

[2.] This life was given us to seek a better; and let the seeking of heavenly glory be your work and scope, and you will have a double advantage.

(1.) Worldly glory will be darkened and lessened in your eyes; for what is greatness here to that glory we expect as coming from God? Mat. xvi. 27.

(2.) You are entitled to God's protection and provision. Earth necessities are given us to preserve this life. All, besides food and raiment, is not necessary. Necessaries God will care for: 'He knoweth that we have need of these things,' Mat. vi. 32. They may comfortably expect it who first seek his kingdom; he hath bound himself to give them these things, Mat. vi. 33.

SERMON IV.

Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother; my soul is even as a weaned child.—Ps. cxxx. 2.

It is not enough to avoid pride, but we must study to excel in humility. The rooting out of sin is never thoroughly done till the heart be planted with the contrary grace. Of many it may be said that they are rather not vicious than virtuous. We may say of a sensual man that he is not proud, but we cannot say that he is humble.

In the former verse, he had told us of his avoiding pride; now he telleth us of his endeavours after humility. There, 'My heart is not haughty;' Here, 'My soul is even as a weaned child.' He declareth his humility by his quiet submission to God's providence.

This is here represented—

1. By a vehement asseveration, 'Verily.'
2. By a sincere endeavour, 'I have behaved and quieted myself.'
3. By an apt comparison, taken from a child that is 'weaned of his mother.'

And it is doubled and repeated for the greater emphasis, 'My soul,' &c.

I. Here is a vehement asseveration, 'Surely.' He is the more earnest in it, to remove the suspicion of ambition, which some were apt to impute to him, as if he sought to wrest the kingdom from Saul. Therefore he prefixeth this 'Surely' to show the truth of what he spoke. In the original it runneth in the form of an oath; Septuagint, *εὶ μὴ*. Such a form of speech as you have Ps. xc. 11, 'To whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.' Heb. marg., 'If they enter into my rest.' Half the speech is expressed, *verba mali ominis suppressenda sunt*, to teach us we should not use our mouths to imprecations; therefore that part is not mentioned. There is a horrible boldness in some men, who are ever and anon wishing great plagues and curses and damnation unto themselves, and interlarding their speech with these imprecations, as if it were a glory or a

sport to them; whereas holy men upon weighty occasions suppress words of cursing or of a direful sound. Yet sometimes, in weighty cases, the imprecation may be expressed; as Ps. vii. 3-5, 'O Lord my God, if I have done this, if there be iniquity in my hands, if I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me; let the enemy persecute my soul and take it; let him tread down my life upon the earth, and lay mine honour in the dust.' So here, 'If I have not behaved and quieted my soul as a child, that is weaned of his mother,' then let me be accounted as a liar, or suffer as a proud person; or let me miss of my hope, *disperream*, or the like. But the imprecative part is concealed, as in many like cases. Well, then, the quiet submission of God's children to providence is sometimes so great that it seemeth incredible to the world, and needeth sometimes to be confirmed with an oath.

II. His sincere endeavour. The submission he attained unto was not pretended, but seriously endeavoured; 'I have behaved, I have quieted myself.' He laboured to suppress all ambitious motions, that he might compose his mind to a modest submission to God.

Here observe four things—

1. That in the best heart there may be some rebellious motions and inclinations rising up against the sovereign government and providence of God. The best heart is but a kingdom divided. In the heart of the renewed there is flesh and Spirit, Gal. v. 17, as two irreconcilable enemies. There are motions and inclinations of the Spirit agreeable to the law of God; and there are motions, inclinations, and lusts of the flesh rebelling against God and making trouble in the heart. This strife is not ended but with life. We must always stand upon our guard and quiet ourselves. The soul may be sometimes under some undue commotion, either by our lusts or passions; when we are exercised with adversity, or injuries, or sickness, our passions may raise a storm, but we must bridle our impatience. Nay, sometimes there will arise in us desires of a higher condition; you have a will to something or other which God seeth not fit for you; you must bridle your ambition. Sometimes the tempest may be so violent that it is not easily calmed. It is said of the wicked that they are like a troubled sea, which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt, Isa. lvii. 20. There is a dead sea, the senseless; a stormy sea, the discontented wicked; the calm sea, the godly, that may be stirred by the force of winds.

