

A COAL FROM THE ALTAR TO KINDLE THE HOLY FIRE OF ZEAL

IN A SERMON PREACHED AT A GENERAL VISITATION AT IPSWICH.

TO MY REVEREND FRIEND

MR SAMUEL WARD

SIR—Your sermon, which I copied partly from your mouth, and partly from your notes, I have adventured into the light; encouraged by the approbation and earnest entreaty of such whose judgments you reverence and whose love you embrace; who also have made bold here and there to vary some things, not of any great consequence, if I can judge. I was loath to smother such fire in my breast, but to vent it, to inflame others. If you shall blame me, I know others will thank me. What I have done is out of zeal to God and his church.

Your affectionate Friend,

AMBROSE WOOD.

Be zealous.—REV. III. 19.

THIS watch-word of Christ, if it be not now a word in season, I know not when ever it was, or will be. Would he now vouchsafe to bestow a letter upon his church here on earth, should he need to alter the tenor of this? Which being the last to the last of the seven churches, why may it not (saith an ancient, upon this text) typify the estate of the last age of his churches? the coldness whereof himself hath expressly foretold. And if God should now send through the earth such surveying angels as Zachariah mentions, chap. i., could they return any other observation of their travels than theirs, 'The whole world lies in lukewarmness'? which makes me often, in my thoughts, proportion these ends of time to the like period of David's age, when no clothes were enough to keep heat in him, 1 Kings i. 1. Faith, I grant, is a more radical, vital, and necessary grace; but yet not so wholly out of grace with the times as poor zeal, which yet, if by any means it might once again be reduced into favour and practice, before time sets, and be no more, I doubt not but Christ would also yet once again, in this evening of the world, come and sup with us, a favour including all other in it.

My desire especially is, that this our island might take it to itself, as well as if it had by name been directed to it; what would it hurt us to make an especial benefit and use of it? Some of our own have so applied it (either out of their judgments or affections, I say not). Learned Fulke marvels if it were not by a prophetic spirit penned for us; others more resolutely have made it a singular type of purpose for us. Their warrant I know not, especially if it be true, which all travellers tell you, that they find more zeal at home than abroad. We are, I grant, in sundry respects equal to Laodicea. Even the very names thereof, as well the first and oldest in regard of the blessings of God, *Διοσκούρι*, God's darling, as the latter in regard of good laws and civility, *Laodicea*, how well do they become us? As rich as they, and that in the very same commodity of wools, abounding as they with many learned Zenos, and bountiful Hieros, parallel in all regards, I would I could say lukewarmness excepted. But I must be a faithful and true witness, and yet this is all I have to say; it was, as I conceive, Laodicea's complexion, and not her constitution; her practice, not her orders; personal lukewarmness, not legal, which Christ strikes at. That fault I find in my text, the same I find in our common Christians, whose spiritual condition and state is too like the external situation of our country, between the torrid and the frigid zones, neither hot nor cold; and so like Laodicea, that if we take not warning, or warming, we may, I fear, in time to come be spued out of God's mouth.

For this present assembly of ministers, could all the choice and time in the world have better fitted me than mine ordinary lot? If fire be set upon the beacons, will not the whole country soon be warned and enlightened?

For myself also, methinks it will better besem my years to heat, than to teach, my ancients; to enkindle their affections, then to inform their judgments. And whereas Paul bids Titus preach zeal with all authority, though in mine own name I crave your patience and audience, yet in his name that is the first of the creatures, and *Amen*, I counsel him that hath an ear, to hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.

Ζηλωσον, 'Be zealous.'

A COAL FROM THE ALTAR.

Ζηλωσον, '*Be zealous.*'—REV. III. 19.

ZEAL hath been little practised, less studied. This heavenly fire hath ever been a stranger upon earth; few in all ages that have felt the heat of it, few that have known the nature of it. A description will rake it out of the embers of obscurity; and it may be that many, when they shall know it better, will better affect it.

2. Zeal hath many counterfeits and allies.* There are many strange fires, which, having sought to carry away the credit of it, have brought in an ill name upon it. From these it would be distinguished.

8. Zeal is everywhere spoken against; it hath many enemies and few friends. The world can no more abide it, than beasts can the elementary fire; the rebukes of many have fallen upon it, the devil weaves cunning lies to bring down the honour of it. Oh, that we could raise and maintain it, by setting forth the deserved praise of it, and challenge it from the false imputations of such as hate it without a cause.

4. Zeal hath in this our earthly mould little fuel, much quench-coal; is hardly fired, soon cooled. A good Christian, therefore, would be glad to know the incentives and preservatives of it, which might enkindle it, inflame it, feed it, and revive it when it is going out.

5. Zeal, in the world's opinion, is as common as fire on every man's hearth; no man's heart without zeal, if every man might be his own judge. If most might be heard, there is too much of it. But the contrary will appear if the right marks be taken, and the true rules of trial and conviction be observed, and the heart thereby examined.

6. Zeal generally handled will break as lightning in the air, and seize upon no subject. Application must set it on men's hearts, and exhortation warm this old and cold age of the world, chiefly this temperate climate of our nation.

THE FIRST PART.

It was said of old, that zeal was an intention of love; of late, that it is a compound of love and anger, or indignation.

The ancients aimed right and shot near, if not somewhat with the shortest. The modern well discovered the use and exercise of more affect.

* Qu. '*Alloys?*'—ED.

tions than love within the fathom and compass of zeal; but in helping that default went themselves somewhat wide, and came not close to the mark; which I ascribe not to any defect of eyesight in those sharp-sighted eagles, but only to the want of fixed contemplation. And, to speak truth, I have oft wondered why poor zeal, a virtue so high in God's books, could never be so much beholden to men's writings as to obtain a just treatise, which hath been the lot of many particular virtues of inferior worth, a plain sign of too much undervalue and neglect.

He that shall stedfastly view it shall find it not to be a degree or intention of love, or any single affection (as the schools rather confined than defined zeal), neither yet any mixed affection (as the latter rather compounded than comprehended the nature of it), but a hot temper, higher degree or intention of them all. As varnish is no one colour, but that which gives gloss and lustre to all, so the opposites of zeal, key-coldness and lukewarmness, which by the law of contraries must be of the same nature, are no affections, but several tempers of them all.

Paul warrants this description where he speaks of the twelve tribes. They served God with intention or vehemency, Acts xxvi. 7.

The root shews the nature of the branch. Zeal comes of a word framed of the very sound and hissing noise which hot coals or burning iron make when they meet with their contrary. In plain English, zeal is nothing but heat; from whence it is that zealous men are oft in Scripture said to burn in the Spirit.

He that doth moderately or remissly affect anything may be styled *Philemon*, a lover; he that earnestly or extremely, *Zelotes*, a zealot; who to all the objects of his affections is excessively and passionately disposed; his love is ever fervent, his desires eager, his delights ravishing, his hopes longing, his hatred deadly, his anger fierce, his grief deep, his fear terrible. The Hebrews express these intentions by doubling the word.

This being the nature of zeal in general, Christian zeal, of which we desire only to speak, differs from carnal and worldly chiefly in the causes and objects.

It is a spiritual heat wrought in the heart of man by the holy Ghost, improving the good affections of love, joy, hope, &c., for the best service and furtherance of God's glory, with all the appurtenances thereof, his word, his house, his saints, and salvation of souls; using the contrary of hatred, anger, grief, &c., as so many mastiffs to fly upon the throat of God's enemies, the devil, his angels, sin, the world, with the lusts thereof. By the virtue whereof a zealot may run all through all his affections, and with David breathe the zeal out of every pipe, after this manner for a taste.

Love.—'How do I love thy law, O Lord, more than the honey or the honeycomb, more than the thousands of silver and gold?'

Hatred.—'Thine enemies I hate with a perfect hatred.'

Joy.—'Thy testimonies are my delight. I rejoice more in them than they that find great spoils, more than in my appointed food.'

Grief.—'Mine eyes gush out rivers of tears. O that my head were a fountain of tears, because they destroy thy law!'

Hope.—'Mine eyes are dim with waiting: how do I long for thy salvation!'

