

Sermon 1

Sermon 2

fore he thinks himself to be poor. Indeed Christians should seek after the grace they want, but they must not therefore overlook the grace they have. Let Christians be thankful for the least growth; if you do not grow so much in assurance, bless God if you grow in sincerity; if you do not grow so much in knowledge, bless God if you grow in humility. If a tree grows in the root, it is a true growth; if you grow in the root-grace of humility, it is as needful for you as any other growth.

OF PERSEVERANCE.

1 PET. i. 5. *Who are kept by the Power of God, through Faith unto Salvation.*

THE fifth and last fruit of sanctification, is perseverance in grace. The heavenly inheritance is kept for the saints, 1 Pet. i. 4. and they are kept to the inheritance; in my text, ‘Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.’ The apostle asserts a saint’s stability and permanency in grace. The saint’s perseverance is much opposed by Papists and Arminians; but it is not the less true, because it is opposed. A Christian’s main comfort depends upon this doctrine of perseverance: take away this, and you much prejudice religion, and cut the sinews of all cheerful endeavours. Before I come to the full handling and discussing this great point, let me first clear the sense of it, which I shall do by way of concession or grant.

When I say, believers do persevere: 1st, I grant, that such as are so only in profession, may fall away, 2 Tim. iv. 10. ‘Demas hath forsaken us.’ Blazing comets soon evaporate. A building on sand will fall, Matth. vii. 26. ‘Seeming grace may be lost.’ No wonder to see a bough fall from a tree that is only tied on. Hypocrites are only tied on Christ by an external profession, they are not ingrafted. Who ever thought artificial motions would hold long? the hypocrites’ motion is only artificial, not vital. All blossoms do not ripen into fruit.

2^{dly}, I grant, that, if believers were left to stand upon their own legs, they might fall finally. Some of the angels, who were stars full of light and glory, yet did actually lose their grace; and if those pure angels fell from grace, much more would the godly, who have so much sin to betray them, if they were not upheld by a superior power.

3^{dly}, I grant, true believers, tho’ they do not fall away actually, and lose all their grace, yet their grace may fail in the degree, and they may make a great breach upon their sanctification. Grace may be *meritura, non mortua*; dying, but not

dead, Rev. iii. 2. 'Strengthen the things which are ready to die.' Grace may be like fire in the embers, though not quenched, yet the flame is gone out. This decay of grace I shall shew in two particulars; (1.) The lively actings of grace may be suspended, Rev. ii. 4. 'Thou hast left thy first love.' Grace may be like a sleepy habit; the godly may act faintly in religion, the pulse of their affections may beat low. The wise virgins slumbered, Matth. xxv. 5. The exercise of grace may be hindered; as when the course of water is stopped, and doth not run. (2.) Instead of grace exercising in the godly, corruption may exercise; instead of patience, murmuring; instead of heavenliness, earthliness. How did pride put forth itself in the disciples, when they strove who should be the greatest! how did lust put forth itself in David? Thus lively and vigorous may corruption be in the regenerate; they may fall into enormous sins. But though all this be granted, yet they do not *penitus excedere*, fall away finally from grace. David did not quite lose his grace; for then, why did he pray, 'Take not away thy Holy Spirit from me!' He had not quite lost the Spirit. As Eutyches, when he fell from a window, Acts xx. and all thought he was dead; 'No, saith Paul, there is life in him:' so David fell foully, but there was the life of grace in him. Though the saints may come to that pass, they have but little faith, yet not to have no faith; though their grace may be drawn low, yet not drawn dry: though grace may be abated, not abolished; though the wise virgins slumbered, yet their lamps were not quite gone out. Grace, when it is at the lowest, shall revive and flourish; as when Samson had lost his strength, his hair grew again, and he renewed his strength. Having thus explained the proposition, I come now to the amplifying this great doctrine of the saints perseverance.

Q. 1. *By what means do Christians come to persevere?*

Ans. 1. By the manuduction and help of ordinances, prayer, word, sacraments. Christians do not arrive at perseverance when they sit still and do nothing. It is not with us as with passengers in a ship, who are carried to the end of their voyage, and they sit still in the ship; or, as it is with noblemen, who have their rents brought in without their toil or labour: but we arrive at salvation in the use of means; as a man comes to the end of a race by running, to a victory by fighting, Matth. xxvi. 41. 'Watch and pray.' As Paul said, Acts xxvii. 31. 'Except ye abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.' Believers shall come to shore at last, arrive at heaven; but, 'except they abide in the ship,' viz. in the use of ordinances, 'they cannot be saved.' The ordinances cherish grace: as they beget grace, so they are the breast-milk by which it is nourished and preserved to eternity.