2. That we must quiet and compose these stirrings, as David endeavoured to still his soul, and suppress all those inordinate motions and desires wherewith ambitious men disquiet themselves. He was naturally inclined to these as well as others, his heart apt to be dis-tempered with them; but he would not give way to them, but endeavoured to bridle them by the government of reason. Thus must we fit and order our spirits or quiet our souls.

3. Though the power of making the means effectual be not in us, but in the Lord's hands, yet we must use the means rationally still, whereby God useth to convey this power. We must check ourselves, stir up the grace of God in ourselves, call ourselves to an account, put conscience to answer for the disorder of our affections. Can we give a reason? Ps. xlii. 5, 11, 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul,' &c.

Jonah iv. 4, 'Dost thou well to be angry?' Thus we must cite ourselves, plead with ourselves, 'I quieted myself.'

4. The freer from ambitious thoughts and distrustful cares, the more quiet we are. It is our lusts that breed our disturbances and troubles. A restless spirit is the fruit of our distrustful fears and anxious cares, or of our ambitious and worldly desires: Ps. cxxvii. 1, 2, 'It is in vain to rise early, to go to bed late, to eat the bread of carefulness. For he giveth his beloved sleep.' Take either the general or limited sense; our duty is our quiet, and our sin our trouble. The Lord hath forbidden our distracting cares and fears and doubts, and hath made it unlawful to be miserable; and vexation is our sin before it is our trouble.

III. It is represented by an apt comparison, or by the similitude of an infant newly weaned, which being the lively emblem of a contented spirit, is repeated twice, that we may observe it the more. The weaned infant challengeth nothing, expecteth nothing, but what the mother will give it. The similitude implieth the greatest obedience, dependence, self-denial, and resignation that possibly can be. I am tender of similitudes, but in this I shall a little expatiate, for these reasons—

1. Because our Lord Christ did not only make use of this similitude, but actually taketh a child, and setteth him in the midst of his disciples, when they were contending for pre-eminence and superiority, as a visible emblem and representation whereby to confute their pride: Mat. xviii. 1-4, 'At the same time came the disciples, saying, Who is greatest in the kingdom of God? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said unto them, Verily, I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.' This is warrant enough to take occasion from little children to preach to you of humility; for if our Lord Christ would use this method, who are we that we should oppose ourselves to his wisdom, and think it lost time a little to insist upon it?

2. Because we may learn many things from children; for though they have the seeds of pride in their natures, yet they are not acquainted with the acts of it; they know not the greatness and glory of the world as a thing above them. But a christian should slight the things of the world as things beneath him, and therein put himself into the posture of a child, though not upon the same reason; they are above the child and below the christian. See also, 1 Cor. xiv. 20, 'Brethren, be not children in understanding, but in malice be ye children, howbeit, in understanding be ye men.' Children envy not the princes and lords of the world, but are as contented with their lower matters as kings and emperors are with their crowns. They do not contrive to undermine others, and to get above them in their worldly dignities; nor to malice others, and blast the name of others, to magnify their own. They know no distinction between lords and beggars; can as well play with the children of one as the other.

3. It is a notable emblem to represent the condition of the wisest and highest of mortal men. The wisest, such as were Christ's disciples, trained up in his own company; yet an infant is produced to shame

them, and show them their weakness, whose minds were busied about sharing the honours of the mediatorial kingdom. Christ tells them he that was most like a child was greatest in the kingdom of God; he that was most humble in his own eyes had most of the gospel privileges. So the highest of mortal men are but as a feeble infant before God, that wholly hangeth on the mother. It is no disgrace to the greatest potentate to carry it humbly to God. David here saith his soul was as a weaned child. When he was to fight with his and God's enemies, who more like a lion than David? But when his business lieth with God, he was as a weaned child. All are beggars before God, king and peasant, base and noble. We have nothing but what he is pleased to give us and continue to us; and we need daily pardon and daily supplies, the meanest as well as the greatest.

4. To obviate our usual replies, when we are reproved for pride or passion: I am not such a child, to put up with this injury; and they shall know they have not to do with a child. But yet we are put ourselves into the posture of a weaned child if obedient to God.