Fear.—'Thy judgments are terrible, I tremble and quake,' &c.

Look what pitch of affection the natural man bestows upon his dearest darling, what insatiable thirst the covetous worldling upon his Mammon, the ambitious upon his honour, the voluptuous upon his pleasure, the same

the Christian striveth in equal, yea (if possible), far exceeding terms to convert and confer upon God and his worship.

In brief, to open a little crevice of further light, and to give a little glimpse of heat; zeal is to the soul, that which the spirits are to the body, wine to the spirits, putting vigour and agility into them. Whence comes that elegant antithesis in the Scripture, 'Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit.'

Christ is said to lead his spouse into the wine-cellar; which simile Bernard* delighting oft to repeat, in two or three sermons interprets of a special measure of zeal inspired into his church. Thus (saith he) Christ led his disciples into the wine-cellar on the day of Pentecost, Acts ii., and filled them and the house with such zeal, as they came forth like giants refreshed with wine, and seemed to the people as men drunk with new wine.

It is to the soul as wings to the fowl. This also is a Scripture emblem to picture the angels with wings, as in the hangings of the temple, and in the visions of the Revelation, in token of their ardent and zealous execution of God's will, whence also they have their name *seraphim*; 'he maketh his ministers a flame of fire,' Heb. i. 7.

To this fire and these wings, which we in the Lord's prayer desire to imitate, there is nothing in us answerable but our zeal; as wheels to the chariot, which makes us not go, but run the ways of God's commandments, and so run that we may obtain. As sails to the wind, and wind to the sails, to which alludes the phrase so frequent in Scripture, *Plerophory*.

As courage to the soldier, mettle to the horse, lust† to the ground, which makes it bring forth much fruit, yea, a hundredfold, vivacity to all creatures. To conclude this, this is that celestial fire which was shadowed out unto us by that poor element in comparison and beggarly rudiment, the fire (I mean) of such necessary use in the law, which rather than it should be wanting, the Lord caused it to descend from heaven, that it might cause the sacrifices to ascend thither again, as a sweet incense unto the Lord, without which no burnt-offering was acceptable.

THE SECOND PART.

But now, as then, there are certain false fires, abominable to God, odious to men, dangerous to the Nadabs and Abihues that meddle with them, bringing thereby coals upon their own heads, and ill favour upon all their services; and not only so, but that which is worse, an ill report and surmise even on those that offer the right fire, and serve the Lord in spirit and truth; yet for their sakes is the name of zeal blasphemed all the day long.

Against these, as then, so now, severe caveats and clear distinctions must be laid, lest such as have not their senses exercised to put a difference, mistake poisonous weeds for wholesome herbs, to their own destruction, and for the sake of one revile the other, to the wrong of God and his saints.

It fares not otherwise with the soul than with the body; besides the native and radical heat, the principal instrument of life, there are aguish and distempered heats, the causes of sickness and death.

To discern of those requires some skill and judgment; yet a good empiric, a Christian of experience, will give a shrewd guess at them, the easier and the better if he mark these following signs and symptoms common to all the kinds of zeal, here also following.

First, They are deeply sick of the pharisaical humour, they love to be

* Sermon. xli. in Can. iv. 9.

† That is, 'fatness or fertility.'—Ed.

seen of men, and say with Jehu, 'Come and see how zealous I am for the Lord of Hosts.' They proclaim their alms with a trumpet, paint their good deeds upon church windows, engrave their legacies upon tombs, have their acts upon record. Thus, comets blaze more than fixed stars; aguish heats breed flushings, and are more seen in the face than natural warmth at the heart. Scholars count hiding of art the best art; the godly man studies by all means how to conceal the one hand from the other in doing well. Hiding of zeal is the best zeal.

Secondly, Of Ahab's disease; exceeding in external humiliation, affected gestures, passionate sighs, loudness of voice, odd attires, and such like. These know how to rend the garment, hang the head with the bulrush, to whip and lance their skins with Baal's priests, and yet strangers to a wounded spirit; not but that true and hearty zeal doth lift up the eyes, knock the breast, dance before the ark. Therefore, this character may deceive the unwary. Let Eli take heed of judging Hannah's spirit rashly by the moving of her lips; yet hypocrites so usually strain nature, and without a cause exceed, and that in public, and upon the stage, that for the most part their actions and affections are palpable; as Jesuits, Capuchins, &c., yea, in many histrionical protestants. Horse-coursers' jades will bound, curvet, and shew more tricks, than a horse well metted for the road or cart.

Thirdly, You may know them by their diligence and curiosity in lighter matters, joined with omission and neglect of greater, wise in circumstance and careless in substance, tithing mint, straining at gnats, &c. In all cheap and easy duties, prodigal; niggardly and slothful in the weighty things of the law. These have at command good words, countenance, yet tears from their eyes sooner than a farthing from their purse, having this world's goods, and see their brother want; these stick up feathers for the carcase, beguiling the simple, cozening the world, but chiefly themselves.

Fourthly, These fires cannot keep themselves within their own hearths, these spirits cannot keep themselves within their own circles. True zeal loves to keep home, studieth to be quiet in other men's dioceses; false zeal loves to be gadding, is eagle-eyed abroad, and mole-eyed at home. Instead of burning bright and shining clear, like brinish lights, they sparkle and spit at others, or, like ill-couched fireworks, let fly on all sides; only out of their wisdom they know how to spare Agag and the great ones, and be sure they anger not their great masters, and meddle with their matches; whereas it is the property of fire that comes from above, to spare the yielding sheath, and melt the resisting metal, to pass by the lower roofs, and strike the towered pinnacle, as Nathan, David; Elias, Ahab; John, Herod; Jonas, Nineveh, &c.

Fifthly, Note, also, in all their proceedings with others, instead of wholesome severity (which rightly zealous men never come unto but by compulsion, and not without compassion of the offender, weeping with Moses and Samuel over the people, being sorry with the emperor, that they know how to write sentences of condemnation), these delight in cruelty, the brand of the malignant church; feed their eyes with massacres, as the queen-mother.* No diet so pleasing to these ravening wolves as the warm blood of the sheep. These are they that cry fire and faggot, away with them, not worthy to live; their very mercies are cruelty; especially in their own cause, they heat the furnace seven times hotter than in God's.

Lastly, These meteors and vapours have no constant light, or continued heat (as the fixed stars, ever like themselves), but have only their aguish

* I presume the reference is to the massacre of St Bartholomew.—ED.

fits and lunatic moods; sometimes, in adversity, they are good under the rod, as Pharaoh; again, in prosperity, like the fat kine of Bashan, ungrateful and forgetful. Sometimes in prosperity, when the sun of peace shineth on them, and the favourable influence of great ones, they shoot forth their blade with the corn on the housetop, running with the stream, and sailing with the wind; sometimes their zeal depends upon the life of Jehoiada; sometimes on the company of the prophets. Commonly in the beginning they blaze like straw-fire, but in the end go out in smoke, and smother; whereas in their entrance into profession, they galloped into shows, and made some girds at hand, they tire, give in, and end in the flesh, whereas all natural motions are swiftest toward their end.

The vestal fires were perpetual, and the fire of the altar never went out. Spices and wefts of these evils may be found in the sincerest Christians; but they suffer not the dead flies to lie and putrefy in the precious boxes of true zeal. Of all these the preacher's caveat may be construed, 'be not over just,'* though it may also admit other interpretations, as after shall appear.

These are the special notes and symptoms of strange fires. The kinds, also, are many, and might be distributed into many heads; but I will reduce them into three, which are known by their names:—

1. Counterfeit zeal, false fire.
2. Blind zeal, smoky fire, or fool's fire, *ignis fatuus*.
3. Turbulent zeal, wild fire.

The first, wanting truth and sincerity, propounds sinister ends.

The second, knowledge and discretion, takes wrong ways.

The third, love and humility, exceeds measure.

The first abounds amongst subtle and crafty professors, and is to be abhorred and detected.†

The second, among simple and devout, is to be pitied and directed.

The third, amongst passionate and affectionate, and is to be moderated and corrected.

