most dead where we should be most raised, fresh, and vigorous ! At any time dead service doth ill become a living God. The heathens saw that the worship must be proportioned to the object of worship. When they worshipped the sun, they offered a horse, and Josiah destroyed the horses of the sun, 2 Kings xxiii. 11. Surely whatever is tendered to God should have the stamp of God upon it. But now in this duty special life and rejoicing in God is required of us ; here we have to do with the bread of life : John vi. 35, 'I am the bread of life ;' and the water of life ; and shall we be conversant about these things with a dead heart ? All should be life and vigour here. What may be the causes of this deadness ?

[1.] Slowness of heart and averseness from all spiritual duties. Our heart naturally bendeth downwards, and sin doth beset us as a weight : Heb. xii. 1, 'Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us.' This cloggeth us in all our heavenly flights and motions. In the best the heart hath a wing and a weight ; it would fain mount up to God, but the flesh depresseth us.

[2.] A particular cause is customariness. We come carelessly, with common hearts, as to a common work. Custom goeth no further than the external act, or conformity to the common practice : 'They sit before thee as my people,' Ezek. xxxiii. 31. They do not consider what is required, but perform what is used, and are guided by others' practice rather than their own conscience and the nature of the duty ; and then no lively exercise of grace is to be expected from them.

[3.] Some carnal distemper. When you give contentment to the flesh, you draw on a hardness and deadness upon the heart, and then in all acts of communion with God there is no life in you : Ps. cxix. 37, 'Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken me in thy way.' An inordinate liberty in worldly and fleshly delights quencheth the vigour of grace, and obstructs the lively exercise of it ; as the prophet saith, 'They take away the heart,' Hosea iv. 11. This is a superadded burden and clog to the spirit.

[4.] Confidence in their own good estate, without actual preparation, or raising their desires and affections. They think, with Samson, to go forth and shake themselves as at other times; but their strength is gone, their mind is barren and vain, their will remiss, their affections dead and cold. There needeth continual diligence to keep the heart in a right frame, and serious preparation before solemn duties.

[5.] The confusion of a dark and ignorant mind: 'What went you out for to see?' Mat. xi. 8. They have a devout aim in general, but do not consider the particular end and use of the duties they are conversant about, nor their own wants, and what suiteth most with their case, either the work of faith or repentance; and then what life can you expect in them?

*Use 2.* To press you to stir up your graces, and break open the box of precious ointment, that the whole house may be filled with the savour of it. If you want Christ, let your souls make hard pursuit after him. If you have found him whom your souls love, rejoice in the light of his countenance. But whether you exercise desire or delight most, let both endear Christ, that he may be more precious to you, and you may engage yourselves to great fidelity to him, resolving to live for the future in all love and obedience to him. Consider again and again what sin deserved, what Christ hath suffered, how wonderfully God's love is expressed, and what thankful obedience is required of us. More particularly—

1. Humble yourselves before God, as unworthy to approach his presence. The saints never loath themselves so much as in the highest acts of communion with God: Job xlii. 5, 6, 'I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.' The soul is never in such a humble posture as when it hath the most raised thoughts of God; then the most holy become vile and loathsome in their own eyes. So Isa. vi. 5, 'Woe is me! for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts.' Great is our unworthiness to appear in the presence of so glorious a majesty; yet this should not make us run away from God, which is an act of legal bondage, but humbly and penitently to run to him, which is an act of faith and dependence on Christ. We are unworthy, but we must not refuse God's remedy, but sue it out in a broken-hearted manner.

2. Admire the wisdom and love of God in finding out such a remedy and ransom for our souls. It deserveth to be the wonder of all men and angels. The angels stand by, and wonder at what God hath done for us: 1 Tim. iii. 16, 'Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels;' and 1 Peter i. 12, 'Which things the angels desire to look into;' and Eph. iii. 10, 'To the intent that now, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.' The angels were but spectators, not the parties interested, but yet they pry into this mystery. Oh! how deeply should our hearts be affected with it.

3. I commend to you the look of faith. Look upon Christ as crucified for you: 'They shall look upon him whom they have pierced,'

Zech. xii. 10; and as 'bearing your sins in his body on the tree,' 1 Peter ii. 24. This is the sight which is exposed to the view of your faith. When Pilate had scourged Jesus, he brought him forth to the Jews, saying, 'Behold the man,' John xix. 5. Or as John pointed as with the finger to Christ: John i. 29, 'Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world.'

4. Heartily receive Christ, that he may live in you, and you in him: John i. 12, 'To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God;' and Col. ii. 6, 'As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him.' Receive him with joy and thankfulness, as the greatest gift that ever could be given you, with a hearty consent of subjection to him.

5. Give up yourselves to Christ as his redeemed ones: 2 Cor. viii. 5, 'But first gave their own selves to the Lord;' and Rom. xii. 1, 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service;' and Ps. cxix. 94, 'I am thine, save me.' Give up yourselves to Christ, to be justified, sanctified, saved by him. Our very taking Christ requireth this giving ourselves to him, for we take him as our Lord and Saviour.

How shall we do to be thus lively in the exercise of grace in this duty?

[1.] Beg the assistance of the Holy Spirit. When God's wind ariseth upon the gardens, the spices flow out: Cant. iv. 16, 'Awake, O north wind, and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out;' that is, in sweet and refreshing odours. We should provide fresh thoughts, but they will be dead and cold unless the Spirit come in with new and fresh influences. The habits of grace lie asleep till he doth actuate and quicken them. The censers of the sanctuary need not only to be filled with incense, but to be set afire, before the perfumed smoke can ascend to heaven in clouds and pillars: Cant. iii. 6, 'Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all the powders of the merchant?' When the heart is inflamed and love kindled, then do we send out a sweet savour.

[2.] Seriously prepare yourselves. Look not for sudden rapt motions when you use not God's means to get your hearts into this frame. There is a watching unto prayer, and a serious examining before receiving. The general preparation is the holy life, for one duty prepareth for another; they that are led by the Spirit will pray by the Spirit. But there is a special preparation, like trimming our lamps when we go to meet with the bridegroom.

[3.] You must rouse up yourselves, and call upon all that is within you to do its office: Ps. ciii. 1, 2, '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.' A man hath some power to awaken his own soul, and stir up himself to heed the work that he is about. You may speak to your hearts; we must do what we can as reasonable creatures.

[4.] When we have done all, all must be perfumed with the sweet incense of Christ's intercession: Rev. viii. 3, 'And another angel came



and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.' Alas ! we mingle weeds with our flowers, and sulphur with our incense ; and our duties, as they come from us, are very unsavoury, and stink in the nostrils of God ; not like the odoriferous smell of a precious ointment.

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## A SERMON ON MICAH VII. 18.

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*Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage?—MICAH vii. 18.*

THE words express an admiration of the Lord's incomparable goodness and pardoning mercy. The question is, how they are brought in here in this place? The prophet had prophesied of great things which God would do for his people, and the fountain of all is his pardoning mercy.

*Obs.* That the ground and foundation of all our hope and comfort in our restoration after our distresses is the Lord's pardoning mercy.

The state of God's people now was mean and calamitous. They were fallen by their iniquity; yet not fallen past recovery, not sunk beneath all hope: ver. 8, 'Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall I shall arise.' The church adviseth her adversaries to sobriety and moderation in using those advantages they had against her; for the Lord hath his times, as of chastening and casting down his people, so also of delivering and raising them up again, and clothing their enemies with shame. Therefore the prophet speaks of building up the fallen walls, ver. 11, 12. Desolate churches have their time of restoration, when God will do marvellous things for his people, ver. 15, and so reckon with their adversaries that they should move out of their holes like worms out of the earth, because they shall be afraid of the Lord our God, ver. 16, 17. And then presently, in the text, 'Who is a God like unto thee?' &c. This abrupt and passionate admiration of God's pardoning mercy sheweth that all these promises had their rise there. There were great difficulties to be overcome before these promises could take place, but the greatest difficulty and obstruction lay in their sins. And the prophet wondereth more at his grace subduing sin, than at his power overcoming difficulties. Instances we have: Jer. xxxi. 34, God had promised great things to his people, both as to their spiritual and temporal condition; the reason rendered there is, 'For I will forgive their iniquity, and will remember their sins no more.' So Jer. xxxiii. 8, 'I will cause the captivity of Judah to return; for I will cleanse them from their iniquity.' That is the ground of all.

*Reason* 1. Sin is the greatest obstacle. Take that out of the way,

and then mercies come freely from God: Isa. lix. 2, 'Your sins have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you.' While sin remaineth unpardoned or unrepented of, God withdraweth his precious presence, and will not be seen of his people, to hear, and help, and bless them: Jer. v. 25, 'Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withheld good things from you.' If there be any restraint of God's blessing, it is because of man's sin. So that remission or pardon is *gratia removens prohibens*; it removeth that which stoppeth our mercies. As when the obstruction is removed, the fountain floweth forth freely; so when sin is removed, that which letteth is taken out of the way.

*Reason 2.* Sin is the cause of all our evils, as well as it stoppeth and hindereth our mercies; it is the great makebate, as well as the great obstacle. Sin being pardoned, the cause of the misery is removed; and the cause being removed, the effect ceaseth: 2 Sam. xii. 13, 'The Lord hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.' The proper wages and recompense of sin is death; and sin being gone, death is gone. So Isa. xl. 2, 'Her warfare is accomplished.' What is the reason of such a sudden change? 'Her iniquity is pardoned.' A foul stomach breedeth an aching head. There is no getting rid of an aching head till the stomach be purged. Effects continue as long as causes work and exert their influence.

*Reason 3.* Outward mercies, were they never so great and full, would never yield any true satisfaction, unless they be joined with reconciliation with God and pardon of sin. Here God promiseth to give them light after darkness, to make their enemies move out of their holes like worms out of the earth; but all this is nothing unless God pardoneth and passeth by their transgressions. Sin is apprehended by God's people as the greatest evil. Till that be gone, their comforts yield them no solid satisfaction. *Quid prodest regium alimentum, si ad Gehennam pascuit?* A traitor, till execution, may have allowance according to his quality from his prince; so may the Lord bestow many common mercies on those who are yet left to everlasting destruction. No solid happiness till pardon: Ps. xxxii. 1, 2, 'Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered: blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.' Till we be received into God's favour, and justified, we have no solid ground of rejoicing—

*Use 1.* To reprove—

1. Them that look not after pardon of sin in their distresses, but temporal blessings in the first place. These howl rather than pray, Hosea vii. 14. Their suits to God are like the moans of beasts rather than the groans of a sanctified heart.

2. Those that hope to remove evil, either by sinful means or natural means, without being reconciled to God. (1.) Sinful means. As Saul in his distress goeth to the witch of Endor. These do more entangle and involve themselves. Fear is an ill counsellor, and urgeth men to use indirect and evil means to avert the things feared; and so, whilst they think to avoid their danger, they hasten and increase it, Prov. x. 24. Instances are frequent. Samson's wife, the Philistines threatened to burn her and her father's house with fire

unless she would betray her husband's secrets, Judges xiv. 15. She doth so, and Samson taking his revenge; they fulfil what they threatened, Judges xv. 6. The children of Israel murmured at the report of the spies, and said, 'Would God we had died in the wilderness,' Num. xiv. 2; and God saith, vers. 28, 29, 'As ye have spoken in my ears, so will I do unto you; your carcases shall fall in this wilderness.' The rebels against fatherly government were afraid of scattering; they would build a tower, 'lest they should be scattered on the face of the earth' (a solemn place wherein to meet), Gen. xi. 4; and for that reason God 'confounded their language, and scattered them,' ver. 8. Jeroboam, to secure the kingdom in his own house, set up calves at Dan and Bethel, lest the people should return, when they went up to Jerusalem to worship, to their natural lord, 1 Kings xii. 26; and this very thing became a snare to the house of Jeroboam to cut it off and destroy it, 1 Kings xiii. 3, 4. The Jews were afraid of Christ, lest the Romans would take jealousy at their frequent resort to him, John xi. 48; and for that reason wrath came upon them to the uttermost. Many will help themselves by sinful compliances, seek to preserve their families, and thereby they ruin them. The second commandment is express. The way to secure ourselves is not to commit new sins, but get a pardon of the old. (2.) By lawful means. Usually means are cursed when we tamper with them before we have made our peace with God. Israel's going forth without a peace-offering, Judges xx.; Asa seeking to the physicians before the Lord, 2 Chron. xvi. 12, will sufficiently instruct us in that. Therefore 'acquaint yourselves with God, and be at peace, and good shall come unto you,' Job xxii. 21. Bustling in the world occasioneth more trouble till our peace be made with God. There is no getting out of the comfortless pit but by the blood of the everlasting covenant, Zech. ix. 11. All our mercies come from a covenant of love, and a covenant made sure by the blood of the Son of God. David had his sins pardoned before his health restored, Ps. ciii. 3. First iniquity removed, then the disease.

3. It reproveth those that, lying under the fruits of sin, have not an heart to seek their recovery from the Lord's pardoning mercy. The church here was fallen under God's indignation, and that by reason of sin: ver. 9, 'I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him.' It was a rod dipped in guilt; and yet hopeth in the Lord for a restitution to wonted privileges, because none like him in pardoning. When God covereth himself with frowns, there is no cause of despair. God threateneth that he may not punish, and punisheth that he may not punish for ever. God maketh show of departing that we may hold him the faster, and threateneth to remove from a person or nation that he may not indeed remove, but that we may entreat him to stay. And, indeed, he is not hard to be entreated. He that is going away sheweth us the way how to keep him still; when he flieth from us, he draweth the soul that it may run after him, Ps. lxxiii. 8. When he seemeth to remove, he doth not go out of sight, that you may always follow him; and if you follow him, he will stand still. If he seem to be wholly out of sight, it is that you may seek him early and earnestly, Hosea v. 16. He hath left somewhat behind him to draw the soul to him. When he smiteth very sorely, it is to awaken a

drowsy sinner, that we may bethink ourselves, and not perish for ever: 'Who is a God like unto thee?'

*Use 2.* To instruct us what should most affect our hearts; not so much God's acts of power as his acts of grace. The church here admireth more his pardoning mercy than his glorious power in her restoration; that mercy should find the way to them, notwithstanding sin, yea, many sins. The godly are sensible of the desert of sin, and their inability to satisfy justice for it. The impediments of God's power lie altogether without God; but the impediments of his pardoning mercy within him. The soul pauseth upon this, that God is just and holy; therefore, when mercy rejoiceth over judgment, there is the triumph of the saints. The effects of God's power are more obvious to our apprehensions, but the fruits of his pardoning mercy are more suspected because of our ill-deservings. It is notable here that God pardoneth as *El*, as a strong God. *Quis Deus fortis par tibi?* So Junius, Who is a strong God like thee in pardoning? Partly to show that he doth not pardon out of need, but choice. He could avenge us, but he will not. Men forbear their enemies out of policy, not out of pity. The sons of Zeruiah may be too hard for them; otherwise, 'Who findeth his enemy and slayeth him not?' We are always in God's power, yet he pardoneth and spareth us. The more power men have, the more they are given to oppression and acts of violence. God is able to destroy us, but he showeth his power rather in pitying our miseries and relieving our wants, in pardoning rather than in punishing; partly to show the concomitancy of his power with his pardoning mercy. He will be strong in pardoning; he will pardon so as to subdue enemies, to remove lets and impediments. So Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7, 'Jehovah, Jehovah, El, the Lord, the Lord, the strong God, merciful and gracious.' So Num. xiv. 17, 18, where Moses alludeth to the former place: 'Let the power of my Lord be great.' So doth this to both of them: 'Who is El like thee?'

But to come more closely to the words.

*Doct.* That the chief glory of the true God consisteth in the pardon of sins, wherein there is none like him.

I shall evidence it by these considerations—

1. We have not a true apprehension of God till we see him singular and matchless in excellency, and do give him a distinct and separate honour far above all other things which are in the world. We are bidden not only to glorify God but to sanctify God, Isa. viii. 13, and 1 Peter iii. 15; to think and speak somewhat of God that cannot be thought or spoken of other things; for to sanctify is to set apart from common use. And when it is applied to God, it signifieth to set him above on the highest point of eminency, to reverence and adore him in our hearts, as to love him and trust in him, and fear him above all other things. The Lord, out of his love, thinketh no people like his people. *Quis sicut tu?* It is used of God and Israel: Deut. xxxiii. 29, 'Who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord?' We are to love God, and serve him, not by chance, but by choice; not because we know no other, but no better; to see a superlative excellency in him, to single him out as the only name above all other names. As Exod. xv. 11, 'Who is like unto thee among the gods? who is like

unto thee, glorious in holiness?' So Ps. lxxi. 74, 'Thy righteousness O God, is very high; who is like unto thee?' So Ps. lxxvii. 13, 'Who is so great a God as our God?' Thus do the people of God, in these and many other places, exalt the glory of his attributes beyond all compare, and see something in their 'beloved above all other beloveds,' Cant. v. 9; and so their souls are more settled in their choice, and fortified against temptations, whilst they do not measure God by the line of created beings, and by these expressions raise their thoughts and hearts into an holy wonder. We are too apt to fancy God after the model of the creature, and so transform his glory into the similitude of such finite beings as we ourselves are. No; who is like him for goodness and power? If we speak of strength, he is strong; of goodness, there is none good but God; of wisdom, God is only wise, &c.

2. Among all his excellences, his pardoning mercy shineth forth most conspicuously in the true religion, and is represented with such advantages as cannot be found elsewhere. His style and name is 'a God of pardons,' Neh. ix. 17. So when he proclaimed his name before Moses, Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7, his pardoning mercy maketh up the greatest part of his name. Now names are *a notioribus*, from such things as are most obvious and observable in them to whom the names are given. To evidence this, that no God is like our God, consider—

[1.] The business of a religion is to provide sufficiently for two things which have much troubled the considering part of the world—to provide a suitable happiness for mankind, and a sufficient means for the expiation of the guilt of sin. Happiness is our great desire, and sin our great trouble. Both these are fully laid down in the scriptures. There we find what is true happiness, and there also how the grand scruple of the world may be satisfied, and their guilty fears may be quenched by the expiation of sin. It was sin that plunged us into mischief, and that cut us off from the favour of God, and did forbid all communion with him and enjoyment of him; therefore the great question of the fallen creature is, 'Wherewith will God be pleased?' and 'What shall I give for the sin of my soul?' Micah vi. 7. The whole world is in dread of provoked justice: Rom. i. 32, 'Who knowing the judgment of God, and that they which commit such things are worthy of death.' Men are sensible of a sentence of death passed upon them, the fear of which puts them in bondage and trouble all their days, Heb. ii. 14.