Now let us open the similitude, and show wherein it holdeth good. David behaved himself, and quieted himself—(1.) As a child; (2.) As a weaned child.

1. As a child. A child is not troubled with ambitious thoughts: Mat. xviii. 3, 'Except ye be converted, and become as little children,' &c. A little child knoweth not what striving for state meaneth. The inclinations and desires of carnal ambition are very contrary to the christian temper, namely, seeking after dominions, dignities, and honours. So Christ would confute his disciples' pride; as if he had said, You strive for worldly greatness and pre-eminence in my kingdom; but my kingdom is a kingdom of babes, and containeth none but the humble, and such as are little in their own eyes, and are contented to be small and despised in the eyes of others, and to look not after great matters in the world. Thus would Christ take them off from the vain ambition and pursuit of esteem and worldly honour, and the expectations of a carnal kingdom. And is it not necessary still that we should become as little children? A great part of the work of grace is to take down our pride, and make us little in our own eyes. We should all prove ourselves to be children of God by the lowliness of our hearts and sobriety of our carriage, and submission to all God's dispensations, and desire no higher condition than God would bring us into by the fair invitation of his providence. We must put ourselves into the posture of a feeble impotent child, without ambition, without covetousness, looking wholly to be directed, supported, and enabled by God.

2. Why as a weaned child.

[1.] A weaned child is taken off from the breast and its natural food; so when the Lord is pleased to withhold from us what we expected, and to keep us in a low and afflicted condition, we must patiently submit to God's will and pleasure, and be contented to be what God will have us to be. Oh, how well were it for us if we were weaned from the world's breasts! Certainly then temptations would be plucked up by the roots. How easily should we please God, and press on to everlasting glory, worldly and fleshly lusts mortified! By some bitterness or other the weaned child is driven from the breast, and it useth it no more.

Oh, that a christian were as soon weaned from the world, and might grow dead to the honours, riches, and pleasures of it ! and could say with the apostle, ' I am crucified to the world, and the world is crucified to me,' Gal. vi. 14. Few are taken off from the dug by the bitterest wormwood that can be laid upon it ; they are still sucking here, though they suck but wind ; and, after many disappointments, still return to the love of the world, as their natural milk. It is a prodigy for a child to keep sucking till thirteen or fourteen years ; we are as greedy at fifty or sixty years as we were before. The world by nature is sweet to us ; the bitterness of affliction doth not wean us from it ; and after all the warnings that we cannot love the Father if we love the world, 1 John ii. 15, yet we love the world still. In death it is made bitter to us, for then the world passeth away, and the lusts thereof ; then we cry out on the world, how it hath deceived us, and tempted this rebelling flesh to neglect God and higher duties. But then it is questionable whether we are weaned or driven from the dug. Surely it becometh us to be weaned sooner.

[2.] The weaned child can do nothing for itself, but is provided for by the care of another ; so should we look upon ourselves as a most feeble and impotent child, able to do nothing of ourselves ; but after we have weaned ourselves from our natural affections and desires, wholly be sensible of our necessities, emptiness, and weakness to shift for ourselves, leaving all to God : Ps. xl. 17, ' I am poor and needy, but the Lord thinketh upon me.' We may be despised of the world and contemned of the world, but that doth not make us loathsome to God. Yea, the lower we are brought, the more is his care engaged for us. The empty, the destitute, who have not the dug to live upon, are devolved upon the Lord, that he may take care of them.

[3.] Though the weaned child have not what it would have, or what it naturally most desireth, the milk of the breast, yet it is contented with what the mother giveth ; it rests upon her love and provision. So are we to be content with what providence alloweth us : Heb. xiii. 5, ' Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have ; ' and Phil. iv. 11, ' I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.' Whatever pleaseth our heavenly Father should please us. The child that is put from the breast to an harder diet is yet contented at last. The children of princes know not what the swelling of pride, the honour of the world meaneth. The child doth not prescribe what it will eat, drink, or put on. They are in no care for enlarging possessions, heaping up riches, aspiring after dignities and honours, but meekly take what is provided for them.

