

beg God to clothe you with a spirit of zeal and magnanimity, Phil. i. 29. 'To you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.' It is a gift of God to be able to suffer, pray for this gift; do not think you can be able of yourselves to lay down life and liberty for Christ; Peter was over-confident of himself, John xiii. 37. 'I will lay down my life for thysake;' but Peter's strength undid him; Peter had habitual grace, but he wanted auxiliary grace; Christians need fresh gales from heaven; pray for the Spirit to animate you in your sufferings; as the fire hardens the potter's vessel which is at first but weak and limber; so the fire of the Spirit hardens men against sufferings? pray that God will make you like the anvil, that you may bear the strokes of persecutors with invincible patience.

APPENDIX

TO

THE BEATITUDES.

CHAP. XXII.

The Preciousness of the Soul.

MATT. XVI. 26. *For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*

EVERY man doth carry a treasure about with him, a **DIVINE SOUL**; and that this jewel should not be undervalued, our Saviour here sets a

price upon it, he lays the soul in balance with the whole world, and being put in the scales, the soul weighs heaviest. ‘What is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?’

‘The world is a stately fabric, enriched with beauty and excellency, it is like a curious piece of arras, set about with divers colours; it is a bright mirror and crystal, in which much of the wisdom and majesty of God is resplendent; but as glorious as this world is, every man doth carry a more glorious world about him, a precious soul. It would bankrupt the world to give half the price of a soul; it will undo the world to buy it, and it will undo him that shall sell it. If we can save our souls, tho’ we lose the world, it is a gainful loss; if we lose our souls, though we gain the world, our very gains will undo us. ‘For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?’

The words branch themselves into these five parts.

1. A supposal of a purchase, ‘if a man shall gain.’ The proposition is hypothetical, Christ doth not say he shall gain but puts a case; it is not a certain purchase, it is only supposed.

2. The purchase itself, the world.

3. The extent of the purchase, the whole world, the world with all its revenues and perquisites.

4. The terms of this purchase, ‘he shall lose his soul,’ not that his soul shall be annihilated (that were happy) but he shall lose the end of his creation; he shall miss of glory he shall lose his soul. And the loss of the soul is amplified by two things,

First, The propriety, his own soul, that which is nearest to him, that which is most himself; the soul is the most noble part, it is the man of the man, he shall lose his own soul.

Secondly, The irrecoverableness of the loss; ‘what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?’ The

words are a *missis*, there is less said, and more intended. What shall he give? as if Christ had said, alas, he hath nothing to give; or if he had something to give, yet nothing will be taken for it; the soul cannot be exchanged, there shall be no bail or mainprise taken for it. 'What shall a man give in exchange for his soul.'

5. Our Saviour's verdict upon this purchase, for what is a man profited? as if Christ had said, he will have an hard bargain of it, he will repent him at last it is but the fool's purchase; for what is a man profited, &c.

Doct. The observation is, that the soul of man is a jewel more precious than a world; all souls are of one price: in this sense that maxim in philosophy holds true, all souls are alike. The soul of prince and peasant, all are equal; and every soul of more value than a world. For the illustration of the doctrine there are two things to be demonstrated.

First, That the soul is very precious.

Secondly, That it is more precious than a world.

1. That the soul is very precious. What Job saith of wisdom, I may fitly apply to the soul: 'Man knows not the price thereof, it cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire, the gold and the chrystal cannot equal it; and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold,' Job xxviii. 13, 16, 17. The soul is the glory of the creation. The soul is a beam of God; it is a sparkle of celestial brightness, as Demascen calls it; it is, according to Plato, a glass of the Trinity. There is, in the soul, an idea and resemblance of God: an analogy of similitude, not proportion, as the schoolmen speak. If David did so admire the rare texture and workmanship of his body, Psal. cxxxix. 13, 15. 'I am wonderfully made, I was curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the

earth.' If the cabinet be so curiously wrought what is the jewel : how richly and gloriously is the soul embroidered ! it is divinely inlaid and enamelled. The body is but the sheath, Dan. vii. 15. ' I was grieved in the midst of my body ;' in the Chaldee it is, in the midst of my sheath. The most beautiful body is but like a velvet sheath, the soul is the blade of admirable metal. The soul is a sparkling diamond set in a ring of clay, &c. The soul is a vessel of honour ; God himself is served in this vessel. The soul is the bird of paradise that soars aloft ; it may be compared to the wings of the cherubims, it hath a winged swiftness to fly to heaven. The soul is capable of communion with God and angels. The soul is God's house he hath made to dwell in, Heb. iii. 6. The understanding, will, and affections are the three stories in this house. What pity is it that this goodly building should be let out, and the devil become tenant in it. The preciousness of the soul is seen in two particulars.

It hath 1. An intrinsical worth. 2. An estimative worth.

1. The soul hath an intrinsical worth. Which appears in two things : 1. Spirituality. 2. Immortality.

1. Spirituality. The soul is a spiritual substance. It is a saying among the ancients, our souls are tempered in the same mortar with the heavenly spirits. Now the soul is spiritual three manner of ways : In its essence, object, operation.

1. The soul is spiritual in its essence. God breathed it in, Gen. ii. 7. It is a sparkle lighted by the breath of God. The soul may be compared to the spirits of the wine, the body to the dregs : the spirits are the more pure refined part of the wine, such is the soul ; the body is more feculent, the soul is the more refined, sublimated part of man.

Mistake me not, when I say the soul is spiritual, and that it is a beam of God; I do not mean that it is of the same substance with him, as Servetus, Osiander, and others have held; for when it is said God breathed into man the breath of life, they erroneously thought that the soul being infused did convey into man the spirit and substance of God, which opinion is absurd and sinful: for if the soul should be part of the Divine essence, then it will follow, that the essence of God should be subject not only to change and passion, but which is worse, to sin, which were blasphemy to assert; so that when we say the soul is spiritual, the meaning is, God hath invested it with many noble endowments, he hath made it a mirror of beauty, and printed upon it a surpassing excellency; as the sun shining upon crystal, conveys its beauty, not its being.

2. The soul is spiritual in its object, it contemplates God and heaven; God is the orb and centre where the soul doth fix; if you could lift up a stone into the highest region, though it did break in an hundred pieces, it would fall to its centre. The soul moves to God, as to its rest, Psal. cxvi. 7. 'Return to thy rest, O my soul.' He is the ark to which this dove flies; nothing but God can fill an heaven born soul; if the earth were turned into a globe of gold, it could not fill the heart, it would still cry, Give, give. The soul being spiritual, God only can be the adequate object of it.

3. The soul is spiritual in its operation, it being immaterial, doth not depend upon the body in its working. The senses of seeing, hearing, and the rest of those organs of the body, cease and die with the body, because they are parts of the body, and have their dependance on it; but the soul (as Aristotle saith) hath a nature distinct from the body, it moves and operates of itself though the body be dead, and hath no dependance upon, or co-exis-

tence with the body. Thales Milesius, an ancient philosopher, calls the soul a self-moveable, it hath an intrinsical principle of life and motion, though it be separate from the body. And thus you have seen the soul's spirituality.

2. The preciousness of the soul appears in its immortality. There are some that say the soul is mortal; indeed it were well for those who do not live like men, if they might die like beasts; but as Julius Scaliger well observes, it is impossible for any thing of a spiritual, uncompounded nature, to be subject to death and corruption: the souls of believers are with Christ after death, Phil. i. 23. Oecolampadius said to his friend, who came to visit him on his death bed, Good news, I shall be shortly with Christ my Lord. And the devout soul shall be ever with the Lord, 1 Thess. iv. ult. The heathens had some glimmerings of the soul's immortality. Cicero saith that the swan was dedicated to Apollo, because she sings sweetly before her death; by which hieroglyphic they intimated the joyfulness of virtuous men before their death, as supposing the Elysian delights, which they should always enjoy after this life. And we read it was a custom among the Romans, that when their great men died, they caused an eagle to fly aloft in the air, signifying hereby that the soul was immortal, and did not die as the body.

The soul's immortality may be proved by this argument, That which is not capable of killing, is not capable of dying; but the soul is not capable of killing; our Saviour Christ proves the minor proposition, that it is not capable of killing. Luke xii. 4. 'Fear not them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.' Therefore the soul not being capable of killing, is not in a possibility of dying; the essence of the soul is metaphysical, it hath a beginning, but no end; it is

eternal, a *parly post*. The soul doth not wax old, it lives for ever, which can be said of no sublunary created glory. Worldly things are as full of mutation as motion, and like Jonah's gourd, have a worm eating at the root.

2. The soul hath an estimative worth.

1. Jesus Christ hath set an high value and estimate upon the soul; he made it, and he bought it, therefore he best knows the price of it. He did sell himself to buy the soul. Zech. xi. 12. 'They weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver.' Nay, he was content not only to be sold, but to die; this enhanceth the price of the soul, it cost the blood of God. Acts xx. 28. 1 Pet. i. 19. 'Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ.' God must die, that the soul may live; the heir of heaven was mortgaged, and laid to pawn for the soul of man. What could Christ give more than himself? what in himself dearer than his blood? O precious soul, that hast the image of God to beautify thee, and the blood of God to redeem thee! Christ was the priest, his divine nature the altar, his blood the sacrifice which he did offer up as an atonement for our souls. Now reckon what a drop of Christ's blood is worth, and then tell me what a soul is worth.

2. Satan doth value souls, he knows their worth; he saith as the king of Sodom did to Abraham, 'Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.' So saith Satan, 'Give me the persons.' He cares not how rich you are, he doth not strive to take away your estates, but your souls. Give me the persons saith he, take you the goods; whence are all his *noemata*, his warlike stratagems, his subtle snares, but to catch souls? Why doth this lion so roar but for his prey? he envies the soul its happiness, he lays the whole train of temptation to blow up the

whole fort-royal of the soul: Why doth he lay such suitable baits? he allures the ambitious man with a crown, the covetous man with a golden apple; the sanguine man with beauty; why doth he tempt to Delilah's lap, but to keep you from Abraham's bosom? the devil is angling for the precious soul; to undo souls is his pride; he glories in the damnation of souls; it is next to victory to die revenged. If Sampson must die, it is some comfort that he shall make more die with him; if Satan, that lion, must be kept in his hellish den, it is all the heaven he expects, to reach forth his paw, and pull others into the den with him.

2. Having shewed you the soul's preciousness; the next thing to be demonstrated, is, that the soul is more precious than a world: the world is made of a more impure lump; the world is of a coarser make, of an earthly extract; the soul is heaven-born, of a finer spinning, of a more noble descent; the world is a great book or volume, wherein we read the majesty and wisdom of him that made it; but the soul is the image of God, Gen. i. The soul is a studied piece; when God made the world, it was but *fiat*, let it be, and it was done; but when he made the soul, all the persons in the Trinity sat together at the council table, Gen. i. 26. 'Come, let us make man in our own likeness.' The soul is a glass wherein some rays of divine glory shine, much of God is to be seen in it; though this glass be cracked by the fall, yet it shall one day be perfect; we read of spirits of just men made perfect, Heb. xii. 23. The soul since the fall of Adam, may be compared to the moon in its conjunction, very much obscured by sin; but when it is sanctified by the Spirit, and translated from hence, it shall be as the moon in the full, it shall shine forth in its perfect glory.

1. If the soul be so precious, see then what that worship is that God doth expect and accept; namely, that which comes from the more noble part of the soul. Psal. xxv. 1. 'To thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.' David did not only lift up his voice, but his soul; though God will have the eye and the knee, the service of the body; yet he complains of them that draw near with their lips, when their hearts were far from him,' Isa. xxix. 13. The soul is the jewel; David not only put his lute and viol in tune, but his soul in tune to praise God. Psal. ciii. 1. 'Bless the Lord, O my soul;' his affections joining together in worship, made up the concert. The soul is both altar, fire and incense; it is the altar on which we offer up our prayers, the fire which kindles our prayers, and the incense which perfumes them. God's eye is chiefly upon the soul: bring an hundred dishes to table, he will carve of none but this; this is the savoury meat he loves. He who is best, will be served with the best; when we give him the soul in a duty, now we give him the flower and the cream; by an holy chemistry we still out the spirits. A soul inflamed in service, is, 'the cup of spiced wine, and the juice of the pomegranate,' Cant. viii. 2. which the spouse makes Christ to drink of: without the worship of the soul, all our religion is but bodily exercise, 1 Tim. iv. 8. which profits nothing; without the soul we give God but a carcase. What are all the Papists' fastings, pennance, pilgrimages, but going to hell in more pomp and state? What are the formalist's prayers, which do even cool between his lips, but a dead devotion? It is not sacrifice but sacrilege; he robs God of that which he hath a right to, his soul.

2. Branch. If the soul be so precious, then of what precious account should ordinances and ministers be?

1. Ordinances they are the golden ladder by

which the soul climbs up to heaven, they are conduits of the water of life. O how precious should these be to us! they that are against ordinances, are against being saved.

2. Of how precious account should ministers be, whose very work is to save souls; their feet should be beautiful.

1. Their labours should be precious; they are, in the Greek, *sunergoi*, 2 Cor. vi. 1. They labour with God, and they labour for your souls; all their sweat, their tears, their prayers are for you; they woo for your souls, and oftentimes spend their lives in the suit.

2. Their liberty should be precious. Constantine was a great honourer of the ministry; if indeed you see any of them who are of this holy and honourable function, like that drug the physicians speak of, which is hot in the mouth, but cold in operation; if you see them either idle or ravenous, if they do not divide the word rightly, and live uprightly, censure and spare not. God forbid I should open my mouth for such. In the law, the lips of the leper were to be covered; that minister who is by office an angel, but by his life a leper, ought to have his lips covered, he deserves silencing. A good preacher, but a bad liver, is like a physician that hath the plague; though his advice and receipts which he gives may be good, yet his plague infects the patient: so though ministers may have good words, and give good receipts in the pulpit, yet the plague of their lives infects their people. If you find a Hophni and Phinehas among the sons of Levi, whose unholy carriage makes the offering of God to be abhorred, you will save God a labour in ejecting them; but be sure you distinguish between the precious and the vile; while you let out the bad blood, have a care to preserve the heart-blood; while you

purge out the ill humours, do not destroy the spirits; while you are taking away the snuffs do not eclipse the lights of God's sanctuary; it is a work fit for a Julian to suppress the orthodox ministry, and open the temple of the idol. The Romans sacked the city of Corinth, and rased it down to the ground for some incivility offered to their ambassador. God will avenge the affronts offered to his ministers, Psal. cv. 15. O take heed of this! if souls be of such infinite value, how precious should their liberties be, whose very design and negotiation is to save souls; 1 Tim. iv. 16. Jude 23.

Use 2. Exhort. Branch 1. If the soul be so precious, take heed of abusing your souls. Socrates exhorted young men that they should look their faces in a glass, and if they saw they were fair, they should do nothing unworthy of their beauty. Christians, God hath given you souls that sparkle with divine beauty; O do nothing unworthy of these souls, do not abuse them: there are four sorts of persons that abuse souls.

1. They that degrade their souls.

1. That set the world above their souls; 'Who pant after the dust of the earth,' Amos ii. 7. As if a man's house were on fire, and he should take care to preserve the lumber, but let his child be burnt in the fire.

2. That make their souls lackeys to their bodies. The body is but the brutish part, the soul is the angelical; the soul is the queen-regent, who is adorned with the jewels of knowledge, and sways the sceptre of liberty; oh what a pity it is that this excellent soul shall be made a vassal, and be put to grind in the mill, when the body in the meantime sits in a chair of state! Solomon complains of an evil under the sun, Eccl. x. 7. 'I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth.' Is it not an evil under the sun to see the

body riding in pomp and triumph, and the soul of man that royal and heaven-born thing, as a lackey walking on foot.

2. They abuse their souls that sell their souls.

1. The covetous person sells his soul for money; as it is said of the lawyer, he hath a tongue that will be sold for a fee; so the covetous man hath a soul that is to be set for money. Achan did sell his soul for a wedge of gold. Judas did sell his soul for silver; Judas sold cheap pennyworths; for thirty pieces of silver he did sell Christ, who was more worth than heaven; and his own soul which was more worth than a world! how many have damned their souls for money? 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. It is observed that the eagles' quills or feathers mixed with hens' feathers, will in time consume them; such is the world to the soul; if you mix these earthly things with your souls, and let them lie too near you, they will in time consume and undo your souls.

2. The ambitious person sells his soul for honour; as Alexander the sixth did sell his soul to the devil for a popedom; and what is that honour but *res imaginaria*? a torch lighted by the breath of people, with the least puff of censure blown out! how many souls have been blown into hell with the wind of popular applause?

3. The voluptuous person sells his soul for pleasure. Heliogabalus drowned himself in sweet water; so many drown their souls in the sweet perfumed waters of pleasure. Plato calls pleasure the bait that catcheth souls: Pleasure is a silken halter, a flattering devil, it kills with embracing.

4. They abuse their souls that poison their souls; error is a sweet poison. Ignatius calls it the invention of the devil. A man may as well damn his soul by error as vice, and may as soon go to hell for a drunken opinion as for a drunken life.

5. They abuse their souls that starve their souls; these are they that say they are above ordinances; but sure we shall not be above ordinances, till we are above sin. The apostle saith, that in the blessed sacrament we are to remember the Lord's death till he come, 1 Cor. xi. 26. that is, until Christ comes to judgment. How then can any omit sacraments without a contempt and affront offered to Christ himself? if Saint Paul and the apostles, those giants in grace, needed the Lord's supper to confirm and corroborate them, much more do we need such holy ordinances, who have but an infant faith; but Satan likes these fasting days, he would have men fast from ordinances: if the body be kept from food, it cannot live long.