[2.] Till there be a due course taken for the pardon of sin, there is no provision made for establishment either of the creature's comfort or duty. (1.) Not his comfort. All the world is *ὑπόδικος τῷ Θεῷ*, Rom. iii. 19, 'become guilty before God,' answerable to him for the breaches of his law, and standeth in dread of his righteous anger and wrath. Nothing obtrudeth itself upon our thoughts but the comfortless sight of our misery when we are serious; and men are never perfect, as appertaining to the conscience, Heb. ix. 9, never upon sound and good terms, but racked with perplexing fears. (2.) Not his duty; for religion can never take deep root in our hearts till some hope be established that God will not deal severely with us, nor call us to an account for all our errors and swerving from his holy law: Ps. cxxx. 4, 'There is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared.' Forgiveness

encourageth us to the hearty service, worship, and obedience of God, whereunto otherwise we could have neither hand nor heart. But since he will forgive the penitent suppliant, and pardon the slips and frailties of our lives, this draweth us to obedience; whereas a desperation of his mercy would certainly avert us from it. We are not in a desperate and hopeless condition; God will allow pardon to the penitent. If our condition were altogether hopeless, it would engage us in a course of sin, without any thought of returning or repenting; as they said, Jer. xviii. 12, 'There is no hope,' &c.

[3.] Natural light giveth some evidence of this truth, that God is placable. The gentiles were all of this opinion, that their gods were inclined to pardon. Thence came all their sacrifices and expiations. They thought their gods would be propitious to sinners if they did come humbly and ask pardon. We see in the daily course of God's providence that God forbeareth the worst, doth not stir up all his wrath against them. They have life, and food, and raiment, and ease, and liberty, and friends, and wealth, and honour, Rom. ii. 4. All these forfeited mercies are continued to us; and God doth not deal with men in utmost rigour, which showeth that he is willing to be appeased and ready to forgive upon terms consistent with his honour and the common good. Yea, his commanding us to forgive one another is an argument that mercy and forgiveness are pleasing unto God. It is the glory of a man to pass by an offence. If this be a perfection or glory in man, reason will tell us that somewhat of this may be expected from God. Certainly our condition is not desperate and past all hope while we are yet in the way, and under an obligation to use means for our recovery. And the Lord inviteth us by daily mercies, Acts xiv. 17. This showeth the possibility of a pardon to fallen mankind. We are not *in termino*, as the fallen angels are.

[4.] It showeth a possibility, yea, a probability. In all false religions there can be no solid and firm persuasion of pardon. Partly because there is no sufficient expiation of sin, even in the judgment of those who knew least of the nature of sin and the malignity of it. They were still at a loss for a recompense to appease angry justice. They were sensible that sin is a wrong done to God, and that its wages is death; that there must be satisfaction given, some amends for the wrong done, and some means used to appease God. Therefore they had several ways and inventions how to wear off this sense of sin; sometimes by mock sacrifices, as many now would droll away conscience. So Alexander ab Alex. Thucydides. They offered painted sacrifices. The gods of the heathens were false gods, and therefore contented with an imaginary satisfaction. Sometimes real sacrifices, wherein they hoped to prevail by the pomp and cost of them, hundreds of beasts; sometimes by dolorous impressions on their own bodies, as Baal's priests gashed themselves. The devil delighteth in the torture and destruction of the creature; he ruleth by fears, and all the dark superstitions in the world are supported by a spirit of bondage, and this fear of provoked justice. Sometimes offer their children in sacrifice, or chose out some men who should die for the rest. Cæsar telleth us of the old Gauls, *Quod pro vita hominis nisi vita hominis redatur, non posse Deorum immortalium numen placari arbitrantur.*

(2.) The other reason is, because there was no law of commerce established between them and that which they conceived to be God; no certain promise to build upon. The gentiles are described to be, Eph. ii. 12, 'Strangers to the covenants of promise.' Something they knew of vice and virtue, but nothing of sin and righteousness in order to a covenant. We have a covenant, wherein remission of sins and salvation by Christ is put into a stated course. The covenant is the church's charter, whereby she holdeth these privileges. (3.) They had no advocate to plead for them, as we have, who is to make our peace with God in case of breaches, 1 John ii. 1, 2. Indeed, they had a conceit of a sort of middle powers. They had their mediators, 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6, *Λεγόμενοι θεοὶ, λεγόμενοι κύριοι*; but no true mediator to go between God and them. As they had their celestial and supreme deities called by this title among the heathens, so inferior deities, a second order, agents between the gods and men. But all this is a fabulous supposition, no way satisfying the heart of a reasonable creature.

[5.] In the christian religion all things are provided for which are necessary to establish a regular hope of pardon.

(1.) There is full satisfaction given to divine justice, and the foundation laid for pardon in the death of Christ, Eph. i. 7. If God will pardon sins, there must be some course taken to keep up the honour of his justice and the authority of his law, or else the government of the world could not be kept up. God is not to be considered as the wronged party only, as a private man may forgive the wrong done to him, but as the judge and governor of the world. Sin is a disobedience to his law. He that hath offended God as a lawgiver shall be punished by him as a judge, unless some course be taken. God must be known to be a righteous God still, Rom. iii. 25; leave some brand upon sin, Rom. viii. 3; check those thoughts of impurity which indulgence to carnality breedeth in the hearts of men, Deut. xxix. 19, that God's law and government may not be brought into contempt, and sinners take liberty to sin without fear. Now, to all these ends Christ came, to purchase forgiveness for us by his own blood.

(2.) We have privileges offered to us by a sure covenant in Christ's name, Luke xxiv. 47, and Acts v. 31. The gospel is an indenture drawn between God and us, wherein is required repentance, and promised forgiveness of sins; or, if you will, a testament, wherein precious legacies are left to us by our dying Lord; and pardon of sins is the first. This sealed and solemnly conveyed to us in the Lord's supper, Luke xxii. 20; the new testament, that is, *Σημείον καὶ σφράγις*, Mat. xxvi. 28, 'My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins.'

(3.) It is dispensed upon rational terms, such as faith and repentance. (1.) Faith: Acts x. 43, 'To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.' It is fit that those who would have benefit by Christ should acknowledge their Redeemer, and thankfully accept of the benefit procured by him and offered in his name, and heartily consent to his conduct and government, that he may bring them home to God again, and put them into a capacity of pleasing and enjoying him.



Faith is our thankful owning of our Redeemer unto the ends for which God hath appointed him. (2.) Repentance is required: Acts iii. 19, 'Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.' It was agreeable to the honour and wisdom of God that those who would be reconciled to him should be sensible of this weighty debt which is upon them, and heartily confess their sins, and with brokenness of heart sue out their pardon, 1 John i. 9; for it was not meet that sin should be pardoned till the creature doth relent, nor for the honour of God's majesty that we should take pardon otherwise than upon our knees: Jer. iii. 13, 'Only acknowledge thine iniquity.' Our case is not compassionate till we are sensible of our wrongs, and willing to return to our duty. An absolute pardon, without any stooping on the creature's part, would open a flood-gate to all profaneness and indulgence to our lusts. Thus there is a condescency to God's nature in the terms required.

(4.) In the manner of dispensing forgiveness. God doth it in a free, full, and universal remission of our sins. It is a free pardon: Isa. xliii. 25, 'I, even I, am he that forgiveth your iniquities for my name's sake, and will remember your sins no more.' It is not given without our desiring, yet without our deserving. God doth it for his name's sake, pitying our misery, and for the glory of his own mercy, Isa. lii. 3. As the sale was without any gain and benefit to us, so the redemption and recovery without any cost to us. It cost Christ dear, but to us it cometh freely. It is a full pardon; for God pardoneth not by halves, and so as to reverse it again, but fully: Micah vii. 19, 'Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.' The persons accepted to grace and favour are made capable of salvation, Rom. v. 10. So universally: Mat. xii. 3, 'All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.' No reservation of any one sin but that sin for which men will not ask pardon. Our sins are infinite, many of them in every pardoned sinner, Ps. xix. 12; Ps. xl. 12, 'They are more than the hairs of my head;' and those not ordinary infirmities, but sometimes heinous transgressions; yet free grace pardoneth all, not only in one, but in all believers; and doth remain as full and overflowing in God to pardon self-condemned sinners as ever.

*Application.* 1. Information. To show us the excellency of the christian religion above other religions in the world, because it discovereth pardon of sins upon such terms as may be most commodious for the honour of God and satisfactory to our souls. The heathens were mightily perplexed about the terms how God might dispense it with honour, and man receive it with comfort. That man is God's creature, and therefore his subject; that he hath exceedingly failed and faltered in his duty and subjection to him, that therefore he is obnoxious to God's just wrath and vengeance, were truths evident by the light of nature and common experience. Therefore they had their terrors and convictions, and that God needed to be atoned and propitiated by some sacrifice of expiation; and the nearer they lived to the original of this institution, the more clear and pressing hath been the conceit hereof; and the more remotely, the more have these notions degenerated and been gradually depraved. But in all their cruel and

dark superstitions there is no rest for souls. They knew not the true God, nor the proper ransom, nor had any sure way of covenant to convey pardon to them, but were still left to this puzzle and distraction of thoughts, that they could not make God just without some diminution of his mercy, nor apprehend God merciful, without making him unjust. Somewhat they conceived of the goodness of God, but they could not apprehend him reconciled to the sinner without debasing his holiness, and not such an enemy to the sin: 'Thou thoughtest I was altogether such an one as thyself;' and therefore had not such notions of the remission of sin as would breed repentance and true holiness, or work in them any true change of heart and life. Their pardon of sin was but a probability, their rites to procure it slight and ridiculous, or else barbarous and unnatural, giving their 'first-born for the sin of their souls;' and the effects of this apprehended expiation were too weak and ineffectual to reduce them to God. The Jews had many sacrifices of God's own institution, but such as 'did not make the comers thereunto perfect as appertaining to the conscience,' Heb. ix. 9. The great price and ransom that was given to provoked justice was known to few. They saw much of the patience of God, but little of his forgiveness. Their ordinances were rather a bond acknowledging the debt than an acquittance revealing the discharge; therefore called 'The handwriting of ordinances against us,' Col. ii. 14, and Rom. iii. 24, 25. And therefore the redemption of souls is spoken of as a great mystery, which then was but sparingly revealed: Ps. xlix. 4, 5, 'My mouth shall speak of wisdom;' and again, 'I will utter my dark saying.' What was that wisdom, that dark saying? See ver. 7, 8, 'None can give God a ransom for his brother; the redemption of the soul is precious.' Eternal redemption by the Messiah was a dark thing in those days. No mere man is able to rescue a sinner from the power of death, to which he is sentenced by the law of God. So again, in more early days, in Job's time, it was 'an interpreter, one of a thousand,' that brought this message to the distressed sinner, that 'God had found a ransom,' Job xxxiii. 23, 24. They were persons rarely found that were employed in that work, or had a discovery of the mind of God about it. So that you see what an hidden thing this atonement, that lieth at the bottom of pardon of sins, was in those days: they knew little of this great transaction. Oh! what cause have we then to bless God for a more clear and open discovery of this blessed truth!

*Use 2.* To put us upon self-reflection. Do we entertain this offered pardon as such a singular thing deserves? Sure if there be none like God in pardoning, we should not be affected with it as some ordinary thing. Here, therefore, I shall inquire what impression it should leave upon us.

1. The sense of God's glorious grace in pardoning should work in us a great love to God, and commend and endear him to our hearts, or else we do not entertain it with that singular affection which so great a benefit and so glorious a project of his love deserveth, but lightly pass it over as a common thing, or a piece of stale news: Rom. v. 8, 'God commendeth his love to us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly;' Luke vii. 47, 'Her many sins

are forgiven to her, therefore she loved much.' Certainly the self-condemning sinner will be deeply affected with this grace, and the saints are always admiring, Eph. iii. 18, 19. Did you ever feel in your hearts what a glorious work of mercy he hath wrought in our redemption? Are your souls more engaged to him? Have you any of the saint's admiration of the height, length, breadth, and depth of this love and grace?

2. Where it is rightly entertained it breedeth admiring thoughts. Everything about God is marvellous, but especially his mercy: 'He hath called us into his marvellous light,' 1 Peter ii. 9. We never have any true apprehension of God in any of his attributes till he filleth us with wonder: 1 Sam. ii. 2, 'Is any holy as the Lord?' Deut. xxxii. 31, 'There is no rock like our rock;' Ps. lxxxvi. 8, 'Among the gods there is none like thee, O Lord; neither are any works like thy works.' Now, since the chief glory of God consists in his grace, and one special act is the remission of sins, therefore we do not rightly entertain this discovery of God unless we are raised into some admiration of his grace. This was God's end: Eph. i. 6, 'That we might be to the praise of the glory of his grace.'

3. Such as breedeth a reverence of God: Ps. cxxx. 4, 'There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared;' and Hosea iii. 5, 'They shall fear the Lord and his goodness.' That sense of pardon which worketh no reverence, but rather a contempt and commonness of spirit in all our transactions with God, is justly to be suspected.

4. It confirmeth us in the true religion, Jer. vi. 16, Mat. xi. 28, 29. In a consultation the inquiry is, Where shall I have any rest of soul? Carnal comforts tickle the senses. False religions leave us in darkness and perplexity; and doubtful, uncertain, loose proposals of grace breed a vanishing delight, which is lost upon the increase of knowledge and a little serious consideration; but the grace of Christ truly propounded soon brings ease and peace. Now this is a confirmation: 1 John v. 10, 'He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself;' an argument in our own bosoms.

5. It taketh off the heart from other things, and bringeth us back from the flesh to God; for where this comfort maketh a due impression, the sensitive lure hath less force. No joy like joy in God and reconciliation with him by Christ, Rom. v. 11. Delight is not abrogated, but preferred; it is most chaste, rational and pure; an holy delight in a pardoning God.

6. It giveth us strength and encouragement to new obedience. Who would not serve a pardoning God, such a pardoning God? Titus ii. 11, 12, 'The grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly,' &c. Teacheth, not by way of instruction, but persuasion. If it doth not engage us to ready gospel obedience, our apprehensions are not right, 2 Cor. v. 14. As God is matchless and singular in his mercy, we should be singular in our obedience.

7. It melteth us into the forgiveness of others. God doth exceed man so far that it is a shame to retain our anger, Hosea xi. 8, and Isa. lvii. 8, 9. We must not measure God by our scantling. He

pardoneth; none like him. Man is revengeful, inexorable, but God is a God of pardons; his pardoning mercy is suitable to his greatness, and other excellences of his nature. Now, what impression doth this make upon us? Eph. iv. 32, 'Forgiving one another, as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.' We have been a thousand times more disingenuous to God, Mat. xviii. 26, 27. He that owed ten thousand talents, upon his entreaty the lord forgave him the debt; but he was inexorable to his fellow-servant that owed him but an hundred pence. The implacable, inexorable nature of man is one of the greatest degeneracies of human nature. To retain a sense of wrong, to watch opportunities of revenge, is to represent the image of the devil in its proper colours.

8. It teacheth us to entertain with reverence the grace tendered to us in the Lord's supper, that was designed and appointed for the representation and remembrance of Christ, and the solemn communication of the benefits thereof to the penitent believer. Now forgiveness of sins is one expressly mentioned, Mat. xxvi. 28, 'For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins.' Christ hath purchased for us the remission of sins, and we are to yield him that obedience which he requireth upon the account of having so dealt with us. Here Christ and his new testament gifts are solemnly delivered to us, the wondrous love of God manifested. Now, what becometh us more than admiring his pardoning mercy, and making God amiable to us, and to express our joy and thankfulness? Here we come to profess communion with a reconciled God, and to take a sealed pardon out of his hands.

*Use 3.* To press you to admire the grace of God in the pardon of sins. It will never be unless we look upon it—

1. As a necessary mercy. Three things make it necessary—law, conscience, judgment. By law we are condemned, though not executed: John iii. 18, 'He that believeth not is condemned already.' This sentence standeth in force till we repent and believe. And then conscience: Rom. ii. 15, 'Which show the works of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness.' So judgment: Acts x. 42, 43, 'He it is that was ordained by God to be judge of quick and dead; and to him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.' Now to them that have a sense of these things, that look shortly to appear before the bar of God, and are afraid of his displeasure, it will appear to be a necessary mercy.

2. It is a great mercy. If forgiveness of sin had been a small thing, it had not been purchased at so dear a rate: Eph i. 7, 'We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.'

3. It is a sure mercy. If we be qualified to receive it, God's truth and justice lies at pawn to make it good to us.

*Use 4.* Comfort to refresh the weary, and make glad the mournful soul. We are apt to say, None like us in sinning; but remember, none is like God in pardoning. Penitent believers should take comfort in this, notwithstanding their great sins before conversion, and slips and failings since, your consciences accuse you of so much unthank-

fulness to God ; yet, Rom. viii. 33, 34, ‘ Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect ? it is God that justifieth ; who is he that condemneth ? it is Christ that died,’ &c. When you are sensible of the great wrong done to God, remember Christ hath satisfied for it, and God is readily inclined to pardon you. There is no mercy for them that fear not justice ; no justice for them that fly to mercy. God hath erected a throne of grace for them that judge and condemn themselves, and will wonderfully discover the riches of his grace.

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## A SERMON ON JOHN XIII. 8.

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*If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.*—JOHN xiii. 8.

THESE words belong to the story of Christ's washing his disciples' feet. In which—

1. The preface is remarkable, ver. 3-5. Jesus, knowing sufficiently the dignity of his person, that he was the eternal Son of God, and was now about to return to God, to take possession of all power in heaven and in earth, after the manner of a waiter and servant of the meanest quality, in all humility, sets him to wash and wipe the feet of his own disciples. By the magnificence of the preface, a man would have thought that he had been about to work some great miracle or give some notable instance of his divine power; but here was no miracle, unless it were of humility and love. We keep state, and stand upon our terms, think it much below us to do an office of kindness and love to inferiors; but Christ, when he had the highest thoughts of his glory, would evidence the greatest humility, to take down our pride, and to assure us, by so pregnant a proof, that his exaltation should not hinder him from condescending to the necessities of his meanest people.

2. The next thing is the interruption made by Peter when Christ came to perform this office to him. (1.) He diverteth it by wonder and admiration: ver. 6, 'Lord, dost thou wash my feet?' that is, purpose to do it. His admiration of Christ's humility was good, but his declining and shunning to receive this office of love from him was a faulty modesty; as the saints usually run into extremity in their humiliations, while they so far debase themselves as to refuse their own mercies. We are unworthy, it is true, and we cannot have a sufficient sense of it; but God can and will do more for unworthy creatures than they can ask or think, or imagine it to be consistent with their duty to receive from him. Christ corrects his error by instruction, showing that the action of washing had a further meaning, as he should afterwards understand when he had received the Spirit, and should be called to discharge the office of an apostle in the church, ver. 7. (2.) Notwithstanding this warning, Peter persists in his error: 'Lord, thou shalt never wash my feet.' He would by no means let Christ wash his feet. What was modesty before is now some degree of obstinacy, as infirmi-

ties grow upon our hands when we indulge them. This second refusal is more peremptory, after Christ had declared the meaning of this washing. Surely he should have acquiesced in Christ's answer; for we must yield obedience to his will, though for the present we do not know the reason of it. But he was so far from acquiescing, that he proceeded to a wilful refusal; therefore Christ rebuketh him more severely, and with a threatening that would go to his very heart. And 'Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.'

In which words—

1. A sin supposed or taxed—*If I wash thee not.*

2. A sad threatening denounced to break his obstinacy—*Thou hast no part with me.*

1. The sin supposed—'If I wash thee not.' The question is whether it relateth to his non-submission to Christ's action of washing his feet, or to the spiritual washing and cleansing of the soul. *Ans.* To both, but chiefly to the last.

