

THE CHRISTIAN WORK.

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THE CHRISTIAN WORK.

NOTE.

'The Christian Work' forms a portion of a considerable quarto, published in 1639. The *general* title-page is given below.* The 'Exposition' of chap. iii. follows this, and the other pieces specified therein will appear in their proper places. The 'Epistles Dedicatory and Prefatory' of the entire volume are herewith prefixed. G.

AN
EXPOSITION
OF THE
THIRD CHAPTER
OF THE EPISTLE OF
St. *Paul* to the PHILIPPIANS :

Also { Two Sermons of Christian watch-
 fulness.
 The first upon Luke 12. 37.
 The second upon Revel. 16. 15.
 An Exposition of part of the second
 Chapter of the Epistle to the *Philipp*.
 A Sermon upon Mal. 4. 2. 3.

By the late Reverend Divine *Richard*
Sibbes, D. D. Master of *Katherine Hall* in *Cam-*
bridge, and sometimes Preacher at *Grays-Inne*.

1 TIM. 4. 8.

But godlinesse is profitable, having promise of the life that
now is, and of that which is to come.

L O N D O N,

Printed by *T. Cotes* for *Peter Cole*,* and are to be sold at the
Glove & Lyon in *Corne-hill*, neare the *Royall Exchange*, 1639.

* For curious notices of *Cole*, see the Bibliographical List of the editions of *Sibbes*' different works in the 7th volume.—G.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

SIR MAURICE ABBOT KNIGHT,

NOW LORD MAYOR OF THE HONOURABLE CITY OF LONDON.*

RIGHT HONOURABLE—My respects unto you, being your honour's engaged many ways, have put me upon a design or project for you; the God of heaven graciously prosper it in my hand! The tenor of it is briefly this: to increase your honour, and to ease the burden of that laborious government which now lieth upon your shoulder.

To mention your name before the glorious labour of so great and worthy an agent in the factorage of heaven as the author of this piece was, and to make you a protector of them, cannot, I conceive, in sober interpretation but be conceived to add honour unto him that hath, and cause him to have more abundantly. Blessed is the wing that is spread over any of the things of Jesus Christ, to shelter them.

Again, to put into your hand, and from your hand into your heart, the remembrance of that God that will gloriously recompense your faithfulness in that great trust committed to you, cannot but (by the blessing of him to whom blessings belongeth) be a cordial means to strengthen your heart in the pang of government, and cause you to travail and bring forth with more ease. There is no labour, nor travail, nor sorrow, nor difficulty, nor danger, nor death, that hath any evil or bitterness in it when heaven is before us, and the truth and faithfulness of the living God embracing us.

If I have miscarried in point of good manners or otherwise in this dedication, your honour shall do but justice to charge your own courtesy and respects always shewed unto me (at least in part) with the blame of it. Had not there been the tempter, doubtless in this case I had not been the transgressor. The God of peace prosper the government of this great city in your hand, and make it a glorious rise and advantage unto you of your greater glory in the heavens. And your Honour may assure yourself that so it shall come to pass, unless that God that heareth prayer shall reject the prayer of,

Your honour to command in the Lord,

J. G.†

* Sir Maurice Abbot was the fifth son of Sir Maurice Abbot of Guildford, Surrey, grandfather of Abbot of Farnham. His more famous brothers were George, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Robert, Master of Baliol College, Oxford, and subsequently Bishop of Salisbury. Sir Maurice was Lord Mayor of London 1639, Drapers' Company; Sheriff, 1627. Family epitaphs still remain on a plate of brass on the south wall of the church of Guildford. Cf. Manning and Bray's History of Surrey, *sub voce*; also Guildhall MSS.—G.

† These initials here, and at close of the Epistle to the Reader, in all probability represent John Goodwin, the renowned champion of Arminianism. It were superfluous to annotate such a name. He died, it is believed, in 1665. Cf. Jackson's 'Life,' one vol. 8vo, 1822.—G.

TO THE READER.

GOOD READER, to discourse the worth or commendations of the author (especially the pens of others having done sacrifice unto him in that kind), I judge it but an impertinency, and make no question, but that if I should exchange thoughts or judgments with thee herein, I should have but mine own again. The book itself, judiciously interpreted, is a volume of his commendation; and those,* though from his own mouth, without any touch or tincture of vanity or self-affectation. The best sight of a man is to hear him speak—*loquere, ut videam*—the tongue being a voluntary and pleasant rack to the heart, to make it confess its treasure, whether it be good or evil. The diligence and care of those that have interposed for the preserving of what came from him in this way from perishing, have made the Christian world debtors unto them; and great pity it had been, that what he spake in public should have died in secret, and not be made seven times more public than speaking could do. The sparks of such fires as he kindled would have been ill quenched till the world had been further served with the light and heat of them.

It is true, heaps of books is one of the oppressions of the world, and the invention of the press hath been the exaltation of weakness and vanity amongst men, as well as of learning and knowledge. Yet know I no way better to retain the oppressed in this kind, than for men of worth and grown judgments and learning to appear in books also among the multitude. The time was when there were, as the apostle speaketh, 'gods many and lords many in the world,' 1 Cor. viii. 5; when the world was pestered with devils of all sorts, instead of gods; but the only means of discharging the world of them, was the setting forth and preaching of the one true God and Lord Jesus Christ. So the furnishing the world with such books, as are books indeed, that breathe spirit and life, and are strong of heaven, speaking with authority and power to the consciences of men, is the only way to affamish the multitude of idol* books, and to have them desolate without a reader. It is, questionless, with men in respect of books, as it is in respect of men themselves (and indeed how there should be any difference between men and books I know not, the book being but the mind of a man, and the mind of a man being the man himself). *Homo homini Deus, homo homini lupus.*† There are men that are gods to men, and there are men that are wolves to men; and the more men-wolves there are in the world, the more men-gods there had need to be; otherwise the darkness would overcome the light, and make the earth as the shadow of

* Qu. 'idle,' = useless.—G. Rather 'idol,' in the sense of unreal, false.—ED.

† In margin here, 'Animus cuiusque is est quisque.'—G.

death. So there are books that are laden with divine and true treasure; that will recompense the reader, his labour and pains sevenfold into his bosom; that will open his mouth and enlarge his heart to bless God, that hath given gifts unto men. Again, there are books also that will deal cruelly and deceitfully with men, consuming their precious time and opportunities; taking their money for that which is not bread. Now the more dreamers of dreams there are, there had need be the more that see visions. The weak, hungry, loose, and empty discourses the world is overlaid and encumbered withal, the more need it hath, by way of a counter recompence, of a full provision of solid and masculine writings, that may make men men, and not always children in understanding.

But I must remember that prefacing authors with long epistles is no employment of any sovereign necessity. Therefore I will no longer separate between thee and that which I desire to recommend unto thee more than anything of mine own. The blessing of Him that giveth the increase be upon the labour of him that planted and watered much in the courts of the house of his God; that though he be dead, he may yet speak to the edification of thine and of many souls.

Thine with a single heart and multiplied affections in the Lord,

I. G.*

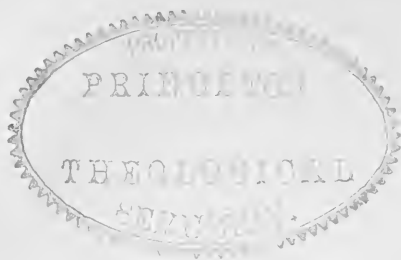
DIRECTIONS TO THE READER.

CHRISTIAN READER, thou mayest please to take notice that this book is divided into two parts: the first whereof is upon the whole third chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians, and contains 256 pages; and because it is entire, and upon the whole third chapter, we have therefore put it first. The second part is upon some certain verses only of the second chapter to the Philippians, and some other texts of Scripture, and contains 204 pages.

Now, for the ready finding out of any principal or material things in the whole book, we have to the book annexed this alphabetical index; for the understanding whereof take thou notice, that the first *p* signifies the *part*, and the second *p* the *page* of that *part*, as for example: There being nothing observed in A, we begin with B, where first thou seest, *Christians must be blameless*, p. 92; that is, part the second, page 92 of the second part; then *how Saint Paul was blameless, when he was without the law*, p. 1, p. 67, 68; that is, part the first, page 67, 68 of the first part.†

* See note to Dedication.—G.

† As wishing to give all the Prefaces, &c., this prefatory note by Goodwin to 'The Table' is here inserted; but 'The Table' itself will be incorporated with the 'general Index.—G.



THE CHRISTIAN WORK.

Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling.—PHIL. II. 12.

THE first word, 'wherefore,' carries our minds back to things formerly delivered. Before, the apostle had taught them out of the example of Christ that they should not mind their own things: 'He went about doing good,' and humbled himself. Now when God is humble, how shall any man be proud? Having therefore such an example as Christ, without all exception, as he hath done do you, be obedient, &c. In the words consider,

First, The duty, 'work.'

Secondly, Directions to the right manner of performing this duty.

Thirdly, The motives to this duty.

The manner of performance of this work: *First*, it must be in sincerity; *secondly*, in obedience; *thirdly*, it must be earnestly and thoroughly; *fourthly*, it must be constant; *fifthly*, it must be ever tending to assure to us our salvation; *sixthly*, it must be in fear, or holy jealousy. The motives to this duty: *First*, Christ, he was obedient, follow him; *secondly*, 'my beloved,' that is, as you shew or deserve my care of you and diligence to do you good, obey; *thirdly*, you have done it heretofore: it is no new thing I require; it is not impossible; you have done it already; *fourthly*, if you do, it shall not be in vain. It tends to the assurance of salvation here, and to the accomplishment thereof hereafter, therefore 'work.'

1. 'Work.' The estate of a Christian is a working estate, not idle. Christianity is not a verbal profession, nor speculative. 'If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them,' saith Christ, John xiii. 17. Observe, he placeth the word 'blessed' in the midst, to unite those two which the world so ordinarily divides. I mean knowledge and practice. If words would go for excellent payment, many there are that would be admirable Christians; but we must know that a Christian's estate is accomplished by works; and that not only outwardly but inwardly, and by all manner of works: works of preparation; works of propriety;* and these inward, or outward and all, is in our general or particular calling.

Works of preparation are those that prepare men to believe; as hear-

* That is, 'appropriation.'—ED.

ing, reading, meditating; for these make not a Christian, but by these a Christian is prepared to be wrought on by God's Spirit. In these a Christian must be still working, and from these he ought to proceed to works of propriety: as belief in God; hope more strongly; love more ardently; pray fervently; do works of charity cheerfully—the three first duties being inward, the two last outward. And these concern our general callings as we are Christians, and then in our particular callings, to love, to reverence one another; seek the good of others, and to be bountiful to others. A Christian he must work in all these.

Use. The use of all this is, *to cause in us a right conceit of religion.* Many are good talkers, use fair words, are excellent in discourse; and these pass for current Christians. Nay, many there are that come not to this degree of speaking well. No; cannot endure to hear others speak well, but endeavour to turn their speech to other matters. Yet these go for good Christians, and think they shall be saved as well as the best, when, alas! they never came one step to salvation. Thus for the work. Now,

2. To the manner. He said before, 'As you have heretofore obeyed, even so work now,' shewing the first thing:

(1.) *That all our works must be done in obedience.* Whatsoever we do, it must be done in obedience to God. Many are damned for misdoing their good works, because they did them not in obedience to God. To this end it is expedient,

First, That we should know what God's will is: Rom. xii. 2, 'That you may prove what is that good, that acceptable and perfect will of God,' saith the apostle; and in the Ephesians v. 10, 'Proving what is acceptable to the Lord.' And therefore an ignorant man is a rebellious man. When he knows not God's will, how can he do his will?

