

SERMON UPON JOSHUA VI. 26.

Cursed be the man before the Lord that riseth 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.—
JOSH. vi. 26.

THESE words relate to the history of Jericho's destruction. In which, the place and the manner of its being destroyed are notable.

1. The place, Jericho, was—(1.) A strong and well-fenced city; one of those which frightened the spies who were sent to view the land. To appearance it seemed impregnable. (2.) It was a frontier, a key to let in all or stop all that entered into the land of Canaan on that side. (3.) A wicked place and people above others; deliciousness of the situation contributing to the luxury of the inhabitants.

2. The manner of its destruction. It was by the marching of Israel about the city seven days, and the priests going before them blowing with rams' horns; a type of God's blessing on the labours of his ministers, in stirring up his people against the kingdom of sin, Satan, and antichrist. But faith must use such means as God hath appointed, though to appearance they be never so despicable. Against Midian Gideon useth the stratagem of lamps in pitchers, which the apostle calleth 'treasure in earthen vessels,' 2 Cor. iv. 7; so here, by the blast of the rams' horns, the walls of this seemingly impregnable city fell flat to the ground: 2 Cor. x. 4, 'For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God in the pulling down of strongholds.'

The text giveth an account of what Joshua did and said on this occasion. What he did, in the beginning of the verse, 'He adjured the people at that time;' that is, exacted this oath or solemn consent from them, to submit themselves and their posterity to the imprecation or curse denounced by him in the name of the Lord. What he said, in the curse itself, 'Cursed be the man before the Lord that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho.'

So that in the words you have a terrible denunciation—(1.) Generally propounded; (2.) Particularly exemplified.

[1.] Generally expressed, 'Cursed be the man before the Lord that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho.' Where—(1.) The crime, 'That riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho;' that is, that shall presume and take the boldness to build the walls of this city. (2.) The punishment, 'Cursed be he before the Lord;' that is, the Lord

seeing, ratifying, and appointing this doom and sentence. For it is not a passionate imprecation, but a prophetic prediction, coming not from any private motion, but the inspiration of God; and therefore it is called 'the word of the Lord spoken by Joshua,' 1 Kings xvi. 34.

But why is such a curse interminated against those that shall build this city?

I answer—Though we are not to render a reason of God's counsels, yet this seemeth to be the cause: it was the first city of all Canaan that was destroyed, and that miraculously; and God would have the ruins remain as a monument to posterity of his power, justice, and goodness; for whilst this spectacle, the rubbish of the ruined walls, remained, it encouraged their faith, and upbraided their unthankfulness to God who had wrought so wonderfully for them; of his justice on the Canaanites, and his grace and goodness towards his people.

[2.] It is particularly explained, 'He shall lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, and in his youngest son he shall set up the gates thereof; that is, he shall be punished for his presumption in this act by the death of his two sons; the first in the beginning of the work, the second in the finishing thereof; the setting up of the gates being the last thing. Others probably understand, he shall be punished with the loss of all his children, from the eldest to the youngest; so that the curse is, his posterity shall be rooted out.

Now, for a long time none had the boldness to attempt this work upon which so fearful a curse was imposed; till at length, some hundreds of years afterwards, in Ahab's time, one Hiel the Bethelite audaciously sets upon it; and accordingly this curse was verified in him, to the utter overthrow of his family: 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.' Strange that, seeing his first son drop away, he desisted not from that design; but such is the precipice of bad projects and engagements, once step in, and seldom stop in the way of wickedness.

This history teacheth us two lessons—

(1.) That it is dangerous to slight God's threatenings. The curse denounced many hundred years before took place. The force and virtue of the prediction was not worn out and antiquated, though the attempt was long after it was first pronounced.

(2.) How dangerous it is to build again what God hath or would have to be ruined and destroyed. This latter lesson I shall insist upon, and observe—

Doct. That to seek to erect what God hath and would have destroyed involveth us in a fearful curse.

In following which point, I shall show—(1.) What God hath and would destroy; (2.) The reasons; (3.) The use.