Branch 2. If the soul be so precious a thing, take heed you do not lose your souls; consider what a loss it is, as appears in two things.

1. It is a foolish loss to lose the soul. 'Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee,' Luke xii. 20. It is a foolish loss to lose the soul, in a three-fold respect.

1. Because there is a possibility of saving the soul; we have time to work in, we have light to work by, we have the Spirit offering us help. The soul is like a ship laden with jewels, the Spirit is a gale of wind to blow; if we would but loosen anchor from sin, we might arrive at the port of happiness.

2. It is a foolish loss, because we lose the soul for things of no value; worldly things are infinitely below the soul, they are *nonentities*, Prov. xxiii. 5. 'Wilt thou set thine eyes on that which is not?' The world is but a bewitchery; these things glister in our eyes; but at death we shall say, we have set our eyes on that which is not: he that thinks to find happiness here is like Ixion, that hugged the cloud instead of Juno, and like Apollo, that embraced the laurel-tree instead of Daphne. Now to

lose the soul for such poor inconsiderate things, is a foolish thing; it is as if one should throw a diamond at a pear-tree, he loseth his diamond.

3. It is a foolish loss, for a man to lose his soul, because he himself hath an hand in it; is it not folly to give one's self poison? a sinner hath his hands imbrued in the blood of his own soul: 'thy destruction is of thyself,' Hos. xiii. 9. 'They lay wait for their own blood,' Prov. i. 18. The foolish sinner nourisheth those lusts that kill his soul; the tree breeds the worm, and the worm eats the tree; were it not folly for a garrison to open to the enemy that besiegeth it; the sinner opens to those lusts which war against his soul, 1 Pet. ii. 11. this is a foolish loss.

2. It is a fatal loss to lose the soul.

1. It is an unparalleled loss, because in losing the soul there are so many things lost with it; as a merchant in losing his ship, loseth many things with it; his money, plate, jewels, spices. Thus he that loseth his soul, he loseth Christ, he loseth the Comforter, he loseth the society of angels, he loseth heaven.

2. It is an irreparable loss: other losses may be made up again; if a man lose his health, he may recover it again; if he lose his estate, he may get it up again; but if he lose his soul, this loss can never be made up again. Are there any more saviours to die for the soul? as Naomi said to her daughters, 'Are there yet any more sons in my womb?' Ruth i. 11. Hath God any more sons? or will he send his Son any more into the world? Oh no, if the soul be lost! Christ's next coming is not to save it, but to judge it. Christian, remember thou hast but one soul, and if that be gone, all is gone. God, saith Chrysostom, hath given thee two eyes, if thou lovest one, thou hast another; but thou hast but one soul, and if that perish, thou

art quite undone. The merchant that ventures all in one ship, if that ship be lost, he is quite broken.

3. The loss of the soul is an eternal loss; the soul once lost, is lost for ever; the sinner and the furnace shall never be parted, Isa. xxxiii. 14. As the sinner's heart will never be emptied of sin, so God's vial shall never be emptied of wrath: it is an eternal loss.

Branch 3. Do what you can to secure the main chance, to save these precious souls. In times of danger men call in their debts, and labour to secure their estates; let me tell you, all you who are yet in your natural estate, your souls are mortgaged; if your land were mortgaged, you would endeavour to redeem it; your souls are mortgaged: sin hath mortgaged them, sin hath laid your souls to pawn and where do you think your souls are? the pawn is in the devil's hand, therefore a man in the state of nature is said to be 'under the power of Satan,' Acts xxvi. 18. Now there are but two ways to fetch home the pawn; and both are set down, Acts xx. 21. 'Repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.' Unravel all your works of sin by repentance, honour Christ's merits by believing: divines call it saving faith, because upon this wing the soul flies to the ark Christ, and is secured from danger.



The Soul's Malady and Cure.

Luke v. 31. *They that are whole need not a Physician, but they that are sick.*

THE occasion of the words is set down in the context; Levi was called from the receipt of custom (he was a custom-house man) but Christ called him, and there went out power with the

word, 'he left all, rose up, and followed him,' ver. 28. Levi did not consult with flesh and blood, he did not say, 'What shall I do for the hundred talents?' 2 Chron. xxv. 9. how shall I live and maintain my charge? I shall lose many a sweet bit at the custom-house; poverty is like to be my patrimony; nay, in case I follow Christ, I must espouse persecution; he doth not reason thus; but having a call, he hastens away after Christ, 'he rose up and followed him;' and that he might give Christ a pledge and specimen of his love, he makes him a feast, ver. 29. 'And Levi made him a great feast in his own house;' a better guest he could not invite? Christ always came with his cost; Levi feasted Christ with his cheer, and Christ feasted him with salvation. Well, Christ being at this feast, the Pharisees begin to murmur, ver. 30. 'Why do ye eat and drink with publicans?' The Pharisees, 1. were offended at him that he should go in and eat with publicans. The publicans were counted the worst of sinners; sinners of the deepest dye; yet the Pharisees were not so much offended at the sins of the publicans, as they had a mind to pick a quarrel with Christ. He who was the horn of salvation to some, was a rock of offence to these Jews; others did feed on him, these did stumble at him. 2. They accuse Christ; for these words carry in them a charge and accusation, 'Why do ye eat with publicans and sinners?' The Pharisees impeached Christ for eating with sinners; malice will never want matter of accusation. Though the devils proclaimed Christ's holiness, Luke iv. 34. 'Let us alone, I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.' Yet the Pharisees tax him for a sinner; see what malice will do, it will make a man speak that which the devil himself will not speak. The devils justify Christ, the Pharisees accuse him. And Christ, who was a Lamb without spot, could not

escape the world's censures, no wonder if his people are loaded with the calumnies and censures of the wicked.

But let us examine the matter of the charge they bring against Christ, and see how groundless it was. They indite Christ for going in with sinners.

First, Christ did nothing but what was according to his commission; the commission he received from his Father, was, that he should come to save sinners, 1 Tim. i. 15.

Secondly, Christ went in with sinners, not to join with them in their sins, but to heal them of their sins; to accuse Christ, was, as Austin saith, as if the physician should be accused because he goes among them that are sick of the plague: This groundless accusation Christ overhears, and in the text gives these envious Pharisees a silencing answer, 'They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.' As if Christ had said, you Pharisees think yourselves righteous persons, you need no Saviour; but these poor publicans are sick, and ready to die, and I come as a physician to cure them; therefore be not angry at a work of mercy; though you will not be healed, yet do not hinder me from healing others. 'They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.'

In the words there are two general parts:

1. The dying patients.
2. The healing physician.

1. The dying patients, Them that are sick. Whence observe,

Doctr. 1. That sin is a soul-disease, Psal. ciii. 3. Isa. liii. 4. 'He hath borne our griefs,' in the Hebrew it is our sicknesses. Man at first was created in an healthful temper, he had no sickness of soul, he ailed nothing; the soul, in the Greek, had its *eukrasia*, its perfect beauty and glory. The eye was clear, the heart pure, the affections tuned with

the finger of God into a most sweet harmony. God made man upright, Eccles. vii. 29.; but Adam, by eating the apple, fell sick; and had died for ever; had not God found out a way for his recovery. For the amplification of the Doctrine, there are three things to be considered.

1. In what sense sin is resembled to sickness.

2. What the diseases of the soul are.

3. That sin-sickness is the worst.

1. In what sense sin is resembled to sickness.

1. Sin may be compared to sickness for the manner of catching.

First, Sickness is caught often through carelessness; some get cold by leaving off clothes. So when Adam grew careless of God's command, and left off the garment of his innocency, he caught a sickness; he could stay no longer in the garden, but lay bed-ridden; his sin hath turned the world, which was a paradise, into an hospital.

Secondly, Sickness is caught sometimes through superfluity and intemperance. Excess produceth sickness. When our first parents lost the golden bridle of temperance, and did eat of the forbidden tree, they, and all their posterity surfeited on it, and took a sickness. The tree of knowledge had sickness and death under the leaves; it was fair to the eye, Gen. iii. 6. but poison to the taste; we all grew desperately sick by eating of this tree. Adam's intemperance hath brought us to fasting and weeping; and besides that disease at first by propagation, we have added to it by actual perpetration. We have increased our sickness, therefore sinners are said to wax worse and worse, 2 Tim. iii. 13.

2. Sin may be resembled to sickness for the nature of it. As, 1. Sickness is of a spreading nature, it spreads all over the body, it works into every part, the head, stomach, it disorders the whole body. So sin doth not rest in one part, but spreads

into all the faculties of the soul, and members of the body, Isa. i. 5, 6. 'The whole head is sick, the whole heart is faint; from the sole of the foot, even unto the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises, and putrifying sores,' &c. ()

1. Sin doth corrupt the understanding, Gregory Nazianzene calls the understanding the lamp of reason, this lamp burns dim, Eph. iv. 18. 'Having their understanding darkened;' sin hath drawn a veil over the understanding, it hath cast a mist before our eyes, that we neither know God nor ourselves; naturally we are only wise to do evil, Jer. iv. 21. Witty at sin, wise to damn ourselves; the understanding is defiled, 1 Cor. ii. 14. We can no more judge of spiritual objects till the Spirit of God anoint our eyes, than a blind man can judge of colours; our understandings are subject to mistakes; 'we call evil good, and good evil; we put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter,' Isa. v. 20. A straight stick under water seems crooked; so to a natural understanding the straight line of truth seems crooked.

2. The memory is diseased; the memory at first was like a golden cabinet in which divine truths were locked up safe; but now it is like a colander or leaking vessel, which lets all that is good run out. The memory is like a searcer, which sifts out the flour, but keeps the bran. So the memory, lets saving truths go, and holds nothing but froth and vanity. Many a man can remember a story, when he hath forgot his creed. Thus the memory is diseased; the memory is like a bad stomach that wants the retentive faculty, all the meat comes up again: so the most precious truths will not stay in the memory, but are gone again.

3. The will is diseased; the will is the soul's commander-in-chief, it is the master-wheel; but how irregular and eccentric is it! The will in the

creation was like that golden bridle which Minerva was said to put upon Pegasus to guide and rule him; it did answer to God's will: This was the language of the will in innocency, 'I delight to do thy will, O God,' Psal. xl. 8. but now it is distempered, it is like an iron sinew that refuseth to yield and bend to God, Isa. xlviii. 4. John v. 40. 'Ye will not come to me that ye may have life.' Men will rather die than come to their physician. The Armenians talk of free will; the will is sick, what freedom hath a sick man to walk; the will is a rebel against God, Acts vii. 51. 'Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost.' The will is diseased.

4. The affections are sick.

First, The affection of desire; a sick man desires that which is hurtful for him, he calls for wine in a fever. So the natural man being sick, he desires that which is prejudicial for him; he hath no desire after Christ, he doth not hunger and thirst after righteousness; but he desires poison, he desires to take his fill of sin, he loves death, Prov. viii. 36.

Secondly, The affection of grief; a man grieves for the want of an estate, but not for the want of God's favour: he grieves to see the plague or cancer in his body, but not for the plague of his heart.

Thirdly, The affection of joy; many can rejoice in a wedge of gold, not in the cross of Christ. The affections are sick and distempered.

5. The conscience is diseased, Titus i. 15. 'Their mind and conscience is defiled.' Conscience is either, 1. Erroneous, binding to that which is sinful, John xvi. 2. Acts xxvi. 9. 'I verily thought with myself I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus.' Conscience is an *ignis fatuus*, leading out of the right way. Or, 2. Dumb, it will not tell men of sin; it is a silenced preacher. Or, 3. Dead, Ephes. iv. 19. Conscience is stupified

and senseless; the custom of sinning hath taken away the sense of sinning. Thus the sickness of sin hath gone over the whole soul, like that cloud which overspread the face of the heavens, 1 Kings xviii. 45.

2. Sickness doth debilitate and weaken the body; a sick man is unfit to walk; so this sickness of sin weakens the soul, Romans v. 6, 'When we were without strength Christ died.' In innocency Adam was, in some sense, like the angels, he could serve God with a winged swiftness, and filial cheerfulness; but sin brought sickness into the soul, and this sickness hath cut the lock where his strength lay; he is now disarmed of all ability for service; and where grace is wrought, though a Christian be not so heart-sick as before, yet he is very faint. The saints' prayers do but whisper in God's ears, and if Christ did not pray them over again, God could not hear them; we sin fervently, but pray faintly; as David said, 2 Sam. iii. 39. 'I am this day weak, though anointed king;' so Christians, though they have the oil of grace poured upon them, and they are anointed spiritual kings, yet they are weak; sin hath enfeebled them; they take their breath short, and cannot put forth such strong desires after God as they ought. When we find ourselves dead in duty, our holy affections languishing, think thus, This is my sickness, sin hath made me weak; as Jephtha said to his daughter, Judges xi. 35. 'Alas, my daughter, thou hast brought me very low;' so may the soul say, Alas, my sin, thou hast brought me very low, thou hast brought me almost to the gates of death.

3. Sickness doth eclipse the beauty of the body: This I ground on that scripture, Psal. xxxix. 11. 'When thou with rebukes dost correct man, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth.' The moth consumes the beauty of the cloth; so a

fit of sickness consumes the beauty of the body. Thus sin is a soul-sickness, it hath eclipsed the glory and splendour of the soul, it hath turned ruddiness into paleness; that beauty of grace which once sparkled as gold, now it may be said, 'How is this gold become dim?' Lam. iv. 1. That soul which once had an orient brightness in it, it was more ruddy than rubbies, its polishing was of sapphire, the understanding bespangled with knowledge, the will crowned with liberty, the affections like so many seraphim, burning in love to God, now the glory is departed. Sin hath turned beauty into deformity; as some faces by sickness are so disfigured, and look so ghastly, they can hardly be known: so the soul of man is, by sin, so sadly metamorphosed (having lost the image of God) that it can hardly be known. Joel ii. 31. 'The sun shall be turned into darkness.' Sin hath turned that sun of beauty which shined in the soul, into a Cimmerian darkness; and where grace is begun to be wrought, yet the soul's beauty is not quite recovered, but is like the sun under a cloud.

4. Sickness takes away the taste; a sick man doth not taste that sweetness in his meat; so the sinner by reason of soul-sickness, hath lost his taste to spiritual things. The word of God is *pabulum animæ*, it is bread to strengthen, wine to comfort; but the sinner tastes no sweetness in the word. A child of God who is spiritualized by grace, tastes a savouriness in ordinances, the promise drops as an honeycomb, Psal. xix. 10. but a natural man is sick, and his taste is gone; since the tasting of the forbidden tree, he hath lost his taste.

5. Sickness takes away the comfort of life; a sick person hath no joy of any thing, his life is a burden to him. So the sin-sick soul is void of all true comfort, and his laughter is but the pleasing dream of a sick man; he hath no true title to comfort,

his sin is not pardoned, he may be in hell before night for any thing he knows.

6. Sickness ushers in death, it is the prologue to death; sickness is as it were the cutting of the tree, and death is the falling of the tree; so this disease of sin (if not cured in time) brings the second death.

2. What the diseases of the soul are. Adam by breaking the box of original righteousness, hath filled the soul full of diseases; the body is not subject to so many diseases as the soul: I cannot reckon them all up, Psal. xix. 12. 'Who can understand his errors?' Psal. xl. 12. Only I shall name some of the worst of these diseases. Pride is the tympany of the soul, lust is the fever, error the gangrene, unbelief the plague of the heart, hypocrisy the scurvy, hardness of heart the stone, anger the phrenzy, malice the wolf in the breast, covetousness the dropsy, spiritual sloth the green sickness, apostasy the epilepsy; here are eleven soul-diseases, and when they come to the full height, they are dangerous, and most frequently prove mortal.

3. The third thing to be demonstrated is, that sin is the worst sickness. To have a body full of plague sores is sad; but to have the soul, which is the more noble part, spotted with sin, and full of the tokens, is far worse; as appears:

1. The body may be diseased, and the conscience quiet. Isa. xxxiii. 24. 'The inhabitant of the land shall not say I am sick.' He should scarce feel his sickness, because sin was pardoned; but when the soul is sick of any reigning lust, the conscience is troubled. Isa. lvii. ult. 'There is no peace to the wicked, saith my God.' When Spira had abjured his former faith, he was put IN LITTLE EASE, his conscience burned as hell, and no spiritual physic that divines did apply, could ever allay that inflammation.

2. A man may have bodily diseases, yet God may love him. 'Asa was diseased in his feet,' 2 Kings xv. 23. He had the gout, yet a favourite with God. God's hand may go out against a man, yet his heart may be towards him; diseases are the arrows which God shoots; pestilence is called God's arrow, Psal. xci. 5. This arrow (as Gregory Nazianzene saith) may be shot from the hand of an indulgent father: but soul-diseases are symptoms of God's anger; as he is an holy God, he cannot but hate sin, 'he beholds the proud afar off,' Psal. cxxxviii. 6. God hates a sinner for his plague-sores: Zech. xi. 8. 'My soul loathed them.'

3. Sickness, at worst, doth but separate from the society of friends; but this disease of sin, if not cured, separates from the society of God and angels. The leper was to be shut out of the camp; this leprosy of sin without the interposition of mercy, shuts men out of the camp of heaven, Rev. xxi. 8. This is the misery of them that die in their sins, they are allowed neither friend nor physician to come at them, they are excluded God's presence for ever, in whose presence is fulness of joy.

