

are sent to when they die. Let all this prevail with us to hallow and sanctify God's name.

Qu. *What may we do to honour and sanctify God's name?*

Ans. Let us get, (1.) A sound knowledge of God, (2.) A sincere love to God :

1. A sound knowledge of God, take a view of his superlative excellencies ; his holiness, his incomprehensible goodness. The angels know God better than we, therefore they sanctify his name, and sing hallelujahs to him. And let us labour to know him to be our God, Psal. xlviii. 14. ' This God is our God : ' we may dread God as a judge, but we cannot honour him as a father, till we know he is our God.

2. Get a sincere love to God : A love of appreciation, and a love of complacency to delight in him, John xxi. 15. ' Lord, thou knowest I love thee.' He can never honour his master who doth not love him. The reason God's name is not more hallowed, is because his name is not more loved. So much for the first petition.

OF THE SECOND PETITION IN THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATTH. vi. 10. *Thy Kingdom come.*

A SOUL truly devoted to God, joins heartily in this petition, *adveniat regnum tuum*, ' Thy kingdom come : ' In which words this great truth is implied, that God is a King ; he who hath a kingdom, can be no less than a king, Psalm xlvii. 7. ' God is King of all the earth.' And he is a King upon his throne. Psalm xlvii. 8. ' God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.' (1.) He hath a regal title, High and Mighty, Isaiah lvii. 15. ' Thus saith the High and Lofty One.' (2.) He hath the ensigns of royalty : his sword, Deut. xxxii. 41. ' If I whet my glittering sword.' He hath his sceptre, Heb. i. 8. ' A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.' (3.) He hath his crown royal, Rev. xix. 12. ' On his head were many crowns.' He hath his *jura regalia*, his kingly prerogatives ; he hath power to make laws, to seal pardons, which are the flowers and jewels belonging to his crown. Thus the Lord is king.

And, *edly*, He is a great King, Psalm xcv. 3. ' A great King above all gods.' He is great in and of himself : and not like other kings, who are made great by their subjects. That he is so great a king, appears, (1.) By the immenseness of his being ; Jer. xxiii. 24. ' Do not I fill heaven and earth ? saith

the Lord.' His centre is every where; he is no where included, yet no where excluded; he is so immensely great, that 'the heaven of heavens cannot contain him,' 1 Kings viii. 27. (2.) His greatness appears by the effects of his power, 'He made heaven and earth,' Psalm cxxiv. 8. and can unmake it. 'God can with a breath crumble us to dust: with a word he can unpin the world, and break the axle-tree of it in pieces; he pours contempt upon the mighty,' Job xii. 21. 'He cuts off the spirit of princes,' Psalm lxxvi. 11. He is Lord Paramount, 'who doth whatever he will,' Psalm cxv. 12. 'He weigheth the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance,' Isa. xl. 12.

3dly, God is a glorious King? Psalm xxiv. 20. 'Who is this King of glory? The Lord of Hosts, he is the King of glory.' He hath internal glory, Psalm xciii. 1. 'The Lord reigneth, he is clothed with majesty.' Other kings have royal and sumptuous apparel, to make them appear glorious to the beholders, but all their magnificence is borrowed; but God is clothed with majesty, his own glorious essence is instead of royal robes, and 'he hath girded himself with strength.' Kings have their guard about them to defend their persons, because they are not able to defend themselves; but God needs no guard or assistance from others: 'He hath girded himself with strength.' His own power is his life-guard, Psalm lxxxix. 6. 'Who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord?' God hath a pre-eminence above all other kings for majesty, Rev. xix. 16. 'He hath on his vesture a name written, *Rex Regum*, KING OF KINGS.' He hath the highest throne, the richest crown, the largest dominions, and the longest possession, Psalm xxix. 10. 'The Lord sitteth King for ever.' Though God hath many heirs, yet no successors. He sets up his throne where no other king doth; he rules the will and affections, his power binds the conscience: angels serve him, all the kings of the earth hold their crowns and diadems by immediate tenure from this great King, Prov. viii. 15. 'By me kings reign;' and to this Lord Jehovah all kings must give account, and from God's tribunal there is no appeal.

Use I. Branch 1. If God be so great a King and sits King for ever, then it is no disparagement for us to serve him; *Deo servire est regnare*: it is an honour to serve a king. If the angels fly swiftly upon the King of heaven's message, Dan. ix. 21. then well may we look upon it as a favour to be taken into his royal service. Theodosius thought it a greater honour to be God's servant, than to be an emperor. It is more honour to serve God, than to have kings serve us. Every subject of this king is crowned with regal honour, Rev. i. 6. 'Who hath made us kings.' Therefore as the queen of Sheba, having seen

the glory of Solomon's kingdom, said, 'Happy are these thy servants which stand continually before thee,' 1 Kings x. 8. So, happy are those saints who stand before the King of heaven, and wait on his throne.

Branch 2. If God be such a glorious King, crowned with wisdom, armed with power, bespangled with riches, then it shews us what prudence it is to have this King to be ours: to say, as Ps. v. 2. 'My King, and my God.' It is counted great policy to be on the strongest side; if we belong to the King of heaven, we are sure to be on the strongest side: the King of glory can with ease destroy his adversaries: he can pull down their pride, befoul their policy, restrain their malice. That stone cut out of the mountains without hands, which smote the image, Dan. ii. 34. was an emblem (saith Austin) of Christ's monarchical power conquering and triumphing over his enemies. If we are on God's side, we are on the strongest side; he can with a word destroy his enemies, Ps. ii. 5. 'Then shall he speak to them in his wrath.' Nay, he can with a look destroy them, Job xl. 12. 'Look upon every one that is proud, and bring him low.' It needs cost God no more to confound those who rise up against him, than a look, a cast of his eye, Exod. xiv. 24. 'In the morning-watch the Lord looked to the host of the Egyptians, thro' the pillar of fire, and troubled their host, and took off their chariot wheels.' What wisdom is it then to have this King to be ours? Then we are on the strongest side.

Use 2. Of Exhortation.

Branch 1. If God be so glorious a King, full of power and majesty, let us trust in him, Psalm ix. 10. 'They that know thy name will put their trust in thee.' Trust him with your soul; you cannot put this jewel in safer hands. And trust him with church and state affairs: he is King, Exod. xvi. 5. 'The Lord is a man of war.' He can make bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations. If means fail, he is never at a loss; there are no impossibilities with him; he can make the dry bones live, Ezek. xxxvii. 10. As a king he can command, and as a king he can create salvation, Isaiah lxxv. 18. 'I create Jerusalem a rejoicing.' Let us trust all our affairs with this great King. Either God can remove mountains or he can leap over them. Canticles ii. 8.

Branch 2. If God be so great a King, let us fear him, Jer. v. 22. 'Fear ye not me: saith the Lord: will ye not tremble at my presence?' We have enough of fear of men. Fear makes danger appear greater, and sin less; but let us fear the King of kings, who hath power to cast body and soul into hell, Luke xii. 5. As one wedge drives out another, so the fear of God would drive out all base carnal fear. Let us fear that God, whose throne is set above all kings; they may be mighty, but he is

almighty. Kings have no power, but what God hath given them; their power is limited, his is infinite. Let us fear this King, whose eyes 'are as lamps of fire,' Rev. i. 14. 'The mountains quake at him; and the rocks are thrown down by him;' Nahum i. 6. If he stamps with his foot, all the creatures are presently up in a battalia to fight for him. O tremble and fear before this God: fear is *janitor animæ*, it is the door-keeper of the soul. It keeps sin from entering, Gen. xxxix. 9. 'How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?'

Branch 3. If God be so glorious a King, he hath *jus vitæ necis*, he hath the power of life and death in his hand. Let all the potentates of the earth take heed, how they employ their power against the King of heaven: they employ their power against God who with their sceptre beat down his truth, which is the most orient pearl of his crown; who crush and persecute his people, who are the apple of his eye, Zech. ii. 8. Who trample upon his laws and royal edicts, which he hath set forth, Psalm ii. 3. What is a king without his laws? Let all those that are invested with worldly power and grandeur, take heed how they oppose the King of glory: the Lord will be too hard for all that come against him, Job xl. 9. 'Hast thou an arm like God?' wilt thou measure arms with the Almighty? Shall a little child go to fight with an archangel? Ezek. xxii. 14. 'Can thy heart endure, or can thy hands be strong in the day that I shall deal with thee?' Christ will put all his enemies at last under his feet, Pf. cx. 1. All the multitude of the wicked, who set themselves against God shall be but as so many clusters of ripe grapes, to be cast into the wine-press of the wrath of God, and to be trodden by him till their blood come forth. The King of glory will come off victor at last: men may set up their standard, but God always sets up his trophies of victory. The Lord hath a golden sceptre, and an iron rod, Pf. ii. 9. Those who will not bow to the one, shall be broken by the other.

Branch 4. Is God so great a King, having all power in heaven and earth in his hand? Let us learn subjection to him. Such as have gone on in sin, and by their impieties hung out a flag of defiance against the King of heaven, oh come in quickly, and make your peace, submit to God, Pf. ii. 12. 'Kiss the Son, lest he be angry.' Kiss Christ with a kiss of love, and a kiss of obedience: obey the King of heaven, when he speaks to you by his ministers and ambassadors, 2 Cor. v. 20. When God bids you flee from sin, and espouse holiness, obey him; to obey is better than sacrifice. "To obey God (saith Luther) is better than to work miracles." Obey God willingly, Isa. i. 19. That is the best obedience, that is cheerful, &c; that is the sweetest honey which drops out of the comb: obey God swiftly, Zech. v. 9. 'I lift up mine eyes, and behold two women,

and the wind was in their wings.' Wings are swift, but wind in the wings denotes great swiftness; such should our obedience to God be. Obey the King of glory.

Uſe III. Comfort to thoſe who are the ſubjects of the King of heaven; God will put forth all the royal power for their ſuccour and comfort.

1. The King of heaven will plead their cauſe, Jer. li. 36. 'I will plead thy cauſe, and take vengeance for thee.'

2. He will protect his people: he ſets an inviſible guard about them, Zech. ii. 5. 'I will be a wall of fire to her round about.' A wall, that is deſenſive; a wall of fire, that is offenſive.

3. When it may be for the good of his people, he will raiſe up deliverance to them, 1 Chron. xi. 4. 'The Lord ſaved them by a great deliverance.' God reigning as a King, can ſave any way: by contemptible means, the blowing of trumpets, and blazing of lamps, Judges vii. 20. By contrary means, he made the ſea a wall to Iſrael, and the waters were a means to keep them from drowning. The fiſh's belly was a ſhip in which Jonah failed ſafe to ſhore. God will never want ways of ſaving his people; rather than fail, the very enemies ſhall do his work, 2 Chron. xx. 23. He ſet Ammon and Mount Seir one againſt another. And as God will deliver his people from temporal danger, ſo from ſpiritual, from ſin, and from hell; 'Jeſus hath delivered us from the wrath to come,' 1 Theſſ. i. 10.

Uſe IV. Terror to the enemies of the church. If God be King, he will ſet his utmoſt ſtrength againſt them who are the enemies of his kingdom, Pf. xcvi. 3. 'A fire goeth before him and burneth up his enemies round about.'

1. He will ſet himſelf againſt his enemies; he will ſet his attributes againſt them, his power and juſtice; and, 'Who knows the power of his anger?' Pf. xc. 11.

2. God will ſet his creatures againſt them, Judges v. 20. The ſtars in their courſes fought againſt Sifer. Tertullian obſerves, that, the Perſians fighting againſt the Chriſtians, a mighty wind aroſe, which did make the Perſians' arrows to fly back in their own faces. Every creature hath a quarrel with a ſinner: the ſtone out of the wall, Hab. ii. 11. The hail and the froſt, Pf. lxxviii. 47. 'He deſtroyed their vines with hail, and their ſycamore-trees with froſt.'

3. God will ſet men againſt themſelves. 1. He will ſet conſcience againſt them: and how terrible is this rod when turned into a ſerpent! Melancthon calls it *Erynnis conſcientia*, a heliſh fury; it is called *vermis conſcientia*, the worm of conſcience. Mark ix. 44. What a worm did Spira feel in his conſcience? He was a terror to himſelf: the worſt civil wars are between a man and his conſcience. 2. God will ſet the diſeaſes of men's

bodies against them, 2 Chron. xxi. 18. 'The Lord smote Jehoram in his bowels, with an incurable disease.' God can raise an army against a man, out of his own bowels : he can set one humour of the body against another : the heat to dry up the moisture, and the moisture to drown the heat : the Lord needs not go far for instruments to punish the sinner ; he can make the joints of the same body to smite one against another, as Dan. v. 6. 3. God will set men's friends against them ; where they used to have honey, they shall have nothing but aloes and wormwood. 'When a man's ways please the Lord, he shall make his enemies to be his friends,' Prov. xvi. 7. But when he opposeth God, he maketh his friends to be his enemies. Commodus the emperor, his own wife gave him poison in perfumed wine. Sennacherib's two sons were the death of him, 2 Kings xix. 37. 4. God will set Satan against him, Ps. cix. 6. 'Let Satan stand at his right hand.' What doth Satan at the sinners elbows ? 1. He helps him to contrive sin. 2. He tempts him to commit sin. 3. He terrifies him for sin. He that hath Satan thus standing at his right hand, is sure to be set at God's left hand. Here is the misery of such as oppose God's royal sceptre, he will set every thing in the world against them : if there be either justice in heaven, or fire in hell, sinners shall not be unpunished.

Use last, If God be such an absolute monarch, and crowned with such glory and majesty, let us all engage in his service, and stand up for his truth and worship ; dare to own God in the worst time : he is King of kings, and is able to reward all his servants : we may be losers for him, we shall never be losers by him. We are ready to say, as Amaziah, 2 Chron. xxv. 9. 'What shall I do for the hundred talents ?' If I appear for God, I may lose my estate, my life : I say with the prophet, God is able to give you much more than this ; he can give you, for the present, inward peace, and for the future a crown of glory which fades not away.

Qu. What kingdom doth Christ mean here ?

Ans. Negat. 1. He doth not mean a political or earthly kingdom. The apostles indeed did desire, 1. Christ's temporal reign, Acts i. 6. 'When wilt thou restore the kingdom to Israel ?' but Christ said, his kingdom was not of this world, John xviii. 36. So that, when Christ taught his disciples to pray, 'thy kingdom come,' He did not mean it of an earthly kingdom, that he should reign here in outward pomp and splendor. It is not meant of God's providential kingdom, Ps. ciii. 19. 'His kingdom ruleth over all ;' that is, the kingdom of his providence. This kingdom we do not pray for, when we say, 'thy kingdom come ;' for this kingdom is already come ; God exerciseth the kingdom of his providence in the world,

Pf. lxxv. 7. 'He putteth down one and setteth up another.' Nothing stirs in the world but God hath an hand in it : he sets every wheel a-working : he humbles the proud, and raiseth the poor out of the dust, to set them among princes, 1 Sam. ii. 8. The kingdom of God's providence ruleth over all ; kings do nothing but what his providence permits and orders, Acts iv. 27. This kingdom of God's providence we do, What kingdom then is meant here, when we say, 'Thy kingdom come?' *Ans.* Positively. There is a twofold kingdom meant here. 1. The kingdom of grace, which kingdom God exerciseth in the consciences of his people : this is *regnum Dei* MIKRON. God's lesser kingdom. Luke v. 3. When we pray, 'Thy kingdom come.' 1. Here is something tacitly implied, that we are in the kingdom of darkness. 1. We pray that we may be brought out of the kingdom of darkness. 2. That the devil's kingdom in the world may be demolished. 2. Something positively intended, *adveniat regnum gratiae et gloriae*. 1. We pray, that the kingdom of grace may be set up in our hearts and increased. 2. When we pray 'Thy kingdom come ;' we pray, that the kingdom of glory may hasten, and that we may in God's good time be translated into it. These two kingdoms of grace and glory, differ not specifically, but gradually ; they differ not in nature, but only in degree. The kingdom of grace is nothing but the inchoation or beginning of the kingdom of glory : the kingdom of grace is glory in the seed, and the kingdom of glory is grace in the flower : the kingdom of grace is glory in the day-break, and the kingdom of glory is grace in the full meridian ; the kingdom of grace is glory militant, and the kingdom of glory is grace triumphant. There is such an inseparable connection between these two kingdoms, grace and glory, that there is no passing into the one kingdom but by the other. At Athens there were two temples, a temple of virtue and a temple of honour ; and there was no going into the temple of honour, but through the temple of virtue : so the kingdoms of grace and glory are so close joined together, that we cannot go into the kingdom of glory, but through the kingdom of grace. Many people aspire after the kingdom of glory, but never look after grace ; but these two, which God hath joined together, may not be put asunder : the kingdom of grace leads to the kingdom of glory.

1. I begin with the first thing implied in this petition, 'Thy kingdom come : ' it is implied, that we are in the kingdom of darkness ; and we pray, that we may be brought out of the kingdom of darkness : the state of nature is a kingdom of darkness : it is a kingdom ; sin is said to reign, Rom. vi. 12. And it is a kingdom of darkness : it is called the power of darkness, Col. i. 16. Man, before the fall, was illuminated with perfect

knowledge, but this light is now eclipsed, and he is fallen into the kingdom of darkness,

Qu. How many ways is a natural man in the kingdom of darkness?

Ans. 1. He is under the darkness of ignorance, Eph. iv. 18. 'Having the understanding darkened.' Ignorance is a black veil drawn over the mind: men by nature may have a deep reach in the things of the world, but ignorant in the things of God. Nahath the Ammonite would make a covenant with Israel to thrust out their right eyes, 1 Sam. xi. 2. Since the fall, our left hand remains, a deep insight into worldly matters; but our right eye is thrust out, we have no saving knowledge of God; something we know by nature, 'but nothing as we ought to know,' 1 Cor. viii. 2. Ignorance draws the curtains round about the soul, 1 Cor. ii. 14.

2. A natural man is under the darkness of pollution: hence sinful actions are called 'works of darkness,' Rom. xiii. 12. Pride and lust darken the glory of the soul; a sinner's heart is a dark conclave, it looks blacker than hell.

3. A natural man is under the darkness of misery: he is exposed to divine vengeance; and the sadness of this darkness, is, that men are not sensible of it; they are blind, yet they think they see; the darkness of Egypt was such thick darkness as 'might be felt,' Exod. x. 21. Men are by nature in thick darkness, but here is the misery: the darkness cannot be felt; they will not believe they are in the dark, til they are past recovery.

Use I. See what the state of nature is, 'it is a kingdom of darkness,' and it is a bewitching darkness, John iii. 17. 'Men loved darkness rather than light.' As the Atlantes in Ethiopia curse the sun. Such as are still in the kingdom of darkness, tremble to think of this condition: 'this darkness of sin leads to the chains of darkness.' Jude 6. What comfort can such take in earthly things? The Egyptians might have food, gold, silver; but they could take but little comfort in them, while they were in such darkness as might be felt: so the natural man may have riches and friends to delight in, yet he is in the kingdom of darkness, and how dead are all these comforts? Thou, who art in the kingdom of darkness, knowest not whither thou goest. As the ox is driven to the threshing, but he knows not whither he goes, so the devil is driving thee before him to hell, but thou knowest not whither thou goest. Shouldest thou die in thy natural estate, while thou art in the kingdom of darkness, blackness of darkness is reserved for thee, Jude 13. 'To whom is reserved blackness of darkness for ever.'

Use II. Let us pray that God will bring us out of this kingdom of darkness. God's kingdom of grace cannot come into

our hearts, till first we are brought out of the kingdom of darkness, 1 Coloss. i. 13. Why should not we strive to get out of this kingdom of darkness? Who would desire to stay in a dark dungeon? O fear the chains of darkness, Jude 6. These chains are God's power, binding men as in chains under wrath for ever. O pray that God will deliver us out of the kingdom of darkness. 1. Be sensible of thy dark damned estate, that thou hast not one spark of fire to give thee light. 2. Go to Christ to enlighten thee, Ephes. v. 14. 'Christ shall give thee light:' he will not only bring thy light to thee, but open thine eyes to see it. That is the first thing implied, 'thy kingdom come;' we pray that we may be brought out of the kingdom of darkness.

The second thing implied in 'thy kingdom come,' we do implicitly pray against the devil's kingdom, we pray that Satan's kingdom may be demolished in the world. Satan's kingdom stands in opposition to Christ's kingdom; and when we pray, 'Thy kingdom come,' we pray against Satan's kingdom. Satan hath a kingdom; he got his kingdom by conquest; he conquered mankind in paradise. He hath his throne, Rev. ii. 13. 'Thou dwellest where Satan's throne is.' And his throne is set up in the hearts of men; he doth not care for their purses but their hearts, Ephes. ii. 2. Satan is served upon the knee, Rev. xiii. 4. 'They worship the dragon,' that is, the devil. Satan's empire is very large; the most kingdoms in the world pay tribute to him. Satan's kingdom hath two qualifications or characters.

(1.) It is *regnum nequitiae*, a kingdom of impiety.

(2.) It is *regnum servitutis*, a kingdom of slavery. 1. The kingdom of Satan is a kingdom of impiety: nothing but sin goes on in his kingdom, murder and heresy, lust and treachery, oppression and division are the constant trade driven in Satan's kingdom: Satan is called the unclean spirit, Luke xi. 24. What else is propagated in his kingdom, but a mystery of iniquity?

2. Satan's kingdom is a kingdom of slavery: Satan makes all his subjects slaves! *Peccati reus dura daemonis tyrannide tenetur*, Muis. Satan is an usurper and a tyrant; he is a worse tyrant than any other. 1. Other tyrants do but rule over the body, but Satan's kingdom rules over the soul; Satan rides some men as we do horses. 2. Other tyrants have some pity on their slaves: though they make them work in the galleys, yet they give them meat, and let them have their hours for rest; but Satan is a merciless tyrant, he gives his slaves poison instead of meat, he gives them hurtful lusts to feed on, 1 Tim. vi. 9. nor will he let his slaves have any rest, he hires them out in doing his drudgery, Jer. ix. 5. 'They weary themselves to commit iniquity.' When the devil had entered into Judas, he sends

him to the high priests, and from thence to the garden, and never let him rest till he had betrayed Christ, and hanged himself. Thus Satan is the worst tyrant; when men have served him to their utmost strength, he will welcome them to hell with fire and brimstone.

U/e. Let us pray that Satan's kingdom set up in the world may be thrown down. It is sad to think, that though the devil's kingdom be so bad, yet that it should have so many to support it. Satan hath more to stand up for his kingdom, than Christ hath for his. What a large harvest of souls hath Satan? And God only a few gleanings. The Pope and the Turk give their power to Satan. If in God's visible church the devil hath so many loyal subjects, that serve him with their lives and souls, then how do his subjects swarm in places of idolatry and paganism, where there is none to oppose him, but all vote on the devil's side? Men are willingly slaves to Satan; they will fight and die for him: therefore Satan is not only called the 'prince of this world,' John xix. 30. but the 'god of this world,' 2 Cor. iv. 4. to shew what power Satan hath over men's souls. O let us pray, that God will break the sceptre of the devil's kingdom, that Michael may destroy the dragon, that by the help of a religious magistracy and ministry, the hellish kingdom of the prince of darkness may be beaten down. Satan's kingdom must be thrown down before Christ's kingdom can flourish in its power and majesty.

2. When we pray, 'Thy kingdom come:' here is something positively intended.

1. We pray that the kingdom of grace may be set up in our hearts, and increased.

2. That the kingdom of glory may hasten, and that we may, in God's due time, be translated into it.

I begin with the first, the kingdom of grace. When we pray, 'thy kingdom come,' we pray, 1. That the kingdom of grace may come into our hearts: This is *regnum Dei*, God's lesser kingdom, Rom. xiv. 17. 'The kingdom of God is righteousness,' Luke xvii. 21. 'The kingdom of God is within you.'

Qu. 1. *Why is grace called a kingdom?*

Ans. Because, when grace comes, there is a kingly government set up in the soul. Grace rules the will and affections, and brings the whole man in subjection to Christ: Grace doth king it in the soul; it sways the sceptre, it subdues mutinous lusts, and keeps the soul in a spiritual *decorum*.

Qu. 2. *Why is there such need that we should pray that this kingdom of grace may come into our hearts?*

Ans. 1. Because, till the kingdom of grace come, we have no right to the covenant of grace. The covenant of grace is sweet-

ened with love, bespangled with promises ; the covenant of grace is our *magna charta*, by virtue of which God passeth himself over to us to be our God : But who are heirs of the covenant of grace ? Only such as have the kingdom of grace in their hearts, Ezekiel xxvi. 26. ‘ A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you ;’ there is the kingdom of grace set up in the soul : then it follows, ver. 28. ‘ I will be your God.’ The covenant of grace is to an ungracious person a sealed fountain ; it is kept as a paradise with a flaming sword, that the sinner may not touch it ; without grace you have no more right to it than a farmer to the city-charter.

2. Unless the kingdom of grace be set up in our hearts, our purest offerings are defiled : they may be good as to the matter, but not as to the manner ; they want that which should meliorate and sweeten them. Under the law, if a man who was unclean by a dead body, did carry a piece of holy flesh in his shirt, the holy flesh could not cleanse him, but he polluted that, Hag. ii. 12. - Till the kingdom of grace be in our hearts, ordinances do not purify us, but we pollute them ; the prayer of an ungracious person becomes sin, Prov. xv. 8. In what a sad condition is a man before God’s kingdom of grace be set up in his heart ! whether he comes or comes not to the ordinance, he sins : if he doth not come to the ordinance, he is a contemner of it : if he doth come he is a polluter of it : a sinner’s works are *opera mortua*, dead works, Heb. i. 6. and those works which are dead cannot please God ; a dead flower hath no sweetness.

3. We had need pray that the kingdom of grace may come, because till this kingdom come into our hearts, we are loathsome in God’s eyes, Zech. xi. 8. ‘ My soul loathed them.’ *Quanta est fœditas vitiosæ mentis*, Tully. An heart void of grace looks blacker than hell ; sin transforms one into a devil, John vi. 70. ‘ Have not I chosen twelve, and one of you is a devil ?’ Envy is the devil’s eye, hypocrisy is his cloven foot : thus it is before the kingdom of grace come. So deformed is a graceless person, that when once he sees his own filth and leprosy, the first thing he doth is to loath himself, Ezek. xx. 43. ‘ Ye shall loath yourself in your own sight for all your evils.’ I have read of a woman, who always used flattering glasses ; by chance, seeing her face in a true glass, *in insaniam delapsa, est*, she ran mad. Such as now dress themselves by the flattering glass of presumption, when once God gives them a sight of their filthiness, they will abhor themselves : ‘ Ye shall loath yourselves in your own sight for all your evils.’

4. Before the kingdom of grace comes into us, we are spiritually illegitimate, of the bastard-brood of the old serpent, John viii. 44. To be illegitimate is the greatest infamy, Deut. xxiii. 2. ‘ A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord

to the tenth generation.' He was to be kept out of the holy assemblies of Israel as an infamous creature : a bastard, by the law, cannot inherit. Before the kingdom of grace come into the heart, a person is to God as one illegitimate, and so continuing, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.

5. Before the kingdom of grace be set up in men's hearts, the kingdom of Satan is set up in them : they are said to be under the power of Satan, Acts xxvi. 18. Satan commands the will : though he cannot force the will, he can, by his subtil temptations, draw it : The devil is said to take ' men captive at his will,' 2 Tim. ii. 26. The Greek word signifies, to take them alive, as the fowler doth the bird in the snare. The sinner's heart is the devil's mansion-house, Matth. xii. 44. ' I will go to my house.' It is *officina diaboli*, Satan's shop, where he works, Eph. ii. 2. ' The prince of the air now worketh in the children of disobedience.' The members of the body are the tools which Satan works with : Satan possesseth men. In Christ's time many had their bodies possessed, but it is far worse to have their souls possessed : one is possessed with an unclean devil, another with a revengeful devil. No wonder the ship goes full sail when the wind blows ; no wonder men go full sail in sin, when the devil, the prince of the air, blows them : Thus it is ; till the kingdom of grace come, men are under the power of Satan, who, like Draco, writes all his laws in blood.

6. Till the kingdom of grace comes, a man lies exposed to the wrath of God ; ' and who knows the power of his anger ?' Psalm xc. 11. If, when but a spark of God's wrath flies into a man's conscience in this life, it is so terrible, what then will it be, when God stirs up all his anger ? So inconceivably torturing is God's wrath, that the wicked call to the rocks and mountains to fall on them, and hide them from it, Rev. vi. 1. The hellish torments are compared to a fiery lake, Rev. xx. 15. Other fire is but painted in comparison of this : and this lake of fire burns for ever, Mark ix. 44. God's breath kindles this fire, Isaiah xxx. 22. And, where shall we find engines or buckets to quench it ? Time will not finish it ; tears will not quench it. To this fiery lake are men exposed, till the kingdom of grace be set up in them.

7. Till the kingdom of grace come, men cannot die with comfort ; only he who takes Christ in the arms of his faith, can look death in the face with joy. But it is sad to have the kingdom of terrors in the body, and not the kingdom of grace in the soul. It is a wonder every graceless person doth not die distracted : what will a grace-despiser do, when death comes to him with a writ of habeas corpus ? Hell follows death, Rev. vi. 8. ' Behold, a pale horse, and his name that sat on him was death, and hell followed him.' Thus you see what need we

have to pray that the kingdom of grace may come. He that dies without Christ, I may say as Christ, Matt. xxviii. 24. 'It had been good for that man, he had not been born.' Few do believe the necessity of having the kingdom of grace set up in their hearts, as appears by this, because they are so well content to live without it. Doth that man believe the necessity of a pardon, that is content to be without it? Most people, if they may have trading, and may sit quietly under their vine and fig-trees, they are in their kingdom, though they have not the kingdom of God within them. If the candle of prosperity shine upon their head, they care not whether the grace of God shine in their hearts: do these men believe the necessity of grace? Were they convinced how needful it were to have the kingdom of God within them, they would cry out as the Jailor, Acts xvi. 3. 'What shall I do to be saved?'

Qⁿ. 3. *How may we know that the kingdom of grace is set up in our hearts?*

Ans. It concerns us to examine this; our salvation depends upon it; and we had need be curious in the search, because there is something looks like grace, which is not, Gal. vi. 3. 'If a man thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.' Many think they have the kingdom of grace come into their heart, and it is only a chimera, a golden dream. *Quam multi cum vana spe descendat ad infera!* Aug. Zeuxis did paint grapes so lively, that he deceived the living birds. There are many deceits about grace.