The first is the mere vizard of zeal, looking asquint one way, and tending another; pretending God and his glory, intending some private and sinister end; first either of honour and promotion, as Jehu, who marched furiously, and his word was the Lord of hosts, but his project was the kingdom.

Secondly, at filthy lucre; as Demetrius and his fellows, who cried, Great is Diana of Ephesus, but meant her little silver shrines. It cannot be denied, but many such there were who helped to pull down the abbeyes, not out of any hatred to those unclean cages, but to rear their own houses out of the ruins, and spoiled copies to make cushions.‡ Judas complained of superfluity, but grieved it fell besides his bag. Many hold temporalities, tithes, and glebes unlawful, because they are loath to forego them. If Jezebel proclaimed a fast, let Naboth look to his vineyard. If the usurer and tradesman frequent sermons, let the buyer and borrower look to themselves. It is too common a thing to make zeal a lure and stale to draw customers, a bait of fraud, a net to entrap; with malicious Doegs, to make it a stalking horse for revenge against the priest, thereby to discharge their gall at ministers and other Christians, for the omission and commission of such things as themselves care not for. With the strumpet in the Proverbs, to wipe their mouths, and frequent the sacrifices, that they may be free from suspicion.

* 'Be not over just' hath seven expositions here, two or three more hereafter.

† Qu. 'detested?'—Ed.

‡ That is, 'tore up manuscripts, and stuffed cushions with the fragments.'—Ed.

All these evils have I seen under the sunshine of the gospel ; but by how much zeal is more glorious than common profession, by so much is dissembled fervency more detestable than usual hypocrisy ; yea, no better than devilish villainy and double iniquity. Such painted walls and whited sepulchres the Lord will break down. Let all Timothies and Nathanaels learn to descry them, and discard them. The cure of this was deeply forelaid by Christ, 'I counsel thee to buy gold tried in the fire.' All is not gold that glistereth ; an image of faith breeds but a show of zeal. Many seemed to trust in Christ, but Christ would not trust them ; but such faith as will abide the fire brings forth zeal that will abide the touchstone.

The second is erroneous or blind zeal, not according to knowledge, Rom. x. I bear many devout papists witness (though I fear the learnedst of them be self-condemned) that they have this zeal, persuading themselves they do God best service when they please the devil most in their will-worship. The same witness I bear many separatists, though I fear most of them be sick of self-conceitedness, new-fangleness, and desire of mastership. For who would not suspect such zeal, which condemns all reformed churches, and refuseth communion with such as they themselves confess to be Christians, and consequently such as have communion with Christ ? It would grieve a man, indeed, to see zeal misplaced, like mettle in a blind horse ; to see men take such pains, and yet fall into the pit. This made Paul to wish himself Anathema for the sake of such ; and yet the multitude and common people reason thus : Is it possible but these men have the right ? But, alas ! how should it be otherwise, when a blind company will follow a blind sect-master ? This being one property of blind zeal (*κακοζήλια*), a fond admiration and apish imitation of some person, for some excellence they see in him, which so dazzles their eyes, that they cannot discern their errors and infirmities, which they oftener inherit than their virtues ; as appears in the Lutherans, and the Jews, that would sacrifice their children to Moloch, in imitation of Abraham. In these the devil becomes an angel of light, and playeth that dragon, Rev. xii., pouring out floods of persecution against the church, causing devout men and women to raise tragedies, breathe out threatenings, and persecute without measure. Than these the devil hath no better soldiers ; but when their scales fall from their eyes, and they come into God's tents, God hath none like unto them. The cure of this divinely is forelaid by Christ also, to buy eye-salve of him. Angels have eyes as well as wings to guide their flight ; when the ship is under sail, and hath the freshest way, it hath most need to look to the steerage, keep the watch, have an eye to the compass and landmarks.

The third kind is turbulent zeal, called by James bitter zeal, a kind of wild fire transporting men beyond all bounds and compass of moderation ; proceeding sometime of a weakness of nature in men, that have no stay of their passion, like to clocks whose springs are broken, and cities whose walls are down. Zeal is a good servant, but an ill master ; mettle is dangerous in a head-strong horse. And so the poets (which were the heathen's prophets) shadowed out the cure of this in Minerva's golden bridle, where-with she managed her winged Pegasus. There is too much of this bitter zeal, of this Hierapicra, in all our books of controversies ; but, especially, there hath been too much in our domestical wars ; some sons of Bichri have blown the trumpet of contention, trumpets of anger. The churches of God should have no such custom ; Oh, that our churches understood that saying !

In quarrels of this nature Paul spends his zeal, not in partaking, but in

parting the fray, beating down the weapons on both sides. Who art thou that judgest? who art thou that condemnest thy brother? Rom. xiv. 10; as if he should say, 'the matters are not *tanti*, we have made the devil too much sport already; who threw in these bones to set us together by the ears, whilst he lets in the common enemy upon us. Charity, charity is the builder of churches; strife about trifles hath wasted many famous ones, and placed the temples of Mahomet where the golden candlestick was wont to stand. We pity the former ages contending about leavened and unleavened bread, keeping of Easter, fasting on Sundays, &c. The future ages will do the like for us. Oh! that the Lord would put into the hearts both of the governors and parties to these quarrels, once to make an end of these Midianitish wars, that we might jointly pour out the vials of our zeal upon the throne of the beast.

Thus have you heard the errors and counterfeits of zeal, through whose sides, and upon the back of which, divers of the malicious world use to beat those whom it hates, because their works are better than their own; injuriously concluding that all zealots are alike. Thus I have heard our merchants complain that the set up blues have made strangers loathe the rich woaded blues, only in request; this is an old sophism. True judgment would teach us to conclude that the best drugs have their adulterates; the most current coins their slips; and that virtue which so many hypocrites put on, to grace themselves withal, is surely some rare and excellent jewel.

THE THIRD PART.

The true zealot, whose fervency is in the spirit, not in show; in substance, not in circumstance; for God, not himself; guided by the word, not with humours; tempered with charity, not with bitterness: such a man's praise is of God though not of men; such a man's worth cannot be set forth with the tongues of men and of angels.

Oh! that I had so much zeal as to steep it in its own liquor; to set it forth in its own colours, that the Lord would touch my tongue with a coal from his altar, that I might regain the decayed credit of it with the sons of men.

It is good to be zealous in good things, and is it not best in the best? Or is there any better than God, or the kingdom of heaven? Is it comely whatever we do, to do it with all our might? Only uncomely when we serve God? Is mean and mediocrity in all excellent arts excluded, and only to be admitted in religion? Were it not better to forbear poetry or painting, than to rhyme and daub? And were it not better to be of no religion, than to be cold or lukewarm in any? Is it good to be earnest for a friend, and cold for the Lord of hosts? For whom dost thou reserve the top of thy affections? for thy gold? for thy Herodias? &c. O ye adulterers and adulteresses, can ye offer God a baser indignity? What aileth the world? Is it afraid, think we, that God can have too much love; who, in regard of his own infinite beauty, and the beams he vouchsafeth to cast upon us, deserves the best, yea all, and a thousand times more than all? Ought not all the springs and brooks of our affection to run into this main? May not he justly disdain that the least riveret should be drained another way? That anything in the world should be respected before him, equalled with him, or loved out of him, of whom, for whom, and through whom are all things? Who, or what can be sufficient for him, our Maker and Saviour? In other objects fear excess; here no ecstasy is high enough.

Consider and reason thus with thyself (O man), canst thou brook a slug-gard in thy work, if thou be of any spirit thyself? Is not a slothful messenger as vinegar to thy teeth, and as smoke to thine eyes? Hast thou any sharpness of wit? is not dulness tedious unto thee? And shall he that is all spirit (for whom the angels are slow and cold enough) take pleasure in thy drowsy and heavy service? Do men choose the forwardest deer in the herd, the liveliest colt in the drove? and is the backwardest man fittest for God? Is not all his delight in the quickest and cheerfulest givers and servitors? Even to Judas he saith, That thou doest, do quickly; so odious is dulness unto him. What else moved him to ordain that the neck of the consecrated ass should be broken rather than offered up in sacrifice? Doth God hate the ass? Or is it not for the sake of the quality of the creature; which hath ever among the heathens been an hieroglyphic of heaviness and tardity.