[1.] I do not exclude the former, because we ought to obey God, though the reason of what he doth and commandeth appeareth not. It was Peter's fault to prefer his own preconceived opinion before the wisdom of Christ; and disobedience to a positive command is no small sin, though the precept hath no other worth to commend itself to our consciences but the will and authority of the commander. The whole world was ruined by eating the forbidden fruit, or the transgression of a positive law.

[2.] Christ doth primarily and principally speak of the spiritual washing, of which the washing of their feet was but an emblem and figure.

(1.) It is usual with Christ to pass from corporeal things to spiritual benefits; as from the water of Jacob's well he discourseth of the well of life, or the gift of the Spirit, John iv. 13, 14; and from the growing of the corn to the gathering of fruit unto the eternal harvest, John iv. 35, 36; from their following him for the loaves to labouring for meat that perisheth not, John vi. 27; and afterward beginneth a notable discourse of the bread of life, or the true manna that came down from heaven; so from the drawing and pouring out of water at the feast of tabernacles of the flowing out of the Spirit, John vii. 38, 39; and many other places. (2.) He saith not, 'If I wash not thy feet,' but, 'If I wash thee not;' by the words declaring that it was not the refusal or contempt of that action which he principally spake of, and afterwards explaineth himself how far the choicest believers need to be washed, ver. 10. (3.) That washing of feet was not so necessary to salvation that a matter of such moment should depend upon the neglect of it, as exclusion from all benefit by Christ. (4.) The words are opposed to the preconceived opinion of Peter and the other disciples, who only looked to the external action: 'Ye are clean, but not all,' ver. 10.

2. The threatening on this supposition—'Thou hast no part with me.' Some make a distinction between the words, *in me*, and *with me*; as if the sense were, Though thou hast part in me, yet none with me, that is, in the supper which he was about to institute; but this is more argute than solid. The phrase implieth two things—(1.) No communion with him; (2.) No interest in him or his benefits.

[1.] No communion with him; as 2 Cor. vi. 15, 'What concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?' that is, there is no familiarity and friendship or communion in worship between them. Presently after this the sacrament of Christ's body and blood was instituted, to the participation of which this spiritual washing was necessary.

[2.] No interest in him; as Acts viii. 21, 'Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter.' Part and lot is right portion, or inheritance; so 'no part with me' is no interest in Christ or his benefits.

*Doct.* That without the washing of the soul from sin men can have no communion with God in Christ nor interest in him. I prove it—

1. With respect to the nature of God, who is represented to us as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

[1.] Our God is pure and holy: Hab. i. 13, 'Of purer eyes than to behold iniquity;' that is, with approbation and acceptance, yea, or so much as connivance, or to let it go unpunished. The sense of this is at the bottom of all that terror and astonishment that is in the heart of sinners, 1 Sam. vi. 20; and the disbelief of this is the ground of all their security, or pleasing themselves in their sins, Ps. l. 21. An unsanctified man can never have any quiet in his sins till he hath defaced the awe of God's holiness in his conscience, or entertained unworthy lessening thoughts of his purity and holiness. This is the cause of the deep humiliation of the saints, and that great self-abhorrence, and self-loathing which they express whenever they have to do with God. They cannot think of him, but they are ashamed of the remainder of corruption in their hearts: Isa. vi. 5, 'Woe is me! for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the Lord of hosts.' So Job xlii. 5, 6, 'I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself in dust and ashes.' Thus were the saints affected when God manifested himself to them in a way of grace. God is a most pure, holy being, and the fountain of all purity and holiness, in comparison of whom the purity of the highest creatures is but pollution: Job xv. 15, 16, 'Behold he putteth no trust in his saints, and the heavens themselves are not clean in his sight: how much more abominable and filthy is man, who drinketh in iniquity like water?' The good angels were never defiled with sin, yet, because of the mutability of their natures, God is said not to trust them, because they are creatures, and so changeable; and they are said, in a comparative sense, not to be clean in his sight. Oh! how much more should we confess ourselves to be vile and abhorred, who are actually defiled with sin, and are so mutable and fickle, and do so often show what dregs and dross remaineth in our hearts. But God, though he be so good and holy in himself, yet may dispense with the unholiness of others. No; his purity implieth an hatred and aversion from all that is not pure and holy: Ps. v. 5, 'The foolish shall not stand in thy sight; thou hatest the workers of iniquity;' for none can have communion with this holy God unless they be pure and holy also. God is good to such as are of a clean heart, Ps. lxxiii. 1; and Ps. xviii. 26, 'With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure, and with the upright thou wilt show thyself upright.' So that there is no fruition



of or communion with this holy God till we are in some measure cleansed and washed from sin.

[2.] Look we to God incarnate, the second person, our Mediator and Redeemer; he also is pure and holy: and, therefore, if conformity maketh way for communion, we must be pure as he is pure. Christ is pure, whether you consider his person or design of coming into the world. For his person: Heb. vii. 26, 'Such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.' This was he who was to bring us to God, and who was set up as a pattern of holiness in our nature. He was pure and holy in his conception and birth, life and death, never tainted or stained with the least sin; his human nature being more like God, and nearer to him than any creature possibly can be. He chose not here a life of monkish sequestration, but free conversation with men, yet never was defiled with their evil company, nor made partaker in their sins. And surely they are very unlike him who are not washed and cleansed from sin, whose hearts are filled and lives are spotted with envy, malice, lust, ambition, affectation of greatness and esteem in the world, and excessive use of carnal pleasures. A life so unlike Christ is to contradict and deny our profession, and to be called Christians to Christ's dishonour. Such a pure and holy head will not suit with a filthy ulcerous body. For this design Christ died, to cleanse, purify, and sanctify us: Eph. v. 26, 27, 'He loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water, through the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy, and without blemish.' The Lord Jesus, when he undertook the recovery of lapsed mankind, wanted not love to intend to us the greatest benefit, nor wisdom to choose it, nor merit or worth to purchase it. What was it then which he did intend, choose, purchase?

I answer—To sanctify and cleanse us. Herein he showed the fervency of his love, the wisdom of his choice, and the value of his purchase, and by all the necessity and excellency of holiness. He saw that our great misery was that we were polluted and unclean by sin, and so made loathsome to God. Therefore his love inclined him, not to loath us, but seek our good; so his wisdom pitched on this, as the most proper and necessary benefit for us. And because of the value of his sufferings, he despaired not to get us made clean, and accordingly pursueth that work till it cometh to its final perfection, and so at length taketh us home to himself, as fully pure and perfect, without any spot or remnant of sinful defilement. Now this being Christ's design, surely except he wash us we cannot participate of other benefits, we have no room in his family, no right to the privileges either of his table or kingdom.

[3.] If you look to God the Spirit, still the argument groweth upon our hands. The Spirit is to make up the match and union between us and the Redeemer, and to bring us to Christ, as Christ is to bring us to God. He that hath not the Spirit of Christ, is none of his Rom. viii. 9. Now the Spirit is an holy and sanctifying Spirit, the healing of our natures and sanctifying and cleansing our hearts, is his great work.

He is called the Comforter, but he is also called the Spirit of sanctification, 1 Peter i. 2, Rom. i. 4. He is both a sanctifier and a comforter; but first a sanctifier, then a comforter; yea, in this life more a sanctifier than a comforter; for his sanctifying work is more necessary, and carried on with less interruption than his comforting work. Nay, once more, he is therefore a comforter because a sanctifier; as appeareth by those metaphors whereby his comforting operation is expressed—'seal.' 'earnest;' so as the sealing of the Holy Spirit is nothing but the impress of the image of God upon our hearts, and the earnest of the Spirit is that conformity to God for the present, that assures of more to come, maketh us long and look for more communications of it. The dwelling of the sanctifying Spirit in our hearts is the earnest and pledge of our dwelling for ever with God, and beginneth that vision and fruition of him which is perfected in heaven.

2. In respect of our natural estate, in which we are altogether filthy and abominable by reason of sin. We are told, Ps. xiv. 3, 'The Lord looked from heaven;' and what did he see here below? 'They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy and abominable.' All persons, and all their actions flowing from their corrupt hearts, are vile and loathsome in God's sight; the Lord looked from heaven before and all was good, very good; there was no disorder in the creation, Gen. i. 31. Whence came the change? As we came out of God's hands we were all pure and clean, but when sin had once invaded our nature the case was altered; all became filthy and odious to God; so that there was an utter incapacity of enjoying communion with God or having an interest in him, which incapacity remaineth till we are sanctified by the Spirit. We have gentle constructions and moderate names and terms that we put upon sin to make it go down the better, or to satisfy ourselves in that polluted estate which the fall hath put us into. But if we look into the scripture we shall find sin and sinners compared to things which are most filthy and loathsome; as to the blood and pollution of a new-born child before it be washed, Ezek. xvi. 6; to the noisome steam and exhalation which breaketh out from an open sepulchre, Rom. iii. 13; to filthy dung and excrements, James i. 21; to the uncleanness of a removed woman, Ezek. xxxvi. 17; to a vessel in which is no pleasure, Hosea viii. 8, which is but a modest expression of that draught into which nature emptieth itself. These and many other expressions doth the scripture use to set forth the loathsomeness of sinners to God. Surely we need to be cleansed and washed, if we had eyes to see our natural face. The sins of others are hateful to us though we are tainted ourselves, but we are blinded with self-love. If we run into open sin we find there is a natural bashfulness or inconfidence, or shyness of appearing before God. Now, all this evinceth a necessity of being washed from sin if we would enjoy any commerce and communion with God in Christ; therefore the one is required in order to the other: James iv. 8, 'Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you'; and presently, 'Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts,' &c. Till that be done, God will not show us his grace and favour.

3. With respect to the new covenant, or our entering into the gospel state, the manner is set down, Heb. x. 22, 'Let us draw

near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.' All that would draw nigh to God by Christ must draw nigh with a true heart, and in full assurance of faith at first; and, before they can have other blessings from him, have their consciences sprinkled with Christ's blood, and their hearts and lives in some measure sanctified. Certainly it is our great duty and privilege to draw nigh to God by Christ; and it is the great drift and intent of the new covenant, as appeareth, Heb. vii. 19, 'For the law made nothing perfect; but the bringing in of a better hope did, by which we draw nigh to God.' Granted; but how must we draw nigh to God? Some things are required with respect to the covenant, and some things with respect to the covenanter. (1.) With respect to the covenant itself, which is made up of duties and privileges. We must draw nigh with a true heart, unfeignedly resolving to perform the duties required. All serious actions must be done with the heart, especially religious actions, wherein we have immediately to do with God, who will not be mocked with a vain show. Now, no business is so weighty as the pursuit of eternal happiness, or the great affairs of our precious and immortal souls; therefore these must be gone about with our heart, and with a true heart, unfeignedly resolving and purposing to do what God requireth of us, and all that he requireth of us. God, that dispenseth with defects, will not dispense with want of sincerity; therefore we must unfeignedly yield up ourselves to do his will, and to be complete therein, otherwise we come as Judas to Christ, to betray him with a kiss; or as Joab to Abner, embracing him to smite him under the fifth rib. Any one lust reserved in yielding up ourselves to God, sheweth that there is falseness at heart; the fleshly mind and interest is not thoroughly mortified; there is a carnal bias in it, which in time will make it revolt from God if it be let alone; neither can there be a thorough intention and habitual purpose to please God in all things, Heb. xiii. 18; Ps. lxvi. 18. (2.) In full assurance of faith. This hath the promises of salvation for its object, and implieth not only an assent to the truth of them, but a dependence upon God that they will be made good to us, we putting no bar and impediment in our own way; that is to say, we doing what to us belongeth, performing all the duties required whatever it costs us; for it is such a trust as taketh the things promised for our whole happiness, and the promises themselves for our whole security. It is enough to the self-denying christian that they have pardon and heaven to hope for, and God's word to bear them out; and they venture their all upon it, that whatever befall them they can comfortably rely upon God, and keep up the rejoicing of their hope: they dare not draw back whatever temptations they have to the contrary, Heb. iii. 6-14; Heb. x. 39. This was chosen as their sole comfort and blessedness, and to this they would adhere and stick to, and find joy and comfort enough in it, Ps. cxix. 111.

4. With respect to the person covenanting: That to qualify us for communion with God in Christ we must be washed from sin; we must have our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. These two graces explain how Christ

must wash us that we may have part with him. This washing is more plainly expressed, 1 Cor. vi. 11, 'Such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God;' where there is a general word *washing*, the kind or species of it, sanctification and justification; there is a relative and real change. But let us explain the text in hand.

[1.] Justification is expressed in that phrase, 'Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.' The part sprinkled is the conscience, which is the most quick, lively, and sensible power of man's soul; when other faculties are corrupted, this taketh God's part. And by an evil conscience is meant a conscience unquiet by reason of sin. Every man's conscience is witness and judge of that impurity and corruption which he is defiled with. Now, the heart is said to be sprinkled from this evil conscience with allusion to the sprinklings of blood under the law, and signifieth the sprinkling the blood of Jesus, which speaks better things than the blood of Abel, Heb. xii. 24; and is done when a poor sinner, being sensible of sin, maketh hearty application of the blood of Christ for remission and pardon with devoting himself to God. Well then, the person that would draw nigh to God with comfort, must be one that is sprinkled from an evil conscience; that is, in a penitent and broken-hearted manner, confesseth his sins with a purpose to forsake them, depending upon the merit of Christ's sacrifice and intercession for his reconciliation with God, 1 John i. 9; for while we lie under the guilt of sin, we cannot draw nigh to God with any comfort or hopes of acceptance. The blood of Christ is sprinkled, on God's part, by his Spirit through the ordinances, on our part by faith and repentance; and this sprinkling doth qualify us for lively and spiritual worship, or, which is all one, for communion with God through Christ. Witness the apostle's reasoning, Heb. ix. 13, 14. As the legally unclean were purified by the sprinkling of the blood of a red heifer, so the spiritually unclean by the blood of Christ, 'who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God.'

[2.] The other benefit is expressed by having their bodies washed with pure water. As the former alluded to the sprinklings of the law, this to the washings of the law; that to the sprinkling of blood, and this to the washing of water: 'Our body is cleansed,' not but that the heart is washed from sinful pollution as well as the body, no, but there must be salt cast into the spring. If the heart be washed from sin, it will show itself in the purity of the outward man. Now this washing implied sanctification, which is accomplished by the Spirit. See Titus iii. 5, 'He hath saved us by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.' This is promised to penitent believers: Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 'I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your filthiness.' Now, our bodies are said to be washed to show that if the Spirit hath renewed our hearts, our outward conversations should be blameless and holy. All outward actions are done by the body, and our bodies must be washed as with pure water. Well then, Christ doth justify and sanctify the penitent believer to qualify us for communion with God;

and the purging of Christ's blood is joined with the renewing of the Spirit. He that is justified must be sanctified, and his sanctification must be evidenced by an holy and blameless conversation. He that would dwell in God's holy hill must have a clean heart and pure hands, Ps. xxiv. 3, 4, or else he hath no part or right in the matter of the new covenant.

5. With respect to the seals or confirming signs of the new covenant, which are baptism and the Lord's supper. The analogy of the two sacraments sheweth the necessity of this washing, and they are both employed in Christ's speech. In the supposition, 'If I wash thee not,' is implied baptism, in the commination, 'Thou hast no part with me,' is implied the Lord's supper, which Christ was then about to institute. Clearly in baptism washing is implied; in the Lord's supper, the benefits of Christ's death are signed, sealed, and confirmed to us. In *foro ecclesiae*, none but baptized persons have right to the Lord's table; so in *foro caeli*, before God, none but those that have the fruit of baptism have right to the benefits thereof; no right to the benefits purchased by his blood till we have the spirit of sanctification. More distinctly—(1.) Baptism is the sign and seal of spiritual washing by regeneration; it assureth us of the purifying virtue of the Lord's grace, and bindeth us to seek after it. If we do our part, God will on his part give grace, whereby our hearts may be purified and cleansed. By the visible act we profess the acceptance of the gospel covenant to both ends, and it is but a nullity and empty formality if sin be not washed away. That baptism signifieth the washing away of sin is clear by the scriptures: Titus iii. 5, *λουτρόν παλυγενεσίας*. Water, by its mixing quality, doth purge and cleanse: Acts xxii. 16, 'Arise and be baptized, for the washing away of thy sins.' It is the rite used by us when first dedicated to God. Now the external application is nothing without the internal effect or renewing of the Holy Ghost. Baptism saveth, 'not the putting away the filthiness of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God,' &c., 1 Peter iii. 21. Careless christians forget their baptismal covenant; some renounce it, but most forget it, 2 Peter i. 9. The water is sprinkled on their bodies, but the Spirit is not poured out upon their souls. Christ would revive this signification before he would admit his disciples to his table—(1.) For the efficacy of baptism is the true preparation required to the Lord's supper; (2.) The Lord's supper, as it supposeth baptism or washing from sin, so it promoteth it. We remember Christ's blood, which is the foundation of all the grace communicated to us, 1 John i. 7, and bind ourselves anew to purge out sin, that we may keep an holy feast to God, 1 Cor. 5-8, and that we may partake more of the sanctifying Spirit, and be encouraged to pursue after holiness in confidence of his blessing; for it is but a renewing of the covenant that we made in baptism; not another, but the same covenant, Mat. xxii. 20.

6. With respect to the types of the law. Drawing nigh to God, and having communion with God, was the privilege of priests under the law; for when the people were kept at a distance, the priests had leave to draw near, and to be conversant about his holy things. Now under the gospel we are all made priests to God, 1 Peter ii. 5; yea, we have the privilege of the high priest to enter into the holiest, Heb. x. 19:

he but once a year, but we at all times, Heb. iv. 16. Here I would observe three things—(1.) Their consecration to their office. No priest could officiate and draw near to God till he was consecrated by certain rites, which consisted either in oblations or offerings, and ablutions or washings. For full communion with God our whole life is our consecration; but for such communion as we are capable of now, our first dedication sufficeth, when sanctified by the Spirit. There is our ministration before the throne of glory in heaven, when justification and sanctification are complete; before the throne of grace, when first accepted, renewed, or washed in the laver of regeneration, Rev. i. 6. (2.) In the exercise of their office. The priests went to the laver first before they went to the altar. The high priest was not to enter into the holiest but after many washings and purifications, Lev. xvi. 4; after a five-fold sprinkling, washing his body: Exod. xxx. 20, 'They shall wash with water, that they die not, when they come near to the altar to minister.' So must we be washed. (3.) In the privileges of their office and function. They had a portion for their own table; but if they eat it in their uncleanness they were to die. He must not eat the bread of God in his uncleanness, Lev. xxii. 30; Lev. vii. 20, 21, and other places. They were in danger of cutting off by the hand of God, and so for any of the offerings, which otherwise were their allowance.