[4.] The child, when he has lost the food which nature provideth for it, is not solicitous, but wholly referreth itself to the mother, hangeth upon the mother. So for everything whatsoever should we depend upon God, refer ourselves to God, and expect all things from him : Ps. lxii. 5, ' My soul, wait thou upon God ; my expectation is from him.' With such a simplicity of submission should we rest and depend upon God. Let us take heed of being otherwise and provident for ourselves, but trust our Father which is in heaven, and refer ourselves to his wise and holy government.

Thus you see here is a perfect emblem—

(1.) Of self-denial; for the child is weaned, taken off from what it most affects. So we must not look to be satisfied in our childish will and appetite; we must be weaned, and put from the breast to an harder diet.

(2.) Of humility, or a sense of our impotency and nothingness; for the child cannot shift for itself, so neither can we. We are weak and witless all of us, as are little children, and know not what is good for us, nor how to provide it, but are merely cast upon the care of another.

(3.) Contentedness and resignation to the will of God, who is our provider. The more impotent, the more entitled to God's care.

(4.) Of dependence and quiet recumbency on God in any state or condition whatsoever; for we must cast the whole care of affairs upon him. Oh, happy we if we could thus be children!

But now let us come to the doctrine.

Doct. That an absolute resignation of ourselves to the will of God doth well become a humble and a trusting soul.

I shall show—(1.) What this resignation is; (2.) Why it argueth both humility and trust.

First, What is this resignation of ourselves to the will of God? I shall show you—(1.) The nature; (2.) The grounds; (3.) The opposites of it.

1. The nature. It is a plenary submission of our will to the will of God for all events that concern us and ours.

This resignation hath too branches—

[1.] An indifferency of mind with respect to future events, leaving them to be disposed according to the will and wisdom of God, for his own glory and our good. This you will find often commended to us in scripture by the practice of the saints and of our Lord Christ: John xii. 27, 28, 'Now is my soul troubled, what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I to this hour. Father glorify thy name.' We learn of Christ that, when we are in great perplexity, and know not the event, we should absolutely submit it to his will, with a respect to his glory; that God will determine and cast the matter so as may be most for his glory and for our good. For Christ consulted not with his own ease, but God's glory; as he respected not the innocent inclination of his human nature, but the glory of his Father. So should we be content that God be advanced, though it be with our loss and bitter cost; as natural things will act against their particular inclination for a general good; fire will descend, water ascend, to avoid a vacuity, and to preserve a continuity in nature. Another instance of such a resignation is in David: 2 Sam. xv. 25, 26, '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 say, I have no delight in thee; let him do unto me as seemeth good unto him.' He sweetly and meekly submitteth to God's pleasure, wholly denying himself and his own will, and resigneth up his person, crown, and estate, as it shall seem good in his eyes. So in the three children: Daniel iii. 17, 18, 'Our God is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace. But if not,' &c. So Esther, when she referred the case to God: 'If I perish, I perish,' chap. iv. 16.

[2.] A contentation in every condition wherein God sets us. Though

it be not so pleasing to us, yet it is that which God appoints. Be we rich or be we poor, solitary or full of company, friends, and relations: Phil. iv. 12, 'I have learned to be abased, and abound; to be full and to be hungry,' &c. They never quarrel with God's government, but take their lot as they find it, and their way to heaven as they find it, be it fair or foul, smooth or rugged.

2. The grounds of this resignation. They are the three grand attributes, the wisdom, power, and goodness of God.

[1.] God is infinitely wise, and knoweth what is best for us: Isa. xxx. 18, 'The Lord is a God of judgment; blessed are all they which wait for him.' All his dealings with his children are full of wisdom, and therefore he is to choose our condition, and not we ourselves. We would choose riches when God knoweth poverty is best for us, to keep us holy and humble. We would undo ourselves if we had our own will, if God did not often deny us that which we have a mind to; as a man in a fever would have cold water, which pleaseth in the drinking, but afterwards proveth his death; or as a child would soon undo himself if you did let him have his will.