Secondly, This obedience must be *to all God's laws*, for partial obedience is no obedience. For he is a lord, and not a servant, that will cull and pick out his obedience. 'Then shall I not be confounded,' saith David, 'when I have respect to all thy commandments,' Ps. cxix. 6. It is the devil's sophistry to put men in heart with the consideration of some few good duties that they have done; when, alas! if a fowl or bird be catched by one wing or leg, it is as sure as if a man had her whole body in his hand. The devil hath a man as sure in one sin unrepented as in many; and therefore the apostle limits not this obedience, but lays it down indefinitely.

(2.) The second thing in the manner is, *that this working must be in sincerity.* 'Whether I am present to see you or not, obey God: he sees you.' A Christian must do all things sincerely, as in the presence of God. The Pharisees did many good works, but it was to be seen of men. Therefore Christ saith, 'they have their reward already,' Mat. vi. 2. I will pay them no wages; they did it not to please me. Many are this way faulty. They do nothing but for applause: pray in public for fashion sake, never in private; whenas Christ saith, 'Enter into thy chamber, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret,' Mat. vi. 6. Many can talk well and discourse well; but for inward graces they never look nor regard: and it is this that upholds many Christians. They see religion is respected of those of whom they desire to be had in some esteem, but God sees thy hypocrisy, and thou hast thy reward.

Joash was a good king so long as Jehoiada lived.* Many seem to be good, so long as those in authority are good; but if they die once, all good goes away with them. But a good Christian is ever good; and in all

* Cf. 2 Chron. xxiv. 2.—Ed.

places, occasions, companies, he will be like himself. Thus much of the second thing in the manner. Now for the third.

(3.) He says, 'Work out.' The word signifies, with toil to labour. So in the 6th of St John's gospel, 'Labour not for the meat that perisheth.' It is a good saying, no perfunctory thing can please God. To this end as Seneca says (*a*), of performing of duties natural; so in religious duties there is required, first, a right judgment of the nature of the things we do; secondly, an affection to do it; and thirdly, that affection must be proportionable to the worth of the things we do, else what do we; yea, as good not do it at all. And therefore the Scripture to every part of God's worship adds words of intention: 'Take heed how you hear,' Mark iv. 24; 'so run,' 1 Cor. ix. 24; 'pray fervently in spirit,' Rom. xii. 11; 'give cheerfully,' 2 Cor. ix. 7; 'repent thoroughly,' Acts xvii. 30. So that our affection must be proportionable to the thing we are about, serious in good. A thorough serious prayer is worth a thousand perfunctory; and one doctrine well digested and applied, worth all the rest, be they never so many, if they be done slightly; and the rather are we to look to this duty, for that the devil is busy in such duties to withdraw thy mind, and to steal away the seed sown. The poor husbandman lost three parts of his seed. Many feel such flashes of comfort while they hear the word, as they could wish they might be dissolved at that present; but being gone, pleasures, profits, and such like, take away and choke the seed sown. Many there are that will play or recreate themselves with all their might; but when they come to pray, instead of all their sinful life, think the saying of 'Lord, have mercy upon me,' or 'I am a sinner,' or such like, make even all accounts between God and their consciences. Those that are and will be Christians indeed, they see what they ought to do, and how they are to perform duties. They shall find themselves to be no losers, but gainers at the end; for by performing of things in this manner they shall strengthen the assurance of their salvation to themselves more and more. For God punisheth such slighting of duties justly, with slight assurance, and with many doubtings of salvation and of their secure estate. Well, the next thing to be considered in the manner of working is;—

(4.) Fourthly, *It must be constant*, not like the morning dew, or Lot's wife that looked back. For religion is a living and trade. It must be maintained with continuance in labour, and working in a constant course of goodness 'all the days of our life,' saith Zacharias' song, Luke i. 75. 'Father,' saith Christ, 'I have finished the work thou gavest me,' John xvii. 4. He never left till all was finished. 'It is finished,' saith Christ on the cross, John xix. 30; and the apostle, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course,' 2 Tim. iv. 7, and then he speaks of 'a crown of righteousness,' 2 Tim. iv. 8. The want of this makes many die in extreme grief. They wish they had done such and such things, when it is too late. To this end we must come with a resolution not to be scared from performance of duties, and therefore to furnish ourselves with patience. For we must meet with many discouragements from without and within. Brethren, saith the apostle, 'you have need of patience,' Heb. x. 36. For 'you shall reap if you faint not,' Gal. vi. 9. And then consider that all promises of a crown are made to such as are sincere. 'To him that overcometh,' saith John, 'I will give,' &c., Rev. iii. 21. 'He that endures to the end shall be saved,' saith Christ, Mat. x. 22. Many decay in their first love, and God justly suffers them to fall into many gross sins, and he vomits up such as are grown cold.

(5.) The fifth thing in the manner is, that it must *tend to salvation*. We must go on in a constant course of goodness till we come, and that we may come, to the end of our faith. Let this end, viz., salvation, make you work in the duties of grace. For salvation is begun here; and the state of grace here is called salvation, even as well as the state hereafter.

The doctrine is, *that all which we do here ought to tend to the assurance of salvation*.

We say in nature that all conclusions are to be reduced to their principles. So is Christianity. All is to be referred to our salvation as to a main principle; those things that tend directly to salvation to be done in the first place, and most especially. And then other works, they must tend the same way, for all works that are good, do either express holiness, or increase it in us; and thereby they increase our own salvation, as in our ordinary callings, if we perform them in obedience to God constantly, it expresses the gifts and graces of God's Spirit in us. Do we sanctify them by prayer? Do we refer all the good to the good of those amongst whom we live, especially to the good of the faithful? This strengthens the assurance of our salvation, and tells us that God's Spirit is in us. The poorest servant in his drudgery, he serves God if he does it as in the presence of God, Col. iii. 24. The poor woman, in bearing and bringing up of children, shall be saved; that is, notwithstanding that sentence, 'that in sorrow and pains she should conceive,' yet her salvation is no whit hindered thereby, but rather furthered. So that it is grace that elevates earthly works, and makes them heavenly.

But take this caution withal, that we more highly esteem our Christian calling than our ordinary vocations and duties; and to that end we ought to redeem some time from our ordinary callings to meditate, and to examine ourselves, and to pray. And this to be done daily, for Christ saith, 'Labour not for the meat that perisheth,' in comparison of that meat which lasteth for ever. Especially on that day which God hath chosen to his own use, I mean the 'Lord's day.' Mingle not thine own callings with holy duties on such days, unless it be in case of mercy, and that also of great necessity. God made this day for his own glory, and for our good, knowing how earthly-minded else we would be, unless some time were allotted wholly to vindicate our minds from these earthly things. Take heed, therefore, how we be bold * on this day especially.

'Your own.' Here is contained another direction in this Christian work. In our works and doings we must begin with ourselves, contrary to the custom of many, who are in their own duties negligent, but lord-like in overseeing of other men's works. We are to know, true zeal and practice begins at home.

'Work out your own.' Whatsoever others do, look you to yourselves. So did Joshua: 'Let the people do what they will, I and my house will serve the Lord,' Josh. xxiv. 15. So that a Christian ought to resolve with himself concerning his own carriage; he that is wise is wise for himself. Better it is that you alone should work out your own salvation, than go to hell with others for company.

'Your own.' Every one hath a cup that he in particular must taste of, and every one a particular work to do. Though all go one way that are saved, yet some go by more sufferings than others. Some hath harder tasks set them to perform than others. Some must live in some callings, and therein 'work out their own salvation,' others in others. Eph. ii. 10, 'Every one is created to good works which God prepares for him.'

* Cf. Eph. iii. 12; Heb. iv. 16.—G. Qu. 'cold'?—ED.

For the sixth direction, contained in 'fear,' &c., the time is too short to speak of; and therefore I come,

3. To the *motives*.

(1.) The first is taken from the *example of Christ*, comprehended in the word 'Wherefore.' Christ, he did as he would have us to do; he did all in obedience to God; he came to do his will; he was sincere, cared not for the world. What he did, he did thoroughly; he healed all; did all good; did all things well; and he finished his course. Now we must imitate Christ in all these; never give over till we may say with comfort at our deaths, 'All is finished.' This must needs move us, if we consider what an honour it is for us to be like him and to follow him; and then it will be gainful to us. He got honour by it—was exalted; so shall we therefore be like him. And then he is a pattern without all exception. We cannot offend so long as we propound him for our example. It is a foolish opinion therefore that men may be too religious. Can any go beyond Christ, nay, or come near him?

(2.) The second motive is taken *from the apostle's love*, 'my beloved.' Shew that you will answer my care and love to you. Whence observe,

That it ought to be a motive to Christians to take good courses, that they may thereby comfort those that have care of their good. The apostle, Heb. xiii. 17, bids the Hebrews, 'that they obey them that are their guides.' Why? 'That they may give account with joy, and not with grief, for it is unprofitable for them.' But to leave this personal manner of speech. Christians ought to seek good courses, to give content to the souls of those Christians with whom they live; for they make it a matter of joy to see one grow in religious behaviour, and contrarily are grieved when they see it decay in any.

(3.) The third motive is drawn *from the possibility of it*; as if he should have said, You have already begun; you know what it is I require; it is no new thing, nor is it impossible; do but work out that which you have begun. He that hath set one step into religion is half way. It was a great commendation in the church of Thyatira, that their last works were more than the first, Rev. ii. 19. We should labour to grow on still, from one degree to another, even as the sun 'shines more and more to the perfect day,' Prov. iv. 18; and therefore it is a Christian course to compare ourselves with ourselves daily, and if we find a decay in ourselves, rest not contented till thou findest thyself amended. We pity men when they decay in outward things; but of all decays, the decay of goodness is the most lamentable; and therefore as you have obeyed, so obey still.

'Now much more in my absence.' These words I take not to be so meant, as if the apostle had spoken of what they already had done, but rather what he would have them to do, as if he should have said, 'I know now that I am absent, you shall want no allurements nor temptations to draw you away; and I know now I am gone grievous wolves shall enter in, not sparing the flock,' as it is in Acts xx. 29, 'therefore now be much more careful, and watch.' Hence therefore observe, the want of means that formerly men had is no sufficient plea to excuse decay in grace in any man. 'Redeem the time.' Why? Not because goodness increases amongst all sorts, but 'because the days are evil,' Eph. v. 16. The world would have reasoned clean contrary. Because the days are evil, be thou also evil, follow the fashion. Religion teaches us to reason otherwise. Because you have not the helps you formerly enjoyed, double your diligence; God will graciously supply you. If you be not wanting to yourselves, he will never

depart from you though I am gone. He was a sanctuary to the Jews in Babylon when they wanted the sanctuary; and yet then were they in greatest glory. And it is remarkable, men have been still most glorious for religion in want of outward means.