2. *Auxilio spiritus*, by the sacred influence and concurrence of the Spirit. The Spirit of God is continually at work in the heart of a believer, to carry on grace to perseverance; it drops on fresh oil, to keep the lamp of grace burning. The Spirit excites, strengthens, increaseth grace, and makes a Christian go from one step of faith to another, till he comes to the end of his faith, salvation, 1 Pet. i. 9. It is a fine expression of the apostle, 2 Tim. i. 14. 'The Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.' He who dwells in an house, keeps the house in repair; the Spirit dwelling in a believer, keeps grace in repair. Grace is compared to a river of the water of life, John vii. 38. This river can never be dried up, because God's Spirit is a spring which continually feeds it.

3. Grace is carried on to perseverance, by Christ's daily intercession. As the Spirit is at work in the heart, so is Christ at work in heaven. Christ is ever praying that the saints' grace may hold out, John xvii. 11. *Conserua illos*; 'Father, keep those whom thou hast given me;' keep them as the stars in their orbs: keep them as jewels, that they may not be lost. 'Father, keep them.' That prayer Christ made for Peter, was the copy of his prayer he now makes for believers, Luke xxii. 32. 'I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not,' that it be not totally eclipsed? how can the children of such prayers perish?

Q. 2. *By what arguments may we prove the saints perseverance?*

Ans. 2. *A veritate Dei*, from the truth of God. God hath both asserted it, and promised it: (1.) God hath asserted it, 1 John ii. 9. 'His seed remaineth in him.' 1 John ii. 27. 'The anointing ye have received of him abideth in you.' (2.) As God hath asserted it, so he hath promised it: the truth of God, the most orient pearl of his crown, is laid a pawn in the promise, John x. 28. 'I will give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish.' Jer. xxxii. 40. 'I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.' God will so love his people, that he will not forsake them; and they shall so fear him, that they shall not forsake him. If a believer should not persevere, God should break his promise, Hof. ii. 19. 'I will betrothe thee unto me for ever, in righteousness and loving-kindness.' God doth not marry his people unto himself, and then divorce them: he hates putting away, Mal. ii. 16. God's love ties the marriage knot so fast, that neither death nor hell can break it asunder.

2. The second argument is, *a potentia Dei*, from the power

of God. In the text, we 'are kept by the power of God unto salvation.' Every person in the Trinity hath an hand in making a believer persevere. God the Father establisheth, 1 Cor. i. 21. God the Son confirms, 1 Cor. i. 8. God the Holy Ghost seals, Eph. i. 13. so that it is the power of God that keeps us. Alas, we are not kept by our own power. The Pelagians held, that man, by his own power, might overcome temptation, and persevere. But St. Austin confutes him. "Man, saith he, prays unto God for perseverance, which would be absurd, if he had power of himself to persevere." And, saith St. Austin, "if all the power be inherent in a man's self, then why should not one persevere, as well as another? Why not Judas as well as Peter?" So that it is not by any other than the power of God that we are kept: as the Lord preserved Israel from perishing in the wilderness, till he brought them to Canaan: the same care will he take, if not in a miraculous manner, yet in a spiritual invisible manner, in preserving his people in a state of grace, till he bring them to the celestial Canaan. As the Heathens feigned of Atlas, that he did bear up the heavens from falling; the power of God is that Atlas which bears up the saints from falling. It is disputed, whether grace of itself may not perish, as Adam's; yet sure I am, grace kept by the power of God, cannot perish.

3. The third argument is taken: *ab electione*, from God's electing love. Such as God hath from all eternity elected to glory, cannot fall away finally: but every true believer is elected to glory, therefore he cannot fall away. What can frustrate election, or make God's decree void? This argument stands like mount Sion, which cannot be moved; insomuch that some of the Papists hold, that those who have absolute election cannot fall away, 2 Tim. ii. 19. 'The foundation of God stands sure, having this seal, the Lord knows them that are his.' The foundation of God is nothing else but God's decree in election; and this stands sure, God will not alter it, others cannot.

