

OF GOD'S POWER.

THE next attribute is God's power, Job ix. 19. 'If I speak of strength, lo, he is strong.' In this chapter is a magnificent description of God's power; 'Lo, he is strong.' The Hebrew word for strong, signifies a conquering, prevailing strength. 'He is strong;' the superlative degree is intended here, viz. He is most strong, He is called, *El-shaddai*, God Almighty, Gen. xvii. 1. His almightiness lies in this, he can do whatever is feasible. Divines distinguish between authority and power. God hath both.

1. He hath a sovereign right and authority over man. He can do with his creature as he pleases. Who shall dispute with God? who shall ask him a reason of his doings? Dan. iv. 35. 'He doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What dost thou?' God sits judge in the highest court; he calls the monarchs of the earth to the bar, and is not bound to give a reason of his proceedings, Ps. lxxv. 5, 7. 'He putteth down one, and raiseth up another.' He hath salvation and damnation in his power. He hath the key of justice in his hand, to lock up whom he will in the fiery prison of hell; and he hath the key of mercy in his hands to open heaven's gate to whom he pleases. This is the name engraven upon his vesture, 'King of kings, and Lord of lords,' Rev. xix. 16. He sits Lord paramount, and who can call him to an account? Isa. xlv. 10. 'I will do all my pleasure.' The world is God's diocese, and shall not he do what he will in his own diocese? He it was that turned king Nebuchadnezzar to eat grass, and threw the angels to hell when they sinned; that broke the head of the Babylonish empire, Isa. xiv. 12. 'How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer! Thy pomp is brought down to the grave.' 'Who sets bounds to the sea, and bridles the proud waves,' Job xxxviii. 11. God is the supreme monarch, all power is seated originally in him; 'And the powers that be are of God,' Rom. xiii. 1. Kings hold their crowns of him, Prov. viii. 15. 'By me kings reign.'

(2.) As God hath authority, so he hath infinite power. What is authority without power? 'He is mighty in strength,' Job ix. 4. This power of God is seen.

1. In the creation. To create, requires infinite power; all the world cannot make a fly. God's power in creating is evident, 1. Because he needs no instruments to work with; it is proper to God to work without tools. 2. He needs no matter to work upon; first, he creates matter, and then works upon it.

3. He works without labour, Pl. xxxiii. 9. 'He spake, and it was done.'

2. The power of God is seen in the conversion of souls. Surely a mighty power went to raise Christ from the grave, Eph. i. 20. (1.) The same power goes to draw a sinner to God, as drew Christ out of the grave to heaven. Greater power is put forth in conversion, than in creation. When God made the world, he met with no opposition: as he had nothing to help him, so he had nothing to hinder him: but when he comes to convert a sinner, here he meets with opposition: Satan opposeth him, and the heart opposeth him: a sinner is angry with converting grace. (2.) The world was the 'Work of God's fingers,' Pl. viii. 3. Conversion is the 'Work of God's arm,' Luke i. 5. (3.) In the creation, God wrought but one miracle, he spake the word: but, in conversion, he works many miracles: The blind is made to see, the dead is raised, the deaf hears the voice of the Son of God. O the infinite power of Jehovah! Before his sceptre, angels vail and prostrate themselves; kings cast their crowns at his feet. Amos ix. 5. 'He toucheth the mountains and they melt.' Job ix. 6. 'He removeth the earth out of her place.' An earthquake makes the earth tremble upon her pillars, but God shakes it out of its place; he can remove the earth from its centre. God can do what he will, his power is as large as his will. Were men's power as large as their will, what work would they make in the world! God's power is of equal extent with his will. God can with a word unpin the wheels, and break the axle-tree of the creation. He can do 'more than we can think,' Eph. iii. 20. He can suspend natural agents: he sealed up the lions' mouth, made the fire not to burn: he made the waters to stand upon an heap: he caused the sun to go ten degrees backward in Ahaz's dial, Isa. iii. 8. What can oppose omnipotency? 'The Lord cuts off the spirit of princes.' Pl. lxxvi. 12. He counter-works his enemies; he pulls down their flags and banners of pride, infatuates their counsels, breaks their forces; and he doth it with ease, with the turning of his hand, Psal. lxxxi. 24. 'with his breath,' Isa. xl. 24. 'with a look.' That is all it needs cost God to destroy his enemies; a look, a cast of his eye, Exod. xiv. 24. 'The Lord looked into the host of the Egyptians, through the pillar of fire, and troubled their host.' Who shall stop him in his march? God commands, and all creatures in heaven and earth obey him. Xerxes, the Persian monarch, threw fetters into the sea, when its waves swelled, as if he would have chained up the waters; but when God speaks, the wind and sea obey him; if he say but the word, the stars fight in their courses against Sisera; if he stamp with his foot, an army of angels shall presently be in battalia. What cannot omnipotent power