*Use 1.* Information—That we have all need to be washed if we expect benefit by Christ. There is a double necessity of this washing—

[1.] Because of our natural pollution; for we are all sinners, and sin is of a defiling nature, making the person unclean and loathsome to God wherever it is. (1.) That we are all sinners by nature the scripture everywhere witnesseth: Job xv. 14, 'What is man that he should be clean? and he that is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?' that is, man by nature is neither clean nor righteous, destitute of purity by nature, and uprightness of conversation. They are ill acquainted with man who think otherwise; for if you consider the universality of sinning, his earliness in sinning, his easiness in sinning, his constancy in sinning, you may soon see what his nature is; and the fountain being so corrupt, the streams and emanations from it must needs be defiled also. Now (2.) that we are therefore odious and loathsome to God, scriptures witness also: Prov. xiii. 5, 'A wicked man is loathsome.' To whom? To God chiefly, being a stench in the nostrils of his holiness. To good men, Prov. xxix. 27. There is *odium offensionis et odium inimicitiae*; the first is opposite to the love of complacency; the second, to the love of benevolence. To indifferent men; for they that allow sin in themselves dislike it in others, Titus iii. 3. To themselves; for they are unwilling to look into themselves, John iii. 20. Therefore certainly if they would become Christ's people, have communion with him, and interest in him, they must be purified.

[2.] Because of daily infirmities: John xiii. 10, 'He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.' Though we be not wholly unclean, yet we contract new filth by walking up and down in a dirty and defiling world, so that a man that needeth not to wash his whole body, needeth still to wash his feet. Every spot or every sin that we commit doth not alter our estate; yet we should be still purging out the relics of sin. Though we do not wallow like swine in

the mire, yet we contract much soil. Daily failings must not be swallowed without remorse and a new exercise of daily repentance. If a man were unclean under the law, he was to wash his clothes before even. Every night look to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. God's reckoning with Adam would not let him sleep in his sins. Especially before solemn duties we must humble and cleanse ourselves for these sins, and seek strength against them; especially when we would get our interest in Christ more confirmed, our communion with him more free. Though we have actually renounced profaneness, yet we must bewail failings.

2. That soul-washing is Christ's work, and communicated to us in his own way, for it is said here, 'If I wash thee not.' Certain it is that none can change or cleanse his own heart: Job xiv. 4, 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one.' That which is wholly corrupt cannot cleanse itself. Our pollution is so universal, that there is nothing left untainted, no sound part to mend the rest. And it is not a slight tincture, but a deep dye, like the leopard's spots or the Ethiopian's skin. The word cannot do it without Christ. Good instructions may show a man his duty, but cannot change his heart. Christ needed not only to be sent as a prophet, but must sanctify himself as a priest and sacrifice, before this benefit could be procured for us. Therefore it is said, John vii. 17, 18, 'As thou hast sent me into the world, even so also have I sent them into the world; and for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth.' It was impossible to recover holiness into the world, unless a price, and no less price was paid than the blood of the Son of God. Therefore it is said, 'He hath washed us in his blood,' Rev. i. 5. This is the fountain opened for the washing of our guilty and sinful souls, Zech. xiii. 1. Well, then, soul-washing is Christ's work, and communicated to us in his own way; that is to say, would we be cleansed from sin, we must beg it of God, for it is a divine operation. 'Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.' But whatever God doth he doth by Christ. He would not look towards us but for Christ's sake. Come we to Christ then, for it is his blood cleanseth us from all sin; he purchased this grace into his own hands; but what Christ doth he doth by his Spirit: 'For the renewing of the Holy Ghost is shed on us abundantly through Christ Jesus our Lord,' Titus iii. 6. Go we to the Spirit then, waiting for his work; but what he doth he doth it by the ordinances, the word, and sacraments; for which end also Christ died: Eph. v. 26, 'Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water through the word.' But what must they do in the ordinances? Will their bare presence work? or can we expect this benefit by an idle and slothful attendance? No; we must diligently use the means, obey the Spirit's sanctifying motions, act the grace received: 1 Peter i. 22, 'Seeing ye have purified your hearts in obeying the truth, through the Spirit.' It was Naaman's error that he would be cleansed from his leprosy and sit still; but the prophet bids him go and wash: he must wash himself if he would be made whole. So, if we lie upon the bed of ease, and say, Christ must do all, we miss the benefit. In cleansing the leper, besides the sprinklings of the priest, he must wash himself,

Lev. xiv. 6. We must make conscience of using the means diligently, and the rather as being encouraged by Christ's purchase or the merit of his death.

3. It informeth us that they handle the gospel amiss, and do not take a right way to be partakers of the fruits and benefits of Christ's death, that do not seek to be washed from sin by him. It is in vain to seek comfort without holiness. These do not consider the ends of Christ's undertaking. He was manifested to take away our sins, 1 John iii. 5; and he came to dissolve the works of the devil, 1 John iii. 8; to give his Spirit to sinful miserable man, to sanctify and cleanse him. Surely it is a mistaken Christ that we close with when we use him to increase our carnal security and boldness in sinning; as many are possessed with an ill thought that God, since the exhibition of Christ, is more reconcilable to sin than he was before, and by reason of Christ's coming there were less vanity and malignity in sin. Oh! let this conceit be far from you, lest you make Christ a minister or encourager of sin, Gal. ii. 17. This is to set up Christ against Christ, his merit against his doctrine and Spirit; or rather, you set up the devil against Christ, and varnish his cause with Christ's name, and so it is but an idol Christ that you dote upon. The true Christ came first to wash us, and then to comfort us; therefore take heed of setting his death against the ends of his death, and running from and rebelling against God because Christ came to redeem you and recover you to God. To seek Christ only for comfort argueth mere self-love; but those that seek holiness from the Redeemer have a more spiritual affection to him. The guilt of sin is against our interest, but the power of sin is against God's glory. The great aim of his death was 'To redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works,' Titus ii. 14. Not only to free our consciences from the bondage of fears, but our hearts from the bondage of sin, that we may serve God with more liberty and delight.

*Use 2. Direction.* In the Lord's supper, where we come to renew our interest in Christ and his benefits, we must look to this first, Are we washed? Have we made conscience of our baptismal vow? It is a lie to the Holy Ghost when we make use of his covenanting signs without a real minding the duties of the covenant; this is to tear the bond and prize the seals. Alas! if you be not washed, you come to lay claim to the benefits you have no title unto; and if you think you have a title, it is only the fruit of your ignorance, mistaking a conditional offer for an actual absolute grant. Well, then, are your hearts true to God in the covenant which you are to renew and feel?

But who can say, my heart is clean? Prov. xx. 9. I answer—Perfection or absolute purity, we cannot expect; for the work is but a-doing; but sincerity we must require, and that may be discerned by four things—

1. If there be no sin but what you are willing to know, and therefore prize the light that discovereth it: John iii. 20, 21, 'Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd; but he that doeth good cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.' *Iniqua lex est, quæ te examinare non patitur.*



2. If there be no sin that you know, but you truly and heartily desire to leave and get rid of it, though to your carnal part it be never so near and dear, and count it the greatest happiness in the world to master it; though the heart be more inclined to one sin than another, yet you mainly set yourselves against it: Ps. xviii. 23, 'I was also upright before him, and kept myself from my iniquity.'

3. If you are not only content to subdue it, but resolve seriously to make use of the means God hath made known to you to purge out sin: Isa. i. 16, 'Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings;' Jer. ix. 14, 'O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved.' Many are content God should search them, but will not stir hand or foot, nor do anything to their own cure; they do not act like creatures in misery, &c.

4. Do you make conscience of your covenant vow and engagement to forsake all impurity so far as that your inward and beloved lusts are weakened, though you cannot wholly get rid of them? I put this last question to you, partly because our sincerity is not only to be determined *quoad conatum*, as to the endeavour, but *quoad eventum*, as to the success, Gal. v. 24. The back bias of corruption is weakened, and we must get a greater readiness, and be the fitter to serve Christ in purity and sincerity: 2 Tim. ii. 21, 'If a man purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel of honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared for every good work.' There must be something in a christian above natural men. In some measure he must be ready and fitted for the service of Christ, and perform acts of obedience, not by constraint, but with delight and cheerfulness; which cannot be till the heart be cleansed from accustomed sins. Partly because the main intent of the covenant is to cleanse us from sin. Consider it either on God's part or man's. On God's part, there are promises to allure or attract us to all manner of purity, as promises of being received by Christ as children into his family. These oblige us to purify ourselves from sins of all kinds, 2 Cor. vii. 1. And promises that offer help to enable us to vanquish the inclinations of the sensual and carnal life, which promises if they be received by faith, do make a wonderful change in sinners, 2 Peter i. 4. Now, we sincerely accepting this covenant, it cannot be imagined but some effect must be produced, if we on our part do not put a bar. We are under a vow and obligation to die unto sin, Rom. vi. 11, which a sincere christian doth make conscience of. He is a debtor, Rom. viii. 12, 13, and therefore doth not forget his vow, but is mortifying and weakening the power of sin every day, and therefore giveth over all care of satisfying or gratifying the flesh, but all his business is to live a pure and holy life, to the praise and glory of God. Therefore, having by God's promises greater strength, by his own vow stricter obligations, he cometh in some measure to overcome sin. Thus I have given you the lowest marks of sincerity in this point. Will you now try yourselves? Are you thus far washed from sin?

But here a question ariseth, Are we bound to have assurance of our sincerity before we come to the Lord's table? I answer—

1. We are bound to be sincere, and to examine whether we be sincere; and so the decision is, we may come without assurance, but

we cannot regularly come without examination. I shall prove both parts.

[1.] That we may come without assurance; for though sincerity be absolutely necessary to the acceptance of the new covenant, yet being and seeing are distinct. A man may be sincere, and have a right to the blessings of the covenant and yet see it not, or not discern his right and title. That dependeth on the clearness of our sanctification, and the evidence of the Spirit witnessing the truth thereof, which is not vouchsafed ordinarily, but to eminent self-denying christians; and therefore, if none but those who have evidence of their sincerity should come to the Lord's table, a great part of those that profess his name should be cut off from an use of this holy means, because they have not the fruits of serious diligence, 2 Peter i. 10, and self-denying obedience, 1 John iii. 19, and so would lose not only the sense of their interest in spiritual privileges, but God's help to obedience; for sacraments are not only means to confirm our faith in God's promises, but to engage us to purity and holiness; and the absurdity of cutting off so many christians from this help and means is obvious.

[2.] We ought not to come without examination, because we have the express injunction of scripture, 1 Cor. xi. 28. And the reason of the thing enforceth it, that you may find out what inward corruptions and sinful inclinations are yet strongest in you, and hear what God and conscience have to say to you as to the fulfilling of your former covenants, or what you have yet to complain of as your greatest burden, what grace you most need to remove the impediment; for on God's part all things are ready.

2. If we cannot approve ourselves as sincere upon examination, we must the more seriously renew our faith and repentance by these acts.

[1.] You must dedicate yourselves anew by renouncing sin with an utter detestation, or renewing your purposes to forsake all sin, never to meddle with it any more: Isa. xxx. 22, 'Thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth, and say unto them, Get you hence.' The phrase implieth hatred and abhorrence of sin; So, get you gone; I have nothing to do with you, Hosea xiv. 8; and so Job xxxiv. 33. Never purpose to commit any sin; yea, purpose to oppose all sin; and these purposes often renewed, lest you grow remiss in them.

2. Bewailing our failings; when God hath opened a fountain for uncleanness, that we are not clean unto this very day, Isa. lxiv. 6, 'We are all as an unclean thing, all our righteousnesses as filthy rags,' for which we are justly loathsome to God.

3. Hunger and thirst for this grace, Mat. v. 6, in confidence and hope, through Jesus Christ, to have the work brought to greater perfection: Col. i. 21, 22, 'And you, that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprieveable in his sight;' and Eph. v. 26, 27, 'That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.'

## A SERMON PREACHED BEFORE THE SONS OF THE CLERGY.

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*The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee.*—Ps. cii. 28.

THE context speaketh of God's unchangeableness. The world changeth, and we change, but God changeth not; in the midst of all confusions he is where he was at first. Now this is a great comfort to God's people, both as to their persons and to their posterity. For their personal happiness, whatever breaches are made upon them, they cannot perish utterly that have an interest in an unchangeable God. When engaged in a good cause, they may die, and fall in the quarrel; but God liveth for ever, and so their service will not be lost. His promises are mostly made good in the other world; therefore a poor mortal creature may find and enjoy happiness enough in a living God. Thus as to their persons. Now to their posterity: it is a comfort that when we go to the grave we have a God with whom to leave our children when we can provide for them no longer; he hath undertaken to look after them, and bring them up. This is the other part of the comfort—*The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee.*

In which words observe—(1.) The persons; (2.) And then their privilege.

1. The persons—*The children of thy servants.*

2. Their privilege is set forth in two words—*They shall continue; they shall be established.*

And the ground or duration is specified in that word—*Before thee.* Let us open these circumstances, that we may see what aspect they have upon the present occasion.

*First*, The persons, 'The children of thy servants.' There two things will be explained—(1.) Who are the servants of God here spoken of; (2.) In what sense *children* is taken—

1. Who are the servants of God here spoken of? Men may be said to be the servants of God—

[1.] In a general sense; and so all that worship, fear, and obey him are his servants.

[2.] In a limited and more restrained sense; and so those that wait

upon him in the office of the ministry are said to be his servants: 2 Tim. ii. 24, 'The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle to all men, apt to teach;' and Ps. cxxxiv. 1, 'Bless the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord, which by night stand in the house of the Lord.' It is meant of the priests which watched by turns in the temple; and the prophets: Amos iii. 7, 'Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secrets unto his servants the prophets.' The one sort are as retainers, that wear his badge and livery; the other, as his domestics and menial servants, that have a nearer and constant attendance upon him. Now I cannot but say that the privilege here spoken of belongeth to all God's servants, but in an especial manner to his special servants; all are rewarded by God according to the degree of their service. Nebuchadnezzar, that was but a servant at large, a bare instrument of his providence, had his wages; but there is a special blessing descendeth upon the family of ministers, as their service is more eminent, and nearer about his person. In the whole course of their employment they are devoted to him. Their labour is great, so are their sufferings; they are called out upon the stage as the public factors for his kingdom, and so exposed to more hardships and losses; therefore God will make it up to their posterity. Often they are contemned, have no portion among their brethren; therefore God will be their portion. Certainly, though they be not principally intended, they cannot be excluded and shut out from this blessing.

2. In what sense is *children* taken? Either the children of their flesh or of their faith. Some say the children of the same faith with the godly teachers and servants of the Lord, begotten by them to God, as noting the perpetuity of the church, who shall in every age bring forth children to God. It is the comfort of God's people to see a young brood growing up to continue his remembrance in the world, that when they die, religion shall not die with them, nor the succession of the church be interrupted. This sense is not altogether incongruous; but rather, I think, the children of their body are here intended, it being a blessing often promised. See the next psalm, Ps. ciii. 17, 'The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, and his righteousness to children's children.'

*Secondly*, The privilege, 'Shall be continued; shall be established;' in what sense is it spoken? Some think only *pro more fœderis*, according to the fashion of that covenant which the people of God were then under, when eternity was but more darkly revealed and shadowed out, either by long life, or the continuance of their name in their posterity, which was a kind of literal immortality. Clearly such a kind of regard is had, as appeareth by that which you find in Ps. xxxvii. 28, 'The Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever.' How? since they die as others do. Mark the antithesis, and that will explain it: 'They are preserved for ever; but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.' They are preserved in their posterity. Children are but the parents multiplied and the parent continued. It is *nodosa aternitas*; when the father's life is run out to the last, there is a knot tied, and the line is still continued by the child. I confess, temporal blessings, such as long life, and the promise of a happy posterity, are more visible in the eye of that dis-

compensation of the covenant; but yet God still taketh care for the children of his people, and many promises run that way that belong to the gospel administration, and still God's service is the surest way to establish a family, as sin is the ready way to root it out. And if it doth not always fall out accordingly, yet for the most part it doth; and we are no competent judges of God's dispensations in this kind, because we see providence by pieces, and have not the skill to set them together; but at the day of judgment, when the whole contexture of God's dealings is laid before us, we shall clearly understand how the children of his servants continue, and their seed is established. But of this by and by.

There is but one clause more that needeth explaining, and that is, 'Before thee.' Some understand it of the duration of the blessing; that is, so long as thou dost endure; as before the sun and moon is rendered, 'as long as the sun and moon endure,' Ps. lxxii. 5. And the Septuagint renders it, *εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα κατευθυνθήσεται*, 'Shall be continued for ever,' or, 'Before thee;' God looking on, or they looking upon thee. But rather it noteth God's respect and favour. These blessings do not come by chance: Ps. xli. 12, 'Thou upholdest me in mine integrity, and settest me before thy face for ever.' In a like case, Lev. xxvi. 9, 'I will have respect to you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you; it is I will set my face to you;' *ἐπιβλέψω ἐφ' ὑμᾶς*; And the Chaldee paraphrase, 'Am I in the place of God?' Gen. xxx. 2. *A facie Domini debuisses petere?*—Oughtest thou not to seek them from the face of God?

The words are explained. The point is—That God hath a great care of and blessing for the posterity of his servants, that they may be established by his favour.

Here I shall show you—(1.) What privilege they have; (2.) The reasons; (3.) Reconcile it with common sense and experience; (4.) To whom the promise is most eminently fulfilled.

First, How far a blessing cometh on the posterity of God's servants.

1. Good men do convey many temporal mercies to their relations; that is the least. God cannot satisfy himself with doing good to the persons of his children, but he must do good to their relations; all about them fare the better for their sakes. A land fareth the better for them: 2 Kings ii. 12, 'My father, my father, the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof;' that is, the defence of the country; much more the vicinage and place of their abode. Sodom was in Lot when Lot was in Sodom: Gen. xix. 22, 'I cannot do anything while thou art there.' Nearer yet; they bring a blessing into their families. You know the offer made to Lot, Gen. xix. 12, 'Hast thou any here besides son-in-law, and thy sons, and thy daughters? Whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place.' There was a fearful storm a-coming, and God would have none that had relation to Lot to perish by it. These sons-in-law were but so by contract and promise of marriage, for Lot's daughters were virgins, and knew not a man, yet God offereth them quarter for Lot's sake. Nearer yet; their own children, that are a part of themselves, do certainly enjoy many temporal blessings by their means. Ishmael, though the church was not continued in his line, yet a great part of the world fell to his share: Gen. xxi.

13, 'I will make of him a great nation, for he is thy seed.' There is the blessing of Isaac and the blessing of Ishmael; if they have not the blessing of Isaac, yet usually the blessing of Ishmael, Isa. lxxv. from ver. 19 to the last.