Thirdly, This zeal is so gracious a favourite with God, that it graces with him all the rest of his graces. Prayer, if it be frequent,* prevaileth much; the zealous witnesses had power to shut and open heaven, Rev. xii. By this Israel wrestled with God, overcame, and was called a prince with God; this strengthened the heart of Moses (as Aaron and Hur supported his hands) till the Lord said, Let me alone; this made Cornelius's prayer to come into heaven, whither our cold suits can no more ascend than vapours from the still, unless there be fire under it. Repentance, a needful and primary grace, which the Baptist so urged; but then we must be zealous and repent (as my text joins them), or else no repentance pleaseth God; nor are there fruits worthy repentance. Alms and good deeds are sacrifices pleasing to God; but, without zeal, the widow's mites are no better than the rest; it is the cheerful *loset*† that doubleth the gift. Generally, as some man's mark and name furthereth the sale of his commodity, so zeal enhanceth all the graces of God. It pitieth me for Laodicea that lost so much cost, had as many virtues, did as many duties as other churches; but, for want of this, Christ could not sup with them. Furnish a table with the principallest fare and daintiest dishes that may be had; let them be roasted and boiled to the halves, or stand on the table till they be lukewarm! what will the guests say? All that we can do, is but the deed done, *opus operatum*, unless zeal confer grace.

Fourthly, Zeal is the richest evidence of faith, and the clearest demonstration of the Spirit. The baptism of water is but a cold proof of man's Christendom, being common to all comers; but if any be baptized with fire, the same is sealed up till the day of redemption. If any shall say, Friend, what doest thou profess a religion without it? how can he choose but be struck dumb? Can we suppose wormwood without bitterness, a man without reason? then may we imagine a religion, and a Christian, without spirit and zeal.

The Jesuit saith, I am zealous; the Separatist, I am zealous; their plea is more probable than the lukewarm worldlings', that serve God without life. If the colour be pale and wan, and the motion insensible, the party is dead or in a swoon; if good and swift, we make no question. The zealous Christian is never to seek for a proof of his salvation; what makes one Christian differ from another in grace, as stars do in glory, but zeal? All believers have a like precious faith; all true Christians have all graces in their seeds; but the degrees of them are no way better discerned than by zeal. Men of place distinguish themselves by glistening pearls. A Christian

* Qu. 'fervent?'—Ed.

† That is, 'e.gerness.'—Ed.

of degrees shines above others in zeal. Comparisons I know are odious to the world, that fain would have all alike ; but the righteous is better than his neighbour. All Christians are the excellent of the earth ; the zealot surmounteth them all, as Saul the people by the head and shoulders ; he is ever striving to excel and exceed others and himself.

One of these is worth a thousand others, one doth the work of many, which made him speak of Elisha* in the plural number, 'The horsemen and chariots of Israel ;' besides his own work, he wins and procures others, makes proselytes. It is the nature of fire to multiply, one coal kindles another ; his work so shines, that others come in and glorify God, marvelling and inquiring what such forwardness should mean, concluding with Nebuchadnezzar, 'Surely the servants of the most high God.'

These are good factors and agents, doing God as good service, as Boute-few† do the devil, and Jesuits the pope, sparing no cost nor labour, and what they cannot do themselves, they do by their friends ; 'Who is on my side, who ?' &c.

As for lets and impediments, they overlook and overleap them, as fire passeth from one house to another ; neither is there any standing for any of God's enemies before them ; they make havoc of their own and others' corruptions. If you will rightly conceive of Peter's zeal in converting and confounding, you must imagine (saith Chrysostom) a man made all of fire walking in stubble. All difficulties are but whetstones of their fortitude. The slug-gard saith, 'There is a lion in the way.' Tell Samson and David so ; they will the rather go out to meet them. Tell Nehemiah of Sanballat ; he answereth, 'Shall such a man as I fear ?' Tell Caleb there are Anakims, and he will say, 'Let us go up at once,' &c. Let Agabus put off his girdle and bind Paul, let him be told in every city that bonds await him ; he is not only ready for bonds, but for death. Tell Jubentius he must lay down his life ; he is as willing as to lay off his clothes. Tell Luther of enemies in Worms ; he will go, if all the tiles of the houses were devils. The horse neighs at the trumpet, the leviathan laughs at the spear. They that mean to take the kingdom of God by violence, provide themselves to go through fire and water, carry their lives in their hands, embrace fagots ; they say to father and mother, 'I know you not,' to carnal counsellors and friendly enemies, 'Get you behind me, Satan.' Zeal is as strong as death, hot as the coals of juniper, floods of many waters cannot quench it. Agar, Prov. xxx., speaks of four things, stately in their kind ; I will make bold to add a fifth, comprehending and excelling them all, namely, the zealous Christian, strong and bold as the lion, not turning his head for any ; as swift as the greyhound in the ways of God's commandments, in the race to heaven ; as nimble as the goat, climbing the steep and craggy mountains of piety and virtue ; a victorious king, overcoming the world and his lusts ; Solomon in all his royalty is not clothed like one of these in his fiery chariot.

To cut off the infinite praises of zeal, let us hear what honourable testimonies and glorious rewards it pleaseth God to confer upon it. David's ruddy complexion, and his skill in music, made him amiable in the eyes of men ; but the zeal of his heart styled him a man after God's own heart, and the sweet singer of Israel. Abraham, that could find in his heart to sacrifice his Isaac, was called the friend of God. The same virtue denominated Jacob a prince with God. Elisha,* the chariots and horsemen ; Paul, a chosen vessel, &c.

* 'Elijah.'—Ed.

† This is the French *Boute-feu*, an incendiary.—Ep.

Neither doth God put them off with names and empty favours, but upon these he bestows his grace. David dedicateth his Psalms to him that excelled ; God, in dispensing of favours, observeth the same rule, : ' To him that overcometh will I give,' &c. To him that hath shall be given. Husbandmen cast their seed upon the fertilest ground, which returns it with the greatest interest ; God gives most talents to those that improve them in the best bank. Joseph shall have a parti-coloured coat, of all kinds of graces and blessings ; and because he knows this will purchase them hatred and envy, he takes them in special tuition ; if any will hurt his zealous witnesses, there goeth out a fire out of their mouths to devour their enemies, Rev. xii. A man were better anger all the witches in the world than one of these. If God bring any common judgments, he sets his seal, Rev. vii. 3, and *thau*, Ezek. ix., on their foreheads, and sprinkles their posts, Exod. xii. ; snatcheth Lot out of the fire (who burneth in zeal, as Sodom in lust) as men do their plate whiles they let the baser stuff burn. In fine, he taketh Enoch and Elijah in triumphant chariots up to heaven, and after their labours and toils, setteth them in special thrones, to rest in glory ; the apostles in their twelve, the rest in their orders, according to their zeal. And though he may well reckon the best of these unprofitable servants, yet such congruity (not of merits, but of favour) it pleaseth him to observe in crowning his graces, that the most zealous here are the most glorious there.

Who would not now wonder, how ever this royal virtue should have lost its grace with the world ? how ever any should admit a low thought of it ? But what ? shall all the indignity which hell can cast upon it, make it vile in our eyes ? Or rather, shall we not reason from the opposition, as Tertullian did of Nero ? That religion which Nero so persecutes, must needs be excellent.

If zeal were not some admirable good, the devil and world would not so hate it ; yet lest silence should be thought to baulk some unanswerable reasons, let us see how they labour to be mad with reason. Let Festus be the speaker for the rest, for he speaks what all the rest think ; you know his mad objection, and Paul's sober answer in that place, Acts xxvi. 24, and the like, 2 Cor. v. 18 ; whether he be mad or sober, it is for God and you.

This text bids us be zealous and repent ; the word signifies, be wise again, or return to your wits. The prodigal is said to come to himself, when he was first heated with this fire. We may well answer the world as old men do young ; you think us Christians to be mad that follow heaven so eagerly, but we know you to be mad, that run a madding so after vanity.