4. The fourth argument is taken, *ab unione cum Christo*, from believers union with Christ. They are knit to Christ as the members to the head by the nerves and ligament of faith, so that they cannot be broken off, Eph. iii. 23. What was once said of Christ's natural body, is true of his mystical, 'A bone of it shall not be broken.' As it is not possible to sever the leaven and the dough when they are once mingled and kneaded together; so it is impossible, when Christ and believers are once united, ever to be separated: Christ and his members make one Christ. Now, is it possible that any part of Christ should perish? How can Christ lose any member of his body mystical, and be perfect? In short, *Si unas excidat, quare non et alter?* If one believer may be broken off from Christ, then, by the same rule,

why not another? why not all? And so Christ should be an head without a body.

5. The fifth argument is taken, *ab emptione*, from the nature of a purchase. A man will not lay down his money for a purchase which may be lost, and the fee-simple alienated. Christ died, that he might purchase us as a people to himself for ever, Heb. ix. 12. 'Having obtained eternal redemption for us.' Would Christ, think we, have shed his blood, that we might believe in him for a while, and then fall away? Do we think Christ will lose his purchase?

6. The sixth argument is, *a victoria supra mundum*, from a believer's victory over the world. The argument stands thus: He who overcomes the world, doth persevere in grace: but a believer doth overcome the world, therefore he perseveres in grace, 1 John v. 4. 'This is the victory over the world, even our faith.' A man may lose a single battle in the field, yet at last win the victory. A child of God may be foiled in a single battle against temptation (as Peter was) but at last he is victorious. Now, if a saint be crowned victor, if the world be conquered by him, he must needs persevere. I come next to answer some objections of the Arminians.

1st, The first objection of Arminians, is, *If a believer shall persevere in grace, then, to what purpose are all those admonitions in scripture? 'Let him take heed lest he fall,' 1 Cor. x. 12. And, Heb. iv. 1. 'Let us fear, lest any of you seem to come short.' These admonitions seem to be superfluous and vain, if a saint shall certainly persevere.*

Ans. No, these counsels and admonitions are necessary to caution believers against carelessness; they are as goads and spurs to quicken them to a greater diligence in working our salvation. These admonitions do not imply the saints can fall away, but they are preservatives to keep them from falling away. Christ told some of his disciples, they should abide in him, yet he exhorts them to abide in him, John xv. His exhorting them was not in the least to question their abiding in him, but to awaken their diligence, and make them pray the harder, that they might abide in him.

2dly, The second objection is, Heb. vi. 4. *It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have felt the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance.*

Ans. This place of scripture hath no force in it; for the apostle here speaks of hypocrites, he shews how far they may go, yet fall away. 1. *They who were once enlightened:* Men may have great illuminations, yet fall away. Was not Judas enlightened? 2. *They have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost;*

the common gifts of the Spirit, not the special grace. 3. *They have tasted the good word of God.* Tasting here is opposed to eating; the hypocrite may have a kind of taste of the sweetness of religion, but his taste doth not nourish. There is a great deal of difference between one that takes a gargle, and a cordial; the gargle only washeth his mouth, he tastes it, and puts it out again; but a cordial is drunk down, which nourisheth and cherisheth the spirits. The hypocrite, who hath only some smack or taste of religion (as one tastes a gargle) may fall away. 4. *And have felt the powers of the world to come:* that is, they may have such apprehensions of the glory of heaven, as to be affected with it, and seem to have some joy in the thoughts of it, yet fall away; as in the parable of the stony ground, Mat. xiii. 20. All this is spoken of the hypocrite; but it doth not therefore prove, that the true believer, who is effectually wrought upon, can fall away. Though comets fall, it doth not therefore follow, that true stars fall. That this scripture speaks not of sound believers, is clear from ver. 9. 'But we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation.'

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OF PERSEVERANCE.

1 PET. i. 5. *Who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.*

Use 1. SEE the excellency of grace, it perseveres: other things are but for a season: health and riches are sweet, but they are but for a season: but grace is a blossom of eternity. The seed of God remains, 1 John iii. 9. Grace may suffer an eclipse, not a dissolution. It is called substance, for its solidity, Prov. viii. 21. and durable riches, for its permanency, Prov. vii. 18. It lasts as long as the soul, as heaven lasts. Grace is not like a lease which soon expires, but it runs parallel with eternity.