2. Where the parent is in visible covenant, the children also are in visible covenant with him as soon as born. I say, they are without scruple to be accounted children of the covenant, and belonging to the church, till they do declare the contrary. Let us see a few places to prove this: Rom. xi. 16, 'For if the first-fruit be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches.' It is an allusion to the law, where the lump was consecrated in the first-fruits, or the cake of the first dough that was offered in the heave-offering. So when a man is dedicated to God, his whole family and posterity is dedicated to God with him. There is a federal holiness descendeth to them by virtue of their parents accepting the covenant of God. So in the decision of that case that was brought to the apostle, where one of the yoke-fellows was an infidel: 1 Cor. vii. 14, 'For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean, but now are they holy.' The scope of that place is to hold forth some privilege to believers, which is not common to others; for it is for the believer's sake; for otherwise the unbelieving husband had been as much sanctified in himself as in the wife. Certainly, therefore, it is some special privilege not common to the marriage of an unbelieving couple. Mark again; this is propounded both negatively and positively. The Holy Ghost doth not mention both, when one is emphatical enough: 'Else were they unclean, but now are they holy.' Pray observe the gradation of the privilege; the unbelieving husband, to whom all things are impure, he is sanctified to serve God's providence to this holy end and use. But higher yet; the children, they are holy; he is sanctified, they holy; that is, instrumentally sanctified, to be a means that the believing wife may bring forth fruit unto God. But now they are holy; and because holy, not to be refused and rejected from the ordinances. Persons were called unclean that might not enjoy the privileges of the temple; holy, that were sanctified for worship. When God permitted ordinances to the gentiles, they are called holy: 'That which God hath made holy, call not thou common and unclean,' Acts x. 15, intending thereby the gentiles as capable of gospel worship. One place more: Ezek. xvi. 10, 'Sons and daughters born to me.' Those that are born during our being in covenant with God are born to God; as the children born in marriage are reckoned to the husband. This is the high privilege which God puts upon his servants, to beget sons and daughters to God, whilst others beget sons and daughters to men for civil uses, or only to people the world. Take, for instance, Seth and Cain, Gen. vi. 1, 2. To bring forth to God, to multiply the church; it will be your crown and rejoicing in the day of the Lord. It is a greater blessing than to see your children monarchs of the world, or if they had been born kings and queens; that had been beneath this of being members of the church. It is very notable that Moses, when he would set forth the dignity of Shem, he doth it thus: Gen. x. 21, 'Shem, the father of all the children of Eber, the brother of Japheth. the elder, which is

of the Hebrews.' This is his prerogative above all his brethren. The Syrians, Assyrians, Lydians, Persians, Armenians, Elamites, these all came of Shem; but because they were ignorant of the knowledge of the true God, he doth not take his title from them, though they were great and mighty nations; this was his prerogative, that Abraham came from him, and all Israel, the people whom God had chosen to himself, and among whom he would record his name, whilst all the rest of the world lay in darkness. A man would have thought that Moses should have set out his great ancestor in more magnificent terms. Another would have taken notice either of his long life (for he lived six hundred years), that he saw both worlds, both before the flood and after; that he was one of the heirs of Noah, one of the three great princes of the world; that Asia, the paradise of the earth, fell to his lot, and Shinar, a land rich in jewels, gold, and spices; another would have reckoned up the mighty kings descended from his loins, or have called him father of the Assyrians, Chaldeans, Persians, famous nations that made such a bustle in the world; but Moses only calleth him father of the children of Eber, a nation shut up within the precincts of a little spot of land; but theirs were the 'promises, and the adoption, and the glory,' Rom. ix. 4, 'and the covenant, and the law.' I tell you, to be a means to bring forth children to God, and to multiply the church, is as great an honour as can be put upon you.

3. If they die in infancy, we need not trouble ourselves about their salvation. God is their God, Gen. xvii. 1; and that is all the best of us have to show for his right to heaven. They are bound up in the same bundle of life with their parents, in covenant with God, and never lived to disinherit themselves. We judge of the graft according to the tree from whence it was taken, till it liveth to bring forth fruit of its own; so of children, according to their father's covenant. God knoweth how to instate them in the privileges of it; Christ died for the church, and they are part of the church, Eph. v. 26, 27.

4. If they live, and bewray the corruption of their natures, there is more hope of them than of others. The grace of the covenant runneth most kindly in the channel of the covenant: Rom. xi. 24, 'How much more shall those which be the natural branches be grafted into their own olive-tree?' They seem to lie more obvious to the Lord's grace. God followeth them with more calls and offers of grace. The Jews were to have the hansom and first offers of the gospel, though they killed the Lord of life, first at Jerusalem, because they were children of the promise, Acts iii. 25, 26. God followeth a covenant people to the last, and beareth with them time after time, till he can bear no longer. They have a greater holdfast upon God; they may plead promises; and if ever God touch their hearts with remorse, they may plead their father's covenant. After Solomon's warping, God remembers promises to David, 1 Kings xi. 12, 13, and 32, 34.

5. Among them salvation is most ordinary, though God leaveth himself a liberty to take men of an evil stock. A rose may grow upon a thorn; *viles virgule pretiosa opobalsama sudant*; a slip of an ill stock may be grafted into the tree of life. Hezekiah was the son of Ahaz, and Josiah the son of Amon. Again, all the children of elect parents are not elect, to show the liberty of his counsels. In the very

line of grace God will make a distinction. Abraham had Isaac and Ishmael; and Isaac had Jacob and Esau: Josh. xxiv. 4, 'I gave unto Isaac Jacob and Esau;' intimating the distinction between the person and posterity of the one and the other. Though I grant all this, yet usually the children of godly parents are they that obtain the blessing; they are in a greater nearness to grace than others are, and there is more to be presumed of their children than of others, because of the ordinary practice of the Lord's grace, and because they have more means and helps, and in an ordinary course lie more obvious to the blessing, have more instruction, are nurtured and trained up in the knowledge of God, and have the prayers and examples of their godly parents. It is to be presumed that all godly men will thus do. God reckoneth upon it: Gen. xviii. 19, 'I know my servant Abraham, that he will command his children and household after him, that they shall keep the way of the Lord, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.' He presumeth that in these families God is known and honoured, that there is less temptation to sin, as lying out of the devil's road. A godly family is the suburbs of heaven, where the young brood is hatched to supply the church.

6. They are not cast off till they do even wrest themselves out of the arms of mercy. Cain excommunicated himself: Gen. iv. 16, 'And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord.' The face of the Lord, in one sense it is everywhere; but it is meant of the church, where God is worshipped. Ishmael, for scoffing and malignity against the power of godliness, Gen. xxi. 9. He mocked Isaac, which the apostle maketh to be persecution, Gal. iv. 29. Esau, for profaneness or despising the birthright, that he may set his lusts a-work, Heb. xii. 15, 16; preferring the satisfaction of sensual lusts before the great privileges in Christ. The Jews were 'broken off for unbelief,' Rom. xi. 20. God bore with them after they had crucified Christ all along; as the branches of the covenant grew wild, God may be cutting them off. When God doth cast off a people, that is dreadful, Rom. xi. He speaketh to the Romans as a body and a church. God may break off a church as well as a person by scattering judgments, prevalency of error, and profaneness; the discouragements of his children; they withdrawing, all is broken to pieces. This is the spiritual judgment now upon us, and we are not sensible of it.

Secondly, The reasons.

1. That he may show the riches of his grace, which reacheth not only to the persons, but to the families of those that love him and serve him. God is resolved to act in the covenant according to the highest laws of friendship; as David: 2 Sam. ix. 1, 'Is there yet any left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?' So will God be a friend to us and our children after us. Yea, this love runneth down to thousands of generations, Rom. xi. 28. They are beloved for their father's sake. For so many years to love their seed, this is a friendship not to be paralleled, 2 Sam. i. 19. It is mercy that our persons, that the fruit of our souls should be accepted, spotted and speckled as it is; that the evil should not outweigh the little goodness that is in them; but the fruit of our bodies is much more, especially if you consider the natural leprosy and filthiness that



is in them. But grace, like a mighty river, will be pent within no banks, but overfloweth all that a man hath, all his relations.

2. Out of an indulgence to natural affection. God hath a son of his own, and he knoweth how he loveth him, and is acquainted with the heart of a father, and he hath planted an affection in parents to their children. Love, like a river, is descensive. Many are more sensible of a misery and curse in their seed than in themselves. Surely next to our eternal happiness their welfare is the most welcome blessing which we can receive; therefore, in an indulgence to good parents, God will bless them in their children. The charter runneth for them and their seed. Children are a part of them, the parent continued, as before, Ps. xxxvii. 24. We abide and live in them when we are dead and gone.

Thirdly, How can we reconcile the promise with experience, since the children of the servants of the Lord are reduced to great extremities, and are as naught and bad as others?

I answer, The blessing is invisible for a great measure, and we want faith to interpret this privilege, as well as any other mentioned in the covenant. Sometimes their outward portion may be small, but however, they are a holy seed unto God. We see the providence of God by pieces; for the present they may be in their natural condition, and the blessing doth not as yet break out in effects of grace, as it doth afterwards. We must leave the Lord to his own seasons. Sometimes for a while God may skip over the next branch in the line, and a wicked and ungracious man may interrupt the blessing for a while, but it runneth on again to a thousand generations. Jotham had Ahaz, but Ahaz had Hezekiah; the grandfather wicked, the son wicked, but the grandchild godly again; so that still there is a respect to the family. It is the usual practice of the Lord's grace, and is here put into the form of a promise, and must, as all temporal promises, be referred to God's pleasure, when to exempt the godly from poverty and their seed. Mostly the blessing is conspicuous enough in the course of God's dispensations, and examples to the contrary are very rare. David was a man of good years and narrow observation, a great student in the providence of God; yet saith he, Ps. xxxvii. 25, 'I have been young, and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor their seed begging bread.' He could find none of their issue in his time reduced to a state of beggary.

Fourthly, To whom the promise will be most eminently fulfilled. There are some qualifications mentioned. All God's servants have their blessings, but these especially; as, namely—

1. The strict, and such as dare not offend him: Ps. ciii. 17, 'The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness to children's children.' They that fear him, that walk exactly in his sight and presence, such are frowned upon, hated, maligned, scorned in the world; therefore God doth take care to provide for them and theirs.

2. The just and upright. They abridge themselves of many advantages of gain which others hunt after. It is not lost: Ps. cxii. 2, 'His seed shall be mighty upon earth; the generation of the upright shall be blessed.' They cannot project, and turn, and wind in the world as

others do, but they deal plainly ; it is not without a blessing. So Prov. xx. 7, 'The just man walketh in his integrity, and his children are blessed after him.' They transmit a clear estate, and so it thriveth.

3. The merciful and charitable : Ps. xxxvii. 26, 'He is ever merciful, and lendeth ; his seed is blessed.' When we are urged to giving, you may object, What shall wife and children do ? I answer—Give the rather ; do something the more for every child, that the blessing may be entailed upon them ; it is lent to the Lord, and it will be paid to your posterity ; your children will not have a whit the less.

4. Those that are tender of God's institutions. The second commandment, that provideth for God's instituted worship, the sanction of it speaketh of blessings and punishments in the posterity, and deservedly. Family arguments prevail with many to yield to the corruptions of their age. But alas ! that which they would build they destroy ; their children are not preserved, but ruined by it. You may convey an estate, but with a curse. Much of the evil that hath lighted upon ministers and their families had its rise hence. God, that gloriously exalts godly ministers and their children, that would rather suffer the loss of all than yield to the least corruption in worship, doth also reckon with them and their families that are partial in his law.

Use 1. I might apply this to parents by way of advice and consolation.

1. Be godly yourselves. Carnal parents obstruct and stop up the course of mercy from descending upon their children as much as in them lieth ; especially in giving up themselves to carnal practices and evil compliances for their children's sake. *Hæreditates transeunt cum onere*. Whatever hands they pass through, the burden continueth. Nay, further, this is not the best way to provide for your children, to drudge and toil like horses, and neglect heaven and happiness, to make them great, or to break God's laws to salve their interest. Besides the mischief you do yourselves, you do not profit them a whit. Fear God, be upright and charitable, careful of God's institutions, and then leave your children with God, and see if he will not provide for them. It argueth a great deal of infidelity when you think you cannot leave them well unless you leave them great. You renounce God, and set up a wedge of gold, if you think that will do them more good than the covenant and the promises of God.

2. Educate your children in God's fear. This will be the means to continue and increase the blessing. Look, as there is a double curse where the father is carnal and the son carnal, so there is a double blessing where the father is godly and the son godly ; the blessing is still increased. Abraham laid the foundation, Isaac made an addition, Jacob increased it a little further ; Joseph, who was the most eminent of all the patriarchs, he still carried on the blessing ; therefore it is said, Gen. xlix. 26, 'The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of thy progenitors.' You may have great hopes when you see children taking kindly to religion, and zealous for their father's God. So in that passage, Gen. xviii. 19, 'I know that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep

the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.'

3. When you die, leave a charge with them : 1 Kings ii. 2, 'Keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself,' &c. ; and 1 Chron. xxviii. 9, 'And thou, Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy fathers, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind,' &c. It is the last time that you can do anything for God. Speeches of dying men have great weight in them, and are entertained with much reverence. Jacob's sons used that as their best plea : Gen. i. 16, 'Thy father did command before he died, saying,' &c. So the sons of Jonadab, the son of Rechab : Jer. xxxv. 3, 'We will drink no wine, for our father commanded us, saying,' &c. There is most esteem had to a father's dying charge ; it will stick by them far more than pressing discourses at another time. As Mr Bolton charged his children, See that none of you meet in an unregenerate condition at the day of judgment.

*Use 2.* Is comfort to poor dying saints, when they leave a great charge behind them ; though you leave them no great matter, it is a good portion to lay up some prayers for them, to leave them a God in covenant with them. God doth strangely provide for the children of his people ; a little holdeth out, like the widow's oil and meal. As to visible means, a man cannot tell how they live, yet live they do, and flourish, and by unexpected providences thrive into a great increase. Therefore moderate your fears and cares ; God will provide. I look upon this meeting with joy of heart, as being in a great measure the fruit of the promise, and I hope you will go away refreshed with the sight of it, and increased in confidence, saying, 'Lord, the children of thy servant shall continue, they shall be established.'

*Use 3.* Advice to the children of godly parents.

I shall first speak to them in the general, and then to this day's meeting more particularly. In the general—

1. Bless God for this privilege. Better be the child of a godly than wealthy parent. I hope none are of so vile a spirit as to hate and condemn your parents because of their piety. Certainly it is a great privilege when you can go to God, and plead your Father's covenant : Ps. cxvi. 14, 'Lord, I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid.' So did Solomon : 1 Kings iii. 25, 26, 'Lord, make good thy word to thy servant David, my father.' That you are not born of infidels, or popish parents, nor fautors and upholders of superstition and formality, but in a strict, serious, godly family, it is a great advantage that you have. It is better to be the sons of faithful ministers than of nobles.

2. Do not interrupt and break off the blessing. It is the greatest unworthiness that can be to be ungodly children of godly parents, and to cast off the God of your fathers : Jer. ii. 12, 'Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this !' He would have the sun to look pale upon such a wickedness, and the spheres to cast out their stars, that a people should cast off their God. Solomon continued alliance with Hiram because he had been a lover of David ; and it is his advice to others, 'Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake thou not.' Surely, then, not the

father's God. Wilt thou be a traitor to thy father's God? 'Be astonished, O ye heavens!' None stain their blood so much as you that forsake the sincerity and strictness of religion which your fathers professed. Treasons in the posterity are counted a stain to noble ancestors; so is apostasy and loss of church privileges in you. It is an excellent thing to see the power of religion preserved from father to son: Heb. xi. 9, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are called 'heirs of the same promise.' Pliny writeth that it was counted a great honour and point of felicity that in one house of the Curios there were three excellent orators one after another, and of the Fabii three presidents of the senate in the same succession. Oh, what an honour is it when there is a constant succession from father to the son, from the son to the grandchild, and all heirs of the same promise! The third descent, they say, maketh a gentleman in a new and opulent family. Here is Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, all heirs of the same promise; this is the true noble blood, a holy kindred, true gentry; otherwise *omnis sanguis concolor*—all blood is of a colour. It is a high honour to be born of such a race. My father, my grandfather, and great-grandfather were all servants of the Lord, and will you cut off the entail? Christians, I must speak to you not only as sons of private christians, but as the sons of ministers, of whom special holiness is required, and which will engage a special blessing to their posterity, and will you stop the course of it? Oh! let not the ministerial blessing be worn out of your generations. I remember one observeth of the Jews, that as long as the strength and virtue of manna continued in their constitutions, they were a fortunate, valorous, and brave people; but when, after some successions of generations, that it was worn out, they grew pusillanimous and base. The ministerial blessing, while that lasteth, the posterity thrive, and by a wonderful providence arrive to great increase, many times from small beginnings. Oh! therefore keep up the warmth and vigour of godliness in your families, and then you will transmit the blessing to ages to come, and the children that are yet unborn. But alas! many times, through our carelessness and default, in the next generation it is worn out; as Phylostratus said of the son of Rufus, Perrinthius, a great master, 'As for his son, I have nothing else to say but that he was his son.' If that be all your honour, that you are the son of such an eminent man, but have nothing worthy in you, that will be a sorry commendation; much more if you should fall to looseness and riot, you are the stain of your parents, and put them to shame when they are dead and gone. There is a notable place, Lev. xxi. 9, 'The daughter of any priest, if she shall play the whore, she profaneth her father, and shall be burnt with fire.' Let us comment on this text a little. Under the daughter, saith Calvin, the sons were also comprised; but if that were not, the daughter of the priest suiteth with your case; for the sons of priests were priests, which you are not now in the times of the gospel; and her case was more like yours, who are not always public persons. Now it is said, 'She profaneth her father.' How? That is, she was a defilement to his name and house. And so the Septuagint, τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτῆς αὐτὴ βεβηλωῖ, she is a reproach to the dignity of his office. Ministers must be not only good in their own persons, but in their

relations, ruling their children and their own house well. Eli's sons were a disgrace and shame to their father; so will you be, if you be nought. Men judge of the parents by the behaviour of their children. Yea, that is not all; the reflection will not only be personal, but as they will judge of the parents by the children, so of the calling by the persons; yea, and of God by the calling. It reflects upon God at last; as the people 'abhorred the offering of the Lord because of the wickedness of Eli's sons,' 1 Sam. ii. 17. The heathens thought it a disgrace to the persons of their gods if their ministers were detected of impurity; and that is the reason of the great punishment there mentioned, 'She shall be burnt with fire.' The punishment of the priest's daughter was greater than that of any other woman. Others were not to die for simple fornication, neither man nor woman; but the man to marry her, or to pay a sum of money, Exod. xxii. 16, 17; but she is to be burnt. Austin observeth the same of the Romans, Lib. de Civit. Dei, cap. 5, *Nam et ipsi Romani antiqui in stupro detectas vestales sacerdotes, vivas etiam defodiebant: adulteras autem fœminas, quamvis aliquâ damnatione, nulla tamen morte plectebant; usque adeo gravius quæ putabant adyta divina quam humana cubilia vindicabant.* They were zealous for the honour of their gods, and therefore punished the faults of their ministers the more severely. Well then, if you would preserve the name of your ancestors to posterity, show it in the gravity of your conversations. Your offences will be a disgrace to them, and by them to God.