[2.] God is omnipotent, and able to do what he pleaseth. None can stay his hand or stop his work; so that, whether we will or no, all our affairs are at God's disposal: Job ix. 12, 'Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him, and say, What doest thou?' The first reason of our submission is his mere sovereignty, till he giveth some further account of his dealings. We are as clay in the hands of the potter, and God maketh us vessels of honour and dishonour at his own pleasure.

[3.] He is incomprehensibly good and gracious to his children, that love him, and fear him, and will convert all that befall them to their everlasting good: Cant. iv. 16, 'Awake, O north wind, and come thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out: let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.' Out of what corner soever the wind bloweth, it bloweth good to the saints.

3. The opposites of this resignation are these three—

[1.] An over-eager desire and vehement prosecution of any good that we want, or of anything that we would have or be in the world. When the heart runs out inordinately and impetuously, you do not accept and reserve the will of God; as Rachel: 'Give me children or else I die,' Gen. xxx. 1. Words of impatience, as the motions of lust, are rapid and vehement: James iv. 3, 'Ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. Ye lust, and have not; ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain. Ye fight, and war, and have not.' Nay, ye ask, and have not; for in their prayers they set God a task to provide meat for their lusts. Be not too eager to have what you love, for this is the way either to be denied or to have it with a curse. You are so passionate because you would not have the flesh want its contentment. But the rule is not, my will, but thine be done. Whatever thou wantest and desirest, leave it to God. A christian should be positive in nothing but his duty; there a fixed resolution becometh us. If God will deliver, well; if not, we will not complain.

[2.] Another thing that is contrary to this resignation is an obstinate cleaving or holding to any state or condition in the world, or any com-

fort of ours, be it never so amiable, sweet, or suitable to our desires. To bind up our souls with any creature maketh us unwilling to submit to God, and we are in danger to deny his sovereignty and authority over us. It is death to many to think of a change, or any divorce from that state in which they are. A christian should hold all his comforts at God's will and pleasure, as ready to resign them when God calleth for them. As David speaketh of carrying his life in his hands, so should we all worldly things, as ready to resign them, and reserving still a submission to God's pleasure. Otherwise we make a snare for ourselves, and the overvalued natural comfort is a door open to let in trouble to the soul, as our affection causeth our affliction, *sine dolore amisit, quia sine amore possedit*. He lost without grief, because he possessed without love, temperance, patience, 2 Peter i. 6; 1 Cor. vii. 30, 'They that weep, as though they wept not, and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not.'

[3.] The next opposite is distrustful fears and cares, or carking solicitude; as if we would be our own carvers, and would take God's work out of his hands; not daring to rely upon God's providence and promise, and take the event as he shall dispose it for us. No; you should refer yourselves to God, and attend how he will dispose of you and yours; for a christian is wholly guided by his will. This carking is—(1.) Needless; and (2.) Fruitless.

(1.) It is needless; for all events are in the hands of God, and are to be disposed of at his pleasure; and what need we trouble ourselves about what God will do for us? Ps. xxxvii. 5, 'Commit thy ways unto the Lord, and he shall bring it to pass;' Ps. lv. 22, 'Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee;' 1 Peter v. 7, 'Cast all thy care upon God, for he careth for thee.' We needlessly take a burden upon ourselves, of which God is willing to ease us. He hath a prospect of all future contingencies at once, which we have not, and is faithful to dispose of them for his own glory and your good.

(2.) It is fruitless: Mat. vi. 27, 'Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit to his stature?' We cannot change the colour of an hair, make it white or black at our pleasure, much less make ourselves taller or shorter. We busy and vex ourselves with anxious thoughts, and what do we get by it? We cannot cure a disease in our bodies, nor prevent a breach upon our relations, nor the decay of our estates. When all is done, we must stand to God's allowance; for our beings and comforts depend upon him. Therefore it is best at first to go on cheerfully in our duty, referring all events to him.

[4.] The next opposite is repining or murmuring at God's dispensation, because it is not according to our minds and fancies; as if we were to sit judges of God's actions, and to like and dislike the disposals of his providence at our will and pleasure. These the apostle calleth 'murmurers, complainers,' Jude 16. We should not murmur, or repine at, or complain of, any dispensation of his; for God's will must govern the world, and not ours. He will not ask our consent what he shall do.

Now you see what this resignation is.