First, What it is that God hath and will destroy. The question is large, but I will restrain it to the matter I intend. And because the accommodation of scripture to particular cases needeth to proceed upon good evidence, that right may be done, I shall state it in these propositions—

1. Certain it is that the kingdom which God will erect and establish

is the kingdom of the Mediator, and the kingdom which God will destroy is the kingdom of the devil. I put it in this copulate axiom or double proposition, because the one immediately dependeth upon the other, and the one cannot be done without the other. The kingdom of Christ as mediator cannot be set up unless the kingdom of the devil be destroyed.

Now that this is the purpose of God, to erect the one and destroy the other, is evident by scripture: 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, but in due time they shall be his footstool. He shall gain upon opposition, and against opposition, and by opposition. They shall be so far from overturning his throne, that they shall be a step to it, as the footstool is to the throne; and I John iii. 8, 'For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil,' *ἵνα λύσῃ*. To unravel all that Satan hath been a-weaving for the captivating and deceiving of the world. Christ having a grant of a kingdom over the nations, his design is to conquer them, and subdue them to himself, and to recover them to himself. This was the meaning of Gen. iii. 15, 'I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.'

2. To know these two kingdoms we must consider the quality of either.

[1.] The gospel kingdom is a kingdom of light, life, and love.

Of light, because the drift of it is to give men a true knowledge of God: Acts xxvi. 18, 'To open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God.' The devil's kingdom is the kingdom of darkness. The devils are said to be rulers of the darkness of this world, Eph. vi. 12. And those that are called from one kingdom to another are called from darkness to light: Col. i. 13, 'Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.'

It is a kingdom of life; as men that were before dead in sins may be made alive unto God: John x. 10, 'I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.' For heathens, and all men in their natural estate, are 'alienated from the life of God,' Eph. iv. 18. But by faith in Christ we live in God and to God: Gal. ii. 20, 'I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me;' Gal. v. 6, 'In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith, which worketh by love.' As it worketh by love, we are inclined to God, and do his will, and seek his glory, and our happiness in the everlasting fruition of him.

And of love. It is a kingdom of love, as it possesseth us with a fervent charity to God and men: 1 John iv. 8, 'He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love;' Acts xxiv. 16, 'Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men.'

Now opposite to light is ignorance and error; to life, a religion that consists of shows and dead ceremonies; to love, uncharitableness,

malice, and hatred of the power of godliness, and persecution; and wherever these eminently prevail, there is an opposite kingdom set up to the kingdom of Christ; which may be done by two sorts of persons or people—

(1.) Those that continue in the old apostasy and defection from God, as eminently was done 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 reigneth, instead of that spirit of love and goodness which the gospel would produce.

(2.) It may be done by a second falling away, which is foretold 2 Thes. ii. 3, 'For that day shall not come, except there come 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 it were a dangerous thing; as if the height of christian faith and devotion did consist in a blind obedience, and a believing what men could impose upon them by their bare authority; and instead of life, men place their whole religion in some superstitious rites and ceremonies, and trifling acts of devotion, or exterior mortifications; and instead of love to God and souls, all things are sacrificed to private ambition, and consciences are forced by the highest penalties and persecutions to submit to their corruptions of the christian faith and worship. Where this obtaineth, there is a manifest perversion of the interests of Christ's kingdom.

Both these apostasies, the general apostasy from God, and the special apostasy from Christ, may be upheld by the authority, power, and interest of several nations; and though the name of God and of Christ be retained in either for a cloak, yet clearly we may see they are revolted from the kingdom of God and of Christ.

[2.] The devil's kingdom. Surely he hath a great hand in all the corruptions of mankind, especially in antichrist's kingdom. As the apostle telleth us, his 'coming shall be' by or 'after the working of Satan,' 2 Thes. ii. 9. He is the raiser and support of that estate, as will appear by what is ascribed to the devil in the scriptures.

(1.) Ignorance, and error, and seduction. For it is said, John viii. 44, that 'he abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him: when he speaketh a lie he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of lies.' And therefore in that society of professed christians where ignorance not only reigneth, but is countenanced, and means of grace suppressed, and most errors and corruptions in doctrine have been introduced, there Satan hath great influence: 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 unto them.'