3. Observe the blessing. Some of you, it may be, came to town poor and ill provided, your parents, out of their short allowance, being not able to supply you better; but you brought the blessing of the covenant along with you, and that was stock enough to set up withal; and so mercies have wonderfully increased with you. Jacob taketh notice of this: Gen. xxxii. 10, 'I am not worthy of all the mercy and all the truth which thou hast showed to thy servant; for with my staff came I over this Jordan, and now am I become two troops.' Mark, he taketh notice not only of mercy, but truth. By truth I understand God's faithfulness engaged in the covenant of his fathers; for elsewhere I observe that truth is thus understood and applied to Jacob: Micah vii. 20, 'Thou wilt perform thy mercy to Abraham, and thy truth to Jacob, which thou hast sworn to our fathers of old.' The covenant is made in mercy, and made good by truth. Mercy first openeth the door of grace, and truth keepeth it open; and therefore mercy to Abraham, because the covenant is made with him; and truth to Jacob, to whom it is made good. Well then, own the blessing of the covenant: Lord, when I came to town, I was a poor lad of mean estate, could hope for little, and would be even glad to live; and afterwards, when a young beginner, full of doubts and fears; but Lord, out of thy mercy and truth, thou hast provided liberally for me, and brought me from mean estate to large and plentiful means. Basil saith it is a useful speculation to consider how we grow up into estate, and come to enjoy what we have. It maketh us humble to remember mean beginnings, and thankful to observe the gradual increase of our comforts; and it decreaseth dependence when we see the mere blessing of the covenant hath carried us through,

and provided such large and rich supplies for us. Oh ! surely he is a faithful God in keeping mercy for thousands of them that love him. Now I come more particularly to speak of the meeting of this day. Let it be like a meeting of ministers' sons. If you would have the ministers' blessing upon you, show somewhat of ministerial graces. There are two graces which a minister should chiefly show forth—sobriety and hospitality, or bounty to the poor. You are not ministers all of you, yet you should savour of the stock from whence you sprang ; and show your extraction, that you were bred in families where sobriety and hospitality were in great respect. It is said of the earth that was taken from the banks of Nilus, that it sympathiseth with the river and place from whence it was taken ; at that time when the river swelleth and overfloweth, the earth will be more heavy and damp than at other times ; and when it decreaseth, it groweth dry and light again. I apply it thus : You are not ministers, yet you should not forget the hole of the pit out of which you were digged, but savour of a ministerial education to the last, in being temperate and charitable.

[1.] Let me press you to sobriety and temperance. At a feast men grow more loose, and abate of their severity and awe. Certainly there needs caution. When Job's sons were feasting, the father falleth a-sacrificing. Let it be a sober meeting, as becometh ministers' sons. You have begun well ; let not your crown fall to the dust. Do but consider what a dishonour it will be, not to yourselves only, but to this holy calling, yea, to the Lord himself, when from a feast of ministers' sons, some shall go away with staggering feet, inflamed countenances, and a faltering tongue. Oh ! let it not be. You do well to begin with a sermon to season your hearts ; and you will do as well to end and conclude with a psalm, that it may look like one of the sober and holy love-feasts the old christians used.

[2.] Let me press you to charity. This is the great end of the meeting, and therefore must not be left out or neglected. The occasions and wants of ministers and ministers' widows are many and great. Now let them know that you have received the ministerial blessing. This is the necessary acknowledgment, that you have received all from God. Let him that gave you all that you have receive a part back again for the relief of his poor servants. Give as ministers' sons, in a liberal, plentiful manner, that the world may know from what kind of stock you came.

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## A SACRAMENT SERMON ON LUKE XXII. 20.

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*This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.*—  
LUKE XXII. 20.

THE text is a proposition, and there are in it, as in all propositions, two parts—

1. A subject or thing spoken of, *τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον*, *continens pro contento*—the cup for the wine.

2. A predicate, or what is said of it—*It is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.*

In which observe—

[1.] The phrase or manner of predication; it is sacramental, such as is ancient and usual, where the name of the thing signified is given to the sign; the wine is the testament; that is, the sign and seal of it.

[2.] A specification of that covenant or testament of which the cup is a sign or seal; it is *καινὴ διαθήκη*, the new testament.

[3.] The ground of both; that is, how the wine cometh to be designed to such a use, or how the testament is said to be new, *ἐν τῷ αἵματί μου*, in or by my blood.

[4.] The amplification of this ground, by two circumstances—

(1.) By the ordination or disposition of his blood, *τὸ ἐκχυνόμενον*, which is shed, so it came to be the ground of the new testament.

(2.) The persons for whom—*ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν*, *For you.*

*Doct.* That the Lord's supper hath a special respect to the new testament of Christ, which was ratified by the shedding of his blood.

There are four things to be explained in the opening and improving of this point—

(1.) A testament; (2.) A new testament; (3.) This new testament is to be considered as founded on Christ's blood; (4.) The respect which this cup hath to the new testament.

*First*, That the new covenant hath the notion of a testament. It is not only a covenant, but *διαθήκη*, a testament.

*First*, In the general, a testament is a man's last will about the disposing of those goods which he leaveth at his death; so is the covenant of grace a free and firm disposition of the mediator's good things, to be possessed by the heirs of promise according to his will. A covenant it is with respect to the manner of agreement; a testament with respect to the manner of confirming it by the testator's death; a covenant in respect of God, a testament in respect of Christ. As it is a covenant, so it is a stipulation between God and his people, promising mercies to them, and requiring duties from them; like a marriage

covenant between a man and his wife, or the testator and the heir. God hath ever delighted in this way of transaction, that he might mix his sovereignty with love and sweetness, and that this solemn obligation might be a help to faith and obedience, as being an indenture solemnly drawn up and agreed between God and us. As it is a testament, so it respects the death of Christ, by which it is ratified. The apostle telleth us, Heb. ix. 16, 17, 'Where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator; for a testament is of force after men are dead, otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.' Men that make a will in their lifetime have a power to change and alter it at their pleasure; it is but *voluntas ambulatoria*, as the civilians say; but when he is once dead, the inheritance is so alienated and transmitted to others that it cannot be reversed; but the heir may challenge his right, and the will must be put in execution. So here, by the death of Christ the new covenant is made firm, valid, and effectual; without which neither we nor the fathers under the law could be saved by it; for God never intended to give remission and eternal life, which he promiseth in the new covenant, but for and in the consideration of Christ's death. Now this notion of a testament hath more of free grace in it. A covenant, in the first notion and apprehension that we have of it, seemeth to have more of debt, but a testament more of grace. A covenant hath more of bargain and compact; therefore we call God's first transaction a covenant of works; but a testament hath more of gift. A testament is merely for their good for whom the testament is made. Legacies are more free than wages; therefore the notion of a testament is only proper to the covenant of grace. We do not call the covenant of works a testament. This in the general.

Secondly, More particularly in the new covenant all things concur that belong to a testament.

1. There is a testator, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ. A testator is one that hath a just title and a full power to those goods which he disposeth of, and so giveth the same right which he had in them to other persons after his death. Our Lord Christ had a full right and power over those things he disposed of, as the heir of all things, Heb. i. 2; and by virtue of his purchase, according to the pact and agreement between the Father and him, which is set down Isa. liii. 10, 11. By the covenant of redemption Christ was bound to lay down his life as an offering for sin; and then the Father would make him a fountain of grace, life, and peace to poor sinners. The death of Christ cometh under a twofold consideration, according to the twofold relation which he sustaineth, as an act of a mediator or a testator. Consider God's transaction with us as a covenant, so he is a mediator; as a testament, so he is the testator. As mediator, so his death was a meritorious ransom or price, to purchase the inheritance and to expiate the offences of the heir. As a testator, so his death was necessary to make the covenant valid, and the blessings of the new covenant in force. For as the testator hath no intention to give his inheritance, and part with the title and possession before he die, so God did never intend to give remission and eternal life but with respect to Christ's death; and if Christ had not died, the promise had been vain, and of



no force. Remission of sins and eternal life could not have been given under the law, unless the mediator had been to pay the price of the same under the gospel, neither could believers either then or now obtain any benefit but by his death.

2. There is a writing, or an instrument, and deed of conveyance, disposed into a testamentary form, written and sealed, for the assurance, comfort, and benefit of the heirs of promise, and they are the scriptures which, by the catholic and general consent of all the christian world, are called the Old and New Testament, because therein Christ hath disposed and bequeathed what he hath purchased for us. To this writing we must have recourse, as the ground of our hope, right, and claim. All the books written since Christ's coming in the flesh bear this title in the front, and are called *καὴν διαθήκη*; and the whole drift of those books is to set down the death of Christ as a testator, and to seal up the great inheritance of eternal life to every faithful christian, as the son and heir of Christ, and to state the terms according to which we enter ourselves heirs. Ministers of the gospel are called ministers of the new testament, 2 Cor. iii. 6. Their great work is to bring souls to mind and seek after Christ's legacies. Sometimes the gospel may be looked upon as an act of oblivion, as it offereth pardon and justification to all who in a sense of sin and fear of wrath flee unto Christ, and putting their cause into his hands, do give up themselves to do the will of God. Sometimes it is called a charter, as it holdeth forth the hope of eternal life to the justified and the sanctified. But in a respect it is a testament or deed of gift, to assure the believing world, and to encourage them with confidence, to lay claim unto righteousness and eternal life, as heirs of Christ, and to seek after the fruits of his purchase in this life, and the full possession in the life to come. The gospel is our law security; therefore it is said, John xx. 31, 'But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have life through his name.' This is the drift of the whole gospel.

3. There are notaries, and they are prophets and apostles, who by the Spirit indited and drew up this testament. Therefore it is said, Eph. ii. 20, 'Ye are built upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone;' that is to say, Christ is placed and laid as the foundation of our comfort and hope in the doctrines and writings of the apostles and prophets; they did commit to writing such truths concerning him as are necessary to salvation. So it is said, Eph. iii. 4-6, 'How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery which I writ before in few words (whereby ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, that the gentiles should be fellow-heirs of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel;' that is, that they might draw up Christ's testament.

4. There are legacies left us by our Lord Jesus Christ in this blessed testament; they are pardon of sin, favour with God, grace, life, glory, all things that are necessary to our blessedness. God's covenant notion is God all-sufficient.

But more especially two legacies are more notable, which imply the rest—the one initial, the other consummate.

[1.] Pardon of sins. This is expressly mentioned in the parallel place to the text, Mat. xxvi. 28, ‘This is the blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.’ This is the great legacy which Christ hath left to his redeemed people when he made the covenant. It was sin that plunged us into mischief, and cut us off from the favour of God, and did forbid all further and longer communion with God and enjoyment of him. Therefore this is that which is in Christ’s eye, to obtain the pardon of sins: Eph. i. 7, ‘In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;’ and Col. i. 14, ‘In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.’ This is *gratia removens prohibens*. Sin was the wrong done to God, that brought such a loss upon us of God’s favour, image, and fellowship. This Christ came to remove, by repairing God’s honour, and giving satisfaction to provoked justice.

[2.] The next great legacy is eternal life, which he bequeathed and disposeth to the heirs of promise: Luke xxii. 29, 30, ‘And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my Father’s kingdom;’ and John xvii. 24, ‘Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me may be where I am, and behold my glory.’ Sin is our great trouble, happiness our great desire. The grand scruple of the world was to have their fears quenched by the expiation of guilt, and their desires satisfied by the enjoyment of a fit happiness. These are the legacies left us by our Lord.

5. There are terms according to which these legacies are to be enjoyed. The new covenant is so a testament that it still remaineth a covenant, copulatively, not privatively, a testamentary covenant; while it provideth for our comfort and safety, it doth not abolish our duty; it requireth something from us, as well as bestoweth something upon us—*etiam hæreditates habent sua onera*, &c. Men may put conditions into their wills and testaments; therefore the sacramental form doth not disannul our obligation. The conditions are faith, repentance, and new obedience. Faith: Rom. iii. 25, ‘Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.’ Repentance: Acts. iii. 19, ‘Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.’ New obedience: Heb. v. 9, ‘He is become the author of salvation to all them that obey him.’ Only I must give you this caution, that all things required of us as conditions and duties are also disposed as legacies in the covenant: Jer. xxiv. 7, ‘I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.’ So Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27, ‘A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh: and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them;’ and Zech. xii. 10, ‘And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications, and they shall look upon him whom they have

pierced, and mourn for him.' This is the proper intent of a testament, that certain unspeakable gifts are designed unto us antecedently to all conditions performed by us; as Christ giveth himself to us, bestowing the first grace. Conditions of the covenant are conditions in the covenant. God doth not only bestow them, but give them. The articles are promises: Heb. viii. 10, 'For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.' Not only privileges, but qualifications. He requireth them so as we may be sensible of our obligation, and acknowledge our duty so as to strive to do our utmost in the use of means, and turn these precepts into prayers, and it is our act at last; and some of this we must find in us before we can take comfort. What he requireth he promises to bestow. God is no Pharaoh, to require brick where he giveth no straw; he giveth us not only pardon, but faith; not only heaven, but holiness; and giveth a new heart as well as the new Jerusalem.

6. There are heirs: Gal. iii. 29, 'And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to promise;' and Rom. viii. 17, 'If children, then heirs.' The blessing of Christ's testament is no common thing cast abroad at random. There are certain persons to whom it doth belong, others to whom not. None are described by name, but by character, which is as good as if described by name; and which character must be interpreted exclusively. Compare John xvii. 9 with 20, 'I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe.' Christ hath left nothing to the carnal world in this testament, but all believers are comprised. As to the wicked, there is not only a preterition, but a positive exclusion. A preterition is a sufficient bar against any man's testament, because he is not named in the will, nor designed to any favour by it; but the carnal and the wicked are excluded: Ps. l. 16, 'As to the wicked, God saith, What hast thou to do to take my covenant into thy mouth?' and Acts viii. 21, 'Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.' But let us see how the heirs of promise are described. Sometimes by God's election and the appointment of God, who, in his unchangeable counsel, designeth the heirs of promise: John vi. 37, 'All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast off;' and Luke xii. 32, 'Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you a kingdom.' Christ's testament is made in compliance with God's decrees; but because this is a secret not known till afterward, therefore the heirs of promise are described in the gospel or testament itself, Heb. vi. 18. There you have one description, 'Who have fled for refuge to take hold of the hope that is set before us;' those who, being chased by the terrors of the law (as the man that was guilty of casual homicide was by the avenger of blood at his heels), do take sanctuary at the Lord's grace in Christ, and are resolved to continue there, waiting for his mercy unto eternal life. Sometimes they are described to be 'the called:' Heb. ix. 15, 'That they which are called might receive the promise of eternal

inheritance.' The heirs of the new testament are the called. Some are not called at all, as the gentiles, to whom the gospel is not preached. Some are called, but refuse or neglect to accept of this grace; as they that were bidden to the marriage of the king's son made light of it: Mat. xxii. 5, 'So many are called, but few are chosen.' Others seem to bind themselves to the observation of the covenant, but do not indeed come under the bond of it. Others are called, and are obedient to the heavenly call; they that choose the things that please God, and take hold of the covenant, Isa. lvi. 4. These are heirs, the effectually called. Again, they are described by their dedication to Christ: 1 Cor. iii. 23, 'All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ's is God's.' As Jesus Christ gave up himself to God, humbled himself to do all the work of God; so they to Christ: 'To them to live is Christ.' Sometimes by their sanctification: Acts. xx. 32, 'To give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified;' and Acts xxvi. 18, 'That they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith.' Faith, as it beginneth in brokenness of heart, so it must end in holiness of life, or else we have no title to the inheritance. Such as are washed from the filth of their corruptions by the blood of the new testament: John xiii. 8, 'If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me;' and 1 Cor. vi. 11, 'But now ye are washed, but now ye are sanctified.' Now some of these descriptions agree to the lowest degree of grace; others include a more perfect measure. Let not poor sinners think themselves excluded from the testament of Christ if they have not such a measure of grace as others. If they cannot make out their title by their holiness, they should by their brokenness of heart; if not by the bold challenge of faith, yet by their humble plea. There are fathers, and young men, and babes in Christ; even babes have their share in Christ's testament: 1 John ii. 12, 'I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake.' The qualification is sometimes laid down to suit with the strongest, tallest christian, sometimes with the weakest, because Christ's testament was intended for the use of little children as well as for fathers and young men. If you run for refuge, if you receive Christ as offered in the gospel, if you resolve to please God, and take hold of his covenant, these are the characters of the heirs of promise.

7. There are seals, which are the sacraments; in this text, 'This cup is the new testament;' that is, the sign and seal of it. It must be understood sacramentally, for properly the new testament implieth higher legacies than the sacramental cup. But you must expound it as other sacramental phrases are expounded; as see the like; circumcision is called God's covenant, Gen. xvii. 10. That in the 11th verse is meant a token of the covenant; so ver. 13, 'My covenant shall be in your flesh;' that is, the sign of it. The apostle explaineth all this: Rom. iv. 11, 'And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith.' It is a sealing sign appointed by God to make us truly and really sure of our right to Christ's death and blood shed, and all the benefits purchased thereby. It is a confirming sign, not to infidels, but believers. To infidels miracles are for a sign, 1 Cor. xiv. 22; but to believers the ordinances of the gospel, as they excite

our faith by the eye, more to mind and regard the grace contained in the testament itself.

8. There are witnesses of this testament. The witnesses from heaven are the 'Father, Word, and Spirit;' and the witnesses on earth, 'the Spirit, the water, and blood;' the one external, the other internal; the one of the truth of the gospel, the other of our interest, as well as the truth of the things themselves.

[1.] The witnesses from heaven: 1 John v. 7, 'There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost.' the blessed Trinity, that Jesus is the Son of God and the saviour of the world, in whom all our confidence should be placed, and on whom we should leave the weight of our souls. God seeketh no farther amends for all our wrongs, nor other price for what we need. The Father, Word, and Spirit witness this. The Word, that is Christ Jesus, the eternal Son of God, whom the apostle calleth the Word. The Father witnessed by an audible voice from heaven when Christ was baptized: Mat. iii. 17, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;' which was given very solemnly, in a great congregation of people, and divinely with great glory and majesty. Again renewed before Peter, James, and John, at Christ's transfiguration, Mat. xvii. 5, upon which Peter pleadeth the truth of the gospel covenant: 2 Peter i. 16, 17, 'For we have not followed cunningly-devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty; for he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' That God approved Christ and the work he was going about, the Word gave testimony to this, not by naked affirmations, but in his doctrine and miracles, 'that he that believeth on him shall be saved.' He hath expressed his Father's mind to the world, and his own office in fulfilling it, that there should be no doubt of it. The Holy Ghost witnessed also at his baptism, resurrection, ascension, at the effusion or descent upon the apostles, that still the world hath fuller confirmation: Acts v. 32, 'And we are his witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.'

[2.] The witnesses on earth. The Spirit, the water, and the blood, these agree in one; they are not one as the former were, 1 John v. 8. This is internal, ver. 10. The work of regeneration of the soul by the power of the Word and Spirit is signified by water. The work of justification of guilty souls by the blood of Jesus Christ, and the testimony of the Spirit bearing witness to our spirits, is an assured testimony that Jesus Christ, whom we believe, is the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. The changing, pacifying, converting, and comforting of souls crieth aloud that Jesus Christ, in whom we believe, is the true and living God, whom to know and believe is eternal life. The great work of applying all the privileges of the saints, and making them actual partakers of the blessings of Christ's death, is committed to the Holy Ghost. All agree in this, that Jesus Christ is a sure refuge for sinners; that that was without us is now within us, transcribed by the Spirit of grace upon our hearts.

*Secondly,* We are not only to consider a testament, but a new

testament. For the understanding of this, note that Christ made his testament two ways—

1. One in typical promises under the law, before he came in the flesh; and so in types and figures he died as it were, and was the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world, Rev. xiii. 8.