Secondly, That this argueth—(1.) Humility; and (2.) Trust.

1. Humility.

[1.] It is an act of submission to be contented to be at God's finding, especially in such a proud creature as man, who would be as a god to himself, providing for himself, both as to the avoiding of evil and obtaining of good : Gen. iii. 22, that smart irrision, 'Behold, man is become as one of us.' But the humble man is contented to be dealt with as the Lord pleaseth, and to submit himself to God's will and God's dispensation, waiting for the manifestation of his favours when and how he is pleased to dispense them. These are humbled under his mighty hand.

[2.] It cometh from an humble temper of spirit, like the disposition of a weaned child, who thinketh not great things of itself.

(1.) They are like the infant in this, that they have no high thoughts of themselves; for it is self-conceit that establisheth self-will. We think ourselves wiser and better than we are, that we deserve more, or can do more for ourselves. Otherwise we would stoop to God, and let him choose our inheritance for us. And if we refer it to God we would not prescribe to him; for that always argueth ascribing to ourselves. We take too much upon us when we wield our own fortune, without dependence upon God and submission to him. His choices are more fit for us than our own.

(2.) They that will stand to God's allowance do not seek great things for themselves. It may be that God may bestow great things upon them here in this world, as he did upon David and upon Abraham; but this was not their aim. When God's will goeth before ours for wealth, honour, riches, then we may take it sweetly out of the hands of his providence, and use it for his glory; but when we seek for our lusts, and peremptorily fix our carnal will, and would set God a task to comply with it, and find out provisions for it, it is the greatest pride imaginable. In setting yourselves and vaunting yourselves before others, you do but despise men; but in setting up your own will to be rich and great, you despise God. If you think to do it without God, you undertake a task too hard for you, and provoke him to disappoint you. If you think to do it by God, you make him to serve with your sins, and to maintain you in your lusts. Therefore it is best to keep still as a weaned child, to be content at the parent's finding; let God's will first interpose.

2. It argueth trust.

[1.] It is a special act of trust, and the only trust required as to temporal things, to go on with our duty, and refer the event to God. Submission before the event is faith; after the event, is patience. It argueth high and honourable thoughts of God when we can trust all in his hands, and refer all to his pleasure. Our Saviour, when he reproveth anxious cares, he showeth they proceed from unbelief : Mat. vi. 30, 'Shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?' You have not honourable thoughts of God's wisdom, power, and goodness, when you cannot depend upon his conduct and government.

[2.] Resignation is built upon dependence, and dependence goeth upon two principles—his fatherly care over us, and the particularity of his providence.

(1.) That God is a father. As the weaned child is left to the mother's care, so are we to the power and care of a father. God, that

hath the wisdom of a father, hath the bowels and tenderness of a mother: Isa. xlix. 15, 'Can a woman forget her child, her sucking child, her only child, the son of her womb? They may forget, but I will not forget you, saith the Lord.' Fix but this one principle, that God is a father and loveth his children, and then you may easily depend upon him, and refer yourselves to him; for the ground of this trust is founded in his fatherly relation and the love of God, and the comfort of it in the sense of our adoption: Mat. vi. 32, 'Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.' Christians should acquiesce in his love and care. Children of the family, whether infants or more grown, never take care for their food and maintenance, but naturally expect it from their parents. God's fatherly love will not suffer him to neglect his children, nor any of their concerns; therefore the people of God, in all estates, do or may cheerfully refer themselves to him. They that believe God's fatherly providence may easily be persuaded that he will provide for them, and order all things for their good.