do? 'The Lord is a man of war,' Exod. xv. 3 'He hath a mighty arm,' Pf. lxxxix. 13. 'God's power is a glorious power,' Col. i. 11. 1. It is an irresistible power, Rom. ix. 19. 'Who hath resisted his will?' To contest with him, is as if the thorns should set themselves in battle array against the fire; or as if an infirm child should fight with an arch-angel. If the sinner be once taken in God's iron net, there is no escaping, Isa. xliii. 13. 'There is none that can deliver out of my hand.' 2 God's power is an inexhaustible power; it is never spent or wasted. Men, while they exercise their strength, weaken it; but God hath an everlasting spring of strength in him, Isa. xxvi. 4. 'Tho' he spends his arrows upon his enemies, Deut. xxxii. 23. yet he doth not spend his strength, Isa. xl. 28. 'He fainteth not, neither is weary.'

Object. Can God do all things? he cannot deny himself.

Ans. Though God can do all things, he cannot do that which stains the glory of his Godhead: he cannot sin; he cannot do that which implies a contradiction. To be a God of truth, and yet deny himself, is a contradiction.

Use 1. If God be so infinite in power, fear this great God. We are apt to fear such as are in power; Jer. v. 32. 'Fear ye not me?' saith the Lord: 'Will ye not tremble at my presence?' He hath power to cast our souls and bodies into hell, Psal. xc. 11. 'Who knows the power of his wrath?' God can with the same breath that made us, dissolve us; 'His eyes are as a flame of fire; the rocks are thrown down by him,' Nah. i. 6. Solomon saith, 'Where the word of a king is, there is power,' Eccl. viii. 4. much more where the word of a God is. O let us fear this mighty God! The fear of God will drive out all other base fear.

Use 2. See the deplorable condition of wicked men: 1. This power of God is not for them: 2. It is against them.

1. This power of God is not for them: they have no union with God, therefore have no warrant to lay claim to his power. His power is no relief to them. He hath power to forgive sins, but he will not put forth his power towards an impenitent sinner. God's power is on eagle's wings, to carry the faints to heaven; but what privilege is that to the wicked; though a man will carry his child in his arms over a dangerous water, yet he will not carry an enemy in his arms. God's power is not engaged to help those that fight against him. Let miseries come upon the wicked, they have none to help them; they are like a ship in a storm without a pilot, driven upon the rocks.

2. This power of God is against the wicked. God's power will not be the sinners shield to defend him, but a sword to wound him. God's power will bind the sinner in chains. God's power serves to revenge the wrong done to his mercy. God

will be Almighty to damn the sinner. Now, in what condition is every unbeliever; God's power is engaged against him, and 'it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God,' Heb. x. 31.

Uſe 3. It reproves ſuch as do not believe this power of God. We ſay, we do not doubt of God's power, but his will. But indeed it is God's power that we queſtion. 'Is any thing too hard for God?' Jer. xxxii. 27. yet we ſtagger through unbelief as if the arm of God's power were ſhrunk, and he could not help in deſperate caſes. Take away a king's power, and we unking him; take away the Lord's power, and we un-god him; yet how guilty of this are we! Did not Iſrael queſtion God's power! 'Can he prepare a table in the wilderneſs?' Pſal. lxxviii. 19. they thought the wilderneſs was a fitter place for making of graves, than ſpreading of a table. Did not Martha doubt of Chriſt's power? John xi. 39. 'He hath been dead four days.' If Chriſt had been there while Lazarus was ſick, or when he had been newly dead, Martha did not queſtion but Chriſt could have raiſed him; but he had lain in the grave four days, and now ſhe ſeemed to queſtion his power. Chriſt had as much ado to raiſe her faith, as to raiſe her dead brother. And Moſes, though an holy man, yet limits God's power through unbelief, Numb. xi. 21. 'The people among whom I am, are ſix hundred thouſand footmen; and thou haſt ſaid, I will give them fleſh for a whole month: ſhall the flocks and the herds be ſlain for them to ſuffice them? or ſhall all the fiſh of the ſea be gathered for them to ſuffice them? And the Lord ſaid unto Moſes, 'Is the Lord's hand waxed ſhort?' This is a great affront to God, to go to deny his power. That men doubt of God's power, appears, 1. By their taking indirec't courſes. Would they defraud in their dealings, uſe falſe weights, if they believed the power of God, that he could provide for them? 2. By their depending more upon ſecond cauſes than upon God, 2 Chron. xvi. 12. 'In his diſeaſe, he ſought not to the Lord, but to the phyſicians.'