A Christian indeed is never right, till he seems to the world to be beside himself ; Christ's own kindred were afraid of him. The apostles are said to be full of new wine, Acts ii. ; besides, with these the world is mad, they run with Stephen like mad men, Acts vii. ; Nicodemus, and such as he, never offends them.

You know also what Ahab laid to the charge of Elijah, with the apology he made for himself. This is a stale imputation in ages. Haman accused Mordecai and the Jews of it. The apostles are said to be troublers of the whole earth. In the primitive church all mutinies and contentions were laid to the martyrs. True it is, where zeal is there is opposition, and so consequently troubles. Christ sets this fire on earth, not as an author, but by accident. The thief is the author of the fray, though the true man strike never so many blows ; but the Ahabs of the world trouble Israel,

then complain of Elijah. The papists will blow up the state, then father it upon the puritans. It is not for any wise man to believe the tithe of the tales and slanders which fly abroad of the zealous. Lewd men would fain strike at all goodness through their sides.

You may remember also Eliab's uncharitable censure of David, I know the pride of thine heart. So do all worldlings measure others by their own length. If they see any forwardness in the peaceablest spirit, they ascribe it either to vainglory or covetousness, the only springs that set their wheels on going; but of this the knower of the heart must judge between us.

When slandering will not serve, then they fall to glavering, cunningly glancing at zeal, whiles they commend the golden mean wherein virtue consists. But Christians, take heed none spoil you through such philosophy, or rather sophistry; for true philosophy will tell you that the mean wherein virtue is placed is the middle betwixt two kinds, and not degrees. And it is but mean virtue that loves the mean in their sense.

Oh, say they, but some discretion would do well. It is true, but take withal Calvin's caveat to Melancthon, that he affect not so the name of a moderate man, and listen to such syrens' songs till he lose his zeal.

I have observed that which the world miscalls discretion to eat up zeal, as that which they call policy doth wisdom. As Joab stabbed Abner under a colour of friendship, antichrist undermineth Christ by pretending to be his vicar. The fear of overdoing makes most come too short. Of the two extremities we should most fear lukewarmness. Rather let your milk boil over than be raw.

From glavering they fall to scoffing. Young saints will prove but old devils. These hot-spurs will soon run themselves out of breath. But we say such were never right bred. Such as prove falling stars never were aught but meteors; the other never lose light or motion. Spiritual motions may be violent and perpetual.

When none of these will take, they fall to right down railing. These puritans, these singular fellows, &c., unfit for all honest company. I hope the state's puritan* and the common puritan be two creatures. For with that staff the multitude beats all that are better than themselves, and lets fly at all that have any show of goodness. But with that which most call puritanism I desire to worship God. For singularity, Christ calls for it, and presseth and urgeth it. What singular thing do you? or what odd thing do you? Shall God's peculiar people do nothing peculiar? The world thinks it strange we run not with them into excesses, and do as most do, that we might escape derision. Judge you which of these men shall please. I believe none shall ever please Christ till they appear odd, strange, and precise men to the common sort, and yet need not be over just neither. Let them that have tender ears stop them against the charms of the world and scorns of Michal, unless they were wiser. Let him that hath a right ear hear what Christ saith to the churches; Be zealous.

THE FOURTH PART.

Yea, but by what means shall a Christian attain this fire, and maintain it when he hath gotten it?

Say not in thine heart, What Prometheus shall ascend into heaven and fetch it thence? Thou mayest fetch it thence by thine own prayer, as did

* That is, the political puritan.—Ed.

Elias and the apostles, men of infirmities as well as thyself. Pray continually and instantly. The Lord that breathed first thy soul into thee, will also breathe on thy soul. I speak not of miraculous (which was but a type), but of ordinary inspiration. Prayer and zeal are as water and ice, mutually producing each other. When it is once come down upon thine altar, though no water can quench it, yet must it be preserved fresh by ordinary fuel, especially the priest's lips must keep it alive.

Sermons are bellows ordained for this purpose. The word read is of divine use, but doth not with that motion stir these coals.

Experience sheweth the best oration will not so much move as the meanest orator.

After the sparkles once by these means kindled, cherish and feed them by reading the word. Let it dwell richly in thine heart. Excite thy dullness by spiritual hymns. Love songs inflame not lust more than the Song of songs doth zeal. Read or sing the 116th psalm; and if thou be not zealous, every verse will check thee in thy throat. Meditation is another help, approved by Isaac's and David's practice; an art lately so taught, as I shall need only to point at the choice themes suiting and furthering this argument. I need not go far to fetch this fire. I may strike it out of every word of this epistle to Laodicea. Behold the Lord God, especially thy Lord Christ, in his glorious titles and majesty; for so he begins his visions to John, and his epistles to the churches, exciting their dull hearts. By such apparitions did he set on fire the heart of Moses in the burning bush, and inflamed Stephen, his first martyr. Answerable and proportionable to which are our serious contemplations. Behold him as one that seeth thee, and knoweth thy works, the rousing preface of all these letters. Cæsar's eye made his soldiers prodigal of their blood. The atheist thinks God takes as much notice of him and his prayers as he doth of the humming of flies and bees; and therefore no marvel if his service be formal and fashionable. The faithful Christian, by faith's prospective, sees him at home, and hears him saying, Well done, thou good servant, which maketh him to work out his heart. Behold him as the beginning of creatures, especially of the new creature. Oh, what love hath he shewed thee in thy redemption! Out of what misery into what happiness, by what a price, to what end, but that thou shouldst be zealous of good works. Behold him as the faithful witness, that witnessed himself for thee a good witness, and here faithfully counsels thee to follow his pattern. Behold him as a speedy and royal rewarder of his followers. Take thyself into paradise, represent to thyself thy crown, thy throne, thy white robes. Look not on the things that are seen, but on the far most excellent weight of glory. Look upon these, and faint if thou canst.

Behold, also, he is a consuming fire, a jealous God, hating lukewarmness, not only destroying Sodom with fire and brimstone, and providing Tophet for his enemies, but awaking also his drowsy servants by judgments (as Absalom Joab, by firing his corn), his Israelites by fiery serpents. Whom he loveth he chasteneth, and keepeth them in the furnace of fiery trials, till they come to their right temper. He standeth and knocketh. If nothing will arouse us, a time will come when heaven and earth shall burn with fire, and Christ shall come in flaming fire, to render vengeance with fire unquenchable. We, therefore, that know the terror of that day, what manner of persons ought we to be?

From God turn thine eyes unto man; set before thee the pillar and cloud of fiery examples, that have led us the way into Canaan. He is but a dull

jade that will not follow. The stories of the Scriptures, the lives of the fathers, the acts and monuments of the church, have a special virtue for this effect. The very pictures of the fires and martyrs cannot but warm thee. If thou canst meet with any living examples, follow them, as they follow Christ, frequent their company; even Saul amongst the prophets will prophesy. No bangling hawk, but with a high fier will mend her pitch; the poorest good companion will do thee some good. When Silas came Paul burnt in the spirit. A lesser stick may fire a billet. If thou findest none, let the coldness of the times heat thee, as frosts do fire. Let every indignation make thee zealous, as the dunstery of the monks made Erasmus studious. One way to be rich in times of dearth, is to engross a rare commodity, such as zeal is. Now, if ever 'they have destroyed thy law,' it is now high time to be zealous.

Consider and emulate the children of this generation, to see how eager every Demas is for worldly promotion. How did that worthy bishop disdain to see an harlot more curiously to adorn her body unto sin and death, than he could his soul unto life everlasting. It angered Demosthenes to see a smith earlier at his anvil than he was at his desk.

When thou hast thus heat thyself, take heed of catching of cold again, as many have done, and brought their zeal to death's door.

The fire may go out divers ways: first by subtraction of fuel; if a man forbear his accustomed meals, will not his natural heat decay? The Levites that kept God's watch in the temple, were charged expressly, morning and evening, if not oftener, to look to the lights and the fire. He that shall forget (at the least) with the curfew-bell in the evening to rake up his zeal by prayer, and with the day-bell in the morning to stir up and kindle the same, if not oftener, with Daniel; I cannot conceive how he can possibly keep fire in his heart. Will God bless such as bid him not so much as good-morrow and good-even?