(2.) That particularity of God's providence which reacheth to all things, especially to those who have a care of his glory and seek his kingdom. Justin Martyr telleth us that it is the opinion of some philosophers that God hath a care of the universe, but not of the kinds and species of all things, much less of the individuals, that is, of me or thee. If this were true, we were left to our own providence. This would destroy all prayer and praise, love and trust. No; all things are subject to his providence. He 'upholdeth all things by the word of his power,' Heb. i. 3. All things are subject to his providence, and supported by the same word by which they were first created. He holdeth all things in his almighty grasp: Job vi. 9, 'That he would let loose his hand, and cut me off.' God could easily do it; all creatures are at his finding: Mat. x. 29, 'A sparrow shall not fall to the ground, without your heavenly Father.' The least of the creatures doth not die casually; they cannot kill a sparrow more than God's providence seeth fit to permit and order. Now we may reason, as the apostle doth, 'Doth God take care of sparrows and of oxen?' 1 Cor. ix. 9. 'Ye are of more value than many sparrows;' much more believers in Christ. The hairs of your head are numbered, Mat. x. 30, 31. God hath the knowledge, and care, and overruling of all the least things that belong to you or shall befall you. They are the kernel of mankind, the first-fruits of his creatures, for whose sake the world is continued, and without whom it would be soon brought to an end. In a family, children are much more cared for than dogs and swine: 1 Tim. iv. 10, 'Especially of them that believe.' The Lord's portion is his people. God careth for them in a peculiar manner; heareth their prayers, how despicable soever they are in the world: Ps. xxxiv. 6, 'This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him.' He careth for all things wherein they are concerned: Job i. 10, 'Hast thou not made an hedge about him, and about all that he hath on every side?' Providence doth so guard them, and everything that is theirs, that without God's permission Satan cannot touch them. He observeth their tears and telleth their wanderings: Ps. lvi. 8, 'Thou tellest all my wanderings, put thou my tears in thy bottle; are they not in thy

book?' Now this is a mighty relief to faith. Can we be backward to trust him who hath such a particular care over us, our persons, name, and estate?

Use. Of exhortation, to persuade us to this resignation of our wills to the will of God, and to put ourselves into the posture of weaned infants; that is, with composedness of mind to wait for the issues of God's providence.

1. It is difficult to bring the heart to such an equanimity. Corruptions will arise; we shall find distrusts when mercies fail; and it is hard to persuade men against present sense that it is good to be poor, and sick, and imprisoned, and afflicted. A sanctified heart findeth it at last: Ps. cxix. 71, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted.' But sense will not easily subscribe to it, that poverty is good, that we may not be proud; diseases good, that we may learn patience; troubles good, that we may have oftener recourse to God; frowns of the world good, that we may have more familiarity with God; that breaches made upon relations are good, that we may more entirely and more in good earnest seek our comfort and happiness in God; that everything is good that leadeth to the best good; that if thou hadst not lost an estate thou mightest have lost thy soul; if God had not taken away thy health, thy wealth, these might have taken thee away from God; that if he doth not add to thy estate, yet he diminisheth thy lusts. Surely to those that have chosen God for their portion, and do measure all things by their chief good and supreme happiness, it should not be so grievous. You must labour to get your hearts into this frame.

2. But in the issue it will be comfortable. Yea, for the present it breedeth a quiet frame of spirit to refer all things to God: Prov. xvi. 3, 'Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established;' Phil. iv. 6, 7, 'Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.' This is the wisest way to an holy security and sound settlement of soul. Never is the heart at rest till it can refer itself to God for all events; as Noah's dove had not whereon to rest the sole of her foot till she returned to the ark: Isa. xxvi. 3, 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.' It is perfect trust that breedeth perfect peace; it easeth you of many tempestuous and unquiet thoughts. Others are always distracted with anxious and dubious thoughts about future events; they do *μετεωρίζεσθε*: Luke xii. 29, 'Neither be of doubtful mind.' Margin, 'Live not in careful suspense.' It is a blessed frame of spirit to have thoughts established.

Means.

1. See you be weaned. There is no talking of referring all things to God while worldly affections reign in us. Trust is for the mortified soul: Heb. xiii. 5, 6, 'Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what men shall do unto me.' There is no room or work for faith till the heart be purged from ambition and covetousness. If your chief care be for heavenly things;

you will be sooner contented with a moderate supply of earthly things, and will find trust more easy, Mat. vi. 33. That is our Lord's cure, 'Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.' Carnal affections unbroken are vehement, and must have satisfaction, and you cannot quiet and still your souls in the want of it. Surely you cannot expect God's providence should serve your lusts.