Uſe 1. If God be infinite in power, then let us take heed of hardening our hearts againſt God, Job ix. 4. 'Who hath hardened himſelf againſt him, and proſpered?' Job ſends a challenge to all creatures in heaven and earth, Who is he did ever take up the bucklers againſt God, and came off conqueror? For a perſon to go on daringly in any ſin, is to harden his heart againſt God, and, as it were, to raiſe a war againſt heaven; and let him remember God is *El-shaddai*, almighty; he will be too hard for them that oppoſe him, Job xl. 9. 'Haſt thou an arm like God?' Such as will not bow to his golden ſceptre, ſhall be broken with his iron rod. Julian hardened his heart againſt God, he oppoſed him to his face; but what got he at laſt? did he proſper? Being wounded in battle, he threw up his blood

into the air, and said to Christ, *Vicisti Galilæe*, 'O Galilean, thou hast overcome;' I acknowledge thy power, whose name and truth I have opposed. Will folly contend with wisdom? Weakness with power? finite with infinite? O take heed of hardening your heart against God! He can send legions of angels to avenge his quarrel. It is better to meet God with tears in your eyes, than weapons in your hand. You may overcome God sooner by repentance, than by resistance.

Uſe 5. Get an interest in God, and then this glorious power is engaged for you. God gives it under his hand, that he will put forth the whole power of his Godhead for the good of his people, 1 Chron. xvii. 24. 'The Lord of hosts is the God of Israel, even a God to Israel.' This almightiness of God's power is a wonderful support and comfort to every believer. It was Samson's riddle, Judg. xiv. 14. 'Out of the strong came forth sweetness:' So out of the attribute of God's power, out of this strong comes forth sweetness: It is comfort in several cases,

1. In case of strong corruption. My sins, saith a child of God, are potent; I have no power against this army that comes against me: I pray, and humble my soul by fasting, but my sins return upon me. Ay, but dost thou believe the power of God? The strong God can conquer thy strong corruption; though sin be too hard for thee, yet not for him; he can soften hard hearts, quicken the dead. 'Is any thing too hard for the Lord?' Gen. xviii. 14. Set God's power on work. By faith and prayer, say, Lord! it is not for thy honour that the devil should have so strong a party within me; O break the head of this leviathan; Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee.

2. In case of strong temptation. Satan is called the strong man: O but remember the power of God; Christ is called, 'The lion of the tribe of Judah,' he hath broken the serpent's head upon the cross. Satan is a chained enemy, and a conquered enemy: Michael is stronger than the dragon.

3. Comfort in case of weakness of grace, and fear of falling away. I pray, but I cannot send out strong cries; I believe, but hand of my faith doth shake and tremble. Cannot God strengthen weak grace? 2 Cor. xii. 9. 'My strength is made perfect in weakness: most gladly therefore will I rather glory in mine infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.' I fear I shall not hold out. Christian, dost thou believe the power of God? Hath not God preserved thy grace thus far? Mayest thou not set up thy Ebenezer? God hath kept thy grace hitherto as a spark in the main ocean. And is not he able still to keep thy grace? 1 Pet. i. 5. 'We are kept by the power of God,' &c. God's mercy pardons us, but his power preserves us. He who by his power keeps the stars that they do not fall out of their orb, keeps our grace that it doth not fail or annihilate.

4. Comfort in case of the deficiency in thy estate, God can multiply the oil in the cruise; miraculously he can raise up supplies: God, who provides for the birds of the air, cannot he provide for his children? He that clothes the lilies, cannot he clothe his lambs?

5. Comfort in regard of the resurrection. This seems difficult to believe, that the bodies of men when eaten up by worms, devoured by beasts and fishes, or consumed to ashes, should be raised the same numerical bodies; but if we believe the power of God, it is no great wonder; which is hardest, to create, or raise the dead: he that can make a body of nothing, can restore it to its parts, when mingled and confounded with other substances, Mat. xix. 26. 'With God all things are possible.' If we believe the first article of the creed, That God is almighty, we may quickly believe the other article, The resurrection of the body. God can raise the dead because of his power, and he cannot but raise them, because of his truth.

6. It is comfort in reference to the church of God: he can save and deliver it when it is brought low. The enemies have power in their hand, but the remainder of wrath God will restrain, Psal. lxxvi. 10. God can either confine the enemies power or confound it: 'If God be for us, who can be against us?' God can create Jerusalem a praise, Isa. lxxv. 8. The church in Ezekiel, is compared to dry bones, but God made breath to enter into them, and they lived, Ezek. xxxvii. 10. The ship of the church may be tossed, because sin is in it, but it shall not be overwhelmed, because Christ is in it, Psalm xvi. 5. *Deus in medio.* All the church's paugs shall help forward her deliverance.



OF THE HOLINESS OF GOD.

THE next attribute is God's holiness, Exod. xv. 11. 'Glorious in holiness.' Holiness is the most sparkling jewel of his crown; it is the name by which God is known, Psal. cxi. 9. 'Holy and reverend is his name.' 'He is the Holy One,' Job vi. 10. 'Seraphims cry, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory,' Isa. vi. 3. His power makes him mighty, his holiness makes him glorious: God's holiness consists in his perfect loving of righteousness, and abhorrence of evil, Hab. i. 13. 'Of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity.'

1st. God is holy intrinsically: 1. He is holy in his nature; his very being is made up of holiness, as light is of the essence of the sun. 2. He is holy in his word; the word bears a stamp