(2.) Idolatry. This was his first and great endeavour for perverting the world, to bring men to worship another god, or the true God by an idol. The devil is *εὐδωλοχάρης*, a delighter in idols.* He was the contriver of the idols of the gentiles; therefore they are said to 'sacrifice their sons and daughters unto devils,' Ps. cvi. 37; and Deut. xxxii. 17, 'They sacrificed unto devils, and not unto God.' They meant it to God, but the Lord saith it was to devils. Aaron saith to Jehovah;

* Synecius.

so saith Jeroboam. Now, where the devil can get such a party in the church as shall not only set up, but be mad upon image-worship, who do more visibly promote his interest than they?

(3.) That which is ascribed to Satan is bloody cruelty, or seeking the destruction of Christ's most faithful servants; for he is called 'a murderer from the beginning' John viii. 44; and Cain is said to be of that 'wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous,' 1 John iii. 12. Enmity to the power of godliness came from Satan; and wherever it is encouraged and notoriously practised, they are a party and confederacy of men governed and influenced by Satan. Now where shall we find this character but in anti-christ's confederacy? Rev. xiii. 15, 'He caused that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed;' and again, Rev. xvii. 5, 6, the woman whose name was Mystery was 'drunken with the blood of the saints, and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.' And it hath been eminently fulfilled in the bloodshed of Germany, France, England, and other nations; and all this to extinguish the light and suppress the truth of Christ. Oh, how many seeming christians hath Satan employed in these works of cruelty! When once he had seduced the church to errors, and corrupted the doctrine and worship of Christ, he presently maketh the erroneous party instruments of as cruel and bloody persecutions as were ever commenced by infidels and Mahometans. Witness their murders upon so many thousands of the Waldenses and Albigenses, whom they not only spoiled, but slaughtered with all manner of hellish cruelty. Some of their own bishops complained they could not find lime and stone enough to build prisons for them, nor defray the charges of their food. The world was even amazed at their unheard of cruelties; smoking and burning thousands of men, women, and children, some in caves, others at the stake; and many other ways butchering them, proclaiming crusades against them, and preaching the merit of paradise to such bloody butchers as had a mind to root them out; driving also multitudes to perish in snowy mountains. What desolations they wrought in Bohemia; what horrible massacres in France! What fires they kindled in England; what cruelties they executed in Ireland and Piedmont! If we should be silent, history will speak, and tell all generations to come how little this faction of christians have of the lamb-like spirit of Christ Jesus, and how insatiable their thirst is for the blood of upright righteous men. And then consider where the satanical spirit ruleth, and whether we have cause to be enamoured of blood, and fire, and inquisitions?

(4.) That which is ascribed to Satan is that he is 'the god of this world,' 2 Cor. iv. 4; and again, the 'prince of this world,' John xii. 31, John xvi. 11. He playeth the god and prince here, and sensual and worldly souls are easily seduced by him. The riches, honours, and wealth of this world are the great instruments of his kingdom; and the men of this world, whose portion is in this life, are his proper subjects. As Christ is head of the saints, so is Satan of the wicked, ungodly, ambitious world. St Austin distinguisheth of two cities—of Jerusalem the city of God, and Babylon which is the incorporation which belongeth to Satan. And therefore, when you find any party of christians who

'are of the world, speak of the world, and the world heareth them,' 1 John iv. 5, they that are to try the spirits may soon see what to choose and what to forsake. Certainly the case is not doubtful where the head of that state, without any warrant from Christ, and with the apparent detriment and loss of christianity, exalteth himself above all that is called God, and affecteth an ambitious tyranny and domineering over the christian world, both princes, pastors, and people; and to uphold this tyranny, careth not what havoc he maketh of the churches of Christ; and where the whole frame of their religion is calculated for secular honour, worldly pomp, and greatness.