2. When you have abated the desire of worldly things, remember you have a father. The weanling is not left shiftless though he be taken from the dug; he hath a mother. So have you a father in heaven, to whom you may repair in all straits: 'Doubtless thou art our Father,' Isa. lxiii. 16; and Ps. ciii. 13, 'Like as a father pitieth his children, so doth the Lord pity those that fear him.' Surely if God stand in this relation to us he will pity us, and do the part of a father to us; for none is so fatherly as God; there is not only an *as*, but a *much more* in the case: Luke xi. 13, 'If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?' What may we not promise ourselves from a father's bowels?

3. You must trust all events in his hands, without anxiety and solicitude, upon two grounds; for,

[1.] He can do what he pleaseth, and will do what is for the best. Nothing can be done amiss which is done by God; for infinite wisdom, power, and goodness cannot err. As for God, his work is perfect, Deut. xxxii. 4. Some things may fall out cross to our opinions and desires, but God maketh not our desires the measure of his dispensations, nor will he govern the world according to our opinion. Most persons in the world would have nothing but wealth and health, and love and respect from men; but it is wisdom, not our partial conceits, which must judge what is necessary for us. And therefore many things fall out which restrain our lusts and pleasure; but because God doeth it, it is good, it is best for us. God knoweth what is good for us, better than we do ourselves; and his divine choices are to be preferred before our foolish fancies. If you were once thoroughly persuaded of this, you would be fitted, not only for a patient, but a cheerful entertainment of all that is or can come upon you. It is expedient sometimes that God should displease his people for their advantage. The shepherd must choose the pastures for the sheep, whether bare or full-grown. The child is not to be governed by his own fancy, but the father's discretion; nor the sick man by his appetite, but the physician's skill: John xvi. 6, 7, 'It is expedient for you that I go away.' Christ's dealing is very expedient and useful, when it is very unsatisfactory to us. We are short-sighted, distempered with passions; our requests many times are but raving; we ask we know not what; would pray ourselves into a mischief and a snare. If it were good for us to have large revenues and means, we should not want them. Therefore out of love and perfect submission to God you should count that good whatever God doeth.

[2.] Whatever the event be, certainly he will not be wholly wanting to us, nor leave us utterly destitute: Heb. xiii. 5, 'For he hath said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you;' a negative gradation, where the

least is first denied. He will be so far from forsaking us, that he will not leave us: 1 Cor. x. 13, 'God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able to bear; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear.' Two things are promised there—

(1.) The gentleness and wisdom of his conduct.

(2.) A comfortable issue. For the present, when our condition is at worst, if it be not comfortable, it will be tolerable; for the future, a way to escape; you are not cast into the deep ocean, where no banks nor bottom. As long as a man can look to the end of an evil, he is not quite discouraged; as a man in the waters hath hope as long as he can see banks. So that the afflictions are qualified, both as to the grievousness and as to the continuance, by the support and by the issue.

[4.] We must not resign ourselves to God in name and pretence, but in deed and reality; and when our resignation is tried, it must be verified for its constancy. The reality is tried by acknowledging God in all our ways, Prov. iii. 5, 6; and you must still fetch the rise and reason of your desires and resolutions from the will of God. We must know what is his will before we give way to any will of our own particularly. Many resign all to God, but it is with a secret hope God will never put them to trial. If God taketh anything from them, they are troubled. When Jonah's gourd was blasted, nothing would please him but death. Desires pettishly solicited and finally disappointed breed vexation. Any overvalued comfort will soon prove our trouble. Therefore we must sit loose from the creature: Jonah iv. 9, 'Dost thou well to be angry?' He requested for himself that he might die. A man that savoureth the things of the flesh will think himself undone when his pleasure, honour, and plenty is taken away. It is the over-loving of worldly things which maketh us grieve for the loss and abatement of them. That love that maketh you eager when you are in expectation, to delight so immoderately when you are in possession, the same love maketh you mourn inordinately when you are in want and loss of these things. The loss will tear those hearts which stuck so inordinately to them.

SERMON V.

Let Israel hope in the Lord from henceforth and for ever.—
Ps. cxxx. 3.

THIS verse showeth the use of the whole psalm. David did not pen it to praise himself, or to extol and set forth his own humility, but to instruct the people of God, that they might learn the right way of trusting or hoping in God.

This way is intimated in the two former verses, wherein he representeth his humility and resignation to God.'