(4.) The fourth motive is laid down *in the end*. It is to our salvation; which as it carries the form of a direction, so as it is an end it hath a power to move us to it. Considering we are not yet perfect, go on till you come to perfection. It is an encouragement to us to begin, and when we have begun, it doth encourage us to go on forward. See this in Titus ii. 11: 'The grace of God teacheth us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly,' &c., and encourageth us on, looking for the glorious appearing of Christ. We are sons; shall we be rebellious? We look for salvation; shall we not then work it out? Yes. Moses chose rather to suffer afflictions with the children of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Why? 'He had respect to the recompence of reward,' Heb. xi. 26. We have an evidence here [that] we shall be saved hereafter; and this makes us strive to ascertain it more and more to us. And indeed, he that carries his salvation in his eye, needs no better encouragement. What made them, in Heb. xi. 38, to wander about and to forsake all? They looked for another city, whose builder was God. Thus it is in ordinary affairs. What seasons war but the hope of peace? the troubles and the tempests on the sea, but the hope of the haven? the labour and cost in sowing, but the expectation of harvest? Shall not we much more endure a little labour here, for endless happiness assured to us hereafter? This is much forgotten. What makes persons so dull in good duties? They either know not, or forget this reward; for he that sets his mind on it cannot be cold or dull. But here's the pity! Men labour, sweat, take pains and travail, spare no cost; and all this to go to hell, to heap up wrath against the day of wrath. The devil has more servants in his barren and fruitless service than God gets with all his promises and good things that he liberally gives. Besides, I add one or two directions more.

First, *Labour to get a platform of wholesome words*. If we would work, we must have an idea of the thing we work in our head. We must labour to get a form of practice and doctrine out of the word of God, and to carry it still about with us.

Then *cast thyself into that mould thou hast thus framed*, Rom. vi. 17. Be moulded in that form of doctrine; believe what he will have us to believe; love that which he will have us to love. And having this frame in thy mind, in what estate soever thou art, whether single or married, governing or governed, thou shalt have still with thee a platform of duties, fitting for the carriage of thyself; and there will be no duty thou hearest taught but thou wilt be able to draw it to thine own practice. The want of this makes most men unfruitful, heaping up thereby damnation unto themselves.

Lastly, *Observe the good motions of God's Spirit in thee*; further them to the most advantage; turn them to present practice; lose nor delay them not; for the devil will steal thee away from them.

Now when we come to another part of the manner of a Christian's work, it must be done 'in fear and trembling,' Not to stand on the divers kinds of fear; in general, it is an affection planted by God in our natures, whereby we, foreseeing dangers which may hinder our being or wellbeing, are afraid of them. This is incident to our natures, and it was also in Christ. And were it not for this, men would be prodigal of their lives, and would rush into desperate dangers. There is a carnal fear, as when we fear the

creatures of whom we are lords ; and this proceeds from a carnal distrust in God. But in this place is meant a spiritual fear, which may be branched into three divers kinds. First, a fear of reverence, which is a fear mixed with love ; when we fear one or stand in awe of him for his greatness, yet love him for his goodness to us ; and thus a Christian fears God. Secondly, hence proceeds the second kind of fear, which is a fear of watchfulness ; and thirdly, a fear of jealousy, lest we should offend against God ; and this arises from the consideration of our weakness and the falseness of our hearts. So that he here saying, ' Work out your salvation with fear,' bids them that they proceed on in their course with reverence, watchfulness, and jealousy. As for the word ' trembling,' it is none other but an effect or symptom of the passion of fear, arising from excess of fear in regard of fearful objects. For then the spirits retiring in to comfort the heart, leave the outward parts destitute, so as they tremble. And on the contrary, in objects of delight and comfort, they come outward, to the outmost parts as it were, to meet with such pleasing objects as are presented to the sense. It being thus in nature, it is also in us spiritually ; for we beholding the majesty and power of God, and considering our own baseness and infirmities, are drawn to a kind of fear, which, if it be somewhat more than ordinary, it produces a spiritual trembling. Having thus opened the words, we will come to some doctrine ; and first, in general observe,

Doct. God requires all duties that are done to him to be done with affection. The careless Christian thinks the deed done to be sufficient to please God. No ; verily he requires work, but it must be done with affection. The affection must first be obedient, and then the outward man. ' Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, and strength, and thy neighbour as thyself,' Lev. xix. 18. ' My son, give me thy heart,' saith Solomon, Prov. xxiii. 26. I might infer this doctrine to shew how many are faulty this way, but I come to this particular affection of fear. *All things that are done must be done in the fear of God ;* and this must we do before our calling and after our calling : before our calling to work ourselves into our salvation, and in our calling to work out our own salvation. Before our conversion fear is necessary for us. God uses it to bring us to Christ. Legal fear is always or most commonly before evangelical. It is as the needle that draws faith after it as the thread. Such is God's goodness to us, that lest we should fall into hell ere we are aware, he hath left us objects of terror and threatening judgments, to keep us from hell ; and all to provoke fear in us that we may be saved. There is a spirit of bondage before the spirit of adoption : Rom. viii. 15, ' Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption,' implying that once they had received the spirit of bondage. For verily, first men see their miserable estate by nature, and this convincing their consciences, comes to stir up fear in them, which drives them to the rock of salvation, Christ Jesus. I speak this the rather, for that it is evident many never yet came to this spirit of fear. They live in a course of known gross sins, between whom and damnation is but a step. They know they are abominable sinners, yet fear not hell. How can men think well of such ? They never yet came to the spirit of bondage to fear. Tell them of hell, they tush at it scornfully, being herein more brutish than an ass. Lay burdens on him, he will bear them patiently ; but press him never so much to go into the fire, you cannot make him come near to it ; whenas wicked men, they cannot be kept from running into hell with all violence. They

are worse than the devil, James ii. 19. They neither tremble nor believe, but live contemptuously and presumptuously in their courses. Well, let such look to it. What they do now they shall do it hereafter, when there will be no comfort left for them, though they seek it with tears.

Thus have I shewn that before conversion fear is necessary. I add, moreover, that men after conversion, believers, they ought to have fear of reverence; wherein we will speak somewhat of fear in general; then of the manner of it; and lastly, of the motives thereto. For the fear that here is spoken of observe that,

First, *It must be general* at all times, in all actions. Job said, 'I feared all my works,' Job iii. 25, and indeed in this estate we must continually fear till we be in heaven. And as it belongs to all works and times, so to all Christians, nay, and to them most of all, for that the devil is set against you. And your actions, if they be ill, are the most scandalous; and by them is God most of all dishonoured. And therefore the more grace a man hath he will fear the more. Even as a rich man, the more riches he hath the more care he taketh, lest they should be stolen from him.

Secondly, *This fear must be serious*. It must work a kind of trembling, by reason of the dangers that we meet withal, which are like to be many and great.

Thirdly, *This fear must be total*, in the whole man. For that the image of God is in the body, even as in the soul, and as in other affections a proud man is known by his proud eye and careless carriage, even so the countenance will be wray whether the heart be humble, loving, careful, and the like. It is an idle speech that many have, they will say their heart is good. Let such know, where grace is, it works a change, and that thoroughly in body and soul. David therefore joins prostration with calling on the Lord: Ps. xcv. 6, 'Let us fall down;' and in other places, casting up of the eye, and extending of the hands.*

Means to this duty; observe,

[1.] First, We must *consider God's love to us*. It is the first and main thing in reverence. This will breed fearfulness in us; for the more assured we are, the more fearful will we be of offending.

[2.] Secondly, *Set before your eyes the other attributes of God, as his justice*. What though it be true, he revenges not the sin of his children, so as it were better for him that he had not offended, for he will not suffer sin to dwell in his children.

[3.] Thirdly, *Add the examples of those that have felt his justice*, especially of the best servants of God. Moses, for a few words, never entered the land of promise. David, for a proud conceit in numbering the people, lost seventy thousand men of the pestilence. The Corinthians, for unworthy receiving of the Lord's supper, many of them died. And if it be thus with his dearest children, have not we cause to fear? Yes, assuredly. God will be honoured in all those that come near him.

Obj. It will be said that there are no examples of late of God's justice in this kind, as to strike with sudden death.

Ans. I answer, true. But God strikes with hardness of heart, which is far more worse. And God doth strike men with temporal judgments, although they think not of it, even for those sins they think not of. And if it were not thus, let such men know there is a judgment to come, and that God is the same God now that he was ever, a powerful, just, and all-

* Cf. Ps. cxlv. 15 and Ps. xxviii. 2; lxiii. 4.—G.

seeing God. And it will make them, if they belong to God, to set themselves in the presence of God even in their most secret closets. This is, notwithstanding, forgotten everywhere. And many sins are committed which sinners would be loath that a child should see, yet are they not afraid of God, that sees them and sets them down in a book. Well then, a Christian after conversion ought to fear with a fear of reverence.

It follows, in the second and third place, a Christian must have a fear of jealousy and watchfulness, and thus 'work out his salvation.' For by this means we keep ourselves from displeasing God, it being a carefulness wrought in us by the Spirit of God, causing us to take heed how we offend God in any thing. For a Christian, knowing the falseness of his own heart, is jealous thereof, there being a spiritual marriage between Christ and us, lest it should offend. And this is the ground of this spirit of jealousy, and therefore none deceives another, but he also deceives himself; for his corrupt heart is as a traitor in his own bosom. Another ground is Satan, that ever joins with our corruptions; for so long as there is a false heart there will be a fawning devil. Now this should make us to examine ourselves, and to fear our hearts, and to 'try our thoughts,' Ps. cxxxix. 23, before they come out into word or action.* For sin is like Elijah his cloud, at the first small, but afterward covers the whole heaven. See it in David. One eye-glance! What a world of sins followed. And therefore we must take heed of beginnings. And then look that thou drawest not the guilt of other men's sins on thyself. Take heed of 'scandal.† See how Jeroboam is branded; ever mention being made of him, 'Jeroboam that made Israel to sin,' 1 Kings xiv. 16. Then again, labour to set thy corruptions in thine eye continually, and to stir up our hearts to hate them. For they trouble us more than the devil, although most men study to gratify their enemy, and how to satisfy the lusts of the flesh. And who are their enemies but such as tell them and bid them beware of their enemies? Now to the reason.

VERSE 13.

For it is God that worketh in you to will and to do according to his good pleasure.

It is as much as if he should say, because God works, therefore work you, lest he should take both the power of working from you and also the act. For he gives both 'to will and to do,' not only the power to will and to do, but the very act of willing and doing; and this he doth out of his free grace and pleasure. In the opening of which words, observe with me these things. *First*, that a Christian hath a power in him to will and to do good; *secondly*, that God works this in him; *thirdly*, this work is a powerful work; *fourthly*, it is an inward work; *fifthly*, this work is entire; *sixthly*, observe how this work is a ground of fear and trembling.

1. For the first, *that a Christian hath a will and power to do good*, this is necessary. For in all estates, whether a man be good or bad, his will is the chief; and therefore, in conversion of any one, the will and judgment is first wrought upon and converted. And therefore this may be noted to

* Consult Dr Faithful Teate's searching and quaint treatise 'Right Thoughts the Righteous Man's Evidence: a Discourse proving our estate, God-ward, to be as our Thoughts are. Directing how to try them and ourselves by them,' &c. 12mo, 1669.—G.

† That is, of being a 'stumbling-block.—G.

shew us our estates, whether we be good or not. If we be good, we will that which is good, and choose the better part; for those that choose the worst ever are opposite to the best. Their estate is naught, let them boast what they will. The Christian therefore ever hath a will to do, though many times he doth not what he will, being sometimes (for secret causes best known to God) kept by him from performing their wills. David would have built a temple, and Abraham would have sacrificed Isaac. Other times hindered by corruptions. The will, or to will, saith Paul, is present, but not the deed, Rom. vii. 18; and Christ saith, 'The spirit is ready, but the flesh is weak,' Mat. xxvi. 41. If we do therefore any good, the deed is God's. If we will it, the will is God's. And then we please God when we will that which God wills, and not when we do that which God wills not.