3. That it is God's purpose to set up one kingdom and demolish the other, not only in the hearts of particular men, but in kingdoms and nations and public societies. Jesus Christ was appointed to be not only 'king of saints,' Rev. xv. 3, but 'king of nations,' Jer. x. 7; and therefore not only erect to himself a throne and a government in the hearts of his people, but to have his religion owned and countenanced, and supported by nations and kingdoms and public societies of men. When Christ was promised to Abraham, it was said, Gen. xviii. 18, 'All the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him;' not only persons, but nations. So Isa. lv. 5, 'Nations that knew not thee shall run to thee;' Isa. lx. 12, 'The nations and kingdoms that would not serve thee shall perish;' Rev. xi. 15, 'The kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.' When Christ sent abroad the apostles, he said, Mat. xxviii. 19, 'Go, teach all nations.' They were not only to gain upon single persons, but bring nations to a public owning of Christ. There is a personal acknowledgment of Christ when we receive him into our hearts: John i. 12, 'To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.' An ecclesiastical acknowledgment of Christ, when the church as a society is in visible covenant with him: Ezek. xvi. 8, 'I swear unto thee, and entered into covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine.' A national acknowledgment of Christ, when his religion is countenanced and supported by nations, and befriended with the laws and constitutions of civil government. This is a great advantage. Christ prayed for it: John xvii. 21, 23, 'That they may all be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.' By believing there is meant common conviction. He had promised it before: John xvi. 8, 'When he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.' It is a great advantage when the potentates of the earth set open the doors to Christ, and are careful of his interest in the world.

4. When true religion is thus received, such an advantage should not be lost or carelessly looked after. Partly because it is with much ado that Christ gets up in the world; not only by the labours of his servants, but by their deep sufferings. As the chief captain said to Paul, 'With a great sum obtained I this freedom,' Acts xxii. 28; so this liberty was not only purchased by the blood of Christ, 1 Peter i. 18, 19, but with the expense of many of his servants' lives, who

counted not their interest dear to them, to bring the world to this pass, and to recover the truths and interests of Christ's kingdom out of the common apostasy. Partly because it is unreasonable that should be lost in an instant that hath been so long a-gaining, and wantonly thrown away which with so many years' care hath been brought to this effect; so that the work of Christ is set back in the world. After the second apostasy, God doth by degrees bring down the kingdom of Satan, and recover the kingdom of the Mediator: Rev. xi. 13, 'The tenth part of the city fell, and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven;' Ps. lix. 11, 'Slay them not, lest my people forget: scatter them in thy power, and bring them down.' To put Christ to do again what hath been done already, is such a presuming on his providence as will cost dear. Partly also because the present age is a kind of trustee for the next. We are God's witnesses to the present age: Isa. xliii. 10, 'Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord.' And we are God's trustees for future generations, and should take care we do not entail prejudices upon them, and leave them to grapple with insuperable difficulties, to find out their way to heaven: Rom. iii. 2, 'The oracles of God were committed to the Jews.' So 2 Tim. ii. 2, 'The things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.' Now we must see that we be faithful in our trust. And we are bound to this zeal, if we remember our ancestors, or remember our posterity. Partly also because God severely threateneth them that play the wanton with religion, because they were not bitten with the inconveniences under which former generations smarted. And therefore, as Samuel dealt with the Israelites, when they would cast off the theocracy, or God's government, under which they had been well and safely governed, that they might be like the nations round about them; Samuel telleth them by God's appointment, 'The manner of the king that shall reign over them,' 1 Sam. viii. 11-13, 'He shall take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen, and some shall run before his chariots; and he will take your daughters to be his confectionaries, and to be cooks and bakers,' &c.; so if such a wanton humour should possess us that we must have the religion of the nations round about us, consider whom you receive spiritually to reign over you; one that will lord it over your consciences, obtrude upon you his damnable errors, and pestilent superstitions, and bold usurpations on the authority of Christ; or else burn you with temporal fire, or excommunicate you, and cast out your name, as one that is to be condemned to that which is eternal. And then you will see the difference between the blessed yoke of Christ and the iron yoke of antichrist.