2. The other after his incarnation, in plain and clear terms, when he fulfilled the types, actually laid down his life; then it was as a closed, sealed will, now it is an open one. In short, these two testaments differ in three things—in excellency, clearness, and efficacy.

[1.] In excellency. We have better promises and better ordinances. Better promises: Heb. viii. 6, 'But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, established upon better promises.' Though in effect they were the same, yet now more spiritual. The first testament had a greater mixture of temporal promises; and in the importance of it, it more concerned this life. Their hell was Egypt, their heaven was Canaan, their eternity was long life, their salvation was temporal deliverance, their gladness was the affluence of worldly comforts and blessings. The promises then were clogged with more conditions. And also better ordinances. The first testament was a dispensation full of dark and painful and chargeable rites; all the services tended rather to stir up brokenness of heart than faith, and signified the death of the sinner more clearly than the death of a saviour and redeemer; and as much as they presignified a redeemer, they typed out his person rather than our benefit. None but the priest could enter within the vail; the way to the holy place was not yet open. The priest could only eat of the sin-offering, Lev. vi. 26. The priest was only to eat what is offered for the people's sins: eating implieth union, to show the death of the sacrifice should become the death of the priest himself. The priest became one with the beast slain; but now sinners eat the sin-offering, feed upon the sacrifice. It is notable that neither priest nor people could eat of the sin-offering for the whole congregation. This social communion was reserved for the gospel. God and they would not eat at one table, lest they should think their communion full and perfect without us, Lev. xvii. 11, 12. Blood was forbidden upon this very ground, because given upon the altar for the remission of sins. Now this is the reason why we are bidden to drink of it: Mat. xxvi. 27, 'Drink ye all of it; for this is the blood of the new testament, which is given for the remission of sins.' It is not the blood of the old testament, but the new. In short, so much as the blood of Christ doth excel the blood of the sacrifices, and as far as heaven is above the earthly sanctuary, and men's souls above the vessels thereof, so far doth our covenant exceed. We have better promises, more comfortable ordinances; the new covenant is set forth with new signs; there needeth nothing to complete it but new hearts.

[2.] In clearness. All was dark and obscure then; there was the blood of lambs, and goats, and other sacrifices. Christ's death was then exhibited but in types and figures. The promise of laying down his life was then accepted in the old testament; the actual performance is in the new. He was then slain in figure. The doctrine of the Trinity was not clearly known, nor the incarnation, death, and resur-

rection of Christ, union with Christ, and the recompense of reward, and the saints' resting-place. God did not so familiarly reveal himself as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 Cor. iii. 18, 'But now we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.'

[3.] In efficacy. Grace was not amply and largely given forth; the promise of the Spirit was the benefit of gospel times, Acts ii. Grace was but sparingly given out, as it were upon trust; now there is a fuller gospel grace.

*Thirdly*, This new covenant is founded upon Christ's blood. God would have this satisfaction before he would give out grace, that justice might be satisfied as well as mercy glorified. The blood of Christ is the ransom of our souls, the price of our pardon and peace, the foundation of all that grace we expect from God. This expiatheth sin, merits the gospel covenant and the Spirit to apply it, or grace to enable men to receive the inheritance. In short, the death of Christ is the foundation, life, and soul of the new covenant, which we come to remember in this sacrament.

*Fourthly*, The respect which the cup or the Lord's supper hath to the new testament.

1. It doth more particularly excite and bind us to look after the blessed legacies of this new testament. In the word the offer of grace is more general, God speaks promiscuously to all; but in the sacraments it is personally applied; every one cometh, man by man, to take hold of God's covenant. The object revealed in the word is like the brazen serpent that was exposed to the eyes of all without difference and distinction, that whosoever had need, and looked upon it, should be healed; but the object propounded in the sacrament is like the sprinkling of the door-posts with blood to assure that house of safety. Those things that are propounded generally should affect all, for none is excluded; but those things that concern us more expressly do more excite us, for we are not only not excluded, but warned to look after them. In the word there is an invitation, but in the sacrament a closer touch and application: Acts ii. 38, 'Be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.'

2. Here is a crucified Christ represented to us as in a glass, Gal. iii. 1. Bread and wine are appointed to this use. Now, his death is the life of our souls, and his sufferings are the feast of our souls, they being the price of our peace and reconciliation with God. The same flesh which was given to God for sacrifice is given to us for food; the blood given to God for atonement, and to us for refreshment: Job vi. 51, 'I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.'

3. We profess a union between us and Christ; for as these things are turned into our substance, become one with us, so doth Christ with our souls; John vi. 56, 'He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me, and I in him.' The penitent, hungry, and

believing soul feedeth upon him, and receiveth strength and life from him.

4. By this ordinance the grant of remission of sins and life eternal is confirmed and sealed to us. As there are certain formalities of law which make any deed or conveyance of law authentic, so by this solemn way do we enter into possession of Christ and his benefits. The promise is sealed by these visible rites, which imply that as really as our bodies receive the bread and wine which represents, so do we receive, Christ and all his benefits.

5. It is an ordinance that is accompanied with the special presence of the Spirit. All gospel ordinances are the ministration of the Spirit, 2 Cor. iii. 18. We cannot but expect a blessing upon the use of God's instituted means. It is the great intent of this duty: 1 Cor. xii. 13, 'We have been all made to drink into one Spirit,' ἐποτίσθημεν εἰς ἓν πνεῦμα. He cometh especially to apply to our souls the benefits of redemption, and to excite faith and love in us, and to fill our hearts with life and comfort.

*Use.* You have heard of a confirmed, sealed testament; and this a new testament, where the ordinances are accommodated to a more spiritual help; and this founded in the blood of your Redeemer, who by his death hath merited your reconciliation with God; and all this represented, sealed, and exhibited to you in this duty. Oh! then, mind your work, and go about it advisedly.

1. As it is a testament.

[1.] Have you entered yourselves as heirs to Christ's testament? You may be children of the kingdom, and yet cast out; pray, preach; Mat. vii. 23: eat and drink in his presence: Luke xiii. 26, 'Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets; but he shall say, I know you not whence you are,' &c. O the cursed estate of them that are out of Christ, that have no part and portion in this testament! The only evidence is, if we have received Christ as offered in the gospel: 1 John v. 12, 'He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life;' and John i. 12, 'To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.' We first receive him in the promise before we receive him in the sacrament. Do you so receive him as to be willing to give up yourselves to God by him? Many have had an offer of Christ, but never yet had a heart to receive him. The offer hath been fruitless through their negligence and disesteem of heavenly things: Mat. xxii. 5, 'They made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise.' Others there are that give a rash consent. *consensus temerarius*; they do not consider what it is to receive Christ; they are willing in generals, unwilling in particulars. Or else there is *consensus de futuro*, hereafter; they are willing to mind their soul's health when sick, or when they come to die. There is *consensus involuntarius*, such a consent as a person would not yield unto if he were in an estate of liberty; when frightened and forced into a little religiousness, when in distress, then they would have Christ by all means; or else there is a partial consent to the benefits of Christ without subjection to him, or a feeble consent which is easily controlled. You



must consent without exceptions and reserves; you must entirely resign yourselves to him with a full, hearty, entire consent; there must be an accepting of Christ as offered to us in the gospel with his benefits, or a consenting that he be ours and we his. This is true willingness, all things considered, when you have considered his strict laws, and made allowance for incident temptations and difficulties.

[2.] Challenge your right, lay claim to the blessings of the covenant, as children do to their estates left them in a testament sealed. Bring forth and produce the written testament of your dying Mediator before the court of God's justice, and by faith plead the benefit of the inheritance, sue out the legacies. Let not the testament of Christ lie by as useless; say, Lord, I am a guilty sinner that deserveth to be sealed up under a curse; but, Lord, thou hast sent thy Son to save poor sinners; he died and gave his life a ransom for many, offereth grace in the gospel, and now hath condescended to my weakness so far as to give me visible security.

[3.] Bind yourselves to the Lord anew. When you renew a covenant, you must not only lay claim to privileges, but bind yourselves to the duties of it: Deut. xxvii. 9, 10, 'And Moses and the priests, the Levites, spake unto all Israel, saying, Take heed and hearken, O Israel; this day thou art become the people of the Lord thy God; thou shalt therefore obey the voice of the Lord thy God, and do his commandments and statutes, which I command thee this day;' and Deut. xxvi. 17, 18, 'Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes and his commandments and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice; and the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments.' We are said to enter into the bond of the holy oath, Isa. lvi. 4. Then we take hold of his covenant when we choose the things that please him, and resolve upon that holy, spiritual, and heavenly life that he hath required of us; do not take them up upon some sudden motion, sinister respects, or base ends; but out of due consideration, and in judgments rightly informed, and out of affection and choice. Ps. xxv. 10, 'All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth to such as keep his covenant and testimonies.' None but they that make conscience of obedience do partake of the benefits of his promises. The mercies of the Lord remembered and challenged should invite us to this, Rom. xii. 1, and 1 Cor. v. 16. This duty bindeth us. David complained that his familiar friend, that ate at his table, did lift up his heel against him. God admits us to his table to show that he and we are agreed; after offences will be aggravated by this. When God in the gospel bids you take Jesus Christ, and be reconciled to him, if you answer, Lord, I am willing, I will accept of Christ, and be thankful, the match is made, when the will is effectually inclined to Christ, and to God the Father by him.

2. As it is a new covenant, God expecteth you should be more holy, and that there should be a more free spirit, more holy. Things that grow in the shadow cannot be so kindly as those that grow under the sunshine. We read of great graces in the saints; then

let us be ashamed that we are no better, much more that we are worse than the people of God that lived under the first testament. We should serve God in newness of the Spirit, Rom. vii. 6. Our worship should be more serious and delightful, our obedience more spiritual, our hopes more lively and strong, our joy more overflowing. Secondly, Our filial freedom should be greater, as we have more of the gospel spirit: Rom. viii. 15, 'For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again unto fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.' God expecteth greater liberty of spirit; we have the spirit of adoption more plentifully poured out. All things under the first covenant did press to servile fear and bondage of spirit; now we are acted more by a spirit of love. Our experience of the efficacy of the gospel should be larger, our fixed notedness greater in all, to have something like the better testament.

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## A SERMON ON THE ENDS OF THE SACRAMENT.

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*And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they that wear soft clothing are in king's houses. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet.—MAT. xi. 7-9.*

THE context standeth thus—

1. A message is sent from John in prison to Christ. He sendeth two of his disciples to inquire if he were the Messiah, not for his own satisfaction, but theirs. They were offended in Christ out of respect to their master.

2. Christ's answer to this message. He referreth them to his works. What do you see and hear? Which teacheth us that our works should praise us in the gates, not our own lips. When the question is put, Are you the sons of God, yea or nay? what are your works? works exceeding the power of nature? John x. 38, 'If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though you believe not me, believe the works.' You should allow the full place of an evidence to them.

3. As they departed, Christ commendeth John, not before his disciples, lest he might confirm their error, or by flattery seek to ingratiate with them, or to teach us this moral instruction, that none is to be praised before his face: 'When John's disciples were departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness for to see?'

In commending John, he first beginneth with the people, inquiring after the reason of their great resort to him before he was in prison. Three times he propoundeth the question. Surely when such multitudes came from all coasts and quarters, you saw some reason for it. What was your aim? Was it by chance, or to behold some worldly greatness, or to hear the word of God from some great prophet? Was it a childish errand, a carnal design, or a religious reason that moved you to hear a prophet of the Lord? You that run after him, had high thoughts of him, you did not go out to see a reed. Plenty grew in the wilderness, that was not your errand; you did not look upon John as such. A reed is a fit emblem of an inconstant person; it bendeth now

this way, anon that way. John was no such reed; he changed not his testimony for frowns or flatteries: 'What went ye out for to see?' Gallantry is not to be seen in the desert, but in a king's court. What was it that moved you? Why doth Christ put the question thrice? Partly to show that the reasons that move us to a duty should be well examined. Partly to shame them that they had no more obtained the right end. Surely ye went to see a prophet, You will not own that all this resort was to a seducer or impostor; you went to see a prophet, one that was commissioned, and had a warrant from God to reveal his will. Why do ye desert him now in prison? Why do ye not believe his testimony concerning me? 'What went ye out for to see?'

The observation which I shall raise from these words shall be this—That when we are going to an ordinance, we should consider our aim, and what we are going about.

In hearing, 'What went ye out for to' hear? Picked words, apt cadences of speech, or out of a desire after 'the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby?' 1 Peter ii. 2. Is that your aim? So in the sacraments, What do you go to see? Do you go to taste wine and bread? That you may do at home in greater plenty, and with less trouble. Or is it to put yourselves into the garb of worship that is in fashion? Translate the scene, and you will be Turk or pagan upon the same account. What do you go out to see? Is it to meet with Christ in his ordinances? Thus in every action should we reflect upon the principles and ends, the reasons that move us to any duty. Is it only to see the faces of one another, or to meet with Christ?

1. As men, thus should we do. The prophet biddeth them, 'Show yourselves men,' Isa. xlv. 8. The privilege of a man is to use recollection, to fix his scope; to know the end distinguisheth a man from a beast. Beasts are overruled by providence; they act for an end, but they know it not. To go on in a track and course of duties without considering the end and reason of them, is to be 'like horse and mule, which have no understanding,' Ps. xxxii. 9; to act like beasts rather than men. A man's eye is upon the end before his hand be in the work. What am I now doing, and why? And the more weighty any action is, the more recollection should we use in that kind. What is my aim? In ordinary works we do not always think of the end, actually, solemnly, but in great businesses we do; it is suitable to the principles of reason, much more in duties of religion.

2. As christians, much more should we thus do. Why? Partly because there is an end appointed. Every duty is appointed for an end, not only a general end for the glory of God, but some especial use. It is not a task, but means appointed in order to the obtaining some end. If duties had been a mere task, then we should look no farther than the work wrought. But now we are to use them as means for the end to which God hath sanctified them. God out of sovereignty might have appointed them as a task, as an acknowledgment of his own dominion; but he hath affixed some end and spiritual profit to be obtained by them; and therefore called means of grace. Partly also because of God's observation. He looketh not to the action, but the aim: Prov. x. 2, 'All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes, but the Lord weigheth the spirits' in the balance of the sanctuary. The plea from

the act is not allowed, Luke xiii. 26. The action must not only be good, but performed to a good end. Partly because the end is the discriminating circumstance in all actions: Hosea i. 4, 'The Lord said unto him, Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel.' There was God's command; but Jehu's aim was at his own greatness. He did it not with that mind God required. A man may do good, but not well. And to come to duties: 'Hearing the word.' This may be but a customary devotion: Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 'They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them; for with their mouth they show much love; but their heart goeth after their covetousness;' so the seals. Many that tear the bond yet prize the seal out of a superstitious conceit. Good things done to an ill end are not acceptable. So in prayer and all other duties, we are chiefly to regard the aim and end; for these duties may be performed out of self-interest, or to feed fancy, or to satisfy curiosity: Ezek. xxxiii. 32, 'Lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not.'

3. This will further appear from the profit of thus considering what we are about. In approaching to the table of the Lord there is a treble benefit.

[1.] It maketh us come the more worthily. The work cannot be well done unless the end be regarded. 'Hear, for it is for thy life'—*finis est mensura mediorum*. They that come for a worthy end will come in a worthy manner. When we go about it hand over head, we are slight and careless. A right pure intention in the supper begets reverence, awakens desires after the blessings offered. It is for Christ, therefore with reverence, therefore with affection, hungering and thirsting after him. What am I now a-doing? When the Israelites came to hear God, they washed their garments: Exod. xix. 12. When we come to taste God, to feed on Christ, we had need to prepare our appetites, seeing such great things are made over to us.

[2.] As it maketh us to do it seriously, so with cheerfulness; the end sweeteneth the means. Physic is troublesome, but it is for health. To sequester ourselves, and to examine conscience, all soul-work is difficult; the soul is loath to discover its own nakedness, as a man in debt is loath to cast up his accounts. Every duty is tedious to the flesh, but God hath annexed some spiritual profit. What will it be in the issue? It is a relief to the soul. As a worldly man worketh hard, fareth hard, but it is for gain: Isa. lv. 2, 'Wherefore do you spend your money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.' The Spirit of God would have them to consider with themselves.

[3.] It helpeth us to judge of the success. You thrive in an ordinance when you have the ends for which God appointed it. Every duty hath its special end, as every tree its special fruit. Would a man gather grapes off thorns or figs off thistles? There are experiences as a well by the way. Now, when you have fixed your aim, you will sensibly

discern whether you have thrived. We see what to look after. Have I met with Christ according to that way of manifestation which is proper to this duty? In the word we come to him as our teacher; in prayer, as our advocate; in the supper, as the master of the feast, to satisfy us with his loves.

Let us apply this to the Lord's supper. Look to the right ends of all duties. Thus we should do in the supper; partly because we are apt to rest in the work wrought, and partly because the work wrought is nothing without a due aim. Signs are either natural, as smoke of fire, or by institution. The sacraments are signs by institution. Now in every instituted sign, unless we look to the author and the end, we do nothing; for every instituted means, as it hath authority from the author, so it hath a tendency and respect to the end, without which it loseth its nature, and is but a common action. If bread and wine were natural signs of Christ, I could not use bread and wine but I must think of Christ. Now I use these as instituted signs; therefore, unless I look to the end, the action is a nullity. I look to the author as able to perform what is signified by it, and as obliged to give it; and the end, to help our infirmities, and as a seal and pledge to assure us, and to revive affections towards Christ and all his benefits. Partly because in the Lord's supper God hath joined so many good ends, that when one ceaseth to move us and affect us, the other may take place which is more suitable to our condition. Now I shall show you what are the ends of the Lord's supper. I have often spoken of them severally; I shall now speak of them conjunctly.

The ends of supper are—1. To be a badge of profession, and to put a visible difference between us and infidels and idolaters, or the worshippers of false gods. The church is said to be 'terrible as an army with banners,' Cant. vi. 4, for order, comeliness, and strength. The banners of Christ, under which the army of the church marcheth, are the sacraments. The Jews were distinguished from all other nations by circumcision and the passover, so a christian is by baptism and the Lord's supper. As for this last, see 1 Cor. x. 21, 'Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and the table of devils.' So that every time we come to the Lord's table, we profess ourselves to be a peculiar people unto him, or a part of that distinct society who are to hold out his honour to the world, and so difference ourselves from Turks, Jews, and infidels, and in effect to withdraw from all false religions in the world. As Christ will not be confounded with idols and devils, so neither will he have his people confounded with idolaters and the children of the devil; they are visibly distinguished by these rites, as a people set apart to worship and serve the true God, and promote his honour and glory in the world; as Balaam prophesied of the church, Num. xxiii. 9, 'They shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.' They shall have their religion and laws apart from other nations; be a distinct community to the world, as Goshen to Egypt; as those in the ark to those that perished in the waters; as Gideon's fleece to all the rest of the ground; as the house of Rahab to the rest of Jericho; they are in a society who own God, and God will own them. Well, then, this end of the sacrament

must not be neglected, for hereby we profess to own the true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, and to abhor idols, and all false religions in the world. But you will say, Do not the rabble of nominal christians the same? What great matter is it? I answer—

[1.] This is not all which Christ intended by this mysterious ordinance, but yet this must not be neglected. Visible godliness is not enough, but visible godliness must not be omitted. Rom. x. 8, 9, 'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth, and believe with thy heart, the Lord Jesus, thou shalt be saved; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation.' The one is necessary to our own safety, the other to the glory of God. Therefore christianity is sometimes described by the inward part, which is faith in Christ; sometimes by the outward part, which is confession. Therefore Christ is called, 'The high priest of our profession,' Heb. iii. 1. It is a thing not to be smothered in the heart, but outwardly owned and acknowledged. Now confession is more made by sacraments than any other thing. This is proper to the society of christians. We may preach to heathens, but this is our military oath to bind us to stand to our profession.