2. Secondly, *This power that we have, we have it not from ourselves, but God gives it to us.* Some things are done for us which were neither wrought by us nor in us; and thus Christ's death was wrought. Some things wrought in us, not by us, as our first work of conversion. Other things are wrought both in us and by us, and these are all good works after conversion. This will whereof we speak is wrought in us by God, as we be his temples, and the deed is wrought by us as instruments of God's working in us. Thought is not so much as will, it being but a way to it. Yet can we not think a good thought without the Spirit of God working in us. For we have no life at all, but are 'dead in sins and trespasses,' much less can we have any motion to that which is good for ourselves.

Quest. But it will be demanded, how can the work be done by God, and yet we work the same work?

Ans. I answer, in every work that is done, there is God's power and man's joined together. But how? So far as we think or will, it is from us, but to think or will that which is good, that is from God. We work not as horses draw together and equally. We are not co-ordinate, but subordinate. We work as understanding creatures. But God guides our understanding to this or that as he pleases. We hear, but God he bores the ear first. Lydia believed, but God opened her heart, and framed it to believe, Acts xvi. 14. We think, but God gives us to think well.

3. In the next place we are to shew, *that this work of God in us is a powerful work.* It determines our will. God deals not *per omnipotentiam* to constrain our wills to this or that which is contrary to the will, but he gives us to will that which he wills. Now when God intends that man shall do anything, he gives him a will to do it; and in this respect his work is powerful in us. Magnify therefore this power, that preserves us in the midst of temptation, even as it preserved the three children in the fire from burning, Dan. iii. 27; that makes earth to be in heaven; and labour to find experience of this power in thee, the want of the sense whereof brings much want of inward comfort of God's Spirit.

4. In the next place, note *that this work is inward within us, not without us.* He uses exhortations, monitions, allurements, but he puts power to these to prevail: *Fortiter pro te, suaviter pro me, Domine*, saith the Father (b.) For God may work *fortiter*, strongly, and yet liberty be preserved too, as it is evident in the angels. For freedom consists not in doing this or that *ad libitum* as we say; but then are we free and at liberty, when we do anything out of a sound judgment. The angels see good reason why they should depend on God, and man seeing that happiness only lies in the enjoyment of the favour of God, do voluntarily depend on him. God there-

fore enters into the heart, changes the stony heart into a heart of flesh, takes away all rebellious dispositions of our heart, and makes them pliable to his will.

5. Come we in the next place to consider *the perfection and entireness of this work*. God, he is 'Alpha and Omega, the author and finisher of our faith,' Heb. xii. 2, and the beginning and perfection of every good thing is from him. *Omne bonum, a summo Bono*; and therefore he is the cause of the not doing of that which is not done; he is *causa quiescendo*, as well as *agendo*. For why is a thing not, but because he gives it not a being? So that all the ill which we will not, is of him. We should therefore be as thankful to him for any sin he keeps us from, as for any good that he causes us to perform; for there is not any sin that another hath committed, but if God had pleased I might have committed. This is an excellent point to teach us humility. Note therefore hence,

Doct. That perseverance is from God. He gives to will and to do. 'He that hath begun will finish the good work,' saith the apostle in the first of this epistle, and the sixth verse. It is not in our strength to hold out; for after we are once changed, God gives grace sufficient to restrain us and to hold us up. God deals not with us as the husbandman does, sows the ground and leaves it. No. God watches and weeds us, and continues his labour upon us, till he brings us to the end of his promise. If he uphold us not, we are ready to return to our first principles again.

Use. This enforces a particular and resolute dependence on God, in full assurance that what he hath promised, he will perform. He will put his fear into our hearts, so as we shall not depart from him.

Doct. And this is done freely of his own good pleasure; and thus he doth all things. Not of necessity; he is not forced to this or that, either by any foreign power, or internal; he is not bound to this or that, as fire burns necessarily: as the school saith, *necessitate naturæ*. Indeed, he is good necessarily, for it is his nature; but in his acts he is free from all manner of compulsion, for none can compel him, neither is he drawn to this or that by any merit in us, for we merit nothing but destruction. It was his own will that he made any creature at all; that he ranked them into angels and men; that he passed by the angels, and redeemed man; to give means of salvation to some and not to others; to make the means effectual to some and not to others; that some are called sooner, some later; some have more strength, some less; to some more comfort, some less; and to those that have more, to give more at some time and less at other times, as is his free will. What meritorious disposition can there be in a dead person, as the apostle saith we are? Oh, but it will be objected that one grace deserves another; and God giving us, for example, the Spirit of prayer, we deserve the thing we prayed for. I answer, nothing less. God indeed uses this order, but hereby do we not deserve anything. God says, 'Ask, and it shall be given,' Mat. vii. 7. But how? Not by desert in praying; but he hath established this order, that men shall ask before we have.

Uses. (1.) Hence have we a ground of thankfulness to God.

(2.) Secondly, take not offence though thou seest thou hast less grace than others have. All are not strong; some are babes; and it is God's will it should be so, even as there are divers degrees in ages. If thou beest in any esteem with Christ, thank God for that thou art. I speak the rather, being* many are vexed because they are not so holy and pure as such are

* = 'because.'—G.

to whom God hath given a large portion of the grace of his Spirit. No. God gives according to his good pleasure.

(3.) *Despair not therefore.* If thou wantest grace, go to God for more. He gives according to his own good pleasure. Many complain they are sinners, dead, dull, indisposed. Go to God. He gives sharpness of wit to the dull, but according to his good pleasure. More hurt and hindrance comes ordinarily from the abundance of God's gifts of this sort than good. For it may be God sees thou wilt be hereby lifted up and extolled, as Paul was; and therefore for thy good he withholds it from thee. Vex not thyself therefore for the want of that which, if thou hadst it, would turn to thine own bane.

Take heed how thou insultest over others, that as yet are not wrought upon. It may be their hour is not yet come; and therefore use thou all means to do good to such as stand in need. God appoints times and seasons, when and what means he will bless. Thou mayest be the instrument to convert thy brother.

And above all take heed of self-conceit. God gives thee all, and if it be not of or from thyself, why shouldst thou boast, or be lifted up? Be therefore content, and repose thyself on God. What though perchance thou wantest outward means and worldly riches? Pass* not for them. Thank God that he hath wrought a spiritual change in thee. He hath given thee the main. I am sure thou wouldst not change thy estate for all the riches in the world, nor pomp and pride thereof. And if thou findest a decay of the sense of God's love and favour towards thee, seek it of him, but with submission. What if thou findest an ebb of goodness in thee? and that it is not with thee now as formerly it hath been, that thou art more easily overcome with temptation, and that thou canst not wrestle as once thou couldst against thy corruptions? Know, God he gives his power to work and fight, as his pleasure is. God by suffering thee thus to be foiled, tells thee that the work is not thine own, but his, and that he gives and bestows increase as he pleases. Take notice therefore of these things. Thus far have we spoken of the words simply considered.

Now, let us come to them, as they have relation one to another, and particularly of the force of the reason. 'God gives the will and deed, according to his own good pleasure:' therefore fear, and take heed how thou neglectest the means. Fear exaltation of spirit, and trust not on outward means. David, that holy man, he had a touch of this: Ps. xxx. 6, 'I said in my prosperity, I shall not be moved.' Fear how thou vowest anything in thine own strength in time to come; for in that St James gives a good instruction, 'You ought to say, If the Lord will,' iv. 15. Submit thyself to him, for he gives the power 'to will and to do, according to his own good pleasure.'

Doct. It ought therefore [to] be an encouragement to a Christian to work, when he considers that *God works the will and the deed, according to his good pleasure.* That God is willing to give 'the will and the deed' in obedience to his ordinance, will make a Christian confident in every good work; and therefore, to that end, he must learn to know God's will, as favourites in court they learn to know what will please the prince, and accordingly they fashion their behaviour. And when we know his will, then come boldly to him for to desire strength in doing his will. For he hath made us gracious promises, 'to take away our stony hearts, and to give us hearts of flesh,' Ezek. xi. 19, and 'to lay no more on us than we are able to bear,' 1 Cor.

* That is, 'pause.'—G.

x. 13. Let us repair to him for the accomplishment of these promises and others. Take heed how we distrust his promises. It made the Israelites travel forty years, till all the generation of them perished, and entered not into that good land. God hath promised us, not an earthly inheritance, but an heavenly, and victory over our sins. Let us then set on this conquest boldly and with courage, for God hath made himself our debtor by his promise, and he is faithful that hath promised : where, by the way, observe the difference between our estate in the 'first,' from this present estate of ours in the 'second Adam.' The first Adam had no such promise to continue in that estate of integrity. But we have. We are assured. We are united to Christ more surely than he was to his estate in paradise. Magnify, therefore, this condition of thine. And in the fourth place, labour to know aright the nature of the covenant of grace ; for it is a part of his covenant with us, that what he enjoins us he will enable us to perform. 'If we believe, we shall be saved,' saith the covenant. Well, God, he gives us to believe, he bids us to repent, he gives us power to repent. The commandments which are given us concerning faith and repentance, and the like graces here, they shew the order that God uses in saving man. 'To you,' saith Christ, 'it is given to know and believe,' Mat. xiii. 11. This ought, therefore, to comfort us, seeing this covenant of grace is, not only a covenant which requires duties of our parts, but also it is a testament wherein these graces are given us in way of legacies. If we knew the privileges that in this covenant do belong unto us, it should surely make us bold. God promises the will and deed, that we may apply these things unto ourselves ; which if we do, we may go about our works with resolution, that they shall be prosperous to us : our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord. In reverence, therefore, use all means. Trust not on the means, but use them in reverence and in fear ; and hereby thou shalt avoid many corrections, which otherwise thy sins will draw on thee, For the difference in the performance of duties makes the difference of Christians. Some are more careless in their performances than others. Is it not just with God to punish such, by letting them fall into many gross sins ? See this in David and Peter. They trusted to themselves, and called not on God for his gracious direction in temptation. Mark their sins. Observe what comfort they lost. And surely those that are watchful Christians are ever careful of their rules ; and God to such gives what he requires of them. He sends us not to seek straw ourselves as Pharaoh, Exod. v. 7 ; but he provides it to us.

Obj. But it will be objected that, by this doctrine of trusting and relying on God, men will grow idle. God will work his will in us though we sleep, say they.

Ans. But to answer them. First, such men as these will be ashamed to argue thus in outward and worldly businesses. For example, in husbandry, God hath promised every good thing to us ; therefore, let me sit still : the corn will grow, though I sow not nor till the ground. Would not such an one be thought mad, that should reason thus ? Because we know that as God hath appointed every end, so he hath ordained order and means, whereby such things shall be effected. Thus is it in grace. He gives 'the will and the deed,' but he prescribes prayer and other ordinances, as the means attaining to this will, for we have it not of ourselves. And therefore he bids us hear, read and meditate, watch, and such like, and depend on God for a blessing in the use of the means he appoints us. Do that which is required of you. God will do that [that] belongs to him. He

will give 'the will and deed.' Christ he knew that the Father loved him and would honour him, but yet he prays, 'Father, glorify thy Son,' John xvii. 1. So in sickness, to whom God purposes and decrees health, he shall do well. But how? Without means? No. They must use advice of physicians, as one of God's ordinances. Thus is it with our souls. We are all naturally sick and dead. God hath predestinated some to live. But how? 'Faith comes by hearing,' Rom. x. 17. He must be conversant still in the use of means appointed to that end. But the comfortless and weak soul will say, 'Alas! I use means, yet feel I no grace; I am not the better.' To such I say, 'It may be thou art not so instant and urgent in the use of the means as thou mayest and should be.' And secondly, thou must not measure thyself by thy will; for a Christian's will is ever beyond his ability, tending still to that perfection which they cannot come to in this world. Rich men that are covetous think themselves poor, and still desire more. 'I know thy tribulation and thy poverty, but thou art rich,' saith the Spirit to the church of Smyrna, Rev. ii. 9; and therefore discourage not thyself. God is faithful. Use the means, and depend not on the means; but depend on God in the use of the means, else thou shalt find but little comfort. And if thou findest thy affections any whit enlarged to good duties, and lifted up, and cheered in the performance of them, and art glad that thou art not so conversant in sinning as formerly thou wert, but that thou makest a conscience of thy ways, thank God and give him the glory, and abase and humble thyself. David was much conversant in this. 'Blessed be the Lord, that hath kept me from shedding of blood,' saith he to Abigail, 1 Sam. xxv. 32, 33, *seq.* And his psalms are full of praises and thanksgiving. And if thou hast any good motions in thine heart, practise them with all speed, and strengthen them.