He that shall despise or neglect prophecy, must he not needs quench the Spirit? Have I not marked glorious professors, who for some farm's sake, or other commodities, have flitted from Jerusalem to Jericho, where the situation was good, but the waters naught! and their zeal hath perished, because vision hath failed!

Such as read the Bible by fits upon rainy days, not eating the book with John, but tasting only with the tip of the tongue; such as meditate by snatches, never chewing the cud and digesting their meat, they may happily get a smacking, for discourse and table-talk, but not enough to keep soul and life together, much less for strength and vigour. Such as forsake the best fellowship, and wax strange to holy assemblies (as now the manner of many is); how can they but take cold? Can one coal alone keep itself glowing?

Though it go not out for want of matter, yet may it be put out by sundry accidents; when it is newly kindled, it may be put out with scoffs and reproaches, if Peter take not heed, and fence himself well against them; but if once thoroughly grown, such breath will but spread and increase it.

It is possible fire may be oppressed with too much wood, and heat suffocated with too much nourishment; over-much prayer, reading, and study, may be a weariness both to flesh and spirit; but it so rarely happeneth, that I need not mention it; and yet the soul hath its satiety. There be some such perchance over-nice men in this sense also, who have not learned that God will have them merciful to themselves. It is often smothered for want of vent and exercise. Let such as use not, and express not their

zeal, brag of their good hearts ; surely they have none such, or not like to have them such. If Nicodemus had not buried Christ by day, we might have feared his zeal had gone out, for all his coming by night.

Yet this is not so ordinary as to extinguish it by the quench-coal of sin. Gross sin every man knows will waste the conscience, and make shipwreck of zeal. But I say, the least known evil unrepented of, is as a thief in the candle, or an obstruction in the liver. I fear David served God but reasonably, till he published his repentance ; he that steals his meat, though poverty tempt him, yet giveth thanks but coldly ; zeal and sin will soon expel the one or the other out of their subject. Can you imagine in the same roof God and Belial, the ark and Dagon ? Lastly, and most commonly, foreign heat will extract the inward, and adventitious heat consume the natural.

The sun will put out the fire ; and so will the love of the world, the love of the Father ; they cannot stand together in intense degrees, one cannot serve both these masters with such affection as both would have. Seldom seest thou a man make haste to be rich, and thrive in religion. Christ's message to John holds true. The poor are most forward in receiving and following the gospel ; as thou lovest thy zeal, beware of resolving to be rich, lest gain prove thy godliness ; take heed of ambitious aspiring, lest courts and great places prove ill airs for zeal, whither it is as easy to go zealous as to return wise. Peter, while he warmed his hands, cooled his heart. Not that greatness and zeal cannot agree, but for that our weakness many times severs them. If thou beest willing to die poor in estate, thou mayest the more easily live in grace. Smyrna, the poorest of the seven candle-sticks, hath the richest price upon it.

The diligent practice of these courses will make easy the practice of this counsel, Be zealous, &c.

THE FIFTH PART.

But here methinks I hear the lukewarm worldling of our times fume and chafe, and ask what needs all this ado for zeal, as if all God's people were not zealous enough.

Such as think they are, or can be zealous enough, need no other conviction to be poor, blind, naked, wretched, and pitiful Laodiceans. Fire is ever climbing and aspiring higher ; zeal is ever aiming at that which is before ; carried toward perfection ; thinking meanly of that which is past, and already attained, condemning his unprofitable service, as Calvin in his last will ; this rule tries full conceited Christians.

What would you have us to do ? We profess, keep our church, hear sermons, as Christians ought to do.

Affectionate friendship and service is not only for public show and pomp upon festival days in chambers of presence, but for domestical, ordinary, and private use ; to such holiday and church retainers, God may well say, Let us have some of this zeal at home and apart.

All affections are most passionate, without a witness. Such as whose families, closets, fields, beds, walks do testify of their worship, as well as temples and synagogues, are right servitors. God much respects their devotions ; and they have strong proof of the power of godliness.

We would you should know, that we are such as have prayers said or read in our families and household ; or else we say some to ourselves at

our lying down and uprising; and more than that, say you what you will, we hold more than needs.

First, know that zeal knows no such unmannerly courses as to slubber over a few prayers, whiles you are dressing and undressing yourselves; as most do, half asleep half awake. Know further, that such as hold only a certain stint of daily duties, as malt-horses their pace or mill-horses their round, out of custom or form, are far from that mettle which is ever putting forward, growing from strength to strength, and instant in duties, in season, out of season; and this says hard to lazy Christians.

May not we go too far on the right hand?

It is true; but liberality baulks and fears covetousness and niggardness more a great deal than prodigality; so does zeal, lukewarmness, and coldness more than too much heat and forwardness; the defect is more opposite and dangerous to some virtues than the excess.

Why, are not some, think you, too strait-laced; that dare not use their Christian liberty in some recreations; swear by small oaths, or lend money for reasonable use? Hath not God left many things indifferent, wherein some shew themselves more nice than wise?

Zeal will cut off the right hand if it cause to offend, much more to pare nails and superfluities; it consumes the strongest, dearest corruptions, much more will it singe off such hair and dross as these. If aught be praiseworthy, it embraceth such things; if any be doubtful, carrying show of evil, of ill report, it dares not meddle with them; it fears that some of these are as indifferent, as fornication was among the heathen.

There are but few such, no, not of the better sort you speak of.

Grant there be any, and zealous emulation culleth the highest examples. Such as mean to excel in any art, travel to find out the rarest workmen, purchase the choicest copies. He that hath true zeal, will strive to purge himself, as Christ is pure.

Will you have us run before our neighbours, or live without example, or company?

Cowards and cravens stand and look who goes first; soldiers of courage will cast lots for the onset and fore-rank, for desperate services and single combats. Jades will not go without the way be led.

So we may soon come to trouble and danger enough.

What danger can there be for an honest, peaceable, religious forwardness?

The slug or snail puts out its tender horns to feel for lets in the way, and pulls them in where there is no cause; so do the fearful that shall be without; but zeal either finds no dangers or makes them none; it neither fears to do well, or to reprove ill-doers, let whoso will be displeased.

Some indeed care not whom they offend, they are so harsh and fiery; they can bear with nothing.

Will true Christianity allow us to bear with any sin?

Can tin or hot iron choose but to hiss again, if cold water be cast on it? Can a righteous soul choose but vex itself at open evil? Such ostriches as can digest oaths, profane and filthy speeches, shew what mettle they have for the Lord of hosts; who will yet be ready enough to offer the challenge, or stab, for the least disgrace to themselves or their mistress. Phinehas had rather, if it were lawful, fight in God's quarrels than in his own.

All are not by nature of so hot dispositions, or so fiery-spirited, as others.

If there be such a dull, phlegmatic creature as hath no life or spirit in anything he goes about, or whom nothing will move; he may plead com-

plexion ; and yet grace is above nature. But the best way is, see every man compare his devotion in matters of God with his spirits and mettle in other affairs, wherein his element or delight lies. If the one equal not the other, the fault is not in nature : the oldest man hath memory enough for his gold, and the coldest constitution heat enough where it likes.

Well, our hearts may be as good as the best, though we cannot shew it.

Fire cannot be long smothered, it will either find a vent or go out ; zeal will either find word or deed to express itself withal.

All have not the gift of utterance.

Violent affections have made the dumb to find a tongue. If it be low water, the mill may stand ; but abundance of heart will set the wheels on going. What earnest discourses will unlearned mariners make of their voyages, huntsmen of their game, &c.

All have not ability and means : many have great charges.

Love and zeal are munificent, make money their servant, not their master ; wheresoever the heart is enlarged, the hand cannot be strained ; where the bowels are open, the purse is not shut. Herod, for his pleasure, cares not for half his kingdom : what will not some gentlemen give for hawks and hounds ? Not only the poor woman that spent the rich ointment on Christ, the widow that gave all her substance, the converts that sold all and threw all at the feet of the apostles ; but even the bounty of the superstitious papists shall rise in judgment against such as profess a religion, will give it good words and countenance, but be at no cost with it, and know a cheaper way to save charge withal.