2. See here that which may excite in the saints everlasting love and gratitude to God. What can make us love God more than the fixedness of his love to us? He is not only the author of grace, but finisher: his love is perpetuated and carried on to our salvation. John x. 27. 'My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life.' *My sheep*, there is election; *hear my voice*, there is vocation; and *I know them*, there is justification; and *I give unto them eternal life*, there is glorification. How may this make us love God, and set up the monuments and trophies of his praise! how much have we done to cause God to withdraw

his Spirit, and suffer us to fall finally! yet that he should keep us, let his name be blessed, and his memorial eternized, who keepeth the feet of his saints, 1 Sam. ii. 9.

3. See whence it is that saints do persevere in holiness: it is solely to be ascribed to the power of God; we are kept by his power, kept as in a garrison: it is a wonder any Christian perseveres, if you consider, (1.) *Corruption within.* The tares are mingled with the wheat; there is more sin than grace, yet grace is habitually predominant. Grace is like a spark in the sea, a wonder it is not quenched: a wonder sin doth not destroy grace, that it doth not do, as sometimes the nurse to the infant, overlay it, and it dies; so that this infant of grace is not smothered by corruption. (2.) *Temptations without.* Satan envies us happiness, and he raiseth his militia, stirs up persecution: he shoots his fiery darts of temptation; they are called darts for their swiftness, fiery for their terribleness. We are every day beset with devils: as it was a wonder Daniel was kept alive in the midst of the roaring lions; so, that there are many roaring devils about us, and yet we are not torn in pieces. Now, whence is it, we stand against these powerful temptations? We are kept by the power of God. (3.) *The world's golden squares, riches and pleasure,* Luke xviii. 24. 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God?' How many have been cast away upon these golden sands, 2 Tim. iv. 10. as Demas? What a wonder any soul perseveres in religion, that the earth doth not choke the fire of all good affections? Whence is this but from the power of God? We are kept by his power.

Use 2. Consolation. This doctrine of perseverance is as Bezor stone; it is a sovereign cordial to keep up the spirits of the godly from fainting. There is nothing doth more trouble a child of God than this, he fears he shall never hold out; these weak legs of mine will never carry me to heaven. But perseverance is an inseparable fruit of sanctification; *Once in Christ, and for ever in Christ.* A believer may fall from some degrees of grace, but not from the state of grace: an Israelite could never wholly sell or alienate his land of inheritance, Luke xxv. 23. A type of our heavenly inheritance, which cannot be wholly alienated from us. How despairing is the Arminian doctrine of falling from grace? To-day a saint, to-morrow a reprobate; to-day a Peter, to-morrow a Judas. This must needs cut the sinews of a Christian's endeavour, and be as the boring an hole in the vessel, to make all the wine of his joy run out. Were the Arminian doctrine true, how could the apostle say, the seed of God remains in him; 1 John iii. 9. and the anointing of God abides? 1 John ii. 27. What comfort were it to have one's name written in the book of life, if it might be blotted out again? but, be assured, for your comfort, grace, if true, though never

so weak, shall persevere: though a Christian hath but little grace to trade with, yet he need not fear breaking, because God doth not only give him a flock of grace, but will keep his flock for him. *Gratia concutitur, non excutitur*, Aug. Grace may be shaken with fears and doubts, but it cannot be plucked up by the roots. Fear not falling away. If any thing should hinder the faints perseverance, then it must be either sin or temptation; but neither of these: 1. Not the sins of believers. That which humbles them shall not damn them: but their sins are a mean to humble them; they gather grapes of thorns; from the thorn of sin, they gather the grape of humility. 2. Not temptation: the devil lays the train of his temptation to blow up the fort of a faint's grace; but this cannot do it. Temptation is a medicine for security; the more Satan tempts, the more the faints pray. When Paul had the messenger of Satan to buffet him, 2 Cor. xii. 8. 'For this I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.' Thus nothing can break off a believer from Christ, or hinder his perseverance. Let this wine be given to such as are of an heavy heart: this perseverance is comfort, 1. In the loss of worldly comforts. When our goods may be taken away, our grace cannot, Luke x. 42. 'Mary hath chosen the better part, which cannot be taken from her.' 2. In the hour of death. When all things fail, friends take their farewell of us; yet still grace remains. Death may separate all things else from us but grace: a Christian may lay on his death-bed, as Olevian, once, "Sight is gone, speech and hearing are departing, but the loving-kindness of God will never depart."