VERSE 14.

Do all things without murmurings and disputings.

This verse contains a new precept of Christian modesty, enforced by removing of contraries. 'Murmuring' is well known among us, it is so ordinarily practised of us. It arises from discontent against God or one another, breaking into words, works, disputings; whereby one endeavours to defend that with reasons which in the heat of his affections passed from him, lest he should be thought inconsiderate and rash. But to come to the particulars, consider with me, *first*, the kinds of it; *secondly*, the causes of it; and *thirdly*, the cure and remedies of it. *For the kinds of it*, it is either against God or against man.

First, Against God. Man since the fall quarrels with his Maker. Whenas heaven and earth must be judged by him, man thinks this unequal, and therefore he first *murmureth against God's counsels and decrees*. God he appoints some to this, others to that. This is unequal, saith the proud man; all of us are alike, saith he; I am as good a man as another. 'Who art thou that contendest with God?' Rom. ix. 20. Remember thou art clay, and God is the potter; he hath power to make one vessel to honour, another to dishonour, Rom. ix. 21. God's decrees are divine and above thy reach. If that men could apprehend them by reason, then they were not divine. Lay thy hand therefore on thy heart, and cry, 'O the depth of the counsels and wisdom of God,' Rom. xi. 33. Shall not we give him leave to do what he will, whenas he is the just Judge of all the world? Can he do any wrong?

Second, It is usual with natural men to murmur against God's providence, in doing better to some others than unto themselves. They think themselves much wronged when they see some others rich and have all, whereas they themselves are poor; and this sin is many times found in the children of God, in David, Job, Habakkuk, 'Why do the wicked prosper?' They found fault with the wicked's prosperity, till they went into the sanctuary of the Lord. There they found the end of such men, Ps. lxxiii. 17. Therefore judge not of any but by his end. Think not all things run round, because thou seest no reason thereof, for God's wisdom is unsearchable. Observe the sweet end, issue, and event of all things. Princes they have *arcana imperii*. Shall not we suffer God to enjoy such privileges? Can we endure that our servant should know all our counsels and minds? Let us therefore yield to God liberty in that which belongs to him; yield glory, who disposes all things sweetly.

A *third* thing which men often murmur at is God's ordinance in magistracy and ministry. Such men, they think God is not wise enough, but they will teach him whom he shall advance to high place, and whom not; and thus they despise not only the magistracy, but God himself. 'They have not cast thee off, but me,' saith God to Samuel concerning the people, 1 Sam. viii. 7; and indeed what are they but lawless and wild persons, that cannot away with order? They will have none to overrule them; or, if they be content for shame to admit thereof, yet *nolumus hunc regnare*, Christ must not rule over them, nor this nor that man. But know, whosoever thou art, that all power is from God, and he will defend his own ordinance against all such as malign it. Ministers are not free from murmurers. How many have we that think it tedious to attend on God at public service! how many that think and are not ashamed to say they can profit more in their private studies! and that this observation of the Lord's day causeth them to lose a whole year in seven!* Ay, but consider, God justly curses thy calling whenas thou makest them a stay† to good duties. It is also thus in families; wife murmurs against husband, and husband against wife, blaming themselves in that they matched with such, whenas they think they might have done better with others. No. Thou couldst not have done better. God he hath decreed this, and his decrees are not to be blamed. Servants also are troubled with this disease. They murmur against their masters, and learn to dispute with them; and therefore St Paul wills servants to count their masters worthy of all honour, that the word of God be not blasphemed, Tit. ii. 5. And that they do not contend in 'answering again,' verse 9. It is also much in children against parents, and likewise parents against children; so that this sin reigneth over all estates and degrees. Take notice therefore hereof, that thou beest not overtaken in it.

Causes of murmuring.

1. The first cause of murmuring is ignorance of God's particular providence; his excellency and thy baseness. Job when he came to see the glory and power of God, then said, 'I abhor myself, I will dispute no more,' Job xlii. 6. If we did likewise consider of his majesty, power, wisdom, and goodness, would we contend with our Maker? Consider this in thine own cause, will any of us endure a murmuring servant? shall we think it is reason in us, and that God must notwithstanding suffer with patience our murmurings and disputations with his sacred Majesty, who is justice itself, and is not bound to render account of his actions to any.

* In margin here, 'Men murmur against men.'—G. † That is, = 'hindrance.'—G.

2. The second cause of murmuring in us is *self-love*. Man thinks himself worthy of all honour, never considering his weakness and infirmities. Moses was very meek; he gave no cause to Dathan and Abiram, and the rest, to provoke them to murmur. God yet having set them in some place in the congregation, they were so lifted up with desire of honour as they were too good to be governed, Numb. xvi. 3. Thus is it with every one of us. We willingly puff up ourselves in our own conceits of self-sufficiency, and hence arises discontentedness, when we think God is not so good to us as our merits do deserve. We look on those good things that God hath given us, we think not of our infirmities. Hence it is we are never thankful for that we have, but desirous of that which we have not. Hence also arises unfruitfulness, for such look for greatness, but never or seldom to do good with that they have, whether power, or riches, or such like.

Cures for this.

The cures of this disease consists partly in meditation, and partly in practice. *First, labour to have a right understanding and knowledge of God's justice without all exception. Secondly, that he is infinitely good, disposing all for the benefit and good of his own children. Thirdly, labour to know and observe his particular providence to these baser creatures, as that the hair falls not without his providence, and that he regards the sparrows, Mat. x. 29. These will make us practise these things. First, in justifying God in whatsoever is done and decreed, as David, Ps. cxix. 137, 'Just art thou, O Lord, and holy, and righteous are thy judgments.'* This was Eli his practice, 1 Sam. iii. 18: 'It is the Lord,' said he. And Hezekiah, 'the word of the Lord is good,' 2 Kings xx. 19; and in the 39th Psalm, David held his tongue, ver. 1.* The reason he renders, 'It is thou, Lord, who art good, and dost all for good.' Therefore learn a holy silence as David leads us, 62d Psalm ver. 1: 'My soul waiteth on God with silence,' for so is the signification of the word (*c*). Thus did Aaron: though his sons were destroyed, 'yet he held his peace,' Lev. x. 3. And when thou findest any discontented thoughts to arise in thine heart, check thyself in the beginning, Ps. lxxiii. 22: 'So foolish and like a beast am I,' saith David; and 'why art thou disquieted, O my soul? and why art thou troubled within me?' Ps. xlii. 5. And examine ourselves: Is it fit that God should answer me? is he not wiser than I? 'What am I?' Am I not wicked, dead, dull? Have not I infinitely displeased him? Let me judge myself, that he may not enter into judgment with me. What though God hath not heard my prayers! I have not hearkened to him when he called me; he may justly neglect me, I have neglected him. Yet hath he been wonderfully good to me; I have received much good from him, and no evil; he hath often spared and doth now spare me; his corrections are gentle and loving, above that we deserve. In his judgments his mercies are great: 'It is his mercy that I am not consumed,' Lam. iii. 22. Propound to thyself the example of Christ. He suffered more than we do, when there was no ill found in him. What says he? 'Not my will, but thine be done,' Luke xxii. 42. Indeed, we may wish afflictions to be removed as grievances, but joining them with the will of God, then our will must give place to his. Resign thyself into his hands. It is God that will have it thus with me; and therefore take and bear with meekness. And as Paul did, also pray that the will of the Lord may be done. Let his wisdom be thine, his will thine. And why? It will be so; it shall be so;

* Cf. the pungent and admirable treatise of John Brinsley ΓΑΛΩΣΣΟ-ΧΑΛΙ'-ΝΩΣΙΣ; or, a Bridle for the Tongue, &c., 1664, 12mo, not to be confounded with his 'Stand-Still; or, Bridle for the Times,' 1647.—G.

subject thyself therefore to it. Though we behave ourselves as stubborn horses, he will tame us and overrule us well enough ; he is too mighty for us. Our stubbornness is the ground of all our crosses and afflictions ; for if we will not easily be brought in, God, that out of his mercy chose us, will bring us in to yield. For he will have his will in us, or of us. He will glorify his justice upon us, if his mercies will not work. Lastly, consider the greatness of this sin, to whet us on to the duty enjoined. Though we seem to murmur only against men, we murmur against God ; for what saith he to Moses ?* ‘ They have not cast off thee, but they have cast off me,’ 1 Sam. viii. 7. God takes part with those in authority, as Moses was. For there is no contempt of man, but comes from a contempt of God. The breaches of the second table do spring from the breaches of the first. Observe also, this sin hath ever been grievously punished, it being a sin that pulls God out of his throne, and makes men dare to teach God how to rule. It robs God of his worship, fear, trust, reverence ; for it proceeds from the want of them ; and lastly, it brings with it great unthankfulness, making men forget all God’s goodness bestowed on them.

‘ Disputing or reasoning.’

It issues from murmuring. For when we are come to that pass that we murmur, lest men should think us rash in doing it without cause, we then endeavour to defend ourselves with reason ; and indeed there is nothing that a carnal man does, but he will have reason for it ; and he will have the world see that he doth not anything without reason. He will dispute with God by questioning whether this or that duty is necessary, and against civil authority by questioning the lawfulness or necessity of such duties as he is enjoined. This is a great sin. In divine truths, disputing is partly about probables, and therefore it is excellent to find out of probables the truth ; but in divine truths, to dispute or make question, is little less than blasphemy. And it is observable that in those times when there was most disputing, as among the schoolmen and the like, about religion and divinity, there was least divinity practised, and very few good men. For the heart of man was then taken up in the consideration of this or that quiddity ; and quite neglected the practice of those truths that were known.

Quest. But it will be asked, is all disputing evil ?

Ans. No. The Turk will have none about the Alkoran, and the pope he will not have men dispute about anything that concerns him. The devil and his instruments they ever run into extremes. Either men must call in question all the grounds of divinity, or else receive upon trust whatsoever is delivered to us. No. We must know in doubtful things, this is good and required to find out certainty. The end of motion is rest, and the end of questions and doubts tends to truth. Yet have we many spend all their life in this or that question or doubt, and edify little or nothing. Like those physicians are they who contend and question about the goodness or badness of this or that meat, when a strong labouring man eats it, and finds as good nourishment out of it as out of any other. While men dispute and talk about this or that doctrine, a sound downright Christian receives it, digests it, and is nourished thereby, while the others do even starve themselves. Let therefore God alone with his secret will. *Homo sum*, said Salvian, *secreta Dei non intelligo* (d). God does what is done, be thou content. In human authority also we ought not to dispute, for the subject hath no calling to know the mysteries of state. It may be a sin to command, and yet a virtue to obey. It is thy duty to obey, not to question.

* Samuel.—G.

But if in thine understanding it be plainly evil which is commanded, obey not.* Job did thus, and Job would hear his servant speak, Job xix. 16. But if it be uncertain to thee and doubtful, certain it is thou must obey. Obedience must be without syllogisms. The servant ought to obey, the master must question.