All have not so much leisure to spend so much time and study about matters of religion ; they have somewhat else to do.

There are indeed many vanities which distract and divide the mind of worldlings ; but zeal counts one thing needful, to which it makes all other vail and stand by. Is there any so good a husband of his time, that will not steal some hour for his pleasure ; that cannot spare his God and his soul half an hour, morning and evening ; that bestows not idly as much time as a sermon or two would take up in the week ? The soul, I confess, hath his satiety as well as the body ; but why should we sit on thorns more at a sermon than at a play, think the Sabbaths longer than holidays, but for want of zeal ? If thou beest not a vain and wilful deceiver of thyself and others, deal honestly and plainly with thy soul, try thyself by these few rules ; and if thou judgest thyself to come short of them, amend and 'be zealous.'

THE SIXTH PART.

Which little round fire-ball coming to hand, as David's small stone, by ordinary lot, knowing the insufficiency of mine own, I pray that God with his arm would scatter it far and wide into those wild parts of the world, without the pale of Christendom, which lie so frozen and benumbed in their paganism, that they feel not the coldness of their religions ; as also in those regions, that being within the tropics of the church, have just so much and so little heat, as to think they have enough, and need no more. Chiefly mine affections burn within me for the good of mine own nation, for which I would I had but so much zeal as truly to wish myself *anathema*, upon condition it had heat suitable to its light. For I must bear it record, it hath knowledge, I would I could say according to zeal. But the Spirit,

knowing that which is spoken to all to be in effect as spoken to none, directs me what I should speak to churches, to speak to particular angels. Now the principal in our church, under that Archangel of the covenant, I most willingly acknowledge to be my lord the king, as an angel of light. And why not that very angel, who by his writing hath begun to pour out the fifth vial upon the throne of the beast, darkened his kingdom, caused them to gnaw their tongues for grief, and blaspheme for the smart of their wounds; though as yet they will not repent of their errors? The Lord anoint him more and more with this oil above all the princes of the earth, that from his head it may run down upon our skirts; make him shine in zeal above all other stars, to the warming and enlightening of this whole horizon; set him up as a standard for his people; clothe him with zeal as with a cloak, to recompense the fury of the adversaries, that he may strike the Aramites, not three but five times, till they be consumed; that he may put the Ammonites under the iron saws, harrows, axes, which have provoked him as much as ever they did David, 2 Sam. xii. But yet, as in the time of the Old Testament, the custody of the fire and light was the charge of the priest, so here I observe Christ to lay it upon his ministers, interpreting his rule by his practice: 'Tell the church, tell the angel of the church;' honouring that despised office with that stately style; intimating the union between people and minister, that they should be as one. What is spoken to the one, is spoken to the other; not as some, that ever make clergy and laity two members, in division and opposition; neither yet as some spirits, that lay all level, but implying a property, especially in grace and zeal in the ministers, whom the preacher calls the master of the assemblies; that they should exceed as far the people as angels do men, and that he will reckon with them for the religion of the people, because cold priests make bold sinners. Zealous Jehoiada may make Jehoshaphat the king zealous, so long as he lives with him. We therefore, men and brethren, or rather, men and angels, upon whom it lies to keep life and heat in the devotion of the world, to consume the dross of vices and heresies, that have fallen into the sink of our times; we that are to make ready our people for the second coming of Christ, is the spirit of Eli, think we, sufficient for us? What manner of persons ought we to be, burning in spirit, fervent in prayer; thundering in preaching, shining in life and conversation? Why is it then, my brethren (Oh, let my plainest rebukes be the fruits and signs of my best love to mine own tribe; let them not be as breakings of the head, but as precious balm to those whose honour with the people I prefer to my life), why is it that some of us pray so rarely and so coldly in private (the evils of our times will not out but by frequent fasting and fervent prayer), in public so briefly, so perfunctorily, and feebly, that we scarce have any witnesses of what we say? Why are there yet remaining any mutes amongst us? Why are there any tongues that dare speak against often or zealous preaching? Doth not Paul adjure us before Him that shall judge the elect angels, that we preach instantly, in season and out of season? Read we the commentaries of that text, or let the practice of ancients expound it; and tell me if ever old or new interpreted that charge, of bare reading, of quarterly, or monthly, yea, or of once on the Sabbath, preaching only, as if that were fully sufficient, without endeavouring or desiring any more. If always often preaching be prating, what meant the practice, I say, not only of Calvin and Beza, but of Chrysostom, Basil, Ambrose, with other of the fathers, preaching every day in the week, some of them twice in the week, none of them so seldom, as such would bear the world in hand? What

meant sundry ancient councils, the eleventh of Tolet in Spain, yea, even of Trent itself, to excite the torpor of the bishops of their times, as their canons speak, enjoining frequent preaching, calling for more than almost any man is able to perform?

But here I may turn reproving into rejoicing, that preaching is grown in any better fashion and grace with our times, by royal and reverend, both examples and countenance: only I wish that every Archippus may fulfil his ministry, be instant and constant in preaching. Solomon, the older and wiser he grew, the more he taught the people, sharpened his goads, and fastened his nails; whereas many amongst us are so wise in their youth, as to affect the foolishness of preaching, but in their dotage ease slays the fool; when the door is oiled, it leaves creaking. They must then fall to make much of themselves, till, contrary with the prophet, they cry out, 'My fatness, my fatness, my belly, my belly!' so favouring their lungs that they will be sure never to die of David's consumption of zeal. Let such preach, say they, that want livings; and if for shame they preach at all, it must be rarely and easily for breaking of their wind (my meaning is not to tax such whom God disenable by weakness of body, or such as recompense their rarity with industry, as Perkins, &c.); and yet, forsooth, these think they may justly challenge, and wear the double honour of countenance and maintenance, I marvel with what right or with what face, so long as there remains express canon of Scripture bequeathing it to those that toil in word and doctrine. Neither will zeal set us on work only to preach, or to preach often, to avoid the infamy of bare readers; but it will teach us to preach painfully, and that in the evidence and demonstration, not so much of art or nature, as of the Spirit and grace, regarding only that the people know Christ and him crucified, not caring whether they know what we have read, how many quotations our memory will carry level, how roundly we can utter our mind in new-minted words, in like sounding, idle, vain, and offensive paranomasies. I blush to fall into the least touch of that kind; yet, at once to shew and reprove that childish folly, 'It is a vein of vain preaching, turning sound preaching into a sound of preaching, tickling men's ears like a tinkling cymbal, feeding them *ῥουσσοῖσι καὶ ἐν ἰδεσμοῖσι*, spoiling the plain song with descant and division.' What is this but to shew our own levity and want of true art; indeed, affecting such a dancing, piperly, and effeminate eloquence (as Tully, Demosthenes, or any masculine orator would scorn), instead of that divine, powerful delivery which becometh him that speaks the oracles of God? If ever we mean to do any good, we must exhort and reprove with all vehemency and authority, lifting up our voice as a trumpet, as the sons of thunder, piercing their ears, witnessing, striving, and contending, according to our gift, whatsoever it be, to manifest our affections, that we may work upon the people, which all the art in the world will not teach us to do; only zeal at the heart will naturally produce it, without straining or affecting. If God require the heart as well as the head, why should we not labour to move the affections as well as inform the judgment? There is a doctrinal, and, as some term it, a doctorly kind of preaching, which is admired of some that understand it not; of others, that could be content with the mass again, because it was gentle and had no teeth in it. And such sermons I have sometimes heard for matter void of exception, but so delivered, as if one were acting a part, or saying a lesson by heart. It hath called to mind a song which sometimes I have met, withal excellently composed, full of sweet air, surely and truly sung, but with flat and dead voices without spirit, which hath marred