[2.] Profession rightly understood is a great matter, for two reasons—

(1.) Cases may happen when our profession is like to cost us dear, as in the primitive times, when owning of Christ exposed them to great danger; the bleak winds that blow in our backs blew in their faces, and it was as dangerous then to be a christian as now to be no christian, or a professed Turk and infidel; yea, more, because christianity maketh us more mild to enemies and opposers than a false religion; which usually maketh men bloody, and inspireth them with destructive furies against the welfare of others; and men need to be obliged to profession then, because of the trouble to the flesh which accompanied it. The ancient libertines, when their profession was costly, thought it enough to be christians in heart, though they outwardly complied with idolaters and false worshippers. The apostle urgeth promises of communion with God: 'I will dwell with them, and walk with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people,' 2 Cor. vi. 16, and concludeth, 2 Cor. vii. 1, 'Having therefore these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of both flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God;' and Phil. ii. 10, 'Every knee shall bow to Christ, and every mouth confess him.' To prostitute my body and keep my mind, it is as if a wife that yieldeth her body to another man should say, I keep my heart loyal to my husband. Now, when we have to do with pseudo-christians, *ad aras Jovis aut Veneris adorare et sub antichristo fidem occultare idem est.*—Zwinglius: Rev. xiv. 13, 'Blessed are the dead which die in (or for) the Lord from henceforth,' ἀπαύρι. We must separate from them, only we must distinguish of corruptions; if not such as are an apparent revolt from the institutions of Christ, if imperfect, inexpedient, as far as we are convinced of the evil, we must separate from the evil.

(2.) Because we are bound to a profession, not in word only, but in deed; to a suitable walking or to glorify Christ. He is not a professor

whose life is not a hymn to God. Actions are the best image of our thoughts. A man may destroy his profession by his conversation : Titus i. 16, 'They profess they know God, but in their works they deny him.' Experience teacheth us that a man may profess a religion which he doth abhor ; though they know God, they do not love him, and live to him, and they are not really and seriously what they nominally profess to be. An unclean person is a votary to Priapus ; a drunkard to Bacchus ; not a disciple of Christ. An earthly sensual worldling doth in his life say that the alcoran is better than the gospel ; a merciless man is worse than an infidel, and hath denied the faith, 1 Tim. v. 8. Interpretative circumcision is turned into uncircumcision, Rom. ii. 25 ; and Jer. ix. 25, 26, 'I will punish all them which are circumcised with the uncircumcised, &c. For all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in heart.' Uncircumcised in heart have a pagan heart. Certainly a man that is obliged to the profession is obliged to the duties which the profession calleth for. What ! profess yourselves to be christians, and live loosely ? This is to be called christians *in opprobrium Christi*, to the reproach of Christ. A christian and a worldling ! a christian and a sensualist ! it is as great a contradiction as to say a christian and an infidel. Profession includeth holy practice as well as verbal acknowledgment. There is a practical blasphemy : Rev. ii. 9, 'I know the blasphemy of them that say they are Jews, and are not.' You blaspheme when you worship, and you make Christ a patron of your sin : Ps. l. 16, 17, 'But to the wicked, God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant into thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee ?' Every sacrament is an aggravation of your unfaithfulness, and so doth not profit, but hurt you. Baptism, though not renounced, is forgotten, when we live as if we were in league with the devil, the world, and the flesh : 2 Peter i. 9, 'Hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.' Better that scalding lead and oil had been poured upon them than the water of baptism. So for the Lord's supper : 1 Cor. xi. 27, 'Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord ;' and Heb. x. 29, 'Of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing ?' Well, then, they are as bad as infidels, yea, worse than infidels, 1 Tim. v. viii. To be brought up in princes courts, and yet to be of clownish behaviour, aggravates the crime.

If you ask what duties doth this profession bind you to, I answer—Consider what are the excellences of the christian profession ? Sure principles of trust, or commerce between us and God, for mercies [of daily providence, pardon, and life ; excellent rewards, and holy precepts of purity and charity. Now, if we transgress any of these, we dishonour our profession.

As to the first, distrust of providence, it is said, Mat. vi. 32, 'Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat, &c. (for after these things do the gentiles seek) ; for your heavenly Father knoweth that you have



need of all these things.' Then, for the other part, commerce with God and rest for the soul; as to fears of vengeance and desires of happiness, we are commanded, Jer. vi. 16, to 'stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.'

As to the second, for excellent rewards, 1 Cor. ii. 12, the apostle saith, 'Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.'

As to the third, for holy precepts—purity and charity. As to purity: 1 Peter iv. 3, 'For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.' So for charity: 1 Tim. v. 8, 'If any man provide not for his own, especially they of his own house, he hath denied the faith;' that is, done an act incompatible with the christian religion.

2. The next end is, it is a seal of the covenant. Circumcision was so: Gen. xvii. 11, 'My covenant shall be in your flesh.' And the apostle explaineth it: Rom. iv. 11, 'He received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith.' Now what is true of one sacrament is true of all, for they agree in their general nature; and therefore it is said, Luke xxii. 20, 'This cup is the new testament in my blood.' A charter that hath divers seals hath not this for one part, that for another, but all for the whole.

Well, then, the new testament is confirmed by them. Now the covenant bindeth mutually. God bindeth himself to give grace to us, and we bind ourselves to live unto God: Exod. xxiv. 6–8, 'And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in a basin, and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said, will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words.'

Well, then, sacraments on God's part are signs and seals of the promise of grace; on our part, an obligation to obedience. God bindeth himself to be our God, and we bind ourselves to be his people. God to be our God, that is to be a benefactor becoming an infinite and eternal power; that is, the meaning of 'I will be your God,' Mat. xxii. 32, and Heb. xi. 16; that is, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, will employ all his wisdom, power, and goodness to keep us from all evil, and bestow on us all good: Gen. xv. 1, 'Fear not, Abraham; I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward;' and Ps. lxxxiv. 11, 'For the Lord God is a sun and a shield; the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.' Here a shield, hereafter a reward; both in part here, both fully hereafter, when the sun is in his meridian. Again, on the other side, we bind ourselves to be his people; that is, as to entrance and progress. As to entrance: Acts xx. 21, 'Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.' So it is an obligation to repentance and faith; this is making the covenant. As to progress, continuance, and keeping covenant; so

we bind ourselves to new obedience: Heb. v. 9, 'He is become the author of eternal salvation, unto all them that obey him.'

Now, then, if we come aright, we must come with a true heart, and in full assurance of faith, Heb. x. 22. With an assurance of faith, that God will be as good as his word, pardoning, sanctifying, blessing, and that he will keep us to everlasting glory; and with a true heart bind ourselves to a return to our duty, depending on the Redeemer's sacrifice, and to walk in all new obedience. The oftener we renew this covenant, the more conscience we must have of both parts. In baptism we first bound ourselves to depend upon God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as our benefactor, redeemer, and sanctifier; as also 1 Peter iii. 21, to serve, worship, and obey Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as our Lord, redeemer, and sanctifier. We often renew this in the Lord's supper. Our faith is the more confirmed, and our obedience more strengthened; as the servant whose ear was bored, Exod. xxi. 6, bound himself to his master. The oftener we devote ourselves to God, the more conscience we should have of our oath. Rouse up yourselves there. Doth God give you bread and wine to be symbols of his wrath and backwardness to do you good; or to be symbols of his grace and readiness to help us, and of his bounty towards us? If he hath forgiven our sins, will he not forgive our infirmities? If he gives the beginnings, will he not give the continuance? If eternal, will he not give temporals? Ps. xxiii. 1, 'The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.' So also excite your obedience; I am the Lord's, and shall I live to myself? No; 'His I am, and him will I serve,' Acts xxvii. 23. I am no longer my own, and shall I live as my own? I shall be the most faithless man in the world. Breach of vows in an indifferent thing is a great crime, much more here: Acts v. 4, 'Whilst it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thy own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.'

3. It is a pledge of heaven: Mat. xxvi. 29, 'But I say unto you, that I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until the day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom;' that is, after a new manner; then we enjoy the effects of it, fulness of joy and eternal delights: Mat. viii. 11, 'Shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven;' sit down at an eternal feast. And Luke xxii. 30, 'That you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom.' So John vi. 54, 'Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.' The man revived that touched the prophet's bones; to eat Christ's flesh by faith leaveth a quickening power. This is our refreshing in the house of our pilgrimage, as Israel had manna in the wilderness till they came into the land of Canaan; so that if we come rightly to this holy duty, we come not mainly for any temporal good, but either heaven, or temporal things in order to heaven. He that believeth not the promise of eternal life with his whole heart, cometh in vain. Therefore, here we come to grow more heavenly-minded, to set mind and heart a-work, to look more and long more for the heavenly estate, and to quicken our selves to prepare for it, and to seek it in the first place, referring our selves to God for other things: Mat. vi. 33, 'First seek the kingdom

of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.' God, who is our father, will give us temporal things so far as is for our good; but chiefly he sheweth himself a father in Christ, to make us heirs according to the hope of eternal life. Therefore we must make heaven our great end and scope: 2 Cor. iv. 18, 'While we look not to the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal;' and the great motive which must dwell in our minds, and govern our choices, and direct all our motions and actions. Heart and mind must be in heaven before we be there.

4. It is the sign, means, and pledge of our communion with Christ: 1 Cor. x. 16, 'The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?' God giveth you this bread and this wine in token of your union with Christ, as these things become one with us, and are turned into our substance. Before conversion, there was a separation between God and us, Isa. lix. 2; but at conversion, and as soon as we do believe, there is a union; we are united to Christ, and by Christ to God; but we solemnly come and take possession of him in the sacrament. This is one of the instruments of application and conveyance. Here is Christ, and all his benefits made made over to you. Christ is the remedy of all evil and the fountain of all good. So we come solemnly to receive him out of God's hands, that our conjunction with him may be more close and sensible; that he may live in us by his Spirit, and we may live in him by faith, as the branches do in the vine, and the vine in the branches, John xv. 1, 2. Our conjunction with him is intrinsical and spiritual, but yet real. By virtue of this union we are made one spirit with the Lord: 1 Cor. vi. 17, 'And one body;' Eph. i. 23, 'Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all things;' and Eph. iii. 6, 'That the gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body.' This conjunction is partly by faith: Gal. ii. 20, 'I live by the faith of the Son of God;' and Eph. iii. 17, 'That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.' God hath put our life into his hands; he is our root: 'And because he liveth, we shall live also.' Faith, or a constant dependence upon Christ, is a means of his dwelling in us by his Spirit. And partly by love; that maketh a conjunction of minds: 1 Sam. xviii. 1, 'And the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and he loved him as his own soul.' Christ loveth us, and we love him. None can unclasp these mutual embraces: Rom. viii. 39, 'Neither height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ.' From this union resulteth a communion of righteousness and sanctification.

[1.] Of righteousness: 2 Cor. v. 21, 'For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' We have the effects of his righteousness, as he suffered the effects of our sin. As we are partakers of Adam's sin by natural generation, so by regeneration we are made partakers of Christ's righteousness: Rom. v. 19, 'As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.'

It is as effectual for pardon and salvation as if believers themselves had performed it.

[2.] God giveth us his Holy Spirit to sanctify us, which is the best and choicest gift which God can give, as it is also the greatest which the saints desire; for what greater gift can there be than to be partakers of a divine nature, to love God, and be like him, and be made fit for him? Now Christ is not only made righteousness, but sanctification to us: 1 Cor. i. 30, 'But of him ye are in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.' And it is said, this spirit of holiness 'is shed upon us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Lord,' Titus iii. 6, for the renewing and healing of our natures. In short, the favour of God and image of God are the two great benefits which we have by virtue of our union and communion with Christ.

5. It is a means of our spiritual growth and nourishment. As bread and wine are the principal means of corporal nourishment: Ps. civ. 15, 'Wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth the heart of man;' so is Christ the food and nourishment of the soul: John vi. 56, 'He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me, and I in him.' His flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed. We are planted into Christ by baptism, and we are nourished in the Lord's supper. There must first be life, and then food; and where there is life, food is necessary to preserve it. So in spiritual life, because of frequent decays and constant employment; we need food for the soul as well as for the body. This ordinance supposeth implantation into Christ, that the covenant is made and initiated, that our new birth is passed, that now we come to strengthen it; therefore we are baptized but once, but we communicate often. *Ὁσάκις* implieth *πολλάκις*; 'As often as ye eat this bread,' &c., implieth that we should be frequent; for by the frequent performance of this duty the Holy Ghost doth confirm our faith, excite our love, quicken our hope, and helpeth us more fully and sensibly to be made partakers of the righteousness and spirit of Christ, and rooted in our union with him unto a continual perseverance.

6. A memorial of Christ's death. To both the elements Christ saith, 'Do this in remembrance of me;' and of the whole action, 'Ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come,' 1 Cor. xi. 26. His passion is acted over again in figure and representation: Gal. iii. 1, 'Before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified among you.' So that your duty there is affectionately and with application to consider the occasion, manner, and end of Christ's death, for the strengthening of our faith, and the preservation of our union and communion with Christ. The occasion was our fallen estate, which brought on guilt and misery, without a sense of which there is no prizing of Christ. A speculative knowledge of our sin and misery will beget only an opinionative faith in Christ; for such as is our sense of the misery so will our reflections be on the remedy; but a sensible, awakening knowledge of our great necessity will teach us to value Christ as a Saviour, and come heartily to him. Therefore we must come to this work with a due sense of our misery and spiritual

indigence, feeling the burden of our sin, and hungering and thirsting after righteousness. The cause and reason of his death as a gift, or a propitiatory sacrifice, is God's free love, John iii. 16. 'Therefore we must come admiring God's grace and goodness to us, applying it with confidence and delight; and out of a sense of this great love, devoting ourselves to his love and service. The manner of it: Phil. ii. 8, 'He became obedient to death, even the death of the cross.' So painful, shameful, cursed a death, to put an everlasting brand on sin. And then the end; to propitiate God, offended with our sins: 1 John ii. 2, 'If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins, and not only for ours, but for the sins of the whole world;' and 1 John iv. 10, 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' Therefore we must depend upon this propitiatory sacrifice, earnestly desiring to partake of the fruits thereof, namely, remission of sins and reconciliation with God, with the gift of the Spirit and adoption to eternal life.

7. It is a pledge of his coming. When Christ went, he left a promise with us: John xiv. 3, 'And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.' Now he would still keep the promise a-foot, that we might look for him, long for him, and wait for him. Reason saith, He may come; faith saith, He will come; love, When will he come?

8. It is a band of love: 1 Cor. xii. 13, 'And have been made all to drink into one spirit;' and 1 Cor. x. 17, 'For we, being many, are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread.' The world maketh sacraments matters of contention and division; but saints use them otherwise, to enkindle a mutual love to one another, to pardon failings, pity miseries, lay aside grudgings, and be mutually helpful to one another; in short, that we may get more love to God and man.

9. To be an holy banquet or spiritual feast, or the entertainment God hath provided for his family in the house of their pilgrimage. This is evident from the nature of the work and the frequent allusions in scripture to a feast. The sacrament is a feast upon a sacrifice. A man keepeth a feast to show his affection to his guests, and to renew and increase their affection towards him; so God keepeth a feast of loves to beget and renew in us a sense and persuasion of his fatherly love to us in Christ, and to renew our love and cheerful obedience to him. Well, then, let us not sit down to God's feast without an appetite, nor eat and drink without sense, and taste, and joy, and gratitude to our entertainer: Ps. xxii. 26, 'The meek shall eat and be satisfied; they shall praise the Lord that seek him; your hearts shall live for ever.' I shall conclude with a few corollaries.

First corollary, If these be the ends of the sacrament, you see what need there is of preparation; that we consider the tenor of our profession, and the nature of God's covenant, the reasons and ends of Christ's death, and the hopes of glory. Alas! without this there will be no prizing of Christ, no desire of righteousness, no hope of salvation, no care to please God. While men are negligent in preparation

and examination of themselves, they provoke God whilst they handle these holy things negligently.

Second corollary, is to show how all these things do promote holiness. As it is a badge of profession ; surely the peculiar people must be an holy nation, 1 Peter ii. 9. As it is a seal of the covenant we are obliged to holiness and new obedience. Therein we devote ourselves to God, to be 'holy as he that hath called us is holy,' 1 Peter i. 16, 17. As it is a pledge of heaven ; it is a sinless state we look for : 1 John iii. 3, 'He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, as Christ is pure.' As it is a means of communion with Christ : 1 John i. 6, 7, 'If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth ; but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.' The visible fruit of this communion is holiness : 2 Cor. vi. 14, 'For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness ? and what communion hath light with darkness ?' And as it is a means of our spiritual growth. What is growth but growth in holiness ? As it is a memorial of Christ's death ; so with the apostle we should be able to say, 'I am crucified with Christ,' Gal. ii. 20 ; and Rom. vi. 6, 'Knowing that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.' What did he die for but to sanctify us ? As it is a pledge of his coming ; can a guilty creature long for Christ's coming ? The voice of sinful nature is, Depart ; but the Spirit in the bride saith, Come. Would prisoners and malefactors long for the assizes ? As it is a bond of love ; true spiritual love is *inter bonos* : 1 John v. 1, 'Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him that is begotten of him.' Our hearts are purified for this love : 1 Peter i. 22, 'Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth.' As it is a feast, if we are not holy, we are unworthy guests, unthankful to God that entertaineth us : Ps. xli. 9, 'Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.' Men do more grievously take injuries from kindred and domestics that eat their bread. You must not eat with God unless you resolve to live in a state of holy friendship with him. From the whole, let us sanctify ourselves in body and soul, and come in a holy manner to this holy table.

Third corollary, is to show the false ends, as resting in the work wrought. Sacraments do no good merely as a work wrought. If severed from the word, they are unprofitable ; as a seal without an indenture and writing : Mat. xxviii. 19, 'Go ye therefore, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you ;' and Eph. v. 26, 'That he might sanctify and cleanse it, by the washing of water through the word ;' and 1 Peter iii. 21, 'The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us ; not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God.'

The papists say it is *viaticum morientium*, therefore thrust the sacrament into the mouths of those that die, and, if neglected, they almost despair of the salvation of him that dieth. No ; it is *viaticum*

*viventium*; it is our journey provision. Death is not a journey, but the end of a journey; it is a passage in a moment, a cessation from our journey in this world, which needeth no *viaticum*. It is a going out of the world, like the putting out of a lamp, in a moment. As a lamp needeth no oil to be extinguished, but to burn, we need this for our journey going through the world, but not at our departure out of the world. In that moment that our body dieth, the soul it is in the hand of God.

END OF VOLUME XV.