Q. 1. *What motives and incentives are there to make Christians persevere?*

Ans. 1. It is the crown and glory of a Christian to persevere, *In Christianis non initia sed fide laudantur*, Prov. xvi. 31. 'The hoary head is a crown of glory, if found in the way of righteousness.' When grey hairs shine with golden virtues, this is a crown of glory. The church of Thyatira was best at last, Rev. ii. 19. 'I know thy patience and thy works, and the last to be more than the first.' The excellency of a building is not in having the first stone laid, but when it is finished. The glory and excellency of a Christian is, when he hath finished the work of faith.

2. You are within a few days march of heaven. Salvation is near to you, Rom. xiii. 11. 'Now is your salvation nearer than when we believed.' Christians, it is but a while, and you shall have done weeping and praying, and be triumphing; you shall put off your mourning, and put on white robes: you shall put off your armour, and put on a victorious crown: you who have made a good progress in religion, you are almost ready to commence, and take your degree of glory; now is your salvation

nearer than when you began to believe. When a man is almost at the end of a race, will he now tire, or faint away? O labour to persevere, your salvation is now nearer; you have but a little way to go, and you will set your foot in heaven. Though the way be up-hill and full of thorns, viz. sufferings, yet you have gone the greatest part of your way, and shortly you shall rest from your labours.

3. How sad is it not to persevere in holiness? You expose yourselves to the reproaches of men, and the rebukes of God. *First*, to the reproaches of men. They will deride both you and your profession, Luke xiv. 28. 'This man began to build, and was not able to finish.' Such is he who begins in religion, and doth not persevere: he is the *ludibrium*, and derision of all. *Secondly*, to the rebukes of God. God is most severe against such as fall off, because they bring an evil report upon religion. Apostacy breeds a bitter worm in conscience; what a worm did Spira feel! and it brings swift damnation; it is a drawing back to perdition, Heb. x. 48. God will make his sword drunk with the blood of apostates.

4. The promises of mercy are annexed only to perseverance, Rev. iii. 5. 'He that overcometh, shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life.' *Non pugnanti, sed vincenti dabitur corona*, Aug. The promise is not to him that fights, but that overcomes, Luke xxii. 28. 'Ye are they which have continued with me, and I appoint unto you a kingdom.' The promise of a kingdom, saith Chrysostom, is not made to them that heard Christ or followed him, but that continued with him. Perseverance carries away the gaudium; no man hath the crown set upon his head, but he who holds out to the end of the race. O therefore, by all this, be persuaded to persevere; God makes no account of such as do not persevere. Who esteems of corn that sheds before harvest, or fruit that falls from the tree before it be ripe?

Q. 2. *What expedients or means may be used for a Christian's perseverance?*

Ans. 1. Take heed of those things, which will make you desist and fall away. *1st*, Take heed of presumption. Do not presume upon your own strength; exercise an holy fear and jealousy over your own hearts, Rom. xi. 12. 'Be not high-minded, but fear.' 1 Cor. x. 12. 'Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.' It was Peter's sin, he leaned more upon his grace than upon Christ, and then he fell. A Christian hath cause to fear lest the lusts and deceit of his heart betray him: take heed of presuming; fear begets prayer, prayer begets strength, and strength begets steadfastness. *2dly*, Take heed of hypocrisy. Judas was first a sly hypocrite, and then a traitor, Psal. lxxviii. 37. 'Their heart was not right with God,

neither were they stedfast in his covenant.' If there be any venom or malignity in the blood, it will break forth into a plague-fore. The venom of hypocrisy is in danger of breaking out into the plague-fore of scandal. *3dly*, Beware of a vile heart of unbelief, Heb. iii. 12. 'Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.' Whence is apostacy but from incredulity? men do not believe the truth, and then they fall from the truth. Unbelieving and unstable go together, Psal. lxxviii. 22. 'They believed not in God,' *ver.* 41. 'They turned back.'