Deceit 1. Men think they have the kingdom of grace in their hearts, because they have the means of grace; they live where the silver trumpet of the gospel sounds, they are lift up to heaven with ordinances, Judges xvii. 13. 'I have a Levite to my priest,' sure I shall go to heaven. The Jews cried, Jer. viii. 4. 'The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord;' we are apt to glory in this, the oracles of God are committed to us, we have word and sacrament. Alas! this is a fallacy; we may have the means of grace, yet the kingdom of grace may not be set up in our hearts; we may have the kingdom of God come nigh us, Luke xi. 20. but not into us; the sound of the word in our ears, but not the favour of it in our hearts. Many of the Jews, who had Christ for their preacher, were never the better: hot clothes will not put warmth into a dead man. Thou mayest have hot clothes, warm and lively preaching, yet be spiritually dead, Mat. vii. 12. 'The children of the kingdom shall be cast out.'

Deceit 2. Men think they have the kingdom of grace set up in their hearts, because they have some common works of the spirit.

(1.) They have great enlightenings of mind, profound know-

ledge, and almost speak like angels dropped from heaven : but the apostle supposeth a case, that after men have been enlightened they may fall away, Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6.

Qu. But wherein doth this illumination come short ?

Ans. The illumination of hypocrites is not virtual, it doth not leave an impression of holiness behind ; it is like weak physic, that will not work. The mind is enlightened, but the heart is not renewed. A Christian that is all head, but no feet, he doth not walk in the ways of God.

(2.) Men have had convictions and stirrings of conscience for sin, they have seen the evil of their ways, therefore now they hope the kingdom of grace is come ; but, I say, convictions, though they are a step towards grace, yet they are not grace. Had not Pharaoh and Judas convictions ? Exod. x. 16.

Qu. What makes convictions prove abortive ? Wherein is the defect ?

Ans. 1. They are not deep enough : a sinner never saw himself lost without Christ : the seed that wanted depth of earth withered, Mat. xiii. 5. These convictions are like blossoms blown off before they come to maturity. 2. These convictions are involuntary ; the sinner doth what he can to stifle these convictions ; he drowns them in wine and mirth ; he labours to get rid of them : as the deer, when it is shot runs and shakes out the arrow, so doth he the arrow of conviction : or as the prisoner that files off his fetters, and breaks loose ; so a man breaks loose from his convictions. His corruptions are stronger than his convictions.

(3.) Men have had some kind of humiliation, and have shed tears for their sins, therefore now they hope the kingdom of grace is come into their hearts. But this is no infallible sign of grace ; Saul wept, Ahab humbled himself.

Qu. Why is not humiliation grace ? Wherein doth it come short ?

Ans. 1. Tears in the wicked do not spring from love to God, but are forced by affliction, Gen. iv. 13. as water that drops from the still is forced by the fire. The tears of sinners are forced by God's fiery judgments. 2. They are deceitful tears *lachrymæ mentiri doctæ* ; men weep, yet go on in sin ; they do not drown their sins in their tears.

(4) Men have begun some reformation, therefore sure now the kingdom of grace is come ; but there may be deceit in this ; 1. A man may leave his oaths and drunkenness, yet still be in love with sin ; he may leave his sin out of fear of hell, or because it brings shame and penury, but still his heart goes after it, Hos. iv. 8. ' They set their hearts on their iniquity ; ' as Lot's wife left Sodom, but still her heart was in Sodom. Hypocrites are like the snake which casts her coat, but keeps her poison :

they keep the love of sin, as one that hath been long suitor to another; though his friends break off the match, yet still he hath a hankering love to her. 2. It may be a partial reformation; he may leave off one sin, and live in another; he may refrain drunkenness, and live in covetousness; he may refrain swearing, and live in the sin of flandering; one devil may be cast out, and another as bad may come in his room. 3. A man may forsake gross sins, but have no reluctancy against heart-sins: *motus primo primi*, proud, lustful thoughts; though he damns up the stream, he lets alone the fountain. O therefore if there be so many deceits, and men may think the kingdom of grace is come into our hearts, when it is not, how curious and critical had we need be in our search, whether we have the kingdom of grace really come into our hearts? If a man be deceived in the title of his land, it is but the loss of his estate; but if be deceived about his grace, it is the loss of his soul. I should now come to answer this question, how may we know that the kingdom of grace is set up in our hearts?

Qu. *How may we know the kingdom of grace is set up in us?*

Ans. 1. In general, by having a metamorphosis or change wrought in the soul; this is called the 'new creature,' 2 Cor. v. 17. The faculties are not new, but there is a new nature; as the strings of a lute are the same, but the tune is altered. When the kingdom of grace is set up, there is light in the mind, order in the affections, pliability of the will, tenderness in the conscience; such as can find no change of heart, they are the same as they were; as vain, as earthly, as unclean as ever; there is no sign of God's kingdom of grace in them.

2. More particularly we may know the kingdom of grace is set up in our hearts, 1. By having unfeigned desires after God; this is the smoking flax Christ will not quench. A true desire of grace, is grace; by the beating of this pulse, conclude there is life, Neh. i. 11. 'O Lord let thy ear be attentive to the prayers of thy servants who desire to fear thy name.' But may not an hypocrite have good desires? Num. xxiii. 10. 'Let me die the death of the righteous.' Therefore, I say, unfeigned desires evidence the kingdom of God within a man.

Qu. *But how may these unfeigned desires be known?*

Ans. 1. An unfeigned desire is ingenuous; we desire God *propter se*, for himself, for his intrinsical excellencies, and the orieny of his beauty which shines; the favour of Christ's ointments (*i. e.*) his graces, draw the virgin's desires after him. Cant. i. 3. A true saint desires Christ not only for what he hath, but for what he is; not only for his rewards, but for his holiness. No hypocrite can thus desire God; he may desire him for his jewels, but not for his beauty.

2. An unfeigned desire is unsatiable, it cannot be satisfied without God : let the world heap her honours and riches, they will not satisfy. Not flowers or music will content him who is thirsty ; nothing will quench the soul's thirst but the blood of Christ ; he faints away, his heart breaks with longing for God, Psal. lxxxiv. 2. and cxix. 20.

3. An unfeigned desire is active, it flourisheth into endeavour, Isa. xxvi. 9. ' With my soul have I desired thee, yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early.' A soul that desires aright faith, Christ I must have, grace I must have, I will have heaven, though I take it by storm ; he who desires water, will let down the bucket into the well to draw it up.

4. An unfeigned desire is superlative : we desire Christ, not only more than the world, but more than heaven, Pl. lxxiii. 25. ' Whom have I in heaven but thee ?' Heaven itself would not satisfy without Christ ; Christ is the diamond in the ring of glory ; if God should say to the soul I will put thee into heaven, but I will hide my face from thee, I will draw a curtain between, that thou shalt not behold my glory ; the soul would not be satisfied, but say as Absalom, 2 Sam. xiv. 32. ' Now therefore let me see the king's face.'

5. An unfeigned desire is gradual : it increaseth as the sun in the horizon ; a little of God will not satisfy, but the pious soul desireth still more ; a drop of water is not enough for the thirsty traveller. Though a Christian is thankful for the least degree of grace, yet he is not satisfied with the greatest ; still he thirsts for more of Christ, and his Spirit. Desire is an holy drowsy : a saint would have more knowledge, more sanctity, more of Christ's presence. A glimpse of Christ through the lattice of an ordinance is sweet ; and now the soul will never leave longing till it sees him face to face. He desires to have grace perfected in glory. *Dulcissimo Deo totas immergi cupit et inviscerari* ; we would be swallowed up in God, and be ever bathing ourselves in those perfumed waters of pleasure, which run at his right-hand for ever. Sure this unfeigned desire after God is a blessed sign that the kingdom of grace is come into our hearts, the beating of this pulse shews life, *Est a Deo ut bene velimus*, Aug. If iron move upwards contrary to its nature it is a sign some loadstone hath been there drawing it ; if the soul move towards God in an unfeigned desire, it is a sign the loadstone of the Spirit hath been drawing it. We may know the kingdom of grace is come into our hearts, by having the princely grace of faith. *Fides est sanctissima humani pectoris, Gemma*.—Faith cuts us off from the wild olive of nature ; and ingrafts us into Christ ; faith is the vital artery of the soul, Heb. x. 38. ' The just shall live by faith.' Faith makes an holy adventure on Christ's merits ; when this faith, as a prince-

ly grace reigns in the soul, now the kingdom of God is come unto us. The Hebrew word for faith comes from a *radix*, which signifies a nourish; faith nourisheth the soul, and is the nurse of all the graces. But, who will not say he is a believer? Simon Magus believed, Acts viii. 13. Yet was in the gall of bitterness. The hypocrite can put on faith's mantle. As the Devil did Samuel's. How shall we know therefore that our faith is sound, that it is the faith of the operation of God, Col. ii. 12. And so that the kingdom of God is within us?

Ans. 1. True faith is wrought by the ministry of the word, Rom. x. 17. 'Faith comes by hearing.' Peter let down the net of his ministry, and at one draught caught three thousand souls. Let us examine how was our faith wrought? Did God in the ministry of the word humble us? Did he break up the fallow ground of our heart, and then cast in the seed of faith? A good sign, but, if you know not how you came by your faith, suspect yourselves: as we suspect men to have stolen goods, when they know not how they came by them.

2. True faith is at first minute and small, like a grain of mustard seed; it is full of doubts and fears, it is smoking flax; it smoaks with desire, but doth not flame with comfort; it is so small that a Christian can hardly discern whether he hath faith or not.

3. True faith is long in working, *non fit instanti*—it costs many searchings of heart, many prayers and tears; there is a spiritual combat: the soul suffers many sore pangs of humiliation before the child of faith be born. They whose faith is *per saltum*, they leap out of sin into a confidence that Christ is theirs: I say, as Isaac concerning his son's venison, Gen. xxvii. 20. 'How is it that thou hast found it so quickly?' How is it that thou comest by thy faith so soon? The seed in the parable which sprung up suddenly withered, Mark iv. 5. *Solent praeococa synito stacessere.*

4. True faith is joined with sanctity; as a little bezoar is strong in operation, and a little musk sweetens; so a little faith purifies, 1 Tim. iii. 9. 'Holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience.' Faith, though it doth but touch Christ, fetcheth an healing virtue from him. Justifying faith doth that, in a spiritual sense, which miraculous faith doth; it removes the mountains of sin, and casts them into the sea of Christ's blood.

5. True faith will trust God with a pawn. 'Tho' a Christian cut short in provisions, the fig-tree doth not blossom, yet he will trust in God: *Fides famem non formidat*.—Faith fears not famine. God hath given us his promise as his bond, Pl. xxxvii. 3. 'Verily thou shalt be fed.' Faith puts this bond in fait: God will rather work a miracle, than his promise shall fail. He hath cause to suspect his faith, who faith, he trusts God for the

greater, but dares not trust him for the lesser ; he trusts God for salvation, but dares not trust him for a livelihood.

6. True faith is prolific, it brings forth fruit ; faith hath Rachel's beauty, and Leah's fruitfulness. *Fides pinguescit operibus*, Luther. Faith is full of good works. Faith believes as if it did not work, and it works as if it did not believe ; faith is the spouse-like grace which marries Christ, and good works are the children which faith bears. By having such a faith, we may know the kingdom of God is within us ; grace is certainly in our hearts.

3. We may know the kingdom of grace is come into our hearts, by having the noble grace of love : faith and love are the two poles on which all religion turns, Cant. i. 4. ' The upright love thee.' True love is to love God out of choice : love turns the soul into a seraphim ; it makes it burn in a flame of affection : love is the truest touchstone of sincerity : love is the queen of the graces, it commands the whole soul, 2 Cor. v. 4. If our love to God be genuine and real, we let him have the supremacy ; we set him in the highest room of our soul ; we give him the purest of our love, Cant. viii. 2. ' I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine, of the juice of the pomegranate.' If the spouse had any thing better than another, a cup more juicy and spiced, Christ should drink of that : we give the creature the milk of our love, but God the cream. In short, if we love God aright, we love his laws ; we love his picture drawn in the saints, by the pencil of the Holy Ghost ; we love his presence in his ordinances. Sledian faith, That the protestants in France had a church, which they called Paradise ; as if they thought themselves in paradise, while they had God's presence in his sanctuary. The soul that loves God, loves his appearing, 2 Tim. iv. 8. It will be a glorious appearing to the saints, when their union with Christ shall be complete, then their joy shall be full. The bride longs for the marriage-day : ' the Spirit and the bride say come : even so come, Lord Jesus,' Rev. xxii. 17. By this sacred love we may know the kingdom of God is within us.

4. We may know the kingdom of grace is come into our hearts by spiritualizing the duties of religion, 1 Pet. ii. 5. ' Ye are an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices.' Spiritualizing duty consists in three things.

1. Fixedness of mind.
2. Fervency of devotion.
3. Uprightness of aim.

1. Fixedness of mind : Then we spiritualize duty, when our minds are fixed on God, 1 Cor. vii. 35. ' That you may attend on the Lord without distraction.' Tho' impertinent thoughts sometimes come into the heart in duty, yet they are not allow-

ed, Psal. cxix. 13. they come as unwelcome guests, which are no sooner spied, but they are turned out.

2. Fervency of devotion, Rom. xii. 11. 'Fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.' It is a metaphor alludes to water that seethes and boils over; so the affections boil over, the eyes melt in tears, the heart flows in holy ejaculations.—We not only bring our offering to God, but our hearts.

3. Uprightness of aim. A heart that is upright hath three ends in duty: 1. That he may grow more like God: As Moses on the mount had some of God's glory reflected on him, 'his face shined.' 2. That he may have more communion with God, 1 John i. 6. 'our fellowship is with the Father.' 3. That he may bring more glory to God, 1 Pet. iv. 11. Phil. i. 20. 'That Christ may be magnified.' Sincerity aims at God in all; though we shoot short, yet we take a right aim: this is a sure evidence of grace, the spiritualizing duty. The spirits of wine are best, so is the spiritual part of duty. A little spiritualness in duty is better than all the gildings of the temple, or outward pompous worship, which doth so dazzle carnal eyes.

+ 5. We may know the kingdom of grace is come into us, by our antipathy and opposition against every known sin, Psal. cxix. 104. 'I hate every false way.' Hatred is [*Gr. prosta gene*, Arist] against the whole kind: hatred is implacable: anger may be reconciled, hatred cannot. A gracious soul not only forsakes sin (as a man forsakes his country never to return to it more) but hates sin; as there is an antipathy between the crocodile and the scorpion. If the kingdom of God be within us, we not only hate sin for hell, but we hate it as hell, as being contrary to God's holiness and our happiness.

1 6. We may know the kingdom of grace is come into us, when we have given up ourselves to God by obedience: as a servant gives up himself to his master, as a wife gives up herself to her husband, so we give up ourselves to God by obedience: and this obedience is, 1. Free; as that is the sweetest honey which drops from the comb. 2. Uniform; we obey God in one thing as well as another, Psal. cxix. 6. 'Then shall I not be ashamed;' or, as it is in the Hebrew, I shall not blush when I have respect to all thy commandments. A good Christian is like a pair of compasses, one foot of the compass stands upon the centre, and the other foot of it goes round the circle; so a Christian by faith stands on God the centre, and by obedience goes round the circle of God's commandments: a sign the kingdom of grace is not come into the heart, when it doth not reign there by universal obedience. Hypocrites would have Christ to be their saviour; but they pluck the government from his shoulders, they will not have him rule; but he who hath the kingdom of God within him, submits cheerfully to every com-

mand of God: He will do what God will have him do; he will be what God will have him be: he puts a blank paper into God's hand, and saith, "Lord, write what thou wilt, I will subscribe." Blessed is he that can find all these things in his soul, 'He is all glorious within,' Psalm xlv. 13. He carries a kingdom about him, this kingdom of grace will certainly bring to a kingdom of glory.

I shall answer some doubts and objections that a Christian may make against himself.

Obj. *I fear the kingdom of grace is not yet come into my heart.*

Ans. When a Christian is under temptation, or grace lies dormant, he is not fit to be his own judge; but in this case he must take the witness of others who have the spirit of discerning. But let us hear a Christian's objections against himself, why he thinks the kingdom of grace is not yet come into his heart.

Obj. 1. *I cannot discern grace.*

Ans. A child of God may have the kingdom of grace in his heart, yet not know it. The cup was in Benjamin's sack, though he did not know it was there; thou mayest have faith in thy heart, the cup may be in thy sack, though thou knowest it not. Old Jacob wept for his son Joseph, when Joseph was alive; thou mayest weep for want of grace, when grace may be alive in thy heart. The seed may be in the ground, when we do not see it spring up; the seed of God may be sown in thy heart, though thou dost not perceive the springing of it up. Think not grace is lost because it is hid.

Obj. 2. *Before the kingdom of grace come into the heart, there must be some preparation for it; the fallow ground of the heart must be broken up: I fear the plough of the law hath not gone deep enough, I have not been humbled enough, therefore I have no grace.*

Ans. God doth not prescribe a just proportion of sorrow and humiliation: the scripture mentions the truth of sorrow, but not the measure. Some are more flagitious sinners than others, these must have a greater degree of humiliation. A knotty piece of timber requires more wedges to be driven into it. Some stomachs are fouler than others, therefore need stronger physic. But wouldst thou know when thou hast been humbled enough for sin?—When thou art willing to let go thy sins. Then the gold hath lien long enough in the furnace, when the dross is purged out; so, when the love of sin is purged out, a soul is humbled enough to divine acceptation, though not to divine satisfaction. Now if thou art humbled enough, (though not so much as others) what needs more? *Frustra fit per plura, &c.*

If a needle will let out the imposthume, what needs a lance? Be not more cruel to thyself than God would have thee.

Obj. 3. *If the kingdom of God were within me, it would be a kingdom of power; it would enable me to serve God with vigour of soul; but I have a spirit of infirmity upon me, I am weak and impotent, and untuned to every holy action.*

Ans. There is a great difference between the weakness of grace, and the want of grace; a man may have life, although he be sick and weak. Weak grace is not to be despised, but cherished; Christ will not break the bruised reed. Do not argue from the weakness of grace to the nullity.

1. Weak grace will give us a title to Christ, as well as strong. A weak hand of faith will receive the alms of Christ's merits.

2. Weak faith is capable of growth. The seed springs up by degrees, first the blade, and then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear: the faith that is strongest was once in its infancy. Grace is like the waters of the sanctuary, which did rise higher and higher: be not discouraged at thy weak faith; though it be but blossoming, it will by degrees come to more maturity.

3. The weakest grace shall persevere, as well as the strongest. A sucking child was as safe in the ark, as Noah. An infant believer, that is but newly laid to the breast of the promise, is as safe in Christ, as the most eminent heroic saint.

Obj. 4. *I fear the kingdom of grace is not yet come, because I find the kingdom of sin so strong in me. Had I faith, it would purify my heart; but I find much pride, worldliness, passion.*

Ans. The best of the saints have remainders of corruption, Dan. vii. 22. 'They had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season.' So in the regenerate, tho' the dominion of sin be taken away, yet the life of it is prolonged for a season. What pride was there in Christ's own disciples, when they strove which should be greatest? The issue of sin will not be quite stopped till death. The Lord is pleased to let the in-being of sin continue, to humble his people, and make them prize Christ the more; but, because you find corruptions stirring, do not therefore presently unfaint yourselves, and deny the kingdom of grace to be come into your souls. That you feel sin, is an evidence of spiritual life; that you mourn for sin, what are these tears but fruits of love to God? that you have a combat with sin, argues antipathy against it: those sins which you did once wear as a crown on your head, are now as fetters on the leg; is not all this from the spirit of grace in you? sin is in you, as poison in the body, which you are sick of, and use all scripture antidotes to expel. Should we condemn all those who have the indwelling of sin, nay, who have had sin, (at some-

times) prevailing, we should blot some of the best saints out of the Bible.

Obj. 5. Where the kingdom of grace comes, it softens the heart : but I find my heart frozen and congealed into hardness, I can hardly squeeze out one tear. Do flowers grow on a rock? can there be any grace in such a rocky heart?

Ans. 1. There may be grief where there are no tears; the best sorrow is rational. In your judgment you esteem sin the most hyperbolical evil, you have a disgust and a displacency against sin; this is a rational sorrow, and such as God will accept.

1. A Christian may have some hardness in his heart, yet not have an hard heart. A field may have tares in it, yet we call it a field of wheat; in the best heart is a mixture of hardness, yet because there is some softness and melting, God looks upon it as a soft heart: therefore, Christian, dispute not against thyself, if thou canst find but one thing, "That the frame and temper of thy soul be holy." Art thou still breathing after God, delighting in him? is the complexion of thy soul heavenly? canst thou say as David, Psal. cxxxix. 17. 'When I awake, I am still with thee?' As colours laid in oil, or a statue carved in gold, abide, so doth an holy complexion; the soul is still pointing towards God. If it be thus with thee, assure thyself the kingdom of grace is come into the soul; be not unkind to God, to deny any work of his Spirit which he hath wrought in thee.

Use. I. Of exhortation. Labour to find that this kingdom of grace is set up in our hearts; while others aspire after heavenly kingdoms, labour to have the kingdom of God within you, Luke xvii. 21. The kingdom of grace must come into us, before we can go into the kingdom of glory. *Motives.*

1st Motive. This kingdom of God within us is our spiritual beauty: the kingdom of grace adorns a person, and sets him off in the eyes of God and angels. This makes the king's daughter all glorious within, Pl. xiv. 13. Grace sheds a glory and lustre upon the soul. As the diamond to the ring, so is grace to the soul. An heart beautified with grace, hath the King of heaven's picture hung in it.

2d Motive. The kingdom of grace set up in the heart is our spiritual defence. Grace is called the 'Armour of light,' Rom. xiii. 12. It is light for beauty, and armour for defence. He who hath the kingdom of grace within him, is 'strengthened with all might according to God's glorious power,' Col. i. 11. he hath the shield of faith, the helmet of hope, the breast plate of righteousness; this armour can never be shot thro', it fortifies a Christian against the assaults of temptations, and the terrors of hell.

3d Motive. The kingdom of grace set up in the heart brings peace with it, Rom. xiv. 17. 'The kingdom of God is righteousness and peace.' There is a secret peace breeds out of holiness. Peace is the best blessing of a kingdom: *Pax una triumphis innumeris melior.* The kingdom of grace is a kingdom of peace; grace is the root, peace is the flower grows out of it; it is *pax in procella*, such peace that no worldly affliction can shake. The doors of Solomon's temple were made of olive tree, carved with open flowers, 1 Kings vi. 32. in a gracious heart is the olive of peace, and the open flowers of joy.

4th Motive. The kingdom of grace enricheth the soul; a kingdom hath its riches. A believer is said to be rich in faith, James iii. 5. How rich is he who hath God for his God, who is heir to all the promises? Heb. vi. 17. A man may be rich in bills and bonds; a believer, tho' he may say as Peter, 'Silver and gold have I none,' Acts iii. 6. yet he is rich in bills and bonds, he is heir to all God's promises; and to be heir to the promises, is better than to be heir to the crown.

5th Motive. When the kingdom of grace comes, it doth fix and establish the heart, Ps. lvii. 7. 'O God my heart is fixed.' Before the kingdom of grace comes, the heart is very unfixed and unsettled; like a ship without a ballast, like quicksilver that cannot be made to fix; but when the kingdom of grace comes, it doth *stabilire animum*, it fixeth the heart upon God; and when the heart is fixed, it rests quiet as in its centre.

6th Motive. This kingdom of grace is distinguishing; it is a sure pledge of God's love. God may give kingdoms in anger; but wherever the kingdom of grace is set up, it is in love; God cannot give grace in anger. The crown always goes with this kingdom; let us therefore be ambitious of this kingdom of grace.

Qu. *How should we do to obtain this kingdom?*

Ans. 1. In general, take pains for it: we cannot have the world without labour, and do we think to have grace? 'If thou seekest her as silver,' Prov. ii. 3. A man may as well expect a crop without sowing, as grace without labour. We must not think to have grace as Israel had manna; they did not plow nor sow, but it was rained down from heaven upon them: No we must *operam dare*, take pains for grace. Our salvation cost Christ blood, it will cost us sweat.

2. Let us go to God to set up this kingdom of grace in our hearts; God is called, 'the God of all grace,' 1 Pet. v. 10. Say, Lord, I want this kingdom of grace, I want an humble, believing heart, O enrich me with grace, let thy kingdom come; and be importunate suitors. As Achsah said to her father Caleb, Josh. xv. 19. 'Thou hast given me a south land, give me also springs of water:' so, Lord, thou hast given me

enough of the world, here is a south land ; but, Lord, give me the upper-springs of grace, let ' thy kingdom come.' What is the venison thou hast given me, without the blessing ? When we are importunate with God, and will take no denial, then he will set up his kingdom within us.

3. Keep close to the word preached ; the word preached is *virga virtutis*, the rod of God's strength ; it is the great engine God useth for the setting up the kingdom of grace in the heart, Rom. x. 17. ' Faith comes by hearing.' Though God could work grace immediately by his Spirit, or by the ministry of angels from heaven, yet he chooseth to work by the word preached ; this is the usual mean, by which he sets up the kingdom of grace in the heart ; and the reason is, because he hath put his divine sanction upon it, he hath appointed it for the means of working grace, and he will honour his own ordinance, 1 Cor. i. 21. What reason could be given why the waters of Damascus should not have as sovereign virtue to heal Naaman's leprosy, as the waters of Jordan ? only this, because God did appoint and sanctify the waters of Jordan to heal and not the others ; therefore let us keep the word preached, because the power of God goes along with it.

Uſe II. Such as have this kingdom of God set up in them, it calls for gratulation and thanksgiving : what will you be thankful for, if not for a kingdom ? Grace is the best blessing, it is the result and product of God's electing love : God, in setting up his kingdom of grace, hath done more for you, than if he had made you kings and queens ; for now you are born of God, and of the blood-royal of heaven. O admire and exalt free grace ; make God's praise glorious, Psal. lxxvi. 2. The apostle seldom mentions the work of grace, but he joins praise, Col. i. 12. ' Giving thanks to the Father, who hath made us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.' If God hath crowned you with the kingdom of grace, do you crown him with your praises.

2. The second thing intended by our Saviour in this petition is, that the kingdom of grace may increase, that it may come more into us : and this may answer a question.

Qu. Why do we pray, ' thy kingdom come,' when the kingdom of grace is already come into the soul ?

Ans. Though the kingdom of grace be already come into us, yet still we must pray, ' thy kingdom come ;' namely that grace may be increased, and that this kingdom may flourish still more in our souls. Till we come to live among the angels, we shall need to pray this prayer, ' thy kingdom come ;' Lord, let thy kingdom of grace come in more power into my soul, let grace be more augmented and increased.

Qu. (1.) When doth the kingdom of grace increase in the soul? When is it a flourishing kingdom?

Ans. 1. When a Christian hath further degrees added to his graces: there is more oil in the lamp, his knowledge is clearer, his love is more enflamed: grace is capable of degrees, and may rise higher as the sun in the horizon. It is not with us as it was with Christ, who 'received the spirit without measure,' John iii. 34. Christ could not be more holy than he was; but our grace is receptive of further degrees, we may have more sanctity, we may add more cubits to our spiritual stature.

1. Then the kingdom of grace increaseth, when a Christian hath gotten more strength than he had, Job xvii. 9. 'He that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.' Heb. 'He shall add to his strength.' A Christian hath strength to resist temptation, to forgive his enemies, to suffer affliction. 'Tis not easy to suffer; a man must deny himself before he take up the cross. The way to heaven is like the way which Jonathan and his armour bearer had in climbing up a steep place, 1 Sam. xiv. 4. 'There was a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other.' It requires much strength to climb up this rocky way. That grace which will carry us through prosperity, will not carry us through sufferings: the ship needs stronger tackling to carry it through a storm than a calm. Now, when we are so strong in grace, that we can bear up under affliction, without murmuring or fainting; here is the kingdom of grace increased. What mighty strength of grace had he, who told the emperor Valentinian, you may take away my life, but you cannot take away my love to the truth.

2. Then the kingdom of grace increaseth, when a Christian hath most conflict with spiritual corruptions, he not only abstains from gross evils, but hath a combat with inward, hidden, close corruptions: as pride, envy, hypocrisy, vain thoughts, carnal confidence: these are spiritual wickednesses, and do both defile and disturb, 2 Cor. vii. 1. 'Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit.' Which shews there are two sorts of corruptions, one of the flesh, the other of the spirit. When we grieve for, and combat with spiritual sin (as being the root of all gross sins) now, the kingdom of grace increaseth, and spreads its territories in the soul.

3. Then the kingdom of grace flourisheth, when a Christian hath learned to live by faith, Gal. ii. 2. 'I live by the faith of the Son of God.' There is the habit of faith, and the drawing of this habit into exercise: for a Christian to graft his hope of salvation, only upon the stock of Christ's righteousness, and make Christ all in justification; to live on the promises, as a bee on the flower, and suck out the sweetness of them; to trust God where we cannot trace him; to believe his love through a

frown ; to persuade ourselves, when he hath the face of an enemy, yet he hath the heart of a Father ; when we are arrived at this, here is the kingdom of grace flourishing in our souls.

5. When a Christian is arrived at holy zeal, Numb. xxv. 13. Phinehas was zealous for his God. Zeal is the flame of the affections, it turns a faint into a seraphim : a zealous Christian is impotent when God is dishonoured, Rev. ii. 2. He will wrestle with difficulties, he will swim to Christ through a sea of blood, Acts xxi. 13. Zeal loves truth when it is despised, and opposed, Pl. cxix. 126. 'They have made void thy law, therefore I love thy law.'—Here is grace increasing, like the sun in the horizon. Zeal resembles the Holy Ghost, Acts ii. 2. 'There appeared cloven tongues like as fire, and sat upon each of them.' Tongues of fire were an emblem of that fire of zeal, which the Spirit poured on them.