Use 1. Information. Branch 1. See into what a sad condition sin hath brought us; it hath made us desperately sick; nay, we die away in our sickness, till we are fetched again with the water of life. O how many sick bedrid souls are there in the world! sick of pride, sick of lust; sin hath turned our houses and churches into hospitals, they are full of sick persons. What David's enemies said reproachfully of him, is true of every natural man, Psal. xli. 8 'An evil disease cleaveth fast unto him.' He hath the 'plague of the heart,' 1 Kings viii. And even those who are regenerate, are cured but in part, they have some grudgings of the disease, some ebullitions and stirrings of corruption; nay, sometimes this king's evil breaks forth to the scandal of reli-

gion, and from this sin-sickness ariseth all other diseases, plague, gout, stone, fever, 1 Cor. xi. 29, 30. 'He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself; for this cause many are weak and sickly among you.'

Branch 2. If sin be a soul-sickness, then how foolish are they that hide their sins; it is folly to hide a disease! Job xxxi. 33, 40. 'If I covered my transgression as Adam, by hiding my iniquity in my bosom, let thistles grow instead of wheat,' &c. The wicked take more care to have sin covered, than cured; if they can but sin in private, and not be suspected, they think all is well; there is a curse belongs to him who puts sin in a secret place, Deut. xxvii. 15. The hiding and concealing a disease proves mortal. Prov. xxviii. 13. 'He that covereth his sins, shall not prosper.'

Branch 3. If sin be a soul-sickness, then what need is there of the ministry? ministers are physicians under God to cure sick souls; God hath set in his church pastors and teachers, Eph. iv. 11. The ministers are a college of physicians, their work is to find out diseases and apply medicines; it is an hard work; while ministers are curing others, they themselves are nigh unto death, Phil. ii. 30. They find their people sick of several diseases; some have poisoned themselves with error, some are surfeited with the love of the creature, some have stabbed themselves at the heart with gross sin. O how hard is it to heal all these sick gangrened souls! many ministers do sooner kill themselves by preaching, than cure their patients; but though the work of the ministry be a laborious work, it is a needful work; while there are sick souls, there will be need of spiritual physicians. How unworthy then are they who malign and persecute the ministers of God? 1 Cor. iv. 9. O unkind world, thus to use thy physician; can there be a greater injury to souls?

would it not be a piece of the highest cruelty and barbarism, if there were an act made that all physicians should be banished out of the land? and is it not worse to see multitudes of sick souls lie bleeding, and to have their spiritual physicians removed from them, which should under God heal them? this is a wrath-procuring sin, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16. 'They misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy.' See what is inscribed in Levi's blessing, Deut. xxxiii. 8, 11. 'And of Levi he said, let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one; bless, Lord, his substance, and accept the work of his hands; smite through the loins of them that rise against him, and of them that hate him, that they rise not again.' The Lord will wither that arm which is stretched out against his prophets.

Use 2. Exhort. Branch 1. If sin be a soul-disease, let this serve to humble us; the scripture often calls upon us to humility, 1 Pet. v. 5. 'Be ye clothed with humility;' if any thing will humble, this consideration may; sin is a soul-disease: if a woman had a fair face, but a cancer in her breast, it would keep her from being proud of her beauty. So Christian, though thou art endued with knowledge and morality, which are fair to look upon, yet remember thou art diseased in thy soul, here is a cancer in the breast to humble thee; this certainly is one reason why God leaves sin in his own children; (for though sin be healed as to the guilt of it, yet not as to the stain of it) that the sight of their sores may make their plumes of pride fall. There are two humbling sights; a sight of God's glory, and a sight of our diseases. Uzziah the king had no cause to be proud; for though he had a crown of gold on his head, he had the leprosy on his forehead, 2 Chron. xxvi. 19. Though the saints have their golden graces, yet they have their leprous

spots; seeing sin hath made us vile, let it make us humble; seeing it hath taken away our beauty, let it take away our pride; if God (saith saint Austin) did not spare the proud angels, will he spare thee, who are but dust and rottenness? O look upon your boils and ulcers, and be humble. Christians are never more lovely in God's eyes, than when they are loathsome in their own; those sins which humble, shall never damn.

Branch 2. If sin be a soul-disease, and the most damnable disease, let us be afraid of it. Had we diseases in our bodies, an ulcer in the lungs, or hectic fever, we would fear lest they should bring death; O fear sin-sickness, lest it bring the second death. Thou who art a drunkard or a swearer, tremble at thy soul-maladies. I wonder to see sinners like the leviathan, made without fear. Why do not men fear sin? why do they not shake with this disease? surely the reason is,

1. Stupidity; as they have the fever of sin, so withal a lethargy, 1 Tim. iv. 2. 'Having their conscience seared with an hot iron.' He that hath an unbelieving heart, and a seared conscience, you may ring out the bell; that man's case is desperate.

2. Presumption. Many fancy that they can lay a fig upon the boil; though they be sick, they can make themselves well; it is but saying a few prayers, it is but a sigh, or a tear, and they shall presently recover; but is it so easy to be healed of sin? is it easy to make old Adam bleed to death? is it easy when the pangs of death are on thee, in an instant to have the pangs of the new birth? O take heed of a spiritual lethargy, fear your disease, lest it prove mortal and damnable. Physicians tell of a disease which makes men die laughing; so satan tickles many with the pleasure of sin, and they die laughing.

3. If sin be a soul distemper, then account them

your best friends that would reclaim you from your sins. The patient is thankful to the physician that tells him of his disease, and useth means to recover him. When ministers tell you, in love, of your sins, and would reclaim you, take it in good part; the worst they intend is to cure you of your sickness. David was glad of an healing reproof, Psal. cxli. 5. 'Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil which shall not break my head.' Ministers are charged by virtue of their office to reprove, 2 Tim. iv. 2. They must as well come with corrosives as lenitives, Tit. i. 18. 'Rebuke them sharply that they may be sound in the faith.' The Greek word is cuttingly; as a surgeon searcheth a wound and then lanceth, and cuts out the gangrened flesh; or as a physician useth leeches and cupping glasses, which put the patient in pain, but it is to restore him to health; so must the ministers of Christ rebuke sharply, that they may help to save their dying patients. Who is angry with the physician for prescribing a bitter potion? Why should any be angry with Christ's ministers for reproof, when in regard of their office they are physicians, and in regard of their bowels they are fathers? but how few are they who will take a reproof kindly! Amos v. 10. 'They hate him that rebuketh in the gate.' But why do not men love a reproof?

1. Because they are in love with their sins; a strange thing that any should love their disease, but so it is, Prov. i. 22. 'How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity?' Sin is the poison of the soul, yet men love it; and he who loves his sin, hates a reproof.

2. Sin possesseth men with a lunacy, Luke xv. 7. People are mad in sin, Jer. l. 38. 'THEY ARE MAD ON THEIR IDOLS.' When sickness grows so violent that men lie raving, and are mad, they

then quarrel with their physician, and say, he comes to kill them. So when sin is grown to an head, the disease turned to a phrenzy, then men quarrel with those that tell them of their sins, and are ready to offer violence to their physicians. It argues wisdom to receive a reproof. Prov. ix. 8. 'Rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee.' A wise man had rather drink a sharp potion, than die of his disease.

Branch 4. If sin be a soul-sickness, then do not feed this disease; he that is wise, will avoid those things which will increase his disease; if he be feverish, he will avoid wine which would inflame the disease; if he have the stone, he will avoid salt-meats; he will forbear a dish he loves, because it is bad for his disease; why should not men be as wise for their souls? thou that hast a drunken lust, do not feed it with wine; thou that hast a malicious lust, do not feed it with revenge; thou that hast an unclean lust, make not provision for the flesh, Rom. xiii. 14. He that feeds a disease, feeds an enemy. Some diseases are starved. Starve thy sins by fasting and humiliation. Either kill thy sin, or thy sin will kill thee.

Branch 5. If sin be a soul-disease, and worse than any other, then labour to be sensible of this disease. There are few who are sensible of their soul-sickness; they think they are well and ail nothing; they are whole and need not a physician. It is a bad symptom to hear a sick dying man say he is well. The church of Laodicea was a sick patient, but she thought she was well, Rev. iii. 17. 'Thou sayest I am rich, and have need of nothing.' Come to many a man and feel his pulse, ask him about the state of his soul, he will say, he hath a good heart, and doubts not but he shall be saved. What should be the reason that when men are so desperately sick in

their souls, and ready to drop into hell, yet they conceit themselves in a very good condition?

1. There is a spiritual cataract upon their eye, they see not their sores. Laodicea thought herself rich, because she was blind, Rev. iii. 17. The god of this world blinds men's eyes, that they can neither see their disease nor their physician. Many bless God their estate is good, not from the knowledge of their happiness, but from the ignorance of their danger; when Haman's face was covered, he was near execution. Oh pray with David, 'Lighten mine eyes, that I sleep not the sleep of death,' Psal. xiii. 3.

2. Men that are sick think themselves well, from the haughtiness of their spirits. Alexander thought himself a while to be the son of Jupiter, and no less than a god; what an arrogant creature is man! tho' he be sick unto death, he thinks it too much a disparagement to acknowledge a disease; either he is not sick, or he can heal himself. If he be poisoned he runs to the herb, or rather weed, of his own righteousness to cure him.

3. Men that are sick conceit themselves well, through self-love. He that loves another, will not credit any evil report of him. Men are self-lovers, 2 Tim. iii. 2. Every man is a dove in his own eye, therefore doth not suspect himself of any disease; he will rather question the scripture's verity, than his own malady.

4. Self deceit and the deceit of the heart, appears in two things.

1. In hiding the disease; the heart hides sin as Rachel did her father's images, Gen. xxxi. 34. Hazael did not think that he was so sick as he was; he could not imagine that so much wickedness, like a disease, should lie lurking in him, 2 Kings viii. 13. 'Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?' As the viper hath his teeth hid in his

gums, so that if one should look into his mouth he would think it an harmless creature; so though there be much corruption in the heart, yet the heart hides it, and draws a veil over, that it be not seen.

2. The heart holds a false glass before the eye, making a man appear fair, and his estate very good. The heart can deceive with counterfeit grace; hence it is men are insensible of their spiritual condition, and think themselves well when they are sick unto death.

5. Men take up a reverend opinion of themselves, and fancy their spiritual estate better than it is thro' mistake. And this mistake is double.

1. They enjoy glorious privileges; they were born within the sound of Aaron's bells, they were baptized with holy water, they have been fed with manna from heaven, therefore they hope they are in a good condition, Judges xvii. 13. 'Then Micah said, Now I know the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest.' But alas! this is a mistake; outward privileges save not. What is any man the better for the ordinances, unless he be the better by ordinances? a child may die with the breast in its mouth. Many of the Jews perished though Christ himself was their preacher.

2. The other mistake is set down by the apostle, 2 Cor. x. 12. 'They, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves amongst themselves, are not wise.' Here is a double error or mistake.

First, 'They measure themselves by themselves:' that is, they see they are not so bad as they were, therefore they judge their condition is good. A dwarf may be taller than he was, yet a dwarf still; the patient may be less sick than he was, yet far from well; a man may be better than he was, yet not good.

Secondly, 'They compare themselves amongst

themselves.' They see they are not so flagitious and profane as others; therefore they think themselves well, because they are not so sick as others: this is a mistake; one may as well die of a consumption as the plague. One man may not be so far off heaven as another, yet he may not be near heaven; one line may not be crooked as another, yet not straight. To the law, to the testimony; the word of God is the true standard and measure by which we are to judge of the state and temper of our souls.

Oh let us take heed of this rock, the fancying of our condition better than it is; let us take heed of a spiritual apoplexy, to be sick in our souls, yet not sensible of this sickness. What do men talk of a light within them! the light within them by nature is not sufficient to shew them the diseases of their souls; this light tells them they are whole, and have no need of a physician.

Oh what infinite mercy is it for a man to be made sensible of sin, and seeing himself sick, to cry out with David, 2 Sam. xii. 13. 'I have sinned against the Lord.' Were it not a mercy for a person that is distracted, to be restored to the use of his reason? so for him that is spiritually distempered, and in a lethargy, to come to himself, and see both his wound and his remedy: till the sinner be sensible of his disease, the medicine of mercy doth not belong to him.

Branch 6. If sin be a soul sickness, then labour to get this disease healed; if a man had a disease in his body; a pleurisy or cancer, he would use all the means for a cure; the woman in the gospel who had a bloody issue, spent her whole estate upon the physicians, Luke viii. 48. Be more earnest to have thy soul cured than thy body. Make David's prayer, Psal. xli. 4. 'Heal my soul, for I have sinned.' Hast thou a consumptive body, rather

pray God to heal the consumption in thy soul; go to God first for the cure of thy soul, James v. 14. 'Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him;' the apostle doth not say, let him call for the physician, but the elders, that is, the ministers. Physicians are to be consulted in their due place, but not in the first place. Most men send first for the physician, and then for the minister; which shews they are more desirous and careful for the recovery of their bodies than their souls; but if soul diseases are more dangerous and deadly, then we should prefer the spiritual cure before the bodily; 'Heal my soul, for I have sinned;' let us consider,

1. Till we are cured, we are not fit to do God any service. A sick man cannot work; while the disease of sin is violent, we are not fit for any heavenly employment; we can neither work for God nor work out our salvation. The philosopher defines happiness the operation of the mind about virtue. To be working for God, is both the end of our life, and the perfection. Would we be active in our sphere? let us labour to have our souls cured. So long as we are diseased with sin, we are lame and bed-ridden, we are unfit for work. We read indeed of a sinner's works, but they are dead works, Heb. vi. 1.

2. If we are not cured, we are cursed; if our diseases abide on us, the wrath of God abides on us.

Quest. But how shall we get this disease of sin cured? this brings to the second thing in the text—The healing physician; The whole need not a physician. Whence observe:

Doct. 2. That Jesus Christ is a soul-physician. Ministers (as was said before) are physicians, whom Christ doth in his name delegate; and send abroad into the world. He saith to the apostles, and in them

to all his ministers, 'Lo I am with you to the end of the world,' Matt. xxviii. 20. That is, I am with you to assist and bless you, and to make your ministry healing; but though ministers are physicians, yet but under-physicians. Jesus Christ is the chief physician; he it is that teacheth us all our receipts, and goes forth with our labours, else the physic we prescribe would never work; all the ministers under heaven would not do any cure without the help of this great Physician. For the amplification of this I shall shew

1. That Christ is a physician.
2. Why he is a physician.
3. That he is the only physician.
4. How he heals his patients.
5. That he is the best physician.

1. That Christ is a physician; it is one of his titles, Exod. xv. 26. 'I am the Lord that healeth thee.' He is a physician for the body; he 'anointed the blind, cleansed the lepers, healed the sick, raised the dead,' Matt. viii. 16. He it is that puts virtue into physic, and makes it healing; and he is a physician for the soul, Psal. cxlvii. 3. 'He healeth the broken in heart.' We are all as so many impotent, diseased persons; one man hath a fever, another a dead palsy, another hath a bloody issue, he is under the power of some hereditary corruption; now Christ is a soul-physician, he healeth these diseases, therefore in scripture, the Lord Jesus, to set forth his healing virtue, is resembled,

1. By the brazen serpent, Numb. xxi. 9. Those who were stung, were cured by looking on the brazen serpent; so when the soul is stung by the old serpent, it is cured by that healing under Christ's wings.

3. Christ is resembled by the good Samaritan, Luke x. 33, 34. 'A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which

stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead ; but a certain Samaritan as he journeyed, came where he was, and when he saw him he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in wine and oil,' &c. We have wounded ourselves by sin, and the wound had been incurable, had not Christ, that good Samaritan, poured in wine and oil.

3. Christ as a physician is resembled by the trees of the sanctuary, Ezek. xlviii. 12. 'The fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof shall be for medicine.' Thus the Lord Jesus, that tree of life in paradise, hath a sanative virtue ; he heals our pride, unbelief, &c. As he feeds our graces, so he heals our corruptions.

2. Why Christ is a physician.

1. In regard of his call ; God the Father called him to practise physic, he anointed him to the work of healing, Luke iv. 18. 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel : he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted.' Christ came into the world as into an hospital, to heal sin-sick souls : this, though it was a glorious work, yet Christ would not undertake it, till he was commissioned by his Father. 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, he hath sent me.' Christ was anointed and appointed to the work of a physician, this was for our imitation ; we are not to meddle many matters without a call ; that is acting out of our sphere.

2. Jesus Christ undertook this healing work, because of that need we were in of a physician. Christ came to be our physician, not because we deserved him, but because we needed him ; not our merit, but our misery, drew Christ from heaven ; had he not come, we must of necessity have perished, and died of our wounds ; our disease was not ordinary,

it had seized on every part ; it made us not only sick but dead ; and such receipts were necessary as none but Christ could give.

3. Christ came as a physician out of the sweetness of his nature ; he is like the good Samaritan, who had compassion on the wounded man, Luke x. 33. A physician may come to the patient only for gain ; not so much to help the patient as to help himself : but Christ came purely out of sympathy ; there was nothing in us to tempt Christ to heal us ; for we had no desire of a physician, nor had we any thing to give our physician ; as sin made us sick, so it made us poor ; so that Christ came as a physician, not out of hope to receive any thing from us, but was prompted to it out of his own goodness, Hos. xiv. 4. ' I will heal their backslidings, I will love them.' Love set Christ a work ; not only his Father's commission, but his own compassion moved him to his spiritual physic and chirurgery. King David banished the blind and lame out of the city, 2 Sam. v. 8. Christ comes to the blind and lame, and cures them ; it is the sounding of his bowels that causeth the healing under his wings.

4. The third particular is, that Christ is the only physician, Acts iv. 12. ' Neither is there salvation in any other,' &c. There is no other physician besides. The papists would have other healers besides Christ, they would make angels their physicians ; all the angels in heaven cannot heal one sick soul ; indeed they are described by their wings, Isa. vi. 2. but they have no healing under their wings. Papists would heal themselves by their own merits. Adam did eat that apple which made him and his posterity sick ; but he could not find any herb in paradise to cure him ; our merits are rather damning than healing ; to make use of other physicians and medicines, is as if the Israelites, in contempt of that brazen serpent which Moses set up, had erected o-

ther brazen serpents. O let us take heed of that *turba medicorum*. Indeed in bodily sickness it is lawful to multiply physicians; when the patient hath advised with one physician, he desires to have others joined with him; but the sick soul, if it joins any other physician with Christ it surely dies.

4. How Christ heals his patients.

Ans. There are four things in Christ that are healing.

1. His word is healing, Psal. cvii. 20. 'He sent his word, and healed them.' His word in the mouth of his ministers is healing; when the spirit is wounded in desertion, Christ doth create the lips that speak peace, Isa. lyii. 19. The word written is a repository in which God hath laid up sovereign oils and balsams to recover sick souls; and the word preached is the pouring out of these oils, and applying them to the sick patient. 'He sent his word and healed them.' We look upon the word as a weak thing. What is the breath of a man to save a soul? but 'The power of the Lord is present to heal,' Luke v. 17. Christ makes use of his word as an healing medicine; the receipts which his ministers prescribe, he himself applies; he makes his word convincing, converting, comforting.

Caution, Not that the word heals all; to some it is not an healing but a killing word, 2 Cor. ii. 16. 'To the one we are a savour of death unto death.' Some die of their disease; two sorts of patients die.

1. Such as sin presumptuously; though they know a thing to be sin, Job xxiv. 13. They are of those that rebel against the light; this is dangerous. David prays, Psal. xix. 'Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins.'

2. Such as sin maliciously; when the disease comes to this head, the patient will die, Heb. x. 29. But to them who belong to the election of

grace, the word is the healing medicine Christ useth. 'He sent his word, and healed them.'

2. Christ's wounds are healing, Isa. lv. 8: 'with his stripes we are healed.' Christ made a medicine of his own body and blood; the physician died to cure the patient. The pelican when her young ones are bitten by serpents, feeds them with her own blood to recover them. Thus when we were bitten by the old serpent, then Jesus Christ prescribes a receipt of his own blood to heal and restore us. The blood of Christ being the blood of him who was God as well as man, had infinite merit to appease God, and infinite virtue to heal us: this, this is the balm of Gilead, that recovers a soul which is sick even unto death. Balm, as naturalists say, is a juice which a little shrub, being cut with glass, doth weep out. This was anciently of very precious esteem; the savour of it was odoriferous, the virtue of it sovereign; it would cure ulcers, and the stinging of serpents. This balm may be an emblem of Christ's blood; it hath a most sovereign virtue in it, it heals the ulcer of sin, the stinging of temptation, it merits for us justification, Rom. v. 9. O how precious is this balm of Gilead! by this blood we enter into heaven.

3. Christ's Spirit is healing; the blood of Christ heals the guilt of sin; the Spirit of Christ heals the pollution of sin? the Spirit is compared to oil, it is called the anointing of the Spirit; Isa. lxi. to shew the healing virtue of the Spirit; oil is healing. Christ by his Spirit heals the rebellion of the will, the stone of the heart; though sin be not removed, it is subdued.

4. Christ's rod is healing, Isa. xxvii. 9. Christ never wounds but to heal; the rod of affliction is to recover the sick patient. David's bones were broken that his soul might be healed. God useth affliction as the surgeon doth his lance, to let out

the venom and corruption of the soul, and make way for a cure.

Quest. But if Christ be a physician, why are not all healed?

Ans. 1. Because all do not know they are sick; they see not the sores and ulcers of their souls; and will Christ cure them who see no need of him? many ignorant people thank God they have good hearts; but that heart can no more be good which wants grace, than that body can be sound which wants health.

2. All are not healed, because they love their sickness, Psal. liii. 3. 'Thou lovest evil;' many men hug their disease. Augustine saith, before his conversion, he prayed against sin, but his heart whispered, Not yet Lord; he was loath to leave his sin too soon; how many love their disease better than their physician! while sin is loved, Christ's medicines are loathed.

3. All are not healed, because they do not look out after a physician. If they have any bodily distemper upon them, they presently send to the physician; their souls are sick, but mind not their physician Christ, John v. 40. 'Ye will not come unto me that ye may have life.' Christ takes it as an undervaluing of him that we will not send to him; some send for Christ when it is too late; when other physicians have given them over, and there is no hope of life, then they cry to Christ to save them, but Christ refuseth such patients as make use of him only for a shift: thou that scornest Christ in time of health, Christ may despise thee in the time of sickness.

4. All are not healed, because they would be self-healers; they would make their duties their saviours; the papists would be their own physicians; their daily sacrifice of the mass is a blasphemy against Christ's priestly office; but Christ will have

the honour of the cure, or he will never heal us; not our tears, but his blood saves.

5. All are not healed, because they do not take the physic which Christ prescribes them; they would be cured, but they are loath to put themselves into a course of physic. Christ prescribes them to drink the bitter potion of repentance, and to take the pill of mortification, but they cannot do this, they had rather die than take physic; if the patient refuseth to take the receipts the physician prescribes, no wonder he is not healed. Christians, you have had many receipts to take, have you taken them? ask conscience. There are many hearers of the word do like foolish patients who send to the doctor for physic, but when they have it, they let the physic stand by in the glass, but do not take it; it is probable you have not taken the receipts which the gospel prescribes, because the word hath no operation on your hearts, you are as proud, as earthly, as malicious as ever.

6. All are not healed, because they have not confidence in their physician; it is observable when Christ came to work any cure, he first put this question, 'Believe ye that I am able to do this?' Matt. ix. 28. This undoes many; O, saith the sinner, There is no mercy for me, Christ cannot heal me. Take heed, thy unbelief is worse than all thy other diseases. Did not Christ pray for them that crucified him? 'FATHER FORGIVE THEM!' Some of those were saved that had an hand in shedding his blood! Acts ii. 36, 37. Why then dost thou say Christ cannot heal thee? unbelief dishonours Christ, it hinders from a cure, it closeth the orifice of Christ's wounds, it stauncheth his blood, Mat. xv. 58. Millions die of their disease, because they do not believe in their physician.

5. The fifth and last particular is, that Christ is the best physician. That I may set forth the praise

and honour of Jesus Christ, I shall shew you wherein he excels other physicians; no physician like Christ.

1. He is the most skilful physician; there is no disease too hard for him, Psal. ciii. 3. 'Who healeth all thy diseases.' The pool of Bethesda might be an emblem of Christ's blood, John v. 5. 'Whosoever first after the troubling of the water stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.' There are certain diseases physicians cannot cure; as a consumption in the lungs, some kind of obstructions and gangrenes: Some diseases are the reproach of physicians; but there is no disease can pose Christ's skill; he can cure the gangrene of sin when it is come to the heart; he healed Mary Magdalen an unchaste sinner; he healed Paul, who breathed out threatenings against the church; inso-much that Paul stands and wonders at the cure, 1 Tim. i. 13. 'But I obtained mercy;' I was bemerced. Christ heals head distempers and heart distempers, which may keep poor trembling souls from despair. Oh, saith the sinner, never was any so diseased as I! but look up to thy physician Christ, who hath healing under his wings; he can melt a heart of stone, and wash away black sins in the crimson of his blood; there are no desperate cases with Christ; he hath those salves, oils, balsams, which can cure the worst disease. Indeed there is one disease which Christ doth not heal; namely, the sin against the Holy Ghost; this is called 'a sin unto death;' if we knew any who had sinned this sin, we were to shut them out of our prayers: 'There is a sin unto death, I do not say that he shall pray for it,' 1 John v. 16. There is no healing of this disease; not but that Christ could cure this, but the sinner will not be cured. The king could pardon a traitor, but if he will have no pardon he must die. The sin against the Holy

Ghost is unpardonable, because the sinner will have no pardon; he scorns Christ's blood, despites his Spirit, therefore his sin hath no sacrifice, Heb. xi 26, 29.

2. Christ is the best physician, because he cures the better part, the soul; other physicians can cure the liver or spleen, Christ cures the heart; they can cure the blood when it is tainted, Christ cures the conscience when it is defiled, Heb. ix. 14. 'How much more shall the blood of Christ purge your conscience from dead works?' Galen and Hippocrates might cure the stone in the kidneys, but Christ cures the stone in the heart; he is the best physician, which cures the most excellent part. The soul is immortal, angelical; man was made in the image of God, Gen. i. 27. Not in regard of his body, but his soul. Now if the soul be so divine and noble, then the cure of the soul doth far exceed the cure of the body.

3. Christ is the best physician, for he causeth us to feel our disease. The disease of sin, though it be most damnable, yet least discernible; many a man is sin-sick, but the devil hath given him such stupifying physic, that he sleeps the sleep of death, and all the thunders of the word cannot awaken him; but the Lord Jesus, this blessed physician, awakes the soul out of its lethargy, and then it is in an hopeful way of recovery. The jailor was never so near a cure, as when he cried out, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' Acts xvi. 30.

4. Christ shews more love to his patients than any physician besides; which appears five ways.

1. In that long journey he took from heaven to earth.

2. In that he comes to his patients without sending for. The sick send to their physicians, and use many entreaties; here the physician comes unsent for, Isa. lxx. 1. 'I am found of them that sought

me not.' He doth prevent us with mercy, he entreats us to be healed; if Christ had not first come to us, and, with the good Samaritan, poured in wine and oil, we must have died of our wounds.

3. This physician lets himself bleed to cure his patient, Isa. liii. 5. 'But he was wounded for our transgressions;' through his wounds we may see his bowels.

4. Our repulses and unkindnesses do not drive Christ away from us. Physicians, if provoked by their patients, go away in a rage, and will come no more. We abuse our physician, thrust him away, we bolt out our physician, yet Christ will not forsake us, but comes again, and applies his sovereign oils and balsams: Isa. lxxv. 3. 'I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people.' Christ puts up wrongs and incivilities, and is resolved to go through with the cure. O the love of this heavenly physician!

5. Christ himself drank that bitter cup which we should have drunk; and by his taking the potion we are healed and saved. Thus Christ hath shown more love than ever physician did to the patient.

5. Christ is the most cheap physician: sickness is not only a consumption to the body but the purse, Luke viii. 43. Physicians' fees are chargeable, but Jesus Christ gives us our physic freely, he takes no fee, Isa. lv. 1. 'Come without money and without price.' He desires us to bring nothing to him but broken hearts; and when he hath cured us he desires us to bestow nothing upon him but our love; and one would think that were very reasonable.

6. Christ heals with more ease than any other: other physicians apply pills, potions, bleeding; Christ cures with more facility. Christ made the devil go out with a word speaking, Mark ix. 25. So when the soul is spiritually possessed, Christ can with a word heal, nay, he can cure with a look.

When Peter had fallen into a relapse, Christ looked on Peter, and he wept. Christ's look melted Peter into repentance; it was an healing look. If Christ doth but cast a look upon the soul, he can recover it. Therefore David prays to have a look from God, Psal. cxix. 132, 'Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me.'

7. Christ is the most tender-hearted physician. He hath ended his passion, yet not his compassion. How doth he pity sick souls! he is not more full of skill than sympathy, Hos. xi. 8. 'My heart is turned within me.' Christ shows his compassion in that he doth proportion his physic to the strength of the patient. Physic, if it be too sharp for the constitution, endangers the life. Christ gives such gentle physic as works kindly and savingly. Though he will bruise sinners, yet 'he will not break the bruised reed.' O the soundings of Christ's bowels to poor souls that feel themselves heart-sick with sin! he holds their head and heart when they are fainting; he brings the cordials of his promises to keep the sick patient from dying away. Christians, you perhaps may have hard thoughts of your physician Christ, and think he is cruel, and intends to destroy you: but O the workings of his bowels towards humble broken-hearted sinners! Psal. cxlvii. 3. 'He heals the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.' Every groan of the patient goes to the heart of this physician.

8. Physicians oft prescribe such physic as is prejudicial to the patient, in two cases; 1. Either in case they find not out the cause of the disease, and then they may give that which is contrary, hot things instead of cooling: or, 2. In case they do find out the cause, they may give that which is good for one thing and bad for another. As it falls out when the liver and spleen are both distempered, the physic which helps the liver may hurt the spleen.

But Christ always prescribes that physic which is suitable, and withal he blesseth the physic. If the disease of the soul be pride, he humbles it with affliction. God turned Nebuchadnezzar to grass to cure him of his tympany. If the disease of the soul be sloth, Christ applies some awakening scripture, Matt. xii. 11. Luke xiii. 24. 1 Pet. iv. 18. If the disease be the stone of the heart, Christ useth proper medicines; sometimes the terrors of the law, sometimes mercies, sometimes he dissolves the stone in his own blood. If the soul be fainting through unbelief, Christ brings some scripture cordial to revive it, Matt. xii. 20. 'A bruised reed he will not break,' Isa. lvii. 16. 'I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.' Thus the Lord Jesus always prescribes that physic which is proper for the disease, and shall work effectually to the cure.

9. Christ never fails of success: Physicians may have skill, but not always success; patients often die under their hands; but Christ never undertakes to heal any but he makes a certain cure, John xvii. 12. 'Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost.' Judas was not given to Christ to be healed; but never any who was given to Christ did miscarry.

Quest. How shall I know that I am given to Christ to be cured?

Ans. If it be with thee as with a sick patient, who sees himself-dying without a physician. Art thou undone without Christ? dost thou perceive thyself bleeding to death without the balm of Gilead? then thou art one of Christ's sick patients, and thou shalt never miscarry under his hands. How can any of those be lost whom Christ undertakes to cure? as he pours in the balsam of his blood, so he pours out the perfume of his prayers for them: John xvii. 11.

‘Holy Father, keep through thy own name those whom thou hast given me.’ Satan could never upbraid Christ with this, that any of his sick patients were lost.

10. Other physicians can only cure them that are sick, but Christ cures them that are dead: Ephes. ii. 1. ‘You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.’ A sinner hath all the signs of death on him; the pulse of his affections doth not beat, he is without breath, he breathes not after holiness, he is dead; but Christ is a physician for the dead; of every one whom Christ cures, it may be said, ‘He was dead and is alive again,’ Luke xv. 32.

11. Christ cures not only our diseases, but our deformities. The physician can make the sick man well; but if he be deformed, he cannot make him fair. Christ gives not only health, but beauty. Sin hath made us ugly and misshapen; Christ’s medicines do not only take away our sickness, but our spots; he doth not only make us whole, but fair, Hos. xiv. 4. ‘I will heal their backslidings,’ ver. 6. ‘His beauty shall be as the olive-tree.’ Jesus Christ never thinks he hath fully healed us, till he hath drawn his own beautiful image upon us. Cant. ii. 13. ‘Arise my fair one;’ fair with justification, fair with sanctification. Christ doth not only heal, but adorn; he is called the Sun of righteousness, Mal. iv. 2. Not only because of the healing under his wings, but because of those rays of beauty which he puts upon the soul, Rev. xii. 1.

12. And lastly, Christ is the most bountiful physician. Other patients do enrich their physicians, but here the physician doth enrich the patient. Christ prefers all his patients; he doth not only cure them, but crown them, Rev. ii. 10. Christ doth not only raise from the bed, but to the throne; he gives the sick man not only health, but heaven.

Use 1. Good news this day, there is balm in Gil-

ead; there is a physician to heal sin-sick souls; the angels that fell had no physician sent to them, we have; there are but few in the world to whom Christ is revealed; they that have the gold of the Indies want the blood of the Lamb; but the Sun of righteousness is risen in our hemisphere, with healing in his wings. If a man were poisoned, what a comfort would it be to him to hear that there was an herb in the garden could heal him! If he had a gangrene in his body, and were given over by all his friends, how glad would he be to hear of a surgeon that could cure him! O sinner, thou art full of peccant humours, thou hast a gangrened soul; but there is a physician that can recover thee. 'There is hope in Israel concerning this;' though there be an old serpent to sting us with his tentations, yet there is a brazen serpent to heal us with his blood.

Use 2. If Christ be a physician, then let us make use of this physician for our diseased souls: Luke iv. 40. 'When the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases, brought them unto him, and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them.' You that have neglected a physician all this while, now when the sun of the gospel, and the sun of your life is even setting, bring your sick souls to Christ to be cured. Christ complains that though men are sick even to death, yet they will not come or send to the physician; John v. 40. 'Ye will not come to me that ye might have life.' In bodily diseases the physician is the first that is sent to; in soul diseases the Physician is the last that is sent to. But here there are many sad objections that poor souls make against themselves, why they do not come to Christ their soul physician.

Object. 1. Alas, I am discouraged to go to Christ to cure me, because of my unworthiness; just like

the centurion, who sent to Christ about his sick servant, Luke vii. 6. 'Lord trouble not thyself, for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof.' Christ was coming to heal his servant, but the centurion would have staved off Christ from coming: 'I am not worthy.' So saith many a trembling soul, Christ is a physician, but who am I that Christ should come under my roof, or heal me? I am unworthy of mercy: as Mephibosheth said to king David, 2 Sam. ix. 8. 'What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am? Now to such as have their hearts broken with a sense of their unworthiness, and are discouraged from coming to Christ to heal them, let me say these five things by way of reply.

1. Who did Christ shed his blood for but such as are unworthy? 1 Tim. i. 14. 'Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.' Christ came into the world as into an hospital, among a company of lame, bedrid souls.

2. Though we are not legally worthy, we may be evangelically; it is part of our worthiness to see our unworthiness, Isa. xli. 14. 'Fear not, thou worm Jacob.' Thou mayest be a worm in thine own eye, yet a dove in God's eye.

3. Though we are unworthy, yet Christ is worthy; we do not deserve a cure, but Christ hath merited mercy for us; he hath store of blood to supply our want of tears.

4. Who was ever yet saved because he was worthy? What man could ever plead this title, Lord Jesus heal me, because I am worthy. What worthiness was in Paul before his conversion? what worthiness was there in Mary Magdalene; out of whom seven devils were cast? but free grace did pity and heal them; God doth not find us worthy, but makes us worthy.

5. If we never come to Christ to be healed till

we are worthy, we must never come; and let me tell you, this talking of worthiness savours of pride, we would have something of our own; had we such preparations and self-excellencies, then we think Christ would accept of us, and we might come and be healed; this is to fee our physician; O let not the sense of unworthiness discourage; go to Christ to be healed: 'Arise, he calleth thee,' Mark x. 49.

Obj. 2. But I fear I am not within Christ's commission, I am not of the number that shall be saved; and then though Christ be a physician, I shall not be healed.

Ans. 1. We must take heed of drawing desperate conclusions against ourselves; it is high presumption for us to make ourselves wiser than the angels. All the angels in heaven are not able to resolve this question, who are elected and who are reprobated.

2. Thou that sayest thou art not within Christ's commission, read over Christ's commission, see who he comes to heal, Luke iv. 18. 'He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted.' Hath God touched thy heart with remorse? dost thou lay to heart thy gospel unkindnesses? dost thou weep more out of love to Christ, than fear of hell? then thou art a broken-hearted sinner, and art within Christ's commission; a bleeding Christ will heal a broken heart.

Obj. 3. But my sins are so many that sure I shall never be healed, I am sick of many diseases at once.

Ans. Thou hast the more need of a physician; one would think that was a strange speech of Peter to Christ, Luke v. 8. 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord;' rather, Lord come near to me. Is it a good argument to say to a physician, I am diseased, therefore depart from me? No, therefore come and heal me. Our sins should serve to humble us, not to beat us from Christ. I tell you

if we had no diseases, Christ would have no work to do in the world.

Objection 4. But my disease is inflamed, and grown to a paroxysm; my sin is greatly heightened.

Ans. The plaster of Christ's blood is broader than thy sore, 1 John i. 7. 'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.' The blood of the Lamb takes away the poison of the serpent: all diseases are alike to Christ's blood; he can cure the greatest sin as well as the least. Hast thou a bloody issue of sin running? the issue of blood in Christ's side can heal thine.

Obj. 5. But mine is an old inveterate disease, and I fear it is incurable.

Ans. Though thy disease be chronical, Christ can heal it. Christ doth not say, if this disease had been taken in time, it might have been cured: he is good at old sores. The thief on the cross had an old festering disease, but Christ cured it; it was well for him his physician was so near. Zaccheus, an old sinner, a custom-house man, he had wronged many a man in his time, but Christ cured him. Christ sometimes grafts his grace upon an old stock; we read Christ cured at sunset, Luke iv. 40. He heals some sinners at the sunset of their lives.

Obj. 6. But after I have been healed, my disease hath broken out again; I have relapsed into the same sin; therefore I fear there is no healing for me.

Ans. It is rare that the Lord leaves his children to these relapses, though, through the suspension of grace, and the prevalency of temptation, it is possible they might fall back into sin; these sins of relapse are sad. It was an aggravation of Solomon's offence, that he sinned after the Lord had appeared to him twice, 1 Kings xi. 9. These sins after healing, open the mouth of conscience to accuse, and stop the mouth of God's Spirit which should

speaking peace. These sins exclude from the comfort of the promise; it is as it were sequestered; but if the soul be deeply humbled, if the relapsing sinner be a relenting sinner, let him not cast away the anchor of hope, but have recourse to his soul-physician; Jesus Christ can cure a relapse, he healed David's and Cranmer's relapse, 1 John ii. 1. 'If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ.' Christ appears in the court as the advocate for the client. As he poured out his blood upon the brazen altar of the cross: so he pours out his prayers at the golden altar in heaven, Heb. vii. 25. 'He ever liveth to make intercession for us.' Christ in the golden work of intercession, presents the merit of his blood to his Father, and so obtains our pardon, and applies the virtue of his blood to us, and so works our cure; therefore be not discouraged from going to thy physician; though thy disease hath broken out again, yet Christ hath fresh sprinklings of his blood for thee, he can cure a relapse.

Obj. 7. But there is no healing for me, I fear I have sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost?

Ans. 1. The fear of sinning it, is a sign thou hast not sinned it.

2. Let me ask, Why dost thou think thou hast sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost? I have grieved the Spirit of God.

Ans. Every grieving the Spirit of God is not that fatal sin. We grieve the Spirit when we sin against the illumination of it; the Spirit being grieved, may depart for a time, and carry away all its honey out of the hive, leaving the soul in darkness, Isa. l. 10. But every grieving the Spirit is not the sin against the Holy Ghost. A child of God when he hath sinned, his heart smites him; and he whose heart smites him for sin, hath not committed the unpardonable sin. A child of God having grieved

the Spirit, doth as Noah, when the dove did fly out of the ark, he opened the windows of the ark to let it in again. A godly man doth not shut his heart against the Spirit, as a wicked man doth, Acts vii. 51. The Spirit of God would come in, he keeps him out; but a gracious soul opens his heart to let in the spirit, as Noah opened the door of the ark to let in the dove. Christian, is it not so with thee? then be of good comfort, thou hast not sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost; that sin is a malicious despiting of the Spirit, which thou tremblest to think of.

Therefore laying aside these arguments and disputes, whatever the diseases of the soul are, come to Christ for a cure, believe in his blood, and thou mayest be saved? you see what a skilful and able physician Christ is, what sovereign oils and balsams he hath, how willing he is to cure sick souls; O then what remains but that you cast yourselves upon his merits to heal and save you! of all sins unbelief is the worst, because it casts disparagement on Christ, as if he were not able to work a cure. O Christian, believe in thy physician, John iii. 15. 'That whosoever believeth in him shall not perish.' Say as queen Esther, Esther iv. 16. 'I will go in unto the king, which is not according to the law, and if I perish, I perish.' So say, the Lord Jesus is a physician to heal me, I will adventure on his blood, if I perish, I perish. Queen Esther ventured against the law, she had no promise that the king would hold out the golden sceptre; but I have a promise which invites me to come to Christ: 'He that comes unto me I will in nowise cast him out,' John vi. 37. Faith is an healing grace; we read when the Israelites were burying a man, for fear of the soldiers of the Moabites, they cast him for haste into the grave of Elisha; now the man as soon as he was down, and had touched the dead body of the prophet revived, and stood up on his feet, 2

Kings xiii. 21. So if a man be dead in sin, yet let him be but cast in Christ's grave, and by faith touch Christ, who was dead and buried, he will revive, and his soul will be healed. Remember there is no way for a cure but by believing; Christ himself will not avail us, **Rom. iii. 25.** 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.' Faith is the applying of Christ's merits. A plaster, though it be ever so rare and excellent, yet if it be not applied to the wound, will do no good; though the plaster be made of Christ's blood, yet it will not heal, unless applied by faith. The brazen serpent was a sovereign remedy for the cure of those that were stung; but if they had not looked upon it, they received no benefit: So though there be an healing virtue in Christ, yet unless we look upon him by the eye of faith, we cannot be cured. Above all things labour for faith; this is the all-healing grace; this hand touching Christ fetcheth virtue from him.

Not that faith hath more worthiness than other graces; but only it is influential, as it makes us one with Christ. If a man had a stone in a ring that could cure many diseases, we say this ring heals; but it is not the ring, but the stone in that ring that doth the cure; so faith saves and heals, not by its own virtue, but as it lays hold on Christ, and fetcheth down his sacred influences into the soul.

2. If Jesus Christ be a spiritual physician, let us labour to hasten the cure of our souls. Consider;

1. What a little time we have to stay here, and let that hasten the cure. Solomon saith 'There is a time to be born, and a time to die,' **Eccles. iii. 2.** But mentions no time of living, as if that were so short that it were not worth the naming: the body is called a vessel, **1 Thess. iv. 4.** This vessel is filled with breath, sickness broacheth

it, and death draws it out. O hasten thy soul's cure, death is upon its swift march, and if that surprise you suddenly, there is no cure to be wrought in the grave, Eccl. ix. 10. 'There is no work, nor device, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest.'

2. Now is properly the time of healing, now is the day of grace, now Christ pours out his balsams, now he sends abroad his ministers and Spirit, 2 Cor. vi. 2. 'Now is the accepted time:' There were certain healing days wherein the king healed them that had the evil. The day of grace is an healing day: if we neglect the day of grace, the next day will be a day of wrath, Rom. ii. 5. O therefore hasten the cure of thy soul; rather neglect thy food than thy cure; sin will not only kill, but damn. To get a cure,

1. Come to the healing pool of the sanctuary; the Spirit of God may on a sudden stir these waters; the next Sabbath for ought thou knowest, may be an healing day to thy soul.

2. Pray others to pray for you; when any disease is upon your body you desire the prayers of others; the prayers of the saints are precious balms and medicines to cure sick souls.

3. Is Jesus Christ a soul physician? then let me speak to you who are in some measure healed of your damnable disease. I have four things to say.

1. Break forth into thankfulness; though sin be not quite cured, (there are still some grudgings of the disease,) yet the reigning power of it is taken away; you are so healed that you shall not die, the John iii. 16. xi. 26. 'Those that were cured by brazen serpent afterwards died; but such as are healed by Christ, shall never die.' Sin may molest, it shall not damn; O then what cause have you to admire and love your physician? The Lord Jesus

hath taken out the core of your disease, and the curse; publish your experiences, Psal. lxvi. 16. 'I will tell you what God hath done for my soul:' as a man that hath been cured of an old disease, how glad and thankful is he? he will tell others of the medicine that cured him. So say, 'I will tell you what God hath done for my soul:' he hath cured me of an old disease, an hard, unbelieving heart, a disease that hath sent millions to hell. Truly we may cheerfully bear any other sickness, if this soul-sickness be cured, Lord (saith Luther) strike and wound where thou wilt, if sin be pardoned. O 'Let the high praises of God be in your mouth,' Psal. cxlix. 6. God expects thankfulness as a tribute; he wonders men bring not their thank-offering, Luke xvii. 17. 'Were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine?'

2. Are you healed? take heed of coming into infected company, lest you take the infection; the wicked are devils to tempt to sin. Lot was the world's wonder that lived in Sodom when it was a pest-house, yet did not catch the disease.

3. Take heed of relapses; men are afraid of a relapse after they are cured; beware of soul relapses. Hath God softened thy heart? take heed of hardening it. Hath he cured thee in some measure of deadness? do not relapse into a drowsy security. Thou mayest have such an uproar and agony in thy conscience, as may make thee go weeping to thy grave. O take heed of falling sick again? 'sin no more lest a worse thing come unto thee,' John v. 14.

4. Pity your friends that are sick unto death; shew your piety in your pity. Hast thou a child that is well and lusty, but hath a sick soul? pity him, pray for him. David wept and fasted for his sick child, 2 Sam. xii. 16. Thy child hath the plague sore of the heart, and thou hast conveyed the plague

to him ; weep and fast for thy child. Hast thou a wife or a husband that (though they do not keep their bed, yet the Lord knows they are sick, they are under the raging power of sin ? O let thy bowels yearn over them ? lift up a prayer over them ; the prayer of faith may save a sick soul. Prayer is the best physic can be used in a desperate case ; you that have felt the disease of sin, and the mercy of your physician, learn to pity others.

4. And lastly, Is Christ a soul physician ? then let us go to Christ to cure this sick, dying nation. Britain God knows is a sick patient ; ‘ The whole head is sick, the whole heart is faint.’ The body politic hath a *cachexy*, it is ill all over : magistracy, ministry, commonality are diseased ; and those who pretend to be our healers, are physicians of no value. We have spent our money upon these physicians, but yet our sores are not healed, Jer. xiv. 19 ‘ Why hast thou smitten us, and there is no healing for us ?’ Instead of healing us, those who should have been our physicians, have increased the nation’s malady, by giving a toleration ; this is like giving strong water in a fever, which doth more inflame the disease. Ah sick Britain, because sinful Britain ! sick of error, uncleanness, drunkenness ; so sick, that we may fear our funerals are approaching : and, which is the worst symptom, though balm hath been poured into our wounds, the precious ordinances of God have been applied, yet we are not healed ; a sign of bad flesh that is so ill to be cured.

This sin-sickness in the land hath produced many direful effects ; division, oppression, bloodshed, the very bowels and arteries of the nation are almost torn asunder, so that now God hath fulfilled that threatening upon us, Mic. vi. 13. ‘ I will make thee sick with smiting thee.’ We had made ourselves sick with sinning, and God hath made us sick

with smiting. Now what remains, but that we should go to the great physician, whose blood sprinkles many nations, that he should apply some healing medicines to dying Britain; God can with a word heal; he can give repentance as well as deliverance; he can put us in joint again. Let all the people of the land lie between the porch and the altar, saying, 'Spare thy people, O Lord,' Joel iii. 17. Our prayers and tears may set Christ on work to heal us, Psal. cvi. 23. 'Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his servant stood in the breach to turn away his wrath.' Let us never leave imploring our heavenly physician, till he lay a fig on England's boil, and cause it to recover.

THE BEAUTY OF GRACE.

1 Pet. i. 2. *Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied.*

THE blessed apostle having felt the efficacy and sovereignty of grace, is taken up with the thoughts of it; and so sweet is this wine of paradise, that he commends it to those dispersed Christians to whom he writes, wishing them all increase.

—*Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied.*—

The words run in the form of a salutation, 'grace unto you, and peace.' When we salute our friends, we cannot wish them a greater blessing than grace and peace: other mercies lie without the pale, and are dispersed in common to men; but grace is a special congiary and gift bestowed on them who are the favourites of heaven. In the words observe,

1. The connexion. 2. The order.

1. The connexion, Grace and peace. The way to have peace, is to have grace; grace is the breeder of peace; the one is the root, the other the flower; peace is the sweet water that drops from the limbeck of a gracious heart.

2. The order, First grace, then peace; grace hath the priority: grace and peace are two sisters, but grace is the eldest sister; and give me leave at this time to prefer the elder before the younger. 'Grace unto you be multiplied.' For the illustration, consider,

1. What is meant by grace.

2. The Author of it.

3. Why it is called grace.

4. The cogency of it.

1. What is meant by grace. This word GRACE hath various acceptations in scripture.

1. Grace is sometimes taken for the favour of God, Gen. vi. 8. 'Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord;' God did cast a gracious aspect upon him.

2. Grace is taken for beauty; as we say such a thing is graceful, James i. 11. 'The flower falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth.'

3. Grace is taken figuratively, and improperly, for the shew of grace; as we call that a face in a glass which is but the idea and resemblance of a face; so John ii. 23. 'Many believed in his name:' that believing was but a shew of faith, as Austin and Theophilact note.

4. Grace is taken in a genuiue and proper sense; so in the text, 'Grace be multiplied;' it may admit of this description; grace is the infusion of a new and holy principle into the heart, whereby it is changed from what it was, and is made after God's own heart. Grace makes not only a civil, but sacred change; it biasset the soul heaven-ward,

and stamps upon it the image and superscription of God.

2. The author or efficient of grace; namely, the Spirit of God, who is therefore called the Spirit of grace, Zech. xii. 10. The spirit is the fountain from whence crystal streams of grace flow. Man, as Clemens Alexandrinus observes, is God's harp or timbrel; the harp will not sound unless touched with the finger; so the heart of man cannot put forth any sweet melody or harmony, till first it be touched with the finger of God's Spirit; this blessed Spirit works grace in the subject,

1. Universally. 2. Progressively.

1. Universally; 1 Thess. v. 10. 'The God of peace sanctify you wholly.' The Spirit of God infuseth grace into all the faculties of the soul; tho' grace be wrought but in part, yet in every part; in the understanding light, in the conscience tenderness, in the will consent, in the affections harmony; therefore grace is compared to leaven, Matt. xiii. 33. because it swells itself in the whole soul, and makes the conversation to swell and rise as high as heaven.

2. The Spirit of God works grace progressively, he carries it on from one degree to another. The Pelagians hold that the beginning of grace is from God; but the progress of grace is from ourselves; so God shall be the author of our faith, and we the finishers. God shall lay the first stone, and we the superstructure; but alas, there needs the continual influence of the Spirit to the carrying on the work of grace in our hearts. Should God withdraw his Spirit from the most holy men, their grace might fail and annihilate: if the sun withdraw its light, tho' ever so little, there follows darkness in the air; we need not only habitual grace, but assisting, exciting, subsequent grace. The ship needs not only the sails, but the winds to carry it; there needs not

only the sails of our abilities and endeavours, but the wind of the Spirit to blow us to the heavenly port.

3. Why the work of holiness in the heart is called grace?

Ans. 1. Because it hath a supereminency above nature; it is a flower which doth not grow in nature's garden; it is of a divine extraction, James iii. 17. By reason we live the life of men, by grace we live the life of God.

2. It is called grace, because it is a work of free grace; every link in the golden chain of our salvation is wrought and enamelled with free-grace; that one should be sanctified, and not another, this is of grace; that God should pass by many of the noble, rich, learned, and graft his heavenly endowments upon a more wild, luxuriant stock, a crabbed nature, weaker parts, well may it be called grace.

Quest. But why is not grace bestowed upon all?

Ans. We must hold with Zanchy, there is always a just reason of God's will; but in particular, I answer,

1. God gives grace to one, and denies it to another, to shew his prerogative; God is not bound to give grace to all, Rom. ix. 15. 'I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.' Suppose two malefactors brought before the king, one he will pardon, but not the other; if any demand the reason, he will answer, it is my prerogative: so God will give grace to one, not to another; he will make one a vessel of mercy, the other a vessel of wrath, this is his prerogative. The apostle hath silenced all disputes in this kind, Rom. ix. 20, 21. 'Who art thou that repliest against God? hath not the potter power over the clay?' If we could suppose a plant to speak, why was not I made a bird, or a beast? why should not I have reason? just so it is when

vain man enters into contest with God? why should not I have grace as well as another? dispute not against prerogative; let not the clay syllogize with the potter.

2. I answer, God may justly deny his grace to any wicked man, for two reasons.

1. Because once he had grace, and lost it; if a father gave his son a stock to trade with, and the son breaks, the father is not bound to set him up again. God gave Adam a stock of grace to begin the world with; Adam did break, and make all his children bankrupts; God is not tied to give him grace again.

2. God may justly deny his grace to every wicked man, because he is a despiser of grace, he tramples this pearl under foot, Prov. i. 7. Is God bound to give grace to them that despise it; if a king's pardon be rejected once, he is not bound to tender it any more; but I shall not launch forth any further into this.

4. The cogency and necessity of grace; it is most needful, because it fits us for communion with God, 2 Cor. vi. 14. 'What communion hath light with darkness?' God can no more converse with an ungracious soul, than a king can converse with a sow; it is by grace that we keep a constant intercourse with heaven.

Use 1. Exhort. Let me with the greatest zeal and earnestness persuade all who have souls to save, to endeavour after grace; grace will be desirable at death; it is as useful now, and more seasonable to look after, Prov. iv. 7. 'With all thy getting get understanding.' Alexander being presented with a rich cabinet of king Darius, he reserved it to put Homer's works in, as being of great value. The heart is a spiritual cabinet into which the jewel of grace should be put; we should desire grace above other things; above the gifts of the Spirit; nay,

above the comforts of the Spirit. Comfort is sweet, but grace is better than comfort; bread is better than honey: we may go to heaven without comfort, not without grace; it is grace makes us blessed in life and death. I shall shew you twelve rare excellencies in grace: I shall set this fair virgin of grace before you, hoping that you will be tempted to fall in love with it.

1. Grace hath a soul quickening excellency in it, Heb. x. 38. 'The just shall live by faith.' Men void of grace are dead; they have breath, yet want life; they are walking ghosts, Eph. ii. 1. The life of sin is the death of the soul: a sinner hath all the signs of one that is dead; he hath no pulse; the affections are the pulse of the soul; his pulse doth not beat after God, he hath no sense, Eph. iv. 19. 'Who being past feeling.' Dead things have no beauty, there is no beauty in a dead flower; dead things are not capable of privilege; the dead heir is not crowned; but grace is the vital artery of the soul; it doth not only irradiate, but animate; therefore it is called 'the light of life,' John viii. 12. And believers are said to have their grave clothes pulled off, and to be alive from the dead, Rom. vi. 13. By grace the soul is grafted into Christ the true vine, John xv. 5. and is made not only living but lively, 1 Pet. i. 3. Grace puts forth a divine energy into the soul.

2. Grace hath a soul enriching excellency, 1 Cor. i. 5. 'Ye are enriched in all knowledge.' As the sun enricheth the world with its golden beams, so doth knowledge bespangle and enrich the mind. Faith is an enriching grace, James ii. 5. 'Rich in faith;' faith brings Christ's riches into the soul, it entitles to the promises; the promises are full of riches, justification, adoption, glory: faith is the key that unlocks this cabinet of the promises, and empties out their treasure into the soul. The riches

of grace excel all other riches. 'The merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver,' Prov. iii. 14.

1. These riches make a man wise; wisdom is the best possession; other riches cannot make one wise. A man may have a full purse, and an empty brain. Many a rich heir, though he lives till he become of age, yet he never comes to years of discretion: but these riches of grace have power to make a man wise, Psal. cxi. 10. 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.' The saints are compared to wise virgins, Matt. xxv. Grace makes a man wise to know satan's devices and subtilties, 2 Cor. ii. 11. it makes him wise unto salvation, 2 Tim. iii. 15. Grace gives the serpent's eye in the dove's head.

2. These spiritual riches sanctify other riches. Riches without grace are hurtful, they are golden snares; they are the bellows of pride, the fuel of lust; they set open hell gates for men; they are unblest blessings; but grace sanctifies our riches, it corrects the poison, it takes away the curse, it makes them beneficial to us; riches shall be certificates of God's love, wings to lift us up to paradise. Thus grace, by a divine chemistry, extracts heaven out of earth, and gives us not only venison, but the blessing.

3. Grace satisfies; other riches cannot, Eccl. v. 10: Riches can no more fill the heart, than a triangle can fill a circle; but grace fills up every chink and hiatus of the soul; it dilates the heart, it ravisheth the affections with joy, Rom. xv. 13. which joy, as Chrysostom saith, is a foretaste of heaven.

3. *Excellency*. Grace hath a soul-adorning excellency, it puts a beauty and lustre upon a person, 1 Pet. iii. 4, 5. 'Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, but let it be the hidden man of the heart, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price; for

after this manner in the old time, the holy women also who trusted in God adorned themselves.' If a man hath plate and jewels, cloth of gold, hangings of arras, these adorn the house, not the man; the glory of a man is grace, Prov. iv. 9. 'She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace.' The graces are a chain of pearl that adorns Christ's bride; the heart inlaid and enamelled with grace, is like the 'King's daughter, all glorious within,' Psal. xlv. 13. A gracious soul is the image of God, curiously drawn with the pencil of the Holy Ghost; an heart beautified with grace, is the angels joy, Luke xv. 7. and is God's lesser heaven, Isa. lvii. 15. Eph. iii. 17. Reason doth not so far exceed sense, as grace doth reason; grace changeth corruption into perfection; nothing so graceth a man as grace doth; grace is the purest complexion of the soul, for it makes it like God. Grace is the flower of delight which Christ loves to smell to; grace is to the soul, as the eye to the body, as the sun to the world, as the diamond to the ring, it doth bespangle and beautify. A soul decked with grace, is as the dove covered with silver wings, and golden feathers.

4. *Excellency.* Grace hath a soul-cleansing excellency. By nature we are defiled; sin is an impure issue, it is a befilything thing, 2 Cor. vii. 1. A sinner's heart is so black, that nothing but hell can pattern it; but grace is a spiritual laver; therefore it is called 'the washing of regeneration,' Tit. iii. 5. The grace of repentance cleanseth; Mary's tears, as they washed his feet, so they washed her heart; faith hath a cleansing virtue, Acts. xv. 9. 'Having purified their hearts by faith.' Grace lays the soul a whitening, it takes out the leopard spots, and turns the cypress into an azure beauty. Grace is of a celestial nature, though it doth not wholly remove sin, it doth subdue it; though it doth not keep sin

out, it keeps it under; though sin in a gracious soul doth not die perfectly, yet it dies daily. Grace makes the heart a spiritual temple, which hath this inscription upon it, 'Holiness to the Lord.'

5. *Excellency.* Grace hath a soul-strengthening excellency, it enables a man to do that which exceeds the power of nature. Grace teacheth to mortify our sins, to love our enemies, to prefer the glory of Christ before our own lives. Thus the three children by the power of grace marched in the face of death; neither the sound of the music could allure them, nor the heat of the furnace affright them, Dan. iii. 17. Grace is a Christian's armour of proof, which doth more than any other armour can; it not only defends him, but puts courage into him. Tertullian calls Athanasius an invincible adamant; grace makes us not only bear suffering, but glory in suffering, Rom. v. 8. A soul steeled and animated with grace, can tread upon the lion and adder, Ps. xciii. 13. and with the leviathan, can laugh at the shaking of a spear, Job. xli. 29. Thus doth grace infuse an heroic spirit, and drive strength into a man, making him act above the sphere of nature.

6. *Excellency.* Grace hath a soul-raising excellency; it is a divine sparkle that ascends; when the heart is divinely touched with the load-stone of the Spirit, it is drawn up to God. Prov. xv. 24. 'The way of life is above to the wise:' grace raiseth a man above others; he lives in the altitudes, while others creep on the earth, and are almost buried in it; a Christian by the wings of grace flies aloft; the saints 'mount up as eagles,' Isa. xl. 31. A believer is a citizen of heaven, there he trades by faith, grace shoots the heart above the world, Psal. cxxxix. 17. Phil. iii. ult. Grace gives us conformity to Christ, and communion with Christ, 1 John i. 3. 'Our fellowship is with the Father, and with

his Son Jesus.' A man full of grace, hath Christ in his heart, and the world under his feet; grace humbles, yet elevates.

7. *Excellency.* Grace hath a perfuming excellency; it makes us a sweet odour to God. Hence grace is compared to those spices which are most odoriferous and fragrant, 'Myrrh, cinnamon, frankincense,' Cant. iv. 13. There is a double perfume that grace sends forth.

1. It perfumes our names, Heb. xi. 2. 'By faith the elders obtained a good report:' Grace was the spice which perfumed their names. How renowned was Abraham for his faith, Moses for his meekness. Phinehas for his zeal? what a fresh perfume do their names send forth to this day; the very wicked cannot but see a resplendant majesty in the graces of the saints; and though with their tongues they revile grace, yet with their hearts they reverence it. Thus grace is aromatical, it embalms the names of men; a gracious person when he dies, carries a good conscience with him, and leaves a good name behind him.

2. Grace perfumes our duties, Psal. cxli. 2. 'Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense.' Noah's sacrifice was a perfume; Gen. viii. 21. The Lord smelled a sweet savour. The sighs of a wicked man are an unsavoury breath, his solemn sacrifice is dung, Mal. ii. 3. There is such a noisome stench comes from a sinner's duties, that God will not come near, Amos v. 21. 'I will not smell in your solemn assemblies.' Who can endure the smell of a dead corpse? but grace gives a fragrancency and redolency to our holy things, Heb. xi. 4. 'By faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, God testifying of his gifts.' Abel's sacrifice was better scented, God smelled a sweet savour of it; for he testified of his gifts. If it be asked what this testimony was God gave of Abel's sacrifice? Hierom

saith, God set his sacrifice on fire; 1 Kings xviii. 38. so from heaven testifying his acceptance of Abel's offering; and if grace doth so perfume you, wear this flower, not in your bosoms, but in your hearts.

8. *Excellency.* Grace hath a soul-ennobling excellency, it doth ennoble a man: grace makes us vessels of honour, it sets us above princes and nobles. Theodosius thought it more dignity to be Christ's servant, and wear his livery laced with the silver graces of the Spirit, than to be great and renowned in the world, Isa. lxiii. 4. 'Since thou wert precious in my sight thou hast been honourable.' Sin doth debase a man, Christ tells wicked men their pedigree, John viii. 44. 'Ye are of your father the devil:' they may put the cloven foot in their scutchion; an ungracious person is a vile person; Nah. i. 14. 'I will make thy grave, for thou art vile:' the Hebrew word for vile signifies to be lightly esteemed: there is nothing so vile but an ungracious man will do; he is ductile and facile to any thing, like wire, which will be bent awry; he will snare his conscience, stain his credit, run as a lacky after the sinful injunctions of men; but grace ennobles; he who is divinely inspired, as he is high born, 1 John iii. 1. so he acts suitably to his birth, he hates whatever is disingenuous and sordid. The saints are called kings and priests for their dignity, Rev. i. 6. and jewels for their value, Mal. iii. 17.

9. *Excellency.* Grace hath a soul-securing excellency, it brings safety along with it. You all desire to be safe in dangerous times; if sword or pestilence come, if death peep in at your windows, would you not now be safe; nothing will secure you in times of danger but grace; grace is the best life-guard; it sets Christians out of gunshot, and frees them from the power of hell and damnation, Prov.

x. 2. 'Righteousness delivers from death.' Do not righteous men die? yes, but righteousness delivers from the sting of the first death, and the fear of the second. It was the saying of one, "I am not afraid to die, but to be damned:" but here is a believer's comfort, the fire of God's wrath can never kindle upon him; grace is God's own image stamped on the soul, and he will not destroy his own image. Xerxes the Persian, when he destroyed all the temples in Greece, he caused the temple of Diana to be preserved for its beautiful structure; that soul which hath the beauty of holiness shining in it, shall be preserved for the glory of the structure; God will not suffer his own temple to be destroyed: would you be secured in evil times? get grace and fortify this garrison; a good conscience is a Christian's fort-royal. David's enemies lay round about him; yet, saith he, 'I laid me down and slept,' Psal. iii. 5. A good conscience can sleep in the mouth of a cannon; grace is a Christian's coat of mail, which fears not the arrow or bullet. True grace may be shot at, but can never be shot through; grace puts the soul into Christ, and there it is safe, as the bee in the hive, as the dove in the ark, Rom. viii. 1. 'There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.'

10. *Excellency*. Grace hath a heart-establishing excellency, Heb. xiii. 9. 'It is a good thing that the heart be established with grace.' Before the infusion of grace, the heart is like a ship without a ballast; it wavers and tosseth, being ready to overturn; therefore a man void of grace is called a double-minded man, James i. 8. He acts for and against, as if he had two souls; he is unresolved, to-day of one mind, to-morrow of another; to-day he will hear a preacher that is orthodox, to-morrow one that is heterodox: he will be as the times are, and change his religion as fast as the chameleon

doth his colour. Hearts unsanctified will be unsettled; they will face about to the rising side; they will follow not what is best, but what is safest; they are not for that religion which hath the word to guide it, but for that which hath the sword to back it; this Seneca calls a mind that rolls up and down, and settles no where.

But grace doth consolidate and fix the heart, Psal. lvii. 7. 'My heart is fixed, O God.' Hypocrites are like meteors in the air; David was a fixed star; grace keeps the heart upright; and the more sincere, the more stedfast; grace carries the heart to God as the centre, and there it rests, Psal. cxvi. Psal. vii. A gracious heart cleaves to God, and let whatever changes come, the soul is settled as a ship at anchor.

11. *Excellency*. Grace hath a preparatory excellency in it; it prepares and fits for glory. Glory is the highest peg of our felicity, it transcends all our thoughts; glory can have no hyperbole. Now grace tunes and fits the soul for glory, 2 Pet. i. 3. 'Who hath called us to glory and virtue.' Virtue leads to glory. First you cleanse the vessel, and then pour in wine. God doth first cleanse us by his grace, and then pour in the wine of glory; the silver link of grace draws the golden link of glory after it; indeed grace differs little from glory; grace is glory in the bud, and glory is grace in the flower. In short, glory is nothing else but grace commencing, and taking its degrees.

12. *Excellency*. Grace hath an abiding excellency; temporal things are for a season, but grace hath eternity stamped upon it, it is called durable riches, Prov. viii. 18. Other riches take wings and fly from us; grace takes wings and flies with us to heaven. Some tell us of falling away from grace; I grant seeming grace may be lost; a blazing comet will spend and evaporate; nay, saving grace may

fail in the degree, it may suffer an eclipse, it may lose all its sweet fruit of joy and peace; but still there is sap in the vine, and 'the seed of God remains,' 1 John iii. 4. Grace is a blossom of eternity; 1 John ii. 27. 'The anointing that abides;' colours laid in oil are durable; those hearts which are laid in oil, and have the anointing of God, hold their colours, and endure for ever: grace is compared to a 'river of the water of life,' John vii. 38. This river can never be dried up, for the Spirit of God is the spring that feeds it. Grace is not like a lease which soon expires; so the Pelagians would make it; to-day a believer, to-morrow an unbeliever; to-day justified, to-morrow unjustified; this would be like a lease soon run out; but God settles grace on the saints as an inheritance, and he will see that the entail shall never be cut off. He who hath true grace, can no more fall away than the angels, which are fixed stars in their heavenly orbs.

The arguments to prove the perpetuation of grace are:

1. God's election; this I ground upon Rom. viii. 29, 30. 'Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate.' Predestination is the grand cause of the saint's preservation; God chooseth as well to salvation as to faith, 2 Thess. ii. 13. What shall make God's election void?

2. The power of God, 1 Pet. i. 5. 'We are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.' I deny not but grace in itself may perish, (our grace is no better coin than Adam's), but grace in God's keeping cannot; the saints' graces of themselves may break as glasses, but these glasses in the hand of God never break.

3. God's solemn engagement; the Lord hath passed it under hand and seal; he hath given bond for the saints' perseverance, Jer. xxxii. 40. 'I will

make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, and they shall not depart from me.' A believer's charter is confirmed under the broad seal of heaven; and if grace doth not endure to eternity, it is either because God wants power to make good what he hath decreed, or truth to make good what he hath promised; either of which to assert were blasphemy.

Besides all this, Jesus Christ our blessed high priest, who hath the golden plate on his forehead, appears in the court; and as he poured out blood on the cross, so he pours forth prayers in heaven for the saints' perseverance, Heb. vii. 25. 'He ever liveth to make intercession for them.' And Christ is not only a priest, but a son; therefore likely to prevail; and which puts the matter out of doubt, what Christ prays for as he is man, he hath power to give as he is God, John xvii. 24. 'Father, I will:' 'Father,' there he prays as man; 'I will,' there he gives as God.

So that grace is an abiding thing; Christians, you may lose your friends, your estates, your lives, but you shall never lose your grace. Those who hold falling away from grace, would make a believer wear Cain's mark, which was a continual shaking and trembling in his flesh; they would spill a Christian's cordial, and break a link of the chain of salvation.

2. *Use.* Trial: let us try whether our grace be true; there is something looks like grace which is not. Chrysostom saith the devil hath a counterfeit chain to all the graces, and he would deceive us with it. Lapidaries have ways to try their precious stones; let us try our grace by a scripture touchstone: the painted Christian shall have a painted paradise.

1. The truth of grace is seen by a displacency and antipathy against sin, Psal. cxix. 104. 'I hate every false way:' grace sets itself against complexion-

sins, Psal. xviii. 23. and against the sins of the times, Rev. ii. 2.

2. Grace is known by the growth of it, growth evidenceth life. Dead things grow not; a picture will not grow; an hypocrite, who is but a picture of religion, doth not grow; a good Christian grows in love to Christ, in humility, in good works, Psal. xcii. 12. Hos. xiv. 5. 'He shall grow as the lily, his branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive-tree, and his smell as Lebanon.' When the Spirit of God distils as dew upon the soul, it makes grace flourish, and put forth into maturity.

3. True grace will make us willing to suffer for Christ. Grace is like gold, it will abide the 'fiery trial,' 1 Pet. i. 7. And if upon a serious scrutiny and trial we find that we have the right jewel, 'the grace of God in truth,' Col. i. 6. this will be a deathbed cordial; we may with Simeon, 'depart in peace,' being assured that though we cannot resist death, yet we shall overcome it.

Use 3. Direction. Let me lay down two or three directions for the attaining of grace.

1st. *Direction.* If we would be enriched with this jewel of grace, let us take pains for it; we are bid to make an hue and cry after knowledge, and to search for it; as a man that searcheth for a vein of gold, Prov. ii. 2, 3. Our salvation cost Christ blood, it will cost us sweat.

2. Let us go to God for grace; he is called 'the God of all grace,' 1 Pet. v. 10. We could lose grace of ourselves, but we cannot find it of ourselves. The sheep can wander from the fold, but cannot return without the help of the shepherd: go to the God of all grace; God is the first planter, the promoter, the perfecter of grace; God is the Father of lights, James i. 17. He must light up this candle of grace in the soul; grace is in his gift; it is not an impropriation, but a donative: O then go to God

in prayer, lay thy heart before him; Lord I want grace; I want an humble, believing heart, and thou art 'the God of all grace, all my springs are in thee.' O enrich me with grace, deny me not this before I die: what is gold in the bag, if I have no oil in the lamp? give me 'that anointing of God.' I read in thy word of 'the fruits of the Spirit;' Lord, my heart is a barren soil, plant some of these supernatural fruits in me, that I may be more useful and serviceable; Lord, I cannot be put off with other things. Who wilt thou give grace to, if not to such as ask, and are resolved not to give over asking.

3. If you would have grace, engage the prayers of others in your behalf; he is like to be rich, who hath several stocks going; he is in the way of spiritual thriving, who hath several stocks of prayer going for him. If you had a child that were sick, you would beg the prayers of others; thou hast a soul that is sick, sick of pride, lust, 'sick unto death;' O beg the prayers of godly friends, that God will heal thee with his grace; a Moses and Jacob have much power with God: believers can prevail sometimes not only for themselves; but for their friends, James v. 16. A godly man's prayers may do you more good than if he should bestow upon you all his lands of inheritance.

4. If you would have grace, frequent the means of grace, lie at the pool of Bethesda, wait at the posts of wisdom's door. Inward grace is wrought by outward means; the preaching of the word is God's engine that he useth for working grace; it is called 'the rod of his strength,' Psal. cx. 2. and 'the breath of his lips,' Isa. xi. 4. By this he causeth breath to enter; out of this golden pipe of the sanctuary, God empties the golden oil of grace into the soul; the ministry of the gospel is called 'the ministry of the Spirit,' 2 Cor. viii. because the Spirit

of God ordinarily makes use of this to work grace; this ministry of the Spirit is to be preferred before the ministry of angels.

Quest. Why is the word preached the ordinary means to convey grace? why not conference or reading?

Ans. The reason is, because God hath appointed it to this end, and he will grace his own ordinances, 1 Cor. i. 21. 'it pleased God.' 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 the Lord did appoint and sanctify the one to this work, and not the other; if therefore we would have grace, let us wait where the manna falls, and there expect the dew of the Spirit to fall with manna, the power of God goes along with his word.

How should we delight in ordinances! Sleidan saith there was a church in France formerly, which the Protestants called paradise; as if they thought themselves in paradise while they were in the house of God; those ordinances should be our paradise, which are 'the power of God to salvation.'

The trees of righteousness blossoming, and bringing forth fruit.

PHIL. i. 11. *Being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.*

THE blessed apostle in this chapter makes a solemn prayer to God for these Philippians; and amongst the rest, he puts up two rare petitions for them.

1. That they might be sincere. Verse 10.
2. That they might be fruitful, in the words of

the text, 'Being filled with the fruits of righteousness,' &c. Where is observable,

1. The matter, 'being filled with fruits.'
2. The manner of production, 'by Jesus Christ.'
3. The end, 'which are to the glory and praise of God.'

Doctrine from whence this great truth doth result, 'That Christians should above all things endeavour after fruitfulness.' The saints are called 'trees of righteousness,' Isa. lxi. 3. These rational trees must not only bring forth leaves, but fruit; 'Being filled with the fruits of righteousness.' For the further amplifying of this, there are two things to be inquired into.

1. How a Christian brings forth fruit.
 2. What is the fruit he brings forth.
1. How a Christian brings forth fruit. I answer; he brings forth fruit 'in the vine;' by nature we are barren; there is not one good blossom growing on us; but when by faith we are ingrafted into Christ, then we grow and fructify: John xv. 4. 'As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me.' Jesus Christ is that blessed root which shoots up that sap of grace into his branches. The Pelagians tell us we have sufficiency of ourselves to bring forth good fruit: but how improper is this? doth not the root contribute to the branches? is it not of Christ's precious fulness that we receive? John i. 16. Therefore it is observable Christ calls the spouse's grace his grace, Cant. v. 1. 'I have gathered my myrrh with my spice.' Christ saith not, thy myrrh, but my myrrh. If the saints bear any spiritual fruit, they are beholden to Christ for it; it is his myrrh, Hos. xiv. 8. 'From me is thy fruit found.'

2. What that fruit is which a good Christian brings forth. Answer; it is

1. Inward fruit. 2. Outward fruit. 3. Kindly fruit. 4. Seasonable fruit.

1. A Christian brings forth inward fruit: 'Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,' Gal. v. 22. This fruit is sweet, and mellow, growing under the Sun of righteousness; this is that ripe fruit God delights to taste of, Micah vii. 1.

2. A Christian brings forth outward fruit.

1. The fruit of good discourse, Prov. xv. 4. 'A wholesome tongue is a tree of life.' Gracious speeches fall from the lips of a godly man, as fruit from a tree.

2. The fruit of good works, Col. i. 10. God will say at the last day, 'show me thy faith by thy works,' James ii. 18. A true saint doth all the good he can, 'honouring the Lord with his substance;' he knows he is to be in the world but a while, therefore lives much in a little time, and crowds up a great deal of work in a little room; it was Christ's speech not long before his suffering, 'I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do,' John xvii. 4. How can they be said to finish their work, that never yet began a good work?

3. A Christian brings forth kindly fruit. The godly man bringeth forth his fruit, Psal. i. 3. That is, he brings forth that fruit which is proper for him to bear. But what is this kindly and proper fruit? I answer, when we are good in our callings and relations: in a magistrate, justice is kindly fruit, Deut. xvi. 19. in a minister zeal, Acts xvii. 16. in a parent, instruction, Deut. iv. 10. in a child, reverence, Eph. vi. 1. in a master, good example, Gen. xviii. 19. Eph. vi. 9. in a servant, obedience, 1 Pet. ii. 18. in the husband, love, Eph. v. 25. in the wife, submission, Eph. v. 22. in a tradesman, diligence, Exod. xx. 9. in a soldier, innocence, Luke iii. 14. A tree of God's planting brings forth his fruit, that which is suitable and proper. I shall never believe

him to be good, that doth not bear kindly fruit ; a good Christian, but a bad master ; a good Christian, but a bad parent, doth not sound well. That minister can no more be good which wants zeal, than that wine is good which wants spirits ; that magistrate can no more be good which wants justice, than that pillar is good which is not upright. That child can no more be good who doth not honour his parent, than a traitor can be said to be loyal. When Absalom did rise up in rebellion against his father, the mule which he rode upon (as if she were weary of carrying such a burden) resigns up her load to the great thick oak, and there left him hanging by the head betwixt heaven and earth, as neither fit to ascend the one, nor worthy to tread upon the other.

Let Christians be persuaded to bring forth proper and genuine fruit, and shine forth in their relations : consider,

1. He who is not good in his relations, goes under the just suspicion of an hypocrite ; let a man seem to be a penitent, or zealot, yet if he bear not fruit proper to his station, he is no tree of righteousness, but some wild degenerate plant. There are some will pray, hear sermons, discourse well ; this is good : but ‘ what means the bleating of the sheep ? ’ they are not good in their relations ; this discovers they are foundered and unsound. A good Christian labours to fill his relations, and to go through all the parts of religion, as the sun through all the signs of the zodiac. I like not those Christians, who, though they seem to be travelling to heaven, yet leave the duties of their relations as a *terra incognita*, which they never come near.

2. The excellency of a Christian is to bring forth proper fruit ; wherein lies the goodness of a member in the body, but to discharge its proper office ? the eye is to see, the ear to hear, &c. So the excel-

lency of a Christian is to bring forth that fruit which God hath assigned to him: what is a thing good for which doth not do its proper work? what is a clock good for that will not strike? what is a ship good for that will not sail? what is a rose good for that doth not smell; what is that professor good for that doth not send forth a sweet perfume in his relation? the commendation of a thing is when it puts forth its proper virtue.

3. Not to bring forth suitable fruit, spoils all the other fruit which we bring forth. If a man were to make a medicine, and should leave out the chief ingredient, the medicine would lose its virtue. If one were to draw a picture, and should leave out an eye, it would spoil the picture; there are many to whom Christ will say at the day of judgment as to the young man, Luke xviii. 22. 'Yet lackest thou one thing.' Thou hast prayed, and fasted, and heard sermons, 'yet lackest thou one thing,' thou hast not been good in thy relations.

4. Relative graces do much beautify and set off a Christian: it is the beauty of a star to shine in its proper orb; relative grace doth bespangle a Christian.

5. A good Christian brings forth seasonable fruit, Psal. i. 8. he that bringeth forth fruit in his season; every thing is beautiful in his time, Eccl. iii. 11. That may be good at one time, which at another may be out of season. There is a great deal of skill in the right timing of a thing; duties of religion must be performed in the fit juncture of time.

1. Christian duties that relate to our neighbour must be observed in their season.

1. Our reproving others must be seasonable. Re-proof is a duty; when we see others walk irregularly, like soldiers that march out of rank and file, we ought mildly, yet gravely, to tell them of their

sin. Lev. xix. 17. but let this fruit be brought forth in its season.

1. Do it privately; Matt. xviii. 15. 'Go and tell him his faults between him and thee alone.'

2. Do it when thou seest him in the best temper, not when his passions are up; that were pouring oil on the flame; but when his spirit is meekened and calmed; you put the seal on the wax when it is soft and pliable; there is a time when men's spirits are more flexible and yielding; now is the fittest time to stamp a reproof upon them, and it is likeliest to take impression. When Abigail reproved Nabal, it was in the right season; not when he was in wine, but when he was in his wits; and was fit to hear a reproof, 1 Sam. xvi. 37.

3. Another season for reproof is in the time of affliction: Affliction tames men's spirits, and now a word of reproof spoken prudentially may work with the affliction; a bitter potion is not refused if in case of extremity of pain. Affliction opens the ear to discipline.

2. Our comforting others must be seasonable; Prov. xv. 23. 'A word spoken in due season, how good is it?' When we see one fallen into sin, and with Peter weeping bitterly, O now a word of comfort will do well. The incestuous Corinthian being deeply humbled, the apostle calls for oil and wine to be poured into his wounds; 2 Cor. ii. 7. 'Ye ought rather to comfort him,' and the reason is given; 'lest perhaps such an one should be swallowed up of sorrow.' When the soul is wounded for sin, now bring the mollifying ointment of a promise, Jer. iii. 1. hang out free grace's colours, display the glory of God's attributes, his mercy and truth to the sinner; when the spirit is broken, a word of comfort spoken in season, is the putting it in joint again; this is to bring forth seasonable fruit, when we give wine to them that are of a heavy

heart; 'Pleasant words are as an honey-comb, sweet to the soul.' Job's friends pretended to comfort him; but instead of pouring oil into the wound, they poured in vinegar.

2. Duties of religion that relate to God must be performed in their season.

1. Mourning for sin is a duty; God loves a contrite heart; Psal. li. 17. how powerful with God is the weeping rhetoric that a poor sinner useth; but yet there is a time when weeping may not be so seasonable; when God hath given us some eminent signal deliverance, and this mercy calls aloud to us to rejoice, but we hang our harps on the willows and sit weeping; this sadness is fruit out of season; there was a special time at the feast of tabernacles, when God called his people to rejoicing; 'Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto the Lord thy God, and thou shalt surely rejoice.'

Now, if the Israelites had sat heavy and disconsolate at that time when God called them to rejoicing, it had been very unseasonable, like mourning at a wedding; when we are called to thanksgiving, and we mingle our drink with tears, is not this to be highly unthankful for mercy; God would have his people humble, but not ungrateful. It is the devil's policy either to keep us from duty, or else to put us upon it when it is least in season.

2. Rejoicing is a duty; Psal. xxxiii. 1. But when God by some special providence calls us to weeping, now joy is unseasonable; this is that which God complains of, Isa. xxii. 12. 'In that day did the Lord of hosts call to weeping, and behold joy and gladness,' &c. Ecclampadius and others think it was in the time of king Ahaz, when the signs of God's anger like a blazing star, did appear; now to be given to mirth was very unseasonable, ver. 14. 'Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the Lord God of hosts;' it is

a concise form of an oath, as if God had said, I swear it shall not by any prayer or sacrifice be expiated; the fruit of joy must be brought forth in its season. To read at home, when the word is a preaching, or the sacrament celebrating, is unseasonable, nay sinful; as Hushai said, 2 Sam. xvii. 7. 'The counsel is not good at this time:' one duty is to prepare for another, but not to jostle out another; fruit must put forth seasonably. The great God who hath appointed the duties of his worship, hath appointed also the time. If, when public ordinances are administered, any person, whether out of pride or sloth, shall stay at home, though he may have his private devotions, yet he brings forth fruit out of season, and let that man know he shall bear his sin.

Let all the trees of righteousness bring forth seasonable fruit; in prosperity be thankful, in adversity patient. 'To every thing there is a season,' Eccl. iii. 1. The Psalmist saith, 'He appointed the moon for seasons,' Psal. civ. 19.

To excite to seasonable fruit, consider,

1. The seasonableness of a thing puts a value and preciousness upon it. Duties of religion performed in their season are glorious.

2. Creatures, by the instinct of nature, observe their season; Jer. viii. 7. 'Yea the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times, and the turtle,' &c. and shall not Christians observe their seasons, when to mourn, when to rejoice?

3. Duties of religion not well timed are dangerous: mourning in a time of joy, private duties in time of public, is unseasonable, and will prove prejudicial.

Use 1. Inform. It shows us who is a Christian in God's calendar, namely, the fruit-bearing Christian. As soon as the sap of grace is infused, it puts forth itself in evangelical fruit. No sooner was Paul con-

verted, but he became a plant of renown, he did bring forth rare fruit, humility, faith, heavenly mindedness; he was one of the most fruitful trees that ever God planted in his vineyard. The jailor when God had changed him from a wild tree, to a tree of righteousness, brought forth sweet and generous fruit. How kindly did he use the apostles? he set meat before them, and washed their wounds; he who was before their jailor, becomes now their nurse and physician.

Use 2. Reproof. Here is an indictment against three sorts.

Branch 1. Such as bring forth no fruit; Hos. x. 1. 'Israel is an empty vine.' O how many unfruitful hearers are there, who evaporate into nothing but froth and fume, being like those ears which run out all into straw! they give God neither the early fruit nor the latter. There are many Christians like arbors, covered only with the leaves of profession; they may be compared to the wood of the vine which is good for nothing, Ezek. xv. 2. He who hath not the fruits of the Spirit, hath not the Spirit, and 'he who hath not the Spirit is none of Christ's,' Rom. viii. 9. and if he be not Christ's, whose is he then? I fear the sin of this age is unfruitfulness. Never more labouring in God's vineyard, and yet never less fruit; instead of the fig-tree and the pomegranate, we have abundance of barren willows growing among us; ministers say they fear they 'spend their labour in vain;' many are perverted, few converted. To the unfruitful Christian let me say four things.

1. Unfruitfulness is a shame: barrenness of old was counted a great shame. For a tree in winter to be unfruitful is no great wonder; but in the spring and summer, to be without fruit, is a reproach to the tree: so, in the winter of ignorance and popery, to have less fruit was less culpable; but in the

spring time of the gospel, when the Sun of Righteousness hath shined so gloriously in our horizon, now to be without fruit is a reproach not to be wiped away.

2. What account can the unfruitful Christian give to God? God will come with this question, Where is your fruit? a godly man dies full of fruit; Job v. 26. 'Thou shalt come to thy grave in full age, like as a shock of corn,' &c. The unfruitful Christian comes to his grave not as a shock of corn, but as a bundle of straw, fit only for the fire; it is good to bethink ourselves what answer we shall give to God for our barrenness. The Lord hath planted us in a rich soil; he may say to us as to his vineyard, Isa. v. 1. 'My beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill, and he fenced it, and planted it with the choicest vine,' &c. and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes,' (in an hill) hilly places are judged the fittest for vines to grow in, Psal. lxxx. 10. there the sun comes best, and is of more force for ripening the grapes.

In a fruitful hill, that is in a very fat, rich soil. So may God say to us, I have planted you in an hilly place, you have been higher than the nations round about you, you have even been lifted up to heaven with ordinances; the sunbeams of mercy, and Sion's silver drops, have fallen upon you; but where is your fruit? your enjoyments are great, but what are your improvements? whom God finds without fruit, he leaves without excuse.

3. They that do not bring forth good fruit, shall never taste of the fruits that grow in heaven. Heaven is the garden of God, the paradise of pleasure, where the most rare delicious fruits grow; there are fruits that the angels themselves delight to feed on: now, if you do not bring God *your* fruit, you shall

never taste *his* fruit: you that do not bring forth the fruits of righteousness, shall never taste the fruits of paradise. O present Christ, with your sweet spices, give him your myrrh, your spiced wine; your myrrh, that is, repentance; this, though it be bitter to you, is sweet to Christ. Those who have no myrrh or wine to give to God, shall never feed upon the Tree of Life which bears several sorts of fruit.

4. Think of the heavy doom which will be passed upon the unfruitful person, Matt. xxv. 30. 'Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness.' This man had not embezzled his talent, but because he did not trade with it, and bring forth fruit, he is therefore sentenced.

Branch 2. It reproves such as bring forth evil fruit. They are not trees of the garden, but the wilderness; their hearts are a fruitful soil for sin, they bring forth pride, malice, superstition, &c.

Branch 3. It reproves such as bring forth good fruit, but to a bad end, Hos. x. 1. 'Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself:' a man had as good bring forth no fruit, as bring forth fruit unto himself.

Quest. What is it for one to bring forth fruit unto himself?

Ans. When all the good he doth is for the magnifying of himself; the worm of pride gets into his fruit and spoils it. Prayer is good; but when a man prays only to shew his parts, this is to bring forth fruit unto himself: some pride it in their humbling confessions, which is as if Benhadad's servants had been proud when they came before the king with ropes upon their heads, 1 Kings xx. 31. Works of mercy are good, but when a man gives alms, not so much to feed the poor, as to feed his pride, now he brings forth fruit to himself, and this fruit is worm-eaten. God will say to all such self seekers, as once he did to the people of the Jews, Zech.

vii. 5. 'When ye fasted and mourned, did ye at all fast unto me, even to me?' sinners, did ye not bring forth fruit unto yourselves?

Use 3. Exhort. Branch 1. Let this exhort all to fruitfulness. How happy were it if it might be said of us as Joseph, Gen. xlix. 22. 'Joseph is a fruitful bough?' We love to see every thing fruitful: if there be a tree in our orchard, though with ever such fair leaves, we value it not unless there be fruit; when you come into your garden, you complain if you see no fruit; such a root is set, but it doth not grow; we love to see fruitfulness every where, and why not in our hearts? O let the precious grapes and figs we bear evidence that we are trees of God's planting; we often plant trees to be a shade to the house. God cares for no such trees as are only for shade, he loves fruit. Arabia is called Felix, because of the sweet fruits which grow there, frankincense, with other perfumes and spices. That Christian may be entitled Felix, happy, that hath the sweet fruits of the Spirit growing in his heart; be fruit-bearing trees. This is the emblem of a good Christian, he is never without fruit, either blooming in his affections, or fructifying in his conversation.

That I may persuade Christians to fruitfulness, I desire them to weigh these five things.

1. Fruit is that which God expects from us, we are his plantations; and 'Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof?' 1 Cor. ix. 7. Let us not be as Pharaoh's kine, which devoured the fat, and yet still were lean; let us not be still devouring sermons, yet never the fatter.

2. Fruitfulness is one of the most distinctive characters of a Christian; Prov. xii. 12. 'The root of the righteous yieldeth fruit.' Fruitfulness differeth a saint from an hypocrite? the hypocrite is all for shew and pretence, he hath fair leaves, but the

‘root of the righteous yieldeth fruit;’ fruit can no more be separated from faith, than moisture from the air, it is the very definition of a branch in Christ, ‘it bears fruit,’ John xv. 2. As a man differs from a beast by reason, a beast differs from a plant by sense, a plant differs from a stone by vegetation; so a good Christian differs from an hypocrite by fruit. Fruitfulness puts a difference between the sound tree and the hollow tree.

Quest. But may not hypocrites bring forth fruit.

Ans. 1. They do not bring forth fruit in the Vine; they bring forth in the strength of parts, not in the strength of Christ.

2. Hypocrites bring forth something like fruit, but it is not the right fruit.

1. The fruit they bear is not so sweet. The crab may bear fruit as well as the pearmain; but this excels in sweetness. The hypocrite may pray and give alms as well as a child of God, but there is a difference in the fruit; the fruit of the regenerate is mellow, it is sweetened with faith, it is ripened with love. The hypocrite’s fruit is sour and harsh; he doth not bring forth pomegranates but crabs, not figs, but wild grapes.

2. The seeming fruit of hypocrites dies and comes to nothing, John xv. 6. ‘He is cast forth as a branch, and is withered.’ The hypocrite’s fruit is like the grass upon the house tops, which withereth before it groweth up, Psal. cxxix. 6. Matt. xiii. 6.

3. Fruitfulness adorns a Christian; the fruit adorns the tree; a fruit-bearing Christian is an ornament to religion; the more fruitful the branch is, the more fair to look on. A dead tree, as it is unserviceable, so it is uncomely. A Christian, decked with the fruits of righteousness, is beautiful and glorious.

4. Fruitfulness is a good evidence to show for heaven; the fruits of love, humility, good works,

are (as St. Bernard saith) seeds of hope, signs of predestination, the happy presages of future glory. The righteousness of faith is always accompanied with the fruits of righteousness. He that can shew good fruit, goes full sail to heaven.

5. God delights in his fruitful trees; when his garden flourisheth he will walk there; he who curs-eth the barren tree, will taste of the fruitful tree, Cant. v. 1. 'I am come into my garden my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice.'

2. *Branch.* It exhorts them that do bear fruit, that they would bring forth more fruit; do not think you have fruit enough, but bring forth further degrees of sanctity, John xv. 2. 'Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit.' Grace is like the morning light which increaseth more and more to the full meridian of glory. Christians should be like that ground in the parable which brought forth 'some sixty, some an hundred fold,' Matt. xiii. 8. He who hath a little gold, labours to increase it; and is not grace more precious than gold? some Christians have a little fruit, and they think that is well; like trees that have an apple or two growing on them to show that they are of the right kind, Isa. xvii. 6. 'Two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough.' They are like the church of Philadelphia which had 'a little strength,' Rev. iii. 8. so they have a little faith, a spark of love. Christ chides a little faith, Matth. xiv. 31. Christians should increase with the increase of God, Col. ii. 19. Christ compares the breasts of the spouse to clusters of grapes, for fruitfulness, Cant. vii. 7. O labour to be Christians of degrees; the apostle prays for the Philippians that their love might abound 'yet more and more,' Phil. i. 9.

Now that I may press Christians who have fruit,

to bring forth more fruits of patience, humility, love, &c. Consider,

1. This is the end why we have new cost laid out upon us, that we should bring forth more fruit. The Lord is still manuring us; not a week, not a day, but he is at new cost with us, he rains down golden showers; and why is God at all this charge with us, but that we may bring forth more fruit?

2. The more fruit we bring forth, the more glory we bring to God; John xv. 8. 'Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.' Though it is a blessed sight to see any fruit, I would not discourage such as bear but two or three olive berries, it is a sign they are not dead trees; it is observable, the ground in the parable which brought forth more sparingly, Christ calls it 'good ground,' Matt. xiii.

8. If the husbandman sees a thin ear, which hath but a little corn in it, yet he is glad to see some, and he carries it into the barn. So though thou art a thin ear, thou hast not so much grace as others, God will not reject thee: if there be any fruit, God will accept it; he that gained but two talents, had his *euge bone serve*; Matt. xxv. 22. 'Well done thou good and faithful servant.' This I speak that I may not discourage the weak Christian; though thou hast less fruit growing on thee, thou art too good a tree to be made fuel of, thou shalt be transplanted into paradise. But I say, you should not rest in small beginnings, but labour to put more oil in the lamp, and be increasing your stock of grace; for, the more fruit you bring forth, the more glory God hath; 'herein is my Father glorified;' though the lowest degree of grace may bring salvation to you, yet it doth not bring so much glory to God. It is observable in the text, when the apostle had said, 'Filled with the fruits of righteousness,' he adds, 'which are unto the glory and praise of God.' It is a praise to the husbandman, and commends his skill and in-

dustry when the plants in his orchard thrive; so when the plants of righteousness flourish, this is to the praise of God's glory; it is the highest end of the creature to bring glory to God; better lose our lives, than lose the end of our living.

3. The fuller we are of fruit, the more we are like Christ, who was 'full of grace and truth,' John i. 14. he received the Spirit 'without measure,' John iii. 34. This tree of life was ever bearing; and he brought forth several sorts of fruit, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, &c. The more we are filled with the fruits of righteousness, the more we resemble the Sun of Righteousness. We were elected to this end, to be made like Christ, Rom. viii. 30. and then are we most like this blessed Vine when we bear full clusters.

4. The more fruit a Christian brings forth, the more will Christ love him. 'Now, saith Leah, will my husband be joined unto me, because I have born him three sons, Gen. xxix. 34. When we bear much fruit, now will Christ's heart be joined to us. Christ will pardon a weak faith, he will honour a great faith. It was not a sparkle of faith Christ commended in Mary Magdalene, but love flaming, Luke vii. 74. 'she loved much.' Christians, would you be like that beloved disciple which 'leaned on the bosom of Jesus?' would you have much love from Christ? let him have much fruit from you.

5. Bearing much fruit will usher in abundance of comfort into the soul in these two exigencies.

1. In the hour of tentation. Satan will be sure to besiege the weakest Christian; all his darts fly that way, and a strong tentation may overcome a weak faith; but a flourishing faith stands like a cedar, and is not blown down by the wind of tentation; a strong faith can stop the mouth of the devil, that roaring lion, 1 Pet. v. 9.

2. Store of fruit will give comfort in the hour of death; a little grace will make us above the danger of death, but degrees of grace will make us above the fear of death; O what joy will it be on the deathbed, when a Christian can bring his sheaves full of corn! when he can shew his five talents that he hath gained by trading! when there is not only a drop or two of oil, but his lamp full of oil! what though the devil shew God our debts, if we can shew him our fruit. O how sweet will death be! it will not be a destruction, but a deliverance.—Death, like a whirlwind, may blow down the tree of the body, but it cannot blast the fruit of our graces. The trees of righteousness carry their fruit with them, Rev. xiv. 13. ‘Their works follow them.’ The Christian who abounds in holiness may say as Simeon, Luke ii. 29. ‘Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.’ He who bears but a little fruit departs in safety; but he who bears much fruit departs in peace.

6. Consider what need we have to be putting forth still more fruit; our graces are yet in their nonage; indeed in heaven this doctrine will be out of season, we shall not need to hear it; then we shall have done growing, being arrived at our full stature? then our light shall be clear, and our love perfect; but while we live here, there is something ‘lacking in our faith,’ 1 Thess. iii. 10. therefore we had need increase the stock of grace, and bring forth more fruit. Our grace is eclipsed with sin, our faith is full of unbelief; now as when the sun is eclipsed, it is by degrees getting out of the eclipse, and it shines brighter and brighter, till it recovers its perfect lustre; so it must be with us, we must be getting out of the eclipse till once we shall arrive at our perfect lustre in glory.

7. He who doth not increase to more fruitfulness will soon be on the losing hand; he that hath not

more faith will quickly have less ; ‘ Thou hast left thy first love.’ It is with grace as it is with fire ; if it be not blown up and increased, it will soon decay. Such as thrive not in their spiritual estate, we may perceive sadly to decline. Tho’ a Christian cannot lose the seed of grace, yet he may lose the actings of grace, and the comfort ; therefore bring forth more fruit ; no sooner doth a Christian begin to stand still, but you may perceive him going backward.

8. The more your fruit is increased, the more your glory is increased ; he whose pound gained ten, was made ruler over ten cities. If you would have your crown hung full of jewels, let your boughs be hung full of fruit.

Use 4. Direction. The last use is of direction. I shall lay down some means to fruitfulness.

1. Be sensible of unfruitfulness. Many might have been fruitful in grace, if they had not conceited themselves so ; he that thinks himself fruitful enough, is barren enough ; be sensible of your wants ; it is better to complain than presume.

2. If you would be fruitful, remove those things which will hinder fruitfulness.

1. Cherishing any secret lust in the heart ; sin lived in, is like vermin to the tree, which destroys the fruit ; grace cannot thrive in a sinful heart.

2. The love of riches ; ‘ The cares of the world choked the seed,’ Matt. xiii. The love of sin poisons the fruit, the love of riches chokes it.

3. The third means to fruitfulness is weeping for sin. Moisture helps germination in trees ; holy tears do water the trees of God, and make them more fruitful : Mary Magdalene, a weeping plant, how fruitful was she in love to Christ ? moist grounds, as your marshes, are most fertile : the soul that is moistened and steeped in tears, is most frugiferous : never did David’s graces flourish more, than when he watered his couch with tears.

4. If you would be fruitful, often apply the blood of Christ, and the promises.

1. Apply the blood of Christ. Naturalists say, that blood applied to the root of some trees makes them bear better. Sure I am, the blood of Christ applied to the heart, makes it flourish more in holiness. None so fruitful as a believer; I know, saith St. Paul, whom I have believed; there was the applying blood to the root of the tree, and how fruitful was he in zeal, love to Christ, heroical courage! He that believes Christ died for him, never thinks he can do or suffer enough for Christ. When we read and pray, now we do but water the branches; when we believe, now we water the root of the tree and make it fruitful.

2. Apply the promises. Husbandmen have an art to comfort the spirits of the root to make the tree bear better: apply the promises; these are for comforting the spirits of a Christian, and then he puts forth fruit more vigorously. It is an experiment in nature, the root of the pine tree watered with wine, doth cause it to flourish; the promises are as wine to water the trees of righteousness, whereby they spread and augment more in grace. Ever preserve the spirits of the tree if you would have it bear; a pensive dejected soul is less fruitful; but when through the promises, a Christian's heart is cheered and comforted, now he is enriched with pleasant fruits; he is like a tree laden with fruit.

5. Another means to fruitfulness is humility. The low grounds are most fruitful: 'The vallies are covered with corn,' Psal. lxxv. 13. 'The humble heart is the fruitful heart. The largest and fairest fruits of the Spirit grow in a lowly Christian; 1 Pet. v. 5. 'God gives grace to the humble.' Saint Paul calls himself the least of saints, yet he was the chief of the apostles. The virgin Mary was low in her own

eyes, but this lowly plant did bear that blessed Vine which brought the fruit of salvation to the world.

6. If you would be fruitful in grace, be much in good conference; Mal. iii. 16. 'Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another.' There is an observation some have concerning the sympathy of plants; some plants will bear better near other trees than when they grow alone, as is seen in the myrtle and olive: this holds true in divinity; the trees of righteousness, when they associate and grow near together, thrive best in godliness. The communion of saints is an excellent means for fruitfulness. Christians increase one another's knowledge, strengthen one another's faith, clear one another's evidences. When the trees planted in God's orchard stand at a distance, and grow strange one to another, they are less fruitful.

7. If you would be fruit-bearing trees, be near the water of the sanctuary? Jer. xvii. 8. 'He shall be like a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out the roots by the river; her leaf shall be green, nor shall it cease from yielding fruit.' The word preached will not only make us knowing Christians, but growing Christians. Ministers are compared to clouds, Isai. v. 6. their doctrine drops as the rain, and makes the trees of God fruitful. I wonder not that they are barren trees and nigh unto cursing, that are not under the droppings of the sanctuary; a Christian can no more be fruitful without ordinances, than a tree without showers.

8. And lastly, if you would fructify apace, go to God and desire him to make you fruitful; God is called the husbandman, John xv. 1. and he hath an art above all other husbandmen; they can plant and prune trees, but if they be dead they cannot make them bear. God can make the barren tree bear, he can put life into a dead tree, Eph. ii. 5.

It is not Paul's planting, but the Spirit's watering, must give the increase.

Pray to God to make you fruitful, tho' it be by affliction ; oftentimes God makes us grow in grace this way, Heb. xii. 11. ' No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous ; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness.' The bleeding vine bears best : it is an observation that the pulling off some of the blossoms of a tree makes the fruit fairer ; the reason is, because the sap hath the less to nourish ; some writers say, they have known a tree by having too many blossoms, hath blossomed itself dead. The notion holds true in a spiritual sense ; God, by pulling off some of the blossoms of our comforts, makes us bring forth fairer fruit ; some have so blossomed in prosperity, that they have blossomed themselves into hell ; it is an ancient experiment, that the planting some tender trees near the west sun doth them hurt, and parcheth the fruit, the sun being so extremely hot : too much prosperity, like the west sun, doth Christians much hurt, and parcheth all good affections, Jer. xxii. 21. O pray to God that he would make you fruitful, though it be by bleeding. Say, as Luther, Lord, wound where thou wilt, prune and cut me till I bleed, so that I may ' have my fruit unto holiness, and my end everlasting life,' Rom. vi. 22.



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