2. If you would be pillars in the temple of God, and persevere in sanctity.

First, Look that you enter into religion upon a right ground; be well grounded in the distinct knowledge of God: you must know the love of the Father, the merit of the Son, and the efficacy of the Holy Ghost. Such as know not God aright, will by degrees fall off. The Samaritans sometimes sided with the Jews when they were in favour, afterwards disclaimed all kindred with them, when Antiochus persecuted the Jews: and no wonder the Samaritans were no more fixed in religion, if you consider what Christ saith of the Samaritans, John iv. 22. 'Ye worship ye know not what:' they were ignorant of the true God: Let your knowledge of God be clear, and serve him purely out of choice, and then you will persevere, Psal. cxix. 30. 'I have chosen the way of truth, I have stuck unto thy testimonies.'

Secondly, Get a real work of grace in your heart, Heb. xiii. 9. 'It is a good thing that the heart is established with grace.' Nothing will hold out but grace: it is only this anointing abides; paint will fall off. Get an heart-changing work, 1 Cor. vi. 11. 'But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified.' Be not content with baptism of water, without baptism of the Spirit: the reason men persevere not in religion, is for want of a vital principle: a branch must needs wither, that hath no root to grow upon.

Thirdly, If you would persevere be very sincere. Perseverance grows only upon the root of sincerity, Psal. xxv. 21. 'Let integrity and uprightness preserve me.' The breast-plate of sincerity can never be shot through. How many storms was Job in? the devils set against him, his wife tempted him to curse God, his friends accused him of being a hypocrite; here was enough, one would think, to have made him to desist from religion: yet for all this, he perseveres. What preserved him? it was his sincerity, Job xxvii. 6. 'My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.'

Fourthly, If you would persevere, be humble, St. Chryostom

calls it the mother of all the graces. God lets a poor humble Christian stand, when others of higher parts, and who have higher thoughts of themselves, fall off by apostacy. They are likest to persevere, whom God will give most grace to: 'But he gives grace to the humble,' 1 Pet. v. 5. They are likest to persevere, who have God dwelling in them: 'But God dwells in the humble soul,' Isa. lvii. 15. *Non requiescit Spiritus sanctus nisi super humilem*, Bern. The lower the tree roots in the earth, the firmer it is; the more the soul is rooted in humility, the more established it is, and is in less danger of falling away.

Fifthly, If perseverance cherish the grace of faith. Faith doth *stabilere animum*, 2 Cor. i. 24. 'By faith ye stand.' 1. Faith knits us to Christ, as the members are knit to the head by nerves and sinews. 2. Faith fills us with love to God; 'it works by love,' Gal. v. 6. And he who loves God, will rather die than desert him: the soldier who loves his general, will die in his service. 3. Faith gives us a prospect of heaven, it shews us an invisible glory; and he who hath Christ in his heart, and a crown in his eye, will not faint away. O cherish faith, keep your faith, and your faith will keep you: while the pilot keeps his ship, his ship keeps him.

Sixthly, If persevere, let us engage the power of God to help us; we are kept by the power of God. The child is safest when it is held in the nurse's arms, so are we, when we are held in the arms of free grace. It is not our holding God, but his holding us, preserves us. When a boat is tied to a rock, it is secure: so, when we are fast tied to the Rock of Ages, then we are impregnable. O engage God's power to help us to persevere. We engage his power by prayer: let us pray to him to keep us, Ps. xvii. 5. 'Hold up my goings in thy path, that my footsteps slip not.' It was a good prayer of Beza, *Domine, quod cepisti perfice, ne in portu naufragium accidat*: "Lord, perfect what thou hast begun in me, that I may not suffer shipwreck when I am almost at the haven."

Seventhly, If persevere, set often before your eyes the noble examples of those who have persevered in religion; *Quod martyres, quod fideles in caelis, jam, triumphant?* What a glorious army of saints and martyrs have gone before us; how constant to the death was St. Paul? Acts xxi. 13. How persevering in the faith were Ignatius, Polycarp, Athanasius? These were stars in their orb, pillars in the temple of God. Let us look on their zeal and courage, and be animated, Heb. xii. 1. 'Seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us run with patience the race that is set before us.' The crown is set at the end of the race; if we win the race, we shall wear the crown.