6. Then the kingdom of grace increaseth, when a Christian is as well diligent in his particular calling, as devout in his general. He is the wise Christian, that carries things equally ; that doth so live by faith, that he lives in a calling. Therefore it is worth our notice, when the apostle had exhorted the Thessalonians to increase in grace, 1 Thess. iv. 10. He presently adds, ver. 11. 'And that you do your own business, and work with your hands.' This is a sign grace is increasing, when Christians go cheerfully about their calling. Indeed to be all the day in the mount with God, and to have the mind fixed on glory, is more sweet to a man's self, and is an heaven upon earth : but to be conversant in our callings, is more profitable to others. I may allude to that of St. Paul. To be with Christ is best for me ; yet to abide here is needful for you, Phil. i. 24. So, to converse with God in prayer and sweet meditation all the week long, is more for the comfort of a man's own person ; but to be sometimes employed in the business of a calling, is more profitable to the family to which he belongs. It is not good to be like the lilies, which toil not, neither do they spin. It shews the increase of grace, when the Christian keeps a due *decorum* : he joins piety and industry, when zeal runs forth in religion, and diligence is put forth in a calling.

7. Then the kingdom of grace increaseth when a Christian is established in the belief and love of the truth. The heart by nature is as a ship without ballast, it wavers and fluctuates. Beza writes of one Bolezius, his religion changed as the moon and planet Mercury. Such as are wandering stars, will be falling stars : but when a soul is built on the rock Christ, and no winds of temptation can blow it away, now the kingdom of grace flourisheth. One calls Athanasius, *Adamus Ecclesie*, an invincible adamant, in respect of his stability in the truth, Col.

ii. 7. Rooted and built up in him ; the rooting of a tree evidenceth the growth.

6. Then the kingdom of grace increaseth in a man's own heart, when he labours to be instrumental to set up this kingdom in others. Though it is the greatest benefit to have grace wrought in ourselves, yet it is the greatest honour to be instrumental to work it in others, Gal. iv. 19. 'Of whom I travail in birth till Christ be formed in you.' Such as are masters of a family, should endeavour to see the kingdom of grace set up in their servants ; such as are godly parents, let not God alone by prayer, till you see grace in your children : what a comfort would it be to you, to be both the natural and spiritual fathers of your children ? Austin saith, his mother Monica travailed with greater care and pain for his new birth, than his natural. This shews the increase of grace, when we labour to see the kingdom of grace set up in others ; then the water abounds in the river, when it overflows and runs into the meadows ; then grace increaseth in the soul when it hath influence upon others, and we endeavour their salvation.

Qu. 2. *Wherein appears the needfulness of this, that the kingdom of grace should be increased ?*

Ans. 1. This is God's design in keeping up a standing ministry in the church to increase the kingdom of grace in men's hearts, Eph. iv. 8. 'He gave gifts unto men ;' that is ministerial gifts : why so ? ver. 12. 'For the edifying of the body of Christ.' Not only for conversion, but for augmentation : therefore the word preached is compared not only to feed, but to milk ; because by this breast-milk, God designs our growth in grace.

2. We had need have the kingdom of grace increase, in respect we have a great deal of work to do, and a little grace will hardly carry us through. A Christian's life is laborious, so many temptations to resist, so many promises to believe, so many precepts to obey, that it will require a great deal of grace : A Christian must not only pray, but 'be zealous and repent,' Rev. iii. 19. Not only love, but 'be sick of love,' Cant. ii. 5. How had he need therefore to have the kingdom of grace enlarged in his soul ? As his work increaseth upon him, so his grace had need increase.

3. If the kingdom of grace doth not increase, it will decay, Rev. ii. 4. 'Thou hast left thy first love.' Grace, for want of increasing, is sometimes like a winter plant, all the sap runs to the root, and it looks as if it were dead, Rev. iii. 2. 'Strengthen the things that remain, which are ready to die : ' Though grace cannot expire, it may wither ; and a withering Christian loseth much of his beauty and fragrancy : what great need have we then to pray, 'thy kingdom come,' that this kingdom of grace

may be increased? If grace be not improved, it will soon be impaired. A Christian, for want of increasing his grace, loseth his strength; he is like a sick man, that cannot either walk or work; his prayers are sick and weak; he is as if he had no life in him, his faith can hardly fetch breath, and you can scarce feel the pulse of his love to beat.

4. To have grace increasing, is suitable to Christianity: Christians are called trees of righteousness, Isa. lxi. 3. The saints are not only jewels for sparkling lustre, but trees for growth: they are called the lights of the world, Phil. ii. 15. Light is still increasing. First there is the *crepusculum*, or day-break, and so it shines brighter to the meridian. They who are the lights of the world must increase till they come to the meridian of glory. Not to grow is suspicious; painted things grow not.

5. As the kingdom of grace increaseth, so a Christian's comforts increase. Comfort belongs to the *bene esse*, or well-being of a Christian; it is like sweet meat, delicious to the taste, Ps. xciv. 29. The more grace, the more joy. As the more sap in the root, the more wine in the grape. Who did more increase in grace than David? And who more in consolation, Ps. iv. 7. 'Thou hast put gladness in my heart.' Grace turns to joy, as milk to cream.

Qu. (3.) *How may they be comforted, who bewail their want of growth, and weep that they cannot find the kingdom of grace increase?*

Ans. 1. To see and bewail our decay in grace, argues not only the life of grace, but growth. It is a sign a man recovers and gets strength, when he feels his weakness: it is a step forward in grace, to see our imperfections. The more the spirit shines in the heart, the more evil it discovers; a Christian thinks it worse with him than it was, whereas his grace may not grow lesser, but his light greater.

2. If a Christian doth not increase in one grace, he may in another; if not in knowledge, he may in humility. If a tree doth not grow so much in the branches, it may in the root: to grow downwards in the root, is a good growth.

3. A Christian may grow less in affection, when he grows more in judgment. As a musician when he is old, his fingers are stiff, and not so nimble at the lute as they were, but he plays with more art and judgment than before; so a Christian may not have so much affection in duty as at the first conversion, but he is more solid in religion, and more settled in his judgment than he was before.

4. A Christian may think he doth not increase in grace, because he doth not increase in gifts; whereas there may be a decay of natural parts, the memory, and other faculties, when

there is not a decay of grace. Parts may be impaired, when grace is improved: be not discouraged, it is better to decay in parts, and be enlarged in grace, than to be enlarged in parts, and to decay in grace.

5. A Christian may increase in grace, yet not be sensible of it. The seed may grow in the earth, when we do not perceive it to spring up: the grace may grow in time of desertion, and not be perceived. So I have done with the first thing intended in this petition, 'thy kingdom come;' we pray that the kingdom of grace may come into our hearts, and that it may increase and flourish.

I should come to the second thing intended in this petition, 'that the kingdom of glory may hasten, and that we may in due time be translated into it.'

When we pray, 'thy kingdom come,' here is something positively intended; we pray, (1.) That the kingdom of grace may be set up in our hearts. (2.) That it may increase and flourish. (3.) That the kingdom of glory may hasten, and that God would, in his due time, translate us into it.

1. What this kingdom of glory is.
2. What are the properties of it.
3. Wherein it exceeds all other kingdoms.
4. When this kingdom comes.
5. Wherein appears the certainty of it.
6. Why we should pray for its coming.

First, What this kingdom of glory is.

Ans. By this kingdom is meant, that glorious estate which the saints shall enjoy, when they shall reign with God and angels for ever. If a man stand upon the sea-shore, he cannot see all the dimensions of the sea, the length, breadth, and depth of it; yet he may see it is of a vast extension: so, though the kingdom of heaven be of that incomparable excellency, that neither tongue of man or angels can express, yet we may conceive of it to be an exceeding glorious thing, such as eye hath not seen.

Concerning the kingdom of heaven I shall shew, (1.) What it implies. (2.) What it imports.

(1.) What it implies.

Ans. It implies a blessed freedom from all evil.

2. What it imports.

Ans. It imports glorious fruition of all good.

1. What the kingdom of heaven implies.

Ans. It implies a freedom from all evil.

1. A freedom from the necessities of nature. We are in this life subject to many necessities; we need food to nourish us, clothes to cover us, armour to defend us, sleep to refresh us; but in the kingdom of heaven there is no need of these things, and it is better not to need them than to have them; and it is

better not to need crutches, than to have crutches. What need will there be of food when our bodies shall be made spiritual? 1 Cor. xv. 44. Though not spiritual for substance, yet for qualities. What need will there be of clothing, when our bodies shall be like Christ's glorious body? What need will there be of armour, when there is no enemy? What need will there be of sleep, when there is no night? Rev. xxii. 5. The saints shall be freed, in the heavenly kingdom, from these necessities of nature to which they now lie exposed.

2. In the kingdom of heaven we shall be freed from the imperfections of nature. Since the fall, our knowledge hath suffered an eclipse.

(1.) Our natural knowledge is imperfect, it is chequered with ignorance. There are many hard knots in nature, which we cannot easily untie: why the sea should be higher than the earth, yet not drown it? What way the light is parted! Job xxxviii. 24. What is the reason of all the occult qualities, sympathies, and antipathies! He who sees clearest, hath a mist before his eyes. Socrates said on his death-bed, there were many things he had yet to learn. Our ignorance is more than our knowledge.

(2.) Our divine knowledge is imperfect; we know but in part, saith St. Paul, 1 Cor. xiii. 9. though he had many revelations, and was wrapt up into the third heaven. We have but dark conceptions of the Trinity, Job. xi. 7. 'Canst thou by searching find out God?'—Our narrow capacities will no more contain the Trinity; than a little glass-vial will hold all the water in the sea: We cannot unriddle the mystery of the incarnation, the human nature assumed into the person of the Son of God; the human nature not God, yet united with God: We see now in *Aenigmata*, in a glass, darkly; but, in the kingdom of heaven, the vail shall be taken off; all imperfecting of nature shall be done away. When the sun-light of glory shall begin to shine in the heavenly horizon, all dark shadows of ignorance shall fly away, our lamp of knowledge shall burn bright, we shall have a full knowledge of God, though not know him fully.

3. In the kingdom of heaven we shall be freed from the toilsome labours of this life; God enacted a law in paradise, 'in the sweat of thy brows thou shalt eat bread,' Gen. iii. 9. There is the labour of the hand in manufacture, and the labour of the mind in study, Eccl. i. 8. 'All things are full of labour,' but in the kingdom of heaven we shall be freed from our labours.

1. There needs no labour, when a man hath got to the haven; he hath no more need of sailing. In heaven there needs no labour, because the saints shall have that glory which they laboured for.

2. There shall be no labour, Rev. xiv. 13. 'They rest from

their labours.' As God, when he had finished the work of creation, rested from his labours, Gen. ii. 2. So, when the saints have finished the work of sanctification, they rest from their labours. Where should there be rest, but in the heavenly centre? Not that this sweet rest in the kingdom of heaven excludes all motion, for spirits cannot be idle; but the saints glorified shall rest from all wearisome employment; it shall be a labour full of ease, a motion full of delight; the saints in heaven shall love God, and what labour is that? Is it any labour to love beauty? They shall praise God, and that sure is delightful: When the bird sings, it is not so much a labour as a pleasure.

3. In the kingdom of heaven, we shall be freed from original corruption: This is *causa causati*, the root of all actual sin. There would be no actual sin, if there were no original; there would be no water in the stream, if there were none in the fountain. Original sin is incorporated into our nature; it is as if the whole mass of blood were corrupted. This makes a Christian weary of his life; he offends that God whom he loves. What would a Christian give to have his chains taken off, to be rid of vain thoughts? How did St. Paul (that bird of paradise) bemoan himself for his sins? Rom. vii. 22. We cannot act either our duties or our graces without sin. The soul that is most refined and clarified by grace, is not without some dregs of corruption; but in the kingdom of heaven the fountain of original sin shall be quite dried up what a blessed time will that be, never to grieve God's spirit more! In heaven are virgin-souls; there is beauty which is not stained with lust: Nothing enters there that defiles, Rev. xxi. 27.

4. In the kingdom of heaven we shall be freed from all sorrows, Rev. xxi. 4. 'There shall be no more sorrow,' Our life here is interlarded with trouble, Psalm xxxi. 10. Either losses grieve, or law-suits vex, or unkindness breaks the heart. We may as well separate moisture from air, or weight from lead, as troubles from man's life. *Quid est diu vivere, nisi diu torqueri?* Aug. But, in the kingdom of heaven, sorrow and sighing shall fly away. Here the saints sit by the rivers weeping, but one smile from Christ's face will make them forget all their sufferings; their water then shall be turned into wine, their mourning into music.

5. We shall, in the kingdom of heaven, be freed from the immodesty of temptation. Satan is not yet fully cast into prison; but he is like a prisoner that goes under bail, he walks about tempting, he labours to trapan us into sin; he is either laying of snares or shooting of darts. *Stat in procinctu diabolus.* He laid a train of temptation to blow up the castle of Job's faith. This is as great a grief to a believer, to be followed with temptations to sin, as it is for a virgin to have her chastity

assaulted : but in the kingdom of heaven, the saints shall be freed from the red dragon ; he is cast out of paradise, and shall be for ever locked up in chains, Jude 6.

6. In the kingdom of heaven, we shall be freed from all vexing cares. The Greek word for care, comes from a primitive which signifies, to cut the heart in pieces. Care disencumbers the mind, it wastes the spirits, it cuts out the comfort of life. Care is an evil spirit that haunts us ; care to prevent future dangers, and preserve present comforts. All care is full of fear, and fear is full of torment, 1 John iv. 18. God threatens it as a judgment, Ezek. xii. 19. ' They shall eat their bread with carefulness.' Every comfort hath its care, as every rose hath its prickles ; but in the kingdom of heaven, we shall shake off the viper of care. What needs a saint glorified to take any care, who hath all things provided to his hand ? There is the tree of life bearing all sorts of fruit. When the heart shall be freed from sin, the head shall be freed from care.

7. We shall, in the kingdom of heaven, be freed from all doubts and scruples. In this life the best saint hath his doubtings, as the brightest star hath its twinkling. If there were no doubtings, there would be no unbelief : assurance itself doth not exclude all doubting, Ps. xxvi. 3. ' Thy loving-kindness is before mine eyes : but at another time, Ps. lxxxix. 49. ' Lord where are thy former loving-kindnesses ?' A christian is like a ship at anchor, which, though it be safe, yet it may sometimes be tossed upon the water. Sometimes a Christian questions his interest in Christ, and his title to the promise : and these doubtings, as they eclipse a Christian's comfort, so they are a bearing false witness against the spirit. But, when the saints shall come into the kingdom of heaven, there shall be no more doubtings ; then a Christian shall say, as Peter, ' Now I know of a surety that the Lord hath sent his angel, and delivered me,' Acts xii. 11. So, now I know, that I am passed from death to life, and am got beyond all rocks, I have shot the gulf, now I am in my Saviour's embraces for ever.

9. We shall, in the kingdom of heaven, be freed from all society with the wicked. Here we are forced sometimes to be in their company, Ps. cxx. 5. ' Wo is me that I dwell in Mesech, and sojourn in the tents of Kedar.' Kedar was Ishmael's son, whose children dwelt in Arabia, a profane, barbarous people. Here the wicked are still raising persecutions against the godly, and crucifying their ears with their oaths and curses : Christ's lily is among thorns : but in the heavenly kingdom there shall be no more any prickling briar, Matth. xiii. 41. ' The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend.' As Moses said, Exod. xiv. 13. ' Stand still and see the salvation

of the Lord : for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever :’ So will God say, stand still and see the salvation of God ; these your enemies, that vex and molest you, you shall see them again no more for ever. At that day God will separate the precious from the vile ; then Christ will thoroughly purge his floor, he will gather the wheat into the garner, and the wicked which are the chaff, shall be blown into hell.

10. We shall, in the kingdom of heaven, be freed from all signs of God’s displeasure. Here God may be angry with his people : though he hath the heart of a Father, he may have the look of an enemy ; this is sad. As when the sun is gone the dew falls ; when the light of God’s face is gone, tears drop from the saint’s eyes. But, in the kingdom of heaven ; there shall be no spiritual eclipses, there shall never appear any tokens of God’s displeasure ; the saints shall have a constant aspect of love from God, they shall never complain any more, as Cant. v. 6. ‘ My beloved hath withdrawn himself.’

11. We shall, in the kingdom of heaven, be freed from all divisions. That, which is the saddest thing in the world, is to see divisions among them that are good. It is sad, that such as have one faith, yet should not be of one heart : Ephraim envies Judah, and Judah vexeth Ephraim ; it is matter of tears, to see those who are united to Christ, to be divided one from another. The soldier’s spear pierced Christ’s side, but the division of saints wound his heart. But, in the kingdom of heaven, there shall be no vilifying one another, or censuring : those, who before could hardly pray together, shall praise God together ; there shall not be one jarring string in the saints’ music.

12. We shall in the kingdom of heaven, be freed from vanity and dissatisfaction. What Job saith of wisdom, chap. xxviii.

14. ‘ The depth saith, It is not in me ; and the sea saith, It is not in me.’ The same may I say concerning satisfaction ; every creature saith, ‘ It is not in me.’ Take things most pleasing, and which we promise ourselves most content from, distil out the spirits and purest quintessence of them, and we shall say, as Solomon did, Eccl. ii. 11. ‘ And behold all was vanity.’ God never did, nor will put a satisfying virtue into any creature. In the sweetest music the world makes, either there is something wanting, or out of tune. Who would have thought that Haman, who was so great in the king’s favour, ‘ He set his seat above all the princes of the provinces,’ Esth. iii. 1. Yet for the want of the bowing of a knee he is dissatisfied ? but in the kingdom of heaven, we shall be freed from these dissatisfactions. The world is like a landscape, you may see gardens and fruit trees, curiously drawn in the landscape, but you cannot enter

into them ; but you may enter into the joys of heaven, ' enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.' The soul shall be satisfied, while it bathes in those rivers of pleasure at God's right-hand ; ' I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness,' Pl. xvii. 15. Thus you see what the kingdom of glory implies ; namely, a blessed freedom from all evil.

13. We shall, in the kingdom of heaven, be freed from the torments of hell, 1 Thess. i. 10. ' Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.'

(1.) The multiplicity of these torments. In this life, the body is usually exercised but with one pain, the stone or headach ; but in hell there is a diversity of torments ; there is darkness to affright, fire to burn, a lake of sulphur to choke, chains to bind, the worm to gnaw.

(2.) The torments of hell will seize upon every part of the body and soul ; the eye shall be tortured with the sight of devils ; the tongue, that hath sworn so many oaths, shall be tortured, Luke xvi. 24. ' send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue.' The memory shall be tormented to remember what mercies have been abused, what seasons of grace neglected ; the conscience shall be tormented with self-accusations.

(3.) In the pains of hell there is no mitigation, no mixture of mercy. In this life, God in anger remembers mercy, Hab. iii. 2. But in hell there is no alleviation or lessening of the pains : as in the sacrifice of jealousy, Numb. v. 15. God would have no oil of frankincense put into it, so in hell there is no oil of mercy to lenify the sufferings of the damned, no incense of prayer to appease God's wrath.

(4.) In the pains of hell there is no intermission. The poets feign of Endymion, that he got leave of Jupiter always to sleep. What would the damned in hell give for one hour's sleep ? Rev. xiv. 11. ' They rest not day nor night.' They are perpetually on the rack.

(5.) In the pains of hell there is no expiration ; they must always lie scorching in flames of wrath, Rev. xiv. 11. ' The smoke of their torment ascended up for ever and ever : ' but in the heavenly kingdom the elect shall be freed from all infernal torments ; ' Jesus hath delivered us from the wrath to come.' A prison is not made for the king's children. Christ drank that bitter cup of God's wrath, that the saints might never drink it.

Secondly, In the kingdom of heaven there is a glorious fruition of all good. Had I as many tongues as hairs on my head, I could not fully describe this ; I may say, as Judges xviii. 9, 10. Heaven is called, ' the excellent glory,' 2 Pet. i. 17. I may as well span the firmament, or drain the ocean, as set forth

the glory of this kingdom, *Cælum non habet hyperbolum*; the kingdom of heaven is above all hyperbole. Were the sun ten thousand times brighter than it is, it could not parallel the lustre of this kingdom; Apelles' pencil would blot, angels' tongues would lessen it: I can but give you the *skiagraphia*, or dark shadow of it; expect not to see it in all its orient colours, till you are mounted above the stars. But let us not stand afar off, as Moses, to behold this Canaan, but enter into it, and taste the honey.

+

Concerning the fruitions and privileges of this heavenly kingdom,

1. We shall have an immediate communion with God himself, who is the inexhausted sea of all happiness: This divines call, 'the beatifical vision.' The Psalmist did triumph in that enjoyment he had of God in this life, Psal. lxxiii. 25. 'Whom have I in heaven but thee?' If God, enjoyed by faith, doth give so much comfort to the soul, how much more, when he is enjoyed by immediate vision! Here we see God but darkly through the glass of ordinances, but, in the kingdom of heaven we shall see him 'face to face,' 1 Cor. xiii. 12. We shall have an intellectual sight of God, *i. e.* we shall see him with the eyes of our mind; we shall know God as much as the angels in heaven do, Mat. xviii. 10. and 1 Cor. xiii. 12. 'We shall know as we are known.' We shall have a full knowledge of God, though not know him fully; as a vessel in the sea is full of the sea, though it holds not all the sea. To see and enjoy God, will be most delicious; in God are beams of majesty, and bowels of mercy. God hath all excellencies concentrated in him, *bonum in quo omnia bona*. If one flower should have the sweetness of all flowers, how sweet would that flower be: All the beauty and sweetness which lies scattered in the creature, is infinitely to be found in God; therefore to see and enjoy him, will ravish the soul with delight. We shall so see God as to love him, and be made sensible of his love; and when we shall have this sweet communion with God, then shall God 'be all in all,' 1 Cor. xv. 28. light to the eye, manna to the taste, music to the ear.

2. We shall, in the kingdom of heaven, with these eyes, see the glorified body of Jesus Christ. This our Saviour makes a great part of the glory of heaven, to view the glory of his human nature, John xvii. 24. 'That they may behold my glory.' When Christ was transfigured upon earth, it is said, 'That his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light,' Matth. xvii. 2. If the glory of his transfiguration was so great, what will the glory of his exaltation be? Much of the glory of God shines in Christ, by virtue of the hypostatical union, Col. ii. 9. 'In whom dwells the fulness of the Godhead

bodily.' Through Christ's humanity, as through a bright mirror, we may see some beams of the Divine Majesty shine forth. Put a back of steel to a glass, and you may see a face in it: Christ's human nature is as a back of steel put on the divine nature; through this we may see God, and then our capacities shall be enlarged to a wonderful degree, to perceive this glorious object; and we shall not only see God's glory, but some of his glory shall be put upon us. *Non tantum aderit gloria, sed in-erit*, Bern. A beggar may behold the glory of a king, and not be the happier; but Christ's glory shall be ours, 'We shall be like him,' 1 John iii. 2. We shall shine by his beams.

3. We shall, in the kingdom of heaven, enjoy the society of an 'innumerable company of angels,' Heb. xii. 22.

Qu. *But is there not enough in God to fill the soul with delight? Can the sight of angels add to the soul's happiness? What need is there of the light of torches, when the sun shines?*

Ans. Besides the divine essence, the sight of angels is desirable; much of God's curious workmanship shines in the angels; the angels are beautiful, glorious creatures: and as the several strings in a lute make the harmony sweeter, and the several stars make the firmament brighter, so the society with angels will make the delight of heaven the greater; and we shall not only see the angels with the glorified eye of our understanding, but converse with them.

4. We shall, in the kingdom of heaven, have sweet society with glorified saints; then the communion of saints will be illustrious.—O what a blessed time will it be when those who have prayed, wept, suffered together, shall rejoice together? we shall see the saints in their white linen of purity, and see them as so many crowned kings: In beholding the saints glorified, we shall behold an heaven full of suns. Some move the question, Whether we shall know one another in heaven? Surely our knowledge shall not be diminished, but increased. It is the judgment of Luther and Anselm, and many other divines, that we shall know one another; yea, the saints of all ages, whose faces we never saw: and, when we shall see the saints in glory without their spots, viz. their infirmities, pride and passion, this will be a glorious sight. We see how Peter was transported, when he saw but two prophets in the transfiguration, Matth. xvii. 3. but, what a blessed sight will it be, when we shall see such a glorious company of prophets, and martyrs, and holy men of God? How sweet will the music be, when they shall all sing together in concert, in the heavenly choir! And though, in this great assembly of saints and angels, 'one star may differ from another in glory,' yet no such weed as envy shall ever

grow in the paradise of God ; then there shall be perfect love, which as it casts out fear, so also envy ; though one vessel of glory may hold more than another, yet every vessel shall be full.

5. In the kingdom of heaven there shall be incomprehensible joy. Aristotle saith, “ joy proceeds from union.” When the saints’ union with Christ is perfected in heaven, then their joy shall be full ; all the birds of the heavenly paradise sing for joy. What joy when the saints shall see the great gulf shut, and know that they are passed from death to life ! What joy, when they are as holy as they would be, and as God would have them to be ! What joy to hear the music of angels, to see the golden banner of Christ’s love displayed over the soul, to be drinking the water of life which is quintessential, and is sweeter than all nectar and ambrosia ! What joy, when the saints shall see Christ clothed in their flesh, sitting in glory above the angels ! Then they shall ‘ enter into the joy of their Lord,’ Mat. xxv. 21. Here joy enters into the saints, in heaven ‘ they enter into joy.’ O thou saint of God, who now hankest thy harp upon the willows, and minglest thy drink with weeping, in the kingdom of heaven thy water shall be turned into wine ; you shall have so much felicity, that your souls cannot wish for more. The sea is not so full of water, as the heart of a glorified saint is of joy : there can no more be sorrow in heaven, than there can be joy in hell.

6. In heaven there is honour and dignity put upon the saints : A kingdom imports honour. All that come into heaven are kings ; they have, 1. A crown, Rev. ii. 10. *Dabo tibi*, the crown of life ; *corona est insignia regiae potestatis*. This crown is not lined with thorns, but hung with jewels, it is a never-fading crown, 1 Peter v. 4. 2. The saints in heaven have their robes ; they exchange their sackcloth for white robes, Rev. vii. ‘ I beheld a great multitude, which no man could number, clothed in white robes.’ Robes signify their glory, white their sanctity. And, 3. They sit with Christ upon the throne, Rev. iii. 22. We read 1 Kings iv. 32. the doors of the holy of holies were made of palm-trees, and open flowers covered with gold ; an emblem of that victory and that garland of glory which the saints shall wear in the kingdom of heaven. When all the titles and ensigns of worldly honour shall lie in the dust, the mace, the silver star, the garter, then shall the saint’s honour remain.

7. We shall in the kingdom of heaven, have a blessed rest. Rest is the end of motion ; heaven is *centrum quietatimum animæ*, the blessed centre where the soul doth acquiesce and rest. In this life we are subject to unquiet motions and fluctuations, 2 Cor. vii. 5. ‘ We are troubled on every side :’ like a ship on

the sea having the waves beating on both sides : but in the kingdom of heaven there is rest, Heb. iv. 9. How welcome is rest to a weary traveller? When death cuts asunder the string of the body, the soul, as a dove, flies away, and is at rest. This is when the saints shall lie on Christ's bosom, that hive of sweetness, that bed of perfume.

8. The saints shall, in the kingdom of heaven, have their bodies richly bespangled with glory ; they shall be full of clarity and brightness. As Moses' face shined, that Israel were not able to behold the glory, Exod. xxxiv. 30. The bodies of the saints shall shine seven times brighter than the sun, saith Chrysostom ; they shall have such a resplendency of beauty on them, that the angels shall fall in love with them ; and no wonder. ' For they shall be made like Christ's glorious body,' Phil. iii. 21. The bodies of saints glorified need no jewels, when they shall shine like Christ's body.

9. In the heavenly kingdom is eternity ; 'tis an eternal fruition, they shall never be put out of the throne, Rev. xxiii. 5. ' They shall reign for ever and ever.' It is called, ' the everlasting kingdom,' 2 Pet. i. 11. and ' an eternal weight of glory,' 2 Cor. iv. 17. The flowers of paradise, of which the saints' garlands are made, never wither. If there could be a cessation of heaven's glory, or the saints had but the least fear or suspicion of losing their felicity, it would infinitely abate and cool their joy ; but their kingdom is for ever, the rivers of paradise cannot be dried up, Ps. xvi. 11. ' At thy right-hand are pleasures for evermore.' The kingdom of heaven was typified by the temple, which was built with stone, covered with cedar, overlaid with gold, to shew the fixed permanent state of glory, that kingdom abides for ever. Well may we pray, ' Thy kingdom come.'

Having spoken of the kingdom of grace, and how we may know that kingdom is set up in our hearts, I am next to speak of the kingdom of glory, or heaven.

1. What is meant by the kingdom of heaven.
2. What are the properties of this kingdom.
3. Wherein this heavenly kingdom excels all the kingdoms upon earth.

4. When this kingdom shall be bestowed.

5. Wherein appears the certainty and infallibility of it.

6. Why we should pray for the coming of this kingdom.

Qu. 1. *What is meant by the kingdom of heaven ?*

Ans. 1. It imports a blessed freedom from all evil. 2. It implies a glorious fruition of all good. (1.) Immediate communion with God, who is the inexhausted sea of all happiness. (2.) A visible beholding the glorified body of Jesus Christ. (3.)

A glorious vision of saints and angels. (4.) Dignity and honour, the crown, and white robes. (5.) A blessed rest.

Qu. 2. *What are the properties or qualifications of the kingdom of heaven?*

Ans. 1. The glory of this kingdom is solid and substantial; the Hebrew word for glory signifies a weight, to shew how solid and weighty the glory of the celestial kingdom is: the glory of the worldly kingdom is airy and imaginary, like a blazing comet or fancy, Acts xxv. 23. Agrippa and Bernice came with a great pomp, with a great fancy, Job xxvi. 7. The earth hangs like a ball in the air, without any thing to uphold it. The glory of the heavenly kingdom is substantial, it hath twelve foundations, Rev. xxi. 14. That which God and angels count glory is true glory.