Secondly, Reasons.

1. It is ingratitude to build again what God hath destroyed, as if his mercies were not worth the having. God prefaces the law, Exod. xx. 2, 'I am the Lord thy God, that brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the Lord's house of bondage.' Now God took it heinously when ever and anon they were making to themselves a captain to return again to Egypt; as if he had done them wrong to knock off their shackles and to free them from the brick-kilns, when their cry, because

of the anguish of their souls, came up to heaven. So in the new testament: Gal. v. 1, 'Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.' The servility of legal observances was so great and so unprofitable, that they could not be thankful enough for their liberty; and therefore it should be dearer to us than to part with it for trifles, or to take on the yoke again, when God hath freed us from it.

2. It is an affront to the God of heaven, or a contempt of his power; an entering into the list with the almighty God, as if we could keep up what he hath a mind to destroy. It is not a simple sin to stand out against Christ, and not to open the gates to him is a great evil. If his anger be but kindled a little, what can we do, the greatest, the wisest, the most powerful amongst us? Ps. ii. 12, 'Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish in the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.' But it is an aggravated sin to turn him out after he is entered. Alas! how horrible a contempt is that of Christ! It is a vile scorn put upon the majesty of God. Better never have owned him than to be cold, indifferent, and negligent in his interests. If the business had been to introduce a religion, it had been another matter; but this is to preserve what is already introduced.

3. It is unbelief. Such persons regard not the threatenings of God: Lam. i. 9, 'She remembered not her last end, therefore she came down wonderfully;' Deut. xxxii. 29, 'Oh, that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end.' Mischief and ruin attendeth these attempts: Hosea xiii. 1, 'When Ephraim offended in Baal, he died.' But people little mind these things.

4. How heinously God taketh this. See how he declareth the cause: Jer. ii. 9-13, 'I will plead with you, saith the Lord, and with your children's children will I plead. For pass over the isles of Chittim, and see; and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing. Hath a nation changed their gods, which yet are no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit. Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord. For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.' God will make you know, and your children's children know, that it is the basest thing in the world that he should lose ground in your days, and that people should sit loose in matters of religion, not care much which end goeth forward, when he hath done such great things for them. But what is God's plea? let them produce any people in any part of the world then commonly known that had dealt with their idols as they had done with him, the true and living God. Then, ver. 12, 'Be astonished, O ye heavens!' God would have the sun look pale on such a wickedness, and the spheres to hurl out their stars, and all the creatures to stand amazed at such a folly, such transcendent and matchless impiety. Elsewhere God complaineth, Isa. xliii. 22, 'Thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; thou hast been weary of me, O Israel.' To be weary of God is as great a charge as can be brought against a people. Then it is just with God to take away religion, that the want may make us more sensible of the worth of it.

5. It bringeth a scandal and ill report on God in the world. Therefore he standeth upon his vindication : Micah vi. 3-5, 'O my people ! what have I done unto thee ? and wherein have I wearied thee ? Testify against me. For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants, and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. O my people ! remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal, that ye may know the righteousness of the Lord.' That strangers receive him not is not so bad, but that a people acquainted with him should cast him out after trial. God calleth upon the mountains and strong foundations of the earth, who keep still their obediencial subjection to their creator, to witness against the ingratitude and stupidity of his people. What injury have we found in God ? ver. 2, 'Hear, O ye mountains, the Lord's controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth ; for the Lord hath a controversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel.'

Use. We must neither build the walls of Jericho again, nor, as much as in us lieth, suffer others to build them. Every one in his place is to hinder the work. If religion were uncertain, it were another matter. But did Christ come to establish the works of the devil ? If Joshua saith, 'Cursed be he before the Lord that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho ;' if Paul said, Gal. i. 8, 'If an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed ;' if others bestir themselves and by clancular and base artifices go to build these walls again, we should be the more zealous for God : Micah iv. 5, 'For all people shall walk in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of our God.' But what must we do ?