VERSE 15.

‘That we may be blameless, and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.’

This verse contains a reason, drawn from the end, why we should do all things without murmuring or disputing. The reason is threefold.

First, that you may be blameless. *Secondly*, harmless. *Thirdly*, that you may be the sons of God.

‘Blameless.’ This word, if it be taken generally, is a thing that none can attain to. God cannot be without blame, for wicked men will quarrel with him, be he never so good. Christ could not live without blame, though he went about doing good continually, Heb. xii. 3. It is said he endured the cross and despised the shame; nay, the best men are subject to most shame. Stop wicked men in their lewd courses, they† are thought presently to be enemies. And the wicked take that for a wrong, whenas they receive so much good from others that they cannot requite it. But the proper signification of the word is in effect thus much, that they should so behave themselves, as they should not give any just occasion of offence, either to their own consciences, or that of other men. Walk towards God without all manner of profanation or irreligious course, and let your gesture towards men be just, that your conscience may clear you of all fraud or guile; and let your carriage toward your own self be free from all abuse of your person, by gluttony, drunkenness, and the like. In a word, be holy, righteous, and sober.

‘Harmless.’ The word signifies simple, without all mixture or composition; or else void of hurt, without horn, as the word imports (e).

The doctrine is, *that it is the property of Christians to do no harm.* The reason is, because our nature now is changed from that it was; for by nature we are to one another lions and wolves, as Heb. xi. 33. Now therefore our nature being changed, our actions also become changed. The gospel makes us tame. The Spirit of Christ in all our members is as Christ himself. His miracles were for good, and they were beneficial to men. He did all things well. Those therefore that are led by this Spirit of his do no harm, so far as they are Christ’s.

Use. For use note this as a main difference between the Christian and another man. For all other people are harmful creatures. The four monarchies were as so many beasts, because to the poor church of God they were as so many beasts, cruel and devouring. Nay, the civillest man of all, to his neighbours he seems to be harmless, but towards the church none so fierce as they.

On the contrary, Christians are meek as doves. The wicked are as ravenous birds, like eagles’ feathers;‡ self-love turns all to its own end.

* Cf. above sentiments with those referred to by Bishop Patrick, note g, Vol. I. page 290, seq.—G.

† Qu. ‘you’?—Ed.

‡ Qu. ‘feathered eagles.’ Cf. Ezek. xxxix. 17, and Ps. lxxviii. 27.—G.

Among the beasts, the Christian is as a lamb, innocent, fruitful ; a common good. ‘ When he is exalted the land rejoices,’ Prov. xi. 11. Contrarily the wicked are termed lions and bears, and the like. Among the plants wicked men are as briars : a man must be fenced that deals with them, 2 Sam. xxiii. 7 ; the godly as lilies, sweet, not fenced with pricks. Among earthly creatures the godly are as the worm ; the wicked, a generation of vipers and serpents. They will do no right, take no wrong, but a word and a blow ; a word and presently to suit, right Esaus and Ishmaels. Nay, they glory in it. Oh, say they, he is a shrewd man. Hence comes duels, combats, and the like. Men now are come to that pass, they will not put up a word. Nay, those that are innocent, and will pass by injuries, tush ! they are fools. But know, thus to be foolish is to be wise, to be Christian like ; and such fools as these are shall find comfort on their deathbeds, when those wise men shall wish they had been such fools.

Such fools as these are, I mean the innocent, shall have God for their help and shelter, for want whereof these worldly wise men come often to ill ends, and to be made fearful examples. The Psalms are full of encouragements herein : Ps. xviii. 2, ‘ The Lord is my rock and fortress,’ said David ; and so in Ps. xxv. 8, 9, 10, &c. Wicked men have horns, but God is a hammer to break the horns of the wicked. The innocent person, and he that is harmless, brings peace to the land, and a blessing to the place where he lives. Here prayers and intercessions are as the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof. Let those things be noted to provoke us unto this duty.

‘ Sons of God.’

This is the third ground whereby we are incited, to be without murmuring and disputing, that you may be ‘ the sons of God ;’ that is, that by this you may appear to your own comfort to be the sons of God, or that herein you may be as the sons of God, in shewing yourselves harmless and blameless, which may testify it to yourselves and others.

Doct. Therefore Christians that are harmless and blameless indeed, are the sons of God. The ground of this is the love of God, who freely gave his own Son to take our nature upon him, and to die to save us from the sting of death ; he became the Son of man to make us the sons of God without rebuke. And as God gave him to us, so by faith doth he give us to him ; and by this God gives us power to be his sons, John i. 12. Our nature is hereby changed ; for whom he makes sons he sanctifies them and makes them new, and thus become we his sons. God hath adopted us, not as natural men, for this or that respect, to an earthly inheritance, but God freely adopts us to an heavenly inheritance that fadeth not ; neither doth God adopt us as men do men *in solamen orbitatis*,* for God hath a Son in whom he is pleased ; neither again can men’s adoption make their adopted sons to be good ; but when God adopts us, he makes us as he would have us to be, like himself. Fourthly, other adopted sons, many of them are not sharers together of the inheritance to one allotted ; but we are made heirs and fellow-heirs with Christ himself. This love of God was such as the apostle could not express in any fit terms ; therefore he saith, ‘ Behold what love hath the Father shewed us !’ 1 John iii. 1. David thought it not to be a small thing to be the son-in-law of an earthly prince, 1 Sam. xviii. 23 ; behold, we are sons of the King of kings. By nature we are sons of the devil, and rebels. Now, that God should freely, out of his own free love, set his love on us, passing over angels and other men, and not sparing his own Son, have we not hence cause to cry, ‘ Behold what love !’ and

* That is, for the solacing of childlessness.—G.

'Oh the depth of that love!' Earthly fathers adopt sons because they die, but God is eternal; he never dies; his Son is everlasting. Consider this as a point of comfort, for this relation is everlasting; he never leaveth us nor forsakes us. Servants are cast out, but the Son abideth for ever; servants know not the counsels of their masters, but sons they know the whole will of God. Consider this as a ground of protection in all dangers, and of provision of all good. 'I have a father,' saith the prodigal; 'what need I die for hunger? I will go to him,' Luke xv. 17. In a word, the word *Father* is an epitome of the whole gospel. All the promises therein contained are sealed up by and in this one word, God is our Father. Can we go to our Father for pardon of sin and not obtain it? By Christ's death and satisfaction he is become our Father; and therefore Christ is Christ after his resurrection. Can we then want any good thing? How can we think he will deny us his Spirit, or that inheritance in heaven, which as a Father he hath promised! How then, or at what shall we be dismayed and discomfited? What can trouble us? Mark what is promised in Ps. ciii. 2, *seq.* All good that may any way concern thy soul or body. Dost thou fear thy corruptions? The Spirit tells thee that God is thy Father; there can be no condemnation to thee, Rom. viii. 1. Dost thou fear want? Surely he that hath given thee Christ, his own Son, how shall he not with him give thee all things, Rom. viii. 32. Thou shalt want nothing for thy good. Thou mayest fall into sin, but God is still thy Father. This relation is everlasting. He will not forsake thee. From hence thou mayest have an argument against all suggestions. This brings with it comfort; but to whom? It must be to such as are sons, not to the traitorous and rebellious. It hath been treason for any man to term himself the son of a king, not being indeed so, yea, though the king were dead; and is it not high treason for a presumptuous traitor to come into the presence chamber of the great God, and with an impudent face to style God his Father? Verily God's answer will be to such, 'You are of your father the devil: his works ye do,' John viii. 44.

1. Those that are God's sons* *he renews to do his will and commandments.* 1 Pet. i. 16: 'Be ye holy,' saith he, 'for I am holy.' But when men hate goodness and good men, nay, and persecute them, defame them, murder them, John viii. 44, they are of the devil. They are murderers and liars; and that religion that teacheth them is devilish.

2. Again, If God be thy Father, *thou wilt have a spirit of prayer.* We are no sooner born but we begin to cry, as Paul did at his first conversion, Acts ix. 11. Every child of God, in respect of his measure of grace, he will do his endeavour to sigh and sob out his grief to God: and as the grace increases, so will this duty be more perfect, till at length he comes to provoke† God, by his promise to urge and bind him by reasons to hear him. Those, therefore, that pass day after day, never finding time for the performance of this duty, they have not God's Spirit; for by it we have access to God, Eph. ii. 18; Eph. iii. 12; and there is no child but will use this privilege; and those that use it not may well suspect they are not children.

3. Thirdly, If thou be the child of God, and hast his Holy Spirit in thee, thou shalt have, whensoever thou standest in need, *a sweet consolation*; for that ever reveals to thee what thou art, and comforts thee in all distress. For, Rom. v. 1, 'being justified by faith, thou hast peace with God.'

* In margin here, 'Signs of God's sons.'—G.

† That is, etymologically, to 'call forth,' = to appeal to.—G.

What cross soever troubles the child of God, this will ever comfort him : Well ! I am the child of God ; I am assured God is reconciled to me ; I have my confidence in him, that when he sees fit I shall be eased ; in the mean time I am assured I shall not be overcome. This is that which no natural man can have ; he cannot rejoice in affliction.

4. Fourthly, If thou beest the son of God, thou art not *overmuch careful for the things that concern this life*. Thou usest the means that God hath ordained, and thou trustest God with the issue and event of all. It is the property of orphans to care much for their living, and for the things of this world ; not for those that have such a father as God, that provides for all his children liberally ; and men in thus doing shew themselves orphans, or bastards, and not sons.

Quest. But some will ask, Is it not possible to be the son of God, and yet ignorant thereof ?

Ans. I answer, Yes. For the child at the first knows not his father ; but by little and little he comes to know him as he grows in years. So is it with the child of God. At the first he only cries and bewails his miserable estate ; but as they grow up, out of the word they learn to see their estates that is laid up for them, and to know their Father that hath been so good to them, and to call upon him as their Father for anything that they want. They know that the Scripture gives it as a note of one that is born of God, that ' he sins not ' ; that is, that not with delight and continuance in sin, but that his new nature stirs him up to repent, and to beg pardon and to strive against it, so as at length he comes to grow so perfect as no temptation shall overthrow him, though it may foil* him. But he always considers his estate when any temptation comes : Shall I, that am a prince, a son and heir to God, do thus, and offend against him ?

' Without rebuke.'

This is comprehended in the former words, and therefore I speak the less thereof. The words are not to be taken in a strict legal sense, but in an evangelical sense, implying that we should walk so as we may be free from rebuke of the best, from gross sins, from common infirmities and personal corruptions. Whether it be rashness, anger, worldliness, intractableness, the child of God must labour to free himself of them. He ought to endeavour to attain to perfection, though we cannot attain to it in this world ; and we ought to pray as the apostle, Eph. iii. 18, ' to know the length, breadth, depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, that passeth knowledge ;' and thus doing we shall dignify this estate of ours.

' In the midst of a crooked and perverse nation.'

The word ' crooked,' or ' perverse,' is a borrowed word from timber,† whose excellency is to be right and straight ; and if it be not, must be squared by the rule. Here it is applied to the disposition and nature of men, who naturally are of a crooked condition, especially those that are in the bosom of the church. They are so crooked as they cannot be squared aright by means ; and so it is with those that are right, they are very right.

Doct. The doctrine then is, *that wicked men are all perverse and crooked*, Deut. xxxii. 5.

Reason. The reason hereof is, since the fall of Adam we are under sin and Satan. Sin is nothing but crookedness. We lying in sin are therefore crooked inwardly and outwardly, in will and in judgment. Even in the church, men *perversely judge* of a Christian's life, and of preaching. So

* That is, sometimes get the better of him.—G.

† That is, *σκολός*, on which cf. Bishop Ellicott *in loc.*, with his references.—G.

that till we be converted, our wisdom is enmity to God. But *the will especially is perverse*. Men they will die. 'Why will ye die, O house of Israel?' Jer. xxvii. 13. 'How often would I have gathered you,' saith Christ, 'and you would not!' Mat. xxiii. 37. Endeavour to bring men to rules: they will not; they will perish. Bring them to make conscience of private prayer, good company: away with it, they will not yield. Our *affections are also perverse*. Do not most men love their bane? Ill company, bad courses, swearing and blaspheming. Men will die rather than they will leave their courses. *Men are also naturally perverse in opposition to means*. God commands, promises, sends mercies and judgments, but who regards? They will go on in their ways; nay, as in Deut. xxix. 19, 'they will bless themselves in them.' This is the nature of most men in the visible church, more perverse than the Jews.

'Signs hereof.'

1. The first sign of this perverse estate is, *bring thyself to the rules of God's truth; if thou do it unwillingly, and art brought to it by violence, if you shun the word and the means of salvation, if you shun good company, it is a sign you are crooked; nay, so crooked, as you desire to be crooked still.*

2. But be it so that thou canst be content to apply thyself to the rule, then *whether do you tremble to apply the rules to your lusts and corruptions?* You have many are so set on their sins as they will justify sin by the word, and wrest the meaning thereof to their own lusts. This is a sure infallible sign of a perverse estate.

Cure hereof.

1. *Bring thyself to God's ordinance*, where thou shalt know thine own crookedness and the danger of it.

2. But especially do this *when thou art young*; for those that are settled in their dregs are not to be dealt withal. It is good therefore to do as nurses do, strengthen ourselves when we are young and pliable.

3. Thirdly, *Keep good company, and such as by their life will discover to thyself thy corruptions and perverse estate; and thus when thou findest it,*

4. *Consider what a miserable estate thou art in.* We amongst us account it a great eyesore to see a body that should be straight to be crooked. Oh that we had eyes to see this spiritual crooked estate we are in! Oh what fear and grief would possess us! How would we labour to free ourselves of it, and to straighten ourselves every day, lest we should be found unfit for God's building, and good for nothing but to burn! With such as walk perversely God will deal perversely, Lev. xxvi. 28. It may be he will seem to sleep for a while, but at the hour of death it will shew that he looked for better courses at thy hands.

5. Pray with the psalmist, Ps. cxix. 5, 'Oh that my ways were so direct, that I might keep thy statutes!' Observe again, that the godly here live in the midst of lions and wolves; those that are of a froward and perverse heart. For those that live under the means of grace, and will not be wrought upon, they are much worse for it. There is more innocence in a Turk than in some that profess better. And those that profess most, if they be hypocrites, of all other make the most bitter opposition against the truth.

The reasons hereof are: *First, God hereby shews his power*, in that he can and doth preserve his children among lions from the wrath of the lion. Christ he must rule, but it is in the midst of his enemies; and therefore his church must be in the midst of his enemies, for he is king of his church.

2. Again, in regard of the wicked, it justifies their just condemnation. They cannot say but that they had the means, as well of the gospel as the examples of those that were good. Thus did Noah justly condemn the old world, and Lot Sodom.

3. Furthermore, those that are not desperately wicked, but of whom we may conceive some hope, surely they by living with the godly may be won; as when they see religion in others bringing forth good works, they see religion is no impossible thing, for they see men troubled with the like infirmities that they are that practise it; and they see it is sweet, because it makes men tractable and loving.

4. Moreover, in regard of the godly, God suffers them to be amongst the wicked, for it refines them. Envy and malice are quick-sighted. God's children know they live in the midst of envy, therefore they are wary. Lot lived more uprightly in Sodom than when he was out of it. Wickedness binds in religion, and makes it more forcible, even as by an *antiperistasis*;* it unites it and strengthens it. It makes the godly to be more careful, to be unblameable, and to watch to keep themselves from doing hurt, and from taking hurt; for wicked men are watchful to take advantage of any ill example in the weak Christian, and to follow it. But, on the contrary, the weak Christian is overcome, and carried away with the streams of vice, and therefore are the more watchful.

‘Directions for life.’

1. *Remember thy calling*—that you are sons of God; and forget not your profession, and fetch reasons from your callings. You are God's children; you are called with a holy calling. Shall I do thus, and offend against my Father? and shall I disgrace that holy calling, and scandalise it? Shall I give cause to make the enemy to blaspheme?

2. Again, *Observe the persons with whom thou conversest*. Are they malicious and envious?

3. Beware how thou *give them offence*; especially watch thy natural corruptions and weaknesses. Take heed of secret ill thoughts.

4. *Carry the example of David about with thee*; see in him what his thoughts wrought. That which thou tremblest to do, tremble to think on; for God justly leaves such in great sins that solace themselves in ill thoughts.

5. Again, *Look to duties of the second table*. These sins are great sores in the eyes of our enemies.

6. *Use a loving, pitiful carriage towards them that are without*. Though they be never so wicked, give them their due, and consider the goodness thou hast was given thee. Therefore be not puffed up in thine own conceit, but fear continually.

‘Among whom you shine as lights in the world.’

These words contain another reason why the children of God ought to be unreprouvable. For, saith the apostle, ‘you are lights.’ All God's children are lights, but so as there is an order of them. God is the ground of all light; he is the Father of lights. Christ he is the Sun of righteousness. These are the grand lights. The word of God is also a light and a lantern to light us in the dark ways of this world. From hence light is derived to the saints, who receive it from Christ by the word and Spirit. You being therefore thus enlightened, you are to converse amongst men as lights, saith the apostle. For the better understanding thereof, consider in what things God's children resemble light; and,

* That is from *αντι* and *περιστάσις*.—G.

1. First, We know this creature of light *is an excellent creature*, shewing the excellency of all other creatures ; and it is a beautiful creature. Thus is the word, and children of God. By it all the world is discovered to be as Egypt, and the church to be as the land of Goshen.* And this is beautiful in the eyes of God, who loves that which is like himself. He is light indeed, and nothing but light is lovely to him. He loves those sparks which our natural corruption hath left unto us ; and therefore much more the light of his own Spirit which he places in us.

2. Secondly, *Light is pure, and admits of no contagion*, though it be in the most contagious places of all. So is the word : it is pure, and makes us pure and sincere, and that we should not be defiled with the lusts and corruptions of this world wherein we converse.

3. Thirdly, *Light makes us to discern of differences..* It shews itself, and discovers other things. Thus doth the word shew itself where it is, and the man that hath it doth discern of things that differ. He judges of the wicked, and censures their lewd courses. The child of God is above all wicked men, and themselves are justly judged of none ; for the wicked men cannot judge of those that are lights, no more than a blind man of colours, for they are blind by nature. The world would indeed censure them, when indeed they cannot discern themselves, when contrarily he discerns himself and knows his infirmities and his slidings.

4. Again, *Light is a heavenly quality.* So is the word of God, holy, pure, transforming godly men to its own likeness, to be heavenly. His bread is from heaven ; his affections, desires, thoughts, endeavours are heavenly. His way is upward. He is heavenly-minded ; while he is on earth he is in heaven.

5. Moreover, *Light is a most comfortable thing in darkness*, expelling terrors and discomfords. Thus is a Christian that is enlightened by the word. Terrors are in the word, but the word comforts the heart of a Christian. It makes him able to judge of his way and estate ; to know he is the Son of God ; that all the promises are his ; that heaven is his ; that he hath God's mark. Contrarily, the wicked have no light at all ; for while they live here their life here is as a death, full of discomfort ; they having no comfort in anything, save a little glimpse of false joy in the creatures ; which when they leave them they are in the more terror,—all their comfort being in this, that they see not that miserable estate before they fall into it and feel it.

6. Furthermore, *Light makes a thing full of evidence.* All the world cannot persuade a man contrary to that they see. Thus the word so discovers to us our estates in grace, and so surely as all the world can never shake the foundation of our faith. ' Though he kills me,' saith Job, ' I will trust in him,' Job xiii. 15. But for the wicked, their life is full of staggering, full of doubtings ; and hence is it that the children of God are counted by God holy, pure, comely, fair and dear, because they live with a resolution. The papists, they will tell us that the word is obscure ; let them tell us the light is obscure, for we may as well believe one as the other.

7. But to proceed : *Light is a quality of surest motion.* It spreads suddenly. Thus do the children of God. They communicate to others. They shine, spreading forth the grace, first of all to those that are next them, as children and friends, then to such as are further off. Those that have

* Cf. Exodus x. 23.—G.

not this nature, that do not desire to do good to others, they are not children of the light ; for it is the nature of all good to communicate.

8. *Light*, we know, *hath a secret influence wheresoever it is*. Thus also is the grace of God in his children. It is ever operative and working. What light soever they receive from the Sun of righteousness, they diffuse it and spread it to others, like the moon ; and therefore he adds further :

‘ As lights in the world.’

We that are ‘ lights in this world,’ we are, it is true, in a dampish place, yet must we shine, though but dimly. Therefore ministers, let them look both to their doctrine and life, for they are great lights, or at the least should be so, and they will be noted. We know when the sun or moon are eclipsed. We all observe it as a wonder. And thus will it be with such lights as ministers should be. Men continually eye them. If they be eclipsed, it will be wondered at and observed of all. Let therefore not only ministers but others also look to themselves, that they take heed of those things that will eclipse them. We know whence the eclipse in nature of these heavenly bodies do come ; from the interposition of dark, gross, earthly bodies. Thus it is with God’s children. Their cares, griefs, and studies in this world being ever more carnal than is meet, they eclipse us and make us dark, keeping us from the presence of that light which should enlighten us. But especially, and above the rest, self-love, that blinds us and eclipses all other lights from us.

9. Again, *Heavenly lights are perpetual*. Even as *stellæ cadentes*, so is it with the wicked man. Though he seems to shine fairly, yet because the causes of this light in him are earthly, no marvel if after the force of them be spent they suddenly vanish. But the godly man’s light is of another substance and nature. It is heavenly, and is ever like himself. It may indeed be obscured, but never wholly eclipsed. Either worldly sorrow or joy doth for a time sometimes darken them, and may be so obscured as neither the world, no, nor themselves can discern their estates for their own comfort ; yet for all this will they at length recover their former brightness and glory again. Saint Paul, he saith, a Christian life is concealed and hid with Christ in God, Col. iii. 3 ; but yet when he shall appear, then shall we also appear.

Use. The use of all this is to try us whether we be lights. Surely if we be, we will have no communion with those that work the works of darkness. So saith Saint John, 1 John i. 5–7. Again, if we be lights we shall wonder at our glorious estate we are in ; we shall think all our life before we came into this estate to be dark ; yea, though formerly we were civilly disposed. And especially shall we wonder at that which we have in future expectation and hope, reserved to us in heaven. A carnal man wonders still at worldly matters, as stately buildings and the like ; a Christian thinks all base in respect of the immense love of God freely set upon him.

Directions how to attain to be lights.

1. First, If we desire to be lights, *communicate thyself with the chiefest light*, as the stars are ever in the presence of the sun, and from his light they receive theirs. Be sure thou placest thyself in God’s eye continually.

2. Secondly, *Use the means*, use the glass of God’s word. Thou shalt not only see thy estate therein, but by it thou shalt be transformed into God’s image, 2 Cor. iii. 18. Other glasses have no such power like this mirror of the gospel. It makes us like God, because it hath the Spirit of God ever accompanying with it, whence it is the word of light. Those therefore that are out of the sunshine of the gospel, no marvel if they be

dark. The moon, so far as it is averse from the sun, is ever dark. So is a Christian. So far as he is turned from Christ, so far he is dark. Let thine eyes therefore be ever towards him in the use of the means, the word, prayer, and the sacraments, and such like.

3. Again, *In thy conversation have no correspondency with the world*, for what fellowship is there between light and darkness? How foully do they therefore deceive themselves that will be wise. They will be protestant or papist, zealous or profane, according as their company are. God will turn such worldly wisdom into mere folly, who will be ashamed of such when he shall come in his kingdom. It is a comely thing to be Christians with Christians. Light with light augments the light, even as the multitude of stars joined in the heaven make the *galaxia*.^{*} A company of Christians meeting in one make a glorious light indeed, and such a lustre as will dazzle the eyes of the wicked world. Be stirred up therefore to use good company.

4. *And follow the example of those that be lights*, and the directions thou findest in the word, and thou shalt shine as the sun in the kingdom of God. It is true the wicked they will labour to cover this light with clouds of disgrace and detraction, and thus they reward God for his goodness, but they have their lesson. There is no surer sign of a wicked man than when they endeavour to deprave these lights and to obscure them. And yet this practice is very usual, when they see especially any new light risen up, they deride and scoff at that man or woman; they hate him for his light. Like Cain are they, that hated his brother for his goodness; and herein are not only imitators of Cain, but they shew themselves to be of their father the devil, for his works they do. Well, as we desire not to be of this sort, let us see that we use the means. Go and be where the word of light is, where it shines; for those that live without it live in darkness. Set not thy carnal reason against God's wisdom. He bids thee do this. And as thou desirest the peace of Zion,

5. *Pray for this light that it may grow more and more unto the perfect day thereof.*

6. And labour to see the contrary estate of such as are in darkness, where the king of fear ruleth, and where is nothing but terror.

7. *And entreat God that he would open thy dull eyes, that the glorious light of the gospel may shine therein.* So doth the apostle, Eph. i. 18; and thus shalt thou at the length come to shine here in this world, without which thou shalt not shine in the world to come. The light of nature and reason cannot bring thee to the light of glory.

8. And when thou art converted, '*strengthen thy brethren*,' Luke xxii. 32; labour to bring others into this marvellous light. 'He that gains a soul shall shine as the stars,' Dan. xii. 3. But will some men say, May we converse then or live among wicked men? Yes, verily; for the Holy Spirit saith that we must '*shine in the world*.' Christ did not pray that God would take his disciples out of the world, but that he would keep them in the world from evil, John xvii. 15. But that which is forbidden is familiar conversation and amity with them; otherwise we may live with them so as by example to gain them. And herein the Christian reasoneth contrary to the world; for the world saith, Do this. Why? Because it is the custom, and most men use it. Nay, saith the Christian, we must live so as we ought to endeavour to make others, which are wicked, like ourselves. We must gain others by our good example. We must 'redeem

* That is, = the milky way.—G.

the time, because the days are evil,' Eph. v. 16. Because others are perverse, be thou good. Noah was not as the old world, nor Lot as Sodom. We as they ought to be preachers of righteousness; and if we cannot bring others to the light of the truth, yet to grieve and pity their estates. And as David bewailed, 'Woe is me, that I am constrained to dwell in Mesech,' &c., Ps. cxx. 5, and yet to comfort ourselves in this, that it will not be always thus with us. The time will come that we shall be freed from them, and we shall have communion with the Trinity and with all the saints. In the mean time shine here; swear not with them; be not dissolute with them, but be constant in going against the stream. Call to mind thy calling, that thou art the son of God. Thou art to be a light to those that are in darkness. Reason not for thy corruptions, but ever against them. I am a Christian; shall I hate him that I profess to follow? I am a son of God; shall company make me perverse? I am a light; shall I cease to shine? No, Lord; while I am here give me grace that I may grow more and more fit for that light and glorious estate that thou hast in keeping for me against that great day of accounts.

VERSE 16.

Holding forth the word of life.

That which is of light is life, saith John, i. 4: 'The life was the light of men;' and therefore he saith we should be as lights, 'holding forth the word of life.' It is not enough for us to shine to ourselves, but we ought to shine to others in speech and conversation. By 'the word of life' here especially is meant the gospel; for the law is a killing letter. We being in our corrupt estate, the law pronounces us dead as concerning ourselves. Then comes the gospel, that sends us out of ourselves to Christ; and in him it pronounces life to such as come to him; and it describes to us the way that leads to life, and the degrees of life, as redemption, grace, and glory, 2 Tim. i. 10. It again begins this life in us, and works faith in us, whereby we lay hold on life; and therefore it is also called the word of faith. It is called the word of the kingdom; for it offers the kingdom to us. It is also called the word of reconciliation; for that it tells us where it is to be had, and works it in us. It is therefore the word of life; and those that believe it not, are dead in law, for the sentence is already passed upon such. He is already condemned as dead men. He wants sense, motion, and comeliness. For *sense*, he cannot relish any goodness, either in hearing or seeing it. He is blinded, and he stops his ear at the voice of the charmer; and this makes him wonder how others are affected with any good thing. For *motion*, he cannot set one step onward to salvation. And for that *comeliness*, we all by nature are more loathsome than the dead carcase. Abraham could not endure the sight of his own wife when she was dead, though living she was so dear to him, Gen. xxiii. 4. Thus are we by nature altogether rotten and polluted; speech, fine discourse, favour, and all other outward good parts, they can put no comeliness upon us. They are but on us as flowers stuck upon a dead carcase. All men know that it is rotten and stinking, and void of all comeliness notwithstanding them. This then must teach us to regard more this word of life, and to pity them that have it not; and how to judge of such that withhold this word of life from them that live in darkness, as the papists do. Surely there is no cruelty like this cruelty, to starve men's souls. Observe we therefore from hence, he that refuseth God's ordinance he refuseth life.

What shall we then think of those private devotions, wherewith many men put off God's ordinance, thinking that they can get as much good in their warm chamber by reading of books, as in the public congregation by hearing God's word taught? These are fools, setting their foolish inventions against God's wisdom, as though they could tell God better means to beget and strengthen faith, than he himself can appoint. Oh, but men will say, it hinders us from our callings; in seven years we lose a year. But dost thou not live by this word? Shalt thou do well to be ashamed of that, and lightly esteem of that word that brings with it life and glory? But why is this word no more esteemed? Surely men deceive themselves with self-conceit. They think themselves good, when they are stark naught; and that they are alive, whenas like to the Laodiceans they are dead in sin and iniquity, Rev. ii. 16, *seq.*

(1.) The reason hereof is, *they want the Spirit to convince them.* For the Spirit convinces us of death. Where this Spirit is not, none will seek for life; for they know not that they are dead by nature; they believe not God's law that should convince them. No marvel then if they affect not a change.

(2.) A second reason is, *for that such men as these are carried by sense.* They see they want no outward content, and for other things they think God will be merciful; they think God loves them, for that he gives them worldly riches. There is another sort of men, and these are brought to despair; how is it that these, seeing their misery, do not esteem of this word aright, and come to it as to the word of life? I answer, they consider not of this word aright; they think their sins so many as that the word cannot enlighten their darkness. To such I say, they are most fit for this word of life; for Christ bids such come to him as are 'weary and heavy laden' with their sins, and he hath promised release, Mat. xi. 28. And he saith he came 'to bind up the broken in heart and the bruised in spirit,' Isa. lxi. 1; and therefore, let such be encouraged by these and such like gracious invitations and promises to come to the word, and with attention to search into the depth of these promises made to them. But thus much of this, that the word is a word of life. Now we come to the next, that Christians must 'hold forth this word of light or life.' And this is done in speech and action, profession and confession, when they are called thereto. For every Christian is a light that must shine. What use is there of light under a bushel? Many are of contrary judgment. They think it wisdom to be close in their profession; in company of papists, to be popish; of religious, to be religiously disposed. Surely this wisdom is carnal and devilish. What use is there of such light? They are like false lanterns, which are commonly called thieves' lanterns. They carry their light to themselves; none is benefited thereby; they are fit for works of darkness. Of such, Christ hath already said, 'He will hereafter be ashamed,' Mark viii. 38. Others there are inwardly one thing, outwardly another, contrary to the Christian's duty, which is to hold forth the light that he hath. And this do they, whenas in all passages of their life they are turned into the word, and cast into the mould thereof; then it teaches us to pray, to be patient, to joy, yea, in the midst of afflictions, and to do good even to those that hate us. And if we, according as we are taught, do these things, then do we hold forth this word of life, and it will be an exceeding great comfort to us in life, in death, in all estates. It will assure us that we are transformed into the image of this word, and the holding forth of this word in our lives thus, will cause a far louder report in the ears of God than all the verbal profession we can make.

In temptation, if we find ourselves even at despair, by considering the curse of the law, due to us for our sins, if in this estate we can apply the gospel so to us, as thereby we find comfort out of it, and such as upholds us, surely this is a great sure sign that we are transformed; and by this we hold forth the power of the word, and thereby the light thereof. In the hour of death, when the devil is most busy to shake our faith, we notwithstanding are not daunted, but ground our faith on the word, and can comfortably apply that speech of St Paul, 'There is no condemnation to those that are in Christ.' We hereby do set forth the power, comfort, and truth of the word. Contrarily, those that are impatient in trouble, and puzzled with every temptation, swallowed up with fear, and shew no assurance of faith in them, notwithstanding the great means they have had, these live as though there were no word. Nay, they do in a manner slander the word in their lives, making show as if the word had no power, comfort, or strength at all in it. For our parts, let us not leave till we have digested all the promises and comfortable assurances the gospel doth everywhere lay out to us. Hereby we shall shew ourselves far above all other men, and in all estates we shall be the same, not moved at all. Let us be therefore thankful for this word of life, and joyful in it, and treasure it up against the evil day, setting our minds ever upon it; let it be as a paradise to us, where the tree of life is placed. Christ in the word is as the tree of life. He that tasteth of this tree shall never die. By the 'first Adam' we come to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, by woeful experience, by the which we all died, but by the second Adam we come to eat of the tree of life, by which we live perpetually.

NOTES.

(a) P. 8.—'No perfunctory thing can please God. To this end, as Seneca says, of performing of duties natural, so in religious duties there is required: first, a right judgment of the nature of the thing we do; secondly, an affection to do it,' &c. This is a commonplace of the Stoic philosophy; and while I have not been able to trace the words, the *sentiment* is frequent in the Letters of Seneca, as well as in those of Cicero.

(b) P. 15.—"Fortiter pro te, suaviter pro me, Domine," saith the father.' A variation or adaptation by Augustine of the apophthegm, 'Fortiter in re, suaviter in modo.'

(c) P. 21.—"My soul waiteth on God with silence," for so is the signification of the word.' The literal rendering is, 'Only to God (is) my soul silent;' one of the standard proof-texts with the Quakers, in support of their 'silent' meetings.

(d) P. 22.—'Homo sum, said Salvian, *scereta Dei non intelligo*.' This is one of various of the reverential sayings of this priest of Marseilles, who is usually classed with the Fathers. It occurs in the most thoughtful of his books, his *De Providentia Dei*, which, from its frequent citation by the Puritans, must have been a favourite with them. Cf. lib. i., near beginning.

(e) P. 23.—'Harmless.' The word signifies without all mixture or composition; or else void of hurt, without harm, as the word imports. The word is *ἀμεμπτοι*, on which cf. Bishop Ellicott, who gives valuable references on its derivation and lexical meaning.

G.