2. The glory of this kingdom is satisfying, Psal. xxxvi. 9. 'With thee is the fountain of life.' How can they choose but be full, who are at the fountain-head? Psal. xvii. 15. 'When I awake, I shall be satisfied with thy likeness,' *i. e.* when I awake in the morning of the resurrection, having some of the beams of thy glory shining in me, I shall be satisfied, Job xxviii. 14. The creature saith concerning satisfaction, 'It is not in me.' If we go for happiness to the creature, we go to the wrong box: only heaven's glory is commensurate to the vast desires of an immortal soul. A Christian, bathing himself in these rivers of pleasures, cries out in a divine extacy, I have enough. The soul is never satisfied till it hath God for its portion, and heaven for its haven. Dissatisfaction ariseth from some defect, but God is an infinite good, and there can be no defect in that which is infinite.

3. The glory of heaven's kingdom is pure and unmixed; the streams of paradise are not muddied, *omnia clara, omnia jucunda*; there, that gold hath no alloy: no bitter ingredient in that glory, but pure as the honey-drops from the comb; there is a rose grows without prickles, the rose of Sharon; there, is ease without pain: honour without disgrace, life without death.

4. The glory of this kingdom is constantly exhilarating and refreshing; there is fulness but no surfeit. Worldly comforts, though sweet, yet in time grow stale: a down-bed pleareth a while, but within a while we are weary, and would rise. Too much pleasure is a pain; but the glory of heaven doth never surfeit or nauseate; the reason is, because, as there are all rarities imaginable, so every moment fresh delights spring from God into the glorified soul.

5. The glory of this kingdom is distributed to every individual saint: in an earthly kingdom, the crown goes but to one, a crown will but fit one head; but in that kingdom above the

crown goes to all, Rev. i. 6. All the elect are kings. The land is settled chiefly upon the heir, and the rest are all provided for ; but, in the kingdom of heaven, all the saints are heirs, Rom. viii. 17. 'Heirs of God, and co-heirs with Christ.' God hath land enough to give to all his heirs.

6. Lucid and transparent. The kingdom of heaven is adorned and bespangled with light, 1 Tim. vi. 16. Light is the glory of the creation, Eccl. xi. 7. 'The light is sweet.' Hell is a dark dungeon, Matth. xxii. 13. 'Fire, but no light.' The kingdom of heaven is a *diaphanum*, all embroidered with light, clear as crystal. How can there want light, where Christ the Sun of righteousness displays his golden beams? Rev. xxi. 23. 'The glory of the Lord did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.'

7. The glory of this kingdom is adequate and proportionable to the desire of the soul. In creature-fruitions, that which doth recommend them, and set them off to us, is suitableness : the content of marriage doth not lie either in beauty of portion, but the suitableness of disposition. The excellency of a feast is, when the meat is suited to the palate ; this is one ingredient in the glory of heaven, it exactly suits the desires of the glorified saints ; we shall not say in heaven, here is a dish I do not love ! There shall be music suits the ear, the anthems of angels ; and food that suits with the glorified palate, the hidden manna of God's love.

8. The glory of this kingdom will be seasonable. The seasonableness of a mercy adds to its beauty and sweetness ; it is like apples of gold in pictures of silver. After an hard winter in this cold climate, will it not be seasonable to have the spring-flowers of glory appear, and the singing of the birds of paradise come? when we have been wearied, and even tired out in battle with sin and Satan, will not a crown be seasonable?

Qu. *Wherein the kingdom of heaven infinitely excels all the kingdoms of the earth?*

Ans. 1. It excels in the architect : other kingdoms have men to raise their structures, but God himself laid the first stone in this kingdom, Heb. xi. 10. This kingdom is of the greatest antiquity ; God was the first king and founder of it ; no angel was worthy to lay a stone in this building.

2. This heavenly kingdom excels in altitude ; it is higher situated than any kingdom ; the higher any thing is, the more excellent : the fire, being the most sublime element, is most noble. The kingdom of heaven is seated above all the visible orbs ; there is, 1. The airy heaven, which is the space from the earth to the sphere of the moon. 2. The starry heaven, the place where are the planets of an higher elevation, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars. 3. The *coelum empyraeum*, the empyrian heaven,

which Paul calls the third heaven : where Christ is, there is the kingdom of glory situated. This kingdom is so high, that no scaling ladders of enemies can reach it ; so high, that the old serpent cannot shoot up his fiery darts to it. If wicked men could build their nests among the stars, yet the least believer would shortly be above them.

3. The kingdom of heaven excels all others in splendor and riches ; it is described by precious stones, Rev. xxi. 19. What are all the rarities of the earth to this kingdom, coasts of pearl, rocks of diamonds, islands of spices ? what are the wonders of the world to it, the Egyptian pyramids, the temple of Diana, the pillar of the sun offered to Jupiter ? what a rich kingdom is that where God will lay out all his cost ? Those who are poor in the world, yet, as soon as they come into this kingdom, grow rich, as rich as the angels ; other kingdoms are enriched with gold, this is enriched with the Deity.

4. The kingdom of heaven excels all other kingdoms in holiness. Kingdoms on earth are for the most part unholy : there is a common shore of luxury and uncleanness running in them : kingdoms are stages for sin to be acted on, Isa. xxviii. 8. ‘ All tables are full of vomit.’ But the kingdom of heaven is so holy, that it will not mix with any corruption, Rev. xxi. 27. ‘ There shall enter into it nothing that defileth.’ It is so pure a soil, that no serpent of sin will breed there : there is beauty which is not stained with lust, and honour which is not swelled with pride. Holiness is the brightest jewel of the crown of heaven.

5. The kingdom of heaven excels all other kingdoms in its pacific nature ; it is *regnum pacis*, a kingdom of peace. Peace is the glory of a kingdom ; *pax una triumphis innumeris melior*. A king’s crown is more adorned with the white lily of peace, than when it is beset with the red roses of a bloody war. But where shall we find an uninterrupted peace upon earth ? Either home-bred divisions, or foreign invasions, 2 Chron. xv. 5. ‘ There was no peace to him that went out, or to him that came in.’ But the kingdom of heaven is a kingdom of peace ; there are no enemies to conflict with ; all Christ’s enemies shall be ‘ under his feet,’ Psalm cx. i. The gates of that kingdom shall stand open, Rev. xxi. 23. ‘ The gates shall not be shut at all ;’ to shew, that there is no fear of an assault of an enemy : the saints, when they die, are said to enter into peace, Isa. lvii. 2. There is no beating of drums or roaring of cannons, but the voice of harpers harping, in token of peace, Rev. xiv. 2. In heaven, ‘ righteousness and peace kiss each other.’

6. The kingdom of heaven excels in magnitude ; it is of vast dimensions. Though the gate of the kingdom be strait, we must pass into it through the strait gate of mortification ; yet, when once we are in, it is very large : though there be an in-

numerable company of saints and angels, yet there is room enough for them. The kingdom of heaven may be called by the name of that well, Gen. xxvi. 22. 'Jacob called the name of it Rehoboth; for he said, now the Lord hath made room for us.' Thou, who art now confined to a small cottage, when thou comest into the celestial kingdom, thou shalt not be straitened for room. As every star hath a large orb to move in, so it shall be with the saints, when they shall shine as stars in the kingdom of heaven.

7. The kingdom of heaven excels in unity; all the inhabitants agree together in love: love will be the perfume and music of heaven; as love to God will be intense, so to the saints. Perfect love, as it casts out fear, so it casts out envy and discord. Those Christians who could not live quietly together on earth (which was the blemish of their profession) yet, in the kingdom of heaven, the fire of strife shall cease; there shall be no vilifying, or censuring one another, or raking into one another's sores, but all shall be tied together with the heart-strings of love; there Luther and Zuinglius are agreed: Satan cannot put in his cloven foot there to make divisions; there shall be perfect harmony and concord, and not one jarring string in the saints' music. It were worth dying to be in that kingdom.

8. This kingdom exceeds all earthly in joy and pleasure; therefore it is called paradise, 2 Cor. xii. 4. For delight: there are all things to cause pleasure; there is the water of life pure as crystal; there is the honey-comb of God's love dropping, it is called 'entering into the joy of our Lord.' Matth. xxv. 23. There are two things which cause joy.

(1.) Separation from sin shall be shaken off, then joy follows. There can no more be sorrow in heaven, than there can be joy in hell.

2. Perfect union with Christ: joy, as Aristotle saith, flows from union with the object. When our union with Christ shall be perfect, then our joy shall be full: if the joy of faith be so great, 1 Pet. i. 8. Then what will the joy of sight be? Joseph gave his brethren provision for the way, but the full sacks of corn were kept till they came to their father's house: God gives the saints a taste of joy here, but the full sacks are kept till they come to heaven. Not only the organical parts, the outward senses, the eye, ear, taste, shall be filled with joy; but the heart of a glorified saint shall be filled with joy. The understanding, will and affections are such a triangle, as none can fill but the Trinity: there must needs be infinite joy, where nothing is seen but beauty; nothing is tasted but love.

9. This kingdom of heaven exceeds all earthly in self-perfection: other kingdoms are defective, they have not all provision within themselves, but are fain to traffic abroad to supply their

wants at home : king Solomon did send to Ophir for gold, 2 Chron. viii. 18. But there is no defect in the kingdom of heaven ; it hath all commodities of its own growth, Rev. xxi. 7. There is the pearl of price, the morning-star, the mountains of spices, the bed of love ; there are those sacred rarities, where-with God and angels are delighted.

10. This kingdom of heaven excels all other in honour and nobility. It doth not only equal them in the ensigns of royalty, the throne and white robes ; but it doth far transcend them : other kings are of the blood royal ; but they in this heavenly kingdom are born of God : other kings converse with nobles ; the saints glorified are fellow-communers with angels : they have a more noble crown, it is made of the flowers of paradise, and is a crown that fadeth not away, 1 Pet. v. 4. They sit on a better throne : king Solomon, 1 Kings x. 18. sat on a throne of ivory overlaid with gold ; but the saints are in heaven higher advanced, they sit with Christ upon his throne, Rev. iii. 21. They shall judge the princes and great ones on the earth, 1 Cor. xvi. 2. This honour have all the saints glorified.

11. This kingdom of heaven excels all others in healthfulness. Death is a worm that is ever feeding at the root of our gourd ; kingdoms are oft hospitals of sick persons ; but the kingdom of heaven is a most healthful climate : physicians there are out of date ; no distemper there, no passing bell, or bill of mortality, Luke xx. 36. ‘ Neither can they die any more.’ In the heavenly climate are no ill vapours to breed diseases, but a sweet aromatical smell coming from Christ ; all his garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia.

12. This kingdom of heaven excels in duration, it abides for ever. Suppose earthly kingdoms to be more glorious than they are, their foundations of gold, their walls of pearl, their windows of sapphire ; yet they are corruptible and fading, Hos. i. 4. ‘ I will cause the kingdom to cease.’ ‘ Troy and Athens now lie buried in their ruins ; *jam seges est ubi Troja fuit*. Mortality is the disgrace of all earthly kingdoms ; but the kingdom of heaven hath eternity written upon it, it is an everlasting kingdom, 2 Pet. i. 11. It is founded upon a strong basis, God’s omnipotency ; this kingdom the saints shall never be turned out of, or be deposed from their throne, as some kings have been, viz. Henry VI. &c. But shall reign for ever and ever, Rev. xxi. 5.

How should all this affect our hearts ? What should we mind but this kingdom of heaven, which doth more outshine all the kingdoms of the earth, than the sun outshines the light of a taper ?

4. Qu. *When shall this kingdom be bestowed ?*

Ans. This glory in the kingdom of heaven shall be begun at death, but not perfected till the resurrection.

1. The saints shall enter upon the kingdom of glory immediately after death; before their bodies are buried, their souls shall be crowned, Phil. i. 23. 'Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ;' from this connection, departing, and being with Christ, we see clearly that there is a *jubtitus transitus*, speedy passage from death to glory; no sooner is the soul of a believer divorced from the body, but it presently goes to Christ, 2 Cor. v. 8. 'Absent from the body, present with the Lord.' It were better for believers to stay here, if immediately after death they were not with Christ in glory; for here the saints are daily increasing their grace; here they may have many *praelibamina*, sweet tastes of God's love; so that it were better to stay here, if their soul should sleep in their body, and they should not have a speedy sight of God in glory: but this is the consolation of believers, they shall not stay long from their kingdom; it is but winking and they shall see God. It will be a blessed change to a believer, from a desert to a paradise, from a bloody battle to a victorious crown: and a sudden change: no sooner did Lazarus die, but he had a convoy of angels to conduct his soul to the kingdom of glory. You who now are full of bodily diseases, scarce a day well, Ps. xxxi. 10. 'My life is spent with grief;' be of good comfort, you may be happy before you are aware; before another week or month be over, you may be in the kingdom of glory, and then all tears shall be wiped away.

2. The glory in the kingdom of heaven, will be fully perfected at the resurrection, and general day of judgment; then the bodies and souls of believers will be reunited; what joy will there be at the reunion and meeting together of the soul and body of a saint! O what a welcome will the soul give to the body! "O my dear body, thou didst often join with me in prayer, and now thou shalt join with me in praise; thou wert willing to suffer with me, and now thou shalt reign with me; thou wert sown a vile body, but now thou art made like Christ's glorious body; we were once for a time divorced, but now we are married, and crowned together in a kingdom, and shall mutually congratulate each other's felicity."

5. Qu. *Wherein appears the certainty and infallibility of this kingdom of glory?*

Ans. That this blessed kingdom shall be bestowed on the saints, is beyond all dispute.

1. God hath promised it, Luke xii. 32. 'It is your Father's good pleasure to give you a kingdom.' Luke xxii. 29. 'I appoint unto you a kingdom.' [Gr. *diatithemai*] 'I bequeath it as my last-will and testament.' Hath God promised a king-

dom, and will he not make it good? God's promise is better than any bond, Tit. i. 2. 'In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie hath promised.' The whole earth hangs upon the word of God's power; and cannot our faith hang upon the word of his promise?

2. There is a price laid down for this kingdom. Heaven is not only a kingdom which God hath promised, but which Christ hath purchased; it is called a purchased possession, Eph. i. 14. Though this kingdom is given us freely, yet Christ bought it with the price of his blood; Christ's blood is an heaven procuring blood, Heb. x. 19. 'Having boldness to enter into the holiest (*i. e.* into Heaven) by the blood of Jesus.' *Crux Christi clavis paradisi*, Christ's blood is the key that opens the gates of heaven. Should not the saints have this kingdom, then Christ should lose his purchase; Christ on the cross was in hard travail, Isa. xiii. 11. He travailed to bring forth salvation to the elect: should not they possess the kingdom when they die, Christ should lose his travail, all his pangs and agonies of soul upon the cross should be in vain.

3. Christ prays that the saints may have this kingdom settled upon them, John xvii. 24. 'Father, I will, that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am,' *i. e.* in heaven. This is Christ's prayer, that the saints may be with him in his kingdom, and be bespangled with some of the beams of his glory: now, if they should not go into this heavenly kingdom, then Christ's prayer will be frustrated: but that cannot be, for he is God's favourite, John xi. 42. 'I know thou hearest me always;' and besides, what Christ prays for, he hath power to give: observe the manner of Christ's prayer, 'Father, I will;' Father, there he prays as man; 'I will;' there he gives as God.

4. The saints must have this blessed kingdom by virtue of Christ's ascension, John xx. 17. 'I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and to your God.' Where lies the comfort of this? Here it lies, Jesus Christ ascended to take possession of heaven for all believers. As an husband takes up land in another country in the behalf of his wife; so Christ went to take possession of heaven, in the behalf of all believers. John xiv. 2. 'I go to prepare a place for you.' My ascension is to make all things ready against your coming; I go to prepare the heavenly mansions for you. The flesh that Christ hath taken into heaven, is a sure pledge that all our flesh and bodies shall be where he is ere long. Christ did not ascend to heaven, as a private person, but as a public person, for the good of all believers: his ascension was a certain fore-runner of the saints' ascending into heaven.

5. The elect must have this blessed kingdom, in regard of the previous work of the Spirit in their hearts. They have the be-

ginning of the kingdom of heaven in them here ; grace is heaven begun in the soul : besides, God gives them *primitus spiritus*, the first-fruits of the Spirit, Rom. viii. 23. The first-fruits are the comforts of the Spirit. These first-fruits under the law were a certain sign to the Jews of the full crop of vintage which they should after receive : the first-fruits of the Spirit consisting of joy and peace, do assure the saints of the full vintage of glory they shall be ever reaping in the kingdom of God ; and the saints in this life are said to have the earnest of the Spirit in their hearts, 2 Cor. v. 5. As an earnest is part of payment, and an assurance of payment in full to be made in due time ; so God's spirit in the hearts of believers, giving them his comforts, bestows on them an earnest, or taste of glory, which doth further assure them of that full reward, which they shall have in the kingdom of heaven, 1 Pet. i. 18. ' Believing, ye rejoice,' there is the earnest of heaven, *ver.* 9. ' Receiving the end of your faith,' salvation, there is the full payment.

6. The elect must have this blessed kingdom, by virtue of their coalition and union with Jesus Christ. They are members of Christ, therefore they must be where their head is. Indeed the Arminians hold, that a justified person may fall from grace, and so his union with Christ may be dissolved, and the kingdom lost ; but I will demand of them, can Christ lose a member of his body ? Then he is not perfect ; and if Christ may lose one member of his body, why not as well all, by the same reason ? And so he shall be an head without a body : but be assured a believer's union with Christ cannot be broken, and so long he cannot be hindred of the kingdom, John xvii. 19. What was said of Christ's natural body is as true of his mystical, John x. 39. ' A bone of him shall not be broken.' Look how every bone and limb of Christ's natural body was raised up out of the grave, and carried into heaven : so shall every member of his mystical body be carried up into glory.

7. We read of some who have been translated into this kingdom. Paul had a sight of it, for he was caught up into the third heaven, 2 Cor. xii. And the converted thief on the cross was translated into glory, Luke xxiii. 43. ' This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.' By all that hath been said, it is most evident, that believers have a glorious kingdom laid up for them in reversion, and that they shall go to this kingdom when they die : there are none that doubt of the certainty of the heavenly kingdom, but such as doubt of the verity of scripture.

6. Qu. *Why should we so earnestly pray for this heavenly kingdom, ' Thy kingdom come ?'*

. Ans. 1. Because it is a kingdom worth the praying for ; it exceeds the glory of all the earthly kingdoms, it hath ' gates of

pearl,' Rev. xxi. 21. We have heard of a cabinet of pearl, but when did we hear of gates of pearl? In that kingdom is the bed of love, the mountains of spices; there are the cherubims, not to keep us out, but to welcome us into the kingdom. Heaven is a kingdom worth the praying for; there is nothing wanting in that kingdom which may complete the saints' happiness; for, wherein doth happiness consist? Is it in knowledge? We 'shall know as we are known:' is it in dainty fair? we shall be at the 'marriage supper of the Lamb.' Is it in rich apparel? We shall be 'clothed in long white robes: is it in delicious music? We shall hear the choir of angels singing: is it in dominion? We shall reign as kings and judge angels: Is it in pleasure? 'We shall enter into the joy of our Lord?' Sure then this kingdom is worth praying for, 'Thy kingdom come.' Would God give us a vision of heaven a while, as he did Stephen who 'saw heaven opened,' Acts vii. 56. We should fall into a trance; and being a little recovered out of it, how importunately would we put up this petition, 'Thy kingdom come.'

2. We must pray for this kingdom of glory, because God will not bestow this kingdom on any without prayer, Rom. ii. 7. 'They who seek for glory and immortality,' and how do we seek but by prayer? God hath promised a kingdom, and we must by prayer put the bond in suit: God is not so lavish as to throw away a kingdom on them who do not ask it. And certainly, if Christ himself, who had merited glory, did yet pray for it, John xvii. 5. 'Now, O Father, glorify me with thy own self;' how much more ought we to pray for the excellent glory, who have this kingdom granted as a charter of God's mere grace and favour.

3. We must pray that the kingdom of glory may come, that by going into it, we may make an end of sinning. I think sometimes, what a blessed time it will be, never to have a sinful thought more! though we must not pray, 'Thy kingdom come,' out of discontent, because we would be rid of the troubles and crosses of this life. This was Jonah's fault; he would die in a pet, because God took away his gourd; 'Lord (saith he) take away my life too,' Jonah iv. 8. But we must pray, 'Thy kingdom come,' out of an holy design that the fetters of corruption may be pulled off, and we may be as the angels, those virgin-spirits, who never sin. This made the church pray, Rev. xxii. 20. *Veni Domine Jesu.*

4. Because that all Christ's enemies shall be put under his feet: the devil shall have no more power to tempt, nor wicked men to persecute; the antichristian hierarchy, shall be pulled down, and Zion's glory shall shine as a lamp, and the Turkish strength shall be broken.

5. We must pray earnestly that the kingdom of glory may come, that we may see God 'face to face,' and have an uninterrupted and eternal communion with him in the empyrean heaven. Moses desired but a glimpse of God's glory, Exod. xxxiii. 18. How then should we pray to see him in all his embroidered robes of glory, when he shall shine ten thousand times brighter than the sun in its meridian splendor! here, in this life, we do rather desire God, than enjoy him; how earnestly therefore should we pray, 'thy kingdom of glory come!' the beholding and enjoying God will be the diamond in the ring, the very quintessence of glory. And must we pray, 'thy kingdom come?' How then are they ever like to come to heaven, who never pray for it? Though God gives some profane persons 'daily bread,' who never pray for it; yet he will not give them a kingdom, who never pray for it. God may feed them, but he will never crown them.

Use I. Of information.

1. *Branch.* From all this you see then, that there is nothing within the whole sphere of religion imposed upon unreasonable terms. When God bids us serve him, it is no unreasonable request, he will out of free grace enthrone us in a kingdom. When we hear of repentance, steeping our souls in brinish tears for sin; or of mortification, beheading our king-sin, we are ready to grumble, and think this is hard and unreasonable: 'but, do we serve God for nought?' Is it not infinite bounty to reward us with a kingdom? This kingdom is as far above our thoughts, as it is beyond our deserts. No man can say, without wrong to God, that he is an hard master; though he sets us about hard work, yet he is no hard master: God gives double pay; he gives great vails in his service, sweet joy and peace; and a great reward after, 'an eternal weight of glory.' God gives the spring-flowers, and a crop; he settles upon us such a kingdom as exceeds our faith. *Premium quod fide non attingitur*, Aug. 'Such as mortal eye hath not seen, nor can it enter into the heart of man to conceive,' 1 Cor. ii. 9. Alas, what an infinite difference is there between duty enjoined, and the kingdom prepared! what is the shedding of a tear to a crown? So that God's 'commands are not grievous,' 1 John v. 3. Our service cannot be so hard, as a kingdom is sweet.

2. *Branch.* See hence the royal bounty of God to his children, that he hath prepared a kingdom for them, a kingdom bespangled with glory; it is infinitely above the model we can draw of it in our thoughts. The painter going to draw the picture of Helena, as not being able to draw her beauty to the life, drew her face covered with a vail: so, when we speak of the kingdom of heaven, we must draw a vail, we cannot set it forth in all its orient beauty and magnificence; gold and pearl

do but faintly shadow it out, Rev. xxi. The glory of this kingdom is better felt than expressed.

1. They who inherit this kingdom are *amicti stolis albis*, 'clothed with white robes,' Rev. vii. 9. White robes denote three things : (1.) Their dignity ; the Persians were arrayed in white, in token of honour. (2.) Their purity ; the magistrates among the Romans were clothed in white, therefore called *candidati*, to shew their integrity : thus the queen the Lamb's wife is arrayed in fine linen, pure and white, which is the 'righteousness of the saints,' Rev. xix. 8. (3.) Their joy : white is an emblem of joy, Eccl. ix. 7. 'Eat thy bread with joy, let thy garments be always white.'

2. The dwellers in this kingdom have 'palms in their hands,' Rev. vii. 9. In token of victory. They are conquerors over the world : and, being victors, they have now palm-branches.

3. They sit upon the throne with Christ, Rev. iii. 21. When Cæsar returned from conquering his enemies, there was set for him a chair of state in the senate, and a throne in the theatre. Thus the saints in glory, after their heroic victories, shall sit upon a throne with Christ. Here is royal bounty in God, to bestow such an illustrious kingdom upon the saints. 'Tis a mercy to be pardoned, but what is it to be crowned ? 'Tis a mercy to be delivered from wrath to come, but what is it to be invested into a kingdom ? 'Behold, what manner of love is this !' Earthly princes may bestow great gifts and donations upon their subjects, but they keep the kingdom to themselves. Though king Pharaoh advanced Joseph to honour, and took the ring off his finger and gave him, yet he would keep the kingdom to himself, Gen. xli. 40. But God enthrones the saints in a kingdom ; God thinks nothing too good for his children ; we are ready to think much of a tear, a prayer, or to sacrifice a sin for him ; but he doth not think much to bestow a kingdom upon us.

3. *Branch.* See hence, that religion is no ignominious, disgraceful thing. Satan labours to cast all the odium and reproach upon it that he can ; that it is devout frenzy, folly in grain, Acts xxviii. 22. 'As for this sect, we know that it is every where spoken against.' But wise men measure things by the end ; what is the end of a religious life ? It ends in a kingdom. Would a prince regard the slights of a few frantics, when he is going to be crowned ? You who are beginners, bind their reproaches as a crown about your head, despise their censures as much as their praise ; a kingdom is a-coming.

4. *Branch.* See what contrary ways the godly and the wicked go at death ; the godly go to a kingdom, the wicked to a prison : the devil is the jailor, and they are bound with the 'chains of darkness,' Jude 6. But what are these chains ? Not

iron chains, but worse; the chain of God's decree, decreeing them to torment; and the chain of God's power, whereby he binds them fast under wrath: this is the deplorable condition of impenitent sinners, they do not go to a kingdom when they die, but to a prison. O think what horror and despair will possess the wicked, when they see themselves ingulphed in misery, and their condition hopeless, helpless, endless; they are in a fiery prison, and no possibility of getting out. A servant under the law, who had an hard master, yet every seventh year was a year of release when he might go free; but in hell there is no year of release when the damned shall go free; the fire, the worm, the prison, are eternal. If the whole world, from earth to heaven, were filled with grains of sand, and once in a thousand years an angel should come and fetch away one grain of sand, how many millions of ages would pass before that vast heap of sand would be quite spent: yet if after all this time the sinner might come out of hell, there were some hope; but this word *ever* breaks the heart with despair.

5. *Branch.* See then that which may make us in love with holy duties; every duty, spiritually performed, brings us a step nearer to the kingdom: *finis dat amabilitatem mediis*. He whose heart is set on riches, counts trading pleasant, because it brings in riches: if our hearts are set upon heaven, we shall love duty, because it brings us by degrees to the kingdom; we are going to heaven in the way of duty. Holy duties increase grace; and as grace ripens, so glory hastens; the duties of religion are irksome to flesh and blood, but we should look upon them as spiritual chariots to carry us apace to the heavenly kingdom. The protestants in France called their church paradise; and well they might, because the ordinances did lead them to the paradise of God. As every flower hath its sweetness, so would every duty, if we would look upon it as giving us a lift nearer heaven.

6. *Branch.* It shews us what little cause the children of God have, to envy the prosperity of the wicked. *Quis arario quis plenius loculis indiget*, Sen. The wicked have the 'waters of a full cup wrung out to them,' Psal. lxxiii. 10. As if they had a monopoly of happiness, they have all they can desire; nay, 'they have more than their heart can wish,' Psal. lxxii. 10. They steep themselves in pleasure, Job xxi. 12. 'They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ.' The wicked are high, when God's people are low in the world: the goats clamber up the mountains of preferment, when Christ's sheep are below in the valley of tears: the wicked are clothed in purple, while the godly are in sackcloth; the prosperity of the wicked is a great stumbling block: this made Averroes deny a providence, and made Asaph say, 'Surely I

‘have cleansed my heart in vain,’ Psal. lxxiii. 12. But there is no cause of envy at their prosperity, if we consider two things.

1. ‘This is all they must have, Luke xvi. 25. ‘Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things :’ thou hadst all thy heaven here. Luther calls the Turkish empire a bone which God casts to dogs.

2. ‘That God hath laid up better things for his children : he hath prepared a kingdom of glory for them ; they shall have the beatifical vision ; they shall hear the angels sing in concert ; they shall be crowned with the pleasures of paradise for ever. O then envy not the flourishing prosperity of the wicked ; they go thro’ fair way to execution, and the godly go thro’ foul way to coronation.

7. *Branch.* Is there a kingdom of glory a-coming ? Then see how happy all the saints are at death, they go to a kingdom ; they shall see God’s face, which shines ten thousand times brighter than the sun in its meridian glory. The godly at death shall be installed into their honour, and have the crown royal set upon their head. They have, in the kingdom of heaven, the quintessence of all delights : they have the water of life clear as crystal ; they have all aromatic perfumes ; they feed not on the dew of Hermon, but the manna of angels : they lie in Christ’s bosom, that bed of spices. There is such a pleasant variety in the happiness of heaven, that after millions of years it will be as fresh and desirable as at the first hour’s enjoying. In the kingdom of heaven, the saints are crowned with all those perfections, which the human nature is capable of : the desires of the glorified saints are infinitely satisfied ; there is nothing absent, that they could wish might be enjoyed, there is nothing present that they could wish might be removed. They who are got into this kingdom would be loth to come back to the earth again, it would be much to their loss ; they would not leave the fatness and sweetness of the olive, to court the bramble ; the things which tempt us, they would scorn. What are golden bags to the golden beams of the Sun of righteousness ? In the kingdom of heaven there is glory in its highest elevation ; in that kingdom is knowledge without ignorance, holiness without sin, beauty without blemish, strength without weakness, light without darkness, riches without poverty, ease without pain, liberty without restraint, rest without labour, joy without sorrow, love without hatred, plenty without surfeit, honour without disgrace, health without sickness, peace without war, contentation without cessation. O the happiness of those that die in the Lord, they go into this blessed kingdom ! And if they are so happy when they die, then let me make two inferences.

1. *Infer.* What little cause have the saints to fear death? Are any afraid of going to a kingdom? what is there in this world should make us desirous to stay here? do we not see God dishonoured, and how can we bear it? is not this world a 'valley of tears,' and do we weep to leave it? are not we in a wilderness among fiery serpents, and are we afraid to go from these serpents? Our best friends live above: God is ever displaying the banner of his love in heaven, and is there any love like his? are there any sweeter smiles, or softer embraces than his? what news so welcome as leaving the world, and going to a kingdom? Christian, thy dying day will be thy wedding day, and dost thou fear it? is a slave afraid to be redeemed? is a virgin afraid to be matched into the crown? Death may take away a few worldly comforts, but it gives that which is better; it takes away a flower, and gives a jewel; it takes away a short lease, and gives land of inheritance. If the saints possess a kingdom when they die, they have no cause to fear death. A prince would not be afraid to cross the sea, though tempestuous, if he were sure to be crowned as soon as he came at shore.

2. *Infer.* If the godly are so happy when they die, they go to a kingdom; then, what little cause have we to mourn immoderately for the death of godly friends? shall we mourn for their preferment? why should we shed tears immoderately for them who have all tears wiped from their eyes? why should we be swallowed up of grief, for them who are swallowed up of joy? They are gone to their kingdom; they are not lost, but gone a little before; not perished, but translated, *Non amissi sed præmissi*, Cyprian. They are removed for their advantage; as if one should be removed out of a smoky cottage to a palace. Elijah was removed in a fiery chariot to heaven: shall Elisha weep inordinately because he enjoys not the company of Elijah? Shall Jacob weep when he knows his son Joseph is preferred, and made chief ruler in Egypt? We should not be excessive in grief, when we know our godly friends are advanced to a kingdom. I confess, when any of our relations die in their impenitency, there is just cause of mourning, but not when our friends take their flight to glory. David lost two sons, Absalom a wicked son, he mourned for him bitterly; he lost the child he had by Bathsheba, he mourned not when the child was departed. St. Ambrose gives the reason, David had a good hope, nay, assurance that the child was translated into heaven, but he doubted of Absalom; he died in his sins, therefore David wept so for him, 'O Absalom, my son, my son.' But though we are to weep to think any of our flesh should burn in hell, yet let us not be cast down for them who are so highly preferred at

death as to a kingdom. Our godly friends who die in the Lord, are in that blessed estate, and are crowned with such infinite delights, that if we could hear them speak to us out of heaven, they would say, ‘weep not for us, but weep for yourselves,’ Luke xxiii. 28. We are in our kingdom, weep not at our preferment, ‘but weep for yourselves,’ who are in a sinful sorrowful world; you are tossing on the troublesome waves, but we are got to the haven; you are fighting with temptations, while we are wearing a victorious crown; ‘weep not for us, but weep for yourselves.’

8. *Branch.* See the wisdom of the godly, they have the serpent’s eye in the dove’s head, ‘wise virgins,’ Matt. xxv. 2. Their wisdom appears in their choice, they choose that which will bring them to a kingdom, they choose grace, and what is grace but the seed of glory? They choose Christ with his cross, but this cross leads to a crown. ‘Moses chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God,’ Heb. xi. 25. It was a wise rational choice, he knew if he suffered he should reign. At the day of judgment, those whom the world accounted foolish, will appear to be wise; they made a prudent choice, they chose holiness, and what is happiness but the quintessence of holiness? ‘They chose affliction with the people of God;’ but through this purgatory of affliction, they pass to paradise. God will proclaim the saints’ wisdom before men and angels.

9. *Branch.* See the folly of those who, for vain pleasures and profits, will lose such a glorious kingdom: like that cardinal of France, who said, “He would lose his part in paradise, if he might keep his cardinalship in Paris.” I may say, as Eccl. ix. 3. ‘Madness is in their heart.’ Lyfimachus, for a draught of water, lost his empire; so, for a draught of sinful pleasure, these will lose heaven. We too much resemble our grandfather Adam, who for an apple lost paradise: many for trifles, to get a shilling more in the shop or bushel, will venture the loss of heaven. This will be an aggravation of the sinner’s torment, to think how foolishly he was undone; for a flash of impure joy he lost an eternal weight of glory. Would it not vex one who is the lord of a manor to think he should part with his stately inheritance for a fit of music? such are they who let heaven go for a song. This will make the Devil insult at the last day, to think how he had gulled men, and made them lose their souls and their happiness for ‘lying vanities.’ If Satan could make good his brag, in giving all the glory and kingdoms of the world, it could not countervail the loss of the celestial kingdom. All the tears in hell are not sufficient to lament the loss of heaven.

Use II. Of reproof.

1. *Branch.* It reproves such as do not at all look after this kingdom of glory; as if all we say about heaven were but a

romance, they do not mind it. That they mind it not, appears, because they do not labour to have the kingdom of grace set up in their hearts : if they have some thoughts of this kingdom, yet it is in a dull careless manner ; they serve God, as if they served him not ; they do not *vires exerere*, put forth their strength for the heavenly kingdom. How industrious were the saints of old for this kingdom ? Phil. iii. 13. ' Reaching forth unto those things which are before ; ' the *Greek* word is *epekteinominos*, stretching out the neck ; a metaphor from racers, that strain every limb, and reach forward to lay hold on the prize. *Luther* spent three hours a-day in prayer ' Anna, the prophetess, departed not from the temple, but served God with fasting and prayers night and day,' Luke ii. 37. How zealous and industrious were the martyrs to get into this heavenly kingdom ! they wore their fetters as ornaments, snatched up torments as crowns, and embraced the flames as cheerfully as *Elijah* did the fiery chariot, which came to fetch him to heaven ; and do we not think this kingdom worth our labour ? the great pains the heathens took in their Olympic race, when they ran but for a crown made of olive intermixed with gold, will rise up in judgment against such as take little or no pains in seeking after the kingdom of glory. The dulness of many in seeking after heaven is such, as if they did not believe there was such a kingdom ; or as if it would not countervail their labour ; or as if they thought it were indifferent whether they obtained this kingdom or not, which is as much as to say, whether they were saved or not ; whether they were crowned in glory, or chained as galley-slaves in hell for ever.

2. *Branch*. It reproves them who spend their sweat more in getting the world than the kingdom of heaven, Phil. iii. 19. ' Who mind earthly things.' The world is the great *Diana* they cry up, as if they would fetch happiness out of the earth which God hath cursed ; they labour for honour and riches. Many are like *Korah* and *Dathan*, the earth swallowed them up, Numb. xvi. 32. So the earth swallows up their time and thoughts : these, if they are not pagans, yet they are infidels ; they do not believe there is such a kingdom : they go for Christians, yet question that great article in their faith, *life everlasting* : these, like the serpent, lick the dust. O what is there in the world, that we should so idolize it ! when Christ and heaven are not regarded ? What hath Christ done for you ? Died for your sins : what will the world do for you ? Can it pacify an angry conscience ? Can it procure God's favour ? Can it flee death ? Can it bribe our judge ? Can it purchase for you a place in the kingdom of heaven ? O how are men bewitched with worldly profits and honours ! that for these things they will let go paradise. It was a good prayer of *St. Bernard*, *Sic*

possideamus mundana, ut non perdamus æterna—Lo, let us so possess things temporal, that we do not lose things eternal.

3. *Branch.* It reproves such who delay and put off seeking this kingdom till it be too late : like the foolish virgins who came when the door was shut. *Mora trahit periculum.* People let the lamp of life blaze out : and when the symptoms of death are upon them, and they know not what else to do, now will look up to the kingdom of heaven : Christ bids them seek God's kingdom first, and they will seek it last ; they put off the kingdom of heaven to a death-bed, as if it were as easy to make their peace as to make their will. How many have lost the heavenly kingdom, through delays and procrastinations ! Plutarch reports of Archias the Lacedemonian, being among his cups, one delivered him a letter, and desired him to read it presently, being of serious business ; saith he, *seria cras*, I will mind serious things to-morrow ; and that night he was slain. Thou that sayest, thou wilt look after the kingdom of heaven to-morrow, knowest not but that thou mayest be in hell before to-morrow : sometimes death comes suddenly, it strikes without giving warning. What folly is it putting off seeking the kingdom of heaven till the day of grace expire, till the radical moisture be spent ? as if a man should begin to run a race when a fit of the gout takes him.

4. *Branch.* It reproves such as were once great zealots in religion, and did seem to be touched with a coal from God's altar, but since they have cooled in their devotion, and have left off the pursuing the celestial kingdom, Hof. viii. 3. ' Israel hath cast off the thing that is good : ' there is no face of religion to be seen, they have left off the house of prayer, and gone to play-houses : they have left off pursuing the heavenly kingdom.

Qu. Whence is this ?

Ans. 1. For want of a supernatural principle of grace. That branch must needs die, which hath no root to grow upon. That which moves from a principle of life lasts, as the beating of the pulse : but that which moves only from an artificial spring, when the spring is done, the motion ceaseth ; the hypocrite's religion is artificial, not vital, he acts from the outward spring of applause or gain, and if that spring be down, his motion toward heaven ceaseth.

2. From unbelief, Heb. iii. 12. ' An evil heart of unbelief departing from the living God,' Pf. lxxviii. 22. ' They believed not in God.' *ver.* 41. ' They turned back.'—Sinners have hard thoughts of God, they think they may pray and hear, yet never the better, Mat. iii. 14. They question whether God will give them the kingdom at last, then they turn back, and throw away Christ's colours ; they distrust God's love, no won-

der then they desert his service ; infidelity is the root of apostacy.

3. Men leave off pursuing the heavenly kingdom ; it is from some secret lust nourished in the soul, perhaps a wanton or a covetous lust. Demas for love of the world forsook his religion, and afterwards turned priest in an idol-temple. One of Christ's own apostles was caught with a silver bait. Covetousness will make men betray a good cause, and make shipwreck of a good conscience : if there be any lust unmortified in the soul, it will bring forth the bitter fruit either of scandal or apostacy.

4. Men leave off pursuing the kingdom of heaven out of timorousness ; if they persist in religion, they may lose their places of profit, perhaps their lives. The reason (saith Aristotle) why the camelion turns into so many colours, is through excessive fear. When carnal fear prevails, it makes men change their religion, as fast as the camelion doth its colours. Many of the Jews who were great followers of Christ, when they saw the swords and staves, deserted him. What Solomon saith of the sluggard, is as true of the coward, he saith, ' There is a lion in the way,' Prov. xxii. 13. He sees dangers before him ; he would go on in the way to the kingdom of heaven, but there is a lion in the way. This is dismal, Heb. x. 38. ' If any man draw back (in the Greek, if he steals as a foldier from his colours) my soul shall have no pleasure in him.'

Use III. Of trial. Let us examine whether we shall go to this kingdom when we die : heaven is called ' a kingdom prepared,' Matth. xxv.

Qu. How shall we know this kingdom is prepared for us ?

Ans. If we are prepared for the kingdom.

Qu. How may that be known ?

Ans. By being heavenly persons : an earthly heart is no more fit for heaven, than a clod of dust is fit to be a star : there is nothing of Christ or grace in such an heart. It were a miracle to find a pearl in a gold mine ; and it is as great a miracle to find Christ the pearl of price in an earthly heart. Would we go to the kingdom of heaven ? Are we heavenly ?

1. Are we heavenly in our contemplations ? Do our thoughts run upon this kingdom ? Do we get sometimes upon mount Pisgah, and take a prospect of glory ? Thoughts are as travellers : most of David's thoughts travelled heaven's road, Psalm cxxxix. 17. Are our minds heavenlized ? Psalm xlviii. 12. ' Walk about Zion, tell the towers thereof, mark ye well her bulwarks.' Do we walk into the heavenly mount, and see what a glorious situation it is ? Do we tell the towers of that kingdom ? while a christian fixeth his thoughts on God and glory, he doth as it were tread upon the borders of the heavenly kingdom, and peep within the vail : as Moses, who had a sight

of Canaan, though he did not enter into it ; so the heavenly christian hath a sight of heaven, though he be not yet entered into it.

2. Are we heavenly in our affections ? Do we set our affections on the kingdom of heaven ? Col. iii. 2. If we are heavenly, we despise all things below in comparison of the kingdom of God ; we look upon the world but as a beautiful prison, and we cannot be much in love with our fetters, though they are made of gold ; our heart is in heaven. A stranger may be in a foreign land, to gather up his debts owing him, but he desires to be in his own kingdom and nation ; so we are here a while as in a strange land, but our desire is chiefly after the kingdom of heaven, where we shall be for ever. The world is the place of a saint's abode, not his delight : is it thus with us ? Do we, like the patriarchs of old, desire a better country, Heb. xi. 16. This is the temper of a true saint, his affections are set on the kingdom of God ; his anchor is cast in heaven, and he is carried thither with the sails of desire.

3. Are we heavenly in our speeches ? Christ after his resurrection did speak of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, Acts i. 3. Are your tongues turned to the language of the heavenly Canaan ? Mal. iii. 16. ' Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another.' Do you in your visits season your discourses with heaven ? There are many say, they hope they shall be saved, but you shall never hear them speak of the kingdom of heaven ; perhaps of their wares and drugs, or of some rich purchase they have got, but nothing of the kingdom. Can men travel together in a journey, and not speak a word of the place they are travelling to ? Are you travellers for heaven, and never speak a word of the kingdom you are travelling to ? Herein many discover they do not belong to heaven, for you shall never hear a good word come from them, *verba sunt specula mentis*, Bern. The words are the looking-glasses of the mind, they shew what the heart is.

4. Are we heavenly in our trading ? is our traffic and merchandize in heaven ? do we trade in the heavenly kingdom by faith ? A man may live in one place and trade in another ; he may live in Ireland and trade in the West-Indies : so, do we trade in the heavenly kingdom ? They shall never go to heaven when they die, who do not trade in heaven while they live. Do we send up to heaven volleys of sighs and groans ? do we send forth the ship of prayer thither, which fetcheth in returns of mercy ? is our communion with the Father and his Son Jesus ? 1 John i. 3. Phil. iii. 20.

5. Are our lives heavenly ? do we live as if we had seen the Lord with bodily eyes ? do we emulate and imitate the angels in sanctity ? do we labour to copy out Christ's life in ours ?

1 John ii. 6. 'Twas a custom among the Macedonians, on Alexander's birth-day, to wear his picture about their necks set with pearl and diamond : do we carry Christ's picture about us, and resemble him in the heavenliness of our conversation? If we are thus heavenly, then we shall go to the kingdom of heaven when we die : and truly there is a great deal of reason why we should be thus heavenly in our thoughts, affections, conversation, if we consider,

(1.) The main end why God hath given us our souls, is, that we may mind the kingdom of heaven : our souls are of a noble extraction, they are akin to the angels, a glass of the Trinity, as Plato speaks. Now, is it rational to imagine, that God would have breathed into us such noble souls only to look after sensual objects? were such bright stars made only to shoot into the earth? were these immortal souls made only to seek after dying comforts? Had this been only the end of our creation, to eat and drink, and converse with earthly objects, worle souls would have served us ; sensitive souls had been good enough for us : what need our souls be rational and divine, to do only that work which a beast may do ?

(2.) Great reason we should be heavenly in our thoughts, affections, conversation, if we consider what a blessed kingdom heaven is ; it is beyond all hyperbole : earthly kingdoms do scarce deserve the names of cottages compared with it. We read of an angel coming down from heaven, who did tread with his right-foot upon the sea, and with his left-foot on the earth, Rev. x. 2. Had we but once been in the heavenly kingdom, and viewed the superlative glory of it, how might we, in an holy scorn, trample with one foot on the earth, and with the other foot upon the sea? There are rivers of pleasure, gates of pearl, sparkling crowns, white robes ; may not this make our hearts heavenly ; it is an heavenly kingdom, and only such go into it as are heavenly.

Use IV. Of exhortation. To all in general.

1. *Branch.* If there be such a glorious kingdom to come, believe this great truth. Socinians deny it. The Rabbins say, the great dispute between Cain and Abel, was about the world to come ; Abel affirmed it, Cain denied it. This should be engraven upon our hearts as with the point of a diamond, there is a blessed kingdom in reversion, Ps. lviii. 11. ' Doubtless there is a reward for the righteous.' Let us not hesitate through unbelief ; doubting of principles is the next way to denying them. Unbelief as Samson, would pull down the pillars of religion. Be confirmed in this, there is a kingdom of glory to come ; whoever denies this, cuts asunder the main article of the creed, ' life everlasting.'

2. *Branch.* If there be such a blessed kingdom of glory to

come, let us take heed lest we miss of this kingdom ; let us fear lest we lose heaven by short shooting. Trembling, in the body a malady, in the soul a grace. This fear is not a fear of diffidence or distrust, such a fear as discourageth the soul, for such a fear frights from religion, it cuts the sinews of endeavour ; but this holy fear, lest we miss of the kingdom of heaven, is a fear of diligence : it quickens us in the use of means, and puts us forward that we may not fail of our hope, Heb. xi. 7. Noah, being moved with fear, prepared an ark. Fear is a watch-bell to awaken sleepy Christians ; it guards against security ; it is a spur to a sluggish heart : he who fears he shall come short of his journey, rides the faster. And indeed this exhortation to fear, lest we miss of this kingdom, is most necessary, if we consider two things ;

First, There are many who have gone many steps in the way to heaven, yet have fallen short of it, Mark xii. 34. ‘Thou art not far from the kingdom of God ;’ yet he was not near enough.

Qu. *How many steps may a man take in the way to the kingdom of God, yet miss of it ?*

Ans. 1. He may be adorned with civility, he may be morally righteous, he may be prudent, just, temperate, he may be free from penal statutes ; this is good, but not enough to bring a man to heaven.

2. He may hang out the flag of a glorious profession, yet fall short of the kingdom. The scribes and pharisees went far ; they sat in Moses’ chair, were expounders of the law ; they prayed, gave alms, were strict in the observation of the sabbath ; if one had got a thorn into his foot, they would not pull it out on the sabbath-day, for fear of breaking the sabbath ; they were so externally devout in God’s worship, that the Jews thought, that if but two in all the world went to heaven, the one should be a scribe and the other a Pharisee : but the mantle of their profession was not lined with sincerity : they did all for the applause of men, therefore they missed of heaven, Matth. v. 20. ‘Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of God.’

3. A man may be a frequenter of ordinances, and yet miss of the kingdom. It is a good sight to see people flock as doves to the windows of God’s house ; it is good to lie in the way where Christ passeth by : yet, be not offended, if I say, one may be an hearer of the word, and fall short of glory ; Herod heard John Baptist gladly, yet beheaded John, instead of beheading his sin : the prophet Ezekiel’s hearers did come with as much delight to his preaching, as one would do to a fit of music, Ezek. xxxiii. 32. ‘Thou art to them as a lovely song of one that hath

a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument; they hear thy words, but they do them not.' What is it to hear one's duty, and not do it? As if a physician prescribe a good receipt, but the patient doth not take it.

4. A man may have some trouble for sin, and weep for it, yet miss of the heavenly kingdom.

Qu. *Whence is this?*

Ans. 1. A sinner's tears are forced by God's judgments; as water which comes out of a still is forced by the fire. 2. Trouble for sin is transient, it is quickly over again. As some that go to sea are sea-sick, but when they come to land they are well again: so hypocrites may be sermon-sick, but this trouble doth not last, the sick-fit is soon over. 3. A sinner weeps, but goes on in sin; his sins are not drowned in his tears.

5. A man may have good desires, yet miss of the kingdom, Numb. xxiii. 10. 'O that I might die the death of the righteous!'

Qu. *Wherein do these desires come short?*

Ans. 1. They are sluggish. A man would have heaven, but will take no pains. As if one should say, he desires water, but will not let down the bucket into the well, Prov. xxi. 25. 'The desire of the slothful kills him, his hands refuse to labour.' 2. The sinner desires mercy, but not grace; he desires Christ as a Saviour, but not as he is the Holy One; he desires Christ only as a bridge to lead him over to heaven. Such desires as these may be found among the damned.

6. A man may forsake his sins, oaths, drunkenness, uncleanness, yet come short of the kingdom.

Qu. *Whence is this?*

Ans. 1. He may forsake gross sins, yet he hath no reluctance against heart-sins, pride, unbelief, and the first risings of malice and concupiscence. Though he dams up the stream, yet he lets alone the fountain; though he lop and prune the branches, yet he doth not strike at the root of it. 2. Though he leaves sin (for fear of hell, or because it brings shame and penury) yet he still loves sin, as if a snake should cast her coat, yet keep her poison, Hos. iv. 8. 'They set their heart on their iniquity.' 3. It is but a partial forsaking of sin; though he leaves one sin, he lives in some other. Herod reformed very much, Mark vi. 10. 'He did many things;' but he lived in incest. Some leave drunkenness, and live in covetousness; they forbear swearing, and live in slandering. It is but a partial reformation, and so they miss of the kingdom of glory. Thus you see there are some who have gone many steps in the way to heaven, yet have come short. Some have gone so far in profession, that they have been confident their estate hath been good, and they shall go to the kingdom of heaven, yet have missed it, Luke xiii. 25.

‘ When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.’ How confident were these of salvation ! they did not beseech, but knock, as if they did not doubt but to be let into heaven ; yet to these Christ saith, ‘ I know you not whence you are ; depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.’ Therefore fear and tremble, lest any of us miss of this kingdom of heaven.

Secondly, This fear is necessary, if we consider what a loss it is to lose the heavenly kingdom. All the tears in hell are not sufficient to lament the loss of heaven : they who lose the heavenly kingdom, lose God’s sweet presence, the ravishing views and smiles of God’s glorious face. God’s presence is the diamond in the ring of glory, Ps. xvi. 12. ‘ In his presence is fulness of joy.’ If God be the fountain of all bliss, then, to be separated from him, is the fountain of all misery. They who lose the heavenly kingdom, lose the society of angels ; and, what sweeter music, than to hear them praise God in concert ? They lose all their treasure, their white robes, their sparkling crowns ; they lose their hopes, Job viii. 14. ‘ Whose hope shall be cut off.’ Their hope is not an anchor, but a spider’s web. If hope deferred makes the heart sick, Prov. xiii. 12. what then is hope disappointed ? They lose the end of their being. Why were they created, but to be enthroned in glory ? Now, to lose this, is to lose the end of their being, as if an angel should be turned to a worm. There are many aggravations of the loss of this heavenly kingdom.

1. The eyes of the wicked shall be opened to see their loss ; now they care not for the loss of God’s favour, because they know not the worth of it. A man that loseth a rich diamond, and took it but for an ordinary stone, is not much troubled at the loss of it ; but when he comes to know what a jewel he lost, then he laments. He, whose heart would never break at the sight of his sins, shall now break at the sight of his loss. Phinehas his daughter, when she heard the ark was lost, cried out, ‘ The glory is departed,’ 1 Sam. iv. 21. When the sinner sees what he hath lost, he hath lost the beatifical vision, he hath lost the kingdom of heaven ; now he will cry out in horror and despair, “ The glory, the everlasting glory is departed.”

2. A second aggravation of the loss of this kingdom will be, that sinners shall be upbraided by their own conscience : this is the ‘ worm that never dies,’ Mark. ix. 44. viz. a self-accusing mind. When sinners shall consider they were in a fair way to the kingdom ; they had a possibility of salvation, though the door of heaven was strait, yet it was open ; they had the means of grace ; the jubilee of the gospel was proclaimed in their ears ; God called, but they refused ; Jesus Christ offered

them a plaister of his own blood to heal them, but they trampled it under foot : the Holy Spirit stood at the door of their heart, knocking and crying to them to receive Christ and heaven, but they repulsed the Spirit, and sent away this dove ; and now they have, through their own folly and wilfulness, lost the kingdom of heaven : this self-accusing conscience will be terrible ; like a venomous worm gnawing at the heart.

3. A third aggravation of the loss of heaven will be, to look upon others that have gained the kingdom ; the happiness of the blessed will be an eye-sore, Luke xiii. 28. ' There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.' When the wicked shall see those whom they hated and scorned, to be exalted to a kingdom, and shine with robes of glory, and they, themselves mills of the kingdom, this will be a dagger at the heart, and make them gnash their teeth for envy.

4. A fourth aggravation is, this loss of the kingdom of heaven is accompanied with the punishment of sense. He who leaps short of the bank, falls into the river ; such as come short of heaven, fall into the river of fire and brimstone. Pl. xc. 17. ' The wicked shall be turned into hell : ' and how dreadful is that ! if, when but a spark of God's anger lights into the conscience here, it is so torturing, what will it be to have mountains of God's wrath thrown upon the soul ? Pl. xc. 11. ' Who knoweth the power of thine anger ? ' The angel never poured out his vial ; but some wo followed, Rev. xvi. 3. When the bitter vials of God's wrath are poured out, damnation follows. Dives cries out, ' O I am tormented in this flame,' Luke xvi. 24. In hell there is not a drop of mercy. There was no oil nor frankincense used in the sacrifice of jealousy, Num. v. 15. In hell no oil of mercy to lenify the sufferings of the damned, nor incense of prayer to appease God's wrath.

5. A fifth aggravation of the loss of this kingdom will be, to consider on what easy and reasonable terms men might have had this kingdom. If indeed God had commanded impossibilities, to have satisfied justice in their own persons, it had been another matter ; but what God did demand was reasonable, only to do that which was for their good, to accept of Christ for their Lord and husband, only to part with that which would damn them, if they kept their sins ; these were the fair terms on which they might have enjoyed the heavenly kingdom : now, to lose heaven, which might have been had upon such easy terms, will be a cutting aggravation ; it will rend a sinner's heart with rage and grief, to think how easily he might have prevented the loss of the heavenly kingdom.

6. It will be an aggravation of the loss of heaven, for sinners

to think how active they were in doing that which lost them the kingdom; they were *felo de se*. What pains did they take to resist the Spirit, to stifle conscience? They sinned while they were out of breath, Jer. ix. 5. 'They weary themselves to commit iniquity.' What difficulties did men go through? What did they endure for their sins? how much shame and pain? how sick was the drunkard with his cups? how sore in the body was the adulterer? and what marks of sin did he carry about him? what dangers did men adventure upon for their lusts? They adventure God's wrath, and adventured the laws of the land. O how will this aggravate the loss of heaven! how will this make men curse themselves, to think how much pains they were at to lose happiness? how will this sting men's consciences, to think, had they but taken as much pains for heaven as they did for hell, they had not lost it.

7. Aggravation of the loss of this kingdom, it will be an eternal irreparable loss; heaven, once lost, can never be recovered. Worldly losses may be made up again: if a man lose his health, he may have it repaired by physic; if a man be driven out of his kingdom, he may be restored to it again, as king Nebuchadnezzar was, Dan. iv. 36. 'My honour is returned to me, and I was established in my kingdom.' King Henry VI was deposed from his throne, yet restored again to it. But they who once lose heaven, can never be restored to it again: after millions of years, they are as far from obtaining glory as at first. Thus you see how needful this exhortation is, that we should fear lest we fall short of this kingdom of heaven.

Qu. *What shall we do, that we may not miss of this kingdom of glory?*

Ans. 1. Take heed of those things which will make you miss of heaven. 1. Take heed of spiritual sloth. Many Christians are settled upon their lees, they are loth to put themselves to too much pains. It is said of Israel, 'They despised the pleasant land,' Ps. cvi. 24. Canaan was a paradise of delights, a type of heaven: ay, but some of the Jews thought it would cost them a great deal of trouble and hazard in the getting, and they would rather go without it; 'They despised the pleasant land.' I have read of certain Spaniards that live where there is great store of fish, yet are so lazy, that they will not be at the pains to catch them but buy of their neighbours; such a sinful sloth is upon the most, that though the kingdom of heaven be offered to them, yet they will not put themselves to any labour for it. They have some faint velleities and desires, O that I had this kingdom! Like a man that wisheth for venison, but will not hunt for it, Prov. xiii. 4. 'The soul of the sluggard wisheth, and hath nothing.' Men could be content to have the kingdom of heaven, if it would drop as a ripe fig into their

mouth, but they are loth to fight for it. O take heed of spiritual sloth; God never made heaven to be a hive for drones. We cannot have the world without labour, and do we think to have the kingdom of heaven? Heathens will rise up in judgment against many Christians: what pains did they take in their Olympic races, when they ran but for a crown of olive or myrtle intermixed with gold; and do we stand still when we are running for a kingdom? Prov. xix. 15. 'Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep.' Sloth is the soul's sleep. Adam lost his rib when he was asleep. Many a man loseth the kingdom of heaven when he is in this deep sleep of sloth.

2. Take heed of unbelief. Unbelief kept Israel out of Canaan, Heb. iii. 19. 'So we see they could not enter in because of unbelief.' And it keeps many out of heaven. Unbelief is an enemy to salvation, it is a damning sin; it whispers thus, To what purpose is all this pains for the heavenly kingdom? I had as good sit still; I may come near to heaven, yet come short of heaven, Jer. xviii. 12. 'And they said, there is no hope.' Unbelief destroys hope; and if you once cut this sinew, a christian goes but lamely in religion, if he goes at all. Unbelief raiseth jealous thoughts of God, it represents him as a severe judge; this discourageth many a soul, and takes it off from duty. Beware of unbelief; believe the promises, James iii. 24. 'God is good to the soul that seeks him;' seek him earnestly and he will open both heart and heaven to you. *Deus volentibus non deeft.* Do what you are able, and God will help you. While you spread the sails of your endeavour, God's Spirit will blow upon these sails, and carry you swiftly to the kingdom of glory.

3. If you would not miss of the heavenly kingdom, take heed of mistake, imagining the way to the kingdom of heaven to be easier than it is; it is but a sigh, or, Lord have mercy. There is no going to heaven *per saltum*: one cannot leap out of Delilah's lap into Abraham's bosom. The sinner is 'dead in trespasses,' Eph. ii. 1. Is it easy for a dead man to restore himself to life? is regeneration easy? are there no pangs in the new birth? doth not the scripture call Christianity a warfare and a race? and; do you fancy this easy? The way to the kingdom is not easy, but the mistake about the way is easy.

4. If you would not miss of the heavenly kingdom, take heed of delays and procrastinations. *Mora trahit periculum.* It is an usual delusion, I will mind the kingdom of heaven, but not yet; when I have gotten an estate and grown old, then I will look after heaven: and, on a sudden, death surprizeth men, and they fall short of heaven. Delay strengtheus sin, hardens the heart, and gives the devil fuller possession of a man. Take heed of adjourning and putting off seeking the kingdom of heaven, till it be too late. Cæsar, deferring to read a letter put into his

hand, was killed in the senate house. Consider how short your life is ; it is a taper soon blown out. *Animantis conjusque vita in fuga est.* The body is like a vessel tuned with breath, sickness broacheth it, death draws it out. Delay not the business of salvation a day longer ; sometimes death strikes, and gives no warning.

5. If you would not come short of the kingdom of heaven, take heed of prejudice. Many take a prejudice at religion, and on this rock dash their souls. They are prejudiced at Christ's person, his truths, his followers, his ways.

(1.) They are prejudiced at his person, Mat. xiii. 57. 'And they were offended in him.' What is there in Christ, that men should be offended at him ? He is the 'pearl of price,' Matth. xiii. 46. Are men offended at pearls and diamonds ? Christ is the wonder of beauty, Psal. xlv. 2. 'Fairer than the children of men.' Is there any thing in beauty to offend ? Christ is the mirror of mercy, Heb. ii. 17. Why should mercy offend any ? Christ is a Redeemer ; why should a captive slave be offended at him who comes with a sum of money to ransom him ? the prejudice men take at Christ is from the inbred privy of their hearts. The eye that is sore cannot endure the light of the sun ; the fault is not in the sun, but in the sore eye. There are two things in Christ men are prejudiced at : 1. His meanness. The Jews expected a monarch for their Messiah, but Christ came not with outward pomp and splendor : 'his kingdom was not of this world.' The stars which are seated in the lightest orbs, are least seen : Christ, who is the bright morning star, was not much seen ; his divinity was hid in the dark lanthorn of his humanity ; all who saw the man did not see the Messiah ; this the Jews stumbled at, the meanness of his person. 2. Men are prejudiced at Christ's strictness ; they look upon Christ as austere, and his laws too severe, Ps. ii. 3. 'Let us break their bands, and cast away their cords from us.' Though, to a saint, Christ's laws are no more burdensome than wings are to a bird ; yet, to the wicked, Christ's laws are a yoke, and they love not to come under restraint : hence it is they hate Christ. Though they pretend to love him as a Saviour, yet they hate him as he is the holy One.

(2.) Men are prejudiced at the truths of Christ. 1. Self-denial. A man must deny his righteousness, Phil. iii. 9. His duties and moralities : he will graft the hope of salvation upon the stock of his own righteousness. 2. He must deny his unrighteousness. The scripture seals no patents for sin : it teacheth us to 'deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts,' Tit. ii. 11. We must divorce those sins which bring in pleasures and profit. 3. Forgiving of injuries, Mark xi. 25. These truths men are

prejudiced at ; they can rather want forgiveness from God, than they can forgive others.

(3.) Men are prejudiced at the followers of Christ. 1. Their paucity ; there are but few (in comparison) that embrace Christ : but why should this offend ? Men are not offended at pearls and precious stones, because they are but few. 2. Their poverty ; many that wear Christ's livery are low in the world ; but why should this give offence ? 1st, Christ hath better things than these to bestow upon his followers ; the holy anointing, the white stone, the hidden manna, the crown of glory. 2^{dly}, All Christ's followers are not humbled with poverty : Abraham was rich with gold and silver, as well as rich in faith : though not many noble are called, yet some noble, Acts xvii. 12. 'Honourable women which were Greeks believed,' Constantine and Thodofius were godly emperors. So that this stumbling-block is removed. 3. Their scandals. Some of Christ's followers, under a mask of piety, commit sin ; this begets a prejudice against religion ; but doth Christ or his gospel teach any such thing ? The rules he prescribes are holy ; why should the master be thought the worse of, because some of his servants prove bad ?

(4.) Men are prejudiced at the ways of Christ ; they expose them to sufferings, Mat. xvi. 24. 'Let him take up his cross and follow me.' Many stumble at the cross. There are, as Tertullian, *delicatulæ*, silken Christians, who love their ease ; They will follow Christ to mount Olivet, to see him transfigured, but not to mount Golgotha, to suffer with him. But, alas, what is affliction to the glory that follows ! The weight of glory makes affliction light. *Adimant caput non coronum*. O take heed of prejudice ; this hath been a stumbling-stone in men's way to heaven, and hath made them fall short of the kingdom.

6. If you would not miss of the kingdom of heaven, take heed of presumption. Men presume all is well, and take it as a principle not to be disputed, that they shall go to heaven. The devil hath given them opium, to cast them into a deep sleep of security. The presumptuous sinner is like the leviathan, 'made without fear ;' he lives as bad as the worst, yet hopes he shall be saved as well as the best ; 'he blesteth himself and saith, he shall have peace, though he goes on in sin,' Deut. xxix. 19. As if a man should drink poison, yet not fear but he should have his health. But whence doth this presumptuous hope arise ? Surely from a conceit that God is made up all of mercy. It is true, God is merciful, but with all he is just too, Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. 'Keeping mercy for thousands, and that will by no means clear the guilty.' If a king proclaim, that only those should be pardoned, who came in and submitted ; should any, still persisting in rebellion, claim the benefit of that

pardon, dost thou hope for mercy, who will not lay down thy weapons, but stand out in rebellion against heaven? none might touch the ark but the priests; none may touch this ark of God's mercy, but holy, consecrated persons. Presumption is *heluo animarum*, the great devourer of souls. A thousand have misfed of heaven by putting on the broad spectacles of presumption.

7. If you would not miss of the heavenly kingdom, take heed of the delights and pleasures of the flesh: soft pleasures harden the heart, many people cannot endure a serious thought, but are for comedies and romances; they play away their salvation. *Homines capiuntur voluptate, ut pisces homo*, Cicero. Pleasure is the sugared bait men bite at, but there is an hook under, Job xxi. 12. 'They take the timbrel and harp; and rejoice at the sound of the organ.' And a parallel scripture, Amos vi. 4. 'That lie upon beds of ivory, that chant to the sound of the viol, that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments.' The pleasures of the world do keep many from the pleasures of paradise. What a shame is it, that the soul, that princely thing, which sways the sceptre of reason, and is akin to angels, should be enslaved by sinful pleasure! Beard, in his theatre, speaks of one who had a room richly hung with fair pictures, he had most delicious music, he had the rarest beauties, he had all the candies, and curious preserves of the confectioner; thus did he gratify his senses with pleasure, and swore he would live one week as a god, though he were sure to be damned in hell the next day. Diodorus Siculus observes, that the dogs of Sicily, while they are hunting among the sweet flowers, lose the scent of the hare; so many, while they are hunting after the sweet pleasures of the world, lose the kingdom of heaven. It is (saith Theophylact) one of the worst fights, to see a sinner go laughing to hell.

8. If you would not fall short of the kingdom of heaven; take heed of worldly mindedness: a covetous spirit is a dunghill spirit, it chokes good affections, as the earth puts out the fire. The world hindered the young man from following Christ, *abiit tristis*, he went away sorrowful, Luke xviii. 23. which extorted these words from our Saviour, ver. 24. 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God?' *Divitiae saeculi sunt laquei diaboli*, Bern. Riches are golden snares. If a man were to climb up a steep rock, and had weights tied to his legs, it would hinder him from his ascent: too many golden weights will hinder him from climbing up that steep rock which leads to heaven, Exod. xiv. 3. 'They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in.' So it may be said of many, they are entangled in earthly affairs, the world hath shut them in; the world is no friend to grace; the more the child

sucks the weaker the nurse is : and the more the world sucks and draws from us, the weaker our grace is, 1 John ii. 15. ' Love not the world.' Had a man a monopoly of all the wealth of the world : were he able to empty the western parts of gold, and the eastern of spices ; could he heap up riches to the starry heaven, yet his heart would not be filled ; covetousness is a dry dropfy. Joshua who could stop the course of the sun, could not stop Achan in his covetous pursuit of the wedge of gold ; he whose heart is locked up in his chest, will be locked out of heaven. Some ships that have escaped the rocks, have been cast away upon the sands ; many, who have escaped gross sins, have been cast upon the world's golden sands.

9. If you would not come short of the kingdom of heaven, take heed of indulging any sin ; one milstone will drown, as well as more ; and one sin lived in will damn, as well as more. *Ubi regnat peccatum, non potest regnare dei regnum*, Hierom. If any one sin reign, it will keep you from reigning in the kingdom of heaven. Especially keep from sins of presumption, which waste conscience, *Vastare contientiam*, Tertul. And the sin of your natural constitution ; the *peccatum in delitiis*, Aug. Thy darling sin, Ps. xviii. 23. ' I have kept myself from mine iniquity,' that sin which my heart would soonest decoy and flatter me into. As in the hive there is one master-bee, so in the heart one master sin ; O take heed of this !

Qu. *How may this sin be known ?*

Ans. (1.) That sin which a man cannot endure, the arrow of reproof should shoot at, that is the bosom sin : Herod could not brook to have his incest meddled with, that was a *noli me tangere* ; men cannot be content to have other sins declaimed against, but if a minister put his finger upon the sore, and toucheth upon one special sin, then *igne mecant oculi*, they are enraged, and spit the venom of malice.

2. That sin which a man's heart runs out most to, and he is most easily captivated by, that is the *Dalilah* in the bosom. One man is overcome with wantonness, another by worldliness. It is a sad thing a man should be so bewitched by a beloved sin, that if it ask him to part with not only one half the kingdom, but the whole kingdom of heaven, he must part with it to gratify that lust.

3. That sin which doth most trouble a man and fly in his face in an hour of sickness and distress, that is the sin he hath allowed himself in, and is his complexion sin ; when Joseph's brethren were distressed, their sin in selling their brother came into their remembrance, Gen. xlii. 21. ' We were verily guilty concerning our brother,' &c. So when a man is upon his sick-bed, and conscience shall say, thou hast been guilty of such a sin, the sin of flandering or uncleanness, conscience reads

a man a sad lecture ; it affrights him most for one sin, that is the complexion sin.

4. That sin which a man is lothest to part with ; that is the endeared sin : Jacob could of all his sons most hardly part with Benjamin, Gen. xlii. 35. ‘ Will ye take Benjamin away ? ’ So saith the sinner, this and that sin I have left, but must Benjamin go too ? must I part with this delightful sin ? That goes to the heart. As it is with a castle that hath several forts about it ; the first and second forts are yielded ; but when it comes to the main castle, the governor will rather fight and die than yield that ; so a man may suffer some of his sins to be demolished ; but when it comes to one, that is like the taking of the castle, he will never yield to part with that ; surely that is the master-sin. Take heed especially of this sin ; the strength of sin lies in the beloved sin : that is like an humour striking to the heart, which brings death. I have read of a monarch, that being pursued by the enemy, he threw away the crown of gold on his head, that he might run the faster ; so that sin, which thou didst wear as a crown of gold, throw it away, that thou mayest run the faster to the kingdom of heaven : O, if you would not lose glory, mortify the beloved sin ; set it, as Uriah, in the forefront of the battle to be slain : by plucking out this right-eye you shall see the better to go to heaven.

10. If you would not fall short of the kingdom of heaven, take heed of inordinate passion ; many a ship hath been lost in a storm, and many a soul hath been lost in a storm of unruly passions. Every member of the body is infected with sin, as every branch of wormwood is bitter ; but, ‘ the tongue is full of deadly poison,’ James iii. 8. Some care not what they say in their passion ; they will censure, slander, with evil to others : how can Christ be in the heart, when the devil hath taken possession of the tongue ? Passion disturbs reason, it is *brevis infania*, a short frenzy. Jonah in a passion flies out against God, Jon. iv. 9. ‘ I do well to be angry to the death.’ What, to be angry with God, and to justify it ? ‘ I do well to be angry ; ’ the man was not well in his wits, passion unfits for prayer, 1 Tim. ii. 8. ‘ I will, therefore, that men pray, lifting up holy hands without wrath.’ He that prays in wrath, may lift up his hands in prayer, but he doth not lift up holy hands. Water, when it is hot, soon boils over ; so, when the heart is heated with anger, it soon boils over in fiery passionate speeches. Some curse others in their passion : they whose tongues are set on fire, let them take heed that they do not one day in hell desire a drop of water to cool their tongue. O, if you would not miss of the heavenly kingdom, beware of giving way to your unbirdled passions. Some say, words are but wind ; but they are such a wind as may blow them to hell.

11. If you would not fall short of the heavenly kingdom, beware of too much indulging the sensual appetite, Rom. xiii.

14. 'Make no provision for the flesh.' The Greek word, *pro-noian poiein*, to make provision, signifies to be caterers for the flesh, Phil. iii. 19. 'Whose god is their belly.' The throat is a slippery place; Judas received the devil in the sop; and often the devil slides down in the liquor: excess in meat and drink clouds the mind, chokes good affections, provokes lust; many a man digs his own grave with his teeth: the heathens could say, *magnus sum & ad mojora natus quam ut sim corporis mei mancipium*, Sen. He was higher born than to be a slave to his body. To pamper the body, and neglect the soul, is to feed the slave, and to starve the wife. Take such a proportion of food as may recruit nature, not surfeit it: excess in things lawful hath lost many the kingdom of heaven. A bee may suck a little honey from the leaf, but put it in a barrel of honey, and it is drowned; to suck temperately from the creature, God allows; but excess ingulphs men in perdition.

12. If you would not fall short of the kingdom of heaven, take heed of injustice in your dealings; defrauding lies in two things, *first*, Mixing commodities: as if one mix bad wheat with good, and sell it for pure wheat, this is to defraud, Isa. i. 22. 'Thy wine is mixed with water.' *Second*, Giving scant measure, Amos v. 8. 'Making the ephah small.' Ephah was a measure which the Jews used in selling; they made the ephah small, they scarce gave measure. I wish this be not the sin of many, Hof. xii. 7. 'He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand.' Can they be holy, which are not just? Micah vi. 11. 'Shall I count them pure with the wicked balances?' Is his heart sincere, who hath false weights? This hath made many they could not reach heaven, because of their over-reaching.

13. If you would not miss of the kingdom of heaven, take heed of evil company: there is a necessary commerce with men in buying and selling, else, as the apostle saith, 'We must go out of the world,' 1 Cor. v. 10. but do not voluntarily choose the company of the wicked, 1 Cor. v. 11. 'I have written to you not to keep company.' Do not incorporate into the society of the wicked, or be too much familiar with them: the wicked are God haters; and 2 Chron. xix. 2. 'Shouldst thou join with them that hate the Lord?' A Christian is bound by virtue of his oath of allegiance to God in baptism, not to have intimate converse with such as are God's sworn enemies; it is a thing of bad report: what doth Christ's dove among birds of prey? What do virgins among harlots. The company of the wicked is very defiling, it is like going among them that have the plague, Prov. vi. 27. 'He that toucheth pitch, shall be defiled,' Psal.

cvi. 35. 'They were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.' If you mingle bright armour with rusty, the bright armour will not brighten the rusty, but the rusty armour will spoil the bright. Such as have had religious education, and have some inclinations to good, yet by mixing among the wicked, they will be apt to receive hurt; the bad will sooner corrupt the good, than the good will convert the bad. Pharaoh learned Joseph to swear, but Joseph did not learn Pharaoh to pray. There is a strange attractive power in ill company to corrupt and poison the best dispositions; they damp good affections. Throw a fire ball into the snow, and it is soon quenched. Among the wicked you lose your heat of zealous affections: by holding familiar correspondence with the wicked, one shall hear them dissuading him from strict godliness, that it will debar him of his liberty and pleasure, Acts xxviii. 2. 'This sect is every where spoken against.' Hereupon he, who before did look towards heaven, begins to be discouraged, and gradually declines from goodness.

(1.) There steals upon him a dislike of his former religious course of life; that he was righteous over-much, stricter than needed.

(2.) There is instilled into his heart a secret delight of evil: he begins to like foolish scurrilous discourse: he can hear religion spoken against, and be silent, nay, well pleased; he loves vanity, and makes sport of sin.

(3.) He is by degrees so metamorphosed, and made like the company he conversed with, that he now grows into a disgust, and hatred of his former sober ways; he is ill-affected towards good men, he is transformed into scoffing Ishmael, a breathing devil; and becomes at last as much the child of hell, as any of that graceless damned crew he conversed with: and what is the end of all? A blot in the name, a moth in the estate, a worm in the conscience. O, if you would not miss of the kingdom of heaven, beware of evil company. Bad company is the bane and poison of the youth of this age: such as were once soberly inclined, yet by coming among the profane, they grow familiar, till at last they keep one another company in hell.

14. If you would not miss of the kingdom of heaven, take heed of parlying with the fleshly part; the flesh is a bosom traitor. When an enemy is gotten within the walls of a castle, it is in great danger to be taken. The flesh is an enemy within: the flesh is a bad counsellor: the flesh saith, There is a lion in the way; it discourageth from a religious strictness, the flesh saith, as Peter did to Christ, 'spare thyself;' the flesh saith, as Judas, 'what needs all this waste?' What needs this praying? Why do you waste your strength and spirits in religion? What

needs all this waste ? The flesh cries out for ease and pleasure. How many, by consulting with the flesh, have lost the kingdom of heaven !

15. If you would not fall short of heaven, take heed of carnal relations : our carnal friends are often bars and blocks in our way to heaven : they will say religion is preciseness and singularity. A wife in the bosom may be a tempter ; Job's wife was so, Job ii. 9. ' Dost thou still retain thy integrity ? Curse God, and die.' What, still pray ? What dost thou get by serving God ? Job, where are thy earnings ? What canst thou shew thou hast had in God's service, but boils and ulcers ? And dost thou still retain thy integrity ? Throw off God's livery, renounce religion. Here was a temptation handed over to him by his wife : the woman was made of the rib, the devil turned this rib into an arrow, and would have shot Job to the heart, but his faith quenched this fiery dart. Beware of carnal relations : we read that some of Christ's kindred laid hold on him, and would have hindered him when he was going to preach, Mark iii. 21. ' They said, he is beside himself.' Our kindred sometimes would stand in our way to heaven, and, judging all zeal, rashness, would hinder us from being saved : such carnal relations Spira had ; for, advising with them whether he should remain constant in his orthodox opinion, they persuaded him to recant : and so, abjuring his former faith, he fell into horror and despondency of mind. Galeacius, marquis of Vico, found his carnal relations a great block in his way ; and what ado had he to break through their tentations ? Take heed of a snare in your bosom. It is a brave saying of Jerom, *si mater mihi ubera ostendat, &c.* " If my parent should persuade me to deny Christ, if my mother should shew me her breast, that gave me suck, if my wife should go to charm me with her embraces, I would forsake all, and fly to Christ."

16. If you would not fall short of the kingdom of heaven, take heed of falling off : beware of apostacy ; he misseth of the prize, who doth not hold out in the race ; he who makes shipwreck of faith, cannot come to the haven of glory. We live in the fall of the leaf : men fall from that goodness they seemed to have ; some are turned to error, others to vice ; some to drinking and dicing, and others to whoring, the very mantle of their profession is fallen off. It is dreadful for men to fall off from hopeful beginnings. The apostate, (saith Tertullian) seems to put God and Satan in the balance, and, having weighed both their services, prefers the devil's service, and proclaims him to be the best master ; in which respect, the apostate is said to put Christ to open shame, Heb. vi. 6. This is sad at last, Heb. x. 38. If you would not miss of the glory, take heed of apost-

tacy ; those who fall away, must needs fall short of the kingdom.

1. If we would not come short of this heavenly kingdom, let us be much in the exercise of self-denial, Matth. xvi. 24. ‘ If any man will come after me, let him deny himself.’ He who would go to heaven must deny self-righteousness. *Covendum est a propria justitia* : Phil. iii. 9. ‘ That I may be found in him, not having my own righteousness.’ The spider weaves a web out of her own bowels ; an hypocrite would spin a web of salvation out of his own righteousness, we must deny our civility in point of justification. Civility is a good staff to walk with among men, but it is a bad ladder to climb up to heaven. We must deny our holy things in point of justification. Alas, how are our duties chequered with sin ! put gold in the fire, and there comes out dross ; our most golden services are mixed with unbelief. Deny self-righteousness ; use duty, but trust to Christ. Noah’s dove made use of her wings to fly, but trusted to the ark for safety : let duties have your diligence, but not your confidence. Self-denial is *via ad regnum* ; there is no getting into heaven, but through this strait gate to self-denial.

2. The second means for the obtaining of the kingdom, is serious consideration ; most men fall short of heaven for want of consideration.

1. *Consideration.* We should often consider what a kingdom heaven is : it is called *regnum paratum*, a kingdom prepared, Matth. xxv. 34. which implies something that is rare and excellent. God hath prepared in his kingdom, ‘ such things as eye hath not seen nor ear heard,’ 1 Cor. ii. 9. Heaven is beyond all hyperbole. In particular, in this celestial kingdom are two things. (1.) A stately palace. (1.) A royal feast.

(1.) A stately palace. (1.) It is large, and hath several stories : for the dimensions of it, it is twelve thousand furlongs, Rev. xxi. 15. Or, as it is in some Greek copies, twelve times twelve thousand furlongs : a finite number put for an infinite ; no arithmetician can number these furlongs : though there be an innumerable company of saints and angels in heaven, yet there is infinitely enough of room to receive them. (2.) The palace of this kingdom is lucid and transparent ; it is adorned with light, the light is sweet. Hell is a dark dungeon, but the palace above is bespangled with light, Col. i. 12. Such illustrious beams of glory shine from God, as shed a brightness and splendor upon the empyrean heaven. (3.) This palace of the kingdom is well situated for a good air and a pleasant prospect : there is the best air, which is perfumed with the odours of Christ’s ointments ; and a most pleasant prospect of the bright morning-star. (4.) The palace is rich and sumptuous ; it hath gates of pearl, Rev. xxi. 21. It is enriched with white robes

and crowns of glory ; and this palace never falls to decay, and the dwellers in it never die, Rev. xxii. 5. ‘ They shall reign for ever and ever.’

(2.) A royal feast. It is called ‘ the marriage-supper of the Lamb,’ Rev. xix. 9. Which Bullinger and Gregory the great, understand of the magnificent supper prepared in the kingdom of heaven. A glorious feast it will be, in respect of the founder God ; the glorified saints shall feast their eyes with God’s beauty, and their hearts with his love ; a delicious feast it will be, in respect of the festivity and holy mirth ; what joy when there shall be the anthems and triumphs of glorified spirits ? When saints and angels shall twist together in an inseparable union of love, and lie in each others sweet embraces : a royal banquet it shall be, where there is no surfeit, because continually a fresh course is served in. The serious consideration what a kingdom heaven is, would be a means to quicken our endeavours in the pursuit after it. What causeth men to make voyages to the Indies, but the consideration of the gold and spices which are to be had there ? Did we survey and contemplate the glory of heaven, we would soon take a voyage, and never leave till we had arrived at the celestial kingdom.

2. *Consideration.* How it will trouble you, if you should perish, to think you came short of heaven for want of a little more pains. The prophet Elisha bid the king of Israel smite the ground six times, and he smote but thrice, and stayed, 2 Kings xiii. 19. And he lost many victories by it ; so, when a man shall think thus, I did something in religion, but did not do enough ; I prayed, but it was coldly ; I did not put coals to the incense ; I heard the word, but did not meditate on it, I did not chew the cud ; I smote but thrice, and I should have smitten six times ; had I taken a little more pains, I had been happy, but I have lost the kingdom of heaven by short-shooting : the consideration how terrible the thoughts of this will be, that we should lose heaven for want of a little more pains, will be a means to spur on our sluggish hearts, and make us more diligent to get the kingdom.

3. The third means for obtaining this kingdom, is to keep up daily prayer, Ps. cix. 4. ‘ I give myself to prayer,’ Prayer inflames the affections, and oils the wheels of endeavour : prayer prevails with God, it unlocks his bowels, and then he unlocks heaven ; all that have got to heaven, have crept thither upon their knees : the saints now in heaven, have been men of prayer : Daniel prayed three times a day, Jacob wrestled with God in prayer, and as a prince prevailed : this prayer must be fervent, else it is *thuribulum sine prunis*, as Luther, a golden censer without fire. O follow God with prayers and tears ; say as Jacob to the angel, Gen. xxxii. 26. ‘ I will not let thee

go, except thou blest me.' Prayer *vincit invincibilem*, Luther ; it conquers the Omnipotent. Elijah by prayer, opened heaven ; by ardent and constant prayer, heaven is at last opened to us.

4. If you would obtain the heavenly kingdom, get a love to heaven. Love puts a man upon the use of all means to enjoy the thing loved. He that loves the world, how active is he ? He will break his sleep and peace for it ; he that loves honour, what hazards will he run ? He will swim to the throne in blood. Jacob loved Rachel, and what would not he do, though it were serving a two seven-years apprenticeship for obtaining her ? Love carries a man out violently to the object loved. Love is like wings to the bird, like sails to the ship, it carries a Christian full-sail to heaven ; heaven is a place of rest and joy, it is paradise, and will you not love it ? Love heaven, and you cannot miss it : love breaks through all opposition, it takes heaven by storm : love, though it labour, is never weary ; it is like the rod of myrtle in the traveller's hand, which makes him fresh and lively in his travel, and keeps him from being weary.

5. If you would obtain the kingdom of heaven, make religion your business. What a man looks upon as a *parergon*, a thing by the bye, he doth not much mind. If ever we would have heaven, we must look upon it as our main concern, other things do but concern our livelihood, this concerns our salvation ; then we make religion our business, when we wholly devote ourselves to God's service, Pl. cxxxix. 18. We count those the best hours which are spent with God ; we give God the cream of our affections, the flower of our time and strength ; we traffic in heaven every day, we are merchants for the ' pearl of price.' He will not get an estate, who doth not mind his trade ; he will never get heaven, who doth not make religion his main business.

6. If you would obtain the kingdom of heaven, bind your hearts to God by sacred vows. Vow to the Lord, (that by his grace) you will be more intent upon heaven than ever, Pl. lvi. 12. ' Thy vows are upon me, O God.' A vow binds the votary to duty ; he looks upon himself as obliged by his vow to cleave to God. Bees when they fly in a great wind, ballast themselves with little stones, that they may not be carried away with the wind ; so we must fortify ourselves with strong vows, that we may not be carried away from God with the violent wind of temptation. No question, a Christian may make such a vow, because the ground of it is morally good : he vows nothing but what he is bound to do by virtue of his baptismal vow, namely to walk with God more closely, and to pursue heaven more vigorously.

7. If you would obtain the kingdom, embrace all seasons and opportunities for your souls, Eph. v. 5. ' Redeeming the time.'

Opportunity is the cream of time ; the improving the seasons of grace is as much as our salvation is worth. The mariner, by taking the present season, while the wind blows, gets to the haven ; by taking the season, while we have the means of grace, and the wind of the Spirit blows, we may arrive at the kingdom of heaven. We know not how long we shall enjoy the gospel ; the seasons of grace, like Noah's dove, come with an olive branch in their mouth, but they soon take wings and fly. Though they are sweet, yet swift. God may remove the golden candlestick from us, as he did from the churches of Asia. We have many sad symptoms, ' Grey hairs are here and there upon us,' Hos. vii. 9. Therefore let us lay hold upon the present seasons ; they that sleep in seed time, will beg in harvest.

8. If you would go to the kingdom of heaven, you must *excubias agere*, keep a daily watch, Mark xiii. 37. ' I say unto all, watch.' Many have lost heaven for want of watchfulness. Our hearts are ready to decoy us into sin, and the devil lies in ambush by his temptations ; we must every day set a spy ; and keep centinel in our souls, Hab. ii. 1. ' I will stand upon my watch.'

(1.) We must watch our eyes, Job xxxi. 1. ' I made a covenant with my eyes.' Much sin comes in by the eye : When Eve saw the tree was good for food, and pleasant to the eyes, ' then she took,' Gen. iii. 6. First she looked, and then she lusted : the eye by beholding an impure object, sets the heart on fire : the devil oft creeps in at the window of the eye. Watch your eyes.

(2.) Watch your ear. Much poison is conveyed through the ear. Let your ear be open to God, and shut to sin.

(3.) Watch your hearts : we watch suspicious persons, ' The heart is deceitful,' Jer. xvii. 9. Watch your heart : 1. When you are about holy things, it will be stealing out to vanity. When I am at prayer, saith St. Hierom, *aut per porticum deambulo, aut de sœnore computo* : either I am walking through galleries, or calling up accounts. 2. Watch your hearts when you are in company. The Basilisk poisons the herbs he breathes on : the breath of the wicked is infectious. Nay, watch your hearts when you are in good company : such as have some good in them, yet may be some grains too light ; they may have much levity of discourse ; and, if no scum boils up, yet too much froth. The devil is subtle, and he can as well creep into the dove, as he did once into the serpent. Satan tempted Christ by an apostle. 3. Watch your hearts in prosperity ; now you are in danger of pride. The higher the water of the Thames riseth, the higher the boat is lifted up ; the higher that men's estates rise, the higher their hearts are lifted up in pride. In prosperity, you are in danger not only to forget God, but to

lift up the heel against him, Deut. xxxii. 15. 'Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked.' It is hard to carry a full cup without spilling, and to carry a full prosperous estate without sinning. *Turpi fregerunt secula luxu divitiæ molles*, Sen. Trag. Samson fell asleep in Dalilah's lap, many have fallen so fast asleep in the lap of prosperity, that they have never awaked till they have been in hell. 4. Watch your hearts after holy duties. When Christ had been praying and fasting, then the devil tempted him, Mat. iv. 23. After our combating with Satan in prayer, we are apt to grow secure, and put our spiritual armour off, and then the devil falls on and wounds us. O if you would get heaven, be always upon your watch-tower, let a spy, keep close sentinel in your souls; who would not watch when it is for a kingdom?

9. If you would arrive at the heavenly kingdom get these three graces, which will undoubtedly bring you thither.

(1.) Divine knowledge: there is no going to heaven blindfold. In the creation, light was the first thing that was made; so it is in the new creation: knowledge is the pillar of fire that goes before us, and lights us into the heavenly kingdom. It is light must bring us to the 'Inheritance in light,' Col. i. 12.

(2.) Faith: faith ends in salvation, 1 Pet. i. 9. 'Receiving the end of your faith, salvation.' He who believes, is as sure to go to heaven as if he were in heaven already, Acts xvi. 31. Faith toucheth Christ; and can he miss of heaven, who toucheth Christ? Faith unites to Christ? and, shall not the members be where the head is? All have not the same degree of faith; we must distinguish between the direct act of faith, and the reflex act, assiance and assurance; yet the least seed and spark of faith gives an undoubted title to the heavenly kingdom. I am justified because I believe, not because I know I believe.

(3.) Love to God: heaven is prepared for those that love God, 1 Cor. ii. 9. Love is the soul of obedience, the touchstone of sincerity, by our loving God, we may know he loves us, 1 John iv. 19. And those whom God loves, he will lay in his bosom. Ambrose, in his funeral-oration for Theodosius, brings in the angels hovering about his departing soul, and being ready to carry it to heaven, asked him, "what that grace was he had most practised upon earth?" Theodosius replied, *Dilexi, Dilexi*, "I have loved, I have loved;" and straitway he was, by a convoy of angels, translated to glory. Love is a sacred fire kindled in the breast; in the flames of this fire, the devout soul ascends to heaven.

10. If we would obtain this heavenly kingdom, let us labour for sincerity, Prov. xxviii. 18. 'Whosoever walketh uprightly, shall be saved.' The sincere Christian may fall short of some degrees of grace, but he never falls short of the kingdom: God will pass by many failings, where the heart is right, Num. xxiii.

21. True gold, though it be light, hath grains of allowance, Pf. li. 6. 'Thou desirest truth in the inward parts.' Sincerity is the fauce which seasons all our actions, and makes them favourable; it is the ingredient into every grace; it is called 'faith unfeigned,' 2 Tim. i. 5. and 'love in sincerity,' Eph. v. 24. Coin will not go current that wants the king's stamp; grace is not current, if it be not stamped with sincerity. Glorious duties soured with hypocrisy are rejected, when great infirmities sweetened with sincerity are accepted. If any thing in the world bring us to heaven, it is sincerity. Sincerity signifies plainness of heart, Pf. xxxii. 2. 'In whose spirit there is no guile.' The plainer the diamond is, the richer.

(1.) Sincerity is when we serve God with our heart; we do not only worship him, but love him. Cain brought his sacrifice, but not his heart: this is God's delight, a sacrifice flaming upon the altar of the heart. A sincere Christian, though he hath a double principle in him, flesh and spirit, yet he hath not a double heart, his heart is for God,

(2.) Sincerity is when we aim purely at God in all we do. The glory of God is more worth than the salvation of all men's souls. A sincere Christian, though he comes short in duty, yet he takes a right aim. As the herb *Heliotropium* turns about according to the motion of the sun; so a godly man's actions do all move towards the glory of God.

11. If we would obtain the heavenly kingdom, let us keep up fervency in duty. What is a dead form without the power? Rev. iii. 16. 'Because thou art luke-warm, neither hot nor cold, I will spue thee out of my mouth.' Fervency puts life into duty, Rom. xii. 11. 'Fervent in spirit, serving God.' Gr. *Zenotes*, 'boiling over.' Christ prayed 'yet more earnestly,' Luke xxii. 44. When the fire on the golden censer was ready to go out, Aaron was to put more coals to the incense, praying with devotion, is putting more coals to the incense. It is not formality, but fervency, will bring us to heaven; the formalist is like Ephraim, a cake not turned, hot on one side, and dough on the other. In the external part of God's worship, he seems to be hot; but as for the spiritual part of God's worship, he is cold. Oh, if you would have the kingdom of heaven, keep up heat and fervour in duty, Elijah was carried up to heaven in a fiery chariot: if you would go to heaven, you must be carried thither in the fiery chariot of zeal; it is violence that takes the kingdom of heaven.

12. If we would arrive at the heavenly kingdom, let us cherish the motions of God's Spirit in our hearts. The mariner may spread his sails, but the ship cannot get to the haven without a gale of wind; so we may spread the sails of our endeavour, but we cannot get to the haven of glory, without the

north and south wind of God's Spirit blow : how nearly therefore doth it concern us to make much of the motions of God's Spirit, motions to prayer, motions to repentance ? 2 Sam. v. 24. ' When thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself, for then shall the Lord go out before thee ; ' So, when we hear, as it were a voice within us, a secret inspiration stirring us up to good duties, we should then bestir ourselves ; while the Spirit works in us, we should work with the Spirit. Many men have God's Spirit striving with them, he puts good motions in their hearts and holy purposes ; but they, neglecting to prosecute these good motions, the Spirit is thereby grieved ; and, being grieved, withdraws its assistance ; and, that assistance being gone, there is no getting to heaven. O make much of the motions of the Spirit, it is as much as your salvation is worth. The Spirit of God is compared to fire, Acts ii. 2. if we are careful to blow this spark, we may have fire to inflame our affections, and to light our feet into the way of peace. If we quench the Spirit by our neglecting and resisting its motions, we cut ourselves off from salvation. The Spirit of God hath a drawing power, Cant. i. 4. The blessed Spirit draws by attraction, as the loadstone the iron. In the preaching of the word, the Spirit draws the heart up to heaven in holy longings and ejaculations. Now when the Spirit is about thus to draw us, let us take heed of drawing back, lest it be to perdition, Heb. x. We should do as Noah, when the dove came flying to the ark ; he put forth his hand, and took it into the ark ; so when this sweet dove of God's Spirit comes flying to our hearts, and brings a gracious impulse as an olive-branch of peace in its mouth, O take this dove into the ark, entertain the Spirit in your hearts, and it will bring you to heaven.

Qu. But how shall we know the motions of the Spirit from a delusion ?

Ans. The motions of the Spirit are always agreeable to the word. If the word be for holiness, so is the Spirit ; the Spirit persuades to nothing, but what the word directs : which way the tide of the word runs, that way the wind of the Spirit blows.

13. We obtain the kingdom of heaven by uniform and cheerful obedience ; obedience is the road through which we travail to heaven. Many say they love God, but refuse to obey him ; doth he love the prince's person who flights his commands ?

(1.) Obedience must be uniform, Pl. cxix. 6. ' Then shall I not be ashamed, ' [Heb.] " I shall not blush when I have respect to all thy commandments." As the sun goes through all the signs of the Zodiac, so must we go through all the duties of religion : if a man be to go an hundred miles, and he goes ninety-nine miles, and there stops, he comes short of the place

he is to travel to ; if, with Herod, we do many things that God commands, yet, if we lie in the total neglect of any duty, we come short of the kingdom of heaven ; for instance, if a man seem to make conscience of duties of the first table, and not the duties of the second ; if he seem to be religious, but is not just, he is a transgressor, and is in danger to lose heaven ; a good heart is like the needle which points that way which the loadstone draws, so he moves that way which the word draws.

(2.) Obedience must be cheerful : ‘ I delight to do thy will, O my God, yea, thy law is within my heart.’ Ps. xl. 8. That is the sweetest obedience which is cheerful, as that is the sweetest honey which drops from the comb freely. God doth sometimes accept of willingness without the work, but never of the work without willingness, Zech. v. 9. ‘ There came out two women, and the wind was in their wings.’ Wings are swift, but wind in the wings denotes great swiftness : an emblem of the swiftness and cheerfulness which should be in obedience. We go to heaven in the way of obedience.

14. If we would obtain this kingdom, be much in the communion of saints ; one coal of juniper will warm and inflame another ; when the heart is dead and frozen, the communion of saints will help to warm it, Mal. iii. 16. ‘ They that feared the Lord spake often one to another.’ Christians should never meet (saith Mr. Bolton) but speak of their meeting together in heaven. One Christian may be very helpful by prayer and conference to another, and give him a lift toward heaven. Old Latimer was much strengthened and comforted by hearing Mr. Bilny’s confession of faith. We read that when Moses’ hands were heavy, and he was ready to let them fall, Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, Exod. xvii. 12. A Christian who is ready to faint under temptation, and lets down the hands of his faith, by conversing with other Christians, he is strengthened, and his hands are held up. A great benefit of holy conference is counsel and advice ; if a man (saith Chrysostom) who hath but one head to advise him, could make that head a hundred heads to advise him, he would be very wise ; a single Christian hath this benefit by the communion of saints, they are as so many heads to advise him what to do in such a case or exigency ; by Christian conference the saints can say, ‘ Did not our hearts burn within us ?’ Communion of saints we have in our creed, but it is too little in our practice ; men usually travel fastest in company ; we travel fastest to heaven in the communion of saints.

15. If we would attain to this kingdom of heaven, let us be willing to come up to Christ’s terms. Many will be cheapening, and bid something for the kingdom of heaven, they will avoid gross sin, and will come to church, and say their prayers ; and yet all this while they are not willing to come up to God’s

price, that is they will not resist the idol of self-righteousness, flying only to Christ as the horns of the altar; they will not sacrifice their bosom-sin; they will not give God spirit-worship, serving him with zeal and intenseness of soul, John iv. 24. They will not forgive their enemies; they will not part with their carnal profits for Christ; they would have the kingdom of heaven, but they will not come up to the price: if you would have this kingdom, do not article and indent with Christ, but accept of his terms; say, Lord, I am willing to have the kingdom of heaven whatever it cost me: I am willing to pluck out my right eye, to part with all for the kingdom; here is a blank paper I put into thy hand, Lord, write thy own articles, I will subscribe to them.

16. If we would obtain the heavenly kingdom, let us attend to the holy ordinances; thus God brings souls to heaven, Acts xxvii. 31. 'Except ye abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.' Some people would leap out of the ship of ordinances, and then God knows whither they leap; but except ye abide in the ship of ordinances, ye cannot be saved. Especially, if you would get to heaven, attend to the word preached: it was by the ear, by our first parents listening to the serpent, that we lost paradise; and it is by the ear, by the hearing of the word, that we get to heaven, Isa. lv. 3. 'Hear, and your souls shall live.' God, sometimes in the preaching of the word, drops in that holy oil into the ear, which softens and sanctifies the heart; the word preached is called the 'ministry of the Spirit,' 2 Cor. iii. 8. because the Spirit of God makes use of this engine to convert souls. If the word preached doth not work upon men, nothing will; not judgment, nor miracles; no, nor though one should arise from the dead; Luke xvi. 31. If a glorified saint should come out of heaven, and assume a body, and tell you of all the glory of heaven, and the joys of the blessed, and persuade you to believe; if the preaching of the word will not bring you to heaven, neither would his rhetoric do it who rose from the dead. In heaven there will be no need of ordinances, but there is while we live here; the lamp needs oil, but the stars need none. While the saints have their lamp of grace burning here, they need the oil of ordinances to be continually dropping upon them; but there will be no need of this oil when they are stars in heaven, If you intend to get to heaven, be swift to hear; for faith comes by hearing, Rom. x. 14, 17. Peter laid down the net of his ministry, and at one draught caught three thousand souls. If you would have heaven's door opened to you, wait at the posts of wisdom's door.

17. If you would arrive at heaven, have this kingdom ever in your eye: our blessed Lord looked at the joy that was set before him; and Moses had an 'eye to the recompence of re-

ward,' Heb. xi. 26. Let the kingdom be much in our thoughts; meditation is the means to help us to heaven.

Qu. *How doth it help?*

Ans. 1. As it is a mean to prevent sin. No sword like this to cut asunder the sinews of temptation; it is almost impossible to sin presumptuously with the lively thoughts and hopes of heaven: It was when Moses was out of sight that Israel set up a calf, and worshipped it; so it is when the kingdom of heaven is out of sight, I mean, out of men's thoughts, that they set up their lusts, and idolize them. The meditation of heaven banisheth sin; he who thinks of the weight of glory, throws away the weight of sin.

2. To meditate on the kingdom of heaven, would excite and quicken obedience. We should think we could never pray enough, never love God enough, who hath prepared such a kingdom for us. *Immensum gloria calcar habet.* St. Paul had heaven in his eye, he was once caught up thither; and how active was he for God? 1 Cor. xv. 10. This would oil the wheels of obedience.

3. It would make us strive after holiness, because none but such are admitted into this kingdom, only the 'pure in heart shall see God,' Mat. v. 8. Holiness is the language of heaven; it is the only coin will pass current in heaven: this considered, would make us 'cleave ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness in the fear of God,' 2 Cor. vii. 1.

Thus you see how the meditation of heaven would be a means to bring us thither.

18. The last means for obtaining the heavenly kingdom is perseverance in holiness, Rev. ii. 10. 'Be thou faithful unto death, and thou shalt receive the crown of life.' In Christians, *non initia sed fines laudantur*, Hierom.

1. Is there such a thing as persevering?

2. How doth a Christian come to persevere?

3. What are the encouragements?

4. What helps?

1. Is there such a thing as persevering till we come to heaven? The Arminians deny it; and truly that any one holds out to the kingdom, is a wonder, if you consider,

1. What a world of corruption is mingled with grace: grace is apt to be stifled, as the coal to be choaked with its own ashes: grace is oft like a spark in the sea, it is a wonder it is not quenched: it is a wonder sin doth not do to grace, as sometimes the nurse to the child, overlay it, that it die; so that this infant of grace is smothered.

2. The implacable malice of Satan; he envies that we should have a kingdom, when he himself is cast out; it cuts him to

the heart to see a piece of dust and clay be made a bright star in glory, and he himself an angel of darkness; he will *Acheronta movere*, move all the powers of hell to hinder us from the kingdom: he spits his venom, shoots his fiery darts, raiseth a storm of persecution, yea, and prevails against some, Rev. xii. 4. 'There appeared a great red dragon, and his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth.' By the red dragon is meant the heathenish empire; now when his tail cast so many to the earth, it is a wonder that any of the stars keep fixed in their orb.

3. The blandishments of riches: the young man in the gospel went very far, 'thou art not far from the kingdom of God;' but he had rich possessions, and these golden weights hindered him from the kingdom, Luke xviii. 23. Jonathan pursued the battle till he came at the honey-comb, and then he stood still, 1 Sam. xiv. 27. Many are forward for heaven, till they taste the sweetness of the world; but when they come at the honey-comb, then they stand still, and go no further. *Funus pecunie funus animæ*. Those who have escaped the rocks of gross sins, yet have been cast away upon the golden sands: what a wonder therefore that any doth hold on till he come to the kingdom!

4. A wonder any holds out in grace, and doth not tire in his march to heaven, if you consider the difficulty of a Christian's work: he hath no time to lie fallow, he is either watching or fighting; nay, a Christian is to do those duties which to the eye of sense and reason seem inconsistent: while a Christian doth one duty, he seems to cross another, *e. g.* He must come with holy boldness to God in prayer, yet must serve him with fear; he must mourn for sin; yet rejoice; he must be contented, yet covet: 1 Cor. xii. 32. condemn men's impieties, yet reverence their authority: what difficult work is this? A wonder any saint arrives at the heavenly kingdom. To this I might add, the evil examples abroad, which are so attractive, we may say, the devils are come among us in the likeness of men. What a wonder is it that any soul perseveres till he comes to the kingdom of heaven? But as great a wonder as it is, there is such a thing as perseverance. A saint's perseverance is built upon two immutable pillars.

(1.) God's eternal love: we are inconstant in our love to God; but he is not so in his love to us, Jer. xxxi. 9. 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love;' with a love of eternity, God's love to the elect is not like a king's love to his favourite, when it is at the highest spring-tide, it soonest ebbs; but God's love is eternized: God may desert, not disinherit; he may change his love into a frown, not into hatred; he may alter his

providence, not his decree: when once the sun-shine of God's electing love is risen upon the soul, it never sets finally.

(2.) A saint's perseverance is built upon the covenant of grace; it is a firm, impregnable covenant: this you have in the words of the sweet singer of Israel, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. 'God hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure.' It is a sweet covenant, that God will be our God; the marrow and quintessence of all blessing: and it is a sure covenant, that he will put his fear in our heart, and we shall never depart from him, Jer. xxxii. 40. This covenant is inviolable, it cannot be broken; indeed sin may break the peace of the covenant, but it cannot break the bond of the covenant.

(3.) The third pillar perseverance is built upon, is the mystical union: believers are incorporated into Christ; they are knit to him as members to the head, by the nerve and ligament of faith, that they cannot be broken off, Eph. v. 23. What was once said of Christ's natural body, is as true of his mystical body. John xix. 36. 'A bone of it shall not be broken.' As it is impossible to sever the leaven and the dough when they are once mingled, so it is impossible when Christ and believers are once united, ever by the power of death or hell to be separated: how can Christ lose any member of his body and be perfect? You see upon what strong pillars the saints' perseverance is built.

2. Qu. *How doth a Christian hold on till he comes to the kingdom? How doth he persevere?*

Ans. 1. *Auxilio Spiritus*: God carries on a Christian to perseverance by the energy and vigorous working of his Spirit. The Spirit maintains the essence and seed of grace, it doth blow up the sparks of grace into a holy flame. *Spiritus est vicarius Christi*, Tertul. It is Christ's deputy and proxy; it is every day at work in a believer's heart, exerting grace into exercise, and ripening it into perseverance: the Spirit doth carve and polish the vessels of mercy, and make them fit for glory.

2. Christ causeth perseverance, and carries on a saint till he come to the heavenly kingdom, *vi orationis*, by his intercession; Christ is an advocate as well as a surety; he prays that the saints may arrive safe at the kingdom. Heb. vii. 25. 'Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost, (*i. e.* perfectly), seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.' That prayer he made for Peter on earth, he prays now in heaven for the saints, 'that their faith fail not,' Luke xxii. 32. 'that they may be with him where he is,' John xvii. 24. And sure, if he pray that they may be with him in his kingdom, they cannot perish by the way: Christ's prayer is efficacious. If the saints' prayers have so much force and prevalency in them; Jacob had power with God, and as a prince prevailed, Hos.

xii. 4. By prayer Elijah unlocked heaven: if the prayers of the faints have so much power with God, then, what hath Christ's prayer? How can the children of such prayers miscarry? How can they fall short of the kingdom, who have him praying for them, who is not only a Priest, but a Son? and besides, what he prays for as he is man, that he hath power to give as he is God. Thus you see how a Christian comes to persevere till he comes to the kingdom.

Obj. But methinks I hear some Christians say, if only perseverance obtains the kingdom, they fear they shall not come thither; they fear they shall faint by the way, and the weak legs of their grace will never carry them to the kingdom of heaven?

Ans. Wert thou indeed to stand in thy own strength, thou mightest fall away: that branch withers and dies that hath no root to grow upon. Thou growest upon the root Christ, who will be daily sending forth vital influence to strengthen thee; thou art imbecil and weak in grace, yet fear not falling short of heaven: For,

1. God hath made a promise to weak believers, what is a bruised reed, but an emblem of a weak faith? yet it hath a promise made to it, Mat. xii. 20. 'A bruised reed he will not break.' God hath promised to supply the weak Christian with so much grace as he shall need, till he comes to heaven. Beside the two-pence which the good Samaritan left to pay for the cure of the poor wounded man, he passed his word for all that he should need beside, Luke x. 35. So, Christ doth not only give a little grace in hand, but his bond for more, that he will give as much grace as a saint shall need till he comes to heaven, Psal. lxxxiv. 11. 'The Lord will give grace and glory;' that is, a fresh supply of grace, till he be perfected in glory.

2. God hath more care of his weak faints, who fear they shall never hold out till they come to the kingdom. Doth not the mother tend the weak child most? Isa. xl. 11. 'He will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom.' If thou thinkest that thou art so weak that thou shalt never hold out till thou comest to heaven, thou shalt be carried in the arms of the Almighty; he gathers the lambs in his arms; Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, marcheth before his people, and his power is in their re-reward, so that none of them faint or die in their march to heaven.

Qu. 3. What are the encouragements to make Christians hold on till they come to the kingdom of heaven?

Ans. 1. It is great credit to a Christian, not only to hold forth the truth, but to hold fast the truth till he comes to heaven; when grace doth flourish into perseverance, and with the

church of Thyatira, our last works are more than our first, Rev. ii. 19. this is *insigne honoris*, a star of honour. It is matter of renown to see grey hairs grow with golden virtues: the excellency of a thing lies in the finishing of it. What is the excellency of a building, not when the first stone is laid, but when it is finished; so the beauty and excellency of a Christian is, when he hath finished his faith, having done his work, is landed safe in heaven.

2. You that have made a progress in religion, have not many miles to go before you come at the kingdom of heaven, Rom. xiii. 11. 'Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.' You who have hoary hairs, your green tree is turned into an almond tree; you are nearer to heaven, it is but going a little further and you will set your feet within heaven's gates; oh therefore now be encouraged to hold out, your salvation is nearer than when you first began to believe. Our diligence should be greater when our salvation is nearer. When a man is almost at the end of the race, will he now tire and faint? Will he not put forth all his strength, and strain every limb, that he may lay hold upon the prize? Our salvation is now nearer; the kingdom is as it were within sight; how should we now put forth all our strength, that we may lay hold upon the garland of glory? Doctor Taylor, when he was going to his martyrdom, "I have (saith he) but two files to go over, and I shall be at my Father's house." Though the way to heaven be up-hill, you must climb the steep rock of mortification; and though there be thorns in the way, *viz.* sufferings, yet you have gone the greatest part of your way, you are within a few days march of the kingdom; and will not you persevere? Christian, pluck up thy courage, fight the good fight of faith, pursue holiness; it is but a while and you shall put off your armour, and end all your weary marches, and receive a victorious crown; your salvation is nearer, you are within a little of the kingdom, therefore now persevere, you are ready to commence and take your degree of glory.

3. The blessed promise annexed to perseverance; the promise is a crown of life, Rev. ii. 10. Death is a worm that feeds in the crowns of princes, but behold here a living crown, and a never fading-crown, 1 Pet. v. 4. And Rev. ii. 28. He that overcometh, and keepeth my words to the end, I will give him *gloriam matutinam*, the morning-star: the morning-star is brighter than the rest. This morning-star is meant of Christ; as if Christ had said, I will give to him that perseveres some of my beauty; I will put some of my illustrious rays upon him; he shall have the next degree of glory to me, as the morning star is next the sun: will not this animate and make us hold out?

We shall have a kingdom, and that which is better than the kingdom, a bright morning-star.

Qu. (4.) *What are the means conducing to perseverance, or, what shall we do that we may hold out to the kingdom?*

Ans. 1. Take up religion upon good grounds, not in a fit or humour, or out of worldly design; but be deliberate, weigh things well in the balance, Luke xiv. 28. ‘Which of you intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost?’ Think with yourself what religion must cost you, it must cost you the parting with your sins: and what it may cost you, it may cost you the parting with your lives: consider if a kingdom will not countervail your sufferings. Weigh things well, and then make your choice, Ps. cxix. 30. ‘I have chosen the way of thy truth.’ Why do many apostatize and fall away, but because they did never sit down and count the cost.

2. If we would hold out to the kingdom, let us cherish the grace of faith, 1 Cor. i. 24. ‘By faith ye stand.’ Faith, like Hercules’ club, it beats down all opposition before it; it is a conquering grace.

Qu. *How comes faith to be so strong?*

Ans. Faith fetcheth Christ’s strength into the soul, Phil. iv.

13. A captain may give his soldier armour, but not strength: faith partakes of Christ’s strength, and faith gets strength from the promise; as the child by sucking the breast gets strength, so doth faith by sucking the breast of the promise; hence faith is such a wonder-working grace, and enables a Christian to persevere.

3. If you would hold out to the kingdom, set before your eyes the examples of those noble heroic saints, who have persevered to the kingdom: *vivitur exemplis*, examples have more influence on us than precepts, Job xxiii. 11, 12. ‘My foot hath held his steps.’ Though the way of religion hath flints and thorns in it, yet my foot hath held his steps; I have not fainted in the way, nor turned out of the way. Daniel held on his religion, and would not intermit prayer, though he knew the writing was signed against him, and a prayer might cost him his life, Dan. vi. 10. The blessed martyrs persevered to the kingdom through sufferings. Saunders that holy man, said, ‘Welcome the cross of Christ; my Saviour began to me in a bitter cup, and shall I not pledge him?’ Another martyr, kissing the stake, said, ‘I shall not lose my life, but change it for a better; instead of coals I shall have pearls.’ What a spirit of gallantry was in these saints! Let us learn constancy from their courage. A soldier, seeing his general fight valiantly, is animated by his example, and hath new spirits put into him.

4. Let us add fervent prayer to God, that he would enable us to hold out to the heavenly kingdom, Ps. cxix. 117. ‘Hold

thou me up, and I shall be safe.' Let us not presume on our own strength. When Peter cried to Christ on the water, 'Lord save me,' then Christ took him by the hand, Mat. xiv. 30. But when he grew confident of his own strength, then Christ let him fall. O pray to God for auxiliary grace. The child is safe when held in the nurse's arms : so are we in Christ's arms. Let us pray that God will put his fear in our hearts, that we do not depart from him ; and that prayer of Cyprian, *Domine, quod cœpisti perfice, ne in portu naufragium accadat*, Lord, perfect that which thou hast begun in me, that I may not suffer shipwreck when I am almost at the haven.

3. *Branch.* Let us press forward with the greatest diligence to this kingdom. And here let me lay down some powerful persuasives, or divine arguments, to make you put to all your strength for the obtaining this blessed kingdom.

1. This is the great errand for which God hath sent us into the world, to prepare for this heavenly kingdom, Matth. vi. 33. 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God.' First in time before all things ; and first in affections, above all things. Great care is taken for the achieving worldly things, Matt. vi. 25. To see people labouring for the earth, as ants about a molehill, would make one think this were the only errand they came about : but alas ! What is all this to the kingdom of heaven ? I have read of a devout pilgrim travelling to Jerusalem, who passing through several cities, where he saw many stately edifices, ware and monuments, he would say, " I must not stay here, this is not Jerusalem : " so when we enjoy worldly things, peace and plenty, and have our presses burst out with new wine, we should say to ourselves, this is not the kingdom we are to look after, this is not heaven : it is wisdom to remember our errand. It will be but sad upon a death-bed for a man to think he was busying himself only about trifles, playing with a feather, and neglecting the main thing he came into the world about.

2. The seeking after the heavenly kingdom will be judged most prudent by all men at last. Those who are most regardless of their souls now, will, before they die, wish they had minded eternity more. When conscience is awakened, and men begin to come to themselves, now, what would they give for the kingdom of heaven ? How happy were it, if men were of the same mind now, as they will be at death ? Death will alter men's opinions ; then those who did most slight and disparage the ways of religion, will wish their time and thoughts had been taken up about the excellent glory. At death men's eyes will be opened, and they will see their folly when it is too late. If all men, even the worst, will wish at last that they had minded the kingdom of heaven, why should not we do that now, which all will wish they had done when they come to die.

3. This kingdom of heaven deserves our utmost pains and diligence ; it is glorious, beyond hyperbole. Suppose earthly kingdoms more magnificent than they are, their foundations of gold, their walls of pearl, their windows of sapphire, yet they are not comparable to the heavenly kingdom. If the pavement of it be bespangled with so many bright shining lights, glorious stars, what is the kingdom itself ? 1 John iii. 2. ‘ It doth not yet appear what we shall be.’ This kingdom exceeds our faith. How sublime and wonderful is that place where the blessed Deity shines forth in his immense glory, infinitely beyond the comprehension of angels ?

(1.) The kingdom of heaven is a place of honour ; there are the glorious triumphs and sparkling crowns. In other kingdoms, there is but one king, but in heaven all are kings, Rev. i. 6. Every saint glorified partakes of the same glory as Christ doth, John xvii. 22. ‘ The glory thou hast given me, I have given them.’

(2.) This kingdom is a place of joy, Matth. xxv. 21. ‘ Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.’ To have a continual aspect of love from God’s face, to be crowned with immortality, to be as the angels of God, to drink of the rivers of pleasure for ever, this will cause raptures of joy. Sure it deserves our utmost pains in pursuing and securing this kingdom. Julius Cæsar coming towards Rome with his army, and hearing the senate and people had fled from it, said, “ that they will not fight for this city, what city will they fight for ? ” If we will not take pains for the kingdom of heaven, what kingdom will we take pains for ? It was the speech of the spies to their brethren, Judg. xviii. 9. ‘ We have seen the land, and behold it is very good ; and are ye still ? Be not slothful to go, and to enter to possess the land.’ We have had a lively description of the glory of heaven, we find the kingdom is very good ; why then do we sit still ? Why do we not *operam novare*, put forth our utmost zeal and industry for this kingdom ? The diligence of others in seeking after earthly kingdoms, shames our coldness and indifferency in pursuing after the kingdom of heaven.

4. The time we have to make sure of the heavenly kingdom is very short and uncertain ; take heed it doth not slip away before you have prepared for the kingdom. Time passeth on apace, *ctio pede preterita vita* ; it will not be long ‘ before the silver cord be loosed, and the golden bowl broken,’ Eccl. xii. The skin wherein the brains are enclosed as in a bowl, this golden bowl will soon be broken. Our soul is in our body, as the bird is in the shell, which soon breaks, and the bird flies out : the shell of the body breaking, the soul flies into eternity. We know not whether we shall live to another sabbath : before we hear another sermon-bell go, our passing bell may go. Our life

runs as a swift stream into the ocean of eternity. Brethren, if our time be so minute and transient, if the taper of life be so soon wasted, or perhaps blown out by violent death, how should we put to all our strength, and call in help from heaven, that we may obtain the kingdom of glory? If time be so short, why do we waste it about things of less moment, and neglect the 'one thing needful,' which is the kingdom of heaven? A man that hath a great work to be done, and but one day for the doing of it, hath need to work hard: we have a great work to do, we are striving for a kingdom, and, alas! we are not certain of one day to work in; therefore what need have we to bestir ourselves, and what we do for heaven, to do it with all our might?

5. To excite our diligence, let us consider how inexcusable we shall be, if we miss of the kingdom of heaven. Who have had such helps for heaven as we have had? Indians who have mines of gold, have not such advantages for glory as we: they have the light of the sun, moon, and stars, and the light of reason, but this is not enough to light them to heaven: but we have had the light of the gospel shining in our horizon; we have been lifted up to heaven with ordinances; we have had the word in season and out of season. The ordinances are the pipes of the sanctuary, which empty the golden oil of grace into the soul; they are *scala paradisi*, the ladder by which we ascend to the kingdom of heaven, Deut. iv. 7. 'What nation is there so great who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for?' We have had heaven and hell set before us, we have had counsels of friends, warnings, examples, the motions and inspirations of the Holy Ghost; how should all these spurs quicken us in our pace to heaven? Should not that ship sail apace to the haven, which hath wind and tide to carry it? The tide of ordinances, and the wind of the Spirit. Surely if we, through negligence, miss of the kingdom of heaven, we shall have nothing to say for ourselves; we shall be as far from excuse as from happiness.

6. You cannot do too much for the kingdom of heaven: you cannot pray too much, sanctify the sabbath too much, love God too much; you cannot overdo. In secular things a man may labour too hard, he may kill himself with working; but there is no fear of working too hard for heaven. *In virtute non est verendum ne quid nimium sit*, Seneca. The world is apt to censure the godly, as if they were too zealous, and did overstrain themselves in religion. Indeed a man may follow the world too much, he may make too much haste to be rich: the ferry-man may take in too many passengers into his boat, to the sinking of his boat; so a man may heap up so much gold and silver, as to sink himself in perdition, 1 Tim. vi. 9. but one cannot be too earnest and zealous for the kingdom of heaven; there is no fear

of excess here, when we do all we can for heaven, we come short of the golden rule set us, and of Christ's golden pattern ; when our faith is highest, like the sun in the meridian, yet still there is something lacking in our faith, 1 Thess: iii. 1. so that all our labour for the kingdom is little enough. When a Christian hath done his best, yet still he hath sins, and wants to bewail.

7. By this you may judge of the state of your souls, whether you have grace or not, by your earnest pursuit after the heavenly kingdom. Grace infuseth a spirit of activity into a person ; grace doth not lie dormant in the soul ; it is not a sleepy habit, but it makes a Christian like a seraphim, swift and winged in his heavenly motions : grace is like fire, it makes one burn in love to God ; and the more he loves him, the more he presseth forward to heaven, where he may fully enjoy him. Hope is an active grace, it is called ' a lively hope,' 1 Pet. i. 3. Hope is like the spring in the watch, it sets all the wheels of the soul a running ; hope of a crop makes the husbandman sow his seed ; hope of victory makes the soldier fight ; and a true hope of glory makes a Christian vigorously pursue glory. Here is a spiritual touch-stone to try our grace by : if we have the anointing of the Spirit, it will oil the wheels of our endeavour, and make us lively in our pursuit after the heavenly kingdom. No sooner had Paul grace infused, but presently, ' Behold, he prays,' Acts ix. 11. The affections are by divines called the " feet of the soul ;" if these feet move not towards heaven, it is because there is no life.

8. Your labour for heaven is not lost : perhaps you may think it is in vain that you have served God : but know that your pains are not lost. The seed is cast into the earth, and it dies, yet at last it brings forth a plentiful crop ; so your labours seem to be fruitless, but at last they bring you to a kingdom. Who would not work hard for one hour, when, for that hour's work, he should be a king as long as he lived ? And let me tell you, the more labour you have put forth for the kingdom of heaven, the more degrees of glory you shall have. As there are degrees of torment in hell, Matth. xxiii. 41. so of glory in heaven. As one star differs from another in glory, so shall one saint, 1 Cor. xv. 41. Though every vessel of mercy shall be full, yet one vessel may hold more than another. Such as have done more work for God, shall have more glory in the heavenly kingdom. Could we hear the saints departed speaking to us from heaven, sure they would speak after this manner : were we to leave heaven a while, and live on the earth again, we would do God a thousand times more service than ever we did : we would pray with more life, act with more zeal ; for now we

fee, the more hath been our labour, the greater is our reward in heaven.

9. While we are labouring for the kingdom, God will help us, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. 'I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes.' The promise encourageth us, and God's Spirit enableth us. A master gives his servant work to do, but he cannot give him strength to work: but God, as he cuts us out work, so he gives us strength, Ps. lxxxvi. 16. 'Give thy strength unto thy servant.' God not only gives us a crown when we have done running, but gives us legs to run: he gives exciting, assisting grace; *lex jubet gratia juvat*: the Spirit helping us in our work for heaven, makes it easy. If the load-stone draw the iron, it is not hard for the iron to move: if God's Spirit draws the heart, now it moves towards heaven with facility and alacrity.

10. The more pains we have taken for heaven, the sweeter heaven will be when we come there. As when an husbandman hath been grafting trees, or setting flowers in his garden, it is pleasant to review and look over his labours; so, when in heaven we shall remember our former zeal and earnestness for the kingdom, it will sweeten heaven, and add to the joy of it. For a Christian to think, such a day I spent in examining my heart, such a day I was weeping for sin; when others were at their sport, I was at prayer: and now, have I lost any thing by my devotion? My tears are wiped away, and the wine of paradise cheers my heart; I now enjoy him whom my soul loves; I am possessed of a kingdom; my labour is over, and my joy remains.

11. If you do not take pains for the kingdom of heaven now, there will be nothing to be done for your souls after death: this is the only fit season for working; and if this season be lost, the kingdom is forfeited, Eccles. ix. 10. 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work nor device, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest.' It was a saying of Charles V. "I have spent my treasure, but that I may recover again; I have lost my health, but that I may have again; but I have lost a great many brave soldiers, but them I can never have again." So other temporal blessings may be lost and recovered again; but if the term of life, wherein you should work for heaven, be once lost, it is past all recovery; you can never have another season again for your souls.

12. There is nothing else but this kingdom of heaven we can make sure of; we cannot make sure of life. *Quis scit an adjiciat hodiernae crastinae vitae tempora dii superi?* Hor. When our breath goes out, we know not whether we shall draw it again? How many are taken away suddenly? We cannot make riches sure, it is uncertain whether we shall get them;

the world is like a lottery, every one is not sure to draw a prize : or, if we get riches, we are not sure to keep them, Prov. xxiii. 5. ‘ Riches make themselves wings and fly.’ Experience seals to the truth of this. Many who have had plentiful estates, yet, by fire, or losses at sea, they have been squeezed as sponges, and all their estates exhausted : but if men should keep their estates a while, yet death strips them of all ; when death’s gun goes off, away flies the estate, 1 Tim. vi. 7. ‘ It is certain we can carry nothing out of the world : ’ so that there is no making sure of any thing here below, but we may make sure of the kingdom of heaven, Prov. xi. 18. ‘ To him that worketh righteousness is a sure reward.’ He who hath grace is sure of heaven, for he hath grace begun in him. A believer hath an evidence of heaven, Heb. xi. 1. ‘ Faith is the evidence of things not seen.’ He hath an earnest of glory, 2 Cor. i. 22. ‘ Who hath also given us the earnest of his Spirit.’ An earnest is part of the whole sum. He hath a sure hope, Heb. vi. 19. ‘ Which hope we have as an anchor.’ This anchor is cast upon God’s promise, Tit. i. 2. ‘ In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie hath promised.’ So that here is great encouragement to take pains for heaven, we may make sure of this kingdom.

13. The kingdom of heaven cannot be obtained without labour. *Non est ad astra molis e terris via.* A boat may as well get to land without oars, as we to heaven without labour. We cannot have the world, without labour, and do we think to have heaven ! If a man digs for gravel, much more for gold, Phil. iii. 14. ‘ I press toward the mark.’ Heaven’s-gate is not like that ‘ iron-gate which opened to Peter of its own accord,’ Acts xii. 10. Heaven is not like those ‘ ripe figs which fall into the mouth of the eater,’ Nah. iii. 12. No, there must be taking pains. Two things are requisite for a Christian, a watchful eye and a working hand. We must, like Hannibal, force away to the heavenly kingdom through difficulties. We must win the garland of glory by labour, before we wear it with triumph. God hath enacted this law, ‘ That no man shall eat of the tree of paradise, but in the sweat of his brows : ’ how then dare any censure christian diligence ? how dare they say you take more pains for heaven than needs. God saith, ‘ Strive as in an agony,’ fight the good ‘ fight of faith ? ’ and they say, you are too strict : but who shall we believe ? An holy God that bids us strive, or a profane atheist that saith we strive too much ?

14. Much of our time being already mispent, we had need work the harder for the kingdom of heaven ; he who hath lost his time at school, and often played truant, had need ply it the harder, that he may gain a stock of learning : he who hath slept and loitered in the beginning of his journey, had need ride the

faster in the evening, lest he fall short of the place he is travelling to. Some here present are in their youth, others in the flower of their age, others have grey hairs, the almond tree blossoms, and perhaps they have been very regardless of their souls or heaven. Time spent unprofitably is not time lived, but time lost : if there be any such here, who have mispent their golden hours, they have not only been slothful, but wasteful servants ; how had you need now to redeem the time, and press forward with might and main to the heavenly kingdom ? 1 Pet. iv. 3. ' The time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles.' It may suffice us that we have lost so much time already, let us now work the harder : such as have crept as snails, had need now fly as eagles to the paradise of God ; if, in the former part of your life, you have been as willows, barren in goodness, in the latter part be as ' an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits,' Cant. iv. 13. Recompense former remissness with future diligence.

15. How uncomely and sordid a slothful temper of soul is, Zeph. i. 12. ' I will punish the men who are settled on their lees : ' Heb. " Crudled on their lees." Settling on the lees, is an emblem of a dull unactive soul. The snail by reason of its slow motion, was reckoned among the unclean, Lev. xi. 30. ' A slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom,' Prov. xix. 24. he is loth to pull it out, though it be to lay hold on a crown, *Non capit porta illa cœlestis torpori languidos*, Brugenl. The devil himself cannot be charged with idleness, 1 Pet. v. 8. ' He walketh about.' An idle soul stands in the world for a cipher, and God writes down no ciphers in the book of life ; heaven is no hive for drones ; an idle person is fit for a temptation. When the bird sits still upon the bough, then it is in danger of the gun ; when one sits still in sloth, then the devil shootshim with a temptation ; standing water putrifies. Heathens will rise up in judgment against supine Christians ; what pains did they take in the Olympic games ? they ran but for a garland of flowers, or olive ; and do we sit still who run for a kingdom ? how can he expect a reward that never works, or a crown that never fights ? *Inertia animae somnus*. Sloth is the soul's sleep. Adam when he was asleep lost his rib ; and when a person is in the deep sleep of sloth, he loseth salvation.

16. Holy activity and industry doth ennoble a Christian. *Labor splendore decoratur*, Cicero. The more excellent any thing is, the more active. The sun is a glorious creature, it is ever in motion, going its circuit : fire is the purest element, and the most active, it is ever sparkling and flaming : the angels are the most noble creatures, they are represented by the cherubims, with wings displayed. The more active for heaven the more illustrious, and the more do we resemble the angels. The phœ-

nix flies with a coronet on its head ; the industrious soul hath his coronet, his labour is his ensign of honour.

17. It is a mercy that there is a possibility of happiness, and that upon our pains taking we may have a kingdom : by our fall in Adam we forfeited heaven : why might not God have dealt with us as with the lapsed angels ? They had no sooner sinned, but they were expelled heaven, never to come thither more ; we may say, as the apostle, Rom. xi. 22. ‘ Behold the goodness, and severity of God.’ To the apostate angels, behold the severity of God, that he should throw them down to hell for ever ; to us, behold the goodness of God ; that he hath put us into a possibility of mercy ; and, if we do but take pains, there is a kingdom stands ready for us : how may this whet and sharpen our industry, that we are in a capacity of salvation ? and, if we do but what we are able, we shall receive an eternal weight of glory.

18. Our labour for the kingdom of heaven is minute and transient, it is not to endure long, our labour expires with our life ; it is but a while and we shall leave off working ; for a little labour an eternal rest. Who would think much to wade through a little water, that were sure to be crowned as soon as they came on shore ; Christians, let this encourage you, you have but a little more pains to take, a few tears more to shed, a few more sabbaths to keep, and behold an eternal recompence of reward ; what are a few tears to a crown ? a few minutes of time to an eternity of glory ?

19. What striving is there for earthly kingdoms, which are corruptible, and subject to change ? with what vigour and alacrity did Hannibal’s soldiers continue their march over the Alps, and craggy rocks, and Cæsar’s soldiers fight with hunger and cold ? Men will break through laws and oaths, they will swim to the crown in blood : will they venture thus for earthly promotions, and shall not we strive more for an heavenly kingdom ? This is ‘ a kingdom which cannot be shaken,’ Heb. xii. 28. a kingdom where there is unparalled beauty, unstained honour, unmixed joy ; a kingdom where there shall be nothing present which we could wish were removed, nor nothing absent which we could wish were enjoyed. Sure if there be any spark of grace, or true generosity in our breasts, we will not suffer ourselves to be out-striven by others ; we will not let them take more pains for earthly honours, than we do for that excellent glory which will crown all our desires.

20. How much pains do some men take to go to hell, and shall not we take more pains to go to heaven ? Jer. ix. 5. ‘ They weary themselves to commit iniquity.’ Sinners hackney themselves out in the devil’s service : what pains do some men take to satisfy their unclean lusts ! they waste their estates,

wear the shameful marks of their sin about them : they will visit the harlot's house, though it stands the next door to hell, Prov. vii. 27. ' Her house is the way to hell.' What pains do others take in persecuting ! Holiness is the white they shoot at. It is said of Antiochus Epiphanes, he undertook more tedious journeys, and went upon greater hazards, to vex and oppose the Jews, than any of his predecessors had done in getting of victories. The devil blows the horn, and men ride post to hell, as if they feared hell would be full ere they would get thither. When Satan had entered into Judas, how active was Judas ! he goes to the high priests, from them to the band of soldiers, and with them back again to the garden, and never left till he had betrayed Christ. How industrious were the idolatrous Jews ! so fiercely were they bent upon their sin, that they would sacrifice their sons and daughters to their idol-gods, Jer. xxxii. 35. Do men take all this pains for hell, and shall not we take pains for the kingdom of heaven ? The wicked have nothing to encourage them in their sins, they have all the threatenings of God as a flaming sword against them. O let it never be said, that the devil's servants are more active than Christ's ; that they serve him better who rewards them only with fire and brimstone, than we do God, who rewards us with a kingdom.

21. The labour we take for heaven, is a labour full of pleasure, Prov. iii. 17. A man sweats at his recreation, tires himself with hunting, but there is a delight he takes in it, which sweetens it, Rom. vii. 22. ' I delight in the law of God in the inner man,' Gr. I take pleasure. Not only is the kingdom of heaven delightful, but the way thither ; what delight hath a gracious soul in prayer ? Isa. lvi. 7. ' I will make them joyful in my house of prayer.' While a Christian weeps, there is joy drops with tears ; while he is musing on God, he hath such illapses of the Spirit, and, as it were, such transfigurations of soul, that he thinks himself half in heaven, Ps. lxiii. 5, 6. ' My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips, when I remember thee upon my bed,' &c. A Christian's work for heaven is like a bridegroom's work on the morning of the marriage-day, he puts on his vesture and wedding-robcs, in which he shall be married to his bride : so, in all the duties of religion, we are putting on those wedding-robcs, in which we shall be married to Christ in glory. O what solace and inward peace is there in close walking with God ! Isa. xxxii. 17. ' The work of righteousness shall be peace.' Serving of God is like gathering of spices or flowers, wherein there is some labour, but the labour is recompensed with delight. Working for heaven is like digging in a gold mine ; the digging is labour, but getting the gold is pleasure : O then let us bestir ourselves for the king-

dom of heaven ; it is a labour full of pleasure ! A Christian would not part with his joy for the most delicious music ; he would not exchange his anchor of hope for a crown of gold. Well might David say, ‘ In keeping thy precepts there is great reward.’ Ps. xix. 11. not only after keeping thy precepts, but in keeping them : a Christian hath both the spring-flowers ; and the crop ; inward delight in serving God, there is the spring-flowers ; and the kingdom of glory at last, there is the full crop.

22. How industrious have the saints in former ages been ! They thought they could never do enough for heaven : they could never serve God enough, love him enough. *Minus te amavi, Domine*, Aug. Lord, I have loved thee too little. What pains did St. Paul take for the heavenly kingdom ? Phil. iii. 13. ‘ Reaching forth unto those things which are before.’ The Greek word to reach forth, signifies to stretch out the neck : a metaphor from racers, who strain every limb, and reach forward to lay hold on the prize. Anna the prophetess, Luke ii. 37. ‘ departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.’ Basil the great, by much labour and watching, exhausted his bodily strength. ‘ Let racks, pullies, and all torments come upon me (said Ignatius) so I may win Christ.’ The industry and courage of former saints, who are now crowned with glory, should provoke our diligence, that so at last we may sit down with them in the kingdom of heaven.

23. The more pains we take for heaven, the more welcome will death be to us : what is it makes men so loth to die ? They are like a tenant that will not go out of the house till the ser-geant pull him out ; they love not to hear of death ; why so ? Because their conscience accuseth them that they have taken little or no pains for heaven ; they have been sleeping when they should have been working, and now they are afraid lest death should carry them prisoners to hell : whereas he who hath spent his time in serving of God, he can look death in the face with comfort : he was wholly taken up about heaven, and now he shall be taken up to heaven : he traded before in heaven, and now he shall go to live there, Phil. i. 22. *Cupio dissolvi*, ‘ I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ.’ Paul had wholly laid himself out for God, 1 Cor. xv. 10. and now he knew there was a crown laid up for him, and he longed to take possession. Thus I have given you twenty-three persuasives or arguments to exert and put forth your utmost diligence, to the obtaining the kingdom of heaven. O that these arguments were written in all your hearts, as with the point of a diamond ! And, because delays in these cases are dangerous, let me desire you to set upon this work for heaven presently, Ps.

cxix. 60. 'I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.' Many people are convinced of the necessity of looking after the kingdom of glory, but they say as those, Hag. i. 2. 'The time is not yet come.' They adjourn and put off till their time is slipped away, and so they lose the kingdom of heaven; beware of this falacy: delay strengthens sin, hardens the heart, and gives the devil fuller possession of a man, 1 Sam. xxi. 8. 'The king's business requires haste;' so the business of salvation requires haste: do not put off an hour longer, *volat ambiguis mobilis aliis hora*. What assurance have you that you shall live another day? Have you any lease of life granted? why then do you not presently arise out of the bed of sloth, and put forth all your strength and spirits that you may be possessed of the kingdom of glory; should not things of the highest importance be done first? Settling a man's estate, and clearing the title to his land, is not delayed, but done in the first place; what is there of such grand importance as this, the saving of your souls, and the gaining of a kingdom? Therefore to-day hear God's voice, now mind eternity, now get your title to heaven cleared before the decree of death bring forth; what imprudence is it to lay the heaviest load upon the weakest horse? So, to lay the heavy load of repentance on thyself, when thou art enfeebled by sickness, the hands shake, the lips quiver, the heart faints. O be wise in time, now prepare for the kingdom. He who never begins his voyage to heaven but in the storm of death, it is a thousand to one if he doth not suffer an eternal shipwreck.

Use VI. Of exhortation.

1. *Branch.* If there be such a glorious kingdom a-coming, then you who have any good hope through grace, you that are the heirs of this kingdom, let me exhort you to fix things:

1. Often take a prospect of this heavenly kingdom: climb up the celestial mount: take a turn, as it were in heaven every day, by holy meditation, Ps. xlviii. 12, 13. 'Walk about Zion, tell the towers thereof, mark ye well her bulwarks.' see what a glorious kingdom heaven is; go tell the towers, view the palaces of the heavenly Jerusalem: Christian, shew thy heart the gates of pearl, the beds of spices, the clutters of grapes which grow in the paradise of God; Say, O my soul, all this glory is thine, it is thy Father's good pleasure to give thee this kingdom. The thoughts of heaven are very delightful and ravishing; can men of the world so delight in viewing their bags of gold, and fields of corn, and shall not the heirs of promise take more delight in contemplating the celestial kingdom? The serious meditation of the kingdom of would glory work these three effects.

(1.) It would put a damp and slur upon all worldly glo-

ry : those who stand upon the top of the Alps, the great cities of Campania seem but small in their eye ; could we look through the perspective glass of faith, and take a view of heaven's glory, how small and minute would all other things appear ? Moses sighted the honours of Pharaoh's court, having an eye to the recompence of reward, Heb. xi. 26. St. Paul, who had a vision of glory, and St. John, who was carried away in the spirit, and saw the holy Jerusalem descending out of heaven, having the glory of God in it, Rev. xxi. 11. how did the world after appear in an eclipse to them ?

(2.) The meditation of the heavenly kingdom would much promote holiness in us : ' heaven is an holy place,' 1 Pet. i. 4. ' An inheritance undefiled ;' it is described by transparent glass, to denote its purity, Rev. xxi. 21. The contemplating heaven would put us upon the study of holiness, because none but such are admitted into that kingdom : heaven is not like Noah's ark, into which came clean beasts and unclean ; only ' the pure in heart shall see God,' Matth. v. 8.

(3.) The meditation of the heavenly kingdom would be a spur to diligence, *Immensum gloria calcar habet*, 1 Cor. xv. 58. ' Always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.' When the mariner sees the haven, he plies it harder with his oars ; when we have a sight and prospect of glory, it would make us be much in prayer, alms, watching ; it would add wings to duty, and make the lamp of our devotion burn brighter.

2. If you have hopes of this kingdom, be content though you have but a little of the world : contentment is a rare thing, it is a jewel that but few Christians wear ; but if you have a grounded hope of heaven, it may work your heart to contentation. What though you have but little in possession ? you have a kingdom in reversion. Were you to take an estimate of a man's estate, how would you value it ? by what he hath in his house, or by his land ? Perhaps he hath little money or jewels in his house, but he is a landed man, there lies his estate. A believer hath but little oil in the cruise, and meal in the barrel, but he is a landed man, he hath a title to a kingdom, and may not this satisfy him ? If a man, who lived here in England, had a great estate befallen him beyond the seas, and perhaps had no more money at present but just to pay for his voyage, he is content, he knows when he comes to his estate, he shall have money enough ; thou who art a believer, hast a kingdom befallen thee : though thou hast little in thy purse, yet, if thou hast enough to pay for thy voyage, enough to bear thy charges to heaven, it is sufficient. God hath given thee grace, which is the fore-crop, and will give thee glory, which is the after-crop ; and may not this make thee content ?

3. *Branch.* If you have hope of this blessed kingdom, pray often for the coming of this glorious kingdom, 'Thy kingdom come:' only believers can pray heartily for the hastening of the kingdom of glory.

1. They cannot pray that Christ's kingdom of glory may come, who never had the kingdom of grace set up in their hearts: can the guilty prisoner pray that the assizes may come?

2. They cannot pray heartily that Christ's kingdom of glory may come, who are lovers of the world; they have found paradise, they are in their kingdom already, this is their heaven, and they desire to hear of no other: they are of his mind, who said, if he might keep his cardinalship in Paris, he would lose his part in Paradise.

3. They cannot pray heartily that Christ's kingdom of glory may come, who oppose Christ's kingdom of grace, who break his laws, which are the sceptre of his kingdom, who shoot at those who bear Christ's name, and carry his colours: sure these cannot pray that Christ's kingdom of glory may come, for then Christ will judge them; and, if they say this prayer, they are hypocrites, they mean not as they speak. But you who have the kingdom of grace set up in your hearts, pray much that the kingdom of glory may hasten, 'Thy kingdom come;' when this kingdom comes, then you shall behold Christ in all his embroidered robes of glory, shining ten thousand times brighter than the sun in all its meridian splendor. When Christ's kingdom comes, the bodies of the saints that sleep in the dust shall be raised in honour, and made like Christ's glorious body; then shall your souls, like diamonds, sparkle with holiness; you shall never have a sinful thought more, you shall be as holy as the angels, you shall be as holy as you would be, and as holy as God would have you to be; then you shall be in a better state than in innocency. Adam was created a glorious creature, but mutable; a bright star; but a falling star: but in the kingdom of heaven is a fixation of happiness; when Christ's kingdom of glory comes, you shall be rid of all your enemies: as Moses said, *Exod. xiv. 13.* 'The Egyptians, whom you have seen to-day, you shall see them no more for-ever.' So those enemies who have plowed on the backs of God's people, and made deep their furrows, when Christ shall come in his glory, you shall see these enemies no more. All Christ's enemies shall be 'put under his feet.' *2 Cor. xv. 2.* and before the wicked be destroyed, the saints shall judge them, *1 Cor. vi. 2.* 'Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?' This will cut the wicked to the heart, that those whom they have formerly scorned and scourged, shall sit as judges upon them, and vote with Christ in his judicial proceedings: O then well may you

pray for the hastening of the kingdom of glory, 'Thy kingdom come.'

4. *Branch.* If you have any good hope of this blessed kingdom, let this make the colour come in your faces, be of sanguine cheerful temper; have you a title to a kingdom, and sad? Rom. v. 2. 'We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.' Christians, the trumpet is ready to sound, an eternal jubilee is at hand, when a freedom from sin shall be proclaimed: your coronation-day is a-coming; it is but putting off your clothes, and laying your head upon a pillow of dust, and you shall be enthroned in a kingdom, and invested with the embroidered robes of glory: doth not all this call for a cheerful spirit? Cheerfulness adorns religion: it is a temper of soul Christ loves, John xiv. 28. 'If ye loved me, ye would rejoice.' It makes many suspect heaven is not so pleasant, when they see those that walk thither so sad. How doth the heir rejoice, in hope of the inheritance? Who should rejoice, if not a believer, who is heir of the kingdom, and such a kingdom as eye hath not seen? When the flesh begins to droop, let faith lift up its head, and cause an holy jubilation and rejoicing in the soul.

5. Let the saints long to be in this blessed kingdom. A prince that travels in foreign parts, doth he not long to be in his own nation, that he may be crowned? The bride desires the marriage day, Rev. xxii. 17. 'The spirit and the bride say come: even so, come, Lord Jesus.' Sure our unwillingness to go hence, shews either the weakness of our faith in the belief of the heavenly kingdom, or the strength of our doubtings, whether we have an interest in it. Were our title to heaven more cleared, we should need patience to be content to stay here any longer.

Again, our unwillingness to go hence declares, we love the world too much, and Christ too little. Love (as Aristotle saith) desires union; Did we love Christ as we should, we would desire to be united to him in glory, when we might take our fill of love. Be humbled that we are so unwilling to go hence: let us labour to arrive at that divine temper of soul as Paul had, *Cupio dissolvi*, 'I desire to depart and be with Christ,' Phil. i. 23. We are compassed with a body of sin; should not we long to shake off this viper? We are in Mesech, and the tents of Kedar, in a place where we see God dishonoured; should not we desire to have our pass to be gone? we are in a valley of tears, is it not better being in a kingdom? Here we are combating with Satan; should not we desire to be called out of the bloody field, where the bullets of temptation fly so fast, that we may receive a victorious crown? O ye saints, breathe after the heavenly kingdom. Though we should be willing to stay to do service, yet we should ambitiously desire to be always sunning ourselves in the light of God's countenance. Think

what it will be to be ever with the Lord : are there any sweeter smiles or embraces than his? Is there any bed so soft as Christ's bosom? Is there any such joy, as to have the golden banner of Christ's love displayed over us? Is there any such honour as to sit upon the throne with Christ? Rev. iii. 21. O then long for the celestial kingdom.

6. Wait for this kingdom of glory. It is not incongruous or improper to long for heaven, yet wait for it; long for it because it is a kingdom, yet wait your Father's good pleasure; God could presently bestow this kingdom, but he sees it good that we should wait a while.

1. Had we the kingdom of heaven presently as soon as ever grace is infused, then God would lose much of his glory. (1.) Where would be our living by faith, which is the grace that brings in the chief revenue of glory to God? Rom. v. 20. (2.) Where would be our suffering for God, which is a way of honouring him, which the angels in heaven are not capable of. (3.) Where would be the active service we are to do for God? Would we have God give us a kingdom, and we do nothing for him before we come there? Would we have rest before labour, a crown before victory? This were disingenuous, Paul was content to stay out of heaven a while, that he might be a means to bring others thither, Phil. i. 23.

(2.) While we wait for the kingdom, our grace is increasing. Every duty, religiously performed, adds a jewel to our crown. Do we desire to have our robes of glory shine brighter? Let us wait and work; the longer we stay for the principle, the greater will the interest be. The husbandman waits till the seed spring up: wait for the harvest of glory, some have their waiting weeks at court; this is your waiting time: Christ saith, 'pray and faint not,' Luke xviii. 1. So wait, and faint not. Be not weary, the kingdom of heaven will make amends for your waiting; 'I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord,' said that dying patriarch, Gen. xlix. 18.

Use V. Comfort to the people of God.

(1.) In all their sufferings. The true saint is, as Luther saith, *hæres crucis*, heir to the cross: affliction is his diet-drink, but here is that may be as bezoar-stone to keep him from fainting, these sufferings bring a kingdom. The hope of the kingdom of heaven, saith Basil, should indulcerate and sweeten all our troubles, 2 Tim. ii. 12. 'If we suffer, we shall reign with him:' it is but a short fight, but an eternal triumph: this light suffering produceth 'an eternal weight of glory,' 2 Cor. iv. 17. 'A weight of glory.' Things which are precious, the more weighty, the more they are worth, the more weight is in a crown of gold, the more it is worth. 'Tis a weight of glory. 2. 'An eternal weight of glory.' Did this glory last for a

while, it would much abate and embitter the joys of heaven : but the glory of that kingdom runs parallel with eternity ; God will be as a deep sea of blessedness, and the glorified saints shall for ever bathe themselves in that ocean. One day's wearing the crown, will abundantly pay for all the saints' sufferings ; how much more then, when ' they shall reign for ever and ever ? ' Rev. xxii. 5. O let this support under all the calamities and sufferings in this life ; what a vast difference is there between a believer's sufferings and his reward, Rom. viii. 18. ' The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.' For a few tears, rivers of pleasure ; for mourning, white robes. This made the primitive Christians laugh at imprisonments, and snatch up torments as so many crowns : though now we drink in a wormwood-cup, here is sugar in the bottom to sweeten it, ' It is your Father's good pleasure to give you a kingdom.'

2. Comfort in death : here is that which may take away from God's children the terror of death, they are now entering into the kingdom. Indeed no wonder, if wicked men be appalled and terrified at the approach of death, they die unpardoned. Death carries them to the gaol, where they must lie for ever without bail or mainprize : but why should any of God's children be so scared and half-dead with the thoughts of death ? what hurt doth death do to them, but lead them to a glorious kingdom ? Faith gives a title to a kingdom, death a possession ; let this be a gospel-antidote to expel the fear of death. Hilarion, that blessed man, cried out, *Egredere, anima, egredere, quid times ?* Go forth, my soul, go forth, what fearest thou ? Let them fear death, who do not fear sin ; but let not God's children be over-much troubled at the grim face of that messenger, which brings them to the end of their sorrow, and the beginning of their joy. Death is yours, 1 Cor. iii. 22. it is a part of the believer's inventory. Is a prince afraid to cross a narrow sea, who shall be crowned when he comes to shore ? Death to the saints shall be an usher to bring them into the presence of the King of glory : this puts lilies and roses into the ghastly face of death, and makes it look amiable. Death brings us to a crown of glory which fades not away : the day of death is better to a believer than the day of his birth ; death is *additus ad gloriam*, an entrance into a blessed eternity. Fear not death, but rather let your hearts revive when you think these rattling wheels of death's chariot are but to carry you home to an everlasting kingdom.