1. Let us not only profess the true religion, but come under the power of it. The heart is best established by grace. The bias of men's corrupt hearts doth easily prevail against the light of their minds. Few are corrupted in opinion but that are first false at heart. The regenerate have advantages above other men : 1 John ii. 20, 'Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things.' Most rotten opinions in the world are against the gust and sense of the new nature. But on the other side, men soon lose their zeal for truth that are addicted to a worldly sensual life. Therefore see that Christ's kingdom be set up in our hearts : Luke xvii. 21, 'The kingdom of God is within you ;' and that there we 'build not again the things we have destroyed,' Gal. ii. 18. After we have devoted ourselves to God, we must not fall off from him ; till Christ's kingdom be set up in our hearts, we shall never sincerely care for his interests in the world ; for all carnal men seek their own things. Men may bustle for a while for the interest of their several factions and opinions, but have not a true pure zeal for Christ's kingdom.

2. Let us pray ; that will do much. Christ hath taught us to pray for the coming of his kingdom : Mat. vi. 10, 'Thy kingdom come !' David, in his penitential psalm, could not forget the welfare of the church, when so deeply concerned as to his own particular, for the recovering of his own peace : Ps. li. 18, 'Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion ; build thou the walls of Jerusalem.' Walls of Zion,

not of Jericho or Babylon. It is God's interest ; spread it before him.

3. Be thankful to God for these deliverances. Prayer gets blessings, but thankfulness keepeth them ; for God is careful to preserve them to such who count it a benefit, and are mindful of it. We have manifold cause to bless God. •

[1.] For former deliverance out of the house of bondage so early.

[2.] That he hath so often defeated the attempts of those who would bring us back thither.

[3.] For the good we have many years enjoyed under the reformed religion, which God hath blessed to the converting, strengthening, and comforting many a precious soul.

[4.] For continuing still the liberty of the gospel and means of grace under a protestant king.

[5.] For the quiet we now enjoy ; when other parts of Christendom are in a combustion, we are untouched, and enjoy safety. We are querulous, and apt to complain ; but all things reckoned, we have much more cause to give thanks.

4. Let such deliverances as this enkindle our love and zeal to that religion which God hath owned and defended. Partly because when men are persuaded of the truth, such providences as these are so many attestations to it : Ps. xli. 11, ' By this I know that thou favourest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.' Partly because God will spew those out of his mouth that are neither hot nor cold. Partly because zeal discourageth the factors and abettors of the kingdom of darkness. The fear of the people restrained the pharisees.

5. Prize the means of grace, and encourage them. Jericho's walls fell by the blast of the rams' horns ; this kingdom falleth by the preaching of the gospel : 2 Thes. ii. 8, ' Whom the Lord will consume with the spirit of his mouth.' Whoever hinders that, promotes the devil's kingdom : 2 Cor. iv. 4, ' In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.' Owls fly in the dark ; this kingdom is maintained by darkness, blindness, and ignorance of the truth.

6. Let us not give encouragement by our divisions to our adversaries. The more we labour for unity, the more we establish religion : Rom. xvi. 17, ' Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them.' When passengers in a boat fall a-quarrelling and pushing one another, they endanger the sinking of the boat. When Christ's army is scattered, antichrist will prevail. Keep up the common christianity. It may be peaceful endeavours signify nothing in a factious and divided time, yet we must unite every one in the things that are right and owned by God : James iii. 17, ' The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable ;' provided we touch no unclean thing. Here we must separate : 2 Cor. vi. 17, ' Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.'

7. Recommend religion by a holy life, partly because gross sins, under the profession of a reformed religion, provoke God to remove

our candlestick from us ; partly because, with all understanding beholders, the fruits of love, peace, and holiness will justify your religion : Mat. xi. 19, ' Wisdom is justified of her children.'

8. Practise the virtues contrary to the vices of the opposite kingdom. Theirs is a bloody religion ; ours a meek one. Be zealous to reduce them from their errors. Let there be a hatred of popery, and a pity to papists ; a hatred of abomination, but not a hatred of enmity : Prov. xxix. 27, ' An unjust man is an abomination to the just, and he that is upright in the way is abomination to the wicked.'