the music. Of such a sermon and preacher the countryman's verdict did well that said, This man may be a great scholar, but he wants beetle and wedges to hew our knotted timber withal; our green wood will not burn unless it be better blown. You shall sometimes see an excellent horse of shape and colour, having many of those marks Du Bartas describes in Cain's supposed horse, which yet, wanting mettle, hath been of little worth and less use. If there were no other preachers than these, which hold themselves the only profound and learned preachers, I muse what should become of conversion of souls, which they that covet must come with the spirit of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children. I may in truth, and I hope with modesty, speak with the preacher, that in observing I have observed and have found that divers great clerks have had but little fruit of their ministry; but hardly any truly zealous man of God (though of lesser gifts) but have had much comfort of labours in their own and bordering parishes, being in this likened by Gregory to the iron on the smith's anvil, sparkling round about. And if for this any bordering neighbours, whose cold labours work not the like success, shall accuse them of some kind (I know not what) of policy in bewitching the people, they may well reply, Behold our zealous affections are our charms, and zeal all our witchcraft; as Latimer well answered one that accused the people of partiality for not affecting him that preached one of his printed sermons, that he had indeed his stick, but wanted his rosin, meaning his zealous manner of preaching and living, without which last all the former will do but little good, if a good ensample of life accompany not their doctrine, as lightning doth thunder. For there are some (I speak it with sorrow of heart) that seem to have fire in their preaching, but carry water in their life; being notoriously proud, covetous, or debauched, stained with odious vices. Let us hear the sum of all. Do we love Christ more than ordinary? Would we give proof of our treble love to him? Let us, then, feed his flock with a treble zeal, expressed in our prayer, preaching, and living. Let us make it appear to the consciences of all, that the top of our ambition is God's glory; and that we prefer the winning of souls to the winning of the world.

This title of angels, why may it not also be extended to magistrates, as well as that higher style of gods? Sure I am that the scarlet robe of zeal would exceeding well become them. Jethro maketh it their prime and essential character; God and Moses their only and sole, in the charge and commission to Joshua so oft repeated, 'Only be of good courage.' And if David were now to re-pen his psalm, I think he might alter the form of his counsel and say, 'Be zealous, ye rulers and judges of the world,' and not wise and politic; or rather, under the terms of wisdom, he comprehends indeed the zeal we call for, the most now-a-days being Gallios, wise only for the matters of the commonwealth: not having a spark of that spirit which was in Phinehas, Daniel, and Nehemiah, &c., for the Lord of hosts, or to his laws and commandments; as if God had made magistrates keepers only of the second table, governors of men, and not of Christians; guardians only of civil societies, and not of his church, and shepherds also of his flock. Are idolatries, blasphemies, profaning of Sabbaths, no sins? Why then either have not the laws force and strength enough in them, as sometime we are answered when we complain? or why are they not executed for the suppressing of these raging sins? Are not all they punished with death in the Scriptures, as well as breaches of the second table? Blood I leave to the malignant church, and admire clemency in rulers as much as any; but yet I know the profane dissoluteness of the times requires a three-

stringed whip of severity to purge our Augean stable of the foul abuses, whipped often with pens and tongues, but spared by them that bear the sword (a man may say, of many governors), altogether in vain for matters of religion. Are not kings of the earth charged to render double to the bloody strumpet of Rome? Why, then, doth the hurtful pity of our times embolden and increase their numbers? Laodicea itself, I doubt not, for matters of mine and thine, had, as their name reports, good civil justice and justicers; but was God the nearer for it? Doth he not threaten, for all that, to spew them out of his mouth? Shall he not curse those that do his work negligently, fearfully, and partially? Our times complain of two special cankerworms of justice, which eat up zeal in magistrates. The first is covetousness, which makes men of place transgress for a morsel of bread: the zeal of their own houses consumes the zeal of God's house. The building of great houses, keeping of great houses, and matching with great houses, raising and leaving of great houses behind them, makes them so ravenous, that they devour so much as chokes all their zeal; which would teach them to shake their laps of bribes, and scorn to accept gifts, though men would augment them for the perverting of judgment. The other, cowardice and fearfulness, which how unfit and base a quality did Nehemiah think it for a man of his place! No better than shyness in a fore-horse, whose eyes men fence on both sides, that they may lead the way, and go without starting; unto which zeal is answerable to magistrates, causing them only to see him that is invisible, without casting a squint eye at men; to sing to God only of judgment and mercy, without tuning their songs to man's care; to walk in the perfect way, without turning either to the right or left hand, for fear or favour. O that there were such a heart in our leaders! how easily would our people follow! What a spring-tide of zeal should we have, if the sun and moon would cast out a benign aspect upon them! Doth it not flourish in all those shires and towns, where the word and sword do jointly cherish it? In others, which are the greatest number, how doth it languish and wane away, and hang down the head! Where is it in divers places of the land to be seen? I had almost said, in my haste and heat, there is none that hath zeal, no, not one, there is no courage for the truth; but that I remember that Elijah was checked for overshooting himself in his too short and quick computation. I hope the Lord hath his fifties amongst us, though but thin sown in comparison of the swarms of professed recusants, and church-papists, of profane atheists, key-cold worldlings, and lukewarm professors. The bodies of our many several congregations, yea, even of the better sort, whereunto have they been likened by our separated adversaries, but unto the prophet Hosea's cake, half-baked upon the hearth, having one side, that is, the outside to the world-ward, in public service, scorched a little and browned over; but the inside to God-ward, in private and family duties, no better than dough; many of them making, indeed, some show, as the outlandish fruits that are plashed upon our walls, but, wanting heat, never come to maturity. If we should make good their resemblances, how then should we please the stomach of God? who hath indeed brooked and borne us a long time. I doubt but wamblingly. How near were we going in '88, and in the powder treason? Do we think he will ever digest us, in the temper we are in? which (to confess the truth of the fashionable Christian) what is it but a state of neutrality, indifferency, or such a mediocrity as will just serve the time, satisfy law, or stand with reputation of neighbours? Beyond

which, if any step a little forward, do not the rest hunt upon the stop? If there hap to break out a sparkle of zeal in any one house in a parish, is not the whole town in an uproar? as when the bells ring awake,* every man brings his bucket to the quenching of this fire. If hall be in an ale-house, who cries out of it? and as for our Sundays, church service, which is all that God gets at our hands, how perfunctorily and fashionably is it slubbered over. How are his Sabbaths made the voider and dunghill for all refuse business, divided between the church and the ale-house, the May-pole commonly beguiling the pulpit! What man would not spew to see God thus worshipped? This want of devotion makes the foul-mouthed papists to spit at us; this want of reformation makes the queasy-stomached Brownists cast themselves out of the church; and shall God always suffer the land to bear us? But behold, he stands at the door and knocks, by treasons, by plagues, by the hammer of dearths, discontents, fires, inundations, especially by the word; his locks are wet with waiting. O, before he shake off the dust of his feet against us, and turn to some other nation more worthy, let us open the door, that he may come in and sup with us. If he loves us, he will purge us and scour us, by one chastisement or other; if he have no pleasure in us, he cannot but unburthen his stomach of us. If all the land besides should turn the deaf ear, yet let me entreat and charge you of my flock to hear his voice, and be zealous. Since my coming amongst you, I have handled some books of the Old Testament, the Epistles to the Romans, to the Hebrews, of Saint James, Peter, and John; out of them taught the doctrine of the law, of faith, love, and good works. Now, in the choice of this epistle of Christ to Laodicea, my desire was to boil up the former to their just temper, in which work I can willingly be content to spend my strength and days, if God see it fit. I cannot be a better sacrifice than to God, and for you. If I waste myself, so you may have light and heat, what else is the end of my life? God hath given you a name, your zeal is gone abroad; and I hope you have many names among you. The Lord increase their number and zeal. If but one of us this day shall open this door of his heart with Joshua, 'Let others choose, I and my house will serve the Lord' more zealously than heretofore, neither I nor he shall have lost our labours. A lively picture casts its eye upon every one that comes near it; such is the word with whom, and with which, we have to do. Let him that is now cold, grow colder and colder; but let him that hath an ear, hear what hath been said to the churches, and be zealous and amend.

The Lord give us not only understanding, but zeal in all things; he baptize us with fire; he breathe on us, and inspire into us the Spirit of life and power, &c. So shall we run the ways of his commandments.

* I suppose 'awake,' an alarm